

with some nuance and delicacy, but without covering it over. However, there was limited engagement with such criticisms in the essays themselves. In many ways, as my discussion above shows, the authors were keen to re-place Kristeva's concept into a social milieu with structural markers; however, although highly constructive, this re-placement did not highlight this problem as a general one for Kristeva's thought.

However, these criticisms cannot undermine the fact that this volume spans a highly interesting and varied number of topics and achieves excellent scholarly standards. Readers of Kristeva will be interested in this volume, as well as various scholars writing about political and social theory, language, or aesthetics.

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***Butterfly Politics*. By Catharine A. MacKinnon. Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017. 504 pp. \$29.95 (hardcover).**

doi:10.1017/S1743923X18001009, e4

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Legal scholar and activist Catharine A. MacKinnon has published a new book. I can imagine she was tempted to call it *I Told You So*. MacKinnon has been talking about the sexual exploitation of women for decades — in intimate relationships, at work, on screen, during war. Long before there was #MeToo (for that matter, long before there were hashtags at all), there was MacKinnon. To her credit, this retrospective collection, which draws on 40 years as a prominent women's rights advocate, is not an exercise in self-congratulation. It is (yet another) attempt at public education.

For decades, MacKinnon has confronted issues like sexual harassment, pornography, and rape to make the case that the sex-based subordination of women is a fundamental feature of modern society — and that the law can be used to do something about it. The essays and speeches contained in this volume, some of which appear in print for the first time, span as far back as

1980 and are organized chronologically within the book's six broad sections on themes ranging from "Change," "Law," and "Culture" to "Towards a More Equal Future." Taken together, these writings offer an exhilarating overview of the intellectual trajectory of one of the great legal architects of gender equality in our time.

In the opening pages, MacKinnon explains that the actual title of the book — *Butterfly Politics* — references a phenomenon that scientists call the "butterfly effect," the idea that "extremely small simple actions, properly targeted, can come to have highly complex and large effects in certain contexts" (1). Although surely meant to inspire the legions of activists whose names will never achieve household status and whose impact will never be fully accounted, the image of the hapless, vulnerable butterfly nonetheless initially struck me as unfortunate, particularly coming from an author I have long admired for her witheringly forceful prose. Was this some kind of ploy, I wondered, to broaden her audience by softening her image (and that of feminism more generally)? But then I remembered another formidable would-be butterfly, Mohammed Ali, who famously boasted that inside the ring he would "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee." Prospective readers can rest assured that *Butterfly Politics* does not flit about, and there is nothing breezy or lightweight about it. This book is quintessential MacKinnon, which is to say knockout swings from start to finish.

Even at nearly 500 pages long and comprising more than two dozen individual essays, *Butterfly Politics* offers only a small sampling of MacKinnon's vast scholarly output, which over the years has appeared not only in traditional formats such as books and law review articles but also in speeches that crackle with the eloquence and punch of live delivery even when repurposed as essays. MacKinnon's commanding rhetorical style galvanizes audiences, but it has been known to exasperate critical interlocutors, including political theorist Wendy Brown, who once observed: "Anyone who has seen or heard MacKinnon knows that she is extremely smart, articulate, charismatic, and a master of an oratorical style in which righteous rage is alloyed with icy rationality, hammering empiricism, and a beseeching feminine anguish — all of which must be mentioned in an analysis that purports to account for her power and purchase in America politics, the law school classroom, and the feminist activist community" (78). Brown's assessment begs the question: when it comes to MacKinnon, why hasn't "extremely smart" been accounting enough?

One possible answer is that critics have trained their focus to an unusual degree on her style and to a much lesser degree on her substance. This theory gains credibility upon reading the book, which will contain many surprises if the main thing you have heard about MacKinnon is that she once tried to get pornography outlawed. MacKinnon earned her lasting reputation as an enemy of sexual liberation in the 1980s, when, in collaboration with activist Andrea Dworkin, she lobbied for increased regulation of pornography. For the record, the legislation MacKinnon favored held that “pornography is a sex discriminatory practice, violating women’s civil rights on the basis of their sex by inflicting sexual abuse to make it, in the case of coerced sex acts, or in the case of trafficked materials, by provably promoting the infliction of sexual violation and other sex-based denigration” (96). MacKinnon’s campaign against pornography alienated many feminists, among others; her common cause with the Moral Majority frequently was cited as definitive proof of the error of her ways. Today, with a self-professed “pussy grabber” occupying the Oval Office, MacKinnon fairly could ask whether her “pro-sex” opponents might not have some strange bedfellows of their own. More productive, however, would be to take the opportunity occasioned by the publication of this book to reassess what one thinks one knows about MacKinnon, and more broadly, about the costs of denying or downplaying the pervasive sexual subordination of women in everyday life.

Even for those more familiar with MacKinnon’s work, reading this book will be rewarding. Not because there is anything substantially new in these pages; there is not. That is not the point. Over the past 40 years, MacKinnon’s message has stayed remarkably the same — the world keeps changing. And, at least for me, reading MacKinnon in the #MeToo era feels different. I still worry that her approach doesn’t take women’s sexual agency seriously enough, that it doesn’t account for sexual diversity, that it vests too much power in legal coercion as an instrument of social change. But in 2018, I also have a newfound appreciation of just how normalized the sexual exploitation of women has been, and just how possible it might be for that to change.

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