

from the philosophy profession, from Heads of Departments and AAP Figures on the Profession, it represents most programs (92% of the philosophy programs). These figures, where possible, have been cross-checked against data obtained from external sources, from DEEWR (formerly DEST) and University Planning Offices. Data from external sources confirms the figures collected internally by the Profession itself. In cases where full data has been unavailable from sources internal to the profession, external sources have been used to provide an indication of trends for the profession.

## 7. References

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The second AVCC Action Plan for Women Employed in Australian Universities 2006-2010, 2006, [http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/policies\\_programs/women/AVCC-Action-Plan-for-Women-2006.pdf](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/policies_programs/women/AVCC-Action-Plan-for-Women-2006.pdf)

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## End Executive Summary.

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## Endnotes

1. University Australia Statistics, University Staff Profile 1996-2005, Table 4. Female Staff: % Full-time and Fractional Full-time by Classification 1996-2005, <http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/publications/stats/staff.htm>
2. The Second AVCC Action Plan for Women Employed in Australian Universities 2006-10, p. 2., [http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/policies\\_programs/women/AVCC-Action-Plan-for-Women-2006.pdf](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/policies_programs/women/AVCC-Action-Plan-for-Women-2006.pdf).
3. This figure represents Teaching and Research Positions, and not Research Only positions. If Research Only positions

are included the figures remains 23%. AAP Benchmarking Collection 1998-2006.

4. Data sourced from AVCC website, 'University Staff Profile 1996-2005': <http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/publications/stats/staff.htm>
5. Report A.
6. Universities Australia, *Academic Staff by Classification and Gender 1994-2002* (4 July 2003, available at [www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/policies\\_programs/women/index.htm](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/policies_programs/women/index.htm) (accessed 10 March 2008)) See also Kerry Carrington and Angela Pratt (2003) "How Far Have We Come? Gender Disparities in the Australian Higher Education System" Dept of the Parliamentary Library Current Issues Brief No 31 2002-03. Available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/CIB/cib02-03.htm>, accessed 10 March 2008.
7. Source: DEST, Selected Higher Education Staff Statistics, 1994-2002, AAP Data.
8. Graeme Hugo (2007) "Demographics – the need for renewal" paper presented at the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (7 March 2008) available at <http://www.chass.org.au/events/2008/phd/index.php#program> Accessed 11 March 2008.
9. This may improve women's likelihood of promotion, given that when women are appointed, they are more often appointed to teaching positions and are more likely to have done contract and casual teaching and research work than having had the opportunity to pursue post-doctoral or other research only positions than their male peers.
10. Continuing positions occupied by staff on ARC contracts are not included in these figures.
11. See Sally Haslanger's comments at the Central APA panel, 2007. Haslanger, S., Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)', 2007. <http://www.mit.edu/%7eshaslang/papers/HaslangerWomeninPhil07.pdf>
12. Female philosophers were employed in 40% of Level A positions in 2006. There are no comparable figures at Level A for 1988 as appointments at this level are not recorded until 1994. In 1994 female philosophers were employed in 24% of Level A positions.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### *Cheating on the Sisterhood: Infidelity and Feminism*

Lauren Rosewarne (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2009). 272 pages. ISBN: 978-0-313-36031-2

Reviewed by **Celina M. Bragagnolo**

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Infidelity to a committed relationship is "an activity ripe for criticism, with participation just as readily dubbed feminist as unfeminist" (7). Thus writes Lauren Rosewarne in the introductory chapter of her work, *Cheating on the Sisterhood: Infidelity and Feminism*, a feminist critique of infidelity. This work weaves scholarly research and a first-person account from the Other Woman perspective, together with an extensive array of pop culture material that, Rosewarne argues, has influenced her Generation Y political identity. The author's research focuses on a particular kind of affair: the committed man/single woman liaison. While infidelity in other sorts of configurations display their own problems—there are certainly women who cheat, as well as those who are in committed gay relationships—the committed man/single woman relationship has the potential to

