

## **BOOK REVIEW**

**Brigitte Feuillet-Liger, Kristina Orfali and Therese Callus (eds.)**

*The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*

**Bruylant, Brussels, 2013, ISBN 9782802745037, 434pp, £53.99**

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*The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, edited by Feuillet-Liger, Orfali and Callus provides a comprehensive and clear picture of the relationship between biomedicine and law in the context of the female body. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a range of different scientific and biomedical possibilities exist for women that would once have seemed impossible. How does the law regulate these advances in biomedicine? How does the law govern procreation in the light of the new reproductive technologies and challenges? How does the law interact with women who want to improve their physical appearance by the use of cosmetic surgery? How does the law engage with issues of genetic predispositions? Can biomedicine liberate women or does it further disempower them? These questions are analysed and answered in this book.

This book is concerned with the uniqueness of the female physical body, the limits, possibilities, challenges and beauties of which its contributors seek to explore. A range of authors, coming from a variety of legal and biomedical backgrounds, examine the female body in order to capture the ways in which society and the female form perceive and interact with each other. The book is split into three parts: Part I deals with the global legal perspective; Part II examines the medical and human science dimension; and Part III offers a general overview.

Part I is titled 'Legal Perspectives around the Globe' and offers a comprehensive and commendable exploration of the law relating to the female body in different countries, including Germany, Italy, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Taiwan, Brazil and Japan. All of the chapters in this

part follow a similar structure: they describe and analyse the domestic law relating to issues pertaining to the female body, such as abortion and surrogacy.

The commodification of women and the female body is one of the key themes that runs throughout this book. For example, Furkel questions how German law manages the risks of commodification, while also allowing its citizens to benefit from the profound transformation of medicine in modern times. Agallopoulou also discusses the risk of commodification inherent in the trafficking of oocytes in a Greek context.<sup>1</sup> Many of the authors also examine the issue of surrogacy with great clarity and insight. Furkel highlights the inconsistency in German law, which prohibits egg donations while 'reluctantly' permitting sperm donations.<sup>2</sup> Schamps analyses the Belgian position, where surrogacy is permitted by law.<sup>3</sup> Kernaleguen considers the issues that arise in relation to the yearning for and refusal of motherhood in France. She discusses the challenges posed by the illegality of surrogacy in France, which forces women to seek alternative solutions abroad. Kernaleguen argues that case law will most likely evolve to recognise 'parentage established abroad' and thereby lead to a legal basis for surrogacy within a limited framework.<sup>4</sup>

Orfanli discusses the female body in relation to abortion, surrogacy and cosmetic surgery (amongst other things) in the US context. She uses the compelling analogies of Barbie, *Extreme Make Over* and *Extreme Make Over: Weight Loss Edition* to depict a trivialisation of the female body, resulting in its

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<sup>1</sup> P. Agallopoulou 'Liberal biomedical practices and the female body (Greek Law)' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> F. Furkel 'Women's bodies and biomedicine in the German federal republic A glimmer of hope for women despite some signs of manipulation' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> G. Schamps 'Women's autonomy and biomedical procedures carried out on the female body under Belgian law' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), pp. 58-59.

<sup>4</sup> F. Kernaleguen 'The female body and biomedicine in French Law: the end of servitude?' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 93.

reduction to an object and a 'subject of medical technology'.<sup>5</sup> She points out that the female body is both privately-owned and the property of society at the same time, a paradox which justifies its regulation and coercion through legal constraints in the form of abortion laws.<sup>6</sup> Orfanli points out that abortion is still a very contentious issue in the US. She also examines the commodification of the body which can be a consequence of assisted reproduction: a *laissez-faire* approach to the issue of surrogacy and gamete donation exists in the US, unlike many other jurisdictions.<sup>7</sup>

PID (Pre-Implantation Diagnosis) is another common theme discussed throughout the book. The account of the restrictive approach to PID adopted in Italy, offered by Parisio and Geresetti, is very interesting. Abortion is only permitted in Italy within the first nineteen days of pregnancy. Parisio and Geresetti contextualise the laws regulating the morning-after and abortion pills and the 'inexcusable' silence on contraception in Italian law. While PID is not allowed in Italy, Parisio and Geresetti refer to the European Court of Human Rights and argue that this breaches the right to respect for the private and family life of the future parents.<sup>8</sup> They claim that under Italian law, 'biomedicine does not seem to be an instrument of female emancipation'.<sup>9</sup> They contend that Italian law still reflects the image of the traditional family. At the same time, Parisio and Geresetti say that the courts 'often interpret the rules in a less restrictive way'.<sup>10</sup> San Julian and Díaz de Terán discuss the different approach adopted

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<sup>5</sup> M. Badji 'Regulating biomedical practices on women in Senegal: the ambiguity of legal rules' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), pp. 299-300.

