THE TECHNOLOGY OF ORGASM: HYSTERIA, THE VIBRATOR, AND WOMEN’S SEXUAL SATISFACTION, by Rachel P. Maines (1999). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, $22, hardback. 181 pp.

I guarantee that this little 123-page (plus notes and references) package of dynamite will entertain and stimulate your classes, clients, and reading groups, even if you doubt some of the facts and question some of the interpretations. Maines has uncovered an ignored chapter in the history of women’s sexuality that deserves our attention, and in the process, she does more for the much-maligned vibrator than anyone since Betty Dodson.

Rachel Maines currently owns a company that does catalog and inventory work for museums and archives. In the 1970s, as a budding feminist historian, she began studying old needlework (knitting, embroidery) magazines. In these magazines, she discovered numerous advertisements for vibrators which “strongly resembled the devices now sold to women as masturbation aids” (p. x). At first she doubted they had a sexual purpose. Subsequently, while pursuing a graduate degree in technology history, she continued to notice and be intrigued by these ads. She recognized that choosing such an area for her dissertation research would raise too many eyebrows. During her short college teaching career in the mid-1980s, Maines followed the vibrator trail into museums and archives, finding amazing diagrams of electrical appliances and even some working machines, reading old medical texts, and giving talks based on her ideas of the purpose of these vibrators. In 1986, she was dismissed from the School of Management at Clarkson University because of this research, she says, at which point she became a
self-employed businesswoman and could study whatever she wanted. Maines has thus spent quite a few years researching this book.

The Technology of Orgasm makes the argument that the electrical vibrator was developed because “massage to orgasm of female patients was a staple of medical practice among some (but certainly not all) Western physicians from the time of Hippocrates until the 1920s, and mechanizing this task [by use of an electromechanical medical instrument] significantly increased the number of patients a doctor could treat in a working day” (p. 3). What, you say? Massage to orgasm by doctors? Since Hippocrates? The first thing you probably wonder is why you never got one! The second question that comes to mind is whether Maines is putting you on. But if you take this claim seriously, the next question you ask yourself is what on earth possessed centuries of doctors to give women manual orgasms? The answers take Maines far afield from technology history and land her squarely in the sex wars still raging today.

Maines argues that sexual dissatisfaction has always been the major cause of women’s mysterious condition, hysteria, and that long ago doctors discovered that providing a genital “paroxysm,” never explicitly identified as a sexual event, relieved many nervous and somatic symptoms. It is too simple, but even as part of the story, it is really a stunner. Hysteria is identified as “a set of symptoms . . . including, but not limited to fainting, edema . . . nervousness, insomnia . . . muscle spasms, shortness of breath, lack of appetite, erratic behavior patterns, etc.” (p. 23). This is a mixed bag, as were so many old diseases. Maines cites texts as far back as the first century to show that genital massage was a standard prescription.

Women could not just be taught this therapy of self-stimulation, especially by the 18th and 19th centuries, because female masturbation came to be forbidden as unchaste and unhealthful, and sometimes even leading to hysteria! And why weren’t women having healthful paroxysm/orgasms with their husbands over all these centuries? Maines, calling herself “an angry feminist” (p. ix), looks to a reason familiar to many angry feminists, namely, “the failure of androcentrically defined sexuality to produce orgasm regularly in most women” (p. 3).

Well, now we are on ground familiar to readers of this periodical. Indeed, this book does feel right at home in the recent feminist tradition of Koedt, Dodson, Hite, Loulan, Ogden, Barbach, and others who discuss the shortfall between women’s sexual satisfaction and traditional heterosexual technique. Unlike these writers, however, who focus on current sexual discourse, Maines dives into the history of women’s pleasure and orgasm and
provides a wealth of references in historical medical treatises. (Her book reminded me of John Boswell’s trailblazing 1980 effort, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, wherein his mastery of many languages and painstaking archival research resulted in claims about the history of homossexuality which challenged many popular beliefs.)