mirror certain patriarchal structures that should be criticized. To her own dismay, Rosewarne, an insightful, intelligent, and self-described feminist, occupied the Other Woman position in one such relationship that spanned several painful and at times lonely years. As such, the book is, among other things, an “examination of allegedly feminist justifications for infidelity” (8). More accurately, it could be described as a third-wave *justification* of infidelity that at the same time recognizes the elements and actions in such relationships that further patriarchal values. As she describes her third-wave standpoint, “analyzing the negative ways that power disparities can be illustrated through infidelity is fundamental. Of equal salience is investigating how infidelity can be framed as an act of feminism, as personal liberation, as illustrative of attempts to alleviate feelings of disempowerment and as a survival strategy” (xiii).

As Rosewarne’s research and personal experience make clear, this type of affair has the propensity to uphold and reproduce patriarchal values. How does this particular kind of affair—the committed man/single woman kind—amplify the inequalities that result from the patriarchal values plaguing heterosexual relationships? What is it that makes this kind of infidelity ripe for critique? Due to space limitations I can only mention four characteristics of these types of relationships that impact negatively on sexual equality in that they leave women—the Other as well as the Betrayed—disempowered. Most of these problems are well-known and widely researched in feminist literature but have not been pursued under the lens of infidelity.

To begin with, the committed man/single woman affair reproduces and solidifies problematic gender stereotypes. The Betrayed Woman is frequently portrayed as a Madonna figure symbolizing “female ethical superiority” as well as nurturing towards her family: noble, pure, self-sacrificing, and restrained (43). Women have been taught and are thus expected to repress anger and negative feelings. In contrast, the Other Woman is portrayed as a whore, a woman who is sexually open and available. She is seen as the cause of the man’s transgression and responsible for his infidelity towards his wife. Equally problematic is the picture of the Other Woman as someone who does in bed what the wife does not want to do. Patriarchal culture attempts to retain the image of wives as pure, motherly, and chaste (43). A male’s sexual fantasies cannot be played out with the mother of his children. Sexual liaisons outside the marriage and household allow men to freely engage in activities that would degrade their wives. Of course, this is not reflective of all affairs and for someone like Rosewarne there is an opportunity for both participants to gain empowerment by engaging in sexual activity outside traditional structures of heterosexual monogamy. However, the idea that the man cannot or will not engage in sexual fantasies with his partner but feels free to do so with someone else is, as Rosewarne suggests, a part of the feminist research repertoire (53).

Rosewarne touches on the “ethics of care” in a couple of chapters pointing to the ways in which women “in practice”—not as a product of some essential characteristic—prioritize different values within relationships. In the woman’s case, this involves prioritizing care to a greater extent than men and prioritizing the man’s well being above her own. In many instances, the committed man with whom Rosewarne was involved would seek her consolation when he missed his long-time partner. At other times, he would call Rosewarne to talk about whether he should get back with her. While she would always be available and caring towards him, “I am hard pressed identifying times,” she says, “when I ever felt convinced that he cared about me more than he did about himself” (36). Indeed, as much research on the ethics of care argues, women

in relationships are encumbered in ways that men are not and that hinder independent action. While this might not be the case in many heterosexual relationships, it does become magnified, Rosewarne argues, in affairs like hers “where the man simply *can’t* provide the woman support she needs, *particularly* when *he* is the source of her pain” (197, author’s italics).

