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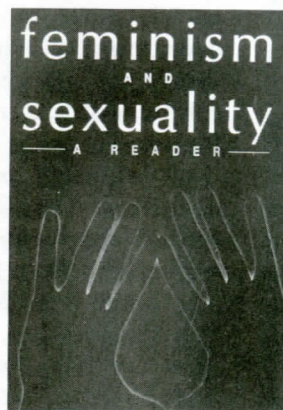


FEMINIST THEORY: FROM MARGIN TO CENTER by bell hooks

A sweeping examination of the core issues of sexual politics, bell hooks' book argues that the contemporary feminist movement must establish a new direction for the 1980s. Continuing the debates surrounding her controversial book, *Ain't I a Woman*, bell hooks suggests that feminists have not succeeded in creating a mass movement against sexist oppression because the very foundation of women's liberation has, until now, not accounted for the complexity and diversity of female experience. In order to fulfill its revolutionary potential, feminist theory must begin by consciously transforming its own definition to encompass the lives and ideas of women on the margin. hooks's work is a challenge to the women's movement and will have profound impact on all whose lives have been touched by feminism and its insights. (USA: South End Press, 1984. 174p. ISBN 0-89608-221-0)

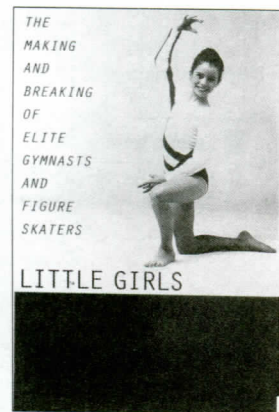
FEMINISM AND SEXUALITY edited by Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott

From bell hooks's incisive look at the scapegoating of black men as archetypal rapists to Andrea Dworkin's scathing statement on



pornography as violence against women, this anthology presents a wide-ranging contemporary perspectives on one of the most fiercely contested areas in feminist thought.

Writings by Adrienne Rich, Judith Butler, Feminists against Censorship, Catharine MacKinnon, and Cheryl Clarke cover the spectrum of issues that surround the crucial topic of sexuality. With classic and cutting-edge commentary on pornography, prostitution, sexual violence, young women and sexuality, heterosexuality and lesbianism, sadomasochism, AIDS, and the international sex industry, this is a comprehensive sourcebook on the major theoretical positions and critical trends surrounding this central feminist issue. (USA: Columbia University Press, 1996. 390p. ISBN 0-231-10709-9)

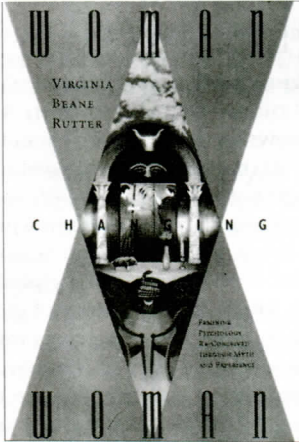


LITTLE GIRLS IN PRETTY BOXES by Joan Ryan

Looking beyond the glory, the gold medals and the public adulation, Joan Ryan brings to light the real world of women's gymnastics and figure skating—the real world that happens away from the cameras, at the training camps and in the private lives of talented teenage competitors. What comes out is a disturbing picture of virtually legalized— even celebrated— child abuse. Ryan's exposé shows the horrors endured by young Olympic hopefuls at the hands of their coaches and sometimes even their own families, as each year the athletes become younger and smaller. From starvation diets and debilitating injuries to the brutal tactics of tyrannical gymnastics guru Bela Karolyi, *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes* issues a call for sanity to a society obsessed with winning at any cost. (USA: Warner Books, 1995. 243p. ISBN 0-446-67250-5)

WOMAN CHANGING WOMAN: FEMININE PSYCHOLOGY RE-CONCEIVED THROUGH MYTH AND EXPERIENCE by Virginia Beane Rutter

Around the world, throughout time, cultures have marked the intimate and transformative events of a woman's life – the onset of puberty, her first sexual experience, conception, childbirth, menopause – with myths and rituals. Such significant feminine rituals are missing in modern societies.



