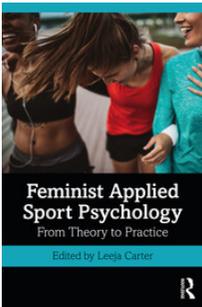
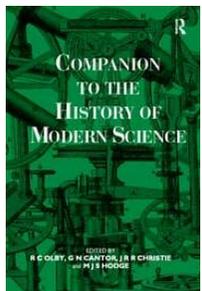


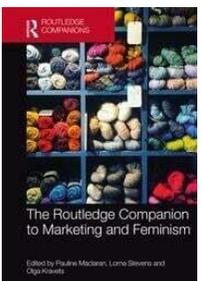
Contents



1. **What is Feminism? Where have we been and where are we going?**
Tanya Prewitt-White and Leslee A. Fisher
Feminist Applied Sport Psychology



2. **Feminism and the History of Science**
J. R. Christie
Companion to the History of Science



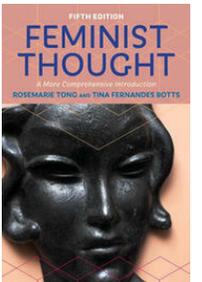
3. **Marketing Education and Patriarchal Acculturation. The Rhetorical work of women's advertising clubs, 1926 - 1940.**
Jeanie Wills
The Routledge Companion to Marketing and Feminism.



4. **Feminism as Global Endeavor**
Temma Kaplan and Nova Robinson
The Routledge Global History of Feminism



5. **The Digital Age and Beyond**
Kate Eichorn
The Routledge Global History of Feminism



6. **Third Wave and Queer Feminisms**
Rosemarie Tong and Tina Fernandes Botts
Feminist Thought

SECTION I

Feminist applied sport psychology

1

WHAT IS FEMINISM?

Where have we been and where are we going?

Tanya Prewitt-White and Leslee A. Fisher

What is feminism? Broadly defined, feminism is the movement to end sexist oppression (hooks, 2000). Those who advocate for feminism focus on the quest for rights, opportunities and conditions that are equal for all people (Evans, 1995). However, treating people equally does not mean treating them the same.

For example, those who advocate for feminism might include a dad working to make sure that his daughter has the opportunity to wrestle, play basketball, baseball, or football. It is a business woman deserving an equal salary for her time, expertise and energy granted to her male counterpart(s). It is young parents teaching their sons that expressing their emotions brings connection to not only others but to themselves. It is making note of media's focus on African American males who have been killed while neglecting to mention African American women who have died by police brutality (Crenshaw, 2016). It is the physical educator who treats boys and girls as equally capable of throwing a baseball, kicking a soccer ball and running with proper form. It is your colleague refusing to laugh or join in on jokes that demean the appearance of any woman, no matter how she identifies. It is advocating for transgendered and gender non-conforming individuals to have the right to use the bathroom and locker room of their self-identified gender identity. Thus, while many gain a misunderstanding of feminism through patriarchal mass media, feminism can be witnessed everywhere by everyone (hooks, 2000) and is a movement against the oppression of all people regardless of race, class, sexuality, ableism and ethnicity as it relates to sexism (Fisher, 2014; hooks, 2000).

In addition, it is too simplistic to believe that those who advocate for feminism define it as a "woman against man" fight. One does not have to be female to advocate for feminism (e.g., Barack Obama, Aziz Ansari, John Legend, Prince Harry). Moreover, the assumption that a female space is absent of patriarchal, sexist or oppressive thinking is incorrect. Sexist thoughts and actions are the root of the

problem, regardless of whether they are perpetrated by males or females. Thus, an anti-male sentiment no longer shapes feminist consciousness (hooks, 2000).

While there is no