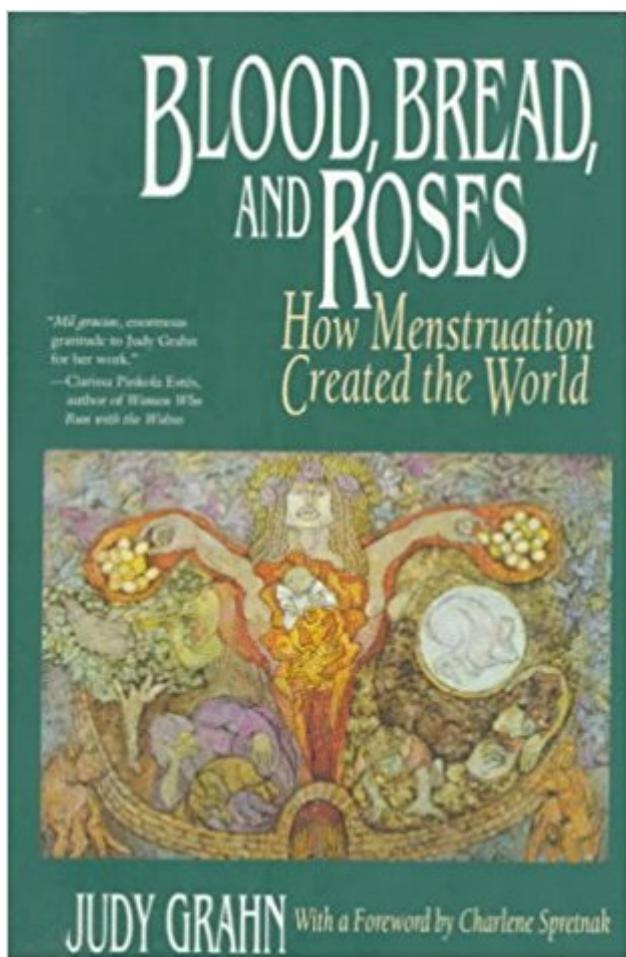


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# Blood, Bread, And Roses: How Menstruation Created The World



## Synopsis

"Blood, Bread, and Roses" reclaims women's myths and stories, chronicling the ways in which women's actions and the teaching of myth have interacted over the millenia. Grahn argues that culture has been a weaving between the genders, a sharing of wisdom derived from menstruation. Her rich interpretations of ancient menstrual rites give us a new and hopeful story of culture's beginnings based on the integration of body, mind, and spirit found in women's traditions. "Blood, Bread, and Roses" offers all of us a way back to understanding the true meaning of women's menstrual power. Foreword by Charlene Spretnak "[Grahn's] intriguing excursion through folklore, myth, religion, anthropology and history bespeaks a feminist conviction that male origin stories must be balanced by a recognition of women's central role in shaping civilization." -Publishers Weekly

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In native and prehistoric cultures around the world, a menstruating woman carried out rituals in which she was secluded--not allowed to see light--but emerged triumphantly at the end of her period. Grahn (Another Mother Tongue) believes these rites taught women principles of separation and synchronic relationship (reinforced by women's awareness that the menstrual cycle was in rhythm with the moon's phases). This "menstrual logic," she adds, was transmitted to men, who extended it. Stretching the evidence thin to fit her theory, Grahn uses menstrual ritual and "menstrual consciousness" to explain the origins of mathematics, astronomy, marriage rites (the bride's dress in Europe was once red), cosmetics, cooking and mourning customs. Her intriguing

excursion through folklore, myth, religion, anthropology and history bespeaks a feminist conviction that male origin stories must be balanced by a recognition of women's central role in shaping civilization. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Best known for several books of poetry ( *The Queen of Wands* , LJ 12/15/83, among others), Grahn presents a bold interpretation of the rites and traditions surrounding menstruation. Using a wide range of sources in mythology and anthropology, Grahn speculates that early women's recognition of the regular cycle of menstruation, for example, may have first suggested ideas of pattern and measurement that eventually led to mathematics and other sciences. The historical separation and seclusion of the menstruant from the immediate community and the reverence and apprehension with which she was treated had long-range implications for clothing, makeup, and food. A thought-provoking alternative cultural history, Grahn's work will interest readers in women's studies and anthropology as well as informed general readers.- Patricia A. Beaber, Trenton State Coll. Lib., N.J. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Amazing

So far so good!

