

porting the military regime in the Philippines through the allocation of aid and the military commence, such as the extraction of natural resources by Canadian mining companies. The state violence of the Philippine government and the complicity of the Canadian state perpetuate the dominance of Canada over developing countries such as the Philippines.

This book is written primarily for an academic audience. During her fieldwork, one interviewee asked whether Pratt's research would improve the lives of Filipino domestic workers. I also had the same question after reading this book. How this book might bring about policy changes and better migrant women's lives is unclear. There seems to be an unfortunate gap between Pratt's belief in the need for policy changes and the limited reach of a theoretical book. Nonetheless, Pratt makes a significant research contribution to the study of migrant mothers in Canada.

Rupture

Clementine Morrigan.

Bradford, ON: Demeter Press, 2012.

Reviewed by Andrea Nikki

Rupture is a bold, honest, and thought-provoking collection of poems and short narrative pieces on female embodiment, violence against women, sexuality, and feminism. Morrigan's accessible language and intimate tone invite the reader to enter into her experiences, which range from harrowing to exhilarating, and appreciate the challenging journey of the woman in patriarchal culture who seeks to honour her feelings, desires, and powers and carve out an independent existence.

The volume includes a section entitled "Rupture" which features photographs of Morrigan sitting nude in a bathtub behind a drawn curtain in which she expresses agony over her female embodiment. Clutching and shaking her large breasts, she offers the insight that only in the seclusion of her private bathtub—a tiny, hidden space—can a woman safely express her full horror over sexual violation. Another section entitled "strange girls have feelings too" includes images of pencilled self-portraits on coloured paper. These self-portraits couple youthful innocence with female sexuality and feminist resistance to effectively underscore that sexual violence against a woman is absolutely never her fault.

A number of the pieces and images seek to educate readers on the social constructions of female beauty and female sexuality. For instance, in "the

girl with the red hair really needs to shave her fucking armpits” Morrigan describes an incident when her innocent love for her armpit hair was met with hatred and group violence: she was pulled down stairs and her head was struck against a pole. This piece is complemented by Morrigan’s self-portrait entitled “**FIERCE FEMMES FUCK SHIT UP**” in which her arms are raised to proudly display thick armpit hair alongside her long, feminine hair, a creative self-presentation that serves to destabilize the femme-butch dichotomy.

“bad skin: a psoriatic manifesto” is also on the theme of social control of the body, and claims that those with severe psoriasis are at an increased risk of suicide, not due to the condition itself but to the aggression and harassment it elicits: “your questions and your looking, they are a violence. they are an attempt to force my unruly body back into a tamed state. they are a demand that i disappear or at the very least explain myself. how dare i walk around with my peeling, red skin, acting like i am normal, just as human as you” (71). Further, “the story of my first period” relays the lonely, alienating, and embarrassing experience of first menstruation, an experience that is typical in patriarchal culture, though one that is rarely articulated in print. Morrigan rewrites the cultural script, and affirms menarche as an event of physical, spiritual, and emotional significance, finding support and strength from the Goddess:

i was bleeding my first blood, caught there between a twelve year old body and an old old man, both who laid claim to my body, who thought it was theirs to touch and feel ... and me, inside my body, possessing it, bleeding my first blood, resisting ... i went outside ... i walked to the tree. i threw my arms around her... i held her pulsing body close to mine. i celebrated and I grieved and i gathered strength. i knew i was not alone. i knew She was with me.... (38)

The concrete imagery of “yes i am a slut” posits several reasons why a woman might be seen as a “slut”:

yes i am a slut. because i have big tits that pour out of pretty much every shirt. . . .because in grade eight a boy pulled down my shirt and bra in front of the whole class and my teacher and everyone saw my nipples. because he got a slap on the wrist and i was told by the principal that it was partially my fault because of the shirt i was wearing ... because when i was nineteen i was assaulted by a bunch of guys for not shaving my armpits they felt the need to pull my tits out of my shirt ... because the clothes i am most comfortable in apparently make me a target for rape. (57-58)

Like other feminist writers, Morrigan affirms an active female embodiment and frees herself from so many sexist projections: “yes i am a slut. because my pussy is beautiful and insatiable. because i love my body. . . .because my body belongs to me no matter how many times i’ve been violated and none of it was my fault ever” (58).

There is too little literature that explores the social mistreatment and stigmatization of survivors of child sexual abuse, including their exploitation by professionals, and this reader appreciates Morrigan’s succinct exploration of this taboo issue in “spillllll over”:

i don’t want people telling me how damaged i am and that i need professional help. i am full of professional help, the good and the bad. i don’t want to be ... a thesis statement or the proof of someone’s else’s point ... and no, you can’t cite my sexual partners in your footnotes and no, you can’t define these experiences for me ... i am not ... [a] sad story about what happens when children are sexually abused. my promiscuity is linked to my trauma and guess what, so were my long, codependent monogamous relationships, but i don’t ever hear “you were sexually abused as a child, are you sure you’re not just using romance to cope?” ... it’s too easy to say “oh you were sexually abused as a child so that’s why you are promiscuous.” it is too easy and it’s also just plain mean. you sound just like my abusive ex.... (63-64)

Rupture asserts the right of women to self-determination and shows how difficult it is to achieve. The volume will appeal to women readers who seek to challenge sexist conditioning and social norms.

An Alchemy of Mind: The Marvel and Mystery of the Brain

Diane Ackerman.
New York: Scribner, 2004.

Reviewed by Csilla Toldy

Essayist and poet Diane Ackerman celebrates the human mind and brain in *An Alchemy of Mind*. As America’s best-known female naturalist she connects