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Book Review: The State of Sex: Tourism, Sex, and Sin in the New American Heartland

Kari Lerum

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A Typology of Domestic Violence: Intimate Terrorism, Violent Resistance, and Situational Couple Violence. By Michael P. Johnson. Lebanon, NH: Northeastern University Press, 2008, 168 pp., \$22.95 (paper).

DOI: 10.1177/0891243211405653

Michael Johnson's book addresses an important issue in the study of domestic violence: whether domestic violence is a "unitary phenomenon" or whether there are multiple forms of domestic violence. Using previous research on domestic violence and secondary data, Johnson argues that there are three types of domestic violence: "intimate terrorism," "violent resistance," and "situational couple violence." The introduction and first chapter provide an overview of the three types and use statistics to illustrate the differences between them. The next three chapters explain, in detail, each of the three types of domestic violence. Johnson concludes with a discussion of the implications this typology has for intervention, prevention, and research on domestic violence.

Although Johnson's typology was first proposed in the 1990s, this book makes several valuable contributions to the literature on domestic violence. First, it provides a comprehensive understanding of each of the three forms of violence, adeptly delving into each form's causes, correlates, and consequences as well as the efficacy of interventions designed to combat domestic violence. Second, Johnson's typology can be used to better understand the problem of gender symmetry in domestic violence, which has been hotly debated for the past 30 years. Family violence researchers argue that domestic violence is gender symmetrical—men and women are equally likely to both use violence and to be victimized in their intimate relationships. Research by feminist researchers, however, argues that domestic violence is gender asymmetrical—men are far more likely than women to use violence and women are far more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner. Each group of researchers has an extensive body of research to support its position. Johnson theorizes that these differences have arisen because each group has studied a different form of domestic violence. He argues that family violence researchers have been studying "situational couple violence" and feminist researchers have been studying "intimate terrorism."

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Thus, Johnson's typology can be used to explain the often contradictory findings of research on gender and domestic violence.

A third contribution of Johnson's book is the discussion of violent resistance in chapter three. Johnson emphasizes the "strength and resourcefulness" of many abused women, a welcome change from many popular images of "passive victims" of domestic violence. However, he is careful to emphasize the individual and institutional constraints facing abused women who resist their intimate partner's violence. Furthermore, distinguishing this type of relationship from intimate terrorism and mutual violent control is important because of the increasing criminalization of domestic violence. With the advent of mandatory arrest laws and no-drop prosecution policies, the number of women arrested and prosecuted for domestic violence has increased dramatically. In many cases, the women were not perpetrators but were engaging instead in violent resistance—and the arrests of these "victim-defendants" have had negative consequences on victims and their families. Identifying and understanding violent resistance can help law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and court advocates better serve women accused of and/or arrested for domestic violence.

Missing from Johnson's book is an in-depth discussion of a fourth type of domestic violence—"mutual violent control." Johnson only briefly describes this fourth type and does not devote a separate chapter to this form of violence, most likely because there is little research in this area. However, cases of "mutual violent control" permeate the media (a recent example is Eminem's music video "Love the Way You Lie," which depicts a mutually violent relationship), and these images reinforce societal stereotypes about domestic violence. Thus, many relationships are classified as "mutual violent control" instead of "violent resistance," with dramatic consequences for victims. An in-depth discussion of the dynamics of mutual violent control, similar to the other types of violence, would make a significant contribution to our understanding of domestic violence.

In addition, the book could also be improved with a more comprehensive discussion of race and ethnicity. While Johnson briefly describes racial differences in chapters two (intimate terrorism) and four (situational couple violence), there is a large body of research related to race, ethnicity, and domestic violence that is absent from Johnson's book. For example, previous research has shown that African Americans' violent resistance in abusive relationships is interpreted very differently than that of white women and Asian women. Johnson also limits the discussion of race and ethnicity to whites, African Americans, and Hispanics—leaving out Native American women, who, in the United States, have the highest risk of victimization of

any racial or ethnic group. Similarly, there is no mention of Asian women or biracial women in this work.

Overall, Johnson's book is well written and engaging. It is highly recommended reading for undergraduates, graduate students, academics, and policy makers interested in creating prevention and intervention services for domestic violence.

ALESHA DURFEE
Arizona State University

The State of Sex: Tourism, Sex, and Sin in the New American Heartland.
By Barbara G. Brents, Crystal A. Jackson, and Kathryn Hausbeck. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010, 301 pp., \$31.95 (paper).

