

there is a dearth of involvement of women, even of a routine let alone a transformative kind.

In the next section of the book, Cordula Reimann and Donna Pankhurst observe that the uptake of feminist discourse, or even attention to women, in the academic and practical field of conflict resolution has lagged well behind its uptake in development studies or, for that matter, the broad academic field of international relations. Pankhurst does, however, see definite signs of change in approaches to the 'post-conflict' stage. While women are still not being invited into the negotiation of conflict resolution, in Africa they are being promoted by international NGOs as central to peace-maintenance, especially at the local level. Pankhurst is concerned however that, as in the development field, the more emancipatory aspects of western feminist thought will not be brought to bear in this process. Like contributors across the book, she concedes that many tradition-oriented women in non-Western settings remain opposed to, or unaware of, these wider notions of what is possible for women.

The three contributions in the section on women and human rights strike a more positive assessment than those in the sections on development and conflict resolution. Uta Ruppert rightly emphasises the importance of the feminist breakthrough at the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights. Ruppert believes the human rights discourse will continue to provide a unifying umbrella for the women's movement, in part because of the track record of the movement's internal global caucus processes in working around issues of cultural difference. Akua Kuenyehia, a law academic in Ghana, takes this further by arguing that women's organisations in Ghana and Nigeria have found the extended UN human rights documents of the 1990s to be key devices to put pressure on their national governments in areas such as domestic violence, as well as reproductive rights and education. Sonya Wolte argues even more strongly in the same vein for Kenya. She also presents an excellent outline of the efforts of national NGOs to bring the rights discourse to bear at the local level by means of training of civic educators and the real changes that are afoot there for women as a result. It remains to be seen whether the optimism in these three contributions proves to be well-founded, with the human rights discourse proving more potent in actual change than the earlier development discourse.

A critical introduction to Queer Theory

Nikki Sullivan, 2003

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003, pp 232, pb, ISBN 0 7486 1597 0

Reviewed by Dr Felicity Grace, Griffith University, Australia

Queer Theory texts have the best covers. Who can forget Jagoes' (1996) selected graphic of Noddy and Ken Doll on the cover of *Queer Theory* (MUP)? The cover of Nikki Sullivan's *Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* continues this fine tradition of memorable cover illustrations. It features four posters from Kelly and Fiveash's Hey Hetrol! poster series including, Hey, hetrol! - Have a baby, no national debate and Hey, hetrol! - Membership has privileges accepted worldwide.

Both my first and overarching response to this book is that it is a clear and well-organised introduction to Queer theory. Any lecturer looking for a good orderly overview of the emergence of queer theory, its key activist events and core disputes could do no better than to direct students to reading the first three chapters. These, in turn, consider the history of social understandings of same-sex desire; debates on sex and gender; and the emergence of queer politics. The materials drawn together for these sections are not new, but they are well organised and clearly explained in a very conversational and approachable style. I think the book is worth the cover price for this clarity and accessibility alone.

From chapter 4 Sullivan begins a discussion of a series of contentious debates and topics which have been critical to Queer theory and practice with a particular interest in lesbian and feminist encounters with queer. It is interesting that she should begin with race, since I would not have said that Queer theory has been particularly good at engaging with topics outside of the sexual. However, I agree that there 'is a coincidence between racism, sexism, and homophobia which is integral to ... heteronormativity' (59) as identified by both second-wave feminists and Foucault. Nevertheless discussions of race and colonisation have emerged relatively late in queer activism and without the biting edge of other debates such as transgender and sadomasochism. Thus while queer studies remain unacceptably white American-Anglo, and sexual in orientation (78) I cannot find the case for 'Queer Race' convincing and therefore question the logic of positioning it as the first debate for discussion given race remains something of a blind spot within most queer studies.

Sullivan's discussion of the fraught terrain of transsexual, transgender and its clash with radical lesbian separatism opens a journey across the classic terrain of queer studies. Trans is historically well situated through its relationship to the medical profession and this chapter is gripping in its outline of the shifting social context of gender reassignment in the United States via both its machinations with radical separatist feminism, and the wider social significance of the murder of Brandon Teena/Teena Brandon. Sullivan is especially clear in identifying the variety of feminist responses to MTF (male to female) transsexuals, in particular those who identify as

lesbians and FTMs (female to males) especially in their relationship to butch lesbians.

The outline of queer engagements with hetero-normativity and associated attempts to queer straight sex, is significant for the ways in which it adds to the more studied American context the Australian debates which have circulated around Melbourne-based, U.K. born historian Sheila Jeffreys. Sullivan is to be congratulated for identifying the very precise and highly varied ways of deploying the notion of heterosexual desire, particularly within feminist theory. This chapter works to highlight the engaging and productive work of feminists considering queering techniques. For me this stands out as one of the striking features and strengths of this work – it actively resists reducing queer theory to a series of gay male counter histories of homosexuality, rather positioning these within a much wider context of cultural concerns surrounding sexuality.

The exploration of debates around the meaning of gay and lesbian community, the character of sadomasochism, shifting understandings of fetishism and the impact of queer theory and methods on popular culture, which make up the balance of this work are similarly well organised. Beginning with an historical context, proceeding to the contemporary situation, and outlining key points of contention, Sullivan does exactly execute a critical introduction. She ends abruptly on the success or otherwise of attempts to queer popular culture and once again I was left wondering if the chapter on race might have been better positioned as a conclusion examining blind spots and areas for further development and debate within queer theory.

*Modern bodies: Dance and American Modernism
from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey*

Julia L. Foulkes

The University of North Carolina Press, 2002, pp 257, pb, ISBN 0-8078-5367-4

Reviewed by Maggi Phillips, Edith Cowan University, Australia

Dancing bodies, especially those committed to artistic intent, present a peculiarly potent if elusive terrain for gender studies. In the first place, bodies who dance are inextricably gendered regardless of any high-minded, confrontational or subversive ideals that their movement may seek to project. Additionally, in western contexts, dance is perceived to thrive in social arenas as a catalysing agent of biological drives, while hovering on the margins of mainstream intellectual and artistic endeavours. Julia Foulkes' *Modern Bodies* both affirms and contests this per-