

## **WE STILL DEMAND! REDEFINING RESISTANCE IN SEX AND GENDER STRUGGLES**

Patricia Gentile, Gary Kinsman, and Pauline Rankin, Eds.  
Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017

**REVIEWED BY ANGELA  
STANLEY**

*We Still Demand! Redefining Resistance in Sex and Gender Struggles* engages readers in ongoing debates within sex, gender, and feminist studies. The editors compile a compelling group of authors and chapters around these topics as a way to protect the history and historical legacy of these debates. That is to say, the authors have chosen to produce this text as a historical record to challenge the narrative of sex, gender, and feminist struggles as strictly human rights struggles. Their hope, as noted in the Introduction, is to produce these chapters as memories, and I would argue memoirs, of grassroots activism and the way that these communities have built and continue to sustain protest movements.

Grounding their text in the historical movement surrounding the We Demand demonstration in 1971, the authors tackle topics that were the touchstones of the movement. These topics include, but are not limited to, police repression, national security campaigns against queers, and the repeal of indecency laws. The demonstration questioned how effective Bill C-150 would be in eradicating discrimination against queer individuals. Rankin, Kinsman, and Gentile position *We*

*Still Demand* as a revisiting of the activism of the 1970s and 1980s to add depth to the historical memory of those struggles and to question the progressive narratives that emerged thereafter.

To this end, the editors divide the book into two sections: Histories of Resistance and Activism (Histories), and The Politics and Power of Resistance (Politics and Power). Although the split seems to signal that the first section is the one that contains historical retelling, this is not strictly true. Both sections, and all the authors, do an admirable job of reaching into the memories of various grassroots organizations and their members to ground their topics and expose contemporary sites of contention. Histories charts a seeming shift from a liberationist queer movement to a rights-based queer movement. In the chapters by Chenier, Brule, Burgess, and Kinsman, the common belief that same-sex marriage, the Pride and Dyke marches, as well as union politics, are rooted in a strict human rights logic, is challenged. The authors of these chapters return to the historical records, both print and oral, to find that these movements, at their core, were subversive and challenged the ways that marriage, work, and access to city space were constructed. The authors argue that in understanding these sites of struggle as simply a struggle for rights, the narrative of progress is falsely reinscribed and queer history is lost. Moreover, the articles by Bain, Matte, and Gentile offer us alternative ways to make meaning of sexual categories and critique the use of surveillance as a state tactic to restrict access to social and medical spaces even as folks are awarded rights as citizens and sexual minorities.

It is within the hegemonic understandings of the LGBTQ+ movement that Politics and Power picks up. Rose begins this section by critiquing the way that knowledge is produced. Particularly, his concern is that knowledge construed as valid (autopsy reports) is used to invalidate other types of knowledge (lived experience). In looking at the epistemology of passing, Rose argues that by relying on just those sanctioned forms of knowledge, complex ideas about gender are subsumed under a limited, and limiting, means of knowledge production.

Noble and Zanin do an extensive exploration into how documents interact with the state to offer those who can access them a feeling of community or citizenship, even as they allow for increased scrutiny by various state apparatuses. Pornographic magazines like *Lezzie Smut*, as well as the Canadian passport, are texts that offer a history of activism, meaning-making and racist ideas of who belongs. However, Zanin notes that documents can also offer ways to circumvent scrutiny.

The remaining articles, by Ferris, Lepp, and Wright, explore rights-based activism's contribution to the increased surveillance of those in vulnerable populations. They argue, convincingly, that in deploying the language of gendered and sexual rights, sex workers and refugees come under increased scrutiny, oftentimes to their detriment. Furthermore, in deploying these rights-based arguments, the original memories of activists and activism in these areas are perverted to suit the aims of the state.

This collection does an excellent job of elucidating the problems of relying on dominant discourses to understand grass roots movements;

however, I find myself wondering about the histories that are still lost. While I appreciate the editors' acknowledgements of the compilation's absent memories, the lack of disability histories is not accounted for. Am I to believe that, within the sex and gender resistance movements, there were no disabled queers contributing to queer activism in the 1970s and 1980s? This absence makes the editors' critique of whose histories are remembered and whose are forgotten even more poignant.

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## **BEING AN EARLY CAREER FEMINIST ACADEMIC: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES, EXPERIENCES, AND CHALLENGES**

Rachel Thwaites and Amy Pressland, Eds.  
London, UK: MacMillan Publishers, 2017

### **REVIEWED BY ISABELLE LEBLANC**

The book consists of thirteen chapters divided into five sections. Each section explores a different set of feminist theoretical and empirical challenges within the academic sphere as it intersects with the notion of "early career". Part I is dedicated to "Introducing the Early Career Experience"; Part II presents the "Affect and Identities: Negotiating

Tensions in the Early Career"; Part III focuses on "Exploring Experience Through Innovative Methodologies"; Part IV considers the elements of "Work, Networks and Social Capital: Building the Academic Career"; Part V examines how to work for change while "Envisaging Feminist Futures."

The book's content includes Laura McKenzie's essay that focuses on how the precariousness and instability involved in the Australian academic job market can be in conflict with long term employment aspirations for some people who find themselves needing to seek jobs outside of academia, sometimes for a short term, simply to survive. Often, the very idea of finding work outside of academia is shunned, which contributes to the overall feeling of being in conflict with the normative ideal of what the "early career" scenario should look like. Agnes Bosanquet, also looks into the Australian context to consider the experiences of mothering and how the notion of "leaving academia" is often part of the early career thinking process.

Olga Marques examines what it means to work in the margins of a discipline and how it often involves feelings of "frustration, contradiction and opportunity" (64). Helena Goodwyn and Emily Jane Hogg underline the importance of different forms of socialization within academic institutions and how some practices favor confidence-building for early career academics while other practices hinder people's confidence.

Sophie Alkhaled offers an auto-ethnographic account of what it means to question oneself on the "kind of feminist" one is to be when one is considered "hybrid" in the sense of multiples subjectivities. Anna Tarrant and Emily Cooper focus on the gendered experience of academia and how new spaces

of sharing can help, such as academic blogging in order to foster friendship and collective spaces. Marjaana Jauhola and Saara Särämä examine how "subtle sexism" persists in Finland where female academics still "watch male colleagues climb the ladder" and where resistance and activism can mean documenting all-male panels all while also encouraging feminist praxis such as collective writing.

An extraordinary example of such collective writing is offered in this book with a chapter signed by The Res-Sisters. This chapter is one of the strongest in the book as it illustrates how the refusal to submit to the idea that someone should be a lead author also means that their "approach is imbued with care and support for one another." This chapter is very rich and it emphasizes how "little acts of solidarity make a big difference" and the importance of embracing collective endeavors and nurturing allies within academia. This is sometimes difficult: Klara Regnö also examines the "challenges to feminist solidarity" (in a Swedish job market where people can be "middle-aged and still early-career" and the "search for the holy grail" can be a repetitive practice of applying and re-applying in a workforce that has "coercive forces with profound impact" on people trying to find long term employment.

Some cultural settings also offer particular difficulties as Irina Gewinner shows: female academics in Russia are more likely to live discrimination than their European peers, such as exclusion from scientific events.

As Órla Meadhbh Murray, Muireann Crowley, and Lena Wanggrenn point out: "being a feminist is hard work" and part of the work for change is identifying what is considered invisible work and making it more visible by acknowledging it as "real work" within academia. Katherine