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Ruthann Robson: An Annotated Bibliography 1979-2005

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RUTHANN ROBSON: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY 1979-2005

*Sanja Zgonjanin**

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what i wanted was a garden
 a space a sanctuary a possibility¹

I. INTRODUCTION

Ruthann Robson is a law professor, essayist, fiction writer, poet, and one of the leading advocates of lesbian legal theory.² Her engagement in the development of a jurisprudence grounded in lesbian existence³ with a purpose of lesbian survival⁴ represents an invaluable contribution to legal scholarship. Robson's legal and literary pursuits are imbued with liberating politics, and she is a masterful practitioner of various writing forms.

Robson started her writing career by publishing in the alternative press that focused on writings by and for women and lesbians.⁵ Those early works, especially the reading and writing of poetry, were demanding, requiring discipline that consequently shaped her work as a legal scholar and a law professor.⁶ After she graduated from Stetson University College of Law in 1979, Robson worked as a clerk to federal judges William J. Castagna of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida and Peter T. Fay of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. From 1983 to 1986 she practiced as an attorney for Florida Rural Legal Services, and she was an instructor of law at Florida State University College of Law from 1986 to 1989. These years provided useful practical experience, leading Robson to engage in extensive research on the subject of lesbians and law. While an affiliated scholar at the feminist Beatrice M. Bain Research Group at the University of California, Berkeley, where she received her L.L.M. in 1990, Robson laid down the groundwork for lesbian jurisprudence.⁷ She envisioned this new legal theory as "a jurispru-

¹ RUTHANN ROBSON, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, in MASKS: POEMS 73 (1999).

² Didi Herman, *A Jurisprudence of One's Own? Ruthann Robson's Lesbian Legal Theory*, 7 CAN. J. WOMEN & L. 509, 510 (1994).

³ See *infra* Legal Works, Books, RUTHANN ROBSON, LESBIAN (OUT)LAW: SURVIVAL UNDER THE RULE OF LAW 21 (1992).

⁴ *Id.* at 17.

⁵ James R. Elkins, *Ruthann Robson & James R. Elkins: A Conversation*, 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 145 (2005) [hereinafter Elkins, *A Conversation*]. For a discussion of the early lesbian-feminist publishing, see generally Kate Adams, *Built out of Blocks: Lesbian Energy and Feminist Ideology in Alternative Publishing*, 34 NO. 3-4 J. OF HOMOSEXUALITY 113 (1998). For a discussion about lesbian narratives of political activism in the late 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s see generally Alisa Klinger, *Writing Civil Rights: The Political Aspirations of Lesbian Activist-Writers*, in INVENTING LESBIAN CULTURES IN AMERICA, 62 (Ellen Lewin ed., 1996).

⁶ Elkins, *A Conversation*, *supra* note 5, at 168.

⁷ See generally Ruthann Robson, *Lifting Belly: Privacy, Sexuality, and Lesbianism*, 12

dence concerned with lesbians, lesbian issues and problems that affect lesbians.”⁸ The result of this work was the first book of both a practical and theoretical nature intended for a lay audience entitled *Lesbian (Out)Law*.⁹ Subsequently, Robson theorized the relation between lesbianism and law in the context of the criminal justice system,¹⁰ identity politics,¹¹ parenting and child custody,¹² and as a part of the larger discourse on lesbian liberation.¹³ The essays collected in the book *Sappho Goes to Law School*¹⁴ further explore the complexity of lesbian identity and the issues related to the development of lesbian legal theory.

Robson’s concern for lesbian liberation is equally present in various other narrative forms she practices. Her novels and short stories depict lesbian daily survival, revealing the inner lives of her characters, their struggles to escape or accept pasts which are often patriarchal, violent and oppressive, and their ways of moving within the realities of the present.¹⁵ Robson’s narrative style is often lyrical and her experiments with structure, fragmentation, and line breaks are intriguing. Negotiating the seemingly disjunctive space between law and literature, she contemplates the role and purpose of narrative: “I think narratives are particularized explorations of particular people (or nonhumans) in particular situations-and at their best illuminate the ambiguities, contradictions, and un-the-

WOMEN’S RTS. L. REP. 177 (1990); Ruthann Robson, *Lesbianism in Anglo-European Legal History*, 5 WIS. WOMEN’S L.J. 1 (1990); Ruthann Robson, *Lesbian Jurisprudence*, 8 LAW & INEQ. 443 (1990); Ruthann Robson, *Lavender Bruises: Intra-Lesbian Violence, Law and Lesbian Legal Theory*, 20 GOLDEN GATE U. L. REV. 567 (1990); Ruthann Robson & S.E. Valentine, *Low(h)ers: Lesbians as Intimate Partners and Lesbian Legal Theory*, 63 TEMP. L. REV. 511 (1990).

⁸ Ruthann Robson, *Lesbian Jurisprudence*, 8 LAW & INEQ. 443, 453 (1990).

⁹ See *supra* note 4.

¹⁰ See generally Ruthann Robson, *Violence Against Lesbians*, in THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND WOMEN 312 (Barbara Raffel Price & Natalie Sokoloff, eds., 2d ed. 1995); Ruthann Robson, *Convictions: Theorizing Lesbians and Criminal Justice*, in LEGAL INVERSIONS 180 (Didi Herman & Carl Stychin eds., 1995).

¹¹ See generally Ruthann Robson, *The Specter of a Lesbian Supreme Court Justice: Problems of Identity in Lesbian Legal Theorizing*, 5 ST. THOMAS L. REV. 433 (1993).

¹² See generally Ruthann Robson, *Making Mothers: Lesbian Legal Theory & the Judicial Construction of Lesbian Mothers*, 22 WOMEN’S RTS. L. REP. 15 (2000); Ruthann Robson, *Third Parties and the Third Sex: Child Custody and Lesbian Legal Theory*, 26 CONN. L. REV. 1377 (1994).

¹³ See generally Ruthann Robson, *Assimilation, Marriage, and Lesbian Liberation*, 75 TEMP. L. REV. 709 (2002).

¹⁴ See *infra* Legal Works, Books, RUTHANN ROBSON, SAPPHO GOES TO LAW SCHOOL: FRAGMENTS IN LESBIAN LEGAL THEORY (1998).

¹⁵ Robson’s use of jurisprudence and the artful construction of argument in her creative works are examined in Sima Rabinowitz’s *Legal Stories: The Art of Argument in the Work of Ruthann Robson*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 431 (2005).

orizability of life.”¹⁶ One narrative type that Robson practices with virtuosity is fiction-theory,¹⁷ a form developed under the influence of the Québécoise lesbian writer Nicole Brossard.¹⁸ The use of a fragmented poetic style bursting with passion, emotion, and desire to theorize about women’s condition, lesbianism, law, and social reform produces a reading accessible to an interdisciplinary audience which is one of the goals of Robson’s writing.

In her series of illness writings,¹⁹ resulting from her personal experience as a cancer patient who was misdiagnosed and mistreated at a prestigious cancer treatment center, Robson employs an autobiographical form of creative nonfiction to tell her story to others, to educate and move the reader, to expose the injustice, and to prevent similar situations from happening to anyone else. Her language is calm yet full of pain and suffering that provokes disbelief and has an infuriating effect. Robson best describes why she chose this particular narrative form: “I have turned to ‘creative nonfiction’ when what I want to relate is unbelievable.”²⁰ Robson’s poetry is also full of liberating political expression. She uses language with care, disrupting punctuation, and varying line length while moving between lyrical prose and prosaic verse.

In addition to a successful writing career, Ruthann Robson has taught law at the City University of New York School of Law since 1990. She teaches general courses in Constitutional and Family Law; upper division seminars on Sexuality and Law, Feminist Legal

¹⁶ Elkins, *A Conversation*, *supra* note 5, at 159.

¹⁷ See *infra* Legal Works, Fiction-Theory.

¹⁸ Nicole Brossard is a Québécoise lesbian feminist poet, novelist, and essayist. See generally <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/brossard/brossard.pub.html>. Robson found particularly attractive Brossard’s *THE AERIAL LETTER* (Wildeman trans., 1988).

¹⁹ James R. Elkins, *A Poetics—of and for—Ruthann Robson*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 363 (2005) [hereinafter Elkins, *A Poetics*]. Ruthann Robson was diagnosed in 1998 with a rare sarcoma cancer and was subsequently mistreated in one of the best cancer treatment centers in the U.S. For Robson’s writings related to her illness, see generally *Reblooming*, 2 NO.2 BLOOM MAGAZINE 55, available at <http://www.bloommagazine.org> (forthcoming Winter 2005); *Correspondence . . . for Marlee Kline*, 16 CAN. J. WOMEN & L. 1 (2004); *Notes from a Difficult Case*, 21 CREATIVE NONFICTION 7 (2003), available at <http://jhf.org/reports/pdfs/CNRobson.pdf>; *Studies in the Subjunctive*, 3 NO. 1 BELLEVUE LITERARY REV. 114 (Spring 2003); *Leaving Her*, in TELLING MOMENTS: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LESBIAN SHORT STORIES (2003); Ruthann Robson & Sima Rabinowitz, *Pain and the Lesbian Body*, 10 GAY & LESBIAN REV. WORLDWIDE 25 (July-Aug. 2003); *Leaving My Doctor Saved My Life*, SELF, May 2001, at 152; *Being a Dyke Saved My Life*, OUT, Apr. 2001, at 47; *Notes on My Dying*, 18 CREATIVE NONFICTION 8 (2001), available at <http://www.creativenonfiction.org/thejournal/articles/issue18/18robson.htm>; *Not/ / a Story*, in COMING OUT OF CANCER: WRITINGS FROM THE LESBIAN CANCER EPIDEMIC (Victoria A. Brownworth ed., 2000).

²⁰ See Elkins, *A Conversation*, *supra* note 5, at 152-53.

Theory, the First Amendment, and Women and Crime; and directs independent studies and serves as a faculty advisor to the New York City Law Review. Professor Robson is a thoughtful and caring teacher, devoted to empowering her students with the knowledge and skills necessary not only for successful public interest advocacy but also for active participation in social change through legal scholarship.²¹ The time commitment, varying pedagogical methodologies, extensive feedback, guidance, and advice she gives to her students are all part of Robson's academic excellence exemplified by the rich body of her students' legal scholarship.²² She teaches and writes with passion, and her writings emanate the gen-

²¹ Writing about Professor Robson's influence on her law teaching career, Kim Brooks emphasizes Robson's boldness and honesty. The part "Teaching Law is a Conversation that Requires an Openness of Spirit" reflects on Robson's focus on conversation as the most important element of teaching and learning. See Kim Brooks, *Feminists, Angels, Poets and Revolutionaries: What I've Learned from Ruthann Robson and Nicole Brossard on What it Means to Be a Law Teacher*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 633 (2005).

²² Jota Borgmann, *Hunting Expeditions: Perverting Substantive Due Process and Undermining Sexual Privacy in the Pursuit of Moral Trophy Game*, 15 UCLA WOMEN'S L.J. (forthcoming 2006); Jennifer Cook, *Shaken from Her Pedestal: A Decade of New York City's Sex Industry Under Siege*, 9 N.Y. CITY L. REV. (forthcoming 2005); Belkys Garcia, *Reimagining the Right to Commercial Sex: The Impact of Lawrence v. Texas on Prostitution Statutes*, 9 N.Y. CITY L. REV. (forthcoming 2005); Justin Haines, *Fear of the Queer Marriage: The Nexus of Transsexual Marriages and United States Immigration Law*, 9 N.Y. CITY L. REV. (forthcoming 2005); Erin Lloyd, *From the Hospital to the Court Room: A Statutory Proposal for Recognizing and Protecting the Legal Rights of Intersex Children*, 12 CARDOZO WOMEN'S L.J. (forthcoming 2005); Hollis Pfitsch, *Homosexuality in Constitutional and Asylum Law: Rhetoric of Acts and Identity*, 15 LAW & SEXUALITY; A REVIEW OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER LEGAL ISSUES (forthcoming 2005); Jeannette Robertson, *Under the Knife: The Dangers of Relying on a Medical Model to Secure Legal Remedies for Gender Transgressive Clients*, 9 N.Y. CITY L. REV. (forthcoming 2005); Erin Stanton, *Home Team Advantage? The Taking of Private Property for Sports Stadiums*, 9 N.Y. CITY L. REV. (forthcoming 2005); Sanja Zgonjanin, *Quoting the Bible: The Use of Religious References in Judicial Decision-Making*, 9 N.Y. CITY L. REV. (forthcoming 2005); Hollis Pfitsch, *The Executive's Scapegoat: Immigration Rights After 9/11*, 11 WASH. & LEE RACE & ETHNIC ANCESTRY L.J. 151 (2005); Sanja Zgonjanin, *What Does It Take To Be a (Lesbian) Parent? On Intent and Genetics*, 16 HASTINGS WOMEN'S L.J. 251 (2005); Carolyn Coffey, *Battling Gender Orthodoxy: The New York City's Inclusion of Gender Variance Discrimination*, 7 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 161 (2004); Kate Haas, *Who Will Make Room for the Intersexed?*, 30 AM. J.L. & MED. 41 (2004); Dana Northcraft, *A Nation Scared: Children, Sex, and the Denial of Humanity*, 12 AM. U. J. GENDER SOC. POL'Y & L. 483 (2004); Mark S. Silver, *Rethinking Harm and Pornography: Conflicting Personal and Community Views*, 23 WOMEN'S RTS. L. RPT. 171 (2002); Matthew Carmody, *Mandatory HIV Partner Notification: Efficacy, Legality, and Notions of Traditional Public Health*, 4 TEX. F. ON C.L. & C.R. 107 (1999); Rachel Haynes, *Bisexual Jurisprudence: A Tripolar Approach to Law and Society*, 5 MICH. J. GENDER & L. 229 (1999); Laura A. Gans, *Inverts, Perverts, and Converts: Sexual Orientation Conversion Therapy & Liability*, 8 B.U. PUB. INT. L.J. 219 (1999); Nicole Bingham, *Nevada Sex Trade: A Gamble for the Workers*, 10 YALE J.L. & FEMINISM 69 (1998); Colleen A. Sullivan, *Kids, Courts & Queers: Lesbian and Gay Youth in the Juvenile Justice and Foster Care Systems*, 6 J. L. & SEXUALITY 31 (1996); Margaret McIntyre, *Sex Panic or False Alarm? The Latest Round in the Feminist Debate over Pornography*, 6 UCLA WOMEN'S L.J. 189 (1995).

uine investment of her mind and energy.²³ Robson won the 1990 Ferro-Grumley Award for lesbian fiction for her first book, *Eye of a Hurricane*,²⁴ and the 2003 Creative Nonfiction Best Essay Award for her essay *Notes From a Difficult Case*.²⁵

The purpose of this annotated bibliography²⁶ is to provide a comprehensive descriptive guide to Professor Robson's writings. It is intended to assist researchers and readers across various disciplines and theoretical perspectives. The bibliography covers the period from 1979, when Robson published her first essay, to the present, and includes all the works forthcoming at the time of this publishing. The reader is advised to consult other sources for information on future publications of Ruthann Robson. Part Two consists of law-related publications: books, articles in law reviews and other periodicals, essays written in fiction-theory style, articles in anthologies, encyclopedia entries and reprints, excerpts, and translations. Part Three includes literary works: novels and collec-

²³ "There is, beyond the lesbian and lesbian sexuality, an erotics—an engagement and passion, a fight for survival and for life—that animates Ruthann's work. It's this animation, this intense engagement with life that I find seductive." Elkins, *A Poetics*, *supra* note 19, at 370.

²⁴ See *infra* Literary Works, Books.

²⁵ See *infra* Literary Works, Creative Nonfiction.

²⁶ This annotated bibliography is part of the 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 311 (2005) Symposium issue. The Symposium was held on November 5, 2004, at the CUNY School of Law to honor the work of Professor Ruthann Robson. The following works presented by the participants at the Symposium are included in the Symposium issue: Elvia R. Arriola, *Encuentro en el Ambiente de la Teoría: Latina Lesbians and Ruthann Robson's Lesbian Legal Theory*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 519 (2005); Kim Brooks, *Feminists, Angels, Poets and Revolutionaries: What I've learned from Ruthann Robson and Nicole Brossard on What it Means to be a Law Teacher*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 633 (2005); Elkins, *A Poetics*, *supra* note 19; Kris Franklin, "Theory Saved My Life", 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 599 (2005); Sharon K. Hom, *Equality, Social and Economic Justice, and Challenges for Public Interest Lawyering*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 511 (2005); Andrea McArdle, *In a Creative Voice: Talking Back to Lawyers' Texts in Notes from a Difficult Case*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 415 (2005); Joey Mogul, *The Dykier, the Butcher, the Better: The State's Use of Homophobia and Sexism to Execute Women in the United States*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 473 (2005); Kate Nace Day, *A Path to Story(s) Table*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 345 (2005); Danielle Ofri, *Literary Magazines in Unlikely Settings*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 423 (2005); Nancy D. Polikoff, *For The Sake Of All Children: Opponents and Supporters Of Same-Sex Marriage Both Miss The Mark*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 573 (2005); Jenny Rivera, *Creating An Intimate Partner Violence Against Women Legal Theory*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 495 (2005); Carl F. Stychin, *Coupling: Civil Partnership in the United Kingdom*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 543 (2005); Kendall Thomas, *Imagining Lesbian Legal Theory*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 505 (2005); Carmen Vazquez, *Through the Looking Glass*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 463 (2005). The Symposium issue also includes additional essays pertaining to the work of Prof. Ruthann Robson: Robert Batey, *Da Vinci Versus Kafka: Looking for Answers*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 319 (2005); Lynda Hall, *Ruthann Robson: Writing Life and Fiction-Theory*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 401 (2005); Sima Rabinowitz, *Legal Stories: The Art of Argument in the Work of Ruthann Robson*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 431 (2005); Julie Shapiro, *Reflections on Complexity*, 8 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 657 (2005).

tions of short stories, fiction short stories published individually in various journals and anthologies, works of autobiographical character, entitled creative non-fiction, and excerpts and translations. Robson's poetry is included in Part Four. Part Five contains conversations with Robson, followed by book reviews she authored in Part Six. Several pieces published in newspapers and magazines are annotated in Part Seven, and Part Eight includes video and audio recordings.

II. LEGAL WORKS

Books

SAPPHO GOES TO LAW SCHOOL: FRAGMENTS IN LESBIAN LEGAL THEORY (1998).

Imagining Sappho as a law student and invoking Sapphic rather than Socratic teaching methodology creates a space for exploration and understanding of the lesbian legal theory developed and advocated by Ruthann Robson. The essays collected in this book theorize about the relationship between lesbianism and law, analyzing a variety of issues such as: problems of identity, violence against lesbians, the criminal justice system's treatment of lesbians, the relationship between feminism, postmodernism and lesbianism, lesbian relationships, family, child custody, class, and pedagogy. Robson's intertwining of personal experiences as a lesbian law professor with her theoretical work contributes to the unique and original character of her intervention in the field of legal jurisprudence.

GAY MEN, LESBIANS, AND THE LAW (Martin Duberman ed., 1997).

This legal primer for young adults, aimed at a high school audience, explains how case law and statutory law affect gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people. Robson explains the history of the legal regulation of sexual behavior, the current state of the law, and advocacy efforts to protect the rights of sexual minorities. She discusses the role of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered people in the legal profession and legal developments in discrimination against sexual minorities in the fields of education, family, criminal justice, and health.

LESBIAN (OUT)LAW: SURVIVAL UNDER THE RULE OF LAW (1992).

Robson seeks to establish lesbian legal theory that will not be assimilationist or separatist but will be centered on lesbians with the goal of sustaining lesbian survival. In developing a foundation for lesbian jurisprudence, Robson investigates the criminalization

of lesbian sexuality, spurning the myth of lesbian imperceptibility in legal history. She discusses the legal regulation of lesbianism, including discrimination, the military, immigration, incarceration, family, child custody, violence against and among lesbians, mediation, and lesbians within the legal profession. This book is an important contribution to lesbian scholarship.

Articles in Law Reviews

Correspondence . . . for Marlee Kline, 16 CAN. J. WOMEN & L. 1 (2004).
See infra Legal Works, Fiction-Theory.

Law Students as Legal Scholars: An Essay/Review of Scholarly Writing for Law Students and Academic Legal Writing, 7 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 195 (2004).

In light of her experience as a faculty advisor to students who engage in academic writing, Robson compares two books on student legal scholarship: *SCHOLARLY WRITING FOR LAW STUDENTS: SEMINAR PAPERS, LAW REVIEW NOTES AND LAW REVIEW COMPETITION PAPERS* (2d ed. 2000) by Elizabeth Fajans and Mary Falk and *ACADEMIC LEGAL WRITING: LAW REVIEW ARTICLES, STUDENT NOTES, AND SEMINAR PAPERS* (2003) by Eugene Volokh. Robson is critical of both books' overemphasis on audience in the first stage of topic selection because she finds passion to be the most important driving force. Volokh offers a detailed discussion about logical argument, but lacks more in-depth analysis of structure and the writing process. Fajans and Falk's book includes a well-written chapter on footnotes and their treatment of first-draft writing is a useful guide to students. Robson concludes that both books provide tools for organizational and analytical editing and she commends them as valuable for future legal scholars.

The Missing Word in Lawrence v. Texas, 10 CARDOZO WOMEN'S L.J. 397 (2004).

Scrutinizing the *Lawrence*²⁷ opinion for words of apology, Robson finds none. She encounters the words: liberty (decisive of the sodomy statute's unconstitutionality); privacy (used to include sexuality in the concept of liberty); lesbian (though only as a part of the citation); history (selectively employed to justify the result); and equality (which found its place in the concurring opinion). However, the justices did not deem it necessary to acknowledge that the countless cases of suffering, death, loss of children, employment, and freedom, humiliation and anger experienced not

²⁷ *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003).

only by sexual minorities but also by law students and professors were due to the Court's devastating holding of *Bowers v. Hardwick*²⁸ for which an apology would be just the first step in acceptance of responsibility.

Introduction: Assimilation and/or Resistance?, 1 SEATTLE J. FOR SOC. JUST. 631 (2003).

This is an introduction to essays on the issues of the assimilation of sexual minorities into heterosexual society and resistance through the rejection of hetero-norms. All the essays were originally presented in 2002 at the Seattle University conference *Assimilation and Resistance: Emerging Issues in Law and Sexuality* by the following authors: Kim Brooks and Debra Parkes,²⁹ Elvia Arriola,³⁰ Anthony Winer,³¹ Jenni Millbank,³² Patricia Novotny,³³ Susan Boyd and Claire Young.³⁴

The Zen of Grading, 36 AKRON L. REV. 303 (2003).

The spiritual tradition of Zen is a metaphor through which Professor Robson reveals her personal practice of grading. The careful preparation of tools, environment, feedback sheets, grading grid, and bluebook organization play an important role, allowing a fresh and open-minded approach to grading. Keeping in mind that each exam answer reflects the teacher's own work, Robson engages in reading and re-reading, assessing and re-assessing each bluebook, spending countless hours to provide valuable feedback. Existing between the desire for a perfect exam and the suffering with a failing one, she strives for a fair evaluation, detaching herself from feelings of joy or disappointment. Lastly, Robson examines the issue of academic dishonesty including cheating and plagiarism.

Assimilation, Marriage, and Lesbian Liberation, 75 TEMP. L. REV. 709 (2002).

²⁸ *Bowers v. Hardwick*, 478 U.S. 186 (1986).

²⁹ Kim Brooks & Debra Parkes, *Moving from the Back to the Front of the Classroom*, 1 SEATTLE J. SOC. JUST. 637 (2003).

³⁰ Elvia R. Arriola, *Queering the Painted Ladies: Gender, Race, Class and Sexual Identity at the Mexican Border in the Case of the Two Paulas*, 1 SEATTLE J. SOC. JUST. 679 (2003).

