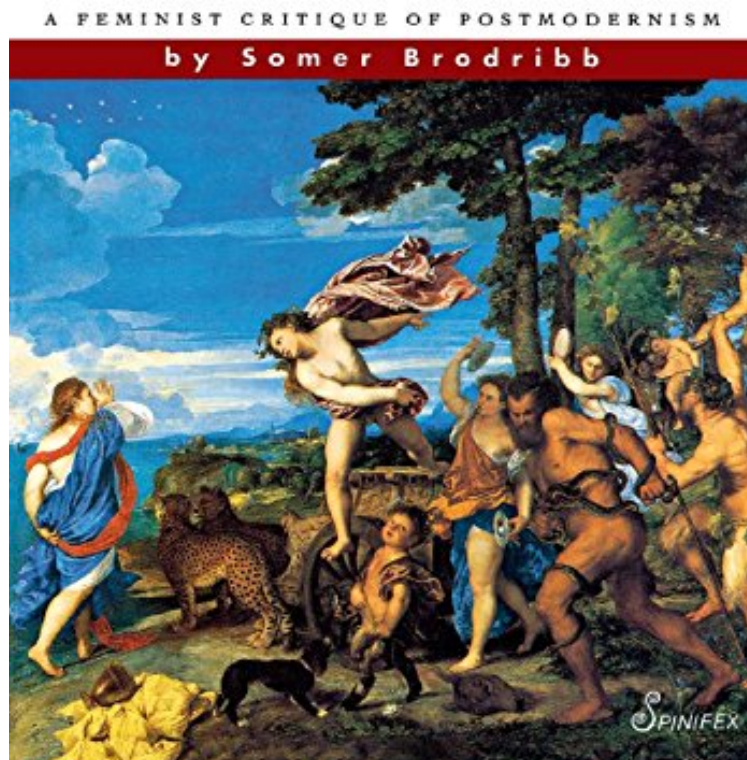


Nothing Mat(T)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism

Somer Brodribb

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Somer Brodribb : Nothing Mat(T)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nothing Mat(T)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. This is an wonderful book. It takes on the deliberately obfuscating and ...By Peggy LuhrsThis is an wonderful book. It takes on the deliberately obfuscating and difficult texts of the mainly French post structuralists/post modernists. But Brodribb is on to the message embedded here and it is one that tells women that only men should speak of women. I agree with Kathleen Barry's blurb, "Her insistent and compelling radical critique refuses essentialism--from both masculinist thinkers and their women followers." Reading this book

helped me understand why feminist activism on campus has gone so off the rails in its focus and how queer theory has come to dominate what was once women's studies to the detriment of actual women. Women's Studies came out of an activist women's liberation movement and its move to the academy brought it under the ethos of the academy which has never been that friendly to women. Brodribb shows the incredible but slippery misogyny embedded in the theories that underpin Gender Studies. It is not the easiest of reads if you are not familiar with the theories discussed here. But her language and points are clear once you see past the veils of mystification these mainly male theorists have donned to persuade women once again to shut up and heed the words of men on the subject of feminism. This is an important book for grasping the patriarchal manipulations pulling too many of the strings in our regressive gender studies programs.⁵ of 12 people found the following review helpful. Rambling, Pretentious Trash By Wal-Mart'Queisha Jenkins This book is impossible to read. It is verbose, inappropriately poetic, and sprinkled with foreign phrases that range from established literary garnish (*fin-de-sicle*) to random phraseology that prevents the comprehension of the sentence in which it squats: "Perhaps we should address the origin of the matter: *puenda origo*." Whole paragraphs devoted to the recounting of various religious myths meander through the text to the extent that the point of their inclusion is lost. The text was originally part of a dissertation, and the bloated, ostentatious writing style for which graduate humanities programs remain infamous is in full effect. It is to be expected that, lacking a certain level of acquaintance with postmodernist writings, most readers would find the the discussion of specific postmodern concepts challenging. The style of writing compounds this difficulty unnecessarily. Instead of summarizing concepts, the author repeatedly presents one or two paragraphs from a relevant text as block quotes. Ambiguity is introduced by the sloppy use of a slash to pack two meanings into one sentence: "Only Superman/Zarathustra can think the "most abysmal thought." The actual points the author wishes to make are difficult to find amidst the history, mythology, and literature recitations. Numerous in-text quotes and references to obscure (non-postmodern) books and authors inhibit the flow of the writing. In short, don't waste your money. This book is nothing but an exercise in which the author shows off her knowledge of everything she has ever read.

