

with insight, compassion, and offers a practical, focused plan for developing different patterns of self-care. Similarly, this book will be a good resource for the practitioner who wants to support the growing numbers of non-resident mothers eager to write their own healing stories.

Regrettably, the book's index is thin and less helpful than the more complete table of contents. The book lists additional resources for finding help and advice in the UK, as well as some internet resources. The short list of additional readings is comprised mainly of books on topics such as self-esteem and anger management, along with six books for children about divorce. With a few exceptions, the reference list is dated, with many citations over ten years old. While this may speak to the dearth of comparable books on the subject, Hart omits contemporary texts that may address the needs of practitioners and scholars interested in this important mothering issue.

## **Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman's Guide to Why Feminism Matters**

Jessica Valenti  
Berkeley: Seal Press, 2007

### **Reviewed by Laurie Kruk**

As a professor, I frequently find myself arguing for the relevance of feminist criticism with young women of eighteen who see my concerns as quaint. As a middle-aged mother of daughters as well, I find myself confronting a generation gap. So when I came upon this book, its objectives clearly appealing to my pedagogical and personal interests, I was intrigued. Jessica Valenti, founder of *Feministing.com*, is obviously speaking for, and to, "Generation Y." From the teasing glimpse of a nude female torso on the cover, to the use of chapter graphics (T-shirts with feminist slogans to embody the "frontal" approach), and pop-culture-infused rhetoric, this book is designed to appeal to the younger generation. In defending feminism against its popular reputation as "anti-men, anti-sex, anti-sexism, anti-everything," Valenti responds to the concern that "there's something wrong with us.... Too fat ... dumb ... too smart ... too slutty ... not slutty enough" with the terse riposte, "Fuck that" (6). Her mixture of earnest intelligence and street-wise argot keeps this book from being "academic." Indeed, if "the personal is political" slogan still applies, Valenti sits nicely within mainstream feminism, drawing on her own experiences to make her case. Her journey from confusion to commitment hooks the reader and

offers a portrait of a complex personality. This is what makes her feminism so twenty-first century—a refusal to settle for simple answers.

Valenti is at her best when discussing the “pornification of pop culture.” Dealing with the recent media frenzy that has been packaged for profit as “Girls Gone Wild,” for instance, she is careful not to come down either on the anti-sex or pro-porn side. She mulls over the ramifications of stripping for the cameras with a lot of hard questions about power politics. Admitting to her own youthful indiscretions helps support her sisterly perspective, so after surveying a number of viewpoints, she concludes “I guess what I’ve come to—and is what works for me—is that you have to find your own middle ground. There has to be space for young women to figure shit out on their own. And I think most times young women do figure it out” (48). Valenti is also very persuasive on sex education campaigns in the United States, her main audience, and the rise of “abstinence” programs and virginity pledges or chastity balls. She provides sources for these disturbing trends (many stories are found online) to ground her anger in current statistics. This is eye-opening stuff for mom/profs who do not have time to watch much television or surf the web.

Valenti also discusses abortion rights, politics, the U.S. women’s movement, the wedding industry, women and politics and the “third wave,” or multiple identity positions within feminism. Perhaps because of my own position, I found these chapters to be a bit thin. But in some ways, this book is an antidote to academic feminism/feminists, as chapter titles like “I promise I won’t call ‘Her-story’” suggest. Nevertheless, I read it with admiration for Valenti’s websurfing research skills and punchy style. Valenti makes her case for feminism with a compelling mix of girl-talk and up-to-date indignation. I think I’ll recommend her book to my students—and in a few years, to my daughters.

## **Obsession, with Intent: Violence against Women**

Lee Lakeman

Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2005

### **Reviewed by Deborah Davidson**

I received my review copy of Lee Lakeman’s *Obsession, with Intent: Violence against Women* just as Aqsa Parvez was murdered, allegedly at the hands of her father and brother in what has been called “an honour killing,” since the 15-year-old Aqsa was said to have refused to wear her head covering and to be engaged in behaviours typical of teenagers in the Western world. Debates emerged as to the place of culture in this teen’s murder. I would argue that