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## BOOK REVIEW

### TALKING BACK TO *IRON JOHN*: A REVIEW OF *WOMEN RESPOND TO THE MEN'S MOVEMENT*

WOMEN RESPOND TO THE MEN'S MOVEMENT: A FEMINIST COLLECTION. Edited by Kay Leigh Hagan. Harper San Francisco, 1992. Pp. 175.

Kathy O'Sullivan\*

*what you mean a mins movement? aint they still running the world? . . .*

. . . .

*do these guys wanna help make the world more better for everybody or do they just wanna whine about how hard it is to be mins in a mins world? if not why not?*<sup>1</sup>

Why should feminists discuss a "movement" comprised mostly of middle class white men? And why should a women's law journal devote precious space and energy to such a discussion? Until I leafed through *Women Respond to the Men's Movement*, my answer to both questions was, "we shouldn't." But bear with me, as I intend to persuade you that we, as feminists and as lawyers, would do well to pay attention to the "men's movement," and to read *Women Respond*.

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1. hattie gossett, *mins movement??? a page drama*, in *WOMEN RESPOND TO THE MEN'S MOVEMENT: A FEMINIST COLLECTION* 19, 20, 24 (Kay Leigh Hagan ed. 1992) [hereinafter *WOMEN RESPOND*].

## I. WOMEN RESPOND TO THE MEN'S MOVEMENT

Feminism asks us to look always for the subtle linkages that connect one thing to another, as well as the reversals that serve to distract us from the issues of our greatest concern.

. . . The essays collected [in *Women Respond*] explore the connections and reversals, both obvious and obscured, that help us understand the depth, complexity, and implications of the men's movement.<sup>2</sup>

*Women Respond* is worth picking up if only because it is a witty, literate, and educating read. But *Women Respond* does far more than entertain. This collection of essays provides much-needed feminist critiques of the men's movement which reveal its oppressive potential and ideological compatibility with other mostly-male clubs of which women have learned to be wary. In *Women Respond*, twenty women writers take on the men's movement. The authors—feminist theorists, poets, teachers, writers, theologians, psychologists, journalists, and activists—include a shaman healer<sup>3</sup> and “the first genetic witch in the USA,”<sup>4</sup> although no one willing to identify herself as an attorney. The authors take their subject seriously, pointing out the dark side of the men's movement that we ridicule or ignore at our peril, as well as the brighter side from which we may draw hope. Their viewpoints range from witty derision to thoughtful critique, with wildly differing levels of optimism and pessimism about the progressive potential of the men's movement.

The essays vary widely in format and writing style. For example, author Ursula K. Le Guin barely fictionalizes what was deceptively billed as a “great mother” weekend, displaying a prose snapshot of an early men's movement retreat, while performance artist/writer Hattie Gossett speaks through the African-American oral tradition of “backtalk” to lend voice to *page drama*.<sup>5</sup> Most of the authors approach their task in essays, from the informal to the heavily footnoted and academic. Rounding out the collection are comic strips in which cartoonist Nicole Hollander's protagonist Sylvia wryly ruminates on this thing called the men's movement.

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2. Kay Leigh Hagan, *Introduction to WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at xi, xiv.

3. Vicki Noble, *A Helping Hand for the Guys*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 101, 110.

4. Zsuzsanna Emese Budapest, *In Search of the Lunar Male: Contemporary Rituals of Men's Mysteries*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 83, 91.

5. Gossett describes “backtalk” as talking back “to the power of the printed page or tv/movie screen or live public speaker or performer.” Gossett, *supra* note 1, at 19.

## II. THE MEN'S MOVEMENT

So what is the men's movement? The most valuable lesson of *Women Respond* is that there is no monolith properly labelled "the" men's movement. Rather, the authors identify several movements which, due to their deep ideological variances, are disserved when lumped together: the mythopoetic, the fathers' rights, and the antisexist movements.

### A. *The Mythopoetic Movement*

"It's clear," the King said, "that I am in debt to you. Whatever I have in my power that would please you, I will give."

"Well," the young man said, "I'd suggest that you give me your daughter as my wife."

Then the King's daughter laughed and said, "I like the way he doesn't beat around the bush . . ." And so she walked over and kissed him.<sup>6</sup>

[M]en face some cultural problems that come to them solely on the basis of gender: They are so strictly trained to be providers that many other areas of their lives are neither cultivated nor validated . . . They struggle with guilt and doubts associated with a history of privilege.