A third issue that the author’s story showcases is the problem of choice (28). Committed men who have affairs tend to have the power to choose between two women who want them, effectively granting them power over the relationship. As Rosewarne confesses, her always “wanting more” contributed to this: “While keeping his options open may empower the man, it is an unworkable scenario for the betrayed partner and the single woman who becomes *disempowered* in such an arrangement” (28, author’s italics). The false hope that oftentimes accompanies the Other Woman position is further disempowering since she is time and again led to postpone future plans of her own. Being subjected to his inability to choose among his various of alternatives reduces single women’s control over time, whether it results in “staying at home waiting for their man to call” or because they spent ten years in an affair and are now approaching forty, single, and childless (33). “For the single woman to relinquish the control of her time and wait for crumbs is a key aspect of her subordination” (170). Rosewarne painfully narrates episode after episode where her settling for “crumbs” clearly left her disempowered.

But perhaps the most interesting challenge that infidelity poses for feminism is the question that Rosewarne proposes in the title of her book. Are we cheating on the sisterhood by getting involved with a committed man? This is a thorny issue, particularly since the first question to be asked is whether, in the first place, there is *a* sisterhood or multiple sisterhoods? While female friendship and companionship are idealized in our culture, “the darker side of sisterhood,” as Rosewarne calls it, is a well-known fact: “it is other women whom we most vigorously compete with” (38). Is this lack of unity, this lack of solidarity, the product of our multiple identities? (41) Could our lack of a “single, macro sisterhood” be the product of patriarchy? Of women competing for male attention? (51) Rosewarne seems to answer affirmatively to all of these questions: “Although I contend that no singular sisterhood exists, this is neither a situation existing because of a biological imperative for women to be spiteful, mean, or malicious nor because of an innate yen to be competitive; rather it is spawned from unequal power relations between men and women. Infidelity is a perfect case study to examine women undermining sisterhoods, as well as men facilitating, and encouraging, such behavior” (41). While Rosewarne argues that there is no single sisterhood—our culture of fractured identities, heightened individualism, and patriarchal structures get in the way of such a construction—she insists that both women tend to become disempowered in affairs.

How then does Rosewarne, the feminist, justify her involvement in such an unequal relationship? This is a question that I kept asking myself from the time I began to learn how emotionally abusive this relationship was. While Rosewarne attempts to rationalize her decision based on factors such as “the demographic issue of the man drought” in countries like Australia (13), the culture of compulsive heterosexuality and celebration of heterosexual coupling (12), society’s belief in the individual’s right to pursue pleasure (72), as well as a consumer culture that values newness and disposable objects (chapter 5), time and again I found myself wondering (as did her friends and family) why she stayed. In addition to “cultural forces” that might induce us to enter into an affair, Rosewarne does indeed

put forth strong arguments which point to how our capacity to experience sexual pleasure outside traditional forms of coupling and committed relationships can indeed be a feminist practice of empowerment. However, it doesn't necessarily follow that this must come at the price of feeling anxious, rejected, manipulated, and disempowered. In a chapter entitled "Ouch! Don't Stop! Infidelity as Sadoomasochism," Rosewarne highlights how the issues of consent and choice become highly problematic in affairs. While "safewords" exist in sadoomasochistic sexual activities, for example, giving those involved the freedom to explore different forms of dominance and submission, there is no such "safeword" in affairs. While the affair gives participants freedom to explore relationships outside of "prescriptive" committed relationships, this freedom is *hindered* by the fact that there is no "safeword" available to stop a relationship that has gotten out of hand. "While the single woman may have chosen to get involved," Rosewarne argues,

while she may have even chosen to be in a situation that she knew could be highly painful, can she ever *really* consent to the amount of pain that might transpire?...The safeword exists in sadoomasochism because it is acknowledged that a situation where pain is sought and consented to can easily get out of hand. In infidelity, the single woman may be in a situation more painful than she would ever have consented to, but she stays and her pain continues. (180, author's italics)

Can one really gain empowerment if one is in a situation which one has no control over, as Rosewarne describes her affair? Without a "safeword," it seems like experimenting with dominance and submission is not only risky business, as Rosewarne knew, but extremely disempowering. Is this the kind of relationship we would want for our sisters, whomever we choose to include in such a category?

