

may otherwise put them in danger of being overlooked by academic scrutiny. As Casey and Martens observe in their introduction to the volume:

In characterising aspects of social life as trivial, a rationale is created for the silencing of such experience, thereby creating gaps in knowledge. If aspects of domestic consumption have been silenced, any study that fills in the gaps should be welcomed. (p. 5)

From this perspective, *Gender and Consumption* is edifying in its representation and examination of less explored areas of women's home-related experiences. As some of the contributing authors note, feminist writing has yet to engage more fully with this subject matter, and to recognize the role of relevant subjectivities in the creation and expression of identity. The present volume, through its insightful papers and extensive bibliographies, constitutes a significant step in this regard.

Anca ROBERTS

Department of Psychology, University of Northampton, Park Campus, Boughton Green Rd, Northampton NN2 7AL, UK.

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Elizabeth Arveda Kissling: *Capitalising on the Curse: The Business of Menstruation*. London, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006, 155pp. \$39.95, £25.50, ISBN 1-5882-6310-X (hbk).

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Kissling examines the ways in which negative representations of menstruation are created by mass media and the way these in turn are manipulated to generate corporate profits, particularly by the 'femcare' and pharmaceutical industries. She takes a critical feminist approach, drawing on feminist existentialism and cultural analysis to explore the ways in which menstruation is used to mark women as Other, and demonstrates how media representations of menstruation '... reinforce and even help to create negative attitudes towards menstruation and toward women's bodies and that these attitudes are exploited to enhance corporate profits' (p. 6). While there is little that is new here, the book's strength is the way it draws together the different examples of commercial exploitation to provide a sound analysis of menstrual consumerism.

Kissling starts with the advertising of 'feminine hygiene' products. She provides an historical outline of the marketing of early disposable menstrual pads and the way in which the 'feminine hygiene' industry moved into providing menstrual education, thus becoming a key driver of a shift in the way menstruation is understood. Advertising constructs menstruation as a hygiene crisis and feminine freshness can be restored by consumption of the products. A disturbing new product development is the scented tampon, taking concealment and anxieties about odour to a new level. Kissling notes: 'This renewed marketing emphasis on scented tampons occurs in a cultural moment in which the aesthetic contrast between femininity and femaleness has never been greater' (p. 20), linking it to depilation and dieting as products of objectification. I would have liked to see this discussion expanded. The next chapter

deals with the portrayal of menarche in films and (US) TV comedies and effectively challenges the assumption that menarche-related storylines are progressive. Kissling demonstrates that much of the humour and role reversal serve to fundamentally reinforce gender stereotypes, for example:

Both of these programs (*King of the Hill* and *Something So Right*) displayed the availability of an ever-increasing number of menstrual hygiene products as a mystery to men, emphasizing male ineptitude in this clearly female realm. They also remind viewers that the key developmental moments are always marked by consumer behaviours. (p. 29)

She then examines the activities of the pharmaceutical industry around premenstrual stress (PMS) and menstrual suppression. This is an important analysis given increasing levels of concern around 'disease mongering' and the marketing of lifestyle drugs (e.g. Moynihan et al., 2002; Tiefer, 2006) and Kissling sets her arguments clearly within the wider context of the corporate construction of disease. Chapter 4 deals with the construction of PMS/Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) as a disease and the marketing of anti-depressants to treat it. She offers a fairly lengthy critique of PMS as a construct, including a detailed account of the controversy around the inclusion of Late Luteal Phase Dysphoric Disorder (LLPDD) and later PMDD in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) appendices. While this provides a clear illustration of the process of creating a condition, it has been very well and extensively addressed elsewhere (e.g. Caplan, 1995; Ussher, 1991; Walker, 1997) and I'm not convinced it merits this level of detail here. The most interesting part of the chapter deals with the marketing of the 'cure' – Sarafem (fluoxetine hydrochloride – the same active ingredient as Prozac) and in particular the analysis of the direct-to-consumer ad campaign for Sarafem. She then turns to the marketing of menstrual suppression via drugs such as Seasonale. Advocates of menstrual suppression argue that regular periods are a relatively recent phenomenon. This position has received enthusiastic and uncritical coverage in American magazines despite the many arguments against and a real need for more research. Moreover, Kissling shows that little publicity surrounds the potential side effects of these drugs, such as increased risk of osteoporosis and heart problems, and raises important questions about shortcomings of the clinical trials.