<sup>6</sup> M. Badji 'Regulating biomedical practices on women in Senegal: the ambiguity of legal rules' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 300.

<sup>7</sup> K. Orfali 'The female body, medicine and the social body in the USA' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 307.

<sup>8</sup> V. Parisio and G. Ceresetti 'The female body and biomedicine in Italian law: strict laws to respect constitutional principles' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 138.

<sup>9</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 144.

<sup>10</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 145.

in Spain: here, PID is legal for the purposes detecting and consequently removing embryos which have genetic diseases or to determine the sex of the child.<sup>11</sup>

The chapter on English law provides an illuminating account of the issues surrounding motherhood and maternity. Callus contends that it is the law's role to balance the accessibility of biomedical technologies and a woman's freedom to use of them.<sup>12</sup> She emphasises the liberating power of biomedicine. Callus also discusses the fact that women are often characterised as a 'mother', whereas men are not instinctively regarded as 'fathers'.<sup>13</sup> She shows that while progress in biomedicine makes it possible to exercise control over procreation and maternity, women themselves are not always empowered to exercise this control. Callus concludes that, in order to make advances in biomedicine it is essential to reject 'the reduction of the body to a mere biological entity which can be manipulated by others, in order to promote the exercise of each individual's freedom over her own body'.<sup>14</sup> Here, the analysis is profound and insightful. Callus does not simply state what the law is, but also puts forward some very compelling normative arguments.

Japan is a particularly fascinating case study. The law governs medicine in general; there is no legislation relating to any of the specific issues raised in the book, the practice of medicine is governed by non-binding administrative provisions. In this way, reproductive rights are neither prescribed nor enforced. Kohado and Ida can only point to one academic who believes that Article 13 of the Japanese Constitution can be interpreted to offer some protection to these rights.<sup>15</sup>The legal position of

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<sup>11</sup>V. San Julian and M. Díaz de Terán, 'Women's bodies and medicine in Spain: the chronicle of a profound metamorphosis' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 148.

<sup>13</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 150.

<sup>14</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 162.

<sup>15</sup> M. Kokodo and R. Ida 'How Japanese tradition hampers woman's freedom over her body' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 290.

abortion is complex in Japan: it is prohibited under the Criminal Code<sup>16</sup> but the law on the safeguarding of mothers allows for voluntary termination of pregnancy under specific conditions. Japan has a different approach to artificial reproductive technologies (ART) too: '[t]here is no law on ART and it is only authorised by guidelines of the four medical associations... Moreover ART is not regulated by the Department of Health'.<sup>17</sup> This means that Japan allows all types of ART. The authors of this chapter therefore argue that '[t]he right of self-determination of women over their bodies with regard to biomedical procedures is simply a reflection of the status of women in Japanese society' and that 'it is not the woman's individual decision that is dominant, but rather the decision of the family community'.<sup>18</sup>

That this book comprises a compendium of different ideas and topics is both its greatest strength and its biggest weakness. The same subject is viewed through the multiple prisms afforded by different jurisdictions. Nothing is really missed, leading to a comprehensive engagement with a range of specific subject areas. However, this can sometimes be a little dull; the book's repeated tendency to analyse the same topic at times borders on the tedious. Readers may feel that some of the repetition needs to be culled. In addition, while the book tackles the issues arising across different jurisdictions, there is insufficient comparative analysis to draw the discrete points together. Each jurisdiction does not exist in a legal or biomedical vacuum; the events in one country can inform the law elsewhere. The contributors to the book do not address this cross-fertilisation in any meaningful way; this is a significant weakness.

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<sup>16</sup> M. Kokodo and R. Ida 'How Japanese tradition hampers woman's freedom over her body' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 291.

<sup>17</sup> M. Kokodo and R. Ida 'How Japanese tradition hampers woman's freedom over her body' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 293.

<sup>18</sup> M. Kokodo and R. Ida 'How Japanese tradition hampers woman's freedom over her body' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 298.

Part II looks at the extra-legal perspectives in medicine and science more broadly. This focus on the sociological and biomedical sphere is welcome and the book expertly navigates the journey through these competing spheres.

