The book applies this framework to welfare reform in the United States in a variety of contexts. One of the most intriguing applications is to the history of the development of welfare policy throughout the twentieth century. The concrete changes in welfare policy are reflected in the shifting dominance of the various gender paradigms. Ultimately, the 1996 change from Aid to Families with Dependent Children to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families illustrates the triumph of the individuality paradigm and the emergence of “masculine mothers” (p. 98). The new welfare regime recognizes only paid employment, not mothering, as deserving of state support.

One weakness of the book is that it does not place the emergence of “masculine mothers” in a cross-national context. As Ann Shola Orloff has shown, dramatic increases in state policies to encourage mothers’ employment are widespread across the advanced industrialized democracies. State policies have differed in whether they have been more “stick”-like or more “carrot”-like, but the goal of sending mothers to work has been shared.

The omission is a minor one, especially in a book that addresses itself primarily to Americanists and political theorists. All the same, one can hope that Creating Gender will inspire cross-national comparisons using the gender paradigms developed here. The book represents a significant advance in our understanding of U.S. welfare reform, and its theoretical framework promises to be useful beyond the cases under immediate investigation.

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September 11, according to Todd Gitlin, jammed his mental circuits. When they became “unjammed” (p. 125), Gitlin refashioned what was originally a series of tributes to the American thinkers who had influenced his youth into a book about the state of contemporary American intellectual life and its relationship to the broader polity. Proving the validity of Woody Allen’s adage that intellectuals are like the Mafia—they only kill their own—much of Gitlin’s vitriol is turned on what he calls “weak thinking on the American left” (p. 67). Holding up David Riesman, C. Wright Mills, and Irving Howe as the jeremiadic standard by which to judge his contemporaries and find them wanting, Gitlin seeks what he calls “a new start for intellectual life on the left” of American politics (p. 1).

For Gitlin, much of contemporary American leftist thought has retreated: either into the irrelevance of theory, “claiming high seriousness as well as usefulness for their pirouettes and performances, their monastic and masturbatory exercises, their populist cheerleading, political wishfulness, and self importance” (p. 34); or into a methodological narrowness with “all the popu-
lar appeal of molecular biology,” which has “substantially earned its reputation as a specialty for number crunchers and other pseudoscientific poseurs” (p. 17). By way of contrast, Gitlin seeks an engaged and thoughtful left with a serious commitment to democratic education, a left that is for something instead of against everything. Ironically, perhaps, beyond the reflections on his intellectual heroes, much of the book is given over to describing what the left should not do, with essays on postmodernism, the “Antipolitical Populism of Cultural Studies” (p. 87), and the values of the media, citizenship, and higher education, all highlighting the left’s perceived failures. It is only in the final essay, which also gives the book its title, that Gitlin offers anything amounting to a positive vision for the American left.

Describing the work of David Riesman as that of “a sympathetic citizen who wanted to counsel society, not lecture it” (pp. 17–18), Gitlin clearly sees himself in the same mold. He should then perhaps take note of his own adage that “smugness goes with myopia” (p. 150). For Gitlin’s positive vision—a liberal patriotism that “would refuse to be satisfied with knee-jerk answers but would join the hard questions as members of a society do” (p. 151)—simply recreates a destructive binary for which he criticizes the American right: one between true and false patriotism. In the aftermath of September 11, as Gitlin notes, the administration of George W. Bush silenced its critics by smearing them as “unpatriotic,” defining the term and controlling its usage. Gitlin does the same, contrasting “the real thing” with some of its supposedly shallower manifestations (p. 138), and projecting onto it his own values. “Lived patriotism,” he declares, “requires social equality. It is in the actual relations of citizens, not symbolic displays, that civic patriotism thrives” (p. 143). Similarly, Gitlin echoes the Bush administration by repeatedly invoking the passengers of Flight 93 as exemplars of his particular patriotism (pp. 128, 145). In so doing, Gitlin simply offers more of the same, declaring his own values patriotic and dismissing those on both the right and the left who think differently. Some critics would hold that this is the inexorable logic of patriotism: one that demands patriotic bona fides as a precursor to speech, distorting democratic debate by making patriotism, not policy, the subject of discussion. There are moments when Gitlin plausibly manages to suggest otherwise, but these are few and far between in this episodic and largely unconvincing text.

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The Impact of Women in Congress by Debra L. Dodson. New York, Oxford University Press, 2006. 312 pp. Cloth, $95.00; paper, 29.95.

The title understates the scope of this book. While students of Congress indeed should read this book—and not only those interested in women—so