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# Translating science to the people: Updating the new our bodies, ourselves

Susan E. Bell

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## Abstract

This paper asks how to recognize and benefit from “situated knowledges.” How can some of the split, contradictory, and unequal knowledge positions become coordinated and mutually beneficial? To do this, I consider how to provide women with the ability to evaluate and adopt birth control technology without at the same time adopting and reproducing the cultural messages and social arrangements embedded in it. I draw examples from the birth control chapter of the 1984 and 1992 editions of *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves*. First, I consider feminist critiques of the language of sex and reproduction. Their critiques underlie the transformed images about the menstrual cycle and contraception in the update of “Birth Control.” Second, I review how medical scientists have redefined “efficacy” and explore the meaning of these changes for a handbook written for women who are making decisions about birth control. Finally, I use these two examples to consider the wider implications of translating science to the

people and of coordinating and benefiting from situated knowledges.



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