DOI: 10.1177/0891243210391897

As a scholar of sex work, sexual health, and human rights, I was eager for the release of *The State of Sex*, an ethnography of Nevada's legal brothel system. This project was long in the making, resting on extensive data including more than a decade of ethnographic observations and interviews; content analysis of websites, legal documents, and newspaper articles; data from police departments and tax assessors; and reviews of published historical research on Nevada and its brothels. The result is the best documentation and analysis to date of Nevada's legal brothel system. To my knowledge, *The State of Sex* is also the most comprehensive ethnography of legal sex work across the globe. Since Nevada is the only state in the United States to recognize prostitution as legal commerce (limited to regulated brothels and within zoning restrictions), this book also provides scholars, activists, and policy makers a vision of how legal prostitution can and does work in the contemporary United States.

The State of Sex is organized into two parts. The first half focuses on macro issues; the second concentrates on the organization and practices of contemporary brothel work. Chapters 1 through 3 present an historical overview of the geography, economics, culture, and politics of prostitution in Nevada. The authors describe sexual commerce within two historical periods in Nevada: 1900 to 1940 (dominated by mining economics and culture) and 1940 to 2000 (organized around tourism and a leisure economy). Brents, Jackson, and Hausbeck link the global economic turn toward leisure-based goods and services to changing patterns in the practice and consumption of prostitution in Nevada. This leads to the second half of the book, where firsthand ethnographic data is presented.

Chapters 4 through 6 specify how contemporary legal brothel work in Nevada is organized, negotiated, and practiced. A constellation of brothels spans a rural and suburban territory, connected by history and politics and a network of largely migratory workers who commute to Nevada from around the United States for contracts lasting between 10 days and three months. The authors find distinct differences between rural and suburban brothels. Rural brothels cater to miners and truck drivers, working-class men who travel primarily for work and are looking for comforts and entertainments of home. Suburban brothels target a customer base of middle- and business-class men (and women), people who travel for leisure as much as for work and are looking for exoticism, fantasy, glamour, and adventure.

In detailing the everyday concerns of brothel workers, the authors find substantial overlap with the concerns of other service workers and independent contractors (e.g., lack of health care, retirement benefits, and job security). Other issues described include controversial practices unique to brothels such as the “lineup,” where workers stand silently with hands behind their backs in an assembly-line display. Once nearly ubiquitous, several factors (including intimidation of customers and complaints by workers) led many contemporary brothels to replace the lineup with meet-and-greet strategies that facilitate a sense of personal connection.

Another practice known as “lockdown” is a requirement by some brothels for workers to both work and live in-house. Brothel managers justify this as a health requirement (fearing that workers will engage in unsafe sex outside the brothel), but the authors indicate that lockdown is more likely steeped in economic and identity management motives (precluding workers’ ability to arrange direct exchanges with customers; keeping workers out of the public eye). However, lockdown practices are subsiding, as large suburban brothels now allow “women to go home after their shift if they want” (p. 136). Since many workers are migratory, going home for the night is not an option. Interestingly, the authors found that living at the brothel is not a top concern for many workers, but rather a pragmatic solution.

Finally, the importance of the legality of this industry cannot be overstated. As the authors state, “Being legal lends a symbolic and material legitimacy and authority to the business, with all the rights (police protection) and responsibilities (house rules to protect health and body) that accompany it” (p. 131). What Brents, Jackson, and Hausbeck do not mention, but what is clear from the magnitude of their study, is how the legality of their subject matter affected their own ethnographic labor process. Longitudinal studies of sex work are rare, but transparent research cooperation between multiple sectors, cross-checking of data, photographs, and real names? This is virtually impossible in most sex work research.

In sum, while the story told is not free of concern for labor rights, the validity and verifiability of these data provide an antidote to alarmist generalizations found in many discussions of sex work and contribute to scholarship critiquing the current political impulse to label all sex workers (especially those who travel) as victims of trafficking (e.g., see Laura Augustin 2007). *The State of Sex* is useful for scholars of sexuality, gender, and work and postindustrial capitalist economies. It is vital reading for students of the meanings of sex and sex work and an important ethnographic case study of what happens when prostitution is organized into legal workplaces.

KARI LERUM

University of Washington, Bothell

REFERENCE

Augustin, Laura. 2007. *Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry*. London: Zed Books.

America and the Pill: A History of Promise, Peril, and Liberation. By Elaine Tyler May. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010, 214 pp., \$25.95 (cloth).