Doctors used and recommended many methods of genital massage over the centuries, we learn here. Maines’ copiously and fabulously illustrated chapters present not only the electrical and mechanical vibrational devices, but the lengthy history of baths, douches, and other forms of water stimulation applied to the vulva for relaxation and symptom relief.

I think Maines has opened fascinating new territory with her materials, and, if her facts are to be believed, I find some agreement with her conclusion that “medicalizing female orgasm in Western culture has been one means of protecting our comfortable illusions about coitus” (p. 121). However, I was troubled by her argument’s essentialism. Maines seems to feel that orgasm has remained unchanged over two millennia, and that women and doctors colluded in denying that the service of genital stimulation and paroxysm were sexual activities. Those of us drowning in the current tidal wave of social constructionism and discourse analysis, on the other hand, are not surprised at all by this “disconnect.” We have no difficulty believing that, depending on circumstances, orgasm might or might not be considered a sexual or even pleasurable act. There may be a physical capacity for “orgasm,” a reflex release of neuromuscular tension, built into human neurophysiology, but that carries no transhistorical meaning in and of itself. The questions we ask have to do with the contexts wherein the reflex occurs, with whom and by whom it is produced, whether the participants are in love or doing a job, what they make of the situation, etc. Maines never refers to the entire corpus of contemporary writings about the social construction of sexuality, and thus deprives her fascinating material of what could be one of its most exciting interpretive aspects.

Reviewed by Leonore Tiefer

NOTE

Leonore Tiefer is a feminist and psychologist who has specialized in sexuality for 30 years. She began with a PhD on hormones and hamsters and an academic position and experimental laboratory, but later respecialized in clinical psychology with a focus on sex and gender problems. She teaches in NYC medical school and has a private practice. Her latest book is *Sex Is Not a Natural Act, and Other Essays* (Westview 1995).
Receiving a breast cancer diagnosis sends many women off the proverbial “deep end.” At least, that’s what those who haven’t confronted cancer expect. The most typical response, however, does not support this at all. *Courage to Conquer* written by Reina A. Marino, MD, is an important addition to a body of cancer literature that effectively dispels this myth and creates a more realistic norm for breast cancer survival. One in eight women will receive a breast cancer diagnosis in her lifetime and three of five of them will survive the disease. This book espouses that coping with the diagnosis and subsequent treatment for a majority of these surviving women actually has the potential to facilitate greater self-definition and boost enjoyment in living. The women featured in this book do not allow breast cancer to “conquer their spirit.” These women fight back and emerge triumphantly.

Dr. Marino describes *Courage to Conquer* as her effort to help cancer patients “not feel alone . . . to inspire, encourage and be strengthened by the survivors’ stories . . . and to increase awareness and sensitivity to breast cancer patients” (p. i-ii). The heartening stories she presents here, I believe, accomplish her goal. And Dr. Marino’s resumé makes her a credible writer about the cancer experience. She is a board certified radiologist, a frequent speaker for the American Cancer Society, founder and director of the Health Education Foundation (a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of health education and cancer research) and she has authored several articles on breast cancer-related topics. Cancer has touched her personally as well. The book’s introduction recounts how the author’s own father’s cancer death inspired her to become involved in raising awareness of the emotional issues associated with this frightening disease.

*Courage to Conquer* is a collection of interviews with 15 women, ranging in age from 24 to 61, who have successfully coped with a breast cancer diagnosis and the assault of contemporary cancer treatments often referred to as “cut, poison and burn.” The women in this book are varied in both their life experiences and individual characteristics. They are professional women and women working in manual labor positions; some are married and some are single women; they are African-American and Caucasian women; and they are women who are cancer-free, as well as those presently involved in an ongoing battle with this disease.
Most of the women describe a heterosexual partner, but several women do not expressly identify their sexual partner’s gender. This diversity is important, because together these stories touch on the pertinent issues, thoughts and emotions experienced by all breast cancer patients.