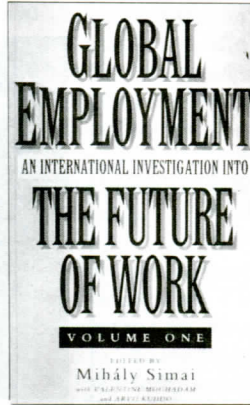
Offering a vision of psychotherapy as a sacred space for women's rites of passage, Jungian analyst Virginia Beane Rutter illuminates the emotional lives of women in her book, *Woman Changing Woman*. Rutter models the so-called "woman-to-women therapy," a process she describes as involving stages of containment, transformation, and emergence. She offers it as a place for a woman to uncover and make conscious the motivating stories and myths in her individual psyche. (USA: HarperCollins, 1993. 243p. ISBN 0-06-250748-6)

GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT: AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE FUTURE OF WORK (VOLUME I) edited by Mihaly Simai

The changing nature of employment, new occupational patterns, joblessness, and their origins and consequences are now high on the public agenda all over the world. If these are left only to the spontaneous operations of the market, the consequences in terms of accelerating pov-

erty, mass migration, social violence and international conflict may be serious.

The essays in these volume by experts, economists, sociologists, political scientists – brought together by the World Institute for Development

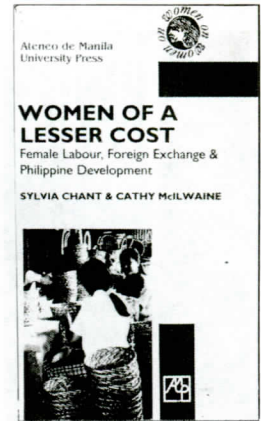


Economics Research of the United Nations University – examine the changing and increasingly interconnected labour markets of the OECD countries, the new market economies in central and eastern Europe, Russia and the heterogeneous economies of the South.

These studies explore the impact of socio-economic and technological factors, the new division of labour, in shaping the internationalisation of labour markets. They examine the parts played in these process by global competition, regional economic integration, global sourcing by transnational corporations, and the impact of international migration. They look at the variety of national responses to the new problems and at international initiatives. Particular attention is given to the growing role and specific position of women in the various economic sectors. (Japan: United Nations University Press, 1995. 274p. ISBN 1-85649-370-9)

WOMEN OF A LESSER COST: FEMALE LABOUR, FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT by Sylvia Chant and Cathy McIlwaine

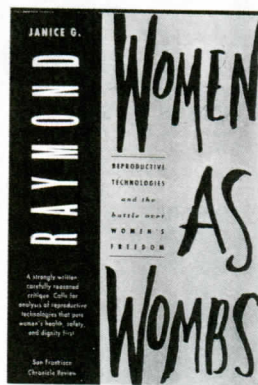
Women of a Lesser Cost explores one of the key questions in current research on gender and development: the links among women's employment, migration and household organization.



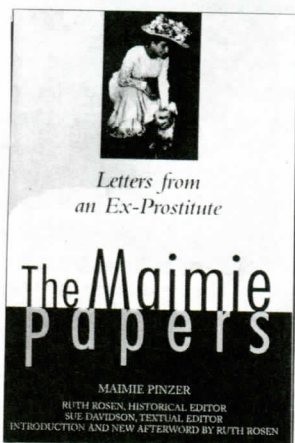
While female labour force participation has long been recognised as depending in a broad spectrum of social, economic and demographic factors, few studies to date have considered these in an integrated manner, and fewer still on the basis of in-depth primary research. Drawing on over 400 interviews with workers, households and employers in the Philippine Visayas, Sylvia Chant and Cathy McIlwaine consider three activities critical to the generation of foreign exchange and export-oriented development – export-manufacturing, international tourism and sex work. They examine the ways in which women's incorporation into these different sectors interacts with their social, demographic and economic circumstances. While the outcomes are diverse and often contradictory, the authors' findings provide important new insights into the nature of women's work and its implications for gender roles and relations. (Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1995. 372p. ISBN 971-550-146-x)