Women struggle with the fact that they are statistically likely to be impoverished, worked to the bone, and raped.

. . . The men's movement and the women's movement aren't salt and pepper, they are hangnail and hand grenade.<sup>7</sup>

The mythopoetic wing of the men's movement is that which will likely come to mind as "the" men's movement, due to the press it and its guru Robert Bly's best-seller *Iron John: A Book About Men* have received for the past few years. Poet Bly's initial notion of the mythopoetic wing sprang from his "discovery" in the 1970s of what he terms "soft" men: men "not interested in harming the earth or starting wars."<sup>8</sup> Such men, according to Bly, are "not happy. You quickly notice the lack of energy in them."<sup>9</sup> Why do "soft" men so lack vitality? As Bly observed, "[i]ronically, you often see these men with strong women who positively radiate energy."<sup>10</sup> Not surprisingly, given this observation, when Bly an-

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6. ROBERT BLY, *IRON JOHN: A BOOK ABOUT MEN* 258 (1990) [hereinafter *IRON JOHN*].

7. Barbara Kingsolver, *Cabbages and Kings*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 39, 40.

8. BLY, *supra* note 6, at 2.

9. *Id.* at 3.

10. *Id.*

nounced his discovery of "soft" men in the early 1980s, he suggested feminism was to blame for rendering men too sensitive, too kind, and too empathic.<sup>11</sup>

When expanding the thesis that would become *Iron John*, Bly later shifted some of the blame for this phenomenon from feminism to inadequate fathering and male mentoring.<sup>12</sup> The mythopoetic ideology decries the absence of paternal influence upon sons created by the assignment in patriarchy of the breadwinning role to the male. Bly describes the result of this phenomenon as "father hunger"<sup>13</sup> in sons. "The problem with men" in contemporary society is thus conceptualized as a failure of some necessary process of male initiation by other males.<sup>14</sup> As an antidote to undesirable empathizing, Bly issues a call for men to discover the "wild man"<sup>15</sup> within, through mythology and folktales, manly rituals, and drumming.

Is such an ideology a threat to feminist values? Movement gurus Bly, Robert Moore, and Sam Keen claim the men's movement is not a "put-down" of, but a complement to, feminism.<sup>16</sup> But although Bly "seems to have started out with some idea that men should explore the full circle of human qualities within themselves,"<sup>17</sup> the writers of *Women Respond* argue he has, in *Iron John*, retreated from that challenge into the timeworn values of patriarchy,<sup>18</sup> where masculinity means dominance and manhood is measured by distance from women, especially from mothers.<sup>19</sup> Further, *Women Respond* criticizes the mythopoetic wing's ideology for its narcissism, its failure to consider issues of power, race and sexuality, and particularly its ignorance of men's violence against women.

The basic premise behind *Iron John*, "father hunger," is challenged by teachers and writers Jane Caputi and Gordene O. MacKenzie: "[I]t seems incredible that Bly can gaze upon a world

11. Charlene Spretnak, *Treating the Symptoms, Ignoring the Cause*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 169, 172.

12. *Id.* at 172-73.

13. BLY, *supra* note 6, at 94.

14. Starhawk, *A Men's Movement I Can Trust*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 27, 32.

15. Spretnak, *supra* note 11, at 172.

16. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Patriarchy and the Men's Movement: Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 13, 13; *see also* BLY, *supra* note 6, at x.

17. Gloria Steinem, *Foreword* to *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at v, viii.

18. *Id.* at viii-ix; *see also* Riane Eisler, *What Do Men Really Want? The Men's Movement, Partnership, and Domination*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 43, 48-49.

19. BLY, *supra* note 6, at 19 ("A clean break from the mother is crucial . . .").

dominated by father figures—father Bush, father Schwartzkopf, . . . Allah, God the father . . . —and see an *absent* father.”<sup>20</sup> But even if such “father hunger” exists, the contributors to *Women Respond* argue that the mythopoetic wing’s focus on initiation rites to make up for men’s inadequate fathering is but narcissistic soul-searching within a movement that could more productively encourage its members to take outward-reaching constructive action. They suggest men would do far better to get involved in the early rearing of their own children, sons and daughters, and thus provide role models for and an emotional bond to the next generation.<sup>21</sup>