Each woman in the book recalls the circumstances surrounding her cancer diagnosis and discusses cancer’s impact on her life with regard to issues such as fertility and sexuality after breast cancer, explaining the diagnosis to children, effects on significant relationships and spiritual development. The women generously offer suggestions to the medical community concerning ways to improve patient sensitivity and treatment based on their experiences. A few even describe how they have taken control of their health through utilization of alternative medicine. A glossary and list of reading materials and resources pertinent to breast cancer issues are included at the end of the book courtesy of the interviewees.

While the book presents each woman’s story in an optimistic fashion, it does not ignore the emotional trauma each survivor experienced or the physical and psychological side effects endured during treatment and recovery. Each woman candidly describes the fear, feeling of hopelessness, and ultimate depression she experienced. Breast cancer is not a pleasant experience. Cancer treatments currently used by the medical community are not easy. The emotional impact of facing possible death, potential loss of a body part that is viewed by many people as synonymous with “female,” and the loss of hair caused by chemotherapy are devastating reminders of vulnerability. This book discloses each woman’s struggle with these events and the emotional turmoil they cause by charting each woman’s psychological end point and her path for getting there.

The only minor fault of *Courage to Conquer* is that most of the interviewees involved themselves with established breast cancer support organizations, so it’s possible they represent a select group of women who were predisposed to come through such a trauma favorably. Unlike most women, they had the benefit of receiving help from these organizations and perhaps a more salient opportunity to receive emotional and educational support. Since the availability of organized support groups is limited in more remote areas, rural women must rely on their families and the local medical community for psychological support. Though the majority of women do seem to use the experience of breast cancer in a growth-enhancing fashion, the inclusion of women who did not receive much structured support yet reported a positive emotional outcome would improve the book’s ability to actually “inspire, encourage and strengthen” all readers.
Courage to Conquer’s greatest strength, however, is the candor of the interviewees. They selflessly share their private experiences, thoughts, and emotions. Because the stories are reported using each woman’s own words, they effectively highlight the uniqueness of this experience while revealing the thoughts and feelings all share. And ultimately, the author demonstrates that although breast cancer is a traumatic occurrence, its survivors more typically respond to the trauma with courage to conquer their fear and are enriched by the pain of the experience.

In sum, Courage to Conquer provides yet more evidence that women are remarkably resilient even when confronting cancer. We are not helpless in the face of adversity. This is important information for psychotherapists working with breast cancer survivors to use. Although the survivor is very likely experiencing feelings of fear, helplessness and a host of other emotions when diagnosed, the potential to be empowered by the experience is most promising. Speaking as a clinician and breast cancer survivor, I think this book and others like it indicate that psychotherapy with cancer survivors must include encouraging women to realize the positive potentials of experiencing cancer as well as coping with the emotional fallout this disease creates.

Reviewed by Kimberely J. Husenits

NOTE

Kimberely J. Husenits is Clinical Psychologist and Faculty in the Department of Psychology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She has provided psychotherapy and supervised the work of other therapists in a variety of clinical settings that include an HMO, college counseling center, community mental health center, drug and alcohol outpatient clinic and her own private practice of psychology. Her clinical and research interests include parent education programs and breast cancer survivorship. She is the mother of three children and is herself a breast cancer survivor.
CELEBRATING THE LIVES OF JEWISH WOMEN: PATTERNS IN A FEMINIST SAMPLER, edited by Rachel Josefowitiz Siegel and Ellen Cole. Published by The Haworth Press, Inc.

In the past decade, the field of feminist therapy has finally begun to hear from and listen to the voices of Jewish women. The 1992 Seattle conference, “Judaism, Feminism and Psychology: Creating a Shelter in the Wilderness,” became the fertile ground from which Jewish feminist voices in the field of psychology/mental health have been emerging. A new collection, Celebrating the Lives of Jewish Women: Patterns in a Feminist Sampler, is a welcome and triumphant addition to that chorus of voices. Edited by Rachel Josefowitz Siegel and Ellen Cole, this 300-plus page anthology includes a rich and varied collection of contributions reflecting the diverse ages, affiliations, regions of North America, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation, and spiritual/religious identities that make up the many textures of Jewish feminist lives.