DOI: 10.1177/0891243210391094

The pill was envisioned as not just a remedy for unplanned pregnancies but as a magical elixir for happy marriages and the looming population crisis that would unleash untold human suffering, civil unrest, and the dark forces of communism. This 50-year anniversary has provided prominent historian Elaine Tyler May an opportune moment to reflect on these lofty goals. The pill's crowning achievement was that it enabled women to escape the physical depletion of continual childbearing, plan their births, and pursue educational and occupational opportunities. Contraception that was effective, detached from actual sex, and "did not require men's cooperation or even their knowledge" was truly revolutionary (p. 4).

Drawing on a variety of archival sources, May traces the pill's development, carefully situating it within broader historical and social contexts. This research was in part a journey of personal discovery for May, who participated in clinical trials in the early 1970s. Her father, Edward Tyler, was also a lead researcher, and her mother, Lillian, was heavily involved in the birth control movement.

The chapters of *America and the Pill* are organized thematically. May pays special tribute to the mothers of invention, Margaret Sanger and Katharine McCormick. May does not, however, gloss over Sanger's ties with the eugenics movement or other troubling occurrences, such as testing on psychiatric inmates and prisoners. Women's rights were initially at the forefront, but this was overshadowed in the 1950s by the individual family planning and population reduction agendas. Yet the motivations of the reformers made little difference to desperate women. African American women, for example, eagerly sought fertility control in spite of the genocidal charges leveled by male leaders of the Black Power movement.

Delving deeper into the male psyche, May explains that men certainly stood to benefit from the pill; it lessened the awkwardness of condoms, the risks of shotgun marriages or illegal abortions, and the financial strains of additional children. "Yet, it could also undermine a sense of masculine potency grounded in procreative power" (p. 58). The Beats were particularly intoxicated by their own virility and thus more threatened by the pill, as illustrated by Richard Brautigan's poem: "When you take your pill it's like a mine disaster. I think of all the people lost inside you" (p. 59). After discussing Hugh Hefner at length, May concludes that his self-proclaimed feminism was "limited" (p. 61). It seems that Hefner was most interested in women's freedom to romp in the sheets. Her content analysis of *Playboy* shows increasing insistence that women take the pill despite side effects. Those who would not were characterized as "neurotic, prudish, hostile to men, or unwilling to take responsibility for contraception" (p. 66). May is not definitive as to "whether the pill was a boon for men or a bust" but is certain that it "disrupted power relations between the sexes" (p. 70).

Droves of women tested pharmaceuticals, but the male volunteer pool for sperm switches, contraceptive ointments, battery heated testicles, and hormones has been conspicuously shallow. Various speculations as to the cause of the discrepant focus on female contraceptives include sexism, disproportionate risks for women, and a scientific fixation on preserving the male libido. On the phenomena of Viagra, May wryly observes, "Apparently, a pill that enhances the potential for men to impregnate women is considerably more marketable than one that diminishes that possibility" (p. 116).

No social history would be complete without examining controversy. May analyzes the pill's iconic place in the sexual revolution and considers challenges to authorities as a ripple effect. Fears of promiscuity are sporadically mentioned. Bush's "conscience clause" is only briefly noted. There is no discussion of anti-abortion activists' specious claims that the

pill causes breast cancer and abortions, and no attention is paid to the debate over the pill's environmental impact.

Toward the end of the book, May incorporates more individual stories from a diverse, but non-probability-based, Internet survey sample. The variety of uses, meanings, and complexity of feelings are fascinating but are not systematically or theoretically analyzed. According to May, the first generation was more likely to view the pill as liberating, but for the 12 million women who take the pill today the "stakes are not as high" (p. 149).

America and the Pill displays the lucid insights and distilled complexities that have become May's trademark, but it has less heft than her previous work. This easy-to-digest text is sprinkled with interesting pop culture tidbits that will appeal to a general audience. Women's health advocates will be interested in the evolution of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective. Sociologists will continue to be drawn to May's work because she is highly attuned to the connections between personal troubles and public issues. If used in a gender or medical sociology course, it would be fascinating to see if this hidden history lesson evokes the younger generation's gratitude.

JENNIFER KEYS
North Central College

Family, Gender, and Law in a Globalizing Middle East and South Asia. Edited by Kenneth M. Cuno and Manisha Desai. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009, 308 pp. \$45.00 cloth.

DOI: 10.1177/0891243211412774

Cuno and Desai's edited volume *Family, Gender, and Law in a Globalizing Middle East and South Asia* arose from a symposium of the same name held in 2004. It represents an ambitious attempt to examine how family life and law "have been contested, constructed, and reconstructed in these two regions in the contemporary era" (p. xiii). Issues of control over women's bodies, sexuality, moral regulation, property rights, and position in the formal power structure are common threads that run through the volume. All of the chapters are nicely couched in social-historical context, thereby allowing an examination of the central issues in light of political, economic, and cultural changes that have occurred in particular states within the regions, specifically India, Pakistan, Turkey, Morocco, Egypt, Bangladesh, Palestine,

Israel, Jordan, and Iraq. The coeditors also include a chapter on Afghan refugee women in Iran.