Although Bly speaks the language of valuing equal partnerships and egalitarian relationships, he identifies with the dominator archetypes of the warrior, the king, and ancient male deities, notably the Greek god Zeus. “Zeus energy,” according to Bly, is “male authority accepted for the sake of the community.”<sup>22</sup> “Zeus energy,” according to Caputi and MacKenzie, is male power attained through domination, subjugation, and rape, not “authority” accepted as beneficial to the community as a whole.<sup>23</sup> Further, Bly draws heavily from the fairy tales of patriarchal cultures as the source of appropriate gender roles. Feminist critiques of the sexual inequality glamorized in patriarchal fairy tales strongly counsel against accepting unchallenged Bly’s premise that such tales hold value today as models for positive gender roles. Several writers also draw parallels, strengthened by the frequently militaristic language of *Iron John*, between the language of the mythopoetic movement and the rhetoric of nationalism,<sup>24</sup> a comparison which further erodes Bly’s egalitarian patina. A particular point of the feminist critique of Bly and the mythopoetic movement is the movement’s

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20. Jane Caputi & Gordene O. MacKenzie, *Pumping Iron John*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 69, 74.

21. See, e.g., Myriam Miedzian, “Father Hunger”: Why “Soup Kitchen” Fathers are not Good Enough, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 127, 128–130; Laura S. Brown, *Essential Lies: A Dystopian Vision of the Mythopoetic Movement*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 93, 98–99 (contrasting the mythopoetic movement with Seattle African-American men’s groups that serve as mentors and role models for the youth in their community).

22. BLY, *supra* note 6, at 22.

23. Caputi & MacKenzie, *supra* note 20, at 72. See generally 1 ROBERT GRAVES, *THE GREEK MYTHS* 117 (1955) (arguing that myths portray Zeus as an incessant rapist of both mortal women and ancient goddesses, and that when Zeus and Apollo became the ruling gods of a society, the position of women in that society drastically degenerated).

24. See, e.g., Brown, *supra* note 21, at 96 (“Hitler and his gang began as just a fringe-group joke to the assimilated Jews of Germany. . . . [H]e, too, relied upon ritual, upon the special bonds between men, to build his movement.”).

glorification of finding and nurturing one's inner "wild man," while failing to confront the reality of, and men's responsibility for, male violence against women. Bly's protestation that *Iron John* "does not seek to turn men against women, nor to return men to the domineering mode that has led to repression of women and their values for centuries,"<sup>25</sup> is viewed by the writers of *Women Respond*, in the context of his book and the movement as a whole, as mere lip service. Bly is also criticized for personally evincing a nonchalant attitude toward male violence against women.<sup>26</sup> Such ignorance of and inattention to rape, battering, and harassment is perceived as a critical and illuminating deficiency of a movement claiming to be interested in human growth.

*Women Respond* even challenges the validity of Bly's commentary as it applies to men, since he fails to articulate if, and if so, how, the mythopoetic vision accommodates male homosexuality. This absence is curious considering Bly's emphasis on the need for and crucial value of men's relationships with other men, and since he lifts images and values from a Greek mythology itself steeped in homosexuality.<sup>27</sup> Bly claims that, although *Iron John's* language "speaks to heterosexual men," and does not discuss any challenges to its viewpoint raised by homosexual men, the book nonetheless "does not exclude homosexual men."<sup>28</sup> The mythology used, as Bly sees it, "does not make a big distinction between homosexual and heterosexual men."<sup>29</sup> Teacher and writer Margaret Randall, however, argues that because "[m]ythology is the reproduction of values, and our culture certainly places a different, inferior, value on that which is homoerotic, homosexual," Bly's conclusion is patently false.<sup>30</sup> In addition, even where a particular myth may leave interpretive room regarding gender roles, Bly "imposes his rugged heterosexism" on it.<sup>31</sup> Bly is criticized for celebrating "that rigid opposition" between the sexes, "recoiling in horror from any flexi-

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25. BLY, *supra* note 6, at x.

26. Spretnak, *supra* note 11, at 172 (referring to a 1982 Bly interview). *But see id.* at 174 (suggesting Bly's 1991 disparagement of the Senators involved in the Clarence Thomas hearings evidences progression towards seeing violence against women as a serious issue).

27. Margo Adair, *Will the Real Men's Movement Please Stand Up?*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 55, 64-65.

28. BLY, *supra* note 6, at x.

29. *Id.*

30. Margaret Randall, "And So She Walked Over and Kissed Him . . ." *Robert Bly's Men's Movement*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 141, 145.

