

More so, even in light of the fact that ninety percent of the offenders of spousal violence are male and that women are more likely than men to be the victims of the most severe forms of assault (Statistics Canada - Catalogue no 85-570 2006, pg. 13), Boyd devotes an entire chapter arguing that sexual harassment, even rape, is not sexual discrimination! Rather, Boyd seems more content focusing on certain sexual harassment and domestic violence cases in which he can paint the women involved as jaded and conniving lovers seeking revenge for relationships gone sour.

Boyd does an even greater disservice to the issue of the status of female professors in academe. According to him, "there is no systematic exclusion of women in the halls of higher learning or from any other important avenue of social or intellectual life in North America"(6). Considering he does not base this statement - among others - on any data or research, how can he say this when, for example, of the 478 tenured professors in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University, less than 19% are women (<http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=515123>)? Ironically, it is precisely his conclusions about the status of women in North American academia and society in general that illuminate the dire need for more women's studies departments in universities and for a louder Big Sister's voice in all other areas of life.

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Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture. Ariel Levy. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005; ix + 224 pages, notes, appendices; ISBN 9-780743-249898; \$25.00US (paper).

What do Paris Hilton, college co-eds in Florida, pole-dancing career gals and young San Francisco lesbians have in common? According to American journalist, Ariel Levy, they embody a worrisome trend sweeping North America. Her book *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture*, explores how female attractiveness and sexuality have morphed into a culture of "raunchiness" in contemporary society. This phenomenon represents an increased exhibitionism and self-exploitation amongst young women and the rise

of a new sexual revolution which equates exploitation with empowerment.

Levy suggests that "raunch culture" is everywhere - the classroom, the Internet, television, magazines, even exercise class. She argues that women are expressing their sexual liberation in some peculiar ways: strip-aerobics classes, thong underwear, Brazilian bikini waxes and PhD's flashing for the cameras of *Girls Gone Wild* (whose camera crews prowl North American bars and beaches offering free hats to college girls willing to pose topless). Levy argues that women are co-opting the aesthetics of porn culture, which, once underground, has become mainstream - the feminist movement has been subverted. Levy states: "If Male Chauvinist Pigs were men who regarded women as pieces of meat, we would outdo them and be Female Chauvinist Pigs: women who make sex objects of other women and ourselves."

Levy's book is an engaging and thought-provoking rallying cry, albeit a lightweight one. But it does pose some important questions about the state of feminism in North America. Her argument is consistent whether she is interviewing drunken co-eds, sophisticated New Yorkers pole-dancing at CAKE parties, or urban "boi" lesbians who demean their "fem" partners: women have internalized the mores of misogyny, expressing their sexuality under the banner of "empowerment." Is this the only power worth having? Levy quotes Erica Jong: "Let's see the Senate fifty percent female; let's see women in decision-making positions - that's power. Sexual freedom can be a smoke-screen for how far we haven't come."

Levy makes a strong case that adolescent girls, in forming their own identities, face great pressure to flaunt their sexuality. Intensely engaged with popular media, they are vulnerable to influences for which they have no historical contexts or filters. The re-inscribing of patriarchal codes has impacts unforeseen by earlier generations of feminists; women not only want to "perform" for men, but to be like men in expressing their sexuality. Shows like *Sex in the City*, and CAKE parties make the point.

Levy appears too readily dismissive of CAKE, an organization which endeavours to create a non-judgemental forum for women to experiment with sexuality. Granted, these experiments often run

parallel to dominant cultural codes, but they may provide a starting place for new discourses of female sexuality. Indeed, the chief weakness of Levy's book may be its failure to offer alternative visions a truly liberated female sexuality. However, with wit, energy and passion she demands answers to the question of what it means for women to truly hold power, and whether this power is to be only sexual. In 2007 such questions may seem alarmingly retrogressive. They still need asking, nonetheless, and Levy's book stands as a challenge for women to confront and answer them.

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*Breaking the Bowls: Degendering and Feminist Change.* Judith Lorber. London: W. W. Norton and Co., 2005; xx + 236 pages; ISBN 0-393-97325-5; \$20.50US (paper).

With several books to hir credit - including *Paradoxes of Gender* which has regularly appeared on Women's Studies syllabi since its 1994 publication - Judith Lorber is a preeminent US writer on the topic of gender. In this latest addition to hir oeuvre, Lorber purports to "show the cracks, anomalies, resistances, and multiplicities that are breaking down the gendered social order in Western postindustrial societies and how we can take the process further by deliberate degendering" (5). Lorber's objective for the process of degendering moves past the existing two sex regime and its replacement by idealized unisex social relations to a multiplex society where the "gendered structures of social orders are...dismantled" (5). Rejecting the current feminist agenda of gender parity, Lorber argues that true gender equality will only occur when we are free from gender; hence a totally gender-free society should be feminism's primary goal.

As an academic who works in the area of Sexuality Studies my response to Lorber's proposal is nothing less than enthusiastic. The 1990s had brought us to the brink of gender deconstruction with Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, Queer Nation, and a new movement of "third wave" feminists who produced low-to-no budget 'zines such as *Function and Verboslammed* that celebrated the eradication of sex and gender alongside the rise of grrrl power.

Upon entering the twenty-first century it seemed that we missed only a cogent piece of writing that could bring the energy of the previous decade to a head, a map that could reveal the next turn on the road to socio-political transformation. With chapter titles such as "A World Without Gender: Making the Revolution," Lorber's volume held a promise that far exceeded both its slim appearance and, unfortunately, the material it delivered.

Structurally, Lorber's volume reads like four papers written for another purpose bookended by two additional essays that struggle to synthesize the pieces into a coherent text. The second and third chapters on parenting and work, for example, offer feminist summaries suitable for an introductory course with only scant mention of how sex roles might be reconfigured. If it seems somewhat untimely for a recent feminist work to reduce complexly gendered relations to sociological roles, then it is even more discrepant to include an entire chapter on the US media's uneven characterizations of female heroes after September 11 and during the attack on Iraq as if masculinized newspaper reporting was the only problem. Lorber seeks to redirect the aim of feminism across the Western world but defaults to an American perspective on a war that most of the West considers illegitimate, leading one to wonder if degendering specifically within the US military state is not its own feminist project.

The introductory and concluding chapters speak more directly to the issue of degendering but pose different problems. For example, Lorber submits a laudable strategy with hir call "on the so-called gender normals - biological, sexual, and gender 'straights' - to make the revolution by becoming gender deviants" (13) and extols the mid-op transsexual and no-op intersexual, but fails to recognize the revolutionary potential in those such as Ricki Wilchins, activist and Executive Director of GenderPAC, who have changed their sex/gender. Concluding that "degendering will encourage varieties of self-display" (176), Lorber herself encourages only those who break from popular binary expressions of gender while dismissing queering as a practice that is insensitive to transsexuals. There is an ample literature showing that gender is a more complex interplay between bodies, psyches, and social formations than Lorber presents.