

the most provocative ideas in Eichler's model since, as she points out, the heterosexual union of marriage is a legally privileged relationship. In Australia, at a time when it is being proposed by the Federal government that health rebates for IVF be limited to married women, and exclude single and lesbian women, it is clear that this principle can represent a huge ideological stumbling block. Eichler's social responsibility model represents a promising vision, but it is also worth remembering that family shifts can oscillate. Social responsibility is not a guaranteed progression, but a goal that will require vigilance and effort.

¹Bacchi, C. 1999. *Women, Policy and Politics: The Construction of Policy Problems*. London: Sage.

A Jewish Mother in Shangri-la

Rosie Rosenzweig
Boston: Shambhala, 1998

Reviewed by Marion Stichman Gold

Rosie Rosenzweig accepts her son Ben's invitation to learn about Buddhism first-hand rather than asking him to return home – to her and to the faith of his birth, Judaism. However, after reading Rosenzweig's adventures in Shangri-la, I was reminded of a mother's familiar admonition to a child, "and if your friends were to jump off a bridge, would you follow?" Rosenzweig, in her quest to understand her son's choice to become a practicing Buddhist, visits retreats in Europe and Asia where she speaks to clerics and laity in her search for answers. Her attempts to recreate her son's experiences reveal that she is able to find common ground between Buddhism and Judaism. However, Rosenzweig's description of these experiences reveal more about her own association with Judaism than answer any questions we may have about her son's change of religion. Why Ben becomes a Buddhist is not definitively answered.

Rosenzweig's narrative of her journey to Paris and Nepal in search of Ben's truth, as well as her own, leads her to analyses of past events that link mother and son. Her reflections on past experiences are sometimes painful and the seeming alienation between mother and son, husband and wife which emerge from time to time serve as a template for the patterns of living together for so many of us. Nevertheless, the reason for undertaking the search for Ben's religious identity through a concrete reenactment of his spiritual journey remains a mystery.

Was it necessary for Rosenzweig to travel half way around the world in an

attempt to share Ben's experiences? Did Rosenzweig feel that the lines of communication could only be reestablished through personal contact? My sense is that her relationship with Ben is somewhat flawed, not unlike many relationships between parents and adult sons and daughters. And the author may have felt that the only way she could reach her elusive son would be through her physical presence and direct conversation with him in a location of his choosing.

A Jewish Mother in Shangri-la doesn't reveal how or why Ben becomes a Buddhist. It does describe the successful rapprochement between mother and son. Rosenzweig does not become, as Rodger Kamenetz writes in *The Jew in the Lotus*, a JUBU (a Jewish Buddhist), although she does attempt to integrate Buddhist meditation rituals into her own Judaic practices. However, Rosenzweig did not have to travel to Nepal to learn about meditation and spirituality in Judaism. Structured, externally directed meditation, (*hitbonenut* in Hebrew) and inner-directed meditation, (*hitbodedut* in Hebrew) are integral to the practice of Judaic mysticism.

Rosenzweig's narrative is a marvellous travelogue about a trek to the Himalayas, but it is also much more than that. It is the narrative of the more perilous and rewarding journey of a mother's relationship with her son.

The Bat Had Blue Eyes

Betsy Warland
Toronto: Women's Press, 1993

Reviewed by Ruth Panofsky

In this powerful collection of prose and poetry, Betsy Warland excavates the eviscerating landscape of incest. She writes as a survivor who is determined not so much to lay blame—although she does evoke the tragedy that is incest. Instead, she writes toward reconciliation with her mother and the other women in her family who have been victims of incest themselves. Driven to unearth this terrible “family secret,” Warland rightly questions whether memory can be “translated into words” (14). This is her dilemma: as a poet she knows that language cannot fully articulate the experience of incest. Yet, Warland recognizes the personal and political value that resides in language, and *The Bat Had Blue Eyes* is as much an effort to reclaim the self as it is a poetic rendering of lived experience.

In fact, the abuse at the heart of the collection and the speaker's world is not described in detail. Warland's focus on the emotional trauma engendered by incest positions the victim at the centre of her volume. The perpetrator is