WOMEN AS WOMBS: REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND THE BATTLE OVER WOMEN'S FREEDOM by Janice G. Raymond

Janice Raymond, professor of women's studies and medical ethics analyses the high-tech biomedical reproductive techniques, and contributes groundbreaking insights into the raging debate over reproductive technology and its ethical, legal and political implications. Raymond asserts that, far from being liberatory issues of "choice," these techniques – including *in vitro* fertilization, sur-



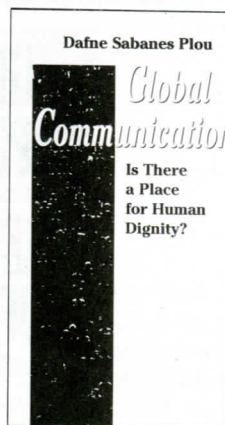
rogacy, and sex predetermination — are actually a threat to women's basic human rights. (USA: HarperCollins, 1993. 254p. ISBN 0-06-250899-7)



LETTERS FROM AN EX-PROSTITUTE: THE MAIMIE PAPERS by Maimie Pinzer (Ruth Rosen, historical editor; Sue Davidson, textual editor)

Maimie Pinzer's life was not very different from that of other Jewish girls growing up in Philadelphia at the beginning of the century. Turning 13, Pinzer's life was drastically altered with the brutal murder of her father, growing conflict with her mother, and her subsequent arrest for running away from home. She spent the next few years in prisons, reformatories, and hospitals eventually becoming a prostitute and morphine addict. In 1910, while recovering from drug addiction, Maimie began a correspondence with Fanny Quincy Howe. Maimie's letters offer an autobiographical account of the life of a poor working woman in the first quarter of this century. Maimie sur-

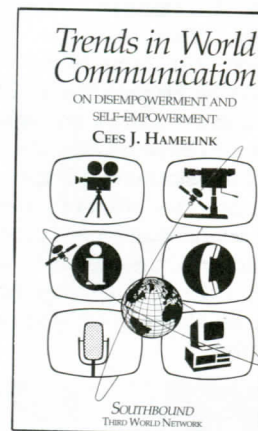
vived prostitution and drug addiction, and worked to achieve some independence and to aid young women like herself. (USA: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1997. 463p. ISBN 1-55861-143-6)



GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS: IS THERE A PLACE FOR HUMAN DIGNITY? by Dafne Sabanes Plou

The communication media are being transformed by the development of new technologies and the creation of giant cultural and entertainment conglomerates whose influence reaches to every corner of the world. Concern about what this concentration of power implies for human freedom and dignity has been heightened by recent mergers and the rapid development of multi-media communication. Yet, this ongoing communications revolution can also offer new ways for churches to carry out their mission in a creative and liberating way.

Journalist Dafne Sabanes Plou, who is also the Chairperson for the Latin American Region of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), draws on the stories of struggle and hope and the experience-tested insights shared during the 1995 global congress of WACC. Plou sets in sharp relief the issues, challenges and opportunities facing Christian communicators and all those concerned about Christian communication today. (Switzerland: WCC Publications, 1996. 74p. ISBN 2-8254-1186-8)

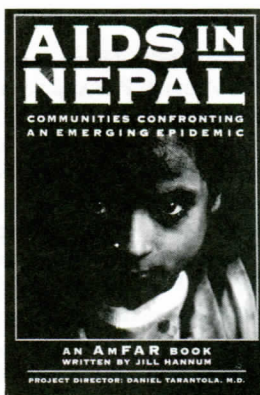


TRENDS IN WORLD COMMUNICATION: ON DISEMPOWERMENT AND SELF-EMPOWERMENT by Cees J. Hamelink

Hamelink, in reviewing and analysing the current trends in global communication, presents a timely challenge to the uncritical false optimism of the myth of the global village. He traces the history of globalization, names the giant corporations which sets the pace of the march to globalization and explains the technological developments which make globalization possible. Packed with facts and insights, this volume is a good guidebook to understanding global communication. (Malaysia: Southbound Sdn. Bhd. And Third World Network, 1994. 168p. ISBN 983-9054-06-6)

