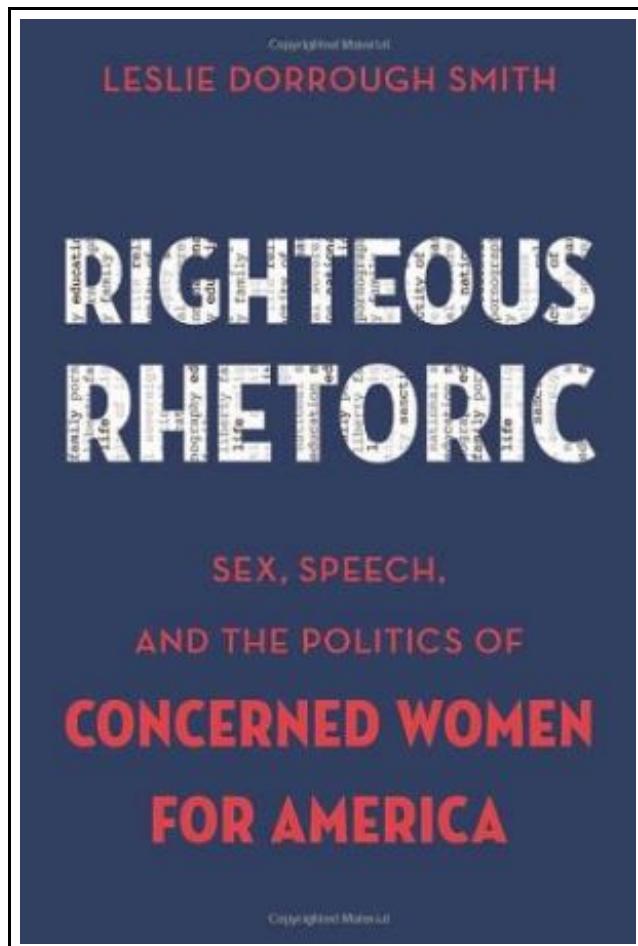


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Reviews

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RIGHTEOUS RHETORIC: SEX, SPEECH, AND THE POLITICS OF CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA (HARDBACK)

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Oxford University Press Inc, United States, 2014. Hardback. Book Condition: New. 236 x 160 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. It is commonly thought that the main distinction of the New Christian Right (NCR) lies in its absolutist theologies and religious fervor. Offering a detailed study of one of the nation's leading conservative Christian women's organizations, Concerned Women for America (CWA), Leslie Smith argues that the absolute, ordered platforms for which CWA is known are not the source of its political power. Rather, such absolutes are the byproduct of chaos rhetoric, a type of speech whose widespread public appeal stems from its deployment of symbols that create a heightened sense of social chaos and threat. Carefully manufacturing these negative emotions, the group is in a prime position to offer its own platforms as the answer to the threat. Smith focuses on CWA's strategic manipulation of particular cultural symbols to naturalize and market its own political interests, many of which revolve around issues of sex. Sex is a symbolic gold mine for many NCR groups not only because it has been cast as the ultimate emblem of morality, but more fundamentally because its regulation (through gender, identity, reproduction, and the family) is critical to the control of society at large. Righteous Rhetoric highlights the centrality of sex to CWA's political enterprise, revealing how the organization's continual fusion of sexual morals with national fortitude, facilitated by chaos rhetoric, lays bare its nationalist agendas. Smith closes by showing that chaos rhetoric is by no means a monopoly of the NCR, but is rather a ubiquitous tactic used by many groups in the fight for social dominance. A more likely source of distinction for groups like CWA, she argues, lies not in radically different theologies or political tactics,...

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