³¹ Anthony Winer, *Assimilation, Resistance, and Recent Transsexual Marriage Cases*, 1 SEATTLE J. SOC. JUST. 653 (2003).

³² Jenni Millbank, *Gender, Visibility and Public Space in Refugee Claims on the Basis of Sexual Orientation*, 1 SEATTLE J. SOC. JUST. 725 (2003).

³³ Patricia Novotny, *Rape Victims in the (Gender) Neutral Zone: The Assimilation of Resistance*, 1 SEATTLE J. SOC. JUST. 743 (2003).

³⁴ Susan B. Boyd & Claire Young, *"From Same-Sex to No Sex"? Trends Towards Recognition of (Same-Sex) Relationships in Canada*, 1 SEATTLE J. SOC. JUST. 757 (2003).

This is a critical discussion about the legal implications of assimilation and anti-assimilation of lesbians, both for individuals and for the process of lesbian liberation. Robson considers two constructs: the same-sex marriage, including the civil union, and the lesbian mother. Suspicious of the concept of equality advanced by supporters of the same-sex marriage, Robson emphasizes the coercive nature of marriage, critically examining the underlying rationale for the prohibition of familial marriages and polygamy as well as the state's interest in matrimony as a political institution. Similarly, disputes between lesbian mothers demonstrate the danger of advocating equality in the context of lesbian parenting, for it is an integral part of heterosexual concepts predicated on biology and protected by the legal system which is hostile to and exclusive of lesbians. Robson concludes that assimilation undermines the quest for liberation founded on a global concept of equality that would eradicate discrimination based on legal marital or parental status.

Our Children: Kids of Queer Parents and Kids Who Are Queer: Looking at Sexual Minority Rights from a Different Perspective, 64 ALB. L. REV. 915 (2001).

Robson starts this article by pointing out the harmful impact of anti-gay conservative rhetoric on the children of sexual minorities as well as children who are sexual minorities. Arguing that it is imperative to protect children from the damaging effects of the law, she analyzes the best interest of the child standard applied by the courts in custody cases and the implicated constitutional rights of both parents and children. She also provides insight into issues of homophobia facing queer adolescents, such as: parents' resort to psychiatric treatments and institutionalization, the state's placement into foster care of children who exhibit nonconformist behavior, and the lack of protection within the educational system. In concluding that any type of discrimination and violence against adult sexual minorities harms their children, Robson calls for legal reform that will encompass broader issues of economic and environmental justice.

Mostly Monogamous Moms?: An Essay on the Future of Lesbian Legal Theories and Reforms, 17 N.Y.L. SCH. J. HUM. RTS. 703 (2000).

See *infra* Legal Works, Fiction-Theory.

Making Mothers: Lesbian Legal Theory & the Judicial Construction of Lesbian Mothers, 22 NO. 1 WOMEN'S RTS. L. REP. 15 (2000).

This article reviews the judicial construction of motherhood as

reflected in two basic approaches: formalist and functionalist. It begins with an introduction to devices available to legalize lesbian parents' status, such as the second parent adoption and the more recent pre-birth decree. It continues with a survey of theories affecting the determination of parenthood, such as the standing doctrine, constitutional theories, and equitable and contract theories. Thereafter, the author engages in a critical analysis of the formalist statutory approach exemplified in the New York case of *Alison D.*³⁵ and the functionalist equitable approach articulated in the New Jersey case *V.C. v. M.J.B.*³⁶ While acknowledging some benefits of the functionalist approach, Robson finds that it domesticates lesbian relationships by construing lesbian motherhood based on the conservative concept of parenthood. Furthermore, it divides lesbians not only by class, but also by the unequal treatment of two legal mothers, always relegating one to a lesser status.

The Politics of the Possible: Personal Reflections on a Decade at the City University of New York School of Law, 3 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 245 (2000).

Contemplating her ten years of teaching at the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law Professor Robson emphasizes the school's progressive character, commitment to anti-elitism, determination to prepare students for public interest careers, and the perseverance in resisting numerous attempts to discredit and even close the school. Praising CUNY for its most diverse student body, she also notes some initial hierarchical problems which were successfully solved with the entire faculty sharing equally in teaching small and large classes and experimenting with credit allocations. Robson's career at CUNY is marked by her role as a law review advisor and her Law and Sexuality seminar which continues to produce excellent quality student scholarship and achievements. Her reminiscence ends with a comparison of the CUNY mission with that of the activist organizations from the sixties, which despite the conservative attacks persisted in creating social change.

Beginning from (My) Experience: The Paradoxes of Lesbian/Queer Narratives, 48 HASTINGS L.J. 1387 (1997).

Robson starts her discussion of the relationship between narrative and lesbian/queer legal theory by an inquiry into the role of the experience as an epistemological method. Contrasting lesbian/queer coming out to feminist consciousness-raising, she asserts that coming out is not primarily a narrative process because it often

³⁵ *Alison D. v. Virginia M.*, 572 N.E.2d 27 (N.Y. 1991).

³⁶ *V.C. v. M.J.B.*, 748 A.2d 539 (N.J. 2000).

takes a non-narrative form. After she situates the lesbian/queer legal narrative within the outsider narrative category, Robson proceeds with an analysis of the debate surrounding legal narrative scholarship and notes that reliance upon narrative to achieve legal change is inappropriate. Problems with narrative stem from the paradoxes related to the heterosexual character of narrative structure, its pervasiveness, the relation between individual and collective narratives, the use of lesbian/queer counter-narrative to create the other, conservative counter-narratives, the attraction of self-censorship and the doubtful endeavor of proffering the strategy of narrative in the age of visual technologies.

Sexual Minorities and "the State": Some Struggles and U.S. Perspective, 2 FLINDERS J. L. REFORM 68 (1997).

The article focuses on the contradictory dual nature of the state: negative, based on the traditional state regulation of sexuality and positive, rooted in the state protection of minorities. Although inconsistent, both notions of the state are employed by advocates in the quest for sexual minorities' equality. The constitutional challenge of the Colorado Constitutional Amendment to prohibit any laws affording legal status to sexual minorities is one example of the fragmented character of the state. Robson believes that alternative foundational principles, not necessarily based on the positive and negative dyad are needed but advocates should also be mindful that individuals historically act as agents as well as opponents of the state.

The Codification of Lesbian Relationships: Examples from Law and Literature in the United States, 9 AUSTL. FEMINIST L. J. 3 (1997).

The essay explores the process of the legal and literary codification of lesbian relationships through normative proscriptions subjecting lesbians to the imitation and acceptance of heterosexual myths such as marriage, romance, and isolation. This process is apparent in lesbian romance and literary novels where codification of longevity, exclusivity, and apolitical appearance is required by publishers depriving a story of any context. This is also apparent in the courts' deprivation of custody of lesbian parents' children. Robson finds that the demarcation between good and bad lesbians resulting in the privatization, or even denial, of lesbian sexual practices is another type of codification both in the legal sphere and in literature, as illustrated in the demarcation between fiction and erotica. Ultimately, she concludes lesbian relationships erroneously become a definition of lesbianism in law and literature, narrowing, instead of expanding, lesbian choices in constructing lesbianism.

State of Marriage, 1 Y.B. N.Z. JURISPRUDENCE 1 (1997).

This comparative perspective on jurisprudential issues related to same-sex marriage confronted by the legislators and courts of the New Zealand/Aotearoa and the United States demonstrates the complex relation between the state and individual. For example, despite the gender-neutral language of the New Zealand marriage statute and the explicit anti-discriminatory provisions of the Bill of Rights Act, the court concluded that marriage was not meant to be between same-sex persons. Similarly, the long tradition of the federal non-interference with state regulation of marriage in the United States did not prevent the enactment of the Defense of Marriage Act. This act defines marriage as between one woman and one man on a federal level and disallows states the possibility of recognition of same-sex marriages from other states, thus altering the relation not only between states but also between federal and local governments. Robson also interrogates the purposes of same-sex marriage as articulated by its lesbian and gay men advocates, concluding that the abolition of the state sanctioned legal marriage would be the best mechanism for achieving equality and terminating the state's use of marital status to determine the individuals' rights.

To Market, to Market: Considering Class in the Context of Lesbian Legal Theories and Reforms, 5 S. CAL. REV. L. & WOMEN'S STUD. 173 (1995).

Robson starts her investigation of the issue of class in the context of lesbian market economy participation through a hypothetical student exercise in which students, in the process of hiring an attorney, examine the level of discrimination in their assessment of the appropriateness of the candidates' dress. While class is not perceived as an identity in American society, it nevertheless shares commonalities with other identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Robson believes in the protection of economic status equal to that of other minority categories, and is concerned with the commodification of lesbianism through economic disparities and advantages/disadvantages conferred upon lesbians according to their class status.

Third Parties and the Third Sex: Child Custody and Lesbian Legal Theory, 26 CONN. L. REV. 1377 (1994).

This article examines the third party doctrine as applied in lesbian child custody cases, including the non-legal lesbian mother, the sperm donor, and the biological relatives of the child. Following an introduction to the origins of the doctrine, Robson analyzes cases in which the lesbian non-legal mother was denied parental

rights because she was relegated to the status of a third party. She criticizes the second parent adoption method as well as the granting of fatherhood to a sperm donor as a reinforcement of heterosexual structure based on male hegemony. Instead of attempting to modify the third party doctrine, she suggests that heterosexist and sexist models of parenthood should be abandoned altogether in the lesbian context.

The Specter of a Lesbian Supreme Court Justice: Problems of Identity in Lesbian Legal Theorizing, 5 ST. THOMAS L. REV. 433 (1993).

Robson investigates the recognition of identity politics as normative rather than descriptive, as well as postmodernist, transcending the instable and suspect concept of identity.

The disjunction between identity and politics produces anomalies such as Justice Clarence Thomas, an African-American who is not committed to the eradication of racism, or a possible lesbian Supreme Court justice who is anti-lesbian. Claiming and disclaiming lesbian identities may be equally problematic. Robson brings attention to the other implications of claiming a lesbian identity such as the creation of a dichotomy between status and conduct, or the problematic analogy between lesbian identity and racial and ethnic identities. Ultimately, she concludes that the social construction of identities precludes envisioning radical change.

Posner's Lesbians: Neither Sexy nor Reasonable, 25 CONN. L. REV. 491 (1993).

Robson's response to Richard A. Posner's book *Sex and Reason* (1992), grounded in sexist sociobiological and bioeconomic theories, focuses on his failure to grasp the complexity of lesbian sexuality and lesbian existence. Depicted as badly dressed, homely, and less sexual than heterosexual and gay men couples, Posner's lesbians are stereotyped in an overly simplistic manner. However plausible it may seem to some, Posner's argument proposing moral indifference and the removal of legal obstacles to homosexuality because the cost-benefit theory does not justify the repression of homosexual practices remains entirely removed from lesbian reality.

Incendiary Categories: Lesbians/Violence/Law, 2 TEX. J. WOMEN & L. 1 (1993).

Robson writes that violence is an attribute of lesbianism and that lesbian survival is situated within the incendiary category of fire with both its helpful and harmful characteristics. Looking through the lens of violence within the categories of lesbianism

and the law, Robson identifies violence in silence, dominance, obscenity, damages, child custody, exclusion, marriage, and contract. She characterizes as violence the judicial definition of lesbianism superseding the lesbian one and the requirement that women conform to their gender identity or heterosexual activity stereotypes. Even statutes that recognize violence against lesbians such as the Hate Crime Statistics Act violate lesbians by categorizing identities to preserve the dominant power structure and by de-gendering the category of homosexuality, thus erasing differences between lesbians and gay men. However, violence, like fire, is used not only to maintain the violence of the law which is destructive to lesbian existence, but also to effect change helping lesbian survival.

Embodiment(s): The Possibilities of Lesbian Legal Theory in Bodies Problematized by Postmodernisms and Feminisms, 2 LAW & SEXUALITY: REV. LESBIAN & GAY LEGAL ISSUES 37 (1992).

In this article, Robson examines the relationship of bodies to various concepts such as text, politics, academy, and law within the theoretical debates of essentialism-social constructionism and modernism-postmodernism as well as the possibilities they offer for lesbian legal theory. She demonstrates the postmodern appropriation which inherently disempowers through imposition of language and discourse foreign to the disempowered. Robson provides examples of the effective use of essentialist and modernist, but also of constructionist and postmodern strategies to penalize lesbians. At the same time, she finds ways to employ these strategies to the advantage of lesbian legal theory.

Gender and Other Disadvantages: A Review of Justice and Gender, 18 FLA. ST. U. L. REV. 883 (1991) (book review).

See infra Book Reviews.

Lifting Belly: Privacy, Sexuality, and Lesbianism, 12 WOMEN'S RTS. L. REP. 177 (1990).

In this article, Robson explores the tension between private, community, and public domains in the area of sexuality as it is reflected in gay rights, feminist, and lesbian discourses. The gay rights agenda, as analyzed through the discussion of conservative support and liberal critique of *Hardwick v. Bowers*, 760 F.2d 1202 (11th Cir. 1985), is seen as stereotypically liberal and individualistic for its failure to address the gendered perspective of sexual privacy. Although incorporated by feminist legal theory, this perspective fails to consider lesbian and gay rights ideology. It only perpetuates the public-private or communitarian-individualist split typical of

heterosexist ideologies. Robson recognizes that lesbianism is not immune to this dual tension, especially discernible in the internal controversy on lesbian sadomasochism, and suggests that decentering sexuality is not a way to solve the tension. She concludes with a proposal to examine sexuality without relying on social constructions of public-private boundaries fixed by the majoritarian measures, even if they include sexual minorities.

Lesbianism in Anglo-European Legal History, 5 WIS. WOMEN'S L.J. 1 (1990).

This is an inquiry into assumptions of lesbian invisibility in legal history perpetuated by the tendency of modern legal scholarship to stereotype lesbianism as extra-legal or to ignore it. Arguing that there is an Anglo-European legal history of lesbianism, Robson provides examples of punishments for lesbian sexual acts from Ancient Greece and Rome through the codes of the Middle Ages, influenced by canon law and Catholic morality. She focuses on the trials of the Inquisition prosecuting women for witchcraft, the most famous of which was that of Joan of Arc. Robson emphasizes the need for more research of lesbianism in legal history of other nations and cultures, urging the rejection of the traditional exclusion of lesbianism from legal discourse and demanding recognition and a proper place for lesbians in legal history.

Lesbian Jurisprudence?, 8 L. & INEQ. 443 (1990).

Engaging in discussion about lesbian legal theory requires going beyond the dominant patriarchal jurisprudence and feminist jurisprudence, both of which exclude lesbianism. Robson starts her inquiry into lesbian jurisprudence by determining that it is not a critique of feminist jurisprudence or a paradigm seeking to solve all legal problems. She uses the symbolism of mythical metaphors and futuristic visions to imagine characteristics and principles of such jurisprudence, translating them into concepts and methodologies such as nonadvocacy and nonpersuasion. Using a model from the American Indian legal systems, Robson contends that lesbian jurisprudence based on sovereignty could coexist along with other jurisprudences. This would allow for intra-lesbian disputes to be solved within and by the concepts of the lesbian legal forum where such solutions would be adequate and appropriate. As a provocative invitation to think about the possibility of lesbian jurisprudence this article poses important questions about the goals, principles, methods, and application of proposed lesbian jurisprudence.

Lavender Bruises: Intra-Lesbian Violence, Law and Lesbian Legal Theory, 20 GOLDEN GATE U. L. REV. 567 (1990).

The article posits intra-lesbian violence within lesbian legal theory, making a clear distinction between the legal treatment of sexuality and the legal treatment of violence in a relationship involving lesbians. The heterosexist nature of the courts results in the misapplication of hetero-relational concepts to lesbians, such as male dominance or mutual restraining orders to adjudicate the fighting of two parties, thus erasing lesbian existence by submerging it in a legal framework based on heterosexist assumptions. A legal recognition of lesbianism focusing on violence, not on sexuality, is necessary to disallow discriminatory statutes against lesbians and instigate equal evidentiary standards regardless of gender.

Ruthann Robson & S.E. Valentine,³⁷ *Lov(h)ers: Lesbians as Intimate Partners and Lesbian Legal Theory*, 63 TEMP. L. REV. 511 (1990).

In the quest for lesbian legal theory, Robson and Valentine examine methods, strategies, and tools used by lesbian couples to protect their relationships. As a durable power of attorney used to authorize financial and health-related decisions, wills and trusts are seen as useful tools for the protection of lesbians, despite their inability to effect a real change. Cohabitation contracts, rooted in the myth of equality devised to sustain a patriarchal power structure, and other contracts related to legal aspects of the relationship, may be beneficial to lesbians. However, they retain a colonizing character by internalizing dominant ideas, especially where they pertain to nonlegal matters, obliterating lesbian aspirations. Finally, the institutions of marriage, adult adoption, and domestic partnership are detrimental to lesbians because by fitting lesbians into a heterosexual context they risk the hetero-relationization of lesbian relationship, although they are arguably of limited beneficial character. The authors propose the abolition of marriage as a sexist institution limiting the multifariousness of relationships as one of the goals of lesbian legal theory.

Michael Mello³⁸ & Ruthann Robson, *Ariadne's Provisions: A "Clue of*

³⁷ Sarah E. Valentine is a Reference and Collection Management Librarian and Professor of Legal Research at New York Law School. She is the author of *Ruth Bader Ginsburg: An Annotated Bibliography*, 7 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 391 (2004).

³⁸ Michael Mello is a Professor of Law at Vermont Law School. In 1985, he worked as an Assistant Public Defender, Capital Appeals Division in Florida and was a co-counsel for Joseph Spaziano in *Spaziano v. Florida*, 104 S. Ct. 3154 (1984) (holding that Florida's jury override in capital case was constitutional). He is the author of *LEGALIZING GAY MARRIAGE* (2004); *DEATH WORK: DEFENDING THE CONDEMNED* (2002); *THE WRONG MAN: A TRUE STORY OF INNOCENCE ON DEATH ROW* (2001); *DEAD WRONG:*

Thread" to the Intricacies of Procedural Default, Adequate and Independent State Grounds, and Florida's Death Penalty, 76 CAL. L. REV. 87 (1988).

The authors use the metaphor of a Greek myth to guide through the habeas corpus petition of state prisoners to federal courts, and then safely return home after passing through the labyrinth of doctrines of federalism. The focus is on the application of the doctrine of procedural default in capital cases, which bars the federal court review of a state court decision relying on a procedural rule including a federal claim. By taking a historical review of the standard for granting habeas corpus, direct review, and through the careful analysis of the adequacy and independence thresholds, the authors argue that a state procedural ground that does not satisfy the adequate and independent ground requirement should not prevent habeas corpus review by federal courts. A study of Florida's procedural default rules in capital cases, specifically the bar of collateral review of claims that defendants raised or could have raised on direct appeal, demonstrates the arbitrariness and inconsistency in the application of procedural default rules. The study suggests that the procedural bar is not an independent ground, thus mandating federal court review.

Michael Mello & Ruthann Robson, *Judge Over Jury: Florida's Practice of Imposing Death over Life in Capital Cases*, 13 Fla. St. U. L. Rev. 31 (1985).

The focus of the article is Florida's sentencing statute allowing a judge to override a jury's recommendation of life imprisonment. The confusion that ensued after the United States Supreme Court decided *Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238 (1972), resulted in a legislative compromise in Florida. This compromise required the jury to consider statutorily enumerated aggravating and mitigating circumstances in producing an advisory sentence of life imprisonment or a majority vote in favor of death, subject to judicial override. The authors argue that strong policy considerations favor the legislative repeal of the judicial override of a jury's recommendation of life. They include maintaining the traditional function of the jury as a representative of social consciousness to decide whether death as an expression of community outrage should be imposed in a capital case and in preventing arbitrariness of individual judges. The authors conclude that Florida legislators should

A DEATH ROW LAWYER SPEAKS OUT AGAINST CAPITAL PUNISHMENT (1997); AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY: THE RELENTLESS DISSENTS OF JUSTICES BRENNAN AND MARSHALL (1996).

repeal the judicial override of a life sentence recommendation not only because it is within their duty but also because it is their ethical obligation.

Book Review, 8 NEW ENG. J. ON PRISON L. 335 (1982) (reviewing ESTELLE B. FREEDMAN, *THEIR SISTERS' KEEPERS* (1981)).

See infra Book Reviews.

Tired of Civil Rights: The Fifth Circuit Imposes an Exhaustion of State Administrative Remedies Requirement in Section 1983 Actions, 12 CUMB. L. REV. 391 (1981-82).

The article analyzes the doctrine of the exhaustion of administrative remedies as applied to section 1983 actions through the lens of United States Supreme Court cases, as interpreted by the Fifth Circuit in *Patsy v. Florida International University*, 634 F.2d 900 (5th Cir. 1981) (en banc), and by other circuits. The Fifth Circuit rejected the Supreme Court precedent that administrative state remedies do not need to be exhausted when the plaintiff has a valid section 1983 claim, holding in *Patsy*, that absent traditional exceptions the plaintiff must exhaust state administrative remedies before initiating a claim in federal court. The circuit courts remain split on the issue of the exhaustion prerequisite, advancing opposing policy considerations to support their view. Robson concludes that requiring exhaustion in section 1983 actions undermines federal civil rights by relying on administrative agencies to safeguard those rights.

Shark Infested Waters: Extraterritorial Application of Federal Controlled Substance Laws, 9 STETSON L. REV. 145 (1979).

This student comment reviews issues related to the extraterritorial application of the federal controlled substance statutes. When determining the jurisdiction over the person, the courts follow the principle of protected interest, also known as intended impact or the objective territorial principle, which confers jurisdiction upon all acts that have an effect on the sovereignty of the U.S. regardless of the actor's physical presence within the jurisdiction. Most often, the prosecution for extraterritorial violations of controlled substance laws is based on either the conspiracy theory, requiring an overt act in furtherance of conspiracy committed within the U.S. and a specific intent to join the conspiracy, or specific statutory grounds of 21 U.S.C. § 959. Robson concludes that because the government has an interest in preventing smuggling, the courts continue to apply the federal controlled substance laws

liberally, consequently incarcerating a growing number of U.S. and non-U.S. citizens.

The Fourth Amendment Behind Bars: Search and Seizure in Prison, 5 NAT'L J. CRIM. DEF. 259 (1979).

In this article, written by Robson as a law student, she explores the application of the Fourth Amendment rights to prisoners. In a Fourth Amendment challenge, the courts balance the prisoner's reasonable but diminished expectation of privacy against the need for prison security. The courts give great deference to prison administration in determining the parameters of security, resulting in a heavy burden on a prisoner to prove that security measures are exaggerated. The author focuses on physical searches of living areas, body surfaces and body cavities which the federal courts generally uphold against Fourth Amendment challenges. Despite prison reform proposals, the Fourth Amendment rights of prisoners continue to be outweighed by the need for security measures. For that reason, it is imperative to carefully assess the security demands ensuring that the restrictions of constitutional rights are minimal.

Criminal Law: Federal Escape Statute-Jury's Discretion or Judge's Law?, 8 STETSON L. REV. 428 (1979).

This student case note examines the reasoning of the Court of Appeals in *U.S. v. Bailey*, 585 F.2d 1087 (D.C. Cir. 1978). Two prisoners were indicted for violation of the federal escape statute and the prison breach statute. The issue on appeal was whether the prison conditions that included frequent fires, beatings, threats, and other violence negated the required intent of the crime or whether they created a defense of duress. The majority rejected the general intent standard previously used by the courts, and held that the required *mens rea* for escape was an intent to avoid confinement, which was a question for a jury. The majority opinion emphasized the defendant's constitutional right to a jury, assigning to the jury the task of determining intent or defense of duress. However, the sharp contrast of policies behind the majority opinion and the dissent indicates the tension that will only result in future inconsistencies, tension which Robson finds ripe for United States Supreme Court review.