AIDS IN NEPAL: COMMUNITIES CONFRONTING AN EMERGING EPIDEMIC by Jill Hannum

In 1993, the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AmFAR) began a three-year, community-based AIDS prevention program in 17 sites scattered throughout the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal. With the objective of enabling people to protect themselves and their sexual partners against HIV/AIDS through information, education, and access to means of prevention. Jill Hannum, in presenting the voices of people who are at the forefront of the response to HIV/AIDS in Nepal, also reveals the many discoveries that community-based organizations made through their interaction and



dialogue with young people and adults across the country. (USA: AmFAR, 1997. 208p. ISBN 1-888363-60-6)

INVENTORY OF HIV/AIDS INFORMATION SOURCES IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION by the United Nations AIDS Asia Pacific Intercountry Team

In mid-1996, a database of over 3,000 candidate resource/information centres was compiled from various sources and a short questionnaire about the technical coverage and information services of each centre, was sent to each institution. This inventory is the result of the nearly 300 responses received. It aims to promote an approach to meeting these needs, not by establishing more information resource, but instead by facilitating coordination among existing centres and increasing awareness of the resources and services they provide. (Thailand: UNAIDS, 1997. 156p.)

WOMEN'S ROLE IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY: SELECTED ESSAYS edited by the University Center for Women's Studies, University of the Philippines

What should be the "proper" role of women in Philippines society? How has this been captured in history? In 1989, the then newly founded University Center for Women's Studies organized a conference of researchers and academics to explore the above questions. What emerged from the two-day conference is a rich trove of essays about the various roles played by Filipino women throughout the different epochs of Philippine history. From be-

ing recognized as spiritual leaders (or *babaylans*) in pre-Spanish times, the women in colonial times were assigned less significant roles, but rose to the challenge of each situation, whether as rebels, political activists, or quietly continuing the tasks of the *babaylans* of old. The selected essays in this volume show that what matters may not be the specific roles played by the Filipino women, but the relative importance society has given these roles throughout the different periods in history. (Philippines: UP Press, second edition 1996. 224p. ISBN 971-8720-00-6)

THE VERY INSIDE: AN ANTHOLOGY OF WRITING BY ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN edited by Sharon Lim-Hing

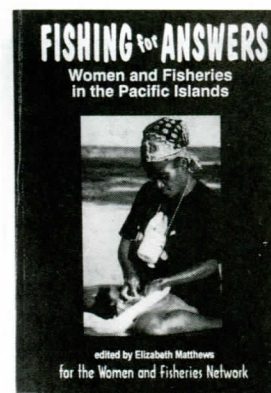
The Very Inside features imaginative and provocative essays, interviews, poetry and prose by Asian and Pacific Islander lesbian and bisexual women. The contributors to this comprehensive volume originate from or identify their heritage in Asia — from South Asia to Southeast Asia, (including Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines) to East Asia. (Canada: Sister Vision, 1994. 467p. ISBN 0-920813-97-6)

FISHING FOR ANSWERS: WOMEN AND FISHERIES IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS edited by Elizabeth Matthews for the Women and Fisheries Network

Life in the Pacific Islands with limited land area to cultivate crops is naturally dependent on coastal resources for food and identity. In the Pacific Islands society, both men and women contribute to the gathering and processing of food, whether from land or from the sea. In fishing activities, men generally are associated with visible, commercial fishing activities, while women dominate the subsistence and small-scale artisanal fishing, especially the collection of invertebrates. Women also dominate the fish processing and marketing activities in the region.

