

Yoshiaki's account opens up the issue when he addresses the question of whether the Japanese comfort station system was in any way different from other military establishments' systems all over the world during World War II or different from the comfort station system that was established for the US occupation troops in postwar Japan. He suggests that it was different, but perhaps only in terms of degree of organization and brutality rather than in its nature. The British army in North Africa and India, the US army in China, and the German army throughout Eastern Europe established comfort stations for their respective troops. Yoshiaki, however, suggests we can draw a line between systems that have been established and promoted by the upper echelons of a military administration such as Japan's and others which have been installed locally without the knowledge of a central military command; he draws another line between systems that forced minors and other very young women into sex work for the military and others that relied on volunteers who had worked mostly as prostitutes before their recruitment into comfort stations.

Despite former comfort women's enormous suffering during and after World War II, it is not their plight *per se* that makes these questions remain powerful in present-day political discourse. In Japan, they touch upon the conduct of the Imperial military, Japan's war responsibility and war crimes and, perhaps most enduringly, the current Japanese government's inclination to compensate these women and their families – something the government refuses to this day despite frequently recurring protests in China and South Korea and the fact that the number of surviving comfort women is rapidly decreasing. Worldwide, these questions alert us to the continuing enormous victimization of women by military organizations at times of war or peace despite the increasing integration of women into the military. Hence Yoshiaki's book remains a must-read for students and scholars with an interest in questions of gender and violence, military-societal relations, and the militarization of sex and sexuality.

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Third-wave feminism: a critical exploration

Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford, editors; Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke/New York, 2004, ISBN 1-4039-1821-X £55.00 (Hbk)

In their succinct introduction, Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford emphasize their desire to offer a critical exploration of third wave feminism, considering its complexities, possibilities and limitations. Their project is vital,

and somewhat controversial, in an academic context in which third-wave feminism has generated widespread anxiety and hostility. Feminists aligning themselves with the second wave, in particular, have been quick to dismiss the purported emergence of a third wave.

The editors hope to enable constructive dialogue between feminists from a wide range of perspectives, bridging 'the cultural economies of third-wave feminism' and 'the epistemologies of contemporary academic feminism' (p. 3). Indeed, the ways in which many of the essays can be read in conversation with each other make the volume particularly cohesive and engaging. Such dialogue is crucial, the editors argue, to exploring questions relating to ownership of the movement and to interrogating divisive mother/daughter and academic/activist models.

Through critically exploring four main arenas of third-wave discourse, 'genealogies', 'sex and gender', 'popular culture' and 'challenges', the volume expands the range of concerns typically grouped as third wave. It also disrupts the common conflation of third-wave work with 'frivolous' pop culture commentary. A key critical theme running through the collection is an interrogation of the feminist wave metaphor itself. Gillis, Howie and Munford, along with Jane Spender, argue the model oversimplifies the diversity of preceding feminist eras and creates generational anxiety, while Mridula Nath Chakraborty contends that the dominant wave model privileges a Eurocentric subject. Alison Stone and Niamh Moore offer thought-provoking arguments for why a genealogical perspective of feminist history provides a more productive, non-teleological, approach.

Innovative analyses of issues central to the socio-historical context of third-wave thinkers, such as globalization, internet technology, and the rise of mass media, make the collection particularly salient. Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake (authors of the vanguard third-wave text *Manifesta*, 2001), for example, explore the ways in which third-wave perspectives on environmentalism, human rights, and anti-corporate activism are shaped by material conditions created by economic globalization and technoculture. Furthermore, Gillis's critique of cyberfeminism raises some key questions regarding the third wave's potentially problematic relationships to the internet.

On the whole, the essays suggest that what has been labelled third-wave feminism is less focused on producing new, groundbreaking theory and analysis, than on negotiating the legacies of second-wave feminism and the challenges of postfeminism. Indeed, two of the central concerns articulated throughout the collection, the need for more substantive recognition of diversity and difference and the necessity of challenging (anti)essentialism, signal a complex range of feminist debates which, as opposed to being exceptional to a third wave, have occupied feminists for nearly three decades.

While Margrit Shildrick, Alison Stone, Andrew Shail and others explore the possibilities of disrupting essentialist embodied categories of sex and gender, Chakraborty argues for an 'embodied essentialism' imagined within the locus of race. For her, the current trends of anti-essentialism merely reinscribe the racist and ethnocentric assumptions of hegemonic feminist theorizing. Focusing on histories of slavery, imperialism, colonization and global capitalism, this embodied essentialism would provide an in-depth reading of the race relations structuring feminist knowledge. Highlighting the need for greater engagement with the diversity of feminist praxis outside the Western mainstream, Denise deCaires Narain argues that third-wave feminism risks repeating problematic assumptions that 'the West is the world'. Similarly, Winifred Woodhull suggests that the third wave's new forms of activism, such as Riot Grrrls, pertain almost exclusively to people in wealthy countries.

Considering that mainstream feminism's ethnocentrism represents a central concern within any critical consideration of the third wave, it seemed somewhat problematic that the three theorists (Chakraborty, Narain, and Woodhull) who most strongly interrogate concerns of race, nation and economic and cultural imperialism are grouped together at the end in the section called 'challenges'. If such perspectives are categorized as constituting final challenges, might they be inadvertently positioned as peripheral (instead of vital) to third-wave discourse, thus perpetuating previous feminist exclusions?

Furthermore, given the volume's aim to assume an academic perspective, while disrupting activist/academic dualisms, it might have been interesting to include consideration of how the emergence of a third wave, and its negotiations with second wave and postfeminist perspectives, are being articulated through feminist pedagogy in Women's and Gender Studies classrooms. Is the increasing proliferation of controversial third wave perspectives affecting curriculum or teaching practices in feminist academic contexts and *visa versa*? How are students of feminist studies negotiating the political and generational binaries which dialogues surrounding third-wave discourse often entail? Such questions seem pertinent to the editors' mission to explore, from the 'eye of the academy', how and if a third wave contributes to the future of feminism.

The collection is, on the whole, an extremely enjoyable read which provides compelling, comprehensive and creative analyses of the various versions of third-wave feminism circulating in contemporary Anglo-American contexts. One of the most powerful messages it delivers is that feminism, in its 'multiple, various and polyphonous' (p. 4) forms, must continue to be debated, fought for and celebrated.

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