Articles in Periodicals

Military Matters, OUT 74 (Nov. 2005).

Robson examines *Rumsfeld v. FAIR*³⁹ in the wake of the oral

³⁹ 390 F.3d 219 (3d Cir. 2004), *cert. granted*, 125 S. Ct. 1977 (2005).

arguments before the Supreme Court. She explains how the power of the purse, embodied in the conditions imposed by the Solomon Amendment, affects the rights of law schools and the impact of this litigation on LGBT issues.

Lesbianism and the Death Penalty: A "Hard Core" Case, 32 Nos. 3 & 4 WOMEN'S STUD. Q. 181 (2004).

This article includes the affidavit submitted by Robson in 2002 to the Illinois Prisoner Review Board on behalf of Bernina Mata who was sentenced to death for the first degree murder of a man. In her expert opinion, Robson points out that the death sentence was the result of the impermissible use of negative stereotypes of lesbians by the prosecution, which was the only aggravating circumstance that the jury considered when it imposed the sentence. In writing the affidavit, Robson confronts the issue of identity politics because she perceives Mata as bisexual, but she decides only to allude to it rather than to make any conclusions. Dismayed by the prosecutor's use of Mata's books to prove her lesbianism, Robson employs the solidarity method, identifying herself as a member of a sexual minority rather than distancing herself from the defendant, to demonstrate to the board members that their decision in the Mata case will have larger political implications.

Hillary: Lesbian Icon?, OUT 72 (Mar. 2004).

Robson examines the popularity and power of a strong and ambitious United States Senator, Hillary Rodham Clinton. She explores the implications of Clinton's lesbianism and how these implications may affect her career.

Wedding Bell Blues, OUT 50 (Aug. 2003).

Exploring the judicial treatment of transgender marriage, Robson finds the ultimate commonality: the preservation of heterosexuality. In their commitment to sustaining the heterosexual concept of marriage, the courts would go as far as disregarding the lawful amendment of the birth certificate after sex reassignment, finding the original birth certificate set in stone and determinative of a person's gender. While transgender marriage cases reflect the complexity of the issue, the author is concerned that the focus on marriage obfuscates the more important issue of equality, which she suggests could be achieved by abolishing the legal status of marriage or abolishing gender as a legal category.

Queer Justice, OUT 35 (Feb. 2003).

With the single exception of New York U.S. District Judge Deborah Batts, the federal courts and the U.S. Supreme Court con-

tinue to be entirely heterosexual. While it is plausible to think that judges would be more tolerant toward a certain minority if one of their colleagues belongs to that minority group, there are examples that defy this possibility. These include intolerance toward the first Jewish justice, Louis Brandeis, or Justice Clarence Thomas's lack of support for diversity. Robson remains concerned with the future judicial appointments of conservatives from minority groups.

Faith, Fame, and Progress, OUT 34 (May 2002).

Questioning the worship of celebrities' coming out as a sign of progress, Robson reminds us that religious programs aimed at eradicating homosexuality are thriving with the help of government funding of faith based initiatives. Citing the illusion of choice in school voucher programs and the illusion of equality between nonreligious and religious charitable organizations, she cautions against a false sense of progress in celebrities' coming out.

Sex Under Fire, OUT 33 (Jan. 2002).

This meditation on the meaning of desire in times of crisis, such as a fatal disease or a publicly tumultuous time, such as the one after September 11th, celebrates the healing and spiritual powers of sex and passion. Robson considers them moving elements of life.

The Novel Law Professor, CLARION 12 (Summer 2002).

Published in the Newspaper of the Professional Staff Congress of CUNY,⁴⁰ this essay challenges the prevailing assumption in the academy that one cannot be a legal theorist and creative fiction writer simultaneously—or, that if one can, then one's work may only be serious in one of those fields. Robson describes her use of language in both spheres to promote social change, both by seeking legal reform in law and filling a void in lesbian literature through decentering romance as the main focus of the story.

Sacred Cows, 9 No. 14 OUT 44 (Aug. 2001).

Robson longs to see more challenges to the criminalization of incest, polygamy, and bestiality; and she questions the purpose of legally regulating marriage and sex. Robson notes the tendency of lesbian and gay rights advocates to distinguish their claims from other domains of sexuality, undermining the larger goal of sexual liberation.

⁴⁰ The newspaper of the Professional Staff Congress of CUNY, CLARION, is available online at: <http://www.psc-cuny.org/communications.htm>.

Leaving My Doctor Saved My Life, SELF 152 (May 2001).

Robson describes her personal experience after she was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer abdominal liposarcoma in a prestigious cancer center. She shows how her defiance led her to find another surgeon who, disagreeing with the diagnosis of her former oncologist, removed the tumor and saved her life.

Being a Dyke Saved My Life, 9 NO. 10 OUT 47 (Apr. 2001).

This personal account demonstrates how being a dyke helped Robson question the validity of her cancer diagnosis, successfully challenging a doctor at a famous cancer center who ruled her cancer incurable.

The Love Amendment, 9 NO. 8 OUT 48 (Feb. 2001).

Arguing for the protection of happiness and love for all instead of the incongruous pursuit of same-sex marriage, Robson wittily hypothesizes about the impact of a debate on the Love Amendment.

Desire as Identity/Identity as Desire, 8 NO. 4 GAY & LESBIAN REV. WORLDWIDE 24 (Jul./Aug. 2001).

The meaning of lesbian identity embodied in waist-long hair as a metaphor of resistance is examined in relation to the importance of body image for lesbians and to the experience of struggling with cancer.

Resisting the Family: Repositioning Lesbians in Legal Theory, 19 SIGNS: J. WOMEN IN CULTURE & SOC'Y 975 (Summer 1994).

This article is an invitation for lesbians to resist the legal institution of the family, regardless of how inclusive it may be, because it domesticates lesbians through its various strategies hostile to lesbianism. Those strategies, as illustrated in the cases *Braschi v. Stahl Associates*,⁴¹ *In re Kowalski*,⁴² and *Alison D. v. Virginia M.*,⁴³ include: assimilation into the heterosexual legal regime, coercion through benefits in exchange for conformity, division among lesbians, indoctrination requiring lesbians not only to adopt the dominant legal structure but also to truly believe in it, and arrogation of lesbianism to heterosexuality, feminism, or familialism. To resist, according to Robson, is to abolish the benefits based on the familial relationship or even the category of family and to create new categories that will honor the complexity of human relationships.

⁴¹ *Braschi v. Stahl Associates*, 543 N.E.2d 49 (N.Y. 1989).

⁴² *In re Kowalski*, 478 N.W.2d 790 (Minn. Ct. App. 1991).

⁴³ *Alison D. v. Virginia M.*, 572 N.E.2d 27 (N.Y. 1991).

Discourses of Discrimination and Lesbians as (Out)Laws, 24 No. 4 RADICAL AMERICA 39 (1993).

In examining the use of gender discrimination laws within the realm of the constitutional doctrine of equality, Robson points out the strategic limitations of anti-discriminatory legal tools in lesbian litigation, including the use of heterosexual norms to prove discrimination, the domestication of lesbians by the dominant legal system, and the marginalization of lesbian experience.

Mother: The Legal Domestication of Lesbian Existence, 7 No. 4 HYPATIA 172 (Fall 1992), reprinted in FEMINIST THEORY AND THE LEGAL REGULATION OF MOTHERHOOD 103 (Martha Albertson Fineman & Isabel Karpin eds., 1995).

Robson argues that mother as a legal category domesticates lesbians by imposing the dominant heterosexual culture upon them. She posits that such placement in a domestic realm, forces lesbians to uncritically accept law which is neither centered on nor concerned with lesbian existence. The article examines the issues facing lesbian mothers in custody disputes including gay sperm donor claims of fatherhood, third party challenges, and intra-lesbian disputes in which lesbians use the law against each other, thereby sustaining the power of the dominant legal regime. Cautioning that the legal category of mother must be carefully used in lesbian custody litigation strategies, Robson calls for the creation of lesbian categories based on lesbian terms and focused on lesbian survival.

Looking for Lesbian Legal Theory—A Surprising Journey, 42 SINISTER WISDOM 32 (1990).

This is a personal account of the author's journey toward a book project on lesbian legal theory finalized at the University of California at Berkeley. Robson explains how her own understanding of lesbianism was shaped from her belief that lesbians were not invisible to her. This view distances her from radical feminism and gay rights ideology, resulting in challenges to the denial of lesbianism and a commitment to create a valid, substantiated lesbian legal theory.

Lesbian Love Contracts?, SOJOURNER: WOMEN'S F. 20 (July 1990).

In examining relationship contracts between lesbians, Robson calls attention to the myth of equality between the contracting parties and the myth of the freedom to choose as tools to disguise a power imbalance. While critical of lesbian adoption of patriarchal contract theory which undermines the lesbian existence, the author suggests limiting its use to strictly legal documents and exam-

ining how such contracts apply and what they mean personally to every lesbian who decides to use them.

Living Our Lives, No. 14 SOC. ANARCHISM 53 (1989).

Motivated by the reading of Emma Goldman's autobiography replete with daily life intricacies and the lack of texts on the anarchist lifestyle, Robson writes a humorous article about what anarchists look like, what they eat, how they love, how they make money and move around, what they do in their spare time, and how they communicate.

Living in Luxury, Father Is "Broke", USA TODAY, July 26, 1984, at 8A.

This short piece shows who is damaged when a battered mother of three is forced to return to her rich husband who does not pay child support because the courts are unable to enforce the law.

Pornography, Power, and the First Amendment, 2 NO. 1 NEW PAGES 9 (Spring 1982), *reprinted in* 13 NO. 7 ENGAGE SOCIAL ACTION 30 (July-Aug. 1985), *and in* 2 ART. 44 COMMUNICATION (Social Issues Resources Series), 2 ART. 54 SEXUALITY (Social Issues Resources Series 1983-1985), *and in* ALTERNATIVE LIBRARY LITERATURE, 1982/1983: A BIENNIAL ANTHOLOGY 68 (Sanford Berman & James P. Danky eds. 1984), *and as revised in* CAMPUS RAPE PREVENTION TRAINING PROJECT, OHIO STATE UNIV., RAPE EDUCATION AND PREVENTION: A READER 185 (Marty Schmidt ed., 1985).

In this article, Robson argues that pornography is a tool of patriarchal society used to degrade and objectify women. She believes, however, that censorship is inconsistent with a free society and that the First Amendment should protect all kinds of speech. Robson starts by distinguishing between obscenity as a concept and pornography as an object. She then criticizes the failure of the courts to clearly define obscenity and pornography, resulting in either overinclusion or underinclusion of certain categories. Robson points out that we live in a pornographic culture where pornography not only promotes the view that women should be subjugated, but also that they enjoy their subjugation. She concludes that pornography harms all women and that women should refuse to be silenced by pornography. An annotated bibliography of further readings on pornography compiled by Robson is attached to the end of the article.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ See *Pornography Further Reading: An Annotated Bibliography Compiled by Ruthann Robson*, 2 NO. 1 NEW PAGES 12 (Spring 1982) listing the following books in alphabetical order by author: KATHLEEN BARRY, *FEMALE SEXUAL SLAVERY* (1979); SUSAN

Fiction-Theory

Correspondence . . . for Marlee Kline, 16 CAN. J. WOMEN & L. 1 (2004).

This emotional letter, in an adapted form of the fiction-theory as practiced by Nicole Brossard, is published in a special issue honoring the work of the University of British Columbia law school professor and feminist scholar Marlee Kline who died in 2001 from leukemia at the age of forty-one. Sharing thoughts and feelings from her personal experience as a rare cancer survivor, Robson rejects the idea that death from cancer is an inevitable tragedy for which society, state, and private powers have no responsibility. Defying invisibility, she remembers other women lost to cancer, articulating the need to consider cancer beyond personal space and arguing for a feminist legal theory of cancer that will focus not only on equality but also on the right to a healthy environment.

Mostly Monogamous Moms?: An Essay on the Future of Lesbian Legal Theories and Reforms, 17 N.Y.L. SCH. J. HUM. RTS. 703 (2000).

Written in the fiction-theory style, influenced by Nicole Brossard, this essay is part of the Symposium issue entitled *Chronicling a Movement: A Symposium to Recognize the Twentieth Anniversary of the Lesbian/Gay Law Notes*. It muses about the conservative choice of assimilation in heteronormativity that lesbians have embraced to legitimate relationships. Critical of the institutions of marriage and civil union, Robson seeks a satisfying justification for the prohibition of blood-related marriage and the insistence on monogamous relationships. The legal regulation of a relationship tends to divide lesbians into those who accept the legal scheme and those who do not. The same is true of the concept of the monogamous mother which governs child custody disputes, dividing lesbians as legal and nonlegal parents and perpetuating the problem of exclusion and inclusion. Robson's lyrical language makes a moving call for queer liberation.

Lesbian Lesbian: A Text on Lesbian Identity with a Subtext on Essential-

BROWNMILLER, *AGAINST OUR WILL* (1975); ANGELA CARTER, *THE SADEIAN WOMAN* (1978); MARY DAILY, *GYN/ECOLOGY* (1978); ANDREA DWORKIN, *PORNOGRAPHY: MEN POSSESSING WOMEN* (1981); BEATRICE FAUST, *WOMEN SEX AND PORNOGRAPHY* (1980); SUSAN GRIFFIN, *PORNOGRAPHY AND SILENCE* (1981); NAT HENTOFF, *THE FIRST FREEDOM* (1980), *TAKE BACK THE NIGHT* (Laura Lederer ed., 1980); FELICE FLANERY LEWIS, *LITERATURE, OBSCENITY AND THE LAW* (1976); ROBERT A. LISTON, *THE RIGHT TO KNOW* (1973); WILLIAM B. LOCKHART, *REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON OBSCENITY AND PORNOGRAPHY* (1970); *Violent Pornography: Degradation of Women Versus Right of Free Speech*, 8 NO. 2 N.Y.U. REV. L. & SOC. CHANGE (1978); CHARLES REMBAR, *THE END OF OBSCENITY* (1968), 15 *SINISTER WISDOM* (1990), LANE V. SUNDERLAND, *OBSCENITY* and; DAVID TRIBE, *QUESTIONS OF CENSORSHIP* (1973).

ism/Constructionism, 3 No. 2 OUT/LOOK: NAT'L LESBIAN & GAY Q. 26 (Fall 1990).

This is the first piece in which Robson uses the fiction-theory genre as it is practiced by Nicole Brossard, Gail Scott, and other feminist writers. The text is written as a lyrical narrative about the search for lesbian identity, which breaks away from the constraints of the constructionist creative writing teacher and the essentialist teenage girl from the neighborhood. See *infra* Poetry, Poetry in Periodicals.

Articles in Anthologies

Reinscribing Normality?: The Law and Politics of Transgender Marriage, in TRANSGENDER RIGHTS: HISTORY, POLITICS AND LAW (Paisley Currah et al. eds., forthcoming).

Robson criticizes the transgender legal reform discourse about marriage as reinscribing the traditional notions of marriage and heterosexuality, thus reinforcing the concept of normalcy. She examines the courts' functionalist and formalist approach to the issue of transgender marriage and concludes that both perspectives serve to preserve the heterosexual matrix grounded in heterosexual intercourse. A strong opponent of the legal regime of marriage, which serves the state by masking economic and other social inequalities, Robson believes that the transgender community can develop a politic that will go beyond the conservatism of marriage.

Legal Scholarship on Lesbianism & Other Minority Sexualities—Part of Feminist Jurisprudence? FEMINIST JURISPRUDENCE, WOMEN AND THE LAW: CRITICAL ESSAYS, RESEARCH AGENDA, AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY 665 (Betty Taylor et al. eds., 1999).

In her investigation of the relationship between lesbian/bisexual/gay/transgender (Robson coins the term "les-bi-gay-trans") legal scholarship and feminist jurisprudence, Robson articulates four different approaches. The first claims the absence of a relationship between the two because feminist scholars see les-bi-gay-trans issues as beyond the scope of their theory and les-bi-gay-trans scholars ignore feminism. The second is the view that lesbian and feminist theories share common ground because both explore the situation of women and the issue of gender consequently including gay, bisexual and transgendered persons. The third approach focuses on the discussion of whether gender is sexual orientation, implicating the issue of identity. The last one includes alternative theories that explore the compatibility of les-bi-gay-trans theories with feminist jurisprudence.

Convictions: Theorizing Lesbians and Criminal Justice, in *LEGAL INVERSIONS: LESBIANS, GAY MEN, AND THE POLITICS OF LAW* 180 (Didi Herman et al. eds., 1995).

This essay theorizes lesbians within the criminal justice system from a lesbian-centered perspective. Robson begins by analyzing the disjuncture between the discourse of equality and criminal proceedings. She then moves to examples of lesbian identity construction and manipulation in murder trials. She suggests that methodological problems such as identification and the relevance of lesbian presence may be solved by expanding the definition of identity, challenging the definition of crime, and by bringing attention to the strategies of exploitation, the sensationalization of violence, and the use of statistics. Robson notes that a lesbian legal theory of criminal justice requires a critical examination of the criminal justice system and its impact on lesbians.

Our Children and Their Laws, in *DYKELIFE: A CELEBRATION OF THE LESBIAN EXPERIENCE* 170 (Karla Jay ed., 1995).

In this article, Robson applies different types of judicial treatment of lesbianism in child custody cases using the hypothetical model of Adam, Eve, and Lillith. These include challenges to lesbian parents by other relatives where the courts require that lesbianism be shown as an extraordinary circumstance sufficient to rebut the presumption of parental preference for custody, the government interference depriving lesbians of custody and the second parent adoption available in some states.

Pedagogy, Jurisprudence, and Finger-Fucking: Lesbian Sex in a Law School Classroom, in *LESBIAN EROTICS* 28 (Karla Jay ed., 1995), *reprinted in* *SAPPHO GOES TO LAW SCHOOL: FRAGMENTS IN LESBIAN THEORY* (1998).

Professor Robson discusses the relationship of sex and pedagogy in law school from her own experience as a lesbian teacher of an elective class entitled "Sexuality and the Law." Recognizing the erotic nature of the teacher-student relationship, she examines the importance of pedagogical rigor affecting boundaries between professorial authority and personal narratives that tend to limit the inquiry into legal doctrines related to sexuality and professorial authority. Professor Robson emphasizes the importance of both student and professorial diversity in legal education. She considers the inclusion of lesbian students especially critical in the classroom because of her concerns with the exploitation and appropriation of lesbianism.

Violence Against Lesbians, in THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND WOMEN: OFFENDERS, VICTIMS, AND WORKERS 312 (Barbara Raffel Price & Natalie Sokoloff eds., 2d ed.1995).

This essay expands on Robson's earlier observations about the meaning of the federal Hate Crime Statistics Act for lesbians.⁴⁵ It inquires whether the law has a deterring effect where the "penalty enhancement model" is used and whether it is enforced impartially where a "neutral model" is applied. As illustrated in some disturbing lesbian murder cases, the criminal justice system acts only therapeutically, even when it convicts the perpetrators. Robson argues that the rule of law, such as the First Amendment principles used against lesbians both in allowing and forbidding the repression of speech, domesticates lesbians and therefore needs to be challenged by developing lesbian-centered strategies within and outside the law.

Legal Lesbicide, in FEMICIDE: THE POLITICS OF WOMAN KILLING 40 (Jill Radford & Diana E.H. Russell eds., 1992).

This essay is a modified, shorter version of the law review article *Lesbianism in Anglo-American Legal History*.⁴⁶ It explores the history of executions of lesbians both by religious and secular authorities. "Lesbicide" consists of not only the legal execution of women for sexual acts with other women—drowning, burning, starving, and hanging—but also the murder by the system's silence on lesbianism.

Encyclopedia Entries

Rights of Association and Assembly, in ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER HISTORY IN AMERICA 37 (Marc Stein ed., 2004).

The First Amendment right of assembly and the implicit right of association has been successfully used in litigation to support the LGBT⁴⁷ struggle for equality, especially in the civil rights era when it was crucial to safeguard the survival of various advocacy groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and LGBT student organizations. However, the courts were reluctant to recognize the freedom of intimate association, upholding sodomy laws and the prohibition of same-sex marriage. The tension between

⁴⁵ See *supra* Articles in Law Reviews, *Incendiary Categories: Lesbians/Violence/Law*, 2 TEX. J. WOMEN & L. 1 (1993).

⁴⁶ See *supra* Articles in Law Reviews.

⁴⁷ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [hereinafter LGBT].

anti-discriminatory laws and the freedom to associate continues to operate against LGBT persons resulting in the legitimization of discriminatory practices of exclusion.

Employment Law and Policy, in *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER HISTORY IN AMERICA* 346 (Marc Stein ed., 2004).

This section provides a general overview of government and private employment discrimination against LGBT persons. The current military ban on homosexuals is noted as the most controversial. Examples are also invoked where the government has perceived homosexual individuals as security risks, as for example during the cold war, terminating their employment. Another context of government discrimination against LGBT persons involves work with children where the exclusion of teachers, social workers, and librarians was significant. Since there is no federal bill prohibiting discrimination against LGBT persons, private employers continue to deny employment or benefits. This is despite a certain level of protection guaranteed by the Civil Rights Act Title VII, which does not cover sexual orientation.

Law and Legal Institutions, in *LESBIAN HISTORIES AND CULTURES* 445 (Bonnie Zimmerman ed., 2000).

In her description of the interaction between the law, legal institutions and lesbianism, Robson centers on the traditional non-recognition of lesbian relationships resulting in the denial of property, benefits, and child custody. She includes the positive and negative effects that same-sex marriage could have on lesbians. She also brings attention to the general animosity of the current legal system toward lesbians, allowing legitimate discrimination such as the discharge of lesbians from the military.

Crime and Criminology, in *LESBIAN HISTORIES AND CULTURES* 206 (Bonnie Zimmerman ed., 2000).

This entry outlines the relationship between lesbianism and the criminal justice system through a short historical review of the criminalization of lesbian sexual activities and the contemporary treatment of lesbian sexuality in the United States. The entry includes bias crimes, lesbian domestic violence, and lesbians on death row, as well as a comparison to other nations. It concludes that the media representation of lesbians as violent perpetuates stereotyping and contributes to the complexity of the relationship that is waiting to be explored more in-depth by an adequate theoretical work.

Marriage, in THE READER'S COMPANION TO U.S. WOMEN'S HISTORY 358 (Wilma Mankiller et al. eds., 1998).

Robson provides a concise historical overview of issues related to marriage as status and contract, including women's inability to own property, the exclusion of slaves, miscegenation laws, the prohibition of marriages between certain relatives, different minimum age requirements for men and women, the prohibition of polygamy and the current debate about same-sex marriage.

Reprints, Excerpts, and Translations

To Market, To Market: Considering Class in the Context of Lesbian Legal Theories and Reforms, reprinted as revised in QUEERLY CLASSED: GAY MEN AND LESBIANS WRITE ABOUT CLASS 165 (Susan Raffo ed., 1997).

Convictions: Theorizing Lesbians and Criminal Justice, reprinted in A QUEER WORLD: THE CENTER FOR GAY AND LESBIAN STUDIES READER 418 (Martin Duberman ed., 1997).

Crimes of Lesbian Sex, excerpted & reprinted in CASES AND MATERIALS ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND THE LAW 149 (2nd ed. 1997); excerpted & reprinted in THE COLUMBIA READER ON LESBIANS & GAY MEN IN MEDIA, SOCIETY, & POLITICS 228 (Larry P. Gross & James D. Woods eds., 1999).