As a sociologist, I find most intriguing the chapters where the authors push their analyses beyond the descriptive level to develop new and critical ways of thinking and in which the intersection of caste, class, sexuality, and gender is examined. For example, Desai's chapter examines how the nationalist movement and "communalism" of personal laws in India during colonialism subverted women's struggle for independence. Agnes, in her chapter, shows how the Indian colonial state produced patriarchal ideologies and a new patriarchal and imperialist legal order that undermined women's rights, especially those of lower-caste women. The chapter by Cole on women and family law in Iraq is also fascinating. Cole raises questions of whether and how the U.S. invasion and subsequent administrative and legal actions, compared with the former Baathist regime and policies, have actually improved women's conditions and status in that country.

Several of the chapters contain stimulating and nuanced analyses of the relationship between patriarchy, morality, and maintenance or rights. In her chapter on the colonial state in India, Agnes examines the connection between maintenance and morality. She finds that even in recent times, allegations of sexual promiscuity are made to withhold women's claims for an allowance and/or property. She argues that women's rights are meaningless in a system whereby "sexuality is pitted against maintenance claims" (p. 39). Cuno's chapter on marital relations and family law in Egypt and Feldman's chapter on gender and laws in Bangladesh also speak to this important and complex relationship between morality and rights. I would recommend that readers who are interested in this line of thinking, particularly with regard to the law and women's property rights in patrilineal and matrilineal societies, reference Bina Agarwal's *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia* (1994) and Mounira Charrad's *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco* (2001), both of which provide a deep and thorough historical context for these arguments.

Cuno and Desai divide the book into four sections, "Colonial Modernity and Family Law Codes," "Religion, Custom, the State, and Patriarchy," "Family Law Codes Contested and (Re)Constructed," and "Women's Roles and Family Relationships Renegotiated and Redefined." It is unclear to me exactly what distinguishes the chapters in one section from those in another or how these sections are very different from one another. More useful to me would have been sections separating the chapters on the basis of political-geographical region. States and regions in the Middle East and South

Asia, though interconnected in various ways, have a unique set of social-historical circumstances and religious, political, and economic influences. Moreover, countries such as India are internally diverse with regard to culture, language, and religion and vary in how these aspects of society influence personal law and women's rights. Although the book's intent is to integrate the regions, it does not do so particularly well. A concluding chapter discussing the significance of examining these states and regions together might have been helpful.

Aside from these relatively minor criticisms, *Family, Gender, and Law in a Globalizing Middle East and South Asia* is an invaluable resource for South Asian and Middle Eastern scholars. It compiles recent top-notch scholarship in the area of gender and family law and its relationship to society. The chapters are uniformly well written and raise interesting and important questions, such as whether and how religion, the state, and regional interests are important in shaping definitions of gender, patriarchy, and the family. South Asian and Middle Eastern studies are fast-growing areas of study at universities across the country. Cuno and Desai's volume provides a wonderful addition to the rich literature in these growing fields.

DENISE BENOIT SCOTT

State University of New York at Geneseo

Globalization and Social Movements: Islamism, Feminism, and the Global Justice Movement. By Valentine M. Moghadam. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009, 168 pp., \$70.00 (cloth); \$22.95 (paper).

DOI: 10.1177/0891243211408295

In *Globalization and Social Movements*, sociologist Valentine Moghadam examines the effects of globalization on grassroots social and political movements around the world. In doing so, she attempts to move beyond the study of globalization as solely a process "from above," as the expansion of global capital and its institutions. Instead, she examines the impact of globalization on global social movements, or "globalization from below" (p. 15).

As globalization of capital has expanded markets and technologies, it has also exacerbated economic and social inequalities throughout the world, including class, race, and gender structures, triggering organization and resistance. To understand these major global changes from both above and below, Moghadam draws on both world-system and world polity theories as well as her own extensive background and scholarship in social movements and

feminist theory. She argues that “the study of social movements in a global era calls for an integrated framework drawing on world-system theory and world polity theory for a macrosociological and global perspective; employing feminism for an understanding of the gendered nature of institutions and movements” (p. 15). Her aim is therefore to create a more “holistic framework” that would, in turn, have the effect of “globalizing social movement theory” itself (p. 15).