There is now a growing body of research and literature about women's roles and concerns in the Pacific Islands' fisheries. Many re-

ports and reviews have been written that document women's activities in the sector and the socio-economic significance of these activities. This book



adds to this growing interest to make visible the particular roles women in the Pacific Islands play in the region's food economy. It offers a picture of the contemporary issues affecting women who catch fish or invertebrates, or who process and/or sell aquatic foods in the Pacific island region. (Fiji: Women and Fisheries Network, 1995. 177p. ISBN 982-335-001-9)

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DIWATA TRAINING ON ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

The DIWATA Foundation, Inc, founded in 1989, is a coalition of two national formations of women's organizations and networks in the Philippines. In 1992, the Foundation started the DIWATA projects, a five-year project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency to promote full socio-economic, political and personal empowerment of women. Through this fund mechanism, 200 projects for women were funded, including projects on education and training, consultations and conferences, research, publications, organizing and socio-economic work. This publication is culled from a training conducted by the Foundation in 1996, as part of its Capability-Building for Women's Socio-Economic Projects, and which aims to train women's organizations in the implementation and management of their socio-economic

projects. (*Philippines: DIWATA Foundation, 1997. 137p. ISBN 971-91845-4-x*)



IMAGES edited by Selvy Thiruchandran

The essays in this volume are from the multi-lingual media-monitoring project of the Women's Education and Research Centre in Sri Lanka. The project's participants represented a wide cross-section of society: researchers, advertisers, media personnel, television producers, university lecturers and a few undergraduates. Collectively, the essays examine women's portrayal in the various media: Sinhala and Tamil cinema, advertising, modern theater, and Sri Lankan fiction in English. Thiruchandran's essay "Major Trends of Feminist Approach to Media" provides an analytical thread to bind the various essays in the collection. (*Sri Lanka: Women's Education and Research Centre, 1994. 139p. ISBN 955-9261-02-9*)

REDEFINING PROSTITUTION AS SEX WORK ON THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA by Jo Bindman

This controversial report disputes the identification of prostitution as a human rights violation akin to slavery which informs the 1949 Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. It reveals that rather than facing conditions of slavery, most men and women working as prostitutes are subjected to abuses similar in nature to those experienced by others work-

ing in low status jobs in the informal sector. The report also finds that the dismissal of the entire sex industry as abusive obscures the particular violations of international norms which are of concern to sex workers. Finally, it recommends that all national legislation which, in intent or in practice, results in the placing of sex workers outside the scope of the rule of law, should be repealed. Moreover, it proposes a redefinition of prostitution as sex work as a preliminary condition for the enjoyment by sex workers of their full human and labour rights. (*UK: Anti-Slavery International, 19???. mimeographed, 109p.*)

EAT SMART, HEALTHY, LOCAL: SAFE AND SECURE FOOD FOR TOMORROW by Pesticide Action Network

In 1996, the Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific, the regional centre of a global coalition promoting sustainable agriculture launched the Safe Food Campaign to promote eating locally grown food from sustainable and healthy agriculture. Eat Smart, Healthy, Local is PAN Asia Pacific's information campaign kit and source book containing timely information and insightful analysis of the issue of food security and sustainable agriculture. There are also case studies of local communities' experiences in sustainable food production and policy advocacy campaigns, as well as documents and position papers on the food security issue by various people's organizations and networks. (*Malaysia: PAN Asia and the Pacific, 1996. 141p.*)

THE UNIVERSAL CHILDBIRTH PICTURE BOOK by Fran P. Hosken (pictures by Marcia L. Williams)

First published in 1981 and now on its 7th edition, *The Universal Childbirth Picture Book* is designed to be used in different ways: for teaching purposes, workshops, and group meetings, as well as for individual reading. It presents the biological facts of reproduction that are shared by all women. (*USA: Women's International Network News, 1995. 75p. ISBN 0-942096-01-0*)

MORE OR LESS, HALF THE SKY: CHINESE WOMEN PARADE COMPILED by China Features

Chinese women account for one fifth of the total women in the world. With their sisters in other countries, they make up half of the world population, and are supposed to "prop up half the sky." Composed of 60 in-depth reports on individual women and women's groups across China, *More or Less, Half the Sky* is a diverse parade of women: ministers and housewives, intellectuals and farmers, elderly and school pupils, indigenous women. The women talk about their sentiments and aspirations, obstacles and achievements, thoughts and reflections in a rapidly changing society. (*China: China Features, 1995. 324p. ISBN 7-5011-2918-5*)

AUTONOMOUS DEVELOPMENT: HUMANIZING THE LANDSCAPE by Raff Carmen

At a time of widespread disillusion with what development had done to the lives of millions of marginalised people over the past 40 years, this book revisits the primary question of what development ought to really be about.