Lavender Bruises: Intra-Lesbian Violence, Law & Lesbian Legal Theory, excerpted & reprinted in APPLICATIONS OF FEMINIST THEORY TO WOMEN'S LIVES: SEX, VIOLENCE, WORK & REPRODUCTION (D. Kelly Weisberg ed., 1996), excerpted & reprinted in MODERN FAMILY LAW: CASES AND MATERIALS 475 (2d ed. 2002), excerpted & reprinted in DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAW 183 (Nancy K.D. Lemon ed., 2000).

Lesbian Jurisprudence?, excerpted & reprinted in MARGARET DAVIES, ASKING THE LAW QUESTION 211 (1994).

Lesbische Rechtswissenschaft, in STREIT 147 (Annette Keinhorst trans. 1994).

This is a German translation of *Lesbian Jurisprudence*⁴⁸ accompanied by a few annotations by the translator designed to facilitate a better understanding for the German speaking audience.

Mother: The Legal Domestication of Lesbian Existence, reprinted in MOTHERHOOD (Martha Fineman ed., Columbia University Press' Gender and Culture Series 1995), reprinted in MOTHERS IN LAW: FEMINIST THEORY AND THE LEGAL REGULATION OF MOTHERHOOD 103 (Martha

⁴⁸ See *supra* Articles in Law Reviews.

A. Fineman & Isabel Karpin eds., 1995), *reprinted in* ADVENTURES IN LESBIAN PHILOSOPHY 186 (Claudia Card ed., 1994).

III. LITERARY WORKS

Books

THE STRUGGLE FOR HAPPINESS (2000).

This collection of short stories reflects the inner struggles of different lesbian characters in their attempts to survive and achieve their life goals. Whether that struggle revolves around the uncertainty of growing up as an abused and neglected lesbian child or around an artist's creative process, what they all share is a search for love, recognition, and one's own happiness.

A/K/A (1997).

The novel traces the paths of two women: Margaret, a prostitute, and BJ, a soap opera actress. Margaret and BJ's alternating chapters are intertwined in a universe of lesbian existence that includes the themes of child sexual abuse, lesbian parenting, mental illness, murder, and an everlasting search for one's identity. By assuming multiple names and identities, Margaret lives an illusion of changing lives escaping constantly from the reality of her own existence. BJ finds a retreat in a script with which she identifies and which disorients her, making her incapable of facing reality and taking charge of her own life. Attracted to each other by a coincidental symmetry of destruction, the two women find refuge in love as their ultimate escape. The vivid portrayal of the relationships between women, the erotic use of language, and the poetic style make this novel moving and powerful.

ANOTHER MOTHER (1995).

The main character of the novel is a successful attorney from an impoverished background whose advocacy work representing lesbian mothers in murder and child custody cases saturates her life. Her inability to cope with her own past, her troubling mother-daughter relationship, class issues, and her political activism shape the way she raises her adopted daughter as well as her relationships with her lover, colleagues, clients, and friends. Robson's detailed description of everyday living and her mastery of law bring insight into the inner struggles of her characters.

CECILE (1991).

The author explores the dynamics of the daily lives of the narrator, her lover Cecile, and their child Colby. The stories follow the three of them as they leave their home in Florida for California

and then New York. Although they change places, schools, jobs, and environments, their unconditional love and commitment to each other endure and remain as inspiring as ever.

EYE OF A HURRICANE (1989).

In this first collection of short stories, Robson demonstrates her exquisite style of storytelling, focusing on lesbian experiences articulated from a variety of perspectives including class, race, age, illness, disability, gender, and patriarchy. The gallery of her characters features a photographer, an abuser, a gypsy fortuneteller, a journalist, an artist, an accountant, an imprisoned mother and her daughter, a legal services attorney, a professor, an aerobics trainer, and many others. Each character's relation to the present is permeated by her past and is skillfully and often subtly interwoven in the story.

Fiction Short Stories

Fingers: 10 x Love, in BEST LESBIAN LOVE STORIES 2003 97 (Angela Brown ed., 2003).

Three women meet at the eco-tourist camp in the Caribbean: Becca, a black college student running away from her crush on a lesbian professor, Gretchen, an older white South African running away from the loss of her lover's child, and Jayne, a racist and homophobic white New Yorker running away from herself. While only Gretchen's lover's finger remains after he dies in the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Jayne's fingers are tangled twice with the fingers of other women. The first time Becca and Gretchen's fingers save her from drowning and the second time she reaches for the fingers of the woman who is closest to her as she goes down the stairwell of a burning skyscraper.

Open, FINE PRINT 1 (2002), *reprinted in* LEGAL STUD. F. 815 (2003).

A law school professor opens the door to the issues of stereotypes, rape, and teenage pregnancy. An open adoption statute brings back the past, reuniting mother with son and leaving it open to the mother to decide how to proceed from that moment.

The Problem, in BEDROOM EYES: STORIES OF LESBIANS IN THE BOUDOIR 184 (Lesléa Newman ed., 2002).

Two lesbian lovers try to determine what the problem is between them. While the narrator blames her lover for freezing during their affectionate moments, it is she who hides her own problem: that she is sick with an incurable rare disease.

*St*f*ck*r*, 21 No. 2 FRONTIERS NEWSMAGAZINE 75 (May 24, 2002).

In the sunny Caribbean, two lesbian couples compete in scoring points for sleeping with someone who knew someone, who knew someone who slept with a celebrity. Unbeknownst to the other three, one of them scores the highest not only for having sex with a reputable lesbian writer of a bestselling memoir who later died of cancer but also for direct evidence in the form of a poem that the writer composed for her.

The Grand Union, in LOVE SHOOK MY HEART II 10 (Jess Wells ed., 2001).

The Grand Union is more than a mere grocery store in a small town with a significant lesbian population. It is a rare opportunity for sex when the only woman you love struggles with cancer.

Numbers Lie, in HOT & BOTHERED 3 220 (Karen X. Tulchinsky ed., 2001).

After being hit by her lover's knee while making love, the narrator receives twenty-seven stitches on her upper lip, which makes the accident seem suspicious.

Black Squirrels, 2 No. 3 HARRINGTON LESBIAN FICTION Q. 3 (2001), reprinted from RUTHANN ROBSON, THE STRUGGLE FOR HAPPINESS 1 (2000).

A lesbian professor, struck with a disabling illness after her university office was moved next to a basement research lab, starts a relationship with a home health care student who works nights guarding a mall construction site. The two women exist in the tension between environmental health concerns and the need to make a living.

Pas de Deux, 1 No. 1 HARRINGTON LESBIAN FICTION Q. 97 (2000), reprinted in RUTHANN ROBSON, The Struggle for Happiness 115 (2000).

Exploring the relationship between a student and her teacher, this story follows one ballerina through her life. It touches upon the issues of success, the power to assign roles, the meaning of vanity, and the unconsummated love. After a lifelong search for her teacher, the ballerina finally finds love in her lesbian relationship.

Keys, in NIGHT SHADE: GOTHIC TALES BY WOMEN 210 (Victoria A. Brownworth & Judith M. Redding eds., 1999).

The tale of the protagonist's escape from her own past of incest and rape is transformed into a tale of animal rescue. This transformation painfully reminds the reader how relative and temporary freedom may be.

re-view (ri-vyōō'), 20 No.3 KALLIOPE 65 (1999), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *The Struggle for Happiness* 45 (2000).

The story provides an insight into the creative process of writing and the organization of the everyday routine of a writer. It also explores the influence of one writer's work and the detrimental impact of suicide on another writer.

His Sister, 2 No. 1 BLITHE HOUSE Q. (Winter 1998), at <http://www.blithe.com/bhq2.1/sister.html>, *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *The Struggle for Happiness* 59 (2000).

The lesbian director of the Criminal Defense Resource Center is quitting her job because her twin brother is a sexual serial murderer on death row. Quitting is an attempt to erase memories and start a new life without the identity as her brother's sister.

Choices, in CLOSE CALLS: NEW LESBIAN FICTION 1 (Susan Fox Rogers ed., 1996), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, A/K/A 15 (1997).

This is a story about a law school student who provides services to all types of women, choosing different names and identities in order to escape the loss of her lover to cocaine.

The Death of the Subject, in OUT FOR MORE BLOOD: TALES OF MALICE & RETALIATION BY WOMEN 203 (Victoria A. Brownworth et al. eds., 1996), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *The Struggle for Happiness* 33 (2000).

The tarot card fortune teller metaphorically expresses the desire for a happy life through her women clients' shuffling of the cards as if the pictures hold the ultimate secret to happiness.

Women's Music, in NIGHT BITES: VAMPIRE STORIES BY WOMEN 179 (Victoria A. Brownworth ed., 1996), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *The Struggle for Happiness* 97 (2000).

A singer and guitar player's lover dies from an overdose, but comes back in a feverish dream to make love to her.

The Pool, in OUT FOR BLOOD: TALES OF MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE BY WOMEN 175 (1995), *reprinted from* RUTHANN ROBSON, EYE OF A HURRICANE 89 (1989).

Featured in a collection of mysteries, this story revolves around the consequences of a nonmonogamous lesbian relationship between a therapist and a college professor. The professor's sexual encounter with the woman who cleans the pool leads to a grim end for one of the women. Or two? Or three?

Kissing Doesn't Kill, in LAVENDER MANSIONS: 40 CONTEMPORARY LES-

BIAN AND GAY SHORT STORIES 208 (Irene Zahava ed., 1994), *reprinted from* RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 157 (1991).

A lesbian high school philosophy teacher's poster is burned. The poster, advocating kissing instead of greed and indifference, is an artistic political statement bringing attention to the AIDS crisis. She tries to emphasize the universal vulnerability of human beings, but faces the hostility of the school environment together with her son.

Frenchtown, No. 2 SHORT FICTION BY WOMEN 1 (1992).

This short story explores the issues of poverty, race, teenage pregnancy, teenage motherhood, and the first kiss between two girls. It is written in the dialect spoken by a young African-American woman from Frenchtown.

dear juan, No. 38 COMMON LIVES/ LESBIAN LIVES 99 (Spring 1991).

This is a letter by a dyke who married her girlfriend's gay brother so he could get a green card. Later he raped her for aborting his child and the letter serves as a closure to a relationship that damaged her life.

Theories of Men, VI No. 2 EVERGREEN CHRONICLES 74 (Summer/Fall 1991), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 121 (1991).

The narrator contemplates the validity and characteristics of theories as constructs created by men in power. She ultimately finds the theories of men incomprehensible and inadequate to explain her mother, earthquakes, lesbians, and love.

Tony's Pizza, MODERN SHORT STORIES 57 (May 1990).

A mother of a sixteen-month-old baby walks out of a pizzeria with a pizza maker. The next day she moves into his place, leaving one man for another.

Lake Hudson's Daughter, EYE OF A HURRICANE 59 (1989), *reprinted in* 13 HARV. WOMEN'S L. J. 367 (1990),

Moving from place to place, living with different women, and changing names is the everyday life of a daughter whose mother is in prison for refusing to reveal the whereabouts of her daughter. The mother does this in order to prevent the enforcement of a court order awarding custody to the father because she is a lesbian.

Epiphany, in LESBIAN BEDTIME STORIES II 2 (Terry Woodrow ed., 1990), *reprinted as Interlude in* RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 91 (1991).

Growing up watching soap operas where happiness is considered illusory, unnatural, and fraudulent and where tragedy is just

waiting to happen, the narrator realizes that she is happy and does not want anything different in her life.

For Love or Money, 16 No. 4 SOJOURNER: THE WOMEN'S F. 22 (Dec. 1990), *reprinted in* IF I HAD A HAMMER: WOMEN'S WORK IN POETRY, FICTION, AND PHOTOGRAPHS 68 (1990), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 83 (1991).

Distinguishing between what women do for love and what they do for money, and missing her lover and their child when she is at work, the narrator faces the in-between love and money zone of helping out another lesbian.

The Room(s), No. 36 COMMON LIVES, LESBIAN LIVES 99 (Fall 1990), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 23 (1991).

The narrator cherishes the beauty of her child's room and the heavenly perfection of the room she shares with her lesbian partner while contrasting them with the rooms she inhabited as she went through a difficult period of her life.

What We Do in Bed, 12 OTHER VOICES 138 (1990) *reprinted from* LESBIAN BEDTIME STORIES 98 (Terry Woodrow ed., 1989), and *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 59 (1991).

The narrator describes the eroticism of reading in bed with her lesbian lover, Cecile, the sensuality of sleeping together, morning lovemaking, and their son's visits to their bed.

Minneapolis, Minnesota & Monogamy, V No. 2 EVERGREEN CHRONICLES 4 (Winter 1990), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 49 (1991).

The narrator, her lover Cecile, and their son Colby go to Minneapolis where the two women attend a conference on lesbian theory and relationships. The story revolves around the understanding of the concept of monogamy, which the narrator describes as looking at the mirror and seeing the reflection of your lover rather than yourself.

Marbalo, Separatism and Neutering Male Cats, 14 No. 5 SOJOURNER: THE WOMEN'S F. 29 (JAN. 1989), *reprinted as* *Marbalo, Lesbian Separatism, & Neutering Male Cats*, in CECILE 9 (1991), and in VIII Nos. 10-11 WOMEN'S REV. OF BOOKS 28 (July 1991), and in LESBIANS RAISING SONS: AN ANTHOLOGY 72 (Jess Wells ed., 1997).

This is the first short story in the collection *Cecile*. It introduces the reader to the narrator, her lover Cecile, their son Colby, and his imaginary friend Marbalo, their cat Bob, and dog Stella. It describes the way the lesbian couple separated from lesbian separatists once they had a male child.

Habeas Corpus, No. 12 LACTUCA 54 (Feb. 1989).

A law clerk for a federal judge, an Asian woman, writes an opinion to stay the execution of a man convicted of raping and brutally murdering two women. The prisoner, his guard, and his lawyer all former Vietnam soldiers, each dream that they rape and kill the same enemy woman. The judge's law clerk also appears in their dreaming, looking for another woman to guide her to safety.

California, or at Least Somewhere West, No. 33 COMMON LIVES/LESBIAN LIVES 67 (Winter 1989), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 95 (1991).

After living happily in a rented old Florida farm house, the narrator, her lover, and their child are forced to find another place to call home after a developer buys the property. Dreaming of going some place west, even perhaps California, all three have different emotional reactions to the move.

When the Sky Is Not Sky Blue, No. 31 COMMON LIVES, LESBIAN LIVES 109 (Summer 1989), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 39 (1991).

Painting the refrigerator a sky-blue color is an omen for an uneasy feeling that the narrator develops when her lesbian partner's ex-husband calls after fifteen years, temporarily disrupting the harmonious lives of the couple and their child.

Artichoke Hearts, 4 No. 4 EVERGREEN CHRONICLES 20 (Summer 1989), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, EYE OF A HURRICANE 41 (1989).

The connection between artichokes, pizza, and sex is presented through a variety of sexual relationships.

Learning to Read, No. 37 SINISTER WISDOM 57 (Spring 1989), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 65 (1991), ALL THE WAYS HOME 43 (Cindy Rizzo et al. 1995), *excerpted in* ROBERT GIARD, PARTICULAR VOICES: PORTRAITS OF GAY AND LESBIAN WRITERS 269 (1997).

The narrator and her lover, Cecile, face the exclusionary nature of their son's alternative school's celebration of "family month." A bulletin board depicts family as consisting of a father, mother, and children. While teaching their four-year-old son how to read, they must also contemplate ways to protect him from homophobia and ignorance.

Growing Avocados, No. 23 COMMON LIVES/LESBIAN LIVES 5 (Winter 1988), *reprinted in* EYE OF A HURRICANE 11 (1989), LESBIAN CUL-

TURE: AN ANTHOLOGY 324 (Julia Penelope & Susan J. Wolfe eds., 1993).

This is a story about domestic violence and abuse in a lesbian relationship. A college teacher comes home after an unsuccessful day and beats her artist lover for no apparent reason. When the artist leaves, the teacher blames her for provoking her.

Kind, 4 No. 2 EVERGREEN CHRONICLES 5 (Winter 1988).

Growing up without a mother, as the only female child with seven brothers and a Methodist minister father, is not easy for the narrator who spends summers with her cousin Lydia. Lydia grows up to become a lesbian separatist and the narrator, searching for her mother, joins Lydia in her escape to Canada. Together with their lovers, they try to avoid homophobia and religious attacks in which one of the narrator's own brothers participates.

Lives of a Long-Haired Lesbian: Four Elemental Narrations, No. 27 FIREWEED 23 (Fall 1988), *reprinted in* 12 No.2 CALYX 72 (1989-90), A LINE OF CUTTING WOMEN 124 (Beverly McFarland et al. eds., 1998), RUTHANN ROBSON, EYE OF A HURRICANE 105 (1989).

The first story, *Home Fires*, is about two women prostitutes who are controlled and abused by their pimp. They escape a fire, but one of them resorts to hanging herself. In the second piece, *Lavender Oceans*, a lesbian character tries to assuage her loneliness by making love to others. In *Gaea*, the third story, a lesbian day care worker starts a violent affair with the mother of one of her students lasting until the mother's husband returns. The last narrative, *Aerobics*, is about the meaning of love and betrayal and the art of accepting without having expectations.

Wisteria, No. 9 OTHER VOICES 90 (Fall 1988).

The color of lavender and the fragrance of wisteria have the power of reminiscence over the lesbian whose longing for sex keeps her moving between lovers.

Taxonomic Classifications: Butch/Femme & Rattle/Snakes, 4 No. 1 EVERGREEN CHRONICLES 7 (Fall 1988), *reprinted in* SILVERLEAF'S CHOICE: AN ANTHOLOGY OF LESBIAN HUMOR 39 (Ann E. Larson & Carole A. Carr eds., 1990), RUTHANN ROBSON, CECILE 31 (1991).

The narrator and her lover Cecile discuss the classifications of lesbian relationships and the different meanings of the butch/femme dichotomy.

The Floor, No. 27 COMMON LIVES/LESBIAN LIVES 53 (Summer 1988), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, EYE OF A HURRICANE 79 (1989).

A lesbian mother obsessed by cleanliness notices a blood spot on her perfectly white kitchen floor. Her long-term companion dog has to be put to sleep.

Her Dream Husbands, No. 3 HALF TONES TO JUBILEE 65 (Summer 1988).

A woman dreams about her first husband whom she left because he was an alcoholic. Her second husband leaves her and she dreams about the man she did not marry.

Inter/Views, 11 No. 1 CALYX 59 (1987-88), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *EYE OF A HURRICANE* 29 (1989).

Preoccupied with unimportant details, oppressed by a patriarchal familial structure, and oblivious to her child's deafness, a freelance journalist is transcribing an interview with a female artist whose life is free of social constraints.

Paternity, 10 No. 1 CLINTON ST. Q. 11 (Spring 1988), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *EYE OF A HURRICANE* 47(1989).

This is a story that makes one question the importance of the concept of paternity for the individual and society. An unwed mother is pressed by friends, clients, the community, and a former lover to acknowledge who is/are the father/s of her three children.

Arva's Triangles, 13 No. 2 SOJOURNER: THE WOMEN'S F. 31 (1987), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *EYE OF A HURRICANE* 19 (1989).

A special relationship is formed between an old gypsy dyke who runs a bookstore and her young assistant who is recovering from oral surgery.

Dinorah, in *CROSSING THE MAINSTREAM* 71 (Ann E. Larson & Carole A. Carr eds., 1987).

Narrating itself, this story describes how Dinorah, a child of Cuban immigrants, experienced womanhood too young, underwent an abortion as a teenager and grew up to become a nurse, alone and pregnant once again. The story follows Dinorah's difficult work in a maternity clinic for migrant farmers, her giving birth while all alone in her trailer home, and the love and care she gave her daughter, which was constrained only by her poverty and her class. When a social worker claims neglect and abuse, Dinorah is forced to subjugate her values to imposed social expectations, which almost destroy the instinctual mother daughter connection. Escape is the only way to survive, and she does it by taking her daughter away and leaving her story behind.

Women's Writing/Male Subjects, 9 No. 3 KALLIOPE 72 (1987).

Robson discusses the treatment of men as subjects in women's writings, including theoretical works, novels, and poetry.⁴⁹

Atlantis V, 9 No. 1 KALLIOPE 47 (1987), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *STRUGGLE FOR HAPPINESS* 71 (2000).

A lawyer and nuclear physicist meet in this fantastic story of love and disaster where danger lurks beneath reality.

Listen to the Dance of the Mango, 1 No. 2 SAGE WOMAN 3 (Winter 1986), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *EYE OF A HURRICANE* 99 (1989).

The mango tree narrates its relationship with a dancer who is trying to save it from being cut down by the power company. Witness to the raping of the woman by a group of men, to her bleeding and crying, the tree is finally chopped down but continues to live in the dance of the woman.

her & geronimo, *CONDITIONS* 70 (1986), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *EYE OF A HURRICANE* 119 (1989).

A farm worker's labor contractor, Geronimo, and the wife of a semi-retired dentist, Claire, come to Florida seasonally to make love to Sylvana. After years of the same routine, Sylvana leaves them so they can be with each other.

Poverty: A Story, No. 1 CATALYST 65 [n.d. cca 1985], *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *EYE OF A HURRICANE* 69 (1989).

A story about poverty is populated by the lives not only of the Street Legal Services clients, but also the employees including attorneys. While in the eye of a hurricane, the employees exchange anecdotes, remembering a former employee. Surrounded by poverty, one of the employees is determined to engage in the art of writing.

Rhea's Daughter, 10 PLAINSWOMAN 19 (1984), *reprinted in* CROSSING THE MAINSTREAM 11 (Ann E. Larson & Carole A. Carr eds., 1987).

⁴⁹ The books discussed follow in alphabetical order by title: PHYLLIS CHESLER, *ABOUT MEN* (1978); JUDITH ARCANA, *EVERY MOTHER'S SON* (1986); MARGE PIERCY, *GONE TO SOLDIERS* (1987); MARGARET ATWOOD, *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* (1986); BARBARA EHRENREICH, *THE HEARTS OF MEN* (1983); ANDREA DWORKIN, *ICE AND FIRE* (1986); MARILYN NELSON WANIEK, *MAMA'S PROMISES* (1985); MARGE PIERCY, *MY MOTHER'S BODY* (1985), *ON THE PROBLEM OF MEN* (Scarlet Friedman & Elizabeth Sarah eds., 1984); BARBARA WILSON, *SISTERS OF THE ROAD* (1986); RACHEL GUIDO DEVRIS, *TENDER WARRIORS* (1986); LOUISE GLUCK, *THE TRIUMPH OF ACHILLES* (1985); *WOMEN'S IMAGES OF MEN* (Sarah Kent & Jacqueline Morreau eds., 1985); JANE MILLER, *WOMEN WRITING ABOUT MEN* (1986); ADRIENNE RICH, *YOUR NATIVE LAND, YOUR LIFE* (1986).

This story explores the mother-daughter relationship as the daughter accompanies her forty-year-old mother to an abortion clinic. Needing her daughter, yet resenting the path she has chosen, the mother indulges in self-pity and arrogance. Hurt that her mother never appreciated or accepted her, the daughter finds escape in returning home to her lover, cat, herb garden, and women like herself.

Celibate, 9 No. 3 ROOM OF ONE'S OWN 62 (1984).

After unsuccessful psychotherapy addressing her lack of sexual desire, the lesbian protagonist breaks up with her partner, moves to her own apartment, and enjoys life without sex.

Learning to See, No. 62 CIMARRON REV. 55 (Jan. 1983), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *EYE OF A HURRICANE* 1 (1989).

This is a story about a freelance photographer who devotes her life to capturing social reality through the lens of her camera. Once she is diagnosed with an eye tumor, the photographer realizes there is more than texture, light and color, more than a mere subject in each photograph. She learns to see life beyond photography.

The Booted Recollection, 12 No. 1 FEMINARY 75 (1982).