The anthology is divided into five sections that focus on these topics: family, Diaspora, the meaning of home, women’s voices, and healing. This review will give you a taste of the many flavors of this marvelous collection. Section One, “From Generation to Generation: The Meanings of Mishpacha,” there are stories illuminating the life of a fifteen-year-old rabbi’s daughter, a woman who examines the practice of brit milah, an interfaith marriage from one Jewish woman’s perspective, a queer Jewish feminist perspective, Jewish mothers and daughters, generational changes in Jewish women’s lives and values, and grandmothers’ desire/responsibility to pass on traditions, memories, language and spirit. Susie Kisber offers an important explanation of why she uses the term “queer”: because it emphasizes the willingness to be “different from the usual.” She remarks about the importance and the power of language and how we choose words like “queer,” “marriage,” and “family.”

Section Two, “Wandering Jews: Lives Fractured by Geography,” includes contributions from two Romanian immigrant Jewish women, a woman in a “mixed” Sephardi/Ashkenazi marriage, a Jew by choice, and an essay by Lilith magazine’s editor-in-chief Susan Weidman Schneider about death and the passing on of memories. In this section (as well as throughout the entire collection), the common thread of marginalization and isolation emerges strongly. Given that our stories and our voices are often silenced, ignored or misunderstood, there is of-
ten an unspoken feeling among us that we are fighting to be heard within our own lives.

“The Journey Home” is the title of Section Three, and the definition of “home” is discussed in the seven articles that comprise this section. We are challenged to ask ourselves and each other: “Where is our Jewish home, our spiritual home?” They include Orthodox and Reconstructionist perspectives, including a contribution from a rabbinical student, from editor Rachel Siegel’s granddaughter, and an essay on Kafka from Evelyn T. Beck. Norma Joseph’s story of her life and identity tells us that, on any given day, she might be seen as too Jewish, too religious or too feminist: “My life is not one seamless harmony.”

It is extremely difficult to summarize the stories in this anthology in such a brief review. Just as the lives of Jewish women are not seamless or simple, neither is this anthology. The editors have done a tremendous job of organizing these stories into themes for us to consider. The collection also includes a section entitled “Eve and the Tree of Knowledge: Woman’s Place Among the People of the Book” which invites us to consider where our voices and our identities are created, nurtured and sustained. Rachel Siegel breaks silence on the topic of Jewish women’s “learned ignorance,” and they ways in which we experience invisibility and are taught to discount ourselves. Ellyn Kaschak encourages us “how to question and what to question,” and to reclaim “the fullness of our own experience.”

Section Five, “Pain and Healing, Sorrow and Hope,” tackles the important and often difficult topics of Jewish domestic violence, Canadian Jewish women’s experiences of anti-Semitism and sexism, and the pervasive and multi-layered impact of the Holocaust on Jewish women. Nora Gold reminds us of the painfully “shrinking of safe spaces” for Jewish women, and the continued silence around anti-Semitism. She identifies from her research three places in which anti-Semitism and sexism intersect: stereotypes (especially the Jewish American Princess); relationships (although she only focuses on heterosexual relationships); and how Jewish women feel about our bodies (especially the “Jewish parts”). As always, we have more work to do and more journeys to travel.

In each chapter, there is something new and something familiar. The theme of universality and its relationship to diversity/difference is explored in every section, with many authors creating a photographic image of their lives, like a slide show, for us to read and to see. Jewish women “come out” at many levels in this collection: queer, Orthodox, secular, religious, Reconstructionist, Jews by choice, grandmothers and
daughters, interfaith marriages, intercultural identities, immigrants, younger and older women, academicians and activists. We hear from “unknown” Jewish women whose stories are nourishing and thought provoking, as well as from some Jewish feminists who have been speaking out for many years, such as Evelyn Torton Beck, Norma Baumel Joseph, and Lenore Walker.

