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Margaretta Jolly. *In Love and Struggle: Letters in Contemporary Feminism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. 328 pp.

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Margaretta Jolly's analysis of letters written by second-wave feminists in the 1970s and 1980s offers a fascinating look at the ways in which women strove to create support networks that facilitated individual and collective liberation. These epistolary networks show both the possibility of intimacy and connection as well as the reality of divisions and tensions within the movement. Jolly's impeccably researched book offers vital insights into the nature of letters as a form of life writing, the contradictions within second-wave feminisms, and the ethics of recovering, publishing, and writing about letters that may not have been intended for public consumption.

In Love and Struggle is grounded by three arguments, which Jolly posits in the first pages of the book and frequently returns to throughout the next thirteen chapters. The first argument is literary: she asserts that letter-writing was viewed "explicitly as a form of women's art, certainly as a creative act" by second-wave feminists (3). Epistolary novels, love letters, and open letters offer not just "historical source material" but also show how rhetorical choices influence letter-writers' (and letter-receivers') sense of self. Jolly's second argument is that these letters represent a part of the "culture of relationship" that was so vital to women's communities (4). More than other literary genres, letters illustrate the "puzzle of how to create genuine coalition and community across political gulf or race or class or sheer difference of temperament" (4). Her final argument is a philosophical one in which she asks whether or how "an ethics of care . . . is incompatible with political process" (4). Drawing on the work of feminist philosophers, notably Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings, and Sara Ruddick, Jolly defines an ethics of care as one that is "premised on the idea that 'no one shall be hurt,' in the face of obvious differences between people and their needs," in contrast to an ethics of justice, "which hopes to treat everyone the same through a principle of human quality" (87). Jolly thus employs a number of lenses—literary, historical, and philosophical—through which to analyze her primary texts. This approach highlights the rich nature of the letters that she has chosen, all of which merit close textual and contextual analysis.

The sheer variety of letters that Jolly examines is mind-boggling and might be overwhelming to some readers. She looks at lesbian love letters, open letters (including Audre Lorde's famous letter to Mary Daly in 1979), cross-generational letters between mothers and daughters, chain letters and newsletters written by activists as from the Greenham Peace Encampment in Berkshire (and other satellite peace camps that were inspired by it) who were protesting the siting of American nuclear cruise missiles, and epistolary fiction such as *New Portuguese Letters* (1972), a collaborative retelling by three Portuguese feminists of the letters of a seventeenth-century Portuguese nun that "shows[s] the continuity of women's oppression in modern Portugal" (42). (The latter was banned by the Portuguese government on charges of obscenity.) Jolly

makes judicious choices in her discussion, allowing some letter excerpts to speak for themselves while spending significant time closely reading others, including a moving series of exchanges between a mother and daughter (Teresa and Kate) written between 1973 and 1979. What connects these diverse letters is a desire to reconcile autonomy and community and the presence of women who are "dedicated to the creation of psychological as well as political emancipation" (247).

Jolly moves to new epistolary technologies in third-wave feminism towards the end of her book and offers a lovely discussion of email correspondence among participants in Women on the Net (WoN), a group of activists and academics that originated in 1997 in an attempt to, in the words of the group's coordinator, encourage women to "use technology as a political tool" and "to explore a transnational women's movement agenda in response to and shaping evolving telecommunication policies" (187). Jolly reflects thoughtfully on both the continuity between this version of the feminist networking and older forms of women's "webs" (which, even before the advent of the Internet, was a powerful trope used to describe women's communities, such as the ones established by the Peace Movement) as well as its break from previous forms of "feminist epistolarity" that expressed "relationships in spiritual, erotic, or therapeutic terms" (193). Indeed, contemporary feminist articulations of the purpose and practice of coalition-building, as well as the ways in which new communication technologies suggest the possibility of a postgender world, are current issues that merit further discussion, perhaps in a later book.

A brief but important part of the book is Jolly's autobiographical reflections on the ways in which letter-writing shaped her own coming of age as a feminist lesbian in the 1980s. Reproducing two letters exchanged with a female friend during the decade in which she cut off relationships with men (except for her father and brothers), Jolly writes that creating a woman-centered existence was important to her liberation but it also "produced new dependencies" and meant that as "care for some increased, care of others diminished" (152). Jolly's rumination on the paradoxes inherent in the practice of a feminist ethics of care demonstrates her deep personal investment in this project and a willingness to risk vulnerability.

I also appreciated Jolly's reflective discussion of the ethical concerns around writing about letters. Drawing on the work of scholars who have written extensively about the ethics of life writing, including Nancy K. Miller, Thomas Couser, Sidonie Smith, Julia Watson, and Paul John Eakin, Jolly concludes that determining "ethical treatment of somebody's personal details or life story" is not a "question of simply weighing up the right to 'free speech' versus the right to individual 'privacy.' We cannot idealize free speech, while Third World and feminist lobbyists are unveiling the hidden monopolies

behind the Internet and worrying about the aggressive marketing of 'the private life'" (238-39). Jolly's refusal to codify a moral algorithm and her understanding of the ways in which "private" exchange is always already circumscribed by larger socio-political inequities mark her as a true activist-scholar who understands the ramifications of her work in the academy and in the world.

In Love and Struggle offers new ways of understanding second-wave feminism and its legacy, provides a nuanced look at the theory and practice of women's letter-writing in personal and public spheres, and provides food for thought on the ways in which new global technologies of communication might enhance and/or hinder activist communities in the twenty-first century. Feminist scholars from a variety of fields (but especially Literature, History, and Philosophy) as well as life writing scholars will benefit from Jolly's expansive study.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.