The next chapter tackles tampon safety scares (Toxic Shock Syndrome in the 1980s and dioxins in the 1990s) and examines the discourses used by both the industry and anti-tampon campaigners. Kissling argues convincingly that the arguments on both sides are flawed, focused on the presence or absence of dioxins rather than the important question of '... what level of health threat is posed by the presence of dioxins in tampons' (p. 94). Nonetheless, anti-tampon activism has had some success forcing the industry to explicitly address these concerns in the information they produce. The UK Tampon Safety Campaign led to British manufacturers abandoning chlorine bleaching. Kissling notes that '... anti-tampon campaigns in the United States have not been as successful or as visible' (p. 81), but unfortunately she doesn't consider why this might be. Another indication of success is the availability of alternatives such as 'The Keeper', menstrual sponges and so on. The openness and positive attitudes promoted in their marketing contrast sharply with those of mainstream products. This leads neatly into the

next chapter, which takes a selective look at the (largely online) menstrual counter-culture as a source of alternative ways of thinking and talking about menstruation and also alternative ways of profiting from periods. She reviews the two virtual menstrual museums (MUM, Harry Finley's Museum of Menstruation and Women's Health, and Geneva Kachman's MOLT, Museum of the Menopausal Lifetime), the Menstrual Monday holiday and discusses alternative consumer products. Important issues of ownership are raised in relation to two high-profile men, Finley and Vinnie D'Angelo of Vinnie's Tampon Cases. Essentially, though, this counter-culture remains marginal and Kissling is not optimistic about the prospect of it's becoming more mainstream given that the cultural and third-wave feminist positions that inform most of it are themselves marginal. In the final chapter, she concludes that '... within the current cultural logic of late capitalism, a woman's relationship to her menstrual cycle is largely defined through consumer products' (p. 123). While this commercialization has been beneficial in some aspects, it forces women to literally buy into their own subjection. She finishes with an upbeat call for resistance, offering 'voices and dollars' strategies. Disappointingly, though, these are rather vague and limited to being 'loud and proud' and fairly basic consumer activism on the part of individuals (contrast with those offered by Moynihan and Henry [2006], for example).

That menstruation is commercially exploited in capitalist societies is not surprising; what is interesting is how and why it is successful. Kissling does provide a good analysis of the role of popular culture in enabling this and situates her analysis within the wider contexts of capitalist consumerism and increasing medicalization. Although she does acknowledge the importance of social and economic structures, analysis of their effects is limited, which is a pity given their importance to understanding the corporate construction of disease (Moynihan and Henry, 2006). The book is written from a very American perspective but there is no explicit consideration of the impact and context of US health care practices. Direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical advertising is rightly identified as an important driver of lifestyle drugs, but the USA and New Zealand are the only developed countries that allow this. While many comparisons are drawn with Europe, these are not followed through. This is a missed opportunity, particularly given the influence of American popular culture. For example, Kissling contrasts the US preference for applicator tampons with the European (not defined) one for non-applicator ones (p. 93), explaining this in terms of US cultural messages that menstruation is dirty but without any reference to cultural messages in any European country. She also compares US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rulings with those of the European Committee for Proprietary Medical Products, which ruled that '... PMDD is not a well established disease and forced Eli Lilly to drop the alleged disorder from its listings for fluoxetine sales in Europe' (p. 55). However, there is no consideration of how this does or might affect the construction of PMS/PMDD as a disease in European Union countries. This is another missed opportunity. Walker (1997) has made the point that English-speaking cultures are very influential globally and '... thus PMS becomes a universal rather than a culture-bound disorder' (p. 162).

Nonetheless, this book makes an important and timely contribution to the menstrual cycle literature providing an integrated analysis of the many ways in which menstruation is commercially exploited.

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Moira MAGUIRE

Department of Psychology, University of Westminster, 309 Regent St., London  
W1B 2UW, UK.

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Iris Marion Young: *On Female Body Experience: 'Throwing like a Girl' and Other Essays*. New York: Oxford, 2005, 188pp. £11.99, ISBN 0-1951-6192-0 (pbk), \$19.95 ISBN 0-1951-6193-9 (pbk).

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It wasn't long after I received this book, which I had specifically requested to review, that I heard that Iris Marion Young had died of cancer, at merely 57 years old. So reading this book was a poignant experience, especially as it contained some genuine surprises for me that left me sad I hadn't become better acquainted with her and her work while she was alive. Dhanda's (2006) obituary describes her as a philosopher activist, engaged in practical, grass roots protests and campaigns as well as teaching philosophy and feminist theory. She also comes over both in her writing and apparently as an interviewee (see Dhanda, 2000) as a funny, kind as well as clever woman, who understood the cultural-historical trajectory of feminist political theorizing she was situated in, and made efforts not only to read feminist history sympathetically and with generosity – with an appreciation of how this has shaped the conditions for subsequent critique – but not without criticism. Dhanda also notes that Young saw her work as following two tracks – one concerned with political theory or philosophy (culminating in her later work in a critique of models of citizenship (Young, 1998, 2006), with the second concerned with the phenomenology of female embodiment.

So, perhaps like other feminist psychologists, as someone whose only previous acquaintance with her work was the famous essay, 'On Throwing like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility and Spatiality' (originally published in 1980), that was the first surprise: that here was a theorist who spanned concerns with female embodiment and global justice. The second was that she really was a phenomenologist – the chapters engage with Sartre, Heidegger, Merleau Ponty as well as de Beauvoir, Kristeva and Irigaray. And the third was that the essays in the book, while sometimes addressing debates of considerable complexity, are refresh-