On a tachlis level, seeing the photos with each biographical statement at the beginning of the book allows the reader to see the many faces of Jewish feminists, and the biographical statements demonstrate the important and groundbreaking work being done. In addition, the anthology also includes a wonderful glossary of Hebrew and Yiddish terms, which enrich the reading of the text.

Celebrating the Lives of Jewish Women must be included in reading lists for women’s and feminist studies courses, clinical training and multicultural discourse. It is a collection that will be enjoyed by clinicians, activists, scholars and students, and as Jewish women we are often all of these identities and more.

Reviewed by Karen L. Erlichman, MSS, LCSW

NOTE

Karen Lee Erlichman is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice. She is also a faculty member in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at University of California-San Francisco.
Over the last ten years there has been an increased interest in the field of health psychology. The explosion of work in this area has been embraced enthusiastically by both the professional community and the public. Unfortunately, despite the proliferation of books, articles, and textbook chapters dedicated to this topic, the epistemological premise of health psychology remains grounded in an individualistic framework. As feminists know all too well, a focus on intra-individual factors for understanding health and illness undermines our ability to offer gendered, class, racial, and other structural analyses of distress. Thus, as Christina Lee points out in *Women’s Health: Psychological and Social Perspectives*, when researchers address ‘women’s health issues,’ the focus tends to be on either gynecological/reproductive issues or on specific risk factors relevant to women (p. 3). Although there are some notable exceptions (e.g., Stanton & Gallant, 1995; Ussher, 1997; Yardley, 1996, 1997) the vast majority of work is not informed by a feminist perspective and thus remains wedded to positivist assumptions and reductionistic explanations. These assumptions and explanations lead quite naturally to ‘solutions’ that are aimed at ‘fixing’ women; such solutions do not address—much less theorize about—the social context of women’s lives. Thankfully, Lee’s book stands out as an important exception.

Lee’s aim is to “present an alternative perspective [to the dominant paradigm in psychology] and to examine the psychology of women’s health by examining the context within which women live” (p. 3). She takes as her starting point the position that gender is a social construction, noting that this shift will orient researchers and health professionals toward social explanations and social solutions. More specifically, Lee identifies four myths that impinge directly on women’s health: ‘the raging hormone’ myth that stereotypes women as unstable victims of their biology; ‘the myth of motherhood’ which positions women as natural caretakers; the ‘angel in the house’ myth that sustains the notion that house work, child care and elder care is the exclusive domain of women; and the ‘women-as-object’ myth that positions woman as Other, as valuable only to the degree that she is physically attractive and sexually available to men. Lee organizes her book around these four themes and she examines how these social myths “limit and constrain
women’s lives and thus their physical and emotional well-being” (p. 11). For example, the three chapters organized around the ‘raging hormone myth’ include a chapter on premenstrual syndrome, a second one on postpartum depression and a third one on menopause.

In addition to the four themes noted above, there is a chapter which addresses “the challenges which confront lesbian women in a heterosexist society” (p. 159). Lee does an excellent job highlighting the many ways in which compulsory heterosexism, at both a symbolic and material level, undermines the quality of women’s lives. The final section includes a chapter on feminist research approaches to women’s health issues. This chapter addresses epistemological as well as methodological issues and Lee argues cogently that truly feminist research in health psychology must start from a non-positivist epistemology—one that truly contextualizes women’s experiences of health and distress.

Women’s Health: Psychological and Social Perspectives succeeds in achieving its aim. It is a well organized book that provides up to date coverage of the research literature that challenges reductive, biomedical explanations of women’s health issues. Indeed, Lee does a fine job supporting her main thesis—that we must attend to the socio-political (and not just ‘environmental’) realm in order to prevent as well as effectively treat women’s physical and emotional health problems. The reader is left with a full appreciation of just how entrenched these social myths are; in spite of the fact that we have amassed a tremendous amount of evidence that challenges them, these gendered myths continue to circulate widely. For example, after reviewing numerous studies on postpartum depression, Lee writes, “although the term postpartum implies a causal relationship between [hormone changes associated with] childbirth and depression . . . there does not exist any sound evidence to support this assumption” (p. 31). In a similar vein, she points out that menopause continues to be defined and studied as an “endocrine deficiency disease . . . despite evidence showing a lack of association between hormone levels and well-being” (pp. 42-43, emphasis added).

