

## REVIEW



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#### ***AFTER THE HAPPILY EVER AFTER: Empowering Women and Mothers in Relationships***

EDITED BY LINDA ROSE ENNIS

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REVIEW BY KAREN DARRICADES

After the Happily Ever After: Empowering Women and Mothers in Relationships, is a collection of essays about heterosexual women living in (and resisting within) the institution of marriage. It looks at the implications on their mental health, career, identity and social status. Is the wedding ceremony, ring and dress more or less of a priority for women now than in previous generations? How has married life changed for women within our current iteration of feminist norms? Are married women happy? And how does extended family integration, childbearing and capitalism affect these factors? Researcher Lorin Basden

Arnold looks at the hashtag #besthus- bandever in “Making Marital Face(book): Husband Posts and Face Management on Facebook,” to examine how married women perform happy-married-life on social media platforms. She observes how the high praise (or low bar) for husbands serves to isolate women from peer supports and leaves other married people feeling despair while navigating marital complexities. In “The Fantasy of Capitalism and Romance,” Melinda Vandenbeld Giles explores how capitalist economics affects the romantic imagination. Giles explains how the competitive capitalist lens results in a dating process whereby potential partners are evaluated based on perceptions of added value, resulting in many who are looking to partner-up always hedging their bets. “Speculation is about always predicting the future and keeping options open,” she writes, “which equally applies to romance. While in these fantasy relation- ships, another potentially better fantasy is only one click away.” Andrea O’Reilly’s “Have Your Cake and Eat It Too” shares her personal story of family planning within a two-

academic marriage that must accommodate the lengthy (uninterruptible) path to tenured positions. And, in "Hopefully He Puts the Ring on It," Sarah Bekaert examines the way young mothers may benefit by deviating from the normative progression of love, then marriage, then baby, by co-parenting before marriage. From prenuptial agreements to career-prioritizing, to the work involved with kinship labour (planning and facilitating children's social and family life) that disproportionately falls at mother's feet, these essays interrogate modern heterosexual marriages in ways that are fascinating. ☒