feminist organizing. In her words, "long before the so-called linguistic turn and Eve Ensler's talk of vaginas, feminist movements had both productively challenged and amplified sex in their attempt to change women's lives" (4–5). Questions of sex are rife with benefits and drawbacks, points of transformation as well as moments of hegemonic reification, and above all help us better understand feminist advocacy of years gone by and the challenges that feminism is compelled to address in the current moment. *A Question of Sex* will be of particular interest to scholars of rhetoric and women, gender, and sexuality studies, and even more broadly, anyone interested in rhetoric(s) invested in the negotiation of identity of difference. Like plenty of academic feminist work, Poirot only contemplates practical answers to some of feminism's most vexing problems. But perhaps that challenge is left to the readers. It is up to us to decide when, where, how, and for whom questions of sex will play out in our work, whatever that might be.

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State of the Marital Union: Rhetoric, Identity, and Nineteenth-Century Marriage Controversies. By Leslie J. Harris. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014; pp. 224. $49.95 cloth.

Around the turn of the twenty-first century, marriage entered the public discourse as a source of heated controversy. Same-sex couples began to pursue marriage rights en masse, prompting a flurry of high-stakes court decisions, ballot measures, and policy proposals. Critics voiced concerns about the nature, definition, and "sanctity" of marriage. "Civil unions" were explored—and mostly rejected—as a satisfactory alternative for committed same-sex relationships. At this writing, that controversy has not yet subsided. Citizens on both sides of the question remain invested in its resolution, curious about what that resolution will mean for their practice of citizenship. And though they may not know it, their concerns and curiosities are daily contributing to an American discursive tradition.

Leslie J. Harris's *State of the Marital Union: Rhetoric, Identity, and Nineteenth-Century Marriage Controversies* resides in the 1800s, examining

the various ways that marriage rights were challenged and defended in those same-but-different times. Back then, people argued about the permissibility of spousal violence, the acceptability of divorce, the legality of polygamy, the morality of free love, and the prospect of miscegenation. Harris examines each of these issues with a scholar's care, allowing the common threads to emerge on their own without needless pulling. Each is considered against the backdrop of nationalism and citizenship, and each helps to contextualize the others.

In her introduction, Harris adjusts the lens of marriage controversy to focus specifically on what she terms "symbolic womanhood," a national myth that "constitutes women as containers of the culture, values, and morals of the nation," adding that the "regulation of marriage as a public institution enables an enforcement of the line between civilization and barbarism" (2). This observation is borne out quickly in chapter 1, where Harris considers the discourse surrounding spousal abuse. Her survey of nineteenth-century judicial rulings and press coverage discloses a situation in which both judges and reporters tended to defer to men as masters of their domains. Since the family was understood as a miniature state, and since the husband/father served as the executive of that state, a certain degree of violence was permissible as a means of "correcting" wife and children. The extent of that violence was "often dependent on the character of the participants in the marriage, and judges frequently read women's character through the lens of proper womanhood" (11). Guilt and innocence in such cases hinged on the performance of gender roles, with blame assigned to those who failed to properly embody them—the "impure" wife or the "brutish" husband, in particular.

Proper womanhood continued to determine women's guilt or innocence when marriages terminated in divorce. In chapter 2, Harris examines the century's prominent *end-of-marriage* controversy. In these years, the emergence of divorce as a possibility created a new civic space for women to inhabit. Formerly relegated to either *single* or *married* status, the divorced woman complicated the popular understanding of women's identity. Divorce cases often received melodramatic treatment from the press, turning high-profile splits into spectator sport. And much like abuse cases, the guilt or innocence of the concerned parties was usually determined by their gender performance. Harris notes that "there was not a legitimate or acceptable deviation from norms of proper womanhood; any deviation created a presumption of guilt" (41). Because divorce laws were localized, new legislation in any one state was

likely to be influential in others. State-level changes thus posed a threat to national identity and inspired opposition at the federal level.

The civilizing, ordering potential of marriage was again contested in the national discourse surrounding Mormon polygamy. Today cited as a point on a slippery slope, polygamous marriage was for most nineteenth-century citizens an example of unchecked licentiousness. Noting that "polygamy would seem to be a fundamental challenge to the institution of marriage as it was then known," Harris observes that "neither side contested traditional conceptions of marriage." Rather, "the controversy hinged on which marriage was the better instantiation of traditional patriarchal marriage" (54). Chapter 3 explores this controversy, considering both the Mormon defense—"no woman would need to remain unmarried"—and the popular critique—that polygamy was indicative of "barbaric" submission to impulse. When Utah was granted statehood on the condition that Mormons renounce the custom, "full citizenship became predicated on acceptable sexual practice" (66). Harris examines popular defenses and critiques of polygamy by Mormon women, and the exploration of women's suffrage by forces hoping to enlist women voters either in support or antagonism.

Similarly, popular opposition to the nineteenth-century "free love" movement suggested that free lovers were fundamentally uncivilized. Though proponents of free love cited opportunities for personal liberation, critics argued that its influence was not relegated to the private lives of adherents. Rather, the movement embraced a reckless lack of self-control that in turn posed a threat to marriage and to the nation. In chapter 4, Harris surveys popular opinion about free love, with special attention to the rhetorical efforts of communities such as Oneida and Berlin Heights, each of which challenged popular notions of sexual morality and social arrangement. She then turns to advocates Victoria Woodhull and Voltairine de Cleyre to analyze their deployment of maternal rhetorics to subvert traditional notions of sex and motherhood (99). In each case, free love proponents are witnessed challenging the popular association between sexual restraint and good citizenship. Predictably, in each case, their contemporaries prove difficult to persuade.

Harris's final controversy, treated in chapter 5, concerns the threat of miscegenation following the Civil War. "Without slavery as an institutionalized marker of difference," she writes, "post–Civil War Americans rhetorically constituted a racialized body that created a seemingly impenetrable

boundary between the Other and the national body" (109–10). Democrats used the issue as a bludgeon with which to attack Republicans on many fronts, persistently summoning the threat of the black Other, especially where vulnerable white daughters were concerned. Harris explains that the term "miscegenation" is traceable to a Democratic pamphlet, published anonymously in 1864 and purporting to be written and endorsed by Republicans. The pamphlet, titled *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro*, argued that interracial marriage and procreation offered a solution to race problems in the United States. By embellishing the Republican position on race, the pamphlet sought to terrify and mobilize concerned readers. One Republican response noted that, by freeing black women from the clutches of licentious white men, the Republican party was actually *preventing* interracial procreation. Both parties identified marriage as a site of public interest with national significance, wrestling for control of its provocative force.

Harris concludes that, throughout history, marriage has provided a lens through which American citizens have viewed and contested popular understandings of identity and citizenship. Though home and family are ostensibly private institutions, the identities they contain are "never really private" (130). Instead, they raise a mirror to the general public, allowing the nation to reflect on who and what it is. *State of the Marital Union* is an important and timely book, offering subtle comment on our own era by way of its history.

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The Rhetoric of Pregnancy. By Marika Seigel. Foreword by Jane Pincus. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014; pp. xiv + 183. $35.00 cloth.

With *The Rhetoric of Pregnancy*, Marika Seigel delivers a scholarly, and entirely accessible, account of landmark books and pamphlets proffering advice to pregnant women (and then also to women who might be about to become pregnant, as the scope of antenatal