



## New Blood: Third-Wave Feminism and the Politics of Menstruation

By Professor Chris Bobel

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*New Blood* offers a fresh interdisciplinary look at feminism-in-flux. For over three decades, menstrual activists have questioned the safety and necessity of feminine care products while contesting menstruation as a deeply entrenched taboo. Chris Bobel shows how a little-known yet enduring force in the feminist health, environmental, and consumer rights movements lays bare tensions between second- and third-wave feminisms and reveals a complicated story of continuity and change within the women's movement.

Through her critical ethnographic lens, Bobel focuses on debates central to feminist thought (including the utility of the category "gender") and challenges to building an inclusive feminist movement. Filled with personal narratives, playful visuals, and original humor, *New Blood* reveals middle-aged progressives communing in Red Tents, urban punks and artists "culture jamming" commercial menstrual products in their zines and sketch comedy, queer anarchists practicing DIY health care, African American health educators espousing "holistic womb health," and hopeful mothers refusing to pass on the shame to their pubescent daughters. With verve and conviction, Bobel illuminates today's feminism-on-the-ground--indisputably vibrant, contentious, and ever-dynamic.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"*New Blood* is at heart an exploration of third-wave feminism and its deeply complex relationship to its predecessors. Framed by an astute analysis of the tensions between the 'waves'—and a generous commitment to pointing out the overlooked commonalities among them—*New Blood* delves into the history of menstrual activism, defines and describes its two contemporary wings, and concludes with an assessment of what these divergent approaches say about the contemporary women's movement and where it's headed."

(*Women's Review of Books* 2011-03-01)

"Chris Bobel is a careful ethnographer, respectful of research participants, and while she clearly takes a stand on menstrual activism, she handily defends her proposition that feminism is 'finding its balance between reliving its past and creating its future.' Bobel's work, which includes incisive analysis of how third-wave activists incorporate and update tactics and strategies of the second wave, will be a welcome addition to the scholarship of feminism."

(Elizabeth Kissling *author of Capitalizing on the Curse: The Business of Menstruation* 2009-06-09)

"This is a well-written, thoroughly researched book. To those interested in the politics of social activism, the menstrual movement and in unpacking the similarities and differences between second- and third-wave feminism, and a reconsideration of gender binary and questions about who menstruates, this book is a must-read."

(*Contemporary Sociology* 1999-01-01)

"Chris Bobel's *New Blood* confirms that menstruation activism is alive, well, and relevant. The book also demonstrates that this activism is now happening in ways that have not been previously studied and its political importance is broader and deeper than generally recognized. *New Blood* is not only *about* activism, it is also both a gift *to* and *from* feminist movements."

(Nancy A. Worcester *Sex Roles* 2011-08-01)

"Fascinating and richly evocative."

(*Gender and Society* 2012-08-15)

### From the Inside Flap

"*New Blood*" offers a fresh interdisciplinary look at feminism-in-flux. For over three decades, menstrual activists have questioned the safety and necessity of feminine care products while contesting menstruation as a deeply entrenched taboo. Through her critical ethnographic lens, Chris Bobel shows how a little-known yet enduring force in the feminist health, environmental, and consumer rights movements lays bare tensions between second- and third-wave feminisms and reveals a complicated story of continuity and change within the women's movement. With verve and conviction, Bobel illuminates today's feminism-on-the-ground—indisputably vibrant, contentious, and ever-dynamic.

### About the Author

Chris Bobel is an associate professor and chair of women's studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and the author of *The Paradox of Natural Mothering*.

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