"An eloquent work. Somer Brodribb not only gives us a feminist critique of postmodernism with its masculinist predeterminants in existentialism, its Freudian footholdings and its Sadean values, but in the very form and texture of the critique, she literally creates new discourse in feminist theory. Brodribb has transcended not only postmodernism but its requirement that we speak in its voice even when criticizing it. She creates a language that is at once poetic and powerfully analytical. Her insistent and compelling radical critique refuses essentialism from both masculinist thinkers and their women followers. She demystifies postmodernism to reveal that it and its antecedents represent yet another mundane version of patriarchal politics. Ultimately Brodribb returns us to feminist theory with the message that we must refuse to be derivative and continue to originate theory and politics from the condition of women under male domination." Kathleen Barry, author of *Female Sexual Slavery* An iconoclastic work brilliantly undertaken . . . Nothing Mat(T)ers magnificently shows that postmodernism is the cultural capital of late patriarchy. It is the art of self-display, the conceit of masculine self and the science of reproductive and genetic engineering in an ecstatic Nietzschean cycle of stasis." Andre Michel Nothing Mat(T)ers encapsulates in its title the valuelessness of the current academic fad of postmodernism. Somer Brodribb has written a brave and witty book demolishing the gods and goddesses of postmodernism by deconstructing their method and de-centering their subjects and, in the process, has deconstructed deconstructionism and decentered decentering! This is a long-awaited and much-needed book from a tough-minded, embodied, and unflinching scholar." Janice Raymond

"Worth reading. The author genuinely loves ideas and avidly seeks racial justice. Infected by his enthusiasm, the reader may well be tempted to learn more about the important issues Delgado raises—an outcome that he would surely welcome."—"New York Law Journal", "Delgado's analysis is fresh and thought provoking."—"The Law and Politics Book", "This is narrative scholarship of the highest quality. "Justice at War" addresses a far-ranging set of topical social issues of our times, from affirmative action to hate speech to (in)justice toward noncitizens during times of war. Accessible, well-written, and deeply insightful, "Justice at War" represents the most creative and thoughtful, if not brilliant, installment of the "Rodrigo Chronicles" so far."—Kevin Johnson, University of California at Davis "Delgado raises important questions that most American studies scholarship ignores because of its narrow focus. Delgado's use of fiction and dialogue allows him to model a fairly broad, interdisciplinary conversation about contemporary issues that all too often is absent in much scholarly work."—"American Studies", About the Author Somer Brodribb is a Canadian feminist and political theorist who works in the Department of Political Science at the University of Victoria, British Columbia. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1 charts the personal and political context of the 'prophets of prick and prattle' through the accounts by their contemporaries, anti-fascist writers Simone de Beauvoir and Maria-Antoinetta Macciocchi. A history of definitions and categories presents structuralism, poststructuralism, deconstruction and postmodernism. The central mood of *fin-de-siecle* crisis and melancholy is considered in terms of a relegitimation of masculine dominance and indifference. Dematerialization of creativity and the disconnection of community are raised in relation to female sacrifice. Chapter 2 considers feminist encounters with

structuralism. The potency of absence in the work of Levi-Strauss and Sartre is discussed in terms of masculine orientations to form and content, subjectivity and substance. The centrality of nothing, nothingness and neutrality springs from masculine temporality and temporizing. Chapter 3 introduces Foucault's rejection of Sartre's dialectical and historical formulations and concerns with authenticity. The originality of Foucault's contributions, and feminist responses to his work, are evaluated. Foucault's epistemology of annihilation as the order of things is related to Nietzsche's work on chaos, space, and the masculine feminine. In Chapter 4, Derrida and Foucault warn of the shame of origin, and their debate on madness, anteriority and reason is posed in this context. Derrida's fixation with dissemination and de/meaning versus conception and new embodiment is a central theme... Chapter 5 contrasts the work of Lacan and Irigaray on ethics in terms of the absence and presence of the Other. Lacan's morbid phallic lack is repudiated by Irigaray's divine, mystic healing of sexual difference through an amorous birth. The flaws in Irigaray's position are elucidated. Current Anglo-American feminist psychoanalytic criticism, and the strategies of the bearded woman are critiqued. Chapter 6 points to the postmodern genesis of immateriality, and argues that Dionysian delirium is another mask of masculinist reason. The articulation of creativity and murder in de Sade and Lacan is central to postmodern possession. A discussion of de Beauvoir, O'Brien and other feminist work attempts to illuminate the feminist potential to make sense. Somer Brodribb, from the Preface.