Drawing on the reflections and writings of Latin American, Asian and African development activists and thinkers whose work is too little known outside their continents, Raff Carmen finds development wanting both as an epistemological category and as a sound operational practice. *Autonomous Development* presents a counter-view in terms of which development ought to become a project of people's autonomous agency. People need to be free as subjects of the process of change, "inventing their future" as authors of a culturally embedded, gender-permeated, economic and political process of transforming and humanizing the landscapes they inhabit. (*UK and USA: Zed Books, 1996. 244p. ISBN 1-85649-388-1*)

Reviews

women in brackets

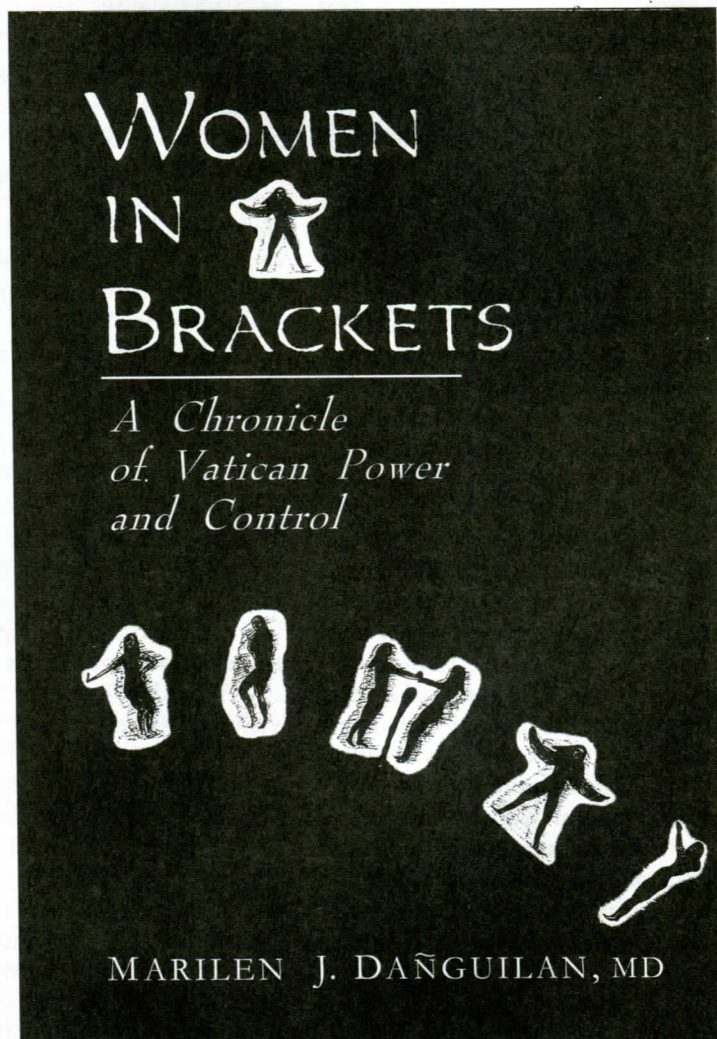
A Chronicle of Vatican Power and Control

Marilen Danguilan, M.D.

Review by Patricia Fe C. Gonzalez

I first got acquainted with Marilen Danguilan's views through her first book, *Making Choices in Good Faith*. I could relate instantly with her views, as they were so down to earth, freed from assertions that start with moral judgements instead of from where people are.

