

include biological phenomena. Medicine and sociobiology, for example, are treated as *sciences* (Jaquette and Staudt, p. 236; Bleier, p. 28; Sapiro).

The Gender Jungle

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Both of these volumes are pegged to genre stereotypes. The Sapiro collection is yet another exercise in victimology. The scenario features WOMAN struggling to liberate herself from the oppressor, PATRIARCHY. The lever of oppression is the cultural BIG LIE that maternity and domesticity define her personhood. The countervailing force is exerted by rehearsing atrocity stories showing the blood of the martyrs, and by spinning cultural narratives displaying genealogies of suffering. Compassion is thus dragooned into the gynaeceum and outfitted with the millstone of guilt. Those who are colonized by this tactic become sympathizers and helpers in the feminist push.

Gender Justice is a normative study of law and public policy from the perspective of communitarian liberalism in the mode of J. S. Mill and L. T. Hobhouse. Nearly half of the book is devoted to a philosophical statement meant to validate the combination of individualism with some sense of *Gemeinschaft*, which the authors call "the open community" (née "the open society"). Individualism makes the optimization of individual choice the presiding norm; communitarianism constricts this large grant of freedom by imposing conditions. The main condition imposed by Kirp, Yudof, and Franks is that the public sphere should be gender neutral.

Mill's attempt to combine the individualist and communitarian opposites led him into fascinating contradictions. The tradition he initiated has learned to manage inconsistency by calling it the "balanced view" and making it a virtue. This style of conflict management begins with the title of the present volume. "Gender justice" is a feminist slogan closely related to another slogan, "the personal is the political." But the expectation evoked by the title is denied in the text. The thought contained in "the personal is the political" catch-phrase is repudiated when the authors postulate a basic distinction between private and public; hence they reject the rhetoric and public policy norms of the Lesbian Nation. However, not wishing to be unfair to any group, the authors restore balance by endorsing the major justice claimed of radical feminism, equal liberty and a gender neutral public sphere. Implementing these norms would probably force a public some distance down the social engineering road,

edge the diverse scholarship conducted by the "(feminist) scholars".

although the authors are at pains to design their package for minimal government intervention.

The negative point of orientation of both studies is biology. In the Sapiro volume (*Women, Biology, and Public Policy*) that orientation is the view that the public world of knowledge is a man's world incorporating the armory of conscious and unconscious weapons for the oppression of women. Some half dozen of the essays are devoted to exposing male bias in the biological and social sciences, beginning with Ruth Bleier's lead essay. As a sometime critic of bias in the sciences, I welcome wholesome skepticism. Alas, the present criticisms are dulled by stultifying androphobia.

Bleier's essay in particular is weak. It merely summarizes arguments from her *Science and Gender* (1984), which was competently examined in a previous issue of this journal (Weisfeld and Hollar, 1985). I will add a few points prompted by the current fashion of goring the biological ox with the horn of sociological reductionism.

Bleier's "arguments" are crafted from loose associative reasoning, innuendo, and carping. At no point is the conceptual structure of sociobiology, her *bête noir*, ever summarized, I imagine because the reader's mind would forthwith be transported beyond the petty pointscore upon which she depends for producing unfavorable impressions (and they are no more than impressions). She ignores the substantial body of apt criticism of sociobiology, perhaps because citing the objections of male authors might spoil the pretense that there is a specifically female criticism of sociobiology. By the same token she chooses not to notice that females have made substantial contributions to this allegedly patriarchal science. The indifference of those investigators to their own gender is no doubt from Bleier's point of view a deep betrayal of sisterhood.

Bleier's partiality as critic undermines the objective judgments that she makes as neuroanatomist. As a specialist she denies that there is good evidence for sex-linked differences in cognitive capacities; but as a feminist she dismisses entire sciences because of their alleged sexual bias. She cannot have it both ways: if sociobiology is gender-tainted, there is no hope for neuroanatomy either.

She does not acknowledge the major achievement of sociobiology considered from the perspective of the social sciences: its provision of a conceptual structure and research methods that place the broad lines of human social structure as well as the nuances of sexual behavior in the context of evolutionary biology. This is an enormous advance that enables us, for the first time, to *identify* the unique features of human sexuality. But Bleier doesn't want to know about them.