One of the strengths of Lee’s book is the breadth of her literature review. Indeed, her reference section alone is almost worth the price of the book. She fully supports her position that any experience of distress will be culturally mediated. Thus, Women’s Health fills a critical gap; it explicitly and systematically addresses the ways in which cultural discourses produce, reify, and sustain gendered illnesses. By focusing the reader’s attention on cultural stories and vocabularies rather than on individual causes or predispositions, Lee provides a conceptual frame-
work for a feminist approach to health psychology, and she makes insightful suggestions for future research.

However, because her literature review is so extensive, she is forced to sacrifice depth for breadth, and she is not able to go into the detail that some readers may be hoping for on particular topics. But this is clearly a conscious choice on Lee’s part and not a failing of the book. Women’s Health is quite clearly a survey of the discursive influences on women’s health issues and not an in depth analysis of these issues. Any one of the four social myths that she discusses could have been a book in itself. Thus, if readers are familiar with a social constructionist approach to gender and disorder, they may find parts of the book on the repetitive side. Also, she states in the introduction that space and time constraints necessitated omission of certain topics (e.g., women with disabilities) and she acknowledges that her coverage of some issues (e.g., the health of minority women) is less thorough and “really necessitates a different book” (p. 10). Lee is clearly aware of the ways in which gender, class, and race are inevitably implicated in discourses of health and illness. However, this book is not geared toward a reader looking specifically for a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which gender, race, and class intersect.

On the other hand, the survey nature of the book may broaden its readership. This is a book that is relevant and timely for researchers and clinicians, students as well as professors. Although this book will probably be most useful for social science academics, Lee’s coverage of topics such as eating disorders, premenstrual syndrome, and postpartum depression has obvious import for therapists. In addition, even her coverage of topics such as ‘women and aging’ includes information that can be very useful for clinicians. For example, therapists working with older women need to be familiar with the research that demonstrates that the actual experiences of bereaved spouses are often less negative than those expected by mental health professionals (p. 154). Also, her literature review is so extensive that if a clinician is interested in pursuing more information on a particular topic, she need only check out the reference section for additional resources.

Women’s Health: Psychological and Social Perspectives is a valuable contribution to the field of health psychology because of its explicitly gendered analysis of the social myths and practices that undermine the quality of women’s lives. Lee offers a challenge to the epistemological premise that grounds the dominant paradigm in psychology and in so doing, not only shows us the limitations of de-contextualized research, but she also provides a different vision for future research. This vision in-
cludes greater attention to the prevention of illness as well as a focus on health, coping, and resilience in a gender stratified world.

Reviewed by Lisa Cosgrove, PhD

NOTE

Lisa Cosgrove is a Clinical Psychologist who teaches in the Counseling and School Psychology Department at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. She also has an independent practice in Natick, MA. She has written articles on the aftermath of sexual assault, PTSD, feminist research methods, and feminist therapy.

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*FED UP: WOMEN AND FOOD IN AMERICA*, by Catherine Manton (1999). *Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, $17.95, paperback, 170pp.*

*Fed Up: Women and Food in America* by Catherine Manton provides a unique analysis of the insurgence of our current eating disorders epidemic as resulting not only from external influences but also from the changes in women’s inner relationship to food and self. In Manton’s words: “most feminist analysis . . . has focused exclusively on the social, economic, and political aspects of (patriarchal) oppression to explain eating disturbances. This sort of analysis has emphasized external influences; the private, inner life of a woman usually has been ignored, even though psychology long ago demonstrated the importance of subjective, emotional forces in determining human behavior” (p. 5). In this text Manton provides a thorough and thoughtful analysis of how the combination of internal and external pressures around food and eating have led to American’s current relationship with food in terms of both eating disorders and our general societal eating patterns.