A southern woman comes to New York for a role in a soap opera, but ends up beaten by her Yankee husband and hurt by the coldness of the North.

A Sense of Place, 7 No. 6 SOJOURNER: THE NEW ENG. WOMEN'S J. NEWS OP. & ARTS 4 (Feb. 1982).

Moving from the northern to the southern East Coast, a woman feels uneasy leaving the place to which she has become attached to follow her husband when he is transferred to the West Coast.

Steps/Stairs, 3 No. 2 KALLIOPE 33 (Winter 1981).

Viewing steps/stairs as phases of her life laden with men's violence toward her, a young woman becomes an attorney and finds peace with her lesbian lover.

Creative Nonfiction

Reblooming, 2 No. 2 BLOOM MAGAZINE 55, *available at* <http://www.bloommagazine.org> (forthcoming Winter 2005).

It is October, more than five years since her body underwent a series of extreme procedures after a wrong diagnosis, and Robson reminisces about life. Interweaving the lives of both irises and

dykes, this poetic narrative refutes the myth that a woman's life is finished at forty and destroys the illusion of blooming as the only beautiful stage of existence. Laureate of "tiresome disagreements," Robson celebrates reblooming through life and love for her own Iris.

Notes from a Difficult Case, 21 CREATIVE NONFICTION 7 (2003), available at <http://jhf.org/reports/pdfs/CNRobson.pdf>, reprinted in IN FACT: THE BEST OF CREATIVE NONFICTION (Lee Gutkind ed., 2005).

This personal narrative describes Robson's experience as a cancer survivor and medical malpractice victim who was misdiagnosed with incurable liposarcoma and mistreated with chemotherapy by doctors at a prestigious cancer center. Written as a reflection about a hypothetical lawsuit, it combines the presentation of facts, the theory of the case, legal analysis, documentary evidence, witness testimony, and the assessment of damages. The piece demonstrates Robson's proficiency in interweaving legal and poetical language and structure, producing an extremely powerful and emotional text.

Studies in the Subjunctive, 3 No. 1 BELLEVUE LITERARY REV. 114 (Spring 2003).

This is an inquiry into the subjunctive as a metaphor of possibilities, not only of moods, but also of directions in which life may turn if it were given a chance. Written in the form of a letter to an anonymous on the birthday of the American poet Anne Sexton who committed suicide in 1974 at the age of forty-six, the text incorporates the author's personal struggle to survive the illness and the memory of the loss of lives on September 11. A suspicion about the notion of death as romantic or literary makes the suicide incomprehensible and celebrates life in which the subjunctive is still very much alive.

Leaving Her, in TELLING MOMENTS: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LESBIAN SHORT STORIES 223 (2003).

This is a personal testimony about the expectations of understanding, trust, and care that Robson had for a female oncologist whom she leaves for a male doctor. She compares her relationship with the oncologist to her relationship with the high school math wiz and finds that both women asserted exclusive authority by using similar language. This produced an abusive effect, resulting in the abandonment of both, which was to Robson's advantage and left her without any regrets.

Story Time, 41 ANOTHER CHICAGO MAGAZINE 216 (2002).

Robson explores the importance of storytelling as a source of learning, inspiration, pain and life, especially when, in writing one's own story, one defies death.

Notes on My Dying, 18 CREATIVE NONFICTION 8 (2001), available at <http://www.creativenonfiction.org/thejournal/articles/issue18/18robson.htm>.

Robson narrates a story about dying by refusing to be the protagonist of another story written by death. While narrative seems like a perfect space in which the narrator could be dignified, beautiful, and kind, its elements are corrupted because there is no beginning—only ending and different ways in which to walk towards it. Influenced by theoretical work of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross,⁵⁰ Robson contemplates five stages of dying: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance; but ultimately chooses resistance, making life a space she wants to inhabit.

not// a story, in COMING OUT OF CANCER: WRITINGS FROM THE LESBIAN CANCER EPIDEMIC 47 (Victoria A. Brownworth ed., 2000).

The personal experience as a rare cancer patient is told from the perspective of a lesbian, who loses her hair to chemotherapy. Robson compares the loss of her waist-long hair to that of the biblical character Samson. The story goes further by telling the reader about the meaning of pubic hair for her sexual desire, and how her disease and chemotherapy affected people around her.

Striving To Be Selfish, 4 NO. 4 J. LESBIAN STUD. 125 (2000), reprinted in LESBIAN SELF-WRITING: THE EMBODIMENT OF EXPERIENCE 125 (Lynda Hall ed., 2000).

Robson examines the concept of selfishness as a positive practice that connects her as a writer and a dyke to something higher than daily life. She articulates the difference between a writer, who writes to explore the secrets of life, and an author, who tends to domesticate the writer and is concerned with sale profits and market demands. Similarly, Robson distinguishes a dyke, who has an inner sensory and intellectual world, from a lesbian, who tries to domesticate “dyke” and belongs to a socially acceptable category. She concludes that being a dyke and writer is selfish because both represent an attempt to communicate with the self through different means: body and language.

⁵⁰ Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, psychiatrist and author of the book ON DEATH AND DYING (1969). See <http://www.elisabethkublerross.com/>.

A Son: Nightmares and Dreams of a Radical Feminist, No. 6 TRIVIA 70 (Winter 1985).

This is a powerful contemplation of issues that a radical feminist faces in the upbringing of her son. After surveying available literature on mother-son relationships from the mother's perspective, Robson tells a story based on her personal experience as a young mother of a male child. She explores two main themes that are deeply embedded in a social structure divided by gender lines. The first is the overvaluation of male life articulated by a social expectation that mothers dedicate their lives to their sons, while fathers, who are usually absent from the child care process, become exonerated when their sons grow up to enter the patriarchal hierarchy of society. The second theme is the mother's responsibility for her son's sexuality. Refusing to accept the positioning of a mother by patriarchy, Robson decides to encourage her son to recognize that the seduction of patriarchy is based on a power imbalance and that refusing to be part of the dominant system is a viable choice for a son.

Reprints, Excerpts, and Translations

A/K/A (Lia Nirgad trans., Israel: Shopra, 2000).

This is a Hebrew translation of the novel by Lia Nirgad. *See infra* Literary Works, Books.

Sex: An Excerpt from Novel Another Mother, 10 No. 1 EVERGREEN CHRONICLES 6 (1995).

See infra Literary Works, Books, ANOTHER MOTHER (1995).

My Son Colby, in WOMEN'S GLIBBER: STATE-OF-THE-ART WOMEN'S HUMOR 179 (Rosalind Warren ed., 1992).

In this excerpt from a short story *Marbalo, Lesbian Separatism & Neutering Male Cats*⁵¹ the narrator describes how she chose the name Colby for her son.

IV. POETRY

Books

MASKS: POEMS (1999).

In the introduction to this superb book of poems, Marge Piercy emphasizes Robson's wit, sensuality, and intellectual subtlety in her poems focused on female experience:

Some of these poems zero in on moments or trends in

⁵¹ *See supra* Literary Works, Books, CECILE 9 (1991).

[Robson's] own life, but she also examines the female experience through women in or associated with the arts as diverse as Frieda Kahlo, Alice B. Toklas, Diane Arbus, Käthe Kollwitz, Mary Cassat, among others. She enters each of their lives sympathetically and speaks for them in a compassionate and persuasive voice. She is equally concerned with how they found or did not find love and with how these women worked and tried to preserve themselves and other women and that work.⁵²

Poetry in Periodicals

january notes of a dying insomniac: nine hundred miles too close to the arctic circle, 6 DRAGONFIRE (Sept. 13, 2005), <http://www.dfire.org/x1091.xml>.

FIRST LINES 1. the fifth midnight

Winter night
It should be dark.

Black. The promised lamp
of ache and silver, nowhere,
the lunar calendar be damned.

Instead it is white.
Bed sheet bleached until they rot,
ripping as I walk through the yard.

There is only fog.
Deceitful lace. The thinness of my
Amherst nightdress caught
by a branch.
The dog barks,
impatient as always,
to illuminate what she cannot find.

in the kingdom of things: II (adolescence), 6 DRAGONFIRE (Sept. 13, 2005), <http://www.dfire.org/x1091.xml>.

FIRST LINES the papers, so precisely translucent and
the needles, never quite clean, but always shiny,
and
the leather pouch softening with misuse, and
the special spoon, the scale, the bong, the
boxes of baggies and the packets of pills
in every color of the rainbow, including black.
every art has its instruments.

⁵² Marge Piercy, *Introduction* to RUTHANN ROBSON, *MASKS: POEMS* vii, viii (1999).

grief tanka, 6 DRAGONFIRE (Sept. 13, 2005), <http://www.dfire.org/x1091.xml>.

FIRST LINES 1.

whisper on no stage
 silent ocean, fox, bone, wind
 mute tongue of the crescent moon
 rage animates the small sounds
 (non) iambic hiss: loss, loss, loss

2.

the itch of paper
 scratched by the black ink
 sharp calligraphy
 another letter to her
 not asking her not to die

Elizabeth "Tex" Williams Black Photographer 1924-, 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 113 (2005), *reprinted from* RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 40 (1999).

FIRST LINES

*I married the military at twenty
 and never divorced. I shot
 thousands—millions—of soldiers,
 finally learning the right lightings,
 the right timings, to prevent overexposure
 of even the most ghost-like faces. I
 preserved forever the soon-to-be-dead.*

Berenice Abbott White Photographer 1898-, 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 114 (2005), *reprinted from* RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 41 (1999).

FIRST LINES

*Every age is dangerous for a woman:
 the Age of Science, the Age of Reason,
 the age of 23 when I escaped to Paris
 to sculpt, but found strength instead
 in the sharp subjects of women. Black
 and white always; color only crowds
 a photograph, like a man in an artist's life.*

Dora Miller Black Photographer 1918-1951, 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 115 (2005), *reprinted from* RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 42 (1999).

FIRST LINES

*Even my mother was excited by the scholarship,
 impressed by the lettering on the vellum envelope:
 The California Institute of Photography.
 Nothing is free. I had to model, to answer phones*

*in the damned charm school. Still, I learned enough
to open my own studio in L.A., but not enough
to avoid a hard marriage, an early heart attack.*

Billie Louise Barbour Davis Black Photographer 1906-1955, 29 *LEGAL STUD. F.* 116 (2005), *reprinted from RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS* 43 (1999).

FIRST LINES *Before I was married I danced, but
now I leap in the laundry room. I lined
the windows with blackout shades from the War.
It was easy to do, almost as easy as shooting
the Virginia skies, cloudless with drought.
I huddle inside, manipulate the light,
execute prints which are exotically crisp.*

Margaret Bourke-White White Photographer 1904-1971, 29 *LEGAL STUD. F.* 117 (2005), *reprinted from RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS* 44 (1999).

FIRST LINES *Black and white is the technique of reality.
I learned this in the thirties
as I photographed the Black Florida
sharecroppers, against their newspaper wallpaper, for
the book I was doing with my soon-to-be-second hus-
band.
Later, they would say I lacked subtlety.
Later, they would send me to South Africa for LIFE.*

Laura Gilpin White Photographer 1891-1979, 29 *LEGAL STUD. F.* 118 (2005), *reprinted from RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS* 45 (1999).

FIRST LINES *I wanted to know the Navajo I photographed
almost as well as I knew my Betsey, my
"companion of fifty years" as her newspaper obituary
labeled her. I never burned in the background sky,
cloudless or otherwise. I always waited
in the desert for the right weather. I never
wanted to work for LIFE, only to live.*

Edith Lewis Comforts Willa Cather as They Spend a Night Lost in the Mesa Verde Canyons of Colorado, 29 *LEGAL STUD. F.* 125 (2005), *reprinted from RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS* 53 (1999).

FIRST LINES *We are not lost. As a child, I was
lost often, by which I meant separated
from my mother. She dropped my hand to
wander*

in the dry goods store, where majestic bolts
of fabric loomed as high as pastel cliffs,
blocking the sun of the one I loved;
the one who did not love me, enough.

Another Version of the Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, 29 *LEGAL STUD.* F. 126 (2005), *reprinted from* RUTHANN ROBSON, *MASKS: POEMS* 54 (1999).

FIRST LINES *before her:*

my voice is slit in two; the whispering
girl at home, silent almost / the whispering
woman who is answered by another whispering
woman.
the question is California. there are only men
left in my family. and even the lesbians
are getting married. i learn to speak of Paris.

time, place, desire, 29 *LEGAL STUD.* F. 127 (2005), *reprinted from* RUTHANN ROBSON, *MASKS: POEMS* 86 (1999).

FIRST LINES the claustrophobic greens of late July
afternoons
as dark as dusk
last December, driving
across the nascent mountain ranges
plowed solid on the Cross Bronx Expressway
winter is an incessant memory

poem to be read at my memorial service, 29 *LEGAL STUD.* F. 141 (2005).

FIRST LINES If I could, I would thank each of you
for being here, but naming names
could be embarrassing. What if I mentioned you,
who had called me beautiful
when I was gaunt and bald, but you
had decided my former beauty was no match

a child's garden of verses, 29 *LEGAL STUD.* F. 143 (2005), *reprinted from* RUTHANN ROBSON, *MASKS: POEMS* 73 (1999).

FIRST LINES what i wanted was everything in other people's
gardens
twirling vines of purple flowers always in bloom
smells that spiraled from the grass sophisticated
like cigarette smoke gathering at my vinyl sandals
like the spring-pink braided garlands in the li-
brary book on Heidi

like the double-heart ankle bracelets adorning
the whores on the corner

Contemplation of Clouds, One hundred-three, 1 No. 1 J. OF THE IMAGE
WAREHOUSE, 102 (2004).

FIRST LINES big sky mind in which thoughts and clouds
wander
unencumbered by judgments:
cumulus, sadness, storm, prognosis
all categories are meaningless

perspective, 4 No. 1 BELLEVUE LITERARY REV. 84 (Spring 2004), 29
LEGAL STUD. F. 137 (2005).

FIRST LINES almost blue, the river
at least from a distance
close: hazel
(the color of her eyes after
i no longer loved her)

the last moment of summer, 25 No. 2 KALLIOPE 31 (2003), 29 LEGAL
STUD. F. 135 (2005).

FIRST LINES the first red leaf
is unnoticed, deep
in the heart of the forest
a fox—or is it a feral dog?—creeps
along the edge
of the receding water

water, 25 No. 2 KALLIOPE 29 (2003), 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 139 (2005).

FIRST LINES if my deepest dreams are always water
bluely clear, teasingly salty water,
then i am forever swimming underwater
arms outstretched into the future
palms turned outward, cupped,
arcing back toward my battered body
to move it forward into more water

Four Poems, 3 No. 3 HARRINGTON LESBIAN FICTION Q. 29 (2002).

1. POSTED FROM TAVISTOCK SQUARE

FIRST LINES Yes, I remember when you were in London:
you were here with your husband,
leaving me, your bad-girl lover, twenty
years younger (than you, than now)

to stay put in my unmonied place,
to read Kerouac's travels across the States.

2. *aubade*

FIRST LINES you dream of me leaning
 hard against another woman
 pushing her into the wall
 with my mouth on her mouth
 and my arms bent and posed
 as if i'm doing stand-up push-ups.

3. *tumor*

FIRST LINES This is not a symbol I would use
 Casually. I dislike metonymy,
 Especially involving the body.

4. *books of the dead*

FIRST LINES as if i could survive this crisis like other ones-
 I'm reading
 sending my lover to the small stone library
 across the street from the post office
 where the cherry trees bloom profusely
 to celebrate spring in our village

six celestial paradigms, No. 2 SOPHIE'S WIND 28 (Winter 2002), *reprinted in* 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 133 (2005).

FIRST LINES 1.
 an ocean splashed with pink the early autumn
 sunset
 a cloud or the idea of a cloud
 on the cavewall of the sky painted
 as if with the blood of berries and animals as
 large as Lasaux
 by hands going soft with the conceit of reason
 this is what we mean when we say philosophy

Anne Brigman in the Doorway of Her Studio c. 1908, No. 2 SOPHIE'S WIND 30 (Winter 2002), *reprinted in* 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 110 (2005).

FIRST LINES Here in the austere Sierras
 Take off your clothes, the sturdy
 boots and jeans - - - no - - - the shirt first
 yes, you are magnificent, don't worry
 now climb that outcrop of granite
 turn your face toward the glitter

April, No. 2 SOPHIE'S WIND 31 (Winter 2002), *reprinted in* 29 LEGAL STUD. F.136 (2005).

FIRST LINES is national poetry month
 I spend it recovering from surgery
 accomplishment measured not in metaphor or
 meter
 but in tubes removed from their beds of flesh

The Invention of Mauve, No. 73 FIREWEED 70 (Fall 2001).

FIRST LINES between the iris and the sunset
 the blood and a fresh bruise

 between the beginning of time and 1856
 textiles were colored mostly with plants
 for yellow use safflower or onion skin
 for black use logwood

On the Question of Lesbian Merger, No. 73 FIREWEED 71 (Fall 2001).

FIRST LINES You—or I suppose I mean I—would have
 thought
 after years and years and years of living
 together, as if we were one body with two names,
 of using the same soaps in the same water and
 sharing baths & showers,
 of eating the same foods with the same spice
 from the same stores,

Betrayal, RESTRICTED ACCESS: LESBIANS ON DISABILITY 284 (Victoria A. Brownworth & Susan Raffo eds., 1999).

FIRST LINES First, I loved your hands
 for their determined if inaccurate grasp
 and your shiny slate eyes
 that sucked with as much power as your mouth

Literary Ambition, RESTRICTED ACCESS: LESBIANS ON DISABILITY 286 (Victoria A. Brownworth & Susan Raffo eds., 1999).

FIRST LINES to write a poem
 spare, clear, and lyrically
 honest
 unabashedly autobiographical

chain – links, No. 43 COMMON LIVES/LESBIAN LIVES: LESBIAN Q. 121 (Summer 1992).

FIRST LINES 1.
 She fell

under the spell of an older girl
 drugs, dancing, and who-knows-what-else
 together

She's fifteen and I've given her everything
 she's ever wanted I still keep her bottles
 of juice cool in the refrigerator the nipples
 clean She's my baby And I love her
 I'm her mother I have every right to protect her

Sabrina's Horses, No. 42 COMMON LIVES/LESBIAN LIVES: LESBIAN Q.
 109 (Spring 1992).

FIRST LINES You are either seventeen hoping to pass for
 twenty, or fifty-two
 hoping to pass for forty.
 You are at a party of the post-avant-garde.
 Your dress matches the wallpaper in a claustrophobic room
 where a
 piano with ivory keys turned gray/black
 dominates.

authenticity commentary on nightshade (#14) & historicity (#15), 20
 TRIVIA: J. OF IDEAS 5 (1992), reprinted in RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS:
 POEMS 129 (1999), 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 108 (2005).

FIRST LINES there were other things that could have been
 said
 about distance and love
 i never escaped entirely
 i learned withdrawal
 i never denied my history
 i edited it

from historicity # 15, 20 TRIVIA: J. OF IDEAS 5 (1992).

FIRST LINES The women listen to each other's stories attentively,
 passionately, seriously.
 They listen with all the grace of a search for a
 missing object
 —when the object is unknown.

Sugar, No. 10 SLIPSTREAM 88 (1990).

FIRST LINES What he called me. Mornings
 I spooned it into my coffee. Something

white. Refined. Pure. Lined
 on a mirror mixed with cocaine.
 Something sweet. Used to cut
 heroin. What he called me
 after he beat me up in my sleep.

*Lammas, Again*⁵³, 13 NO. 4 ROOM OF ONE'S OWN 50 (1990).

FIRST LINES the wind is an island without color your raincoat
 was yellow
 breezes combed the hair chemotherapy would
 soon steal
 your bones were cold mine had been broken
 we talked of our mothers of children, of choices
 you would bless the daughter of my parthenogen-
 esis
 on her seventh birthday you would call her into
 our circle
 who knew then how traitorous the body could
 be?

Sleeping Together: 7 Selections, 13 NO. 4 ROOM OF ONE'S OWN 51
 (1990).

FIRST LINES 1.
 it was either christmas or disappointment
 childhood was stiff as the nap
 on my thin green couch of a bed
 i moved over all night to make room for myself
 caressing names with abandon
Rosa Franz Elita Ennio
 the sounds licked me hard in soft spaces

*Lesbian Lesbian: a text on lesbian identity with a subtext on essentialism/
 constructionism*, 10 OUT/LOOK: NAT'L LESBIAN & GAY Q. 21 (Fall
 1990).

FIRST LINES I discovered her.
 I invented her.
 The first problem is not contradiction, but signifi-
 cation.
 If the "I" is phallic—a plural patriarchal phallic,
 or even a singular male
 phallus—it cannot signify the "I" of a lesbian

⁵³ This poem was written for Barbara Deming (1917-1984).

whether she is
discovered or invented. And even if the “I” is not
phallic, it has been
labeled such and thus carries a phallic
connotation.

Historicity, 15 TRIVIA 8 (Fall 1989).

FIRST LINES THIS PLACE—like all places—has a history.
There are mauve walls with paint blistering to re-
veal penicillin-urine-
yellow patches. There is a reception area; there
are conference rooms.
In storage, there are old files, minutes of meet-
ings, annals, calendars,
appointment books.

Nightshade: After Reading Trivia 13, 14 TRIVIA 66 (Spring 1989), *re-
printed in* RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 107 (1999).

FIRST LINES i am going away a little each day
i don't necessarily feel bad about this. facts, my
mother taught me, are facts.
nothing more.
but the other women i know, the women i call
friends, the lesbians i called
family, until i learned not to, accuse me: “you
lack imagination,” they tell
me. sometimes they say it in French; a language
beautiful as a slap on a high
cheekbone, reminding me of all the things i
could never do:

White and Black Photography, 33 No. 1 NIMROD 53 (Fall/Winter
1989), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 39 (1999), 29
LEGAL STUD. F. 112 (2005).

FIRST LINES The man at Ashmore's always asks me
whether I'm White or Black. I never answer.
I am here only to buy my mother's dream book.
If you dream of Indians, the number 42.
If you dream of death: the number 9.

The Wife of Fredrich Nietzsche, 9 Nos. 1 & 2 SUNDG: THE SOUTHEAST
REV. 47 (1989).

FIRST LINES We never married: Not only because
there was bad blood between my family

of gypsies and his family of Protestant butchers
and ministers; Not only because his sister
was in Paraguay breast feeding a colony
for purebred Germans and my brother
was studying Kabbalah; Not only because
he only loved women who were already loved by
important men;

Two Sides of the Window, 10 PHOENIX 53 (1989).

FIRST LINES this rain is grenades on the last of the lilies
 petals crumple like the bloody bodies of boys
 confused by the wetness

 you taught me verdant could be compliment
 i memorized your round eyes until they sharp-
 ened
 into the softest point of leaf

Transaction, CATALYST 11 (Winter 1989).

FIRST LINES *when the first person was sold*
 there was a buyer and seller,
 but no shackles.
 iron was still a glint
 under the imagination's ground.

taking back virginity, CATALYST 12 (Winter 1989).

FIRST LINES 1.
 first, the fasting
 necessary as a passage from the jungle
 you may eat bananas for potassium
 you may drink water and your own blood
 your body is a sunlit clearing
 you walk into its lushes grasses
 you have always been this pure

She-Bear, No. 16 SING HEAVENLY MUSE! 75 (1989).

FIRST LINES heavy as a wet bear, the threat
 of icicles hugging her fur, i
 roll slowly from side to side,
 huddled inside a lightless cave.
 i have never felt more alone, less
 lonely. i am swollen
 with forests of blood.
 my breasts glow with sap.

The Eighth Month, A LABOUR OF LOVE 65 (Mona Fertig ed. 1989).

FIRST LINES Old women, having
 survived their men, sat
 Around the smooth wood of worn tables,
 Telling their truths. No one
 Wrote them down. They would be derided
 As tales, remembered
 For centuries. Observations:
 Every baby a tooth.