Following a discussion of the theories and scholarship regarding mobilization and collective action, Moghadam organizes the main body of the book around three empirical chapters providing examinations of three main global social movements: Islamist activism, feminist activism, and the global justice movement. The scope of the work is clearly ambitious, taking a global scale while also examining grassroots mobilization. Moghadam conveys a clear picture of the development of, organization of, and strategies used by each social movement in a broad sense and provides tables detailing the many (and diverse) organizations active under the general headings Islamist, feminist, and global justice.

It is the inclusion of Islamism in comparison to the other social movements that ultimately is the unique contribution of this work. Her chapter on Islamism emphasizes the differences between moderate and militant strains, including groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood in the former, and jihadist networks in the latter. In her chapter on feminism, she examines transnational feminist movements (TFMs) ranging across three general areas of concern, including those organized against neoliberal economic policies, around antifundamentalist activism for women’s rights in the Muslim world, and around antiwar efforts. Finally, in her third empirical chapter, she emphasizes the importance of the World Social Forum as a centralizing means for diverse organizations—from transnational activist networks, to labor unions, to religious grassroots organizations—to link with one another in their different, but complementary, efforts.

In every chapter, and indeed throughout the book, Moghadam carefully compares methods of framing issues, organizational strategies, and elements of cross-movement cooperation. In doing so, she returns several times to the importance of virtual as well as physical meeting and organization via the internet. In her words, “the internet, in particular, has become a key mobilizing resource, a framing device, and a means by which collective identities are created and maintained” (p. 120). One of the great strengths of this book is the inclusion of such seemingly disparate movements in a much-needed comparative analysis, while also being mindful of the great diversity within each movement. Research has tended to focus either on Islamism or on

allegedly antiglobalization (in reality antineoliberal “market fundamentalism”) movements but not on both. Moghadam argues correctly, however, that Islamist movements have tended to be highly critical—not of capital or private enterprise—but of the Western-dominated expansion of global corporate capital, structural adjustment programs, and the increase in inequality within and between the global North and South. In this sense, these movements have clear similarities to movements that otherwise would seem their polar opposites: feminism and the global justice movement. But all tend to be anti-inequality, anti-imperial, and antiwar. In other ways, however, the movements are indeed opposite, especially in regard to patriarchal politics. Moghadam also notes that while much Islamist activism is indeed reformist and democratic, the very presence of militant variations is a marked difference especially between global Islamism and global feminism. There may indeed be many layers of overlap in terms of concerns with imperialism, economic inequalities, and social injustices, but for all its vast diversity, the feminist movement is at all times nonviolent.

Overall, Moghadam has produced a study that is global in scale yet remarkably brief. It synthesizes theoretical approaches to social movements and globalization while uniquely comparing Islamist, feminist, and global justice movements, without diverting into extensive jargon. Moghadam’s analysis is accessible to advanced undergraduates, graduate students, and specialists alike. She provides a clear, comprehensive, yet concise analysis that will be of interest to any concerned with the interactions and overlaps of these important movements.

CURTIS R. RYAN
Appalachian State University

Women on Probation and Parole: A Feminist Critique of Community Programs and Services. By Merry Morash. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2010, 159 pp., \$85.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

DOI: 10.1177/0891243210394171

Morash has given us an inaugural comparative look at two programs in neighboring counties of the same state that oversee post-incarceration release supervision for women: Traditional County and Gender Responsive County. As her choice of names implies, Traditional County supervisory programs aim to treat men and women similarly and focus on monitoring parolees to ensure compliance. Gender Responsive County, on the other hand, emphasizes the unique experiences of female offenders. Data for the analyses come

from the women themselves, probation and parole supervisory officers, and correctional files of drug tests, new convictions, and women's participation in treatment programs.

Findings support the aphorism of "different strokes for different folks" in women's successful completion of probation and parole. Post-incarceration women are distinct along a number of dimensions, for example, education, mental health, and material resources. One size does not fit all. "Substance-centered" women, who have the most deeply rooted problems and who comprise two thirds of the women in the study, commit different types of offenses, different numbers of times, and have different lengths of involvement in criminal behavior than do women who commit economic crimes or violence-dominated crimes. These differences form the subtext of the argument for the intensive supervision of supervisory officers in Gender Responsive County. Additionally, "dominant illegal activities," obviously closely linked to the women's race, class, and gender social locations, also profoundly influence the circumstances of the female parolees, their behaviors under supervision, the behaviors of supervisors toward them, and the outcomes of their probationary supervision. Morash's focus on the women's different "dominant" crimes is particularly interesting and informative as she draws out both the complexity and intensity of problems women face as they engage in illegal activity, but also as a consequence of the types of illegal activity.

