



Fundamentalism and Gender

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Fundamentalism, as the word implies, is about getting back to basics, and for Americans this has meant getting back to God's word as proclaimed in the Bible. Yet the issues that American fundamentalists have most hotly contested--abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment--have little to do with scripture *per se*. Why are these so central? Perhaps it is because the real fundamentals of fundamentalism are social, not textual. Fundamentalism often seems to be about "family values" and restoring women to their "proper place"--not just in America, but wherever the corrosive effects of secular modernity are felt.

The purpose of this book is to examine the connection between fundamentalism and gender. In their introduction, John Hawley and Wayne Proudfoot plot the intellectual terrain. Then four specialists--Randall Balmer, Peter Awn, John Hawley, and Helen Hardacre--present case studies from Islam, Hinduism, the New Religions of Japan, and American Christianity. In response, Jay Harris and Karen McCarthy Brown come forth with diametrically opposite conclusions. Harris, working from a Jewish perspective, argues that fundamentalism makes no sense as a comparative category, especially in relation to gender. Brown on the contrary turns to depth psychology to show why fundamentalism is necessarily tied to a conservative ideology of gender.

Here readers interested in women's issues, comparative religion, and global fundamentalism are given fresh perspectives on one of the most pressing debates of our time.

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