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Reply to Bonnie Berry's Review

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Book reviews

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It is discomfiting to be on the receiving end of a review like Bonnie Berry's, especially when it comes from an author whose work you admire. What could have been an opportunity to engage on crucial issues became instead an occasion for complaints about duplication of her efforts. On that point, I feel some need for a brief response. Although she correctly points out that both of us cover many of the same topics, that kind of overlap is common when scholars focus on matters of broad social importance. Dozens of sources that we both cite survey much of the same ground. It is also unsurprising that some of those citations are common to both our works. My book has over 1.100 citations, only 50 of which, by her estimate, appear in her own work. Moreover, what her review fails to acknowledge, unlike other prominent reviews of my own book, is its focus on law. My research includes the first systematic overview of how laws banning discrimination on the basis of appearance actually work, and how laws governing fraud in marketing cosmetic products and services often fail to work. My account of the beauty bias also includes an extensive survey of current public policy initiatives that are not part of her analysis.

I regret that Professor Berry used her review largely to detail the merits of her own work rather than to address the substance of concerns that we share. I will hope for other occasions to engage on issues that deserve a wide academic and policy audience.

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