

*Taking Our Time* offers a rich and diverse collection of women's perspectives on time. Mary O'Brien explores her childhood experience of "periods" or linear time; Robbie Pfeuffer Kahn gives us yet another portrayal of the impositions of linear time on pregnancy, birth and lactation, and Elizabeth Deeds Ermath presents the notion of woman's time by means of an interesting analysis of Eliot's Maggie Tulliver and Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, and finds that woman's time as historical time is a contradiction. Cheryl Walker examines the work of the poet H.D., arguing that it provides a model for the changes through which women have gone during the modern period with respect to historical time, and Patricia Mills takes us on a journey of the creation of the female self by re-weaving the myths of Antigone, Circe, and Medea. Marie-Luise Gaettens' excellent essay on two German women's re-examination of Nazi Germany focusses the relationship between patriarchy, authority and Nazism. Mair Verthuy studies the feminine time in the writings of Helene Parnet, while Irma Garcia finds female temporal sensibility in the writings of Nin, Duras, Collette and Woolf, amongst others. Margaret Davis presents a brief account of her mother's studies of time and synchronicity along with the bizarre personal experiences that accompanied her studies. The reader will also find a poem by various authors between each article. The book opens with an introduction by Frieda Johles Forman and concludes with selections from the Agape Feminist Conference on "Women's Time" held in Italy in 1984.

While the depth of the studies varies greatly, on the whole, *Taking Our Time* is a worthwhile book for anyone interested in explorations of the concept of feminine time.

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**Healing Voices.** Toni Laidlaw, Cheryl Malmo and Associates, *San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990, hardcover.*

This book has a number of features which make it a unique and valuable contribution to feminist discourse and practice. First, it is a practical guide to various approaches to feminist therapy and, as such, will be a useful teaching tool. Secondly, it is itself a fine example of how feminist research should be organised,

that is, the presentation of the material is consistent with feminist ideals. And, lastly, it is the most cohesive anthology that I have ever encountered. The voices of *Healing Voices* speak with an evocative similarity throughout the text. There is such a consistency of care and clarity in these articles that they blend; the end of one article runs into or overlaps with the next. In fact, this is so much the case that I had a difficult time remembering which author discussed which issues and approaches and had to return to the text a number of times to separate people and topics.

Another unique feature of this book is that we get to hear about the therapy from more than just the therapist's perspective. As feminists, we are all too familiar with the one-sided authoritarian voice of the psychiatric community. "Patients" are diagnosed, treatments are administered, data are analysed and studies are published. The patient has no voice, her input is not considered, her response is not important and the legitimacy of her experience is ruled out of order on the grounds that, first, she is sick and, secondly, she cannot be objective. In *Healing Voices*, each article ends with a client's discussion of how she experienced her healing. The complementarity of the voice of therapist and client enriches every discussion of the therapeutic approach and technique. In one article, "The Therapeutic Journey: A Guide for Travelers," we not only hear from "Eve," Jan Ellis' client, but we also read a postscript from Eve's father. Eve is an incest survivor who confronted her father about the molestations when he was seventy-three years old. It is important that at least one of these articles not only shows us the bravery and strength of the clients, but also bears witness to the attempt of a father to acknowledge the pain he inflicted on his daughter.

It is not just the clients' voices that add a personal note to a description of the therapeutic environment. Therapists also speak not with the third person passive voice but as active participants interacting with their clients. Bonnelle Lewis Strickling shares the personal dynamics of her relationship with her client Simone. She states, "Almost immediately, Simone and I made some sort of psychic connection ... somehow we had matching and/or complementary psychic structures and issues." Such admissions transform the traditional, artificial boundaries of analyst and replace them with a sharing interactive model of healing.

There is nothing feminist *per se* about all of the therapeutic approaches in this book. The therapists often adopt approaches that are compatible with feminism. Some authors use hypnosis, and one author is a Jungian. Malmo, for example, when speaking of the use of hypnosis, states, "The feminist values and beliefs about equality, about women's need for personal power and control, and about the importance for women to learn to attend to and trust their own experiences and abilities are compatible with naturalistic hypnotherapy." Further, the feminist perspective often alters the approach and imbues it with a uniquely feminist orientation. The last article in the book is a good example of this alteration. Malmo adapts ego-state therapy to fit a feminist framework using three distinct parts to represent different ego states: the big sister, the little sister and the spirit guide. The use of spirit guide seems to be one which many of the contributors to this book find useful. The spirit guide is the persona of wisdom and strength within the individual. Since wisdom and strength are characteristics with which few women can identify or own, feminist therapists seem to recognise the importance of building a recognition of every woman's power and capability within herself as part of the healing process.

To summarize this book is not easy so I have not attempted to do so. What I hope this review has illustrated is the richness and importance of the text. I found reading it not only intellectually interesting but also profoundly moving. It engaged both my cognition and affection and did so in ways that were not always pleasant but nonetheless significant. *Healing Voices* is an important contribution to feminist thought and feminist action. Laidlaw and Malmo are to be commended for putting together such a valuable work.

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**Fat Oppression and Psychotherapy: A Feminist Perspective.** Laura S. Brown and Esther D. Rothblum (eds.). Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, 1989, Pp. 103 hardcover.

*Fat Oppression and Psychotherapy: A Feminist Perspective* is a collection of articles that challenge readers to examine the oppressive attitudes and biases that they hold with respect to women and weight. The

collection includes personal accounts of the experience of being fat which are interspersed with a series of articles addressing issues of concern to therapists working with clients. These essays attempt to heighten awareness of internalized fat oppression, and present strategies for identifying covert fat oppressive attitudes and eliminating them. The book is successful in this area, drawing on an empirical knowledge base concerning etiology, social stigma and medical implications. Research findings are presented to challenge stereotypes of fatness, such as fatness represents gluttony and obsessive eating. The research methodology of studies purporting to demonstrate that fatness equates with poor health is challenged, as are the findings. There is an excellent discussion of physical exercise and its appropriate role in fitness promotion, as opposed to weight control.

The notion that sexism and misogyny are at the root of fat oppressive attitudes is certainly not new. Orbach and Chemin addressed these issues a decade ago, by identifying how these attitudes are manifested even in feminist therapy. Furthermore, the feminist analysis is quite different. Most of the current treatment strategies, even those that are predicated on feminist analysis, assume that most fat women eat compulsively as a way of dealing with other issues. This publication represents a significant, if extreme, departure in this regard.

Chrisler's article is of particular interest. As someone who has done weight loss counselling, she has examined first-hand many of the mixed messages therapists give clients, such as advising them on the importance of feeling healthy and not choosing ideal target weight, while simultaneously weighing them and reinforcing or consoling them depending on the outcome. This is just one of the many articles that challenges the medical establishment's claims about weight and medical illness and highlights the dangers of weight loss as opposed to weight *per se*.

Indeed, it is in this area that the book lives up to the promotional literature's claim of being controversial, but the book sidesteps many issues by intentionally not including articles on disordered eating, maintaining that fat is simply a variant of human size. This assertion raises many questions. Does everyone who weighs more than 500 lbs. do so merely because that is his or her "setpoint"? Is an 80 lbs. anorexic, at the other end of the continuum, merely a variant in size? What about