31. *Id.*

bility or fluidity" of sex-linked traits and behaviors.<sup>32</sup> The movement's failure to adequately address male homosexuality makes clearer that its vision of gender roles is hardly revolutionary. In viewing the blurring of the dominant culture's ingrained gender stereotypes as a danger (at least a danger to men), the mythopoetic movement damages its credibility as a movement interested in personal growth, and casts into doubt both its claimed applicability to homosexual men and its compatibility with feminism.

The mythopoetic movement is also criticized as being a luxury of middle-class white men, who "hold fast to the skewed distribution of power, in spite of a new enthusiasm for airing substantive complaints about some of the negative effects of patriarchal socialization for males,"<sup>33</sup> and fail to consider larger questions of race and class.<sup>34</sup> Because it fails to address the crucial issue of power, several writers argue that the mythopoetic movement cannot be properly labelled a "movement" at all: "Movement, by definition, is the ushering in of social change. This 'men's movement' is not about social change. It is a backlash—men clamoring to reestablish the moral authority of the patriarchs."<sup>35</sup> The consensus of opinion among the writers of *Women Respond* is thus that the mythopoetic movement "emerges more as a critical response to feminism than as a critical commentary on patriarchy."<sup>36</sup>

Most of the contributors to *Women Respond* address the mythopoetic wing of the men's movement, and do so thoroughly, excerpting *Iron John* itself and placing it within its historical context. *Women Respond* thus provides a forum for feminist critique of this widely publicized, accepted, and derided mythopoetic movement, and provides some balance to the discussion.

### B. *The Father's Rights Movement*

The collective message presented by "fathers' rights" groups is a chilling one: that children belong to men . . . when men want them, but not when men don't.<sup>37</sup>

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32. Caputi & MacKenzie, *supra* note 20, at 78. See also *id.* at 77 (describing "gender clinics" in which behavioral modification and shock treatment are used to force boys demonstrating feminine behavior to conform to traditionally masculine norms).

33. Spretnak, *supra* note 11, at 170.

34. *Id.* at 171.

35. Adair, *supra* note 27, at 55; see also Spretnak, *supra* note 11, at 169-70.

36. bell hooks, *Men in Feminist Struggle—The Necessary Movement*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 111, 112.

37. Phyllis Chesler, *The Men's Auxiliary: Protecting the Rule of the Fathers*, in *WOMEN RESPOND*, *supra* note 1, at 133, 134.



While comments about the fathers' or men's rights movement are sprinkled throughout *Women Respond*,<sup>38</sup> psychologist and prolific author Phyllis Chesler contributes the only piece dealing primarily with the fathers' rights movement.<sup>39</sup> Chesler's essay offers in a nutshell that which she exhaustively developed in *Mothers on Trial*,<sup>40</sup> providing a valuable overview of the fathers' rights movement, and linking it to the ideology of the mythopoetic movement: "Long before Robert Bly, I saw men as father-wounded sons who therefore grow up to scapegoat women for their fathers' many failings."<sup>41</sup>

Chesler divides the fathers' rights movement into right and left wings, arguing that the push to "repackage long-standing ideas" about fathers grew out of both the anti-feminist new right and male feminist movements: right wing or reactionary activists claim children need a family dominated by a father; left wing or progressive activists argue for men's equal right to participate in child-rearing, because "mother is a verb, not a noun."<sup>42</sup> The fathers' rights movement works to influence judicial thought in the area of family law, particularly with respect to child custody upon divorce.<sup>43</sup> Fathers' rights groups argue that men are discriminated against in custody decisions by the legal system and by their ex-wives, and that male parenting is as good as, if not superior to, female parenting. The tactics of fathers' rights groups include using "equality" rhetoric to argue for either sole paternal custody or joint custody rather than sole maternal custody with paternal visitation. As a means of achieving this goal, fathers' rights groups often support mandatory mediation as opposed to judicial settlement of the financial and custodial issues of divorce. Fathers' rights groups may also campaign against abortion rights, counsel men to kidnap their children and default on child-support payments, lobby against state actions

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38. See, e.g., Spretnak, *supra* note 11, at 171 (characterizing the men's rights movement as "aggressively misogynist").

39. Chesler, *supra* note 37, at 133.

40. PHYLLIS CHESLER, *MOTHERS ON TRIAL* (1986); see also PHYLLIS CHESLER, *SACRED BOND* 15-17 (1988).

41. Chesler, *supra* note 37, at 133; see also PHYLLIS CHESLER, *ABOUT MEN* (1978) ("How sad that men would base an entire civilization on the principle of paternity, upon male legal ownership of and presumed responsibility for children, and then never really get to know their sons or their daughters very well; never really participate, for whatever reason, in parenting, in daily, intimate fathering"), reprinted in Chesler, *supra* note 37, at 133.

