

BREAKING FEMINIST WAVES

Series Editors:

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For the last twenty years, feminist theory has been presented as a series of ascending waves. This picture has had the effect of constraining the way we understand and frame new work as well as deemphasizing the diversity of past scholarship. The aim of this series is to attract original scholars who will unearth neglected contributions to feminist theory and offer unique interpretations of past scholarship. By breaking free from the constraints of the image of waves, this series will be able to provide a wider forum for dialogue and engage historical and interdisciplinary work to open up feminist theory to new audiences and markets.

LINDA MARTÍN ALCOFF is Professor of Philosophy at Hunter College and the City University of New York Graduate Center. Her books include *Visible Identities: Race, Gender and the Self*; *The Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy* (coedited with Eva Kittay); *Identity Politics Reconsidered* (coedited with Moya, Mohanty, and Hames-Garcia); and *Singing in the Fire: Tales of Women in Philosophy*.

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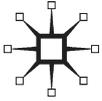
by Clara Fischer

GENDERED READINGS OF CHANGE

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SERIES FOREWORD

Breaking Feminist Waves is a series designed to rethink the conventional models of what feminism is today, its past and future trajectories. For more than a quarter of a century, feminist theory has been presented as a series of ascending waves, and this has come to represent generational divides and differences of political orientation as well as different formulations of goals. The imagery of waves, while connoting continuous movement, implies a singular trajectory with an inevitably progressive teleology. As such, it constrains the way we understand what feminism has been and where feminist thought has appeared, while simplifying the rich and nuanced political and philosophical diversity that has been characteristic of feminism throughout. Most disturbingly, it restricts the way we understand and frame new work.

This series provides a forum to reassess established constructions of feminism and of feminist theory. It provides a starting point to redefine feminism as a configuration of intersecting movements and concerns, with political commitment but, perhaps, without a singular center or primary track. The generational divisions among women do not actually correlate to common interpretive frameworks shaped by shared historical circumstances, but rather to a diverse set of arguments, problems, and interests affected by differing historical contexts and locations. Often excluded from cultural access to dominant modes of communication and dissemination, feminisms have never been uniform nor yet in a comprehensive conversation. The generational division, then, cannot represent the dominant divide within feminism, nor a division between essentially coherent moments; there are always multiple conflicts and contradictions, as well as differences about the goals, strategies, founding concepts, and starting premises.

Nonetheless, the problems facing women, feminists, and feminisms are as acute and pressing today as ever. Featuring a variety of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives, *Breaking Feminist Waves* provides a forum for comparative, historical, and interdisciplinary work, with special attention to the problems of cultural differences,

language and representation, embodiment, rights, violence, sexual economies, and political action. By rethinking feminisms' history as well as their present, and by unearthing neglected contributions to feminist theory, this series intends to unlock conversations between feminists and feminisms and to open up feminist theory and practice to new audiences.

LINDA MARTÍN ALCOFF
and
GILLIAN HOWIE

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