Rosewarne seems to grant towards the end of the book, and the end of her story, that desire trumps politics: "knowing that certain behavior conflicts with feminism is insufficient to eliminate desire and nor is it enough incentive to deprive ourselves of it. Feminist politics, no matter how ardent, are unlikely to drown out desires in a culture that encourages their sating. To pretend that a desire does not exist can mean denying the aspects of our identities that makes us individuals" (114). Yes, desire exists, and it often trumps politics, but this is *precisely* where feminist critiques can and must step in. Desire has been well researched in feminist scholarship, particularly in the area of psychoanalysis, since desire is heavily implicated in structures of domination, especially patriarchal ones. Because for Rosewarne politics can do nothing when confronted with desire, feminist critique can only go so far. In her understanding, feminism becomes a means, a "tool," for analyzing action, for critical self-awareness. "Sure, feminism became an important framework for me to intellectualize my behavior and his behavior and hers, but it was a tool. It was a reference point and it was a tactic of rationalization. But politics could never be as important to me as the experience. ...To do what I thought would bring me pleasure, would bring me *empowerment*. And I used feminism to analyze it" (238). A politically relevant feminist critique can and must be allowed more force than this.

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## **Contemporary Feminist Theory and Activism: Six Global Issues**

Wendy Lynne Lee (Buffalo, NY: Broadview Press, 2010). 244 pp. ISBN 1551119048 \$29.95

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The new century has given rise to reconsiderations of many twentieth-century preoccupations. Wendy Lynne Lee's collection of essays uses the analysis of six critical issues facing the world today to redefine feminism for the twenty-first century, or, at least, to demonstrate the limitations of major conceptions of feminism of the late twentieth century. The book is best described as a collection of essays, for the structure of the work is not a linear argument, or even the application of a clearly defined perspective to different issues. Rather, it is primarily a work in applied philosophy, employing the critical tools of the discipline to argue for a feminism that is broad enough to be relevant to understanding and addressing any and all of the critical issues of our day, from climate change to terrorism to globalization in all its permutations. A form of socialist feminism informed primarily by critical theory and globalization emerges from the theoretical tools employed in the analyses of the issues. The argument for this new critical feminist perspective consists primarily in its usefulness for illuminating connections between a wide array of seemingly disparate topics. In the course of the analyses of these topics, the primary opponents of feminism in the contemporary world emerge: religious fundamentalism and free market capitalism.

This is an ambitious book, with multiple aims articulated for the book as a whole, as well as for each chapter. In the introduction, Lee states the primary aims for the book: (1) to "demonstrate the relevance of feminist theorizing to issues that may seem less directly about the status and emancipation of women...but which...are more relevant now than ever" (8-9); (2) to "show how feminist thinking can usefully illuminate the conceptual, political, economic, and morally relevant links between a range of pressing contemporary issues" (9); and (3) to show that feminist theorizing has the capacity to "elucidate some of the key relationships among seemingly disparate issues that are likely to define the twenty-first century" (9). To accomplish these aims, Lee chooses to address six global issues: sexual identities, reproductive technology, global economic inequality, the culture industry, religious fundamentalism, and the environment. These are all already recognizable issues of concern for feminists, but Lee chooses these particular issues for analysis because they are being transformed by the introduction of new technologies and the effects of globalization. These transformations call into question older conceptions of feminism and feminist analyses of these issues, thus demonstrating both the need for a different conception of feminism, and for understanding the relevance of feminism to issues that are now more complex and more clearly connected to other emancipatory movements.

For example, in Chapter II, "Sexual Identities: Institutionalized Discrimination, Medical/Technological Possibility, and the (Slow) Death of Binary Nature," Lee lists four contemporary events that have transformed feminist analyses of sexual identity. These are: (1) state legislation that aims to make heterosexuality "the only legitimate expression of sexual desire" (15); (2) technologies that make possible multiple combinations of sex and gender; (3) the challenges to "social and religious institutions such as marriage and 'the family'"