The Fifth Month, LIMESTONE 51 (Fall 1988), *reprinted in* A LABOUR OF LOVE 62 (Mona Fertig ed., 1989).

FIRST LINES The womb hums.
 Alive with a thousand bees
 That flap and turn violently
 As a black and yellow butterfly
 Trapped
 By an amateur's net
 The midwife says my uterus is
 Stretched high between my breasts

Sacrifice, LIMESTONE 53 (Fall 1988).

FIRST LINES The family is the heart
 of agony. Each member takes
 a turn at fanning
 the fire. Sons split
 logs from trees that wanted
 to grow. Daughters carve dolls
 in order to watch the whittled
 dresses ironed to ashes.

creation rituals, LIMESTONE 56 (Fall 1988).

FIRST LINES (i)
 i weave the night's
 hunger for a head round &
 large as a small planet
 until my hands are raw
 with fiberglass & hemp

closure, 35 SINISTER WISDOM 38 (Summer-Fall 1988).

FIRST LINES Perhaps it is because I've never been athletic,
 preferring to sit on

the sidelines watching women's legs; preferring
to be among the
perceivers rather than among the perceived;
Perhaps it is because at thirteen, I could look be-
tween nine and
nineteen with the right eyeliner and modeled for
Seventeen
magazine;

Self-Portrait of Frida Kahlo Without a Moustache, 15 CONDITIONS: A FEMINIST MAGAZINE OF WRITING BY WOMEN WITH AN EMPHASIS ON WRITING BY LESBIANS 7 (1988), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 58 (1999).

FIRST LINES I am land: Mexico. My leg
withered from polio dangles from my hip
like my country hangs off the continent.
My body is an unnatural disaster. My flesh
has been severed, sucked, impaled and pierced
by machines, doctors and men. Sometimes

the last decade of patriarchy, 10 Nos.1 & 2 KALLIOPE 143 (1988), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 93 (1999), 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 129 (2005).

FIRST LINES 1.
our old wounds got older
and less lonely our fantasies fled our heads
to become schemes we swirled
like a dangerous coffee of safety

A Series,⁵⁴ 9 No. 1 CREATIVE WOMAN 16 (Spring-Summer 1988).

FIRST LINES Living alone colours the dreams. I dream
of nuns singing on the beach, of a cat pawing
a leafless twig, of Claudine Claudel
having her hair combed in an insane asylum.

The Beaches of January, No. 8 ANEMONE 24 (1987-88).

FIRST LINES 1.
water rolls white as a desert
you come to such places because you are thirsty
only to fall into someone else's footprints
isolation is always imaginary

⁵⁴ This poem is "Gwen John, the artist, dreams of Claudine Claudel insane asylum, while Rodin prepares to receive an honorary degree."

Breaking / With the Past, No. 5 WOODRIDER 30 (1987-88).

FIRST LINES the glasses shattered in the chipped sink
 only the roaches were never cut
 never bled even the dog caught
 a shard of Libby's embossed in his eye

October, No Longer in the Tropics: Uncounted Days, 11 No. 4 ROOM OF ONE'S OWN 46 (1987).

FIRST LINES my child brings home a friable leaf
 glued to a sheet of cheap recycled paper.
 neither is red nor crimson nor scarlet.
 both vibrate in hues of brown.
 we agree,
 the trees are conscripted into timber.

the consort, EARLY RIPENING: AMERICAN WOMEN'S POETRY NOW 204 (1987), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 25 (1999), 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 99 (2005).

FIRST LINES 1.
 all romance is a parody of this:
 child
 & woman as Madonna/Goddess
 the day you learned to kiss:
 the souring smell of my breast
 on your excited wet breath

Lammas,⁵⁵ No. 4 BACKBONE 57 (1987).

FIRST LINES magenta is the color of mourning
 no flowers in bouquets only sprawling blooms
 could celebrate you as you were dying
 you chanted cherishing all your work
 all your women all your infinite loves
 all that belonged to you
 though you were the proprietor of nothing

Neolithic Masks, 15 No. 2 FLA. REV. 5 (Fall/Winter 1987).

FIRST LINES 1. the wander
 there was a one-eyed animal at the water:
 a snake
 or a crane

⁵⁵ This poem was written for Barbara Deming (1917-1984).

a glint of fish or a goddess
i thought it was you

The Aquarium, 7 NO. 2 PHOENIX 54 (1987).

FIRST LINES It wasn't simply that I made the wrong choice, I
Always do that. It was that I was so tired that
Sleep could not cure me. I was weary of no light
Ever reaching the tropical blue slash
Across my belly. It was my prize

The Deepening Valley, NO. 2 HALF TONES TO JUBILEE 43 (Summer 1987).

FIRST LINES the light waits for us as we run
our tongues across the borders
of each other's lips. the mouth
is the abyss which teaches us love
isn't falling, it's being caught.

notes on post avant-garde poetry, NO. 4 ALTERNATIVE FICTION & POETRY 8 (Summer 1987).

FIRST LINES the cutting edge is dull:
it colds her feet / he chops them off
it colds his feet / she chops them off
it colds the feet / they are chopped off

Three Poems, 53 NO. 2 NEW LETTERS 12-15 (1986).

Käthe Kollwitz, Graphic Artist, Sketches A German Working-Class Woman, reprinted in RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 46 (1999), 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 120 (2005).

FIRST LINES the distance between us is a piece of bread,
black and thick crusted. we both stand
on long lines, but i can pay you to stand
naked in my studio, pay you to stand
holding a child that is not yours. his
head is a pea in the giant pod of your hands.

Mary Cassatt, After Destroying the Letters of Edward Degas, reprinted in RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 50 (1999), 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 123 (2005).

FIRST LINES I didn't burn them and they weren't about love.
You can think what you want. I want
you to. Imagination is a caress. Imagine
my portrait of him. I destroyed that too.

Not because he was the only man I ever
painted, except for my father and brothers,

The Animus of Diane Arbus, the Photographer, reprinted in RUTHANN
ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 52 (1999), 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 119 (2005).

FIRST LINES I've always been afraid of everything
Human. I was schooled in rooms with
Heavy drapes and taught that civilization
Insisted I ignore my cousin's prominent
Harelip. But I secretly studied it for
Hours, and learned that being polite
Is the ultimate strategy. I made collages

Correspondence, No. 4 WOODRIDER 42 (1986).

FIRST LINES as a pink ocean ebbed between rocks
a woman drew her name
in the red clay near the pines.

There Is No Explanation, No. 4 WOODRIDER 44 (1986).

FIRST LINES on a blanket near the tidal line
we are a recurring dream
i knit
strands of my hair into a plausible story

The Second Son, No. 4 WOODRIDER 46 (1986).

FIRST LINES this one is never the messiah
his mother
makes an untenable virgin
there are tiny fractures across her stomach
as if from a corset
but each burst capillary
cries the name of her first baby

correspondence with a male editor, 12 No. 1 & 2 MOVING OUT 33
(1986).

FIRST LINES he asked, wasn't i moved
by beauty, meaning *his* beauty:
the idea of a marbleized athenian
with the lines of a young boy,
static and white as a mountain.

Amber, 3 No. 2 S. FLA. POETRY REV. 28 (Winter 1986).

FIRST LINES bitter & yellow as an orange
frozen in the grove, disappointment

catches in the throat:
something you cannot say;

Possession, 3 No. 2 S. FLA. POETRY REV. 29 (WINTER 1986).

FIRST LINES The best threats are implicit, requiring
not even a gesture not even a tone
of voice Often, they are guised
as cautions & hang in pots like ferns

Regine's Rebuke to Kierkegaard, 6 No. 1 NEGATIVE CAPABILITY 38 (Winter 1986), *reprinted in* EARLY RIPENING: AMERICAN WOMEN'S POETRY NOW 203 (Marge Piercy ed., 1987), RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 48 (1999), 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 121 (2005).

FIRST LINES The years
flew by like magpies trailing bright
ribbons through the twilight. I
have fourteen sons. Not even one is
named Søren. Their eyelashes curl
dark and thick as the tails of Danish ducks
in winter. Some of my boys have handsome
fathers. Do not worry, my jejune darling, you
are not being charged with paternity.

the damp cynicism of morning, 11 No. 5 SOJOURNER: THE WOMEN'S F. 29 (Jan. 1986).

FIRST LINES when dreams dissolve
like aspirin in the dry mouth
of an emotional arthritic
& the splintered bones of betrayal
grind against the well worn bones
of fantasy,

waves, night, Second Ser., No. 4 IKON CREATIVITY AND CHANGE 115 (1985), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 70 (1999), 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 97 (2005).

FIRST LINES 1.
the moon looks full, but it's waning
your mother
wails that she's tired of life
at this edge her same complaints
salted over years

Mouth Piece, 5 No. 13 LABYRIS 40 (1985).

FIRST LINES 1.

my wisdom teeth emerged
while you swelled in my body
my gums smarted
but i suffered no knowledge

not for my mother & father, 5 No. 13 LABYRIS 42 (1985).

FIRST LINES i'm sick to senility of childhood:

other people's. i'm sick
in bed (with the flu) (it's
spring) & i'm reading (actually
leafing through) accumulated
literary magazines & journals.

the freeing of the hands, XIII No. 2 FLA. REV. 99 (1985).

FIRST LINES 1.

women once walked on their hands
like dogs
like men
balance was easier
but it was difficult to get the babies
up to their breasts
so they used their forearms
to scoop up their human pups
thinking this was freedom
standing up
but the men followed them
like dogs

Because of Blanche, V No. II NEGATIVE CAPABILITY 15 (1985).

FIRST LINES What connects is not always

obvious. A woodworker
will disguise a cheap hinge in pine,
but the rich will demand brass
in the shape of a fleur-de-lis
against a lustrous mahogany.

each winter, 8 No. 3 CALYX 21 (Fall/Winter 1984), *reprinted in*
RUTHANN ROBSON, MASKS: POEMS 82 (1999), 29 LEGAL STUD. F. 101
(2005).

FIRST LINES after the first chill sets like a splinted bone
& my hands seem webbed with paperish ice
you appear blonde as my breath

Genealogy, in *SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES: WOMEN OF THE SOUTH* 18 (Maxine Alexander ed., 1984), *reprinted in* RUTHANN ROBSON, *MASKS: POEMS* 3 (1999), 29 *LEGAL STUD. F.* 95 (2005).

FIRST LINES Almost better to be an orphan
 than to be a woman holding sea-rotted
 twigs and looking for her ancestors;
 clutching a driftwood divining rod that
 will never discover a grand matriarch or
 patron of the arts. My mothers had to work.

Women's Letters, 6 No. 3 *KALLIOPE* 62 (1984), *reprinted in* WILD AND GREEN: *A CELEBRATION* (1985).

FIRST LINES I.
 dearest anyone, everyone,
 editor, friend, lover, mother,
 publisher, cohort, compatriot,
 I've been so depressed, so lonely, so lost,
 so busy, so productive, so harried,
 here, touring Europe, making speeches, living in
 London,
 staying home, recuperating near the ocean, in
 Georgia.

Bodies / of Water, 6 No. 3 *KALLIOPE* 64 (1984).

FIRST LINES the belief persists: our sleep
 has a teleology.
 dreams
 are meant to tell us something;
 are not merely random ravings
 of the inner mind operating
 in the subterranean mode;

Sugarloaf Key, 6 No. 3 *KALLIOPE* 66 (1984).

FIRST LINES we walk a land
 that is hardly a land
 at all
 more like a wedge
 of clotted mangroves
 poking up
 from tepid water

Simmer Over Medium Heat, IV No. 2 *NEGATIVE CAPABILITY* 48 (1984).

FIRST LINES each loss must be grieved individually

floured by hand browned alone
 lean veal in an iron skillet
 with only a finely chopped onion
 for comfort in my blackest apron

Fibers, 1 No. 3 CRAB CREEK REV. 16 (Winter 1984).

FIRST LINES it is the details of life
 that knit themselves
 into a safety net which will catch
 you if you stumble and fall

Cartesian Exercises for Women, 4 No. 11 LABYRIS 8 (Winter 1983).

FIRST LINES You are an illiterate witch.
 You have just been accused of foolishness
 by the Inquisition. Unlike the father
 of modern philosophy, you can't suppress
 your work in progress and substitute
 pithy maxims about God's existence
 as proved by your own. Think

For the Arapesh, 20 MINN. REV. 76 (Spring 1983).

FIRST LINES the scratch on her face is from a branch
 it is not considered seductive or charming
 the bruise on her leg is from a fall
 it is not considered beautiful or alluring

Firedaughters, 12 No.1 EVENT 140 (1983).

FIRST LINES nineteen generations ago, nine million
 died, nine-tenths of them women.
 the daughters watched their mothers burn
 on living trees cut into the shape of crosses.
 Europe is built on witches' ashes.

October in the Tropics: Five Days, 8 No. 3 ROOM OF ONE'S OWN 10
 (1983).

FIRST LINES 1. *the first*
 she sends me a crimson leaf
 abducted from a hollow of Appalachia.
 here, the hibiscus are still
 in violent bloom, yellow and waxy
 as Woolworth's plastic. Autumn
 is always her favorite time of year.

SubTropical, 4 & 5 MADISON REV. 40 (Winter 1983).

FIRST LINES I.

clues are stewn around me
like the petals browning
in the sharp afternoon sun.
i want to piece together
the puzzle of the flowers;
my mother would be so proud,

Preoccupied, 9 No. 2 INT'L POETRY REV. 88 (Fall 1983).

FIRST LINES before
 the army of your body
 waylaid me
 by stringing little flags
 in every crevice of my flesh;

Woman in a Green Silk Dress, 2 No. 3 FEMINIST RENAISSANCE 10
(Aug./Sept. 1983).

FIRST LINES there is a buried history here in these
 nineteenth century halls carved with
 seventeenth century flowers a history
 of women's silence Courtrooms
 of white men in white wigs where women
 if they appeared at all appeared as
 impressionist paintings dabs
 of color the dots not all connected

Kore, THIRD WIND 53 (Spring 1983).

FIRST LINES My old friends cannot look me up,
 they probably don't even know I'm married
 (mine was a sudden courtship).
 My husband hides me and has changed my
 name.
 He calls me Persephone.

Untitled, 1 No. 1 MUSE'S BREW POETRY REV. 4 (Summer 1983).

FIRST LINES the boxwoods are strident
 in your october yard
 or so i imagine them
 watching
 you like an arsonist
 burning
 my poem in autumn's
 last hot breeze.

The Ascent, 1 No. 1 MUSE'S BREW POETRY REV. 5 (Summer 1983).

FIRST LINES rip out the bones that cage
 the pain & make a bowed
 white ladder of bleached rib rungs.

In a Winter Kitchen, No. 3 RIVER CITY REV. 28 (Fall 1983).

FIRST LINES my hands, smelling of large dogs
 and firewood, swab alcohol
 at inflamed puncture in your thick
 earlobes. i do not ask,
 why why do we mutilate ourselves?

Revolutions, 3 SLIPSTREAM 29 (1983).

FIRST LINES as a rebellious child, i bit
 my nails, predictable for a girl
 who read too much. now, i scratch
 long red lines on your back to prove
 passion like a philosophic theorem;

Rainy Days (With No Savings), KAN. STATE UNIV. TOUCHSTONE 15
(Fall/Winter 1983).

FIRST LINES that lighting bolt in a crisis
 the courage
 of my convictions
 that single slash across a mediocre sky
 to be a hero
 to flash your ideals and bury your instinct

Still Life with Mirror, No. 13 PANHANDLER 15 (Fall/Winter 1983).

FIRST LINES the mirror becomes your confidante.
 you display your variegated body
 to her. she shows you persimmons,
 orchids, plums, pansies, raisins

Ideations, 3 No. 2 SOCIAL ANARCHISM 37 (1983).

FIRST LINES the truth shall set you
 apart, unless you only know it
 like an alphabet; like a theorem
 and are still corded and roped
 to the incests of the fathers:
 what they call their language-
 the most powerful tool in the slave trade.

Sunday, Ten A.M., No. 6 CAT'S EYE 7 (1983).

FIRST LINES She has the audacity to ape
 Moses, to part

Red seas
without a wand.

For an Inland Woman, 2 No. 2 RED BASS 17 (1983).

FIRST LINES Even when our friendship sparkled solid
as a diamond, we never ventured the roads
together. You were always too tired, too lonely,
too wary of planning a long journey
without a man.

Plight of the Revolutionary Bureaucrat, 3 No. 1 NEGATIVE CAPABILITY 78
(Sue Brannan Walker, ed., Winter 1982).

FIRST LINES some days, working within the system
is hard to distinguish from sabotage.
some nights, smoky guilt threatens
to detonate the carefully constructed peace.

Barbed Women, No. 5 DAY TONIGHT/NIGHT TODAY 48 (1981).

FIRST LINES three women, we form a delegation, somewhat
official. we want to say:
We have come to liberate our sisters!
we say: we have come to tour the prison
excuse us, the women's correctional institute
yes, we have called in advance
we are on the billboard calendar of events
we are wearing borrowed tailored suits

In the Light or Every Woman Needs a Dead Lover, 6 No. 4 ROOM OF ONE'S OWN 30 (1981).

FIRST LINES from his vantage point of death
he beguiles: darkness, darkness
and shines a flashlight in your face
to obscure the tunnel of love

Cynthia, 6 No. 4 ROOM OF ONE'S OWN 31 (1981).

FIRST LINES Cynthia sits
on the front steps
unbraiding her dark hair
caught in mid thought
balanced and waiting
for her lover
for her mother

After the War, Back Home in Georgia, 6 No. 4 ROOM OF ONE'S OWN 33
(1981).

FIRST LINES the red azaleas erupt
 like wounds
 on soldiers' green bush uniforms

V. CONVERSATIONS

James R. Elkins, *Ruthann Robson & James R. Elkins: A Conversation*, 29 *LEGAL STUD. F.* 145 (2005).

Robson and Elkins⁵⁶ converse about the relationship between law, literature and teaching as well as the various forms of narrative and theorizing. They both recognize the power of narrative, but Robson points out its limitations, such as the risk of any narrative to represent the universal, therefore closing down further inquiry into the validity of a subject. The conversation also revolves around the variety of genres that Robson practices in her writing with a special focus on creative non-fiction and the fiction-theory essay form as influenced by Nicole Brossard which Elkins names "mosaic/prose poem/fragment."⁵⁷

Penelope E. Andrews⁵⁸, Sharon K. Hom⁵⁹ and Ruthann Robson,

⁵⁶ James R. Elkins is a Professor of Law at West Virginia University College of Law. He is the editor of the *Legal Studies Forum* and the author of a website devoted to lawyers and poetry: Strangers to Us All: Lawyers and Poetry, <http://www.wvu.edu/%7Elawfac/jelkins/lp-2001/intro/lp1.html>. He co-authored *LEGAL INTERVIEWING AND COUNSELING IN A NUTSHELL* (3d ed. 1997) and published numerous articles including: *Reading/Teaching Lawyer Films*, 28 *VT. L. REV.* 813 (2003-04); *An Anthology of Poetry by Lawyers*, 28 *LEGAL STUD. F.* 1 (2004); *The John William Corrington & Charles Bukowski Correspondence: On Poetry and Writing*, 27 *LEGAL STUD. F.* 561 (2003-04).

⁵⁷ Elkins, *A Conversation*, *supra* note 5.

⁵⁸ Penelope E. Andrews is a Professor of Law at City University of New York School of Law. She co-edited *THE POST-APARTHEID CONSTITUTIONS: PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTH AFRICA'S BASIC LAW* (Penelope Andrews & Stephen Ellmann eds., 2001) and authored numerous essays and articles including these recent works: *The South African Constitution as a Mechanism for Redressing Poverty*, in *POVERTY AND RIGHTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA* (Muna Ndulo ed., forthcoming 2005); *The South African Bill of Rights: Lessons for Australia*, in *COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON BILLS OF RIGHTS* (Christine Debono & Tania Colwell eds., 2004); *Aboriginal Women in Australia and Human Rights*, in *WOMEN AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW* 731 (Kelly D. Askin & Doreanne M. Koenig eds., 2001); *Reparations for Apartheid's Victims: The Path to Reconciliation?*, 53 *DEPAUL L. REV.* 1155 (2003-04); *Transitional Perspectives on Women's Rights*, 14 *INTERRIGHTS BULL.* 143 (2004); Penelope Andrews & Taunya Banks, *Two "Colored" Women's Conversation About the Relevance of Feminist Law Journals in the 21st Century*, 12 *COLUM. J. GENDER & L.* 498 (2003).

⁵⁹ Sharon K. Hom is the Executive Director of Human Rights in China and Professor of Law Emerita, City University of New York School of Law. Her publications include *CONTRACTING LAW* (2d ed. 2000), co-authored with Amy Hilsman Kastely and Deborah W. Post, and *CHINESE WOMEN TRAVERSING DIASPORA: MEMOIRS, ESSAYS, AND POETRY* (1999).

Critical Challenges: A Conversation on Complicity and Civility in Legal Academia, 1 SEATTLE J. FOR SOC. JUST. 601 (2003).

Prompted by controversy over the denial of tenure at the City University of New York School of Law and the lack of public academic debate about the issues of professional competency, identities and political manipulations, these three female professors from different backgrounds discuss the implications of such a controversy for the individuals and the law school community. They examine the assumption of victimhood, the marginalization of dissenters, the manipulation of narrative by the powerful, the issue of dignity and the use of silence as a political tool. Cautioning about the dangers of the appropriation of victimhood, the authors call for prudence in recognizing opportunistic silencing and manipulation that inhibits progress.

Ruthann Robson & Sima Rabinowitz,⁶⁰ *Pain and the Lesbian Body*, 10 GAY & LESBIAN REV. WORLDWIDE 25 (July-Aug. 2003).

Sima Rabinowitz, a poet, freelance writer and editor engages in a dialogue with Robson about their personal experiences with pain and its impact on lesbian sexuality, sex and relationships with lesbian lovers.

Present at the Revolution, 7 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 6 (Apr. 1999).

Robson introduces Karla Jay's book *Tales of the Lavender Menace: A Memoir of Liberation* through her conversation with the author. Jay chose the genre of memoir for two reasons. She was moved by media simplification of the post-Stonewall era and the radical feminist movement and she wanted to preserve the memory of that era as experienced by ordinary people like herself. Though it was difficult to structure the time frame of the book, Jay focused on the events from 1968 to 1971. Periodically she moves to the present time to show what happened to some of the individuals. Jay feels a general nostalgia about the sixties and does not have regrets.

Victoria A. Brownworth,⁶¹ *A/K/A Novelist: An Interview with Ruthann*

⁶⁰ Sima Rabinowitz is the author of the poetry collection *THE JEWISH FAKE BOOK* (2004).

⁶¹ Victoria A. Brownworth is a lesbian writer who authored and co-authored: *COMING OUT OF CANCER: WRITINGS FROM THE LESBIAN CANCER EPIDEMIC* (2000); VICTORIA A. BROWNWORTH & SUSAN RAFFO, *RESTRICTED ACCESS: LESBIANS ON DISABILITY* (1999); *NIGHT SHADE: GOTHIC TALES BY WOMEN* (1999); JUDITH M. REDDING & VICTORIA A. BROWNWORTH, *FILM FATALES: INDEPENDENT WOMEN DIRECTORS* (1997); *NIGHT BITES: VAMPIRE STORIES BY WOMEN* (1996); *TOO QUEER: ESSAYS FROM A RADICAL LIFE* (1996); *OUT FOR MORE BLOOD: TALES OF MALICE & RETALIATION BY WOMEN* (1996); *OUT FOR BLOOD: TALES OF MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE BY WOMEN* (1995).

Robson, 5.09 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 1 (Mar. 1997).