I then got a chance to meet Dr. Danguilan personally in one of the roundtable discussions on reproductive health and rights sponsored by the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines (FPOP), where I was working part time. FPOP and other women's groups were the target of attack of the Catholic Church hierarchy and pro-life advocates over the issue of artificial contraception and abortion. To help create a venue for dialogue between women's reproductive rights advocates and religious people, in order to honestly look into where each individual is coming from, and discover current thinking among rank and file religious Christians. FPOP organized a small group dialogue between church people and women advocates on the ethical and moral issues



surrounding reproductive health and rights. The discussion was meant to establish areas of unity and disunity and, from there, move to a larger audience and see whether a saner approach to the issue is at all possible. When asked about her views on the ethical and moral questions on reproductive health and rights, Dr. Danguilan responded by raising more questions: Who sets moral principles? How do ethical principles come about and who sets them? When it comes to policymaking in relation to reproductive rights, who speaks for whom? What are the ethical considerations on population aid and loans, on biomedicine and reproductive health? What are the ethical considerations governing relationships? Why the rampant incidence of violence against women? These questions later became a guide in our dialogue with other sectors. But shortly after that short, very thought-provoking discussion, Dr. Danguilan, left the country. "What a loss to the Philippine women's movement here," I thought. Marilen Danguilan is one of very few individuals in the Philippines who dare articulate openly their views on the question of women's reproductive rights, despite the inquisitorial mood of the Catholic community, especially some sections of the church hierarchy and laity. I thought that I could no longer ask her the questions that were bothering myself as a Christian and a budding feminist. I thought that Dr. Danguilan had been "silenced." I thought that perhaps the woman who was so reflective and passionate about her personal views on women's reproductive rights became exasperated with the senseless paranoia of men of the cloth. *Women in Brackets* proves me wrong. Dr. Danguilan simply hibernated, gathering her thoughts, preparing to come back with a vengeance.

Women in Brackets as its secondary heading says, chronicles the moves of the Catholic hierarchy, from the local Philippine church to the Vatican authorities, to influence and make its presence felt in the international conferences in Cairo and Beijing, two important conferences that really made a difference for women worldwide. It records the interference of a church listening only to its own views and stubbornly sticking to them, no matter who or what is sacrificed. *Women in Brackets* is a satirical description of the deliberation processes in Cairo and Beijing, where terms or phrases that different groups could not attain consensus were enclosed in brackets. Take a look at some of those words: equal, equitable, people-oriented, race and ethnicity, gender, equal access to education, sexual orientation, reproductive health, unsafe abortions, sexual harassment, domestic work, other unions. Words like these would be debated on, kept, dropped, deleted, or changed depending on how debates and negotiations proceeded, until the final papers were approved by the whole conference. Reading through Dr. Danguilan's book, one can at least appreciate the work in mind and emotions that have gone into the documents.

As I follow the debates on the "brackets," I cannot help but reflect on my own questions and discernment processes. My interest in the issue of reproductive rights stems from my own questions and anxieties regarding the inner logic of the vision of society I used to believe in, a vision which considers non-essential feminism, creation spirituality, and women's autonomy.

Coming from a religious background, I give real significance to the moral and ethical grounds of my decisions. It is like second nature to me. I remember how I would consult fellow religious and even moral theologians in choosing the form of

my social involvement. Sometimes, it happened in very informal settings, where I simply presented the dilemmas I was caught in. Sometimes I did this in more formal articulation of questions, and sometimes even in collective processes or catharsis. I honestly factored other people's views into my own personal deliberations even as I made the final decisions myself. The process of discernment was never easy. Often, I became filled with much anguish, as each major choice meant a confrontation with an old self and a complete detachment from previously held views and beliefs, and yes, even of lifestyles.

Fortunately, those theologians from whom I sought counsel embraced a moral theology grounded not only in doctrinal teachings but also in the anguish and dilemmas—and joys too—of human living. I am suspicious of decisions spawned more by rules rather than by deep thought, observation and discussion. For me, extreme forms of legalism deprive people of a God-given grace called "free will."