42. Chesler, *supra* note 37, at 134-35.

43. *Id.* See generally CHESLER, *MOTHERS ON TRIAL*, *supra* note 40, at 425-36.

against "deadbeat dads," and seek to have incest allegations against fathers dismissed.<sup>44</sup>

Chesler rejects the call for a "gender-neutral" approach to custody issues, finding the equality rhetoric empty given that women are disadvantaged as compared to men under our male-ordered system: "The equal treatment of 'unequals' is unjust. In real patriarchy, the paternal demand for 'equal' custodial rights, and the law that values legal paternity or male economic superiority over biological motherhood and/or over women's primary care of children, degrades and violates both mothers and children."<sup>45</sup> Thus, Chesler argues, mothers are "custodially vulnerable" when fathers fight for custody.<sup>46</sup> Chesler notes that fathers win custody anywhere from fifty to eighty percent of the time when custody is contested, even when they have not cared for or economically supported their children, and even when they have been absentee or violent fathers.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, mothers are often held to higher standards of parenting and morality than fathers, and their typically weaker economic position may lead judges to award custody to the (wealthier) father because to do so is deemed "in the best interest of the child."<sup>48</sup> Finally, Chesler argues that the mediation process favored by fathers' rights groups works against mothers and children by relegating family issues to a lesser forum than that afforded litigated issues, rendering decisions insulated from public scrutiny and not required to be consistent in approach or in outcome with any set of laws.<sup>49</sup>

Chesler's discussion of the progressive-reactionary coalition that is the fathers' rights movement is startling and enlightening. She fails to discuss in her essay, however, whether any differences in tactics or demands exist between the two strands of the coalition. Considering what appears to be a wide ideological gulf between the two groups, it would have been helpful for Chesler to make clear whether and where the views of the right and left diverge. Finally, given the legal implications of the fathers' rights movement, *Women Respond* may have been enriched by including a piece by a legal practitioner specifically addressing this area.<sup>50</sup>

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44. Chesler, *supra* note 37, at 135-36.

45. *Id.* at 140.

46. *Id.*

47. *Id.* at 138.

48. *Id.*

49. See CHESLER, *MOTHERS ON TRIAL*, *supra* note 40, at 443-447.

50. See, e.g., MARTHA FINEMAN, *Dominant Discourse, Professional Language, and Legal Change in Child Custody Decisionmaking*, 101 HARV. L. REV. 727 (1988) (simi-

### C. *The Antisexist Movement*

If [the women's movement's] goals could be met, those of the men's movement would be moot points: When women and men are partners in the workplace and the home, sons will be nurtured by fathers; the burden of breadwinning will be shared; the burdens of privilege, if there are any, will surely be erased when power comes up as evenly as grass.<sup>51</sup>

Make no mistake about it: Women want a men's movement. We are literally dying for it.<sup>52</sup>

The writers of *Women Respond* share the view that a men's movement that is legitimate from a feminist viewpoint is needed. In the feminist conception of such a movement, men would "come to understand the evils of patriarchy, the injustice that that has done to women, and the way that has distorted all social relations."<sup>53</sup> A legitimately feminist men's movement would address issues of power,<sup>54</sup> including men's "institutionalized advantage" in society,<sup>55</sup> and would thus be capable, as the mythopoetic movement is not, of recognizing "the difference between spiritual malaise and oppression."<sup>56</sup> Teacher and writer Riane Eisler envisions such a movement as embracing a "partnership model," where cooperation, nonviolence, and nurturance are valued; this movement would present an alternative "gender script" to the prevalent "dominator" model, which values aggression and conquest.<sup>57</sup> Finally, the particular need for men to reconsider and take responsibility for their role in perpetuating war is a recurring theme of *Women Respond*, which was written when Operation Desert Storm was a fresh memory.<sup>58</sup>

*Women Respond* finds the mythopoetic and fathers' rights movements falling far short of this vision, by ignoring men's violence against women and abuse of children, talking up male nurturance without getting serious about family leave and child care, blaming women—mothers, feminists—for what may more properly be recognized as wounds inflicted upon men by their participation

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larly finding "equality" rhetoric deceptive and rejecting mandatory joint custody and mediation in favor of a "primary caretaker" custodial standard).