In this conversation about her novel *a/k/a*, Robson explains that her goal was to move away from the focus on sexual identity by exploring the daily lives of multidimensional characters who assume different identities.

A Conversation with E. M. Broner, KALLIOPE 51 (Special Double Issue 1985).

This dialogue informs the reader about the current writing projects of the feminist writer Esther Masserman Broner. These include a historical novel about the Midwest that uses the proletarian style and a book about Jewish women's ceremonies. Broner combines religious and non-religious rituals with fiction and practices various types of ceremonies that allow her to connect with other women. She is enthusiastic about her role as a pioneer in encouraging mothers and daughters to write and publish together and she believes in keeping the door open for other writers whose voices are yet to be heard.

An Interview with Barbara Deming,⁶² 6 No. 1 KALLIOPE 37 (1984), reprinted in French in No. 2 Vlasta 52 (Winter 1983).

Barbara Deming, a feminist poet, novelist, and short story writer, talks with Robson about her relationship to writing and activism as two inseparable activities that shape her life. Deming notes the usefulness of poetry for the mind and body, reveals a personal crisis and obstacles she faced when writing about her own sexuality, talks about writers who influenced her, and speaks to the value of keeping journals. Hopeful that the young generation of feminists' children will take on the work of previous activists, Deming believes that the slow progress will eventually result in the rejection of arbitrary sexual categories and the social recognition of the complexity of each individual.

Ruthann Robson & Blanche Farley,⁶³ *An Interview with Margaret Atwood*, 5 No. 1 KALLIOPE 41 (1983).

This interview was conducted at the Women Writers Conference at the University of Kentucky in April of 1982. Margaret Atwood, a Canadian novelist, poet, fiction and non-fiction writer, talks about the U.S. publication of her collection of short stories

⁶² This interview was conducted during the Easter weekend of 1983 in the Florida Keys when Robson was a guest of Barbara Deming. It is the last interview with Deming before her death on August 2, 1984. See Ruthann Robson, *We Are All Part of One Another*, 5 No. 2 SOC. ANARCHISM 39, 39-40 n.2 (1985).

⁶³ Blanche Flanders Farley is a co-author of *LIKE A SUMMER PEACH: SUNBRIGHT POEMS & OLD SOUTHERN RECIPES* (1996).

DANCING GIRLS (1982) and the differences between the Canadian and U.S. literary publishing markets. Her critical study, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972) that addresses the different treatments of literary topics by British, Canadian and American writers, was not published in the U.S. Atwood announces her upcoming critical works as well as two novels.

Peggy Friedmann & Ruthann Robson,⁶⁴ *An Interview with Marge Piercy*, 4 NO. 2 KALLIOPE 37 (Winter 1982), *reprinted in* MARGE PIERCY, PARTI-COLORED BLOCKS FOR A QUILT 131 (1982), *and in* 3 NO.1 RED BASS 8 (n.d.).

Marge Piercy, a novelist, poet, and activist explains the difference between writing poetry and prose. For her, poetry is continuity that lives on as a spoken tradition while a novel is a narrative about time that the writer abandons in order to create another story. Piercy points to the realistic depiction of her male protagonists and the relationship between the writer and her characters which often escapes the author's control. Piercy also talks about the process of writing multiple drafts and the role of small magazines devoted to women's writings in promoting the visibility of women in the literary world.

VI. BOOK REVIEWS

Law Students as Legal Scholars: An Essay/Review of Scholarly Writing for Law Students and Academic Legal Writing, 7 N.Y. CITY L. REV. 195 (2004).

See supra Articles in Law Reviews.

The Artist with Integrity, 10 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 25 (Oct. 2001).

This critical review of Adrienne Rich's poetry collection *Fox: POEMS 1998-2000* (2001) questions the lack of wit, transparency, and connection with the reader. One explanation Robson proposes is the extremely short timeframe encompassed by the work.

Mother Lode, OUT 36 (May 2001).

How mothers react to their children's sexual and gender choice is reflected in the four books Robson reviews: PATSY CLARKE ET AL., *KEEP SINGING: TWO MOTHERS, TWO SONS, AND THEIR FIGHT*

⁶⁴ Elizabeth Friedmann is the author and co-author of the following works: *A MANNERED GRACE: THE LIFE OF LAURA (RIDING) JACKSON* (2005); *THE LAURA (RIDING) JACKSON READER* (2005); *LAURA (RIDING) JACKSON ET AL., THE WORD WOMAN AND OTHER RELATED WRITINGS* (1993); *LAURA (RIDING) JACKSON ET AL., FOUR UNPOSTED LETTERS TO CATHERINE* (1993); *LAURA (RIDING) JACKSON ET AL., FIRST AWAKENINGS: THE EARLY POEMS OF LAURA RIDING* (1992).

AGAINST JESSE HELMS (2001); KATE MILLETT, *MOTHER MILLETT* (2001); ARIEL GORE & BEE LAVENDER, *BREEDER* (2001); and SUZANN M. JOHNSON & ELIZABETH O'CONNOR, *FOR LESBIAN PARENTS: YOUR GUIDE TO HELPING YOUR FAMILY GROW UP HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND PROUD* (2001).

Robin Remembers, 9 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 15 (Mar. 2001).

Despite some weaknesses in the portrayal of certain relationships, Robson finds quality in the insight into the personal and political perspectives that influenced the poet, Robin Morgan, in *Saturday's Child: A Memoir* (2001).

My Lesbian Husband, 8 No. 7 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 17 (Feb. 2000).

This is a short review of the creative non-fiction essays by Barrie Jean Borich compiled in the book *My Lesbian Husband: Landscapes of a Marriage* (1999). The essays offer an examination and comparison of a lesbian relationship with relationships to family and friends.

Access for All, 8 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 16 (Jan. 2000).

Robson reviews Victoria Brownworth's anthology, *Restricted Access: Lesbians on Disability* (1999) which explores the issues related to physical and mental disability including the cost of medical care, isolation, and exclusion.

Present at the Revolution, 7 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 6 (Apr. 1999).

See *infra* *Conversations*.

Hate Is Not a Family Value, 8 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 15 (Dec. 1999).

The Second Coming of Curly Red (1999), by Jody Seay, is a novel about the meaning of spiritual gratitude played out in a drama between the evil characters, who support gay discrimination, and the good ones opposing it. Robson commends it as a valuable literary start for a lesbian author.

Intimate Resistance, 7 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 14 (Apr. 1999).

The new book of poems by Adrienne Rich entitled *Midnight Salvage: Poems 1995-1998* (1999) is welcomed by Robson. She views it as a technically proficient voice about the intimate resistance of desires even though lesbianism is not only absent but replaced with a predominant male presence.

Queering the Constitution?, 6 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 18 (July 1998).

In this book review of *Women, Gays, and the Constitution: The Grounds for Feminism and Gay Rights in Culture and Law* (1998), by David J. Richards, Robson criticizes the exclusion of lesbians from the title of the book, the obfuscation of lesbian sexuality, and the

assimilation of lesbians into the same category as gay men. Richard's comparison of slavery to the government's denial of rights to gays and lesbians is overreaching, but his historical treatment of equality is satisfactory.

Theories of Women, 6 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 8 (Feb. 1998).

This review compares two anthologies of essays, *Feminism Meets Queer Theory* (1997), edited by Elizabeth Weed and Naomi Schor, and *Cross-Purposes: Lesbians, Feminists, and the Limits of Alliance* (1997), edited by Dana Heller. The former explores the ways in which queer theory demoted feminist theory while the latter is concerned with the role of lesbians within and outside of feminist theory.

Grassroots Philosophy, 6 NO. 4 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 22 (Nov. 1997).

A book review of *Critique of Patriarchal Reason* (1997), by Arthur Evans, lauds the author's departure from the patriarchal analytic academic philosophy. This philosophy had a devastating impact on minorities, the developing world, and the natural environment, and shows a lack of engagement with feminist, queer, post-colonial or deep ecology theories.

The End of Lesbian Writing?, 5 NO. 12 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 25 (June 1997).

Robson commends Sue-Ellen Case for her commitment to claiming lesbian space at the end of print culture in her book *The Domain-Matrix: Performing Lesbian at the End of Print Culture* (1996). She finds a weakness in its mimicking the cyberspace form. Significant for attempting to redefine spatial relations and criticizing capitalism, the book is a primer for future-oriented lesbians.

Love on the Rocks, 1 NO. 4 LESBIAN REV. OF BOOKS 26 (Summer 1995).

Betrayal of friendship, coming-of-age, and coming-out are the subjects of Susan Stinson's novel, in Robson's book review of *Fat Girl Dances with Rocks* (1994), involving a high school girl and her friend.

Timely and Timeless, 4 NO. 10 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 15 (May-June 1995).

Robson provides a short review of Doris Grumbach's *The Book of Knowledge* (1995) a historical fiction illustrating the high costs of conventionality and the devastating impact of heterosexual hegemony on characters whose lives involve lesbianism, incest, and male homosexuality.

Against Cultural Amnesia: Dispatches from the Front, 3 No. 4 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 28 (May/June 1992).

Robson reviews Valerie Miner's latest collection *Rumors from the Cauldron: Selected Essays, Reviews, & Reportage* (1992). The essays about individual women and the reviews of books by women are focused on collectivity and social change. Robson also includes the notes from the after-reading discussion with the author at Judith's Room, a women's bookstore in New York City.

Translation Holograms: The Repertoire of Lesbian Language, 2 No. 12 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 30 (Sept.-Oct. 1991).

Nicole Brossard's *Mauve Desert* (1990) is a fictional novel within the novel and includes a fictional translation of the original. As a lesbian teenage girl grows up in a lesbian home falling in love with an older woman, the original fictional novel acquires another dimension when translated.

Women Words: A Review Column by Ruthann Robson, No. 15 NEW PAGES 45 (Summer 1991).

This review column examines new books published by the women's independent presses in different genres: anthologies, poetry collections, novels, lesbian murder mysteries, and vampire stories.⁶⁵

Little Pilgrims' Progress: Using the Secret Code of Children to Cross Boundaries, 2 No. 10 LAMBDA BOOK REP. 20 (May-June 1991).

Robson commends Rebecca Brown for the structural integrity of her novel *The Children's Crusade* (1991). The story of childhood is told through the transgression of boundaries between reality and fantasy, history and present, childhood and adulthood.

Gender and Other Disadvantages: A Review of Justice and Gender, 18 FLA. ST. U. L. REV. 883 (1991).

This is a review of Deborah L. Rhode's book *Gender and Other Disadvantages: A Review of Justice and Gender* (1989). Robson points

⁶⁵ The books mentioned in the review listed in alphabetical order by author/editor are: LESBIAN PHILOSOPHIES AND CULTURES (Jeffner Allen ed., 1990); MAKING FACE, MAKING SOUL—HACIENDO CARAS: CREATIVE & CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES BY FEMINISTS OF COLOR (Gloria Anzaldua ed., 1990); BEV JOE ET AL., DYKES-LOVING-DYKES: DYKE SEPARATIST POLITICS FOR LESBIANS ONLY (1990); BECKY BIRTHA, THE FORBIDDEN POEMS (1991); REBECCA BROWN, THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE (1989); JEWELLE GOMEZ, THE GILDA STORIES: A NOVEL (1991); DONNA J. HARAWAY, SIMIANS, CYBORGS, AND WOMEN: THE REINVENTION OF NATURE (1991); LESBIAN TEXTS AND CONTEXTS: RADICAL REVISIONS (Karla Jay & Joanne Glasgow eds., 1990); PAULA MARTINAC, OUT OF TIME (1990); KAREN MARIE CHRISTA MINNS, VIRAGO (1990); CHERRY MUHANJI, HER: A NOVEL (1990); MINNIE BRUCE PRATT, CRIMES AGAINST NATURE (1990); NINA WEINSTEIN, NO MORE SECRETS (1990); BARBARA WILSON, GAUDI AFTERNOON (1990).

out its strengths and weaknesses acknowledging the scholarly value of the work as a laudable contribution to feminist legal writings. Rhode proposes a shift in legal theory from the dominance paradigm, focusing on sex-based differences, to a sex-based disadvantage paradigm. While recognizing that male dominance may not be entirely replaced with the disadvantage paradigm, Rhode injects contextualization as a solution to compensate for the inadequacy of the disadvantage paradigm. Robson considers the contextualization as the weakest point of the book because of the lack of theoretical support. She also finds the examination of race, sexual orientation, age, and disability problematic and limited. However, she commends Rhode's discussion of class consciousness as mindful of welfare policies and reproductive issues.

Marge Piercy's Summer People, 15 No. 2 SOJOURNER: THE WOMEN'S F. 35 (Oct. 1989).

This is a review of Marge Piercy's *Summer People* (1989), a novel about intimate relationships and fantasies of three characters involved in a ménage-a-trois. While centered on the intimacies of the characters, some of whom are artists, the novel also depicts the details of the creative artistic process.

Reviews, No. 14 NEW PAGES 43 (Spring/Summer 1989):

1. *You Can't Kill the Spirit*, at 51.

The first in the memorial series devoted to Barbara Deming, *You Can't Kill the Spirit* (1988) by Pam McAllister, is a noted collection of tales based on feminist peace activism.

2. *The Obsidian Mirror: An Adult Healing from Incest*, at 52.

Robson provides a short review of Louise M. Wisechild's *The Obsidian Mirror: An Adult Healing from Incest* (1988), a powerful personal account of rape and sexual assault perpetrated by closest family members.

3. *Cows and Horses*, at 57.

Cows and Horses (1988) by Barbara Wilson is a depressing novel about the break-up of a long term relationship between two women skillfully portrayed through the injection of politics and duality of butch/femme roles.

4. *A Letter to Harvey Milk*, at 58.

Robson finds Leslea Newman's *A Letter to Harvey Milk* (1988) a worthwhile collection of short fiction stories focused on the interplay between Jewish and lesbian identities.

Lesbian Politics in the Lap of Luxury, 1 No. 11 LAMBDA RISING BOOK REP. 15 (June-July 1989).

This review is critical of Sarah Aldridge's presentation of lesbians in *Keep to Me, Stranger* (1989).

Portrait-of-the-Artist-as-Baby-Dyke, 6 No. 2 HURRICANE ALICE: A FEMINIST Q. 5 (Spring 1989).

Although the coming-out story *The Finer Grain* (1988) by Denise Ohio is well written, Robson criticizes the author for perpetuating the stereotypical concept of beauty as a measurement of a person's value.

Review of Two Short Story Collections, 11 No.3 KALLIOPE 72 (1989).

Robson reviews *Women and Children First* by Francine Prose and *A Letter to Harvey Milk* by Lesléa Newman. Both authors explore the multiple layers of storytelling as a comforting and healing tool against the spiritual vacancy that marks the postmodern existence.

Andrea Dworkin: Intercourse & Mariana Valverde: Sex, Power & Pleasure, No. 13 SOCIAL ANARCHISM 51 (1987-88).

In her review of Andrea Dworkin's *Intercourse* (1987), Robson emphasizes the importance of the radical feminist perspective on heterosexuality because such a point of view is shared by the anarchists who are also concerned with the means used by the government to preserve the state of patriarchy. Dworkin's pessimistic vision of the future is countered by Mariana Valverde's optimism in *Sex, Power & Pleasure* (1987). Valverde analyzes sexuality as a social construct calling for the resistance to patriarchal models of sexuality. Both books are a useful introduction to the feminist perspective on sexuality.

Reviews, No. 12 NEW PAGES (Spring/Summer 1987):

1. *Letters from Nicaragua*, at 7.

This is a short comment about Rebecca Gordon's *Letters from Nicaragua* (1986), collecting her correspondence during the six months work as a Witness of Peace in Nicaragua.

2. *Lesbian Philosophy: Explorations*, at 7.

Robson notes Jeffner Allen's collection of four essays concerning issues such as motherhood, nonviolence, and androgyny entitled *Lesbian Philosophy: Explorations* (1986).

The Hand That Rocks the Boat, 4 No. 1 WOMEN'S REV. OF BOOKS 14 (Oct. 1986).

In this review, Robson examines three books that explore the mother-son relationship. She finds *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*:

Mothers, Sons & Leadership (1985) by Mercedes Lynch Maloney and Anne Maloney, masquerading as historical, to be not only superficial but disturbing for its pervasive mother-blaming theme as well as its portrayal of mothers as subservient and silly. Less disturbing, although similarly limited, is Carole Klein's *Mothers and Sons* (1985), entirely based on the unchallenged paradigm of patriarchy and unquestioned assumptions that mothers are heterosexual and that women are incomplete. The third book, *Every Mother's Son: The Role of Mothers in the Making of Men* (1986) by Judith Arcana, provides more insight into the complexity of the mother-son relationship, breaking the myths of patriarchy that reinforce stereotypes.

The Highest Apple: Sappho and the Lesbian Poetic Tradition, 10 No. 1 CALYX 77 (Summer 1986).

The collection of essays, *The Highest Apple: Sappho and the Lesbian Poetic Tradition* (1985) by Judy Grahn, explores the poetic tradition of Sappho and its importance for lesbian culture. The collection revolves around the concept of the "House of Women"⁶⁶ as a place of feminine thought, which Grahn considers central to the literature and culture at large.

Book Review: Chain Chain Change & Mejor Sola Que Mal Acompañada, 9 No. 1 RESPONSE 29 (1986).

The Seal Press is applauded for publishing two books for Black and Latina women in abusive relationships: *Chain Chain Change: For Black Women dealing with Physical and Emotional Abuse* (1985) by Evelyn C. White and the bilingual Spanish-English *Mejor Sola Que Mal Acompañada: For the Latina in an Abusive Relationship* (1985) by Myrna M. Zambrano. Both books offer multicultural perspective to domestic violence, offering help and assistance through poetry, popular songs, and self-help.

Reviews, No. 11 NEW PAGES 20 (Fall 1986):

1. *Egalia's Daughters* at 20.

Robson finds *Egalia's Daughters* (1985) by Gerd Brantenberg a clever story about an imaginary land in which men and women switch roles. Incorporating recent historical moments, the book is not only witty, but also provocative.

2. *Horizons of the Heart* at 20.

This is a short comment on *Horizons of the Heart* (1986) by

⁶⁶ Ruthann Robson, *The Highest Apple: Sappho and the Lesbian Poetic Tradition*, 10 No. 1 CALYX 77 (Summer 1986).

Shelley Smith that Robson describes as not more than a relaxing read.

Reviews, No. 10 NEW PAGES 18 (Winter/Spring 1986):

1. *Women Against Censorship* at 18.

This short comment brings attention to the anthology *Women Against Censorship* (Varda Burstyn ed., 1985) comprised of essays reflecting the theoretical position against pornography and censorship.

2. *Rituals of Survival* at 20.

Rituals of Survival (1985) is a collection of short stories about Latina working-class, urban women of different ages skillfully told by Puerto Rican writer Nicholasa Mohr.

3. *The Swashbuckler* at 20.

Robson characterizes the novel *The Swashbuckler* (1985) by Lee Lynch as an engaging read, full of surprises and romance, evolving around a working-class New York lesbian.

4. *Quiet Fire* at 21.

Quiet Fire: Memoirs of Older Gay Men (1985) by Keith Vacha is a collection of seventeen interviews with gay men who are over fifty-five years of age. Although lacking in racial variety, the collection includes different life experiences and disparate views of the gay movement, religion, marriage, politics, and other issues.

5. *Risking a Somersault in the Air: Conversations with Nicaraguan Writers* at 21.

This short review provides insight into *Risking a Somersault in the Air: Conversations with Nicaraguan Writers* (1985) by Margaret Randall, a collection of interviews with fourteen Nicaraguan writers who are all Sandinistas and revolutionaries.

6. *Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence* at 21.

Robson reviews the controversial anthology *Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence* (Rosemary Curb & Nancy Manahan eds., 1985) comprised of personal stories describing daily life in the convent, loneliness, relationships with other sisters, and leaving the convent. While she thinks that the book is an important work, Robson notes its limitations, including the uniformity and superficiality of the narrative.

7. *We Say We Love Each Other* at 24.

Minnie Bruce Pratt's second volume of poetry entitled *We Say We Love Each Other* (1985) is noted for its unique voice exploring love in the social and political context.

8. *Talking It Out* at 27.

This is a short note about *Talking It Out* (1985), a guide to battered women groups by Ginny NiCarthy, Karen Merriam, and Sandra Coffman, published as part of the Seal Press New Leaf Series on domestic violence.

9. *We Are Ordinary Women* at 27.

We Are Ordinary Women (1985), collected by Participants of the Puget Sound Women's Peace Camp, is comprised of poems, statements, and other documents pertaining to the group.

10. *Prisons That Could Not Hold* at 27.

This short comment brings attention to Barbara Deming's *Prisons That Could Not Hold* (1985), a collection of essays chronicling the activism of her time.

Feminism as Integrity, 1 No. 3 BELLES LETTRES: REV. OF BOOKS BY WOMEN 13 (Jan./Feb. 1986).

This is a review of two books about Wilma Scott Heide, the chairwoman of the National Organization for Women from 1970-1974 who focused her energy on issues such as women in poverty, welfare reform, and racism. *A Feminist Legacy: The Ethics of Wilma Scott Heide and Company* (1985) by Eleanor Humes Haney explores the ethics of feminism. *Feminism for the Health of It* (1985) by Wilma Scott Heide is a collection of her own essays.

Reviews, No. 9 NEW PAGES (Spring/Summer 1985):

1. *Clenched Fists, Burning Crosses* at 14.

Robson describes Cris South's novel *Clenched Fists, Burning Crosses* (1984) as a well-written story full of love and violence, involving a lesbian witness of a Klan murder.

2. *Murder in the Collective* at 14.

This short comment praises Barbara Wilson's mystery novel *Murder in the Collective* (1984) as a mesmerizing work that touches upon a variety of issues such as feminism, lesbian coming out, racism, sexual domination, and politics.

3. *Goat Song* at 14.

Robson recommends the novel *Goat Song* (1984) by Dodici Azpadu, an original story about the lives and struggles of queer women at the low end of the social ladder.

4. *Gathering Ground* at 14.

This is a review of the anthology *Gathering Ground* (Jo Cochran et al. eds., 1984), that includes poetry, graphic art, fiction, nonfic-

tion, and interviews representing Northwestern women of color who are writers and artists.

5. *See No Evil* at 15.

Robson commends the collection *See No Evil: Prefaces, Essays & Accounts 1976-1983* (1984) by Ntozake Shange for its creative use of language to present not only the author's own work, but other authors' plays and volumes of poetry.

6. *Clear Wind* at 16.

Neeli Cherkovski's collection of poetry *Clear Wind* (1984) is noted for its distinct voice of the American male.

7. *We Are All Part of One Another* at 16.

Robson salutes New Society Publishers for putting together the writings of Barbara Deming, *We Are All Part of One Another: A Barbara Deming Reader* (Jane Meyerding ed., 1984), many of which remain out-of-print. This invaluable collection includes excerpts from her books and essays based on her personal experiences as an activist, feminist, and lesbian writer.

8. *The Absence of the Dead is Their Way of Appearing* at 19.

This short review describes the weaknesses of Mary Winfrey Trautmann's *The Absence of the Dead Is Their Way of Appearing* (1984), a book that fails to connect the reader with a tragic story of a mother's response to her daughter's death from leukemia.

Mary Daly: Pure Lust, Nos. 8-9 SOCIAL ANARCHISM 69 (1985).

Robson introduces the reader to Mary Daly's *Pure Lust* (1984), which takes apart the modern patriarchy by reclaiming the ontology of feminism through the creation of feminist language.

Candace Falk: Love, Anarchy & Emma Goldman, 5 No. 2 SOCIAL ANARCHISM 54 (1985).

