

submits that it is women's job to enlighten their oppressors, something she clearly repudiated in the relations between whites and non-whites.

In all fairness, perhaps Hooks did not mean to suggest that women should take care that men understand the demands of feminism, but such misunderstandings are recurrent. Once again, the brevity of the separate essays is most likely responsible for the absence of a much-needed broader context, where subtleties can and should be explored. Of course, the strength of *Talking Back* lies in its concise rhetorical style, designed to arouse a similar emotional response from the reader as the author herself offers. At the same time, however, Hooks evades criticism of fundamental aspects of her book by adopting such a personal tone; it is the style rather than the content that focuses attention.

I acknowledge Gloria Watkins' concern that "feminist theory is rapidly becoming another sphere of academic elitism" (p. 36) and, in that sense, one can appreciate her attempt to speak to the non-academic community (no footnotes, short bibliography, etc.). *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist — Thinking Black* aspires to unite the popular writer Bell Hooks with the controversial educator Gloria Watkins in one aim:

To reaffirm the primacy of feminist struggle, feminist scholars must renew our collective commitment to a radical theoretical agenda, to a feminist education that is the practice of freedom. We begin this task by acknowledging that feminist theory is losing its vital connection to feminist struggle.... (p. 40-1)

This aim means to transcend the still persisting limitations of racism, sexism and other forms of domination. Therefore, regardless of some shortcomings in her book, Bell Hook's *Talking Back* is a stimulating work to read.

Gesche Peters
Concordia University

Taking Our Time: Feminist Perspectives on Temporality. Frieda Johles Forman with Caoran Sowton, Toronto: Pergamon Press Canada, 1989, Pp. 209 paperback.

Taking Our Time is an interesting collection of essays and poems investigating the concept of time from a feminist perspective which draws on many different disciplines: philosophy, sociology, history and literature amongst others. The contributors share a distrust of "patriarchal time," that is, linear, objective time, which has excluded woman's cyclical, subjective and relative time. Heide Göttner-Abendroth's essay, entitled "Urania — Time and Space of the Stars: The Matriarchal Cosmos through the Lens of Modern Physics," is one of the best essays in the collection and is the only one which carefully explains just what the patriarchal concept of time is and how it came to be accepted as a universal concept of time. She points out that before the "patriarchalization" of time, time had so much to do with women that it was considered to be female.

For the bodily processes in women concerned with fertility — for which she was highly revered in matriarchies as the giver of life — run synchronously with the clocks of the heavenly bodies. The menstruation cycle runs synchronously with the phases of the moon, and the pregnancy cycle of nine months is embedded in the mythical year from Easter till Yule (vernal equinox till winter solstice). Presumably, the erotic acts of these peoples in the community, at least on a sacral level, were adjusted to these cycles, and everything obeyed this synchronous "inner clock" of women. (p. 110)

Public recognition of the inner clock of women was evident from the dance rituals at the moon and sun calendars such as Stonehenge and Avebury. Göttner-Abendroth points out that the matriarchal peoples were the first to conduct precise astronomical studies and that they did not conceive of time as a linear progression. Rather, time was the spiralling cyclical movement and rhythm of the planets and stars in space. This cyclical concept of time was destroyed, along with the rest of matriarchal society, by the patriarchal warrior societies in antiquity. These patriarchal societies held a rational-linear, historical concept of time which is glorified in "the enumeration of genealogies of ruling houses, all pure father-son genealogies, and in similar lists of the succession of dynasties and kingdoms." However, with the rapid

growth of the mathematical sciences and the corresponding metricalization of linear time, historical time was soon estimated to be less rational and less valuable than metrical time. Such a split still exists today where the historical sciences are criticised for being imprecise, non-metricizable, and only half-scientific (that is, half-baked).

The persistent tendency of science and technology to quantify, to measure and to impose an artificial order upon life processes has stifled woman's experience of time. Most of the essays attempt to show that woman's time is not measurable or quantifiable. In her essay, "Unreliable Allies: Subjective and Objective Time in Childbirth," Meg Fox documents the way male-dominated obstetrics has reduced the creative, unpredictable and unique experience of birth to a mechanical process which must conform to the limits of objective clock-time.

By insisting on the minute chronology of the labor and the "delivery," the medical caregiver reconstitutes birth as a rationally apprehensible sequence of causally related events. Birth is fixed in an inflexible sequential framework, thus locating the laboring woman, and with her, her attendants, in time. (p. 126)

However, woman's time during childbirth is not objective and quantifiable; rather, it is subjective, timeless, and mystical. The rhythm of her contractions take her beyond the limits and demands of clock-time. This rhythm, Fox writes, is "a living symbol of a timeless, endless world" (p. 127). Those who are allowed to submerge themselves with this rhythm may emerge as a "changed being, as the mystic emerges into a *vita nuova*" (p. 127). To interfere in this experience is to objectify labour, to refuse to allow woman her unique, personal birth experience.

While Fox points out some very important and unfavorable aspects of childbirth within the context of an orthodox, male-dominated medical community, this critical documentation of objectified labour is by no means something new. Since the sixties, it has been very clear that the objectification of labour was misguided (to put it mildly) and that women had lost all control and creativity in childbirth. This phenomenon has been extensively researched and documented in feminist literature. Moreover, the medical community's attitude towards childbirth is in fact changing. Responsible women are becoming more

assertive about the kinds of conditions in which they want to give birth and are insisting on a minimum of interference. Doctors and hospitals are responding to this need by setting up birthing rooms and birthing centres and by relaxing hospital regulations and procedures so that labour and delivery can be dictated by the inner rhythm of the woman's body — a rhythm which neither she nor the doctor can or should attempt to control.

The impositions of patriarchal time are not limited to a woman's experience of childbirth. In "Teaching 'Time': Women's Responses to Adult Development," Jerilyn Fisher, who works with mature women returning to college, explores how patriarchal assumptions about timing and progress in adult development prove to be unsuitable for women's particular needs. She writes, "I am first struck by my students' consistent needs to have their personal sense of time validated." Women returning to college feel "off-time," developmentally delayed and often think that their return to college is self-indulgent and inappropriate. Once they realize that the temporal standards for measuring adult development are male biased, they begin to feel that they still "have time," that their life decisions might have been made at the right time after all. These women have literally *taken their time*. Although Fisher's exploration of the development of these women is fascinating, too little is said about the male standards for adult development. What are these male markers of maturity? Writes Fisher: "Chronologically mature women who (still) struggle with separation and autonomy, are relieved to learn that, according to Gilligan's research, failure to achieve these 'masculine' developmental tasks does not represent their failure to progress psychologically" (p. 139). However, Fisher fails to explain just what is meant by separation and autonomy, and this vagueness gives rise to an apparent contradiction. On the one hand, separation and autonomy are "masculine" goals but, on the other hand, separation and autonomy are precisely the goals that women returning to college hope to achieve! Nevertheless, Fisher does clarify to some extent what constitutes a male-defined "maturational signpost," namely, menstruation, motherhood, graying hair and menopause. These are the traditional benchmarks of women's coming and being "of age." Fisher quite rightly emphasises that women have to decide for themselves what constitutes maturity, development and aging.

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.

Susan-Judith Hoffman
University of Guelph

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.