All the women face daunting tasks upon release from prison. They must meet the requirements of diverse programs (substance abuse, employment, anger management, parenting), take tests (urine analyses, drug tests), follow up on referrals (housing, counseling), and access assistance (children and family agencies, employment). In each of these many tasks, Morash demonstrates that it is substance-centered women who are most chronically and fully disadvantaged.

Analytically the study population of substance-centered women is divided into three distinct groups that are differentiated by their locations on the path to recovery. Women in the "failing" group actively continued to use drugs and had at least one additional problem. This group included women who had absconded, committed new crimes, or were incarcerated at the end of the year of supervision. The rates of women "failing" in both programs were dramatically similar. Traditional County's failure rate was 46.2 percent; the rate of failure in Gender Responsive County was 42.2 percent. The second group, those "making it," still used drugs but did not abscond, become reincarcerated, or commit new crimes (beyond drug possession and consumption). The final group, "beyond use" women, abstained from drugs, did not

abscond, did not commit new crimes, and lived in the community at the end of their supervisory period.

While accounting for women's agency in their choices to offend, abscond, or abstain, Morash also provides a structural analysis of the women's choices within contexts of service and program inadequacy and fragmentation, poverty, housing instability, child custody, support structures, and unemployment. The interconnected nature of structure and agency can undermine even the best intentions of the women and their supervising officers.

The text is a searing indictment of Traditional County parole and probation services. Morash builds the indictment statement by statement of organizational interruptions in supervision (changing parole officers as women with unstable housing change zip code addresses), inappropriate referrals, referrals that lack understanding of women's circumstances, and missed opportunities for intervention. The overall picture at the end is that Traditional County benignly helps women fail. On the other hand, Gender Responsive County is always presented positively. Where outcomes in Traditional County are negative, similar outcomes in Gender Responsive County are "ambivalent."

The presentation of qualitative data in the form of telling rather than showing, which is uniform throughout the text, results in authorial conclusions that must be accepted on faith. The voices of the women and supervisory officers are muted. Women's complex stories are told in two- to three-sentence summaries that reduce them to caricatured examples. Nonetheless, the text is valuable in that it is the first in-depth comparison between traditional and gender responsive programming for post-incarcerated women. It is an excellent beginning.

LORA BEX LEMPERT
University of Michigan Dearborn

Racing Romance: Love, Power, and Desire among Asian American/White Couples. By Kumiko Nemoto. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009, 196 pp., \$68.00 (cloth); \$23.95 (paper).

DOI: 10.1177/0891243210391093

Kumiko Nemoto describes *Racing Romance* as less a collection of "love stories" between Asian Americans and whites than a collection of stories about discourses of love and power in contemporary American society. Culled from life history narratives and interviews with 16 couples and 10

individuals currently or previously involved in interracial relationships, these stories are meant to reveal how racism and the logic of patriarchy and gender shape the respondents' narratives of identity, love, and family. The book promises much: to reveal the contradictions and tensions inherent in these relationships, to make sense of the power structures surrounding them, and to examine how they perpetuate racialized and gendered discourses of nation, family, and multiculturalism. Although chock full of insights on Asian/white relationships, *Racing Romance* ultimately reads more like a collection of love stories than an analysis of couples' experiences that tightly argues and shows how gender, race, and class form and inform interracial desire and romance.

There is much to glimpse about Asian American/white interracial romance in *Racing Romance*. Chapters 2 and 3, which address Asian American women's relationships with white men, confirm that these relationships bolster white male authority. Together, these two chapters reveal the importance of generation, birth nation, and class, as unequal gender dynamics are more pronounced in the lives of disadvantaged immigrant women than in those of the more upwardly mobile U.S.-born women. At the same time, reflecting historically produced racialized discourses and images of Asian women and white men, both groups of women regard their relationships with white men as a means to achieve modernity, while many white men covet Asian American women because of their alleged status as model minority feminine subjects. Racialized white femininity also plays a strategic role in these interracial relationships. While both Asian women and white men benefit by portraying white women as undesirable partners due to the latter's supposed sexual promiscuity, lack of discipline, and poor family values, Asian American men, due to their marginalized masculinity, regard their relationships with white women as an indicator of their assimilation into mainstream American society and attainment of normative white manhood. Thus entangled, these seemingly progressive Asian American/white relationships remain firmly shaped by ideologies of race and gender in American culture, which ultimately buttress white hegemonic masculinity.