Many goals are achieved in the 136 pages of this text. The text chronicles the usurpation of food as a commodity of capitalism. In doing this she provides an historical account of women’s changing relationships with food from foraging societies to present-day society. The role of capitalism, the media, and political forces in influencing if not dictating this relationship are revealed. A feminist analysis of previously accepted commentaries on this process provides insight into how women have been distanced not only from food but also from understanding the effects of this loss of relationship on their identity as mothers, partners/wives, and workers.

Manton describes how food and food preparation has been used to define women’s roles in the home while also alienating them from these roles. This premise is based on the assumption that “women traditionally have used food as a means of nurturing and caring for others” (p. 1). This analysis begins with a chapter by Elaine S. Morse describing women’s role in food gathering and production in foraging, horticultural, and agrarian societies. Morse challenges traditional analyses of early women’s roles as subservient. She provides evidence that humanoid women in foraging societies may have been among the earliest tool makers and that specifically among the !Kung, women’s role as gatherer, producer, and distributor of food gave them a position of prestige within the tribe. This chapter furthermore firmly establishes a relationship between women and food including the use of food to provide
life-sustaining nutrition as well as nurturing to their families and communities.

In the following chapters the modern-day takeover of food by capitalism is described. Manton gives the history of the media and patriarchy stepping into women’s kitchens across America. She delineates the personal and societal implications of the introduction of Betty Crocker, baby formulas, canned and pre-packaged foods, etc. She asserts that the media utilized guilt as an advertising ploy and aimed ads at the younger generations, teaching daughters to be critical of their mothers’ methods of cooking. In essence, a great deal of information was lost in this process. Manton basically describes an ethnic cleansing of food preparation as becoming acculturated meant using Americanized canned goods rather than preparing meals from scratch. The media’s success in focusing women on canned foods and quick meals was closely followed with changing eating practices and changing body ideals. The media manipulated the 1960s counterculture focus on “lite” living to a focus on “light” living; representing a change from “lite” consumption to “light” weight. After reading this text, it seems only logical that food and eating has for some women become a negative attempt at coping; food has after all been manipulated by others (e.g., the media and the food industry) for years.

The impact of the book is broad, ranging from offering innovative interventions for practitioners working with disordered eating, to providing a feminist social history of food and eating in America, to catalyzing the initiation of a self-dialogue regarding personal food choices, to delineating an ecofeminist analysis of Americans’ present style of consumption. In essence, Manton traces the effect of women’s changing relationship with food and food production on the self, the body/psyche, the community, society, and the world society. While reading this book I found myself reflecting on my role in this history. I remembered when as a child I would yell at my mother when she would substitute ingredients in my most favorite foods; never considering that she might be more knowledgeable about food preparation and my family’s likes than a mega-corporation under the guise of the name Betty Crocker. I also found myself reflecting on my present and future behavior in terms of the foods I choose to consume, whom these foods allow to profit and whom they cause to use scarce resources to produce food for other nations’ consumption. Additionally, I pondered how and what I will teach my children, what types of eaters and consumers of food will they be?

This would be an excellent text for a Women’s Studies, Psychology of Women, or Political Science/History class. As young adults entering
the world of work and family, reading this text would allow them to make an informed choice about how they want to run their households and educate their children about the role of women in relation to food. As a therapist working in a counseling center, I plan to use this information in outreach programs about eating disorders and body image. I will also provide this text for politically-minded clients who would benefit from reading an analysis of food and women’s historical role. *Fed Up* is relevant to our current social dilemma of not only caring for women in the throws of disordered eating but also to our search for proactive approaches preventing the continuation of this epidemic. Knowledge is power and Manton provides an extremely valuable perspective on the evolution of women’s current relationship with food.

*Reviewed by Amy S. Combs, MA*

**NOTE**

Amy S. Combs is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania currently interning at Towson University Counseling Center. She has presented nationally and regionally in the area of eating disorders. Her current research focuses on identifying the key elements of feminist therapy for eating disorders.