This book is being used for a research project.

This book is filled with not only misinformation, but also blatant lies. The author claims the practice of wearing shoes came from traditions of women in certain areas of the world not touching the ground with their bare feet while menstruating; it didn't have ANYTHING to do with people wanting to protect their feet against rocks and cold according to the author. She makes similar claims about utensils coming into use because of taboos regarding menstruating women scratching themselves with their hands, again not having anything to do with not wanting to burn oneself on hot food or dishing it out. The idiocy doesn't stop there! The author actually goes on to suggest a link between menstrual huts and the development of hats among our foremothers because of the similarity in the words! Did she really think that our ancient foremothers spoke English? I would not suggest wasting money on this book. For a truthful book that affirms women and our monthly cycle without resorting

to making up false information just to make us feel good, get Lara Owen's book Honoring Menstruation instead.

The first time I picked up this book I got to the part about menstruation being the inspiration for chairs, and like another reviewer here, thought Grahn's ideas way out there and put the book aside. Fast forward five years and it makes a lot more sense to me. Grahn is a poet and relates a world before there was language, when what would become humans lived in trees and struggled day to day along side the other animals. Grahn posits that the correlation of the female menstrual cycle with the cycle of the moon served as the first physical distinction between animal and environment, and provided the metaphorical correlation necessary to all language. Lacan describes this as the mirror stage which happens in infancy. What Grahn describes is similar but takes place not with an individual but with an entire race, haltingly, and over a very long period of time. None of us knows what happened in the dawning of human consciousness. Grahn weaves a credible account based on commonalities between ancient cultures, myths, and language. Still, her narrative departs so acutely from what we generally do, or have not bothered to, imagine about our origins that it seems very easy to dismiss. Yet in a country where 45% of the people believe God created the world in seven days, made the first man out of dust, and the first woman out of one of his ribs, why is Grahn's version - based on the physically possible - so difficult to consider? Much of what Grahn writes is speculation, a delving into the possible. The stories of women have been, throughout history, suppressed, stolen, and destroyed. We cannot totally recreate this lost history, but we can try on other ideas and take from them the value that they hold. For women to consider that their lives and their bodies were integral to the creation of human culture is no more absurd than the completely unsubstantiated idea (which 45% of Americans believe) that ONLY the lives and bodies of men were necessary to human culture - that a male god spoke the whole kit and caboodle into being in seven days, and women were just an afterthought. So Judy, you go, girl. And please do write a book on menopause.

Dr. Grahn's book was way ahead of its time. Both thought-provoking and transformational, she gives us nothing less than a new origin story in which women are at the center, without relegating men to the fringe. I highly recommend this book as well as the New College of California journal *Metaformia: A Journal of Menstruation and Culture*, [...] Page One describes how this theory returns women to a crucial place in cultural origin stories, in our histories, in our rituals, in our religions, and in the ordinary and extraordinary everyday things that billions of women do all over the planet - so

women can again identify themselves as being part of culture creation in major, leading, and centralizing ways.

Judy Grahn is one of those rare people who are truly original thinkers. This breakthrough book, which gives an entirely new perspective on the creation of culture, is based on several years of cross-cultural research as well as the author's ability to think way outside the box. A highly recommend this book.

But the thing I think it didn't contain as much of is relating to the title of the book. Don't get me wrong, I learned a lot about being a weemon, but I still was looking for more of a book on the ways it creates the world, not random facts, etc. Or random coincidences.

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