The Vatican and the institutional church need to be reminded of the attitude of Jesus to the human condition. The image of Jesus dealing with the confrontation between the prostitute and the moral guardians of the people reveals Jesus' basic attitude to human dilemmas: "He who has no sin amongst you, cast the first stone." It was an indictment of an attitude that is more concerned with laws rather than with understanding the human condition, with cold philosophical "heavenly" virtues and principles rather than with the questions and concerns of real people.

This should apply to any institution or organization of power, be it church, state, ideological parties. More often, such institutions consider power as a relationship of domination, rather than a facilitator of liberation and the flowering

of genuine freedom. People must now be aware of the fact that the question of women's reproductive rights and women's oppression as a whole has something to do, more than anything else, with relations of power. And in this power conflict, women stand as victims rather than as "criminals" as some sections of society would have people believe. This attitude bears no mark of compassion to the anguish and trauma that many women undergo in making reproductive choices.

Some representatives of government were presented in Dr. Danguilan's book as having openminds on the question of reproductive rights. Some stood by the hard-line church position. By and large however, government representatives represent a section of our society where *realpolitik* rather than *prophetic witness* can be expected. Playing "diplomat" or playing "prophet" seems a difficult choice for men and women in government positions. While the book cannot serve as a critique of government's population and reproductive health policy, Dr Danguilan, as she interpellates her own position on the debate, makes a categorical statement that asserts women's inalienable right to decide for themselves and to have full autonomy over their own bodies. Dr. Danguilan does not at all free the state of any responsibility for its use of power and dominance in the name of economic growth and sustainability, or for blaming women for overpopulation and even environmental degradation and imposing policies that violate women's autonomy.

Far from the church leaders' insinuations that progressive women are "fetus killers," Dr. Danguilan presents them as women who understand the conditions of other women. We may, for instance, wish our heart out that there were no abortions in the world but the fact

FAR FROM THE CHURCH LEADERS' INSINUATIONS THAT PROGRESSIVE WOMEN ARE "FETUS KILLERS," DR. DANGUILAN PRESENTS THEM AS WOMEN WHO UNDERSTAND THE CONDITIONS OF OTHER WOMEN.

remains that millions of abortions happen everyday and millions of women die of "unsafe abortions." We can also wish our heart out that HIV/AIDS is not here with us. But the fact remains that the number of people afflicted with the disease is growing at an alarming rate everyday. The problem is concrete. The solution must start from where the problem is and where it is coming from, and not from any airport decision of what is correct and incorrect, moral and immoral by people who admit not having experienced the same parallel dilemma. It was deepened understanding of feminism that clarified for myself the starting points from where the issue has to be addressed and resolved. For instance, the question is not whether one is for or against abortion. The questions are much larger than this and the answers are not black or white.

Some church leaders are concerned that a liberal attitude towards sexuality will only lead to permissiveness and decay of moral values. That is a negative view of what could be a positive appreciation of sexuality, which makes people celebrate it as a wondrous gift rather than as a disgrace. In making daily choices, people will sin and make mistakes. It is the responsibility of people in positions

of authority to ensure that the sanctity of each individual's conscience remains inviolable. I recall one of my religious mentors: "Sometimes religious teachers leave no freedom for our students to choose what is right or wrong. We install structures that checks whether they go to Sunday mass or fulfill this or that Christian duty. We do not even give them the freedom to choose between heaven or hell."

Our church leaders should start to deal with their constituencies as grown-up adults. We are against any form of promiscuity and irresponsible relationships. But having a sense of responsibility, is in itself a process that all individual persons go through. It cannot be imposed from outside. After all, who decides who is responsible and who is not? Is the church's norm of a sense of responsibility the only norm? Should the church impose it to the rest of society?

Women in Brackets consistently raises these important questions. It may well be Dr. Danguilan's close encounter of a rare kind with her church. It could well be ours too. ♪

Patricia Fe C. Gonzalez is a member of the Executive Committee of the feminist organization Sarilaya.