This is not to suggest that the femocratic jeremiad spoils everything in the Sapiro volume. Most of the essays contain good description, as far as they go, and some treat significant policy histories and future options. Rothman's essay on the medicalization of childbirth and the Jaquette/Staudt study of the population policy of the Agency for International Development crisply exhibit the imprint of scientific thinking on reproductive practices. The authors sense that there is something sinister about the medical profession's monopoly on childbirth and about international birth control programs. Does the conceptualization of reproduction as a kind of management somehow uniquely threaten women? This question doesn't quite come to the surface because to put it, in all clarity, requires entertaining the possibility that family planning, abortion, and medicalization might not be the boons that the feminist justice menu makes them out to be. Since contributors to the Sapiro volume seem to be unaware that feminist ideology crumbles at just this point, it is worthwhile touching on one or two particulars.

Feminists welcome measures of reproductive control because they are the enabling hardware of liberation from the maternal "role." They have been high on the feminist agenda for over sixty years (Kennedy, 1970; Corea, 1977; Shorter, 1983). Nevertheless, feminist paranoia brands the medicalization of reproduction as an imposition of male dominance over female bodies. This is hype. It is also superstitious insofar as it "derives" medical technologies from male character: the effects are the same regardless of whether the gynecologist is man or woman. Nevertheless, it isn't all hype. Feminists are having second thoughts about liberation's enabling hardware. There is no more powerful engine for overwhelming the subjective perception of gender than the medicalization of childbirth, which reduces it to cures and Petrie dishes and a range of medical interventions that completely displace a loving couple from their subjectively central position in childbirth (Corea, 1977; Walters and Singer, 1983; Caton, 1986). In Australia, the world leader in IVF, feminists in large numbers recently defected from that brave new world therapy. They had already defected from casual sex and pornography. Even pioneer feminists (e.g., Frieden and Greer) have had second thoughts so sweeping that their shocked sisters have been obliged to introduce a new category of thought that has been baptized "conservative feminism" (Stacey, 1983). The excruciating contradiction in the name says all.

Such retreats from the future underscore the wisdom of Kirp, Yadof, and Franks in holding fast to the middle ground that legitimates a wide range of choice. Many women combine careers with normal domestic life and do not feel particularly in need of feminist ideology at home or at work. Such persons

are the prime constituency of *Gender Justice* . . . until they go to the divorce court, or until a child is sexually molested. The toughest area for judges and lawmakers in family law is custody, maintenance, and alimony. Amidst the distress and anguish, fairness is elusive and sometimes takes alarming turns: in Australia there have been three retributive assassinations of family court judges. The authors approach these precincts with the innocence of Snow White, and leave them without offering any usable norms. Their recommendation that custody be "delegalized" and that maintenance and alimony be "bargained" (pp. 183-84) merely endorses the present unsatisfactory practice. Readers are also advised that "support for marriage and liberalized divorce laws go hand in hand" (p. 180).

Emptiness of this stripe is the staple of the book. Real conflict is subdued by wordifications that manufacture imaginary reconciliations. This insouciance is characteristic of contemporary liberalism, which has exchanged the interpretation of nature that made liberalism of a former time robust for a liberalism based on projections of social trends. For theorists such as Locke and Madison, individualism was not a sacred icon to be valorized as choice. The individual concept was the fruit of analysis meant to identify the enduring politically relevant core of human nature. On this basis it was claimed that all men—irrespective of nation, race, creed, or caste—are equally self-interested operators impelled to seek those goods abbreviated as life, liberty, and property. With this natural determinism in place, liberal theory could specify the choiceworthy as constitutional government embedded in growth economy.

Mill and Hobhouse replaced the static concept of human nature for a developmental concept which was meant to integrate individualism with communalism. But neither thinker devised a science of human development; and in its absence social prognostication could not attain rigor. The rise of behavioral biology in the past two decades promises some help to the extent that it may clarify *possible* developmental tracks. The authors of *Gender Justice* reject this option on frankly ideological grounds: the "determinism" that they detect in behavioral biology is incompatible with their notion of the open-endedness of rational choice (pp. 46-66). It seems that hope springs eternal from the upwardly-mobile middle class breast.

I venture to suggest that the real problem for the heirs of liberal theory would be this. The individual in classical theory always meant implicitly adult *males*. Mill was the first to appreciate this fact and to extend the individual concept, at least tentatively, to females. But no liberal (or for that matter, non-liberal) theorist has thought through the validity of that extension. The liberal political establishment has

affirmed this extension not on the basis of theory, but in response to feminism as a reform movement or social trend. This task remains to be done, and the only objective basis for it, as far as I can see, is the methods and findings of behavioral biology.

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