The intimate biography of Emma Goldman, *Love, Anarchy & Emma Goldman* (1984) by Candace Falk, is criticized by Robson as sexist, partial, and sometimes offensive.

Jane Meyerding (Editor): We Are All Part of One Another, 5 No. 2 SOCIAL ANARCHISM 39 (1985).

This is a review of the anthology *We Are All Part of One Another: A Barbara Deming Reader* (Jane Meyerding ed., 1984), the collected writings of Barbara Deming, a pacifist, feminist, and lesbian author. The anthology was welcomed as timely since most of Deming's works were out of print. It is commended as an excellent presentation of Deming's ideal of nonviolence as articulated through her personal experiences. The book includes some of

Deming's most important works, such as excerpts from *Running Away from Myself: A Dream Portrait of America Drawn from the Films of the 1940's* (1969), and essays from *Prison Notes* (1966).

Reviews, 3 No. 1 NEW PAGES (Fall 1984):

1. *Let's Talk About Sex and Loving* at 21.

Robson makes a short comment on *Let's Talk About Sex and Loving* (1983) by Gail Jones Sanchez and Mary Gerbino, a children's book explaining sex and sex-related issues from a limited heterosexual perspective that reinforces traditional views of nuclear family.

2. *A Kid's First Book About Sex* at 21.

Although Robson finds that *A Kid's First Book About Sex* (1983) by Joani Blank is an excellent introduction of sexuality to children that includes homosexuality, she notes that the author fails to address unwanted touching.

3. *Against the Season, The Price of Salt, Lovers in the Present Afternoon* at 23.

Robson reviews three novels published by the major lesbian fiction publisher Naiad Press: *Against the Season* (1984) by Jane Rule, a well-written story with a variety of characters; *The Price of Salt* (1984) by Claire Morgan, a skillfully crafted love story; and *Lovers in the Present Afternoon* (1984) by Kathleen Fleming, a typical story about two married women falling in love with each other.

4. *A Small Room with Trouble on My Mind* at 23.

This is a short comment on the use of fragmented style combining poetry and prose in *A Small Room With Trouble on My Mind* (1983) by Mike Henson.

5. *Narratives* at 23.

Robson reviews *Narratives: Poems in the Tradition of Black Women* (1983) by Cheryl Clarke, which is an impressive collection of poetry accompanied by drawings.

Feminism Must Have No Servants, 1 No. 4 HURRICANE ALICE (Spring/Summer 1984).

Robson reviews *Look Me in the Eye: Old Women, Aging, and Ageism* (1983) by Barbara Macdonald with Cynthia Rich. The book explores the concept of ageism in general and in the women's movement in particular with all its stereotypes and contradictions.

Feminists & Their Sons, 1 No. 3 SOJOURNER: THE WOMEN'S F. 20 (July 1984).

This review, which begins with Robson's personal narrative

describing what it means to be a feminist raising a son, examines Judith Arcana's *Every Mother's Son* (1983). While Arcana is commended for including the journal excerpts documenting her relationship with her son and for her articulation of a feminist mother's role in her son's upbringing, she is criticized for inadequately exploring the mythical subtext of the mother-son relationship.

Reviews, 2 No. 3 NEW PAGES (Winter 1983):

1. *Against Sadomasochism and Coming to Power* at 34.

Robson reviews two anthologies about sadomasochism: *Against Sadomasochism: A Radical Feminist Analysis* (Robin Ruth Linden et al. eds., 1982) and *Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M* (SAMOIS ed., 1982). Both books, while centering on the issues of eroticism, power, and the concept of consent, offer opposing perspectives.

2. *Black Lesbian in White America* at 34.

This short review summarizes the focus of the book *Black Lesbian in White America* (1983) by Anita Cornwell, one of the first black lesbian activists.

3. *America Made Me* at 35.

America Made Me (1983) by Hans Konig is seen as a bitter description of the state of being of contemporary men, seemingly caused by women.

4. *Walking on the Moon* at 35.

Barbara Wilson's collection of short stories *Walking on the Moon* (1983) is commended as intense reading that satisfies both emotional and intellectual needs.

5. *Dos Indios* at 35.

Robson finds the lyrical style, complexity of characters, and reality of presentation to be valuable traits of *Dos Indios* (1983) by Harold Jaffe, a novel about a crippled boy who becomes a musician.

Reviews, 2 No. 2 NEW PAGES (Spring 1983):

1. *Ambitious Women*, at 16.

In this review, Robson commends Barbara Ellen Wilson for her novel *Ambitious Women* (1982) which successfully portrays three working women who face a real world with real problems rather than one-dimensional characters.

2. *Parti-Colored Blocks for a Quilt*, at 17.

This is a review of Marge Piercy's collection of her own critical essays, reviews, and interviews entitled *Parti-Colored Blocks for a Quilt* (1982). Robson finds that the book portrays Piercy as a writer whose art represents an integral part of her political being. The collection includes essays on support groups for writers, growing up in the 50s, and poetry readings. It also includes reviews of the works of Audre Lorde, Joanna Russ, Adrienne Rich, and Margaret Atwood.

Evincing a Feminist Sensibility: Reviews of Women's Fiction & Women's Poetry, 5 No. 1 KALLIOPE 64 (1983).

In this collection of book reviews Robson employs her own literary standard of "evincing a feminist sensibility"⁶⁷ which she explains as a move beyond expression of women's feelings by men's language toward a new language free of domination. She examines five works of fiction and five collections of poetry from the perspective of furthering a feminist commitment.⁶⁸

Their Sisters' Keepers, 8 NEW ENG. J. ON PRISON L. 335 (1982).

In reviewing *Their Sister's Keepers* (1981) by Estelle B. Freedman, a book exploring the women's prison reform movement during the period 1830-1930 in the United States, Robson commends the author for her detailed description of the principles underlying female prison reform. These include feminine morality and occupational therapy, as well as the female management of women's prisons. The concept of sisterhood between non-prisoner and prisoner females sustained institutional control for a long time until the prison reform movement declined in the 1920s. Although Freedman's book is limited exclusively to the institutional perspective, her work represents an important inquiry into the history of women's prisons, providing valuable information to future reformers.

Unlikely Heroes, 68 A.B.A. J. 188 (1982).

In this short book review, Robson points out that *Unlikely Heroes* (1981) by Jack Bass is a valuable contribution to the history of

⁶⁷ Ruthann Robson, *Evincing a Feminist Sensibility: Reviews of Women's Fiction & Women's Poetry*, 5 No. 1 KALLIOPE 64, 64 (1983).

⁶⁸ The following fiction works are reviewed: CATHY COCKRELL, *UNDERSHIRTS AND OTHER STORIES* (1982); JANE RULE, *THIS IS NOT FOR YOU* (1982); BARBARA GREENBERG, *FIRE DRILLS* (1982); SHEILA ORTIZ TAYLOR, *FAULTLINE* (1982); BARBARA ELLEN WILSON, *AMBITIOUS WOMEN* (1982). The following poetry works are reviewed: CAROL COX, *THE WATER IN THE PEARL* (1982); KATHLEEN NORRIS, *THE MIDDLE OF THE WORLD* (1982); JOAN ALESHIRE, *CLOUD TRAIN* (1982); ROBIN MORGAN, *DEPTH PERCEPTION* (1982); MARGE PIERCY, *CIRCLES ON THE WATER: SELECTED POEMS* (1982).

the southern civil rights movement. It depicts the pivotal role of the Fifth Circuit judges in the desegregation of the South. Known as "The Four," Judges Tuttle, Rives, Brown, and Wisdom expanded *Brown v. Board of Education* to other areas of civil rights, thereby risking their own social prestige and their personal status in local communities.

On Claiming Identity, 76 No. 5 GRADUATE WOMAN 41 (Sept.-Oct. 1982).

Robson reviews a black feminist June Jordan's *Civil Wars* (1981), a collection of essays, letters and speeches promoting African and the developing world's perspective, and Bell Hooks' *Ain't I a Woman* (1981), an analysis of the affect of sex and race on black women in America.

Helping Those Who Are Beyond Help, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Nov. 7, 1982, at E4.

Robson reviews Ken Auletta's *The Underclass* (1982), a book examining the causes and effects of the underclass, a category of people who are welfare recipients, street criminals, hustlers, alcoholics, addicts, and mentally ill.

The Brandeis/Frankfurter Connection, 56 No. 10 FLA. BAR J. 809 (Nov. 1982).

The Brandeis/Frankfurter Connection (1982) by Allen Murphy examines the two Supreme Court justices with respect to the judicial rule of non-involvement in political activities. The personal correspondence and memories of people who were close to them reveal that Brandeis used Frankfurter as a proxy for acting on his behalf on the political stage. After he was appointed to the Supreme Court, Frankfurter openly participated in political decisions. Robson points out that the author, while advocating the same standard for all judges, does not elaborate on what that standard should be.

The Best Defense, 56 No. 9 FLA. BAR J. 750 (Oct. 1982).

This is a review of Alan M. Dershowitz's *The Best Defense* (1982) which Robson finds an example of interesting stories from the courtroom depicting criminal defense attorneys, judges, and prosecutors.

Two Strong Novels that Lay Down the Law, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Oct. 3, 1982, at E9.

Robson reviews two novels that portray the impact of the law on women and intertwine social morality and personal concerns: *The Magistrate* (1982) by Ernest K. Gann and *Ambitious Women* (1982) by Barbara Ellen Wilson.

"*Rituals*" *Mixes Biography with Fiction*, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Aug. 8, 1982, at E5.

In reviewing *Rituals* (1982) by Linda Sexton, the daughter of Anne Sexton, Robson notes a reader's tendency to view the fictional relationship between the daughter and her dead mother as autobiographical.

Piercing Politics, FLA. TIMES-UNION, July 18, 1982, at D8.

This is a review of Marge Piercy's *Circles on the Water: Selected Poems* (1982), which is a collection of poems encompassing twenty years of work. The collection is praised for including the most important of Piercy's political poems as well as those on the natural world and love.

Mild Discomfort, 7 NO. 10 SOJOURNER: THE NEW ENG. WOMEN'S J. OF NEWS OP. & ARTS 14 (June 1982).

In this review of Rita Mae Brown's novel *Southern Discomfort* (1982), Robson points out both humor and sadness in the story that takes place in Alabama during the twenties. While noting the general lack of ideas and the exclusive limitation to personal issues of the characters, she finds the novel emotionally engaging.

Women Who Kill, 55 NO. 6 FLA. BAR J. 436 (June 1982).

Robson reviews Ann Jones' *Women Who Kill* (1980), which is a book about women accused of murder. Jones provides a historical survey followed by analysis of such women not only from the legal point of view, but also from sociological and feminist perspective.

Feelings Shift with the Caribbean Tide, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, June 13, 1982, at 3E.

Eden Burning (1982) by Belva Plain is a novel based on an interracial rape in the Caribbean. Although credited for her control of characters, Plain is criticized for lacking new insight into this common theme of south Caribbean literature.

Alice Adams and Her Myriad Moods Find a Home in "To See You Again", FLA. TIMES-UNION, May 30, 1982, at G4.

This brief review commends Alice Adams for her short stories collected in *To See You Again* (1982), reflecting her strength by the successful use of metaphors and manipulation of themes.

Judgments on the Men Who Judge Society, FLA. TIMES-UNION, May 2, 1982, at G5.

This is a review of Bruce Allen Murphy's *The Brandeis/Frankfurter Connection* (1982) in which the author examines how two

prominent justices of the Supreme Court maintained their involvement in political affairs.

"Harm" Has Some Poetic Sensibility, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Apr. 25, 1982, at G7.

Robson commends Margaret Atwood for her poetic sensibility and ability to use metaphors in her novel *Bodily Harm* (1982).

Southern Laughter and Tears, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Apr. 11, 1982, at G8.

This is a review of Rita Mae Brown's *Southern Discomfort* (1982), a novel about the social norms of the South, racism, love, sexual identity, and family.

Condon's "Hit Man" Misses the Mark, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, Apr. 4, 1982 at E3.

This review notes Richard Condon's lack of originality in his novel *Prizzi's Honor* (1982), a story about a hit-man who is defending a mafia's family honor.

Kate Millett vs. the Ayatollah: Another Side of the Revolution, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Mar. 28, 1982, at H7.

Robson reviews Kate Millett's book *Going to Iran* (1982), which portrays the new Iranian government of Ayatollah Homeini and its betrayal of the women's movement that was fighting against the Shah.

Piercy Novel Braids Personal, Political, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Mar. 21, 1982, at H3.

Robson praises Marge Piercy's novel *Braided Lives* (1982) as a superbly crafted work about growing up and attending college during the 1950s. Piercy explores various relationships and one of the most important themes of that time when abortions were illegal: reproductive rights.

Race, Sex and Class Provide Triple Bind, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Feb. 21, 1982, at G4.

Two books focus on the historical treatment of poor black women from the perspective of race, sex, and class: *Women, Race and Class* (1981) by Angela Y. Davis and *Ain't I a Woman* (1981) by Bell Hooks. Robson notes that they both use historical approaches that include the periods of slavery and the suffrage, civil rights and women's movements. Davis incorporates a Marxist perspective in her work while Brooks explores issues such as sexism and racism within the contemporary liberal movements.

Desegregation Produced Some Unlikely Heroes, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Jan. 24, 1982, at G3.

Unlikely Heroes (1981) is a book about the trial and appellate federal judges of the Fifth Circuit and the impact of their efforts to desegregate the South when southern states were reluctant to follow the Supreme Court's mandate to end segregation.

The Killing of Karen Silkwood, 1 NO. 4 NEW PAGES 19 (1981).

Robson reviews *The Killing of Karen Silkwood* (1981) by Richard Rashke, which tells the story of a young lab technician at a plutonium plant who suffered nuclear contamination and then died in a mysterious car crash on her way to deliver documents exposing company safety hazards to the union. The book focuses on the famous court case that ensued.

Pornography and Silence, 2 NO. 1 MAENAD 81 (1981).

Robson reviews Susan Griffin's *Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature* (1981), which provides the analysis of pornography through the prism of specific persons. The book focuses on the mind of a pornographer who, out of fear of rejection, becomes involved with himself obliterating the woman and silencing her speech.

The Secret that Exploded, 67 A.B.A. J. 1336 (1981).

This is a review of the book *The Secret that Exploded* (1981) by Howard Morland. An advocate of nuclear disarmament, Morland describes the events surrounding the Progressive case in which the government sought to enjoin the publication of his article on the secrets of the H-Bomb. The book demonstrates the tension between freedom of the press encompassed in the First Amendment and the secrecy that revolves around nuclear weapons issues. He emphasizes the need to unveil the secrets in order to allow democratic public participation in related policy decisions.

Explaining America: The Federalist, 67 A.B.A. J. 892 (1981).

In this book review of *Explaining America* (1981) by Garry Wills, Robson acknowledges the importance of the volume for the understanding of American history. The book focuses on The Federalist Papers, which were written as an attempt to influence certain states to embrace the Constitution. Unlike the critics of The Federalist Papers, who fail to address the meaning of concepts such as "interest" and "public virtue" at the time, this book brings to light the visions of the essays which are grounded in the philosophical work of David Hume. Robson, however, notes that including a general introduction to The Federalist Papers would have been helpful to the reader because the American audience is not adequately familiar with the subject.

The 444 Days: Hostages and Hate, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Dec. 20, 1981, at G7.

Two books tell the story of the Iranian crisis of 1979 when Iranian militants held American hostages inside the American Embassy in Tehran: *America Held Hostage* (1981) by Pierre Salinger and *Inside And Out* (1981) by Richard Queen. Robson reviews Salinger's detailed presentation of secret negotiations leading to the release of hostages and Queen's personal account as a hostage who was released due to his deteriorating health condition. She finds that both books contribute to a better understanding of the crisis and the persons involved.

Children, Sex Are Examined, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Nov. 8, 1981, at G7.

Robson reviews two books focusing on sexual exploitation of children. She finds that *The Death of Innocence* (1981) by Sam Janus trivializes the subject, while *Children in Chains* (1981) by Clifford L. Linedecker is more informative and covers more issues such as child prostitution, child pornography, and incest.

'Near vs. Minnesota' Studied in Friendly's 'Minnesota Rag', FLA. TIMES-UNION, Sep. 31, 1981, at G6.

Robson reviews Fred W. Friendly's book *Minnesota Rag* (1981) in which he describes the relationships of the players involved in the First Amendment case *Near v. Minnesota*, 283 U.S. 697 (1931).

Do Courts Serve Children's Best Interests?, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Aug. 2, 1981, at G12, reprinted as *The Child Savers: Juvenile Justice Observed*, 56 NO.1 FLA. BAR J. 84 (Jan. 1982).

This review credits Peter S. Prescott for his book *The Child Savers: Juvenile Justice Observed* (1981). Prescott, who received permission to attend closed juvenile court proceedings, paints a grim picture of what he observed, concluding that the role of the state as a substitute for parents is futile.

Humanity Depends on Other Species, FLA. TIMES-UNION, July 26, 1981, at G3.

Robson reviews *Extinction* (1981) by Paul and Anne Ehrlich, a treatise focusing on the causes and effects of the natural extinction and human exploitation of natural resources.

"July's People" Is Satisfying Novel About South Africa, FLA. TIMES-UNION, June 21, 1981, at F8.

This is a review of a South-African writer Nadine Gordimer's novel *July's People* (1981), a story about a white family during the South African revolution.

Wifebeating: The Tables Turned, FLA. TIMES-UNION, May 24, 1981, at E5.

This review examines two books on battered women and violence. *The Burning Bed* (1980) by Faith McNulty depicts the trial of a battered woman who burned the father of her children to death and was found not guilty because of temporary insanity. *Sweet Sir* (1981) by Helen Yglesias depicts the fictional trial of a woman who stabs her husband to death while he beats her and is acquitted by the jury based on self-defense.

Silkwood's Life and Death Still Studied, FLA. TIMES-UNION, May 3, 1981, at G6, *reprinted in* NEW PAGES: NEWS & REVIEWS OF THE PROGRESSIVE BOOK TRADE 19 (Summer 1981).

Robson reviews Richard Rashke's *The Killing of Karen Silkwood* (1981), which tells the true story of a young woman who was a victim of nuclear contamination at the lab where she worked, and the aftermath of her mysterious death in a car crash, including the trial initiated by her family.

A Complete Study of 'The Federalist', FLA. TIMES-UNION, Apr. 12, 1981, at E10.

This is a review of Garry Wills' *Explaining America: The Federalist* (1981) in which the author analyzes *The Federalist Papers* essays, making them more accessible and understandable.

'Threat' Doesn't Work as True Suspense Novel, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Apr. 26, 1981, at G10.

This is a short critique of Richard Jessup's *Threat* (1981), a book that Robson portrays as a suspense novel that fails to keep the reader in suspense. The plot revolves around a seemingly perfect extortion crime concocted in order to get the money necessary to save a twin brother captured by the Vietnamese.

Justice Douglas and His Journey, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Mar. 15, 1981, at E7.

Robson credits James Simon for his ability to present Justice William O. Douglas in the biography *Independent Journey: The Life of William O. Douglas* (1980), as a complex libertarian.

New Book Assesses JFK Assassination, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Mar. 1, 1981, at G10.

Robson reviews David S. Lifton's *Best Evidence* (1980), crediting the author for his fifteen years of research on the details of President Kennedy's assassination. Lifton challenges the methodology of the Warren Commission.

VII. COLUMNS AND ESSAYS

"The envelope, please. . .", 18 No. 3 GAY COMMUNITY NEWS 7, 7-13 (July 22-28 1990).

Robson critically examines the concept of literary awards and competition in the context of lesbian literature. While she insists on the celebration of lesbian literature within lesbian literary community, she is wary of the artificial nature of the competition, vaguely articulated standards, and inherent judgments that result from an awarding process. Robson demands a challenge to the tenets of dominant ideology rather than self-aggrandizement.

Mable Haught: Community Developer for Florida's Native Americans, 17 No. 5 RESPONSE 28 (June 1985).

This piece describes the work of the United Methodist Seminole Mission director, Mable Haught, and the outreach programs offered by the Mission, which includes day care for preschool children, youth programs, the preservation of traditional crafts practices, and the Creek language preservation program. Although struggling with a lack of resources, the Mission hopes to achieve its future plans like developing a nursing home, expanding youth programs, and providing assistance for drug and alcohol abuse victims.

Marge Piercy's Verse Bites Back at Readers, FLA. TIMES-UNION, Jan. 30, 1983, at H1.

This is a commentary about Marge Piercy's poetry, which Robson finds very vital and accessible. She is especially impressed by Piercy's performance at a poetry reading, which represents an important part of the oral tradition.

Hello, Dali!, FLA. TIMES-UNION, March 14, 1982, at E1.

Robson comments on the newly opened Dali Museum in St. Petersburg hosting the private collection amassed during more than forty years by the Morse family. The collection includes some of the most famous paintings such as *The Disintegration of the Persistence of Memory*, *The Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus* and *Hallucinogenous Bullfighter*, as well as watercolors, graphics, drawings, and sculptures.

VIII. VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDINGS

Videotape: What's at Stake in 2004: The Supreme Court (Public Policy Department of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center Sept. 2004) (on file with N.Y. LGBT Comm. Ctr.).

This forum was organized by the Public Policy department of

the LGBT Center in New York in September 2004 to address issues related to judicial appointments in the upcoming presidential election. Robson talks about the role of the Supreme Court and the conservative rhetoric of the lower federal courts with a special focus on the Eleventh Circuit. She foresees that the LGBT communities will invest a vast amount of energy litigating against the conservative agenda, assuming a defensive position instead of promoting their own interests and goals.

Compact Disc: 'QueerKids' Law: A Look at the Legal Needs of Lesbian and Gay Youth, Conference proceedings 96th AALL annual meeting (Valencia, Calif.: Mobiletape Co. 2003) (on file with the American Association of Law Libraries).

Robson addresses some of the legal issues pertaining to lesbian and gay youth such as the lack of access to sexual information embodied in the Children Internet Protection Act, abstinence until marriage educational programs, parents and school official's intolerance, peer sexual harassment, homelessness, and violence. Although there is some progress in educational litigation concerning First Amendment rights and within the juvenile justice system, she believes that more has to be done to prevent discrimination and violence toward gay and lesbian youth. Robson emphasizes the danger of intolerance taught through conservative programs, which results in parents institutionalizing non-heterosexual or gender nonconforming children, the state placing such children in foster care, and queer children running away from home.

Videotape: Constructing Change (Washburn Law School 1996) (on file with the Washburn Law School Library).

Robson gave two presentations at the conference Constructing Change: "Criminal Justice System: Impact on Queers" and "Our Relationships." Robson argues that when the gay and lesbian community distances itself from criminals, it creates an obstacle to achieving equality. The response to violence towards the LGBT community focuses on victims, not perpetrators. There is a tendency to sensationalize or romanticize criminal defendants which results in exploitation. For example, attorneys often used lesbian murder cases to strike book or film deals.

Perverved Justice (U.K. Channel 4 television broadcast 1996) (on file with City University of New York School of Law Library).

This documentary film, commissioned by British Channel 4, examines the capital punishment of women in the U.S. Professor Robson estimates that forty percent of the cases contain some im-

plication of lesbianism. She argues that women are being put on death row because of the preexisting prejudice around sexual identity. This prejudice is manipulated by the prosecution in order to dehumanize female defendants. Robson identifies various prosecutorial strategies of dehumanization exemplified in the cases of Andrea Jackson, Wanda Jean Allen, Ana Cardona, Fay Foster and Aileen Wuornos. Cinematographic stereotyping of women as seductive vampires also influences the mind of an average juror for whom the connection between the killer and the stereotype becomes understandable and the crime becomes coherent. Robson notes that in its search for equality, the gay and lesbian movement needs to incorporate these types of murder crimes into its agenda, preventing sensationalism based on sexuality, rather than distancing itself from criminality altogether.