David le Breton discusses the ambivalence of medicine and the mixed results it can have for women. He considers the notion of the 'perfect' female, as portrayed on television and in advertisements. He describes medically assisted reproduction as 'a two-edged sword for women'; on one hand, it 'fosters motherhood for lesbians and provides a way of overcoming sterility' but, on the other, 'involves heavy medicalisation,' which can have adverse effects.<sup>19</sup> He questions whether the use of ARTs is 'compatible with a woman's right of self-determination over her body'.<sup>20</sup> Le Breton suggests that in vitro fertilisation (IVF) causes many women to become depressed<sup>21</sup> and that there are '[a] lot of drawbacks for a fairly low success rate'.<sup>22</sup> He also argues that the suffering that women go through is overlooked and suggests that, in these cases, the child is merely a commodity for the commissioning parents and the surrogate mothers.<sup>23</sup> Fraisse meanwhile discusses the 'revolution' of contraception<sup>24</sup> and its involvement in 'liberating reproduction from the constraints of nature and by resisting male

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<sup>19</sup> D. le Breton 'Between liberation and alienation and ambivalences of medicine' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 323.

<sup>20</sup> D. le Breton 'Between liberation and alienation and ambivalences of medicine' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 325.

<sup>21</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 326.

<sup>22</sup> D. le Breton 'Between liberation and alienation and ambivalences of medicine' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 327.

<sup>23</sup> D. le Breton 'Between liberation and alienation and ambivalences of medicine' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 335.

<sup>24</sup> G. Fraisse 'The habeas corpus of women a double revolution?' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 339.

domination!’<sup>25</sup> He sets out the history of contraception in France and argues that ‘science has accompanied, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the emancipation of women’.<sup>26</sup>

Ogien shows that the main criticisms of the right to self-determination and consent derive from the respect for human dignity.<sup>27</sup> He questions the merits of this dignity argument and states that we need to go further than Kant to understand properly the notion of human dignity.<sup>28</sup> Nisand claims that medicine has helped to emancipate women, particularly where contraception is concerned.<sup>29</sup> She says that ‘the most spectacular interaction between medicine and the female body concerns the ability to maintain a woman’s fertility’.<sup>30</sup> However, she contends that medicine has also transformed women’s bodies for the worse due to the impact of commodification in a market economy, which, she argues, causes significant harm.<sup>31</sup> Nisand points out, however, that ‘women will know how to defend themselves against the effects of fashion and choose the benefits of medicine by not succumbing to what is harmful’.<sup>32</sup>

Elsewhere, Cornec questions whether advances in medicine have improved the lives of women and whether they have commodified the female body.<sup>33</sup> She suggests that ‘the priority must be to liberate women from their fears’, such as those which surround menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth and

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<sup>25</sup> G. Fraisse ‘The habeas corpus of women a double revolution?’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), pp. 239-340.

<sup>26</sup> G. Fraisse ‘The habeas corpus of women a double revolution?’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 342.

<sup>27</sup> R. Ogien ‘“My body belongs to me” “no is no”. What remains of these principles?’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 348.

<sup>28</sup> R. Ogien ‘“My body belongs to me” “no is no”. What remains of these principles?’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 351.

<sup>29</sup> I. Nisand ‘Medicine and the female body’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 365.

<sup>30</sup> I. Nisand ‘Medicine and the female body’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 367.

<sup>31</sup> I. Nisand ‘Medicine and the female body’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 368.

<sup>32</sup> I. Nisand ‘Medicine and the female body’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 368.

<sup>33</sup> I. Nisand ‘Medicine and the female body’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 369.

body weight. It is a pity that Cornec's discussion of these fears does not consider the interconnection between them and the ways in which they interact with one another.

Hassen Ben Jemma addresses cosmetic surgery and contends that it causes doctors to 'touch the physical integrity of the body, not in order to treat a disease that threatens it, but simply to alter its appearance'.<sup>34</sup> She questions the justification for cosmetic surgery. She recognises that consent is the most important aspect to this type of surgery<sup>35</sup> and she talks about the subjective perceptions that everyone has of their body, contending that the decision to have cosmetic surgery is a personal one.<sup>36</sup> She also points to the possibility of liberation<sup>37</sup> and alienation.<sup>38</sup> This section highlights the tenuous but compelling connection that exists between biomedical procedures and their sociological impact.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book is the final section. In Part III Feuillet-Liger provides an excellent overview. She discusses how biomedicine offers hope to people because it provides 'the promise of happiness'. Things are now achievable that never seemed possible in the past.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, this promise is also concerning. Feuillet-Liger argues that medicine may become a 'matrix of autonomy', a web of sometimes competing autonomous decisions made by different

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<sup>34</sup> Hassen Ben Jemma 'Cosmetic surgery: between liberation and exploitation of the female body' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 375.

<sup>35</sup> Hassen Ben Jemma 'Cosmetic surgery: between liberation and exploitation of the female body' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 376.