According to Nemoto, most white men filter their relationships with Asian women through a lens of color-blindness and multiculturalism, in which the race of their partner is understood as a matter of culture and appearance and the increase in intermarriage is heralded as evidence of America's racial progress. In contrast, Asian American men, who encounter strong and persistent public disapproval of their relationships with white women, tend to be more color-cognizant. This difference confirms that patriarchy is constitutive of more than gender difference and that men—in this case, white men and Asian American men—experience gender privilege

differently, depending on their race and class. Despite these differences, however, Nemoto argues that the majority of Asian American/white relationships share this commonality: They rely on and practice white middle-class ideals of family and gender norms that deviate little from whiteness as a future model for interracial marriage.

Though the potential is there, *Racing Romance* at times falls short of the goals set out in its introduction, most notably the claim to bridge sociological and psychoanalytic perspectives. As Nemoto explains, sociological models tend to overlook the roles of desire, affection, imagination, and the complexity of emotional patterns in explaining social phenomena and, thus, would benefit from a psychoanalytic approach that takes seriously “racialized desires, ambivalence, or alienation” (p. 7). The insight here is that seemingly private emotions, such as desire, anxiety, and repulsion, are deeply gendered and racialized. This is an important and exciting project: to conceptualize interracial romance not as a private matter between partners but as a social, historical, and transnational affair that exposes multiple and overlapping interrelated forms of power relations. This is where the book does not quite deliver. Although Nemoto emphasizes that interracial romance is constituted by and constitutive of gendered, sexualized, and racialized discourses and practices that circulate between Asia and the United States, this critical stance is not tightly grafted to the respondents’ personal narratives. As it is, the “love stories”—with respondents repeating numerous stereotypes about Asian American women and men and culture—are presented intact and without the benefit of Nemoto’s critical commentaries. This format, which separates the personal narratives almost entirely from the critical analyses that appear in concluding sections, not only gives the book an unfinished feel, but also de-contextualizes and de-historicizes these life stories, making it difficult to grasp the connection between desire, social structure, and power that Nemoto clearly wants us to see.

YEN LE ESPIRITU

University of California, San Diego

When Couples Become Parents: The Creation of Gender in the Transition to Parenthood. By Bonnie Fox. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2009, 334 pp., \$35.00 (paper); \$75.00 (cloth).

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Does the advent of parenthood necessarily mean that heterosexual couples shift their behavior to privilege the man and disadvantage the woman, thus

creating gender inequity? Does intensive parenting necessarily create more privilege for men and more subordination for women? Despite volumes of research on the household division of labor, work/life integration, and gender inequity more broadly, the power of infants to push gender into more salience persists for many couples. Fox describes the first year of parenthood for 40 Canadian couples. Framed in a social relations perspective with political economy sensibilities, the stories reveal how many—but not all—couples shift towards greater gender inequity.

Fox uses extensive quotes to show both diversity and not-so-simple patterns among the couples she studied. Finding couples through subsidized birth classes, she first gets to know the couples before the birth and in the months afterwards. She describes the material conditions and responses of both partners to the demands of parenthood in gendered contexts.

The chapters loosely follow the first year of the child's life—for example, chapter two is about giving birth; and chapter three is about the postpartum period, emphasizing exhaustion, time strains, and the great value of social support. Gender becomes more of the focus in chapters four through eight—for example, how giving birth makes women mothers, but fathers have more leeway to navigate their role. Gender influences the divisions in the daily care of the infant, the couple, and the home, but there is great variety among couples. Through comparisons, Fox makes clear the socially created expectations and real material demands of infants in chapter six, "Home Making and Making Family." The political economy of privatized care clearly emerges over the months and is the primary focus of chapter seven. Chapter eight continues the illustration of great diversity among couples, with some experiencing turmoil, anger, and frustration; others coming closer in the joint project of caring for the baby; and still others struggling but determining that the partner is not the cause of the challenges.

The interviews showed the limitations of ideological or social constructivist ("doing gender") approaches to explaining the increase in salience of gender among new parents. Contrary to expectations, only sometimes was intensive mothering, breastfeeding, or demands of husbands the cause of disproportionate work for mothers—but all could be factors. Private responsibility for infants is rarely studied in gender analysis, yet it emerges as central for the parents in this study. The rare couples who had help with housework and who had a secure income with reasonable work hours were more likely to have egalitarian parenting.

I liked the stories of couples who grew closer through the joint project of parenting their child, or who could enjoy each other more because friends and family cared for them. Additionally, stories of women who

used bargaining power from higher earnings to elicit more from husbands suggested that gender inequality is not inevitable. Of course, there were plenty of stories of women trying to minimize the impact of the baby on the husband so that he would not lose his position of privilege in the family. Within material limitations, there are stories of creativity, imagination, and agency used to resist gender based inequality.

