The title *Push Comes to Shove* begs the question ‘when’, and the answer to that question is now. Author Maud Lavin recasts aggression in a positive light, by envisioning it as a means to articulate power and enact change, while providing the caveat that it can go too far. Her interest is in female aggression in particular. She situates female aggression as a contemporary disposition through in-depth analyses of repressive stereotypes that have been sidestepped over the past fifteen years in American culture (with the majority of examples from the last decade).

An art historian and professor of visual and cultural studies at the Art Institute of Chicago, Lavin covers a broad swath of media, from YouTube videos to blockbuster films. Since visual art has a narrower audience than mainstream entertainment, this selection demonstrates just how pervasive female aggression is. Lavin draws the reader’s attention to the far end of the spectrum. The protagonists she deconstructs are not merely assertive; they are shamelessly aggressive and frequently flawed. Thus, Lavin characterizes aggression on multiple occasions as messy. In chapters organized thematically rather than by media, she courts messiness by pitting unlikely protagonists against one another to reveal commonalities. Instead of segregating visual art, she allows Kill Bill’s Beatrix (aka. The Bride) to play off Marlene McCarthy’s hand drawn matricidal adolescents, and establishes a dialogue between the characters of Zane’s erotica literature and Kara Walker’s paper silhouettes of historical race relations.

In these analyses, depth is privileged over breadth. Lavin’s thorough treatment make *Push Comes to Shove* suited to academic libraries supporting programs in visual culture, art, and gender studies. At the same time, the style of writing invites reading for pleasure and is relevant to public library collections. She contextualizes the analyses with psychoanalytic theory, cultural criticism, and demographic statistics. This rich context mostly precedes the discussion of particular examples—although it occasionally interrupts them—facilitating skimming for the researcher and casual reader alike.

Like the females featured in *Push Comes to Shove*, Lavin does not shy away from firm opinions, such as annoyance at the gratuitous display of genitals in the aforementioned McCarthy drawings. Overall, her tone is more neutral than impassioned, although, as a proponent of aggression, Lavin does give the sense of imploring the reader to transgress gendered boundaries. And, ultimately, *Push Comes to Shove* is inspiring! Readers should not be surprised if they find themselves wanting to intervene in a Vanessa Beecroft performance or sign up for boxing lessons.

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