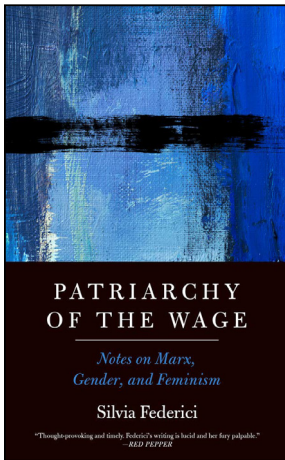


reading front to back or plundering a particular chapter for conceptualizing and improving a specific phase of your design process. Think of this book as a modular framework of design considerations, rather than a how-to guide, and consider pairing with other texts about pedagogy and technology for online learning if you are new to online content creation.—*Lauren deLaubell, SUNY Cortland*

Silvia Federici. *Patriarchy of the Wage: Notes of Marx, Gender, and Feminism.* Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2021. 151p. Paper, \$15 (ISBN: 978-1629637990).



Activist and Marxist scholar Silvia Federici is perhaps best known for the Wages for Housework campaign launched in the 1970s, which demanded payment for domestic labor in an attempt to make a critical intervention in the capitalist exploitation of women.¹ Like most of her work, *Patriarchy of the Wage* emphasizes “reproductive labor,” labor that does not directly produce profit for the owning class, but instead reproduces and cares for the laborers whose work creates that profit. In this book, Federici analyzes various forms of reproductive labor to generate new understandings of Marxist theory, and new possibilities for socialist organizers. Ultimately, Federici argues that understanding reproductive labor and its gendered nature is necessary for building a strong socialist movement, and an equitable world where everyone can thrive.

Chapters 1 and 2 constitute a defense of the Wages for Housework campaign against critique from other socialist activists. Federici argues that many leftists depict waged laborers as the protagonists of socialist struggle while marginalizing unwaged laborers such as housewives, to the detriment of both women and the socialist movement. These leftists position domestic work as a natural act of love and care that would occur even without the organizing presence of capitalism in workers’ lives. Federici argues that this narrative serves the owning class by separating reproductive labor from waged labor, when in fact both are necessary for profit generation. The Wages for Housework campaign demands payment for the “real length of the workday,” which extends beyond the time spent directly laboring for a wage into the time spent caring for the bodies, minds, and children of workers (20). In these chapters, Federici connects the patriarchal positioning of women as natural domestic laborers who deserve no wage to low wages in feminized professions, arguing that once women become “used to working for nothing,” it is easy for employers to justify low wages in fields like librarianship, nursing, and teaching (15). The central argument here is that true working-class solidarity requires valuing all labor, including reproductive labor.

Federici moves from socialist practice into socialist theory in chapters 3 through 5, arguing that classical Marxism is incomplete without the feminist critique that unpaid reproductive labor is central to capitalist exploitation, and thus an important site of working class struggle. These chapters are very much part of a conversation between Federici and other Marxist theorists and may be of less interest to readers with little grounding in this discourse. However, library workers may find much of value in chapter 4, “Marx, Feminism, and the Construction of the Commons.” Federici argues that one of the flaws in Marx’s analysis was his belief that industrialization would build the conditions necessary for socialist revolution by increasing productivity and reducing scarcity. Federici incorporates the work of ecofeminists who argue

that while industrial advancement may increase productivity, it also devastates the planet and creates new demands for reproductive labor required to sustain human life in increasingly damaged ecosystems. This chapter calls for a shift away from Marxist communism toward a politics of the commons, focused on building a society modeled on “spaces [such as community gardens] that are self-organized and both require and produce community” (67). While libraries are not named in this chapter (nor are they typically self-organized), I found myself thinking about how they serve as a commons, providing space and labor that supports a variety of productive and reproductive communal activities.

In the final two chapters, Federici discusses the history of two categories of feminized laborers: housewives and sex workers. The central argument of both of these chapters is that as capitalism shifted into heavy industry in the late nineteenth century, workers’ bodies required more care so they could handle the physical demands of the labor. Workers also needed to be replaced more often. This led to the development of the family wage and the housewife required to care for a male worker’s body, as well as to bear and care for children who would serve as future laborers. This duty to reproduce led many married women to resist sex and created the need for another kind of reproductive laborer: the sex worker, who could serve men’s need for sexual pleasure when their wives would not. These are interesting arguments, but I wish these chapters had been longer and contained more supporting evidence for Federici’s historical claims. The history of sex workers, the history of housewives, and the complex relationship between the two in the context of patriarchy and capitalism is simply too much to cover in two short chapters. These chapters would also have benefited from more analysis of race and how it intersects with dominant views of housewives and sex workers.

Patriarchy of the Wage offers an important feminist intervention into socialist practice and theory, and I admire Federici’s commitment to addressing both at once. This book has much to offer for anyone interested in socialist praxis that accounts for reproductive labor and the environmental toll of capitalism. While some of its arguments are underdeveloped, it is particularly strong when laying out Federici’s politics of the commons, pulling in arguments from Marxist and feminist theory, and examples from feminists and socialists struggling in a variety of contexts. Library workers will value this book for contributions to theory about reproductive labor and feminized professions, and for the possibilities it offers in viewing libraries as sites for building a politics of the commons. —Melissa A. Hubbard, University at Buffalo

Note

1. Federici frequently uses the word “women” to refer to cisgender women whose bodies are capable of producing children. I believe she does so because this artificial conflation of sex and gender is fundamental to the systems of oppression she is exposing in her work. Capitalism and patriarchy position “women” as a biological category destined to engage in reproductive labor because of the assumed reproductive capacities of our bodies. Federici’s arguments in this book would be stronger if she had engaged critically with this use of the word women and its power to reinscribe the gender binary and reinforce patriarchy.

Jamie A. Lee. *Producing the Archival Body*. Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge, 2021. 182p. Hardcover, \$160 (ISBN: 978-0367182199).

Jamie A. Lee’s *Producing the Archival Body* weaves together many timely conversations held both in the academy and among the broader public. The book is organized into two parts, “Body Parts” and “Assembled Bodies in Action.” Each section uses multiple frameworks from somatechnics to queer theory, feminist theory, and archival studies alongside Lee’s personal