The stories provide insights on many topics such as couple negotiations, work/family interfaces, the challenges of lower-wage jobs, breastfeeding, and power dynamics. This plethora of insights makes the book useful for many topics, but hard to summarize. True to the data, Fox did not force couples into neat categories if they did not fit, but the complexity makes useful conclusions challenging.

This book shows the value of deep knowledge of a specific group, as well as the need for models of couple equity/inequality following childbirth to include measures of social support and social context, in addition to standard measures such as education, wages, and work hours. For teaching, this book is accessible for advanced undergraduate students and sophisticated enough for graduate seminars in gender, family, and social inequality. The story of Rosa and Ross would work well in a reader for undergraduate students.

Fox's work contributes to other studies that show women's employment, gender egalitarian ideology, and father's interest are not enough to undo gender. The uneasy answers suggested by Fox's couples involve material and social support for new parents, encouraging new parents to make parenthood a joint project, and jobs that allow for a living wage and time with family—factors beyond the control of most couples.

JULIA McQUILLAN
University of Nebraska

Behind the Mask of the Strong Black Woman. By Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009, 194 pp., \$64.50 (cloth); \$23.95 (paper).

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Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant chronicles the experiences of Black women from various walks of life as they confront the hidden injuries of race- and gender-based oppression. The author challenges the reader to deconstruct the myth of the strong Black woman by considering how Black women hide their pain and anger. Beauboeuf-Lafontant discusses how the

objectification of Black women in U.S. society makes it difficult for Black women to discover their real feelings and needs as human beings. What makes Beauboeuf-Lafontant's work unique and compelling is her ability to reveal the ways that Black women conceal their oppression and concede to dominant forms of discourse that depict this group of women as "pillars of strength" despite their exploitation and objectification as not fully human.

The author interviews 58 Black women between the ages of 19 and 67, with a mean age of 35.6 years. Most of the women in the sample were middle class. Five women were born and raised in the Caribbean, and three were from Africa. Two thirds of the women talked about the impact of having to be a strong Black woman and the discourse that shapes this social construct. The other one third of the interviewees did not view the construct of the strong Black woman as reflective of their lives and felt it was not particularly relevant to understanding the social reality of Black women overall.

The author argues that the very definition of Black womanhood is to be strong and resilient. Thus, Black women have felt pressured to live up to this expectation despite the daily hassles and chronic stressors that pull at them from many directions. Beauboeuf-Lafontant provides examples of Black women throughout history who have displayed enormous strength and courage through their work and by caring for families. However, these examples reveal only one aspect of Black women's reality. The other realities with which Black women must contend include racism, sexism, and classism, and these are not given adequate expression and voice as part of Black women's experience. Thus, there is a lack of discourse by this group regarding their disappointment with various social abuses as well as the material conditions of their lives. Because of the lack of discourse among Black women about the myth of the strong Black woman, Black women are constantly being defined by others, which further leads Black women to internalize the myth that they must remain strong and not show their pain or the injuries of racism, sexism, and classism in their everyday lives.

Bauboeuf-Lafontant maintains that Black female identity is something that Black women carry within them but refuse to reveal fully to others. She reveals that when Black women do not show the other side of their humanity, as needing care, support, and understanding from others, they cope in ways that are psychologically and physically harmful. For example, according to the author, Black women seldom seek outside support because they do not want to be perceived as weak and unable to manage their everyday lives. Thus, the mask of being a strong Black woman is held in place to meet the social expectations of others.

The author encourages Black women to listen to their voices and honor their emotional needs. This consists of Black women creating a space for

Black women's experiences. Beauboeuf-Lafontant argues that oppression encourages subordinated groups to deny their social reality and accept the dominant group discourse as their own; thus, oppressed groups such as Black women are telling a false story about their daily reality with racism and sexism among other "isms" in U.S. society. The author draws on the work of Dorothy Smith, Carol Gilligan, and Patricia Hill Collins to encourage Black women to draw on their lived experiences, which places women in a position to construct their own systems of knowledge and meaning-making in society. Instead of Black women relying on the subjective world of others, Black women are encouraged to view their own subjective reality as equally powerful and central to understanding the everyday experiences of this group.

The author concludes this fascinating book by encouraging Black women to acknowledge both their vulnerabilities and strengths and insist on being fully human. According to Beauboeuf-Lafontant, being fully human means that Black women must appreciate their inner voice, value their experiential knowledge, and most importantly, take care of their emotional and physical health.

GAIL WALLACE
University of Alabama at Birmingham