no other resource that provides as complete a picture of Catholic social teaching than this book. It is well written and generally to the point. The question is, though, can you stomach the unfortunate parts to get to the good stuff?

-Brian K. O'Neel
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Unfortunately, this book is NOT the story of feminism. If it were, the history of the last thirty years might have been a lot less traumatic to western civilization.

Fox-Genovese is credited with being the founding mother, as it were, of Women's Studies--a dubious honor, considering the depths to which many such departments have declined. As a historian, however, she is capable of evaluating the impact of social trends. In this volume, she applies that ability to the contemporary feminist movement and proceeds to enumerate and document not only its shortcomings but its divisive effects on society, and its baneful effects on women and children.

Feminism set out to rewrite the story of what it meant to be a woman in America, she says, but from the start, it has divided women by race, religion, and class. Throughout the book, but especially in the sections on the economic revolution, is this class-consciousness evident. She carefully documents that, as women's "right to work" has progressed, the effect has been to widen the gap between educated and uneducated women while narrowing the gap between women and men of equal education and same race.

Take, for example, the famous "59 cents" slogan (supposedly women earned $.59 for every dollar a man earned), vintage 1980. Today, she notes, "young full-time women workers are earning 90 percent or more of what their male colleagues earn." (And, oh joy, she footnotes it--it's a rare pleasure to read a book about feminism which footnotes everything the reader would want footnoted!) And for educated women, as of 1992 women held almost half of all managerial and professional positions.

So much anyone might be able to guess, anecdotally. What Fox-Genovese does is to tease out the implications of that development, to analyze it. Here's where the issue of employment opportunity gets interesting. What does it mean that, between 1982 and 1992, when men lost a net 93,000 management jobs, women gained a net 520,000 management jobs? What does it mean that 70% of social service jobs in the public sector are held by women?

Fox-Genovese takes no explicit stand for or against divorce, abortion, or
even sexual orientation, in principle. But the benefit of this book is not to convince us in the choir, but to provide ammunition for us, in the form of documentation from a highly creditable source.

The main word to describe Fox-Genovese is sensible. She is insightful to the point of hurt: Discussing feminists' love affair with careers rather than children she comments: "... both parents want the freedom to give the maximum amount of uninterrupted time to the work that brings them professional advancement and personal satisfaction. Both want the right to be so busy that they must be spared the responsibilities of everyday life."

Her perceptions of contemporary conservatism are perhaps a bit inadequate—and that is instructive in itself. On the one hand, the worldview of pro-family conservatives is not often adequately portrayed by the general media. Nor, alas, is it understood, let alone shared, by many economic conservatives, whose rhetoric and policies tend to dominate the landscape. Still, such quotations as this do suggest that what gets through is not the best of pro-family philosophy: "Conservatives talk as if they wanted to imprison women within motherhood; feminists talk as if they want to liberate women from it. When conservatives stress women's attachment to children and wax eloquent about its rewards, their words ring hollow since they fail to appreciate the painful difficulties of most women's lives."

If we assume that Fox-Genovese has caught the pulse of a significant population of women who are seeking an ideological home, now that feminism has betrayed them, pro-family leaders would do well to heed such comments. Implicit within is tactical advice for those whose task is to create a welcoming climate for these women.

-Connaught Marshner
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It has become a commonplace of official episcopal and Vatican responses over the past thirty years that the widespread abandonment of the Catholic Church's sound traditions—the sorry scenario of doctrinal dissent, disciplinary disorder, clerical defections, and other scandals—has been in no way due to Vatican Council II itself, but is the result of abusive and selective readings and applications of Council documents. But this position only raises a further question: Why has it been so easy for these abusive and selective interpretations of the Council to flourish, and to diffuse and even impose themselves, so widely?

After all, this phenomenon has been practically unique in the history of ecumenical councils. While many of them were also followed by periods of