

For readers not quite familiar with the various discussions underway, it is a tough slog. This text is most useful within a critical frame of lesbian/gay studies, feminist studies/theory, and/or women's studies.

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Lesbian Lifestyles, Women's Work and the Politics of Sexuality. Gillian A. Dunne. University of Toronto Press, Toronto and Buffalo, 1997; x + 231 pages; ISBN 0-8020-7951-2; \$18.95.

Lesbian Lifestyles is a life-history based study that explores the relationship between a woman's sexuality and her work choices and experiences. The author interviewed 60 British women from a variety of class and racial backgrounds. Dunne's analysis of the respondents' narratives concludes that questioning and resistance of heterosexual, feminine gender norms - in terms of sexuality and education - results in the need for financial self reliance. This need leads these women into non-traditional and/or highly skilled fields of employment.

Although the introduction to *Lesbian Lifestyles* displays the author's awareness of the largely uncharted subjectivity of personal memory, the text seems to ground its analysis on some problematic assumptions as to how individuals remember. In particular, the interviews appear to have been conducted through a chronologically organized line of inquiry (early childhood to present). Such an inquiry, ultimately, cannot display any factual revisions or thematic/emotional associations that may have links to both the respondents' past and present experiences.

Dunne does make excellent use of previous studies that explore the relationship between family, and work choices and opportunities amongst heterosexual women in both Britain and North America. In doing so she reveals the need for her own and similar future inquiries into the relationship between gender and sexuality, and

individuals' educational and work choices. This is an accessible and well-organized volume that proceeds thematically and makes sufficient use of respondents' words for readers to get a feel for the tone of the original interviews.

Throughout the text Dunne ably directs readers' attention to the various class perspectives of her respondents and offers compelling analysis of instances where other variables such as educational success or feelings of difference appear to most dramatically inform respondents' views. Unfortunately, attention is not likewise given to the various racial and ethnic perspectives of respondents. Only the remarks of non-white respondents are explicitly marked. This inconsistency is a reading distraction and analytical short-fall.

Lesbian Lifestyles is valuable, both for its accomplishments and failings, as methodological background reading for researchers utilizing oral history (or other participatory styles of interviewing) or working in the general area of gender and sexuality. As well, resulting from the relative accessibility of Dunne's text, chapters of the book are ideal excerpts for use in undergraduate courses on "women and work," "gender and sexuality" and related inquiries.

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Madonna: Bawdy & Soul. Karlene Faith. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario, 1997; xv + 217 pages; appendix: Selected Works of Madonna, Frances Wasserlein; ISBN 0-8020-8063-4; \$19.95.

Karlene Faith's highly readable postmodern critique of pop icon, po-mo (and pro-mo) artist, Madonna, displays both the appreciations of fandom and the rigors of feminist cultural studies scholarship. The reader, therefore, is offered a rare, balanced view which takes seriously Madonna, the artist and person, and which also acknowledges both the political limits and possibilities of her work.

In nine chapters and a postscript, Faith presents a multi-faceted analysis of Madonna's beginning career through to the Fall of 1997 when the film, *Evita*, in which she plays Eva Peron, was released and her daughter, Lourdes, was born. The book contextualizes the place of Madonna within popular culture, addresses her vast and fascinating contradictions and provides a rollicking, if sometimes repetitive, analysis of Madonna and the postmodern cultural world she (and we) inhabit. Faith provides extensive discussions of Madonna's work as it relates to identity politics, s/m erotica, pornography, censorship and "the similar threads of inquiry" (75) shared by Madonna and Foucault (yes, that one!). The appendix, by Frances Wasserlein, provides a useful, if highly - and non-fan - selected, index of Madonna's artistic productivity in theatre, video, film, and disc.

Faith treats Madonna fairly and without judgmental overreach, an accomplishment for a self-described "sexual conservative, although lesbian identified" (33). Faith draws from a wide and impressive scope of criticism, both academic and popular, and she includes a large number of Canadian citations. The juxtaposition of discourses can be sometimes jarring for the reader (Judith Butler meets Norman Mailer), yet, it demonstrates the border-crossings that good scholars of culture must themselves execute to produce effective and (more widely appealing) criticism.

There are points on which a reader might quibble with Faith. She, arguably, fails to appreciate fully the agenic possibilities of reclamation and reinvention (see, for example, her discussion of sadomasochism in chapter 3). She perceives Madonna's assertion that she is not a lesbian (Chapter 5) narrowly, as a claim to heterosexual privilege only (rather than possibly the refusal of categorization and fixed sexual identity, for example). Nor does Faith consider the contentious point that Madonna's representations of eroticized childhood acknowledge that children are sexual - as well as exploitively sexualized - creatures in order to refuse, rather than participate in, the myth of childhood innocence produced from adult anxieties of the very sort Faith expresses.

Still for all, this book is a useful contribution to a less reactionary and more measured discussion of

Madonna's cultural impact and will likely be read by scholars, students, cultural critics and Madonna fans and detractors, alike. With the release of a new compact disc, *Ray of Light*, and despite having been shut out of the Oscars by the Academy, Madonna continues to hold our attention. As Faith's book attests, Madonna is taken seriously in this "academy" where rigorous cultural criticism continues to reveal the political losses accrued through reactionary or reductive responses to the popular.

For those who pay attention, as fans and/or as informed critics, it is clear there is more to Madonna - and to her fans' persistent loyalty, fascination and devotion - than meets the eye. Often, the superficial public gaze on Madonna does not see beyond sex. But, as Madonna herself says of this bawdy persona: "Everybody probably thinks I'm a raving nymphomaniac, that I have an insatiable appetite, when the truth is, I'd rather read a book." This book? Or would she prefer Foucault?!

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Lesbian Subjects: A Feminist Studies Reader. Martha Vicinus, ed. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1996; illustrations; 273 pages; ISBN 0-253-21038-0; \$16.95 US.

Classics in Lesbian Studies. Esther D. Rothblum, ed. Harrington Park Press, An Imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc, New York, London, 1997; 286 pages; ISBN 1-56023-093-2; \$24.95 US.

In each of these texts, the editors offer us what they propose as an historical overview of some of the most significant recent writings on or about lesbian identities. Both texts offer an interdisciplinary approach to exploring lesbian identities, including essays from both the liberal arts and the social sciences. Each text operates as a sort of historical document, although these documents differ greatly in form and content. Other