51. Kingsolver, *supra* note 7, at 41.

52. Steinem, *supra* note 17, at v.

53. Ruether, *supra* note 16, at 14.

54. *E.g.*, Adair, *supra* note 27, at 58.

55. Starhawk, *supra* note 14, at 29.

56. *Id.*

57. Eisler, *supra* note 18, at 44–45, 47–52.

58. *See, e.g.*, Ruether, *supra* note 16, at 15; Starhawk, *supra* note 14, at 32–35; Brown, *supra* note 21, at 100.

in a patriarchal society men otherwise find beneficial. But although *Women Respond* deals primarily with those men's movements considered antifeminist, scattered throughout as a point of contrast are references to antisexist men's groups. Men participating in such groups may become more involved in child care, or advocate and work against pornography, date rape, battering, and visitation rights for abusive fathers.<sup>59</sup> Several such groups are mentioned in *Women Respond*, including the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS), the "struggling survivor of the antisexist men's movement of the 1970's."<sup>60</sup> NOMAS is credited for not only enhancing men's lives, but for being profeminist and gay affirmative, and for holding Men and Masculinity conferences annually since 1975.<sup>61</sup> Another group mentioned is Real Men, which speaks to men's groups about patterns of violence against women and raise money for battered women's shelters.<sup>62</sup> The writers of *Women Respond* also take care to point out, applaud, and, where necessary, criticize male writers of antisexist commentary.<sup>63</sup>

Although the antisexist groups are afforded somewhat sketchy treatment in *Women Respond*, after pages of discussion of the misogynistic movements, reading even anecdotal evidence of antisexist men's groups is quite heartening. Furthermore, the discussion of antisexist groups and writers serves as a useful counterpoint to the ideologies and tactics of the mythopoetic and fathers' rights movements, reminding us that men as well as women can embrace a feminist vision.

### III. TO CONCLUDE

On the whole, I fully recommend *Women Respond* for presenting feminist women's thoughtful, comprehensive, yet digestible takes on the men's movement. I will admit to craving an index, which *Women Respond* lacks, that would ease reader efforts to compare writers' interpretations of issues. How enjoyable you find read-

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59. E.g., Adair, *supra* note 27, at 65.

60. Brown, *supra* note 21, at 99.

61. Adair, *supra* note 27, at 56.

62. Spretnak, *supra* note 11, at 171.

63. See, e.g., MICHAEL S. KIMMEL & THOMAS E. MOSMILLER, *AGAINST THE TIDE: PRO-FEMINIST MEN IN THE UNITED STATES 1776-1990* (1992) (chronicling men who have taken a principled stand vis-à-vis women's rights), cited with approval in Adair, *supra* note 27, at 61; JOHN STOLTENBERG, *REFUSING TO BE A MAN* (1989), cited with approval in Brown, *supra* note 21, at 94. But see hooks, *supra* note 36, at 112-13 (criticizing Stoltenberg, among others, for depoliticizing the struggle to end sexist oppression by replacing it with a focus on "personal self-actualization").

ing particular essays may depend on your openness to New Age spiritualism and familiarity with *Iron John*. Readers accustomed to legal writing should be warned that since the essays vary wildly and are not grouped by style or topic, the transition between pieces is sometimes jolting, as between the thorough critique found in *Pumping Iron John*<sup>64</sup> and the steeped-in-New-Age ritual *In Search of the Lunar Male: Contemporary Rituals of Men's Mysteries*.<sup>65</sup> But the non-structure is refreshing, and suits well the collection's posture as an open forum for feminist response.

Perhaps we need not concern ourselves with the men's movements. However, in the context of the anti-woman political and social climate of recent years, evidenced by the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings, the Tailhook scandal, the continuing controversy over abortion rights, we ignore at our peril the glorification of traditional "masculinity" and mother-discrimination ensconced in equality rhetoric. So although we may not want to look closely at the mythopoetic movement, steeped as it is in helping those in power feel better about themselves, as feminists we should, for its mythology replicates patriarchal values and behaviors. We may not want to hear the tired sexist claims of fathers' rights groups, but as lawyers we must be aware of their influence to the detriment of mothers and children in custodial determinations. Finally, we may not even be aware that male antisexist groups exist, yet we should know our allies as well as our foes, and support their efforts: "Patriarchy is itself the original men's movement, and the struggle to overthrow it must be a movement of men as well as women."<sup>66</sup>

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64. Caputi & MacKenzie, *supra* note 20, at 69.

65. Budapest, *supra* note 4, at 83.

66. Ruether, *supra* note 16, at 17.