<sup>36</sup> Hassen Ben Jemma 'Cosmetic surgery: between liberation and exploitation of the female body' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 377.

<sup>37</sup> Hassen Ben Jemma 'Cosmetic surgery: between liberation and exploitation of the female body' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 378.

<sup>38</sup> Hassen Ben Jemma 'Cosmetic surgery: between liberation and exploitation of the female body' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 380.

<sup>39</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger 'Biomedicine, a promise of freedom' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 385.



stakeholders.<sup>40</sup> She stresses that the aim of this comparative book is ‘to assess the impact of biomedicine on the female body’.<sup>41</sup>

Feuillet-Liger’s overview compares the choices made in multiple jurisdictions and provides ‘a kind of psychoanalysis of law in order to assess the impact of the changes and whether biomedicine promotes the emancipation and full autonomy of women’.<sup>42</sup> She explores (i) the freedom given to women by biomedicine, and (ii) the ambivalence of that freedom. She says that five freedoms now exist as a result of biomedical advances: sexual freedom,<sup>43</sup> reproductive freedom,<sup>44</sup> the capacity to have children due to ARTs,<sup>45</sup> the ability to account for genetic predispositions when making reproductive choices, and the freedom to choose the conditions for childbirth.<sup>46</sup> Feuillet-Liger contends that the ambivalence of freedom occurs because women often freely submit to biomedical interventions, even where they may cause considerable harm. She also states that ‘the ambivalence of the freedoms given to women by biomedicine may result from situations where women request a biomedical procedure but have been pressurised into doing so’.<sup>47</sup>

Feuillet-Liger adds considerably to the book’s analysis of the commodification problem. She says that the ambivalence of the freedom also results from the connection that exists between biomedicine and money.<sup>48</sup> She argues that, despite many great advances, ‘the road towards ‘more freedom’ for

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<sup>40</sup>B. Feuillet-Liger ‘Biomedicine, a promise of freedom’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 386.

<sup>41</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger ‘Biomedicine, a promise of freedom’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 387.

<sup>42</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger ‘Biomedicine, a promise of freedom’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 389.

<sup>43</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), pp. 390-392.

<sup>44</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), pp. 392-394.

<sup>45</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), pp. 394-395.

<sup>46</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), pp. 396- 397.

<sup>47</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger ‘Biomedicine, a promise of freedom’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 407.

<sup>48</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger ‘Biomedicine, a promise of freedom’ in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 410.

women and not to non-contradictory freedoms is still long, not only because it will take a long time to establish the ownership of freedom by women, but also because, once freedom is won, it often remains fragile'.<sup>49</sup>

This overview essentially ties up the preceding arguments and reflects the 'terrible beauty' that is biomedicine. It also suggests that the freedom it confers can be limiting and limited. The overview discusses how money can influence this freedom, how women's consent can be context-dependent, and how societal pressures can impel women to opt for biomedical procedures that they may not really want.

This book represents many of the issues that are central to the female definition of self. One gets a sense that every woman's interests are represented in this book. The contributors have not trivialised the very real and often very painful issues that confront women. However, they present men in what is, for the most part, a negative light. Men are largely seen as almost invisible antagonists. The book's contributors do not seem to favour the nurturing male-female relationships in which the man plays, or could play, a role in sharing the pain of infertility or in contributing to decisions of ARTs or surrogacy. The invisibility of men means that this book does not address the significance of the male perspectives where biomedicine and the body are concerned. This may reflect social reality or biological essentialism, but the absence of men's voices in most of the chapters in this book is a notable lacuna. Another issue that is not sufficiently fleshed out is the significance of international human rights and the consequences these rights have for the medical procedures discussed in the book.

*The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine* contains a thorough and up-to-date analysis of the and biomedical issues that empower or constrain the female body. It gives a genuine insight into how issues such as surrogacy and cosmetic surgery can commodify women. The book, from beginning to end, deals in fascinating detail with how medicine has 'emancipated women'. This

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<sup>49</sup> B. Feuillet-Liger 'Biomedicine, a promise of freedom' in B. Feuillet-Liger, K. Orfali and T. Callus, eds. *The Female Body: A Journey Through Law, Culture and Medicine*, Brussels, Belgium: Bruylant, 2013), p. 423.

emancipation has not come without cost; a reality which the contributors to this informative book have sought to analyse fully. This book is recommended for both casual reader and academic audience alike and it makes an important contribution to the related literature. The aims of its contributors are met in their entirety. The book lives up to its title; the reader is taken on interesting and informed journey through the legal, cultural and medical landscape which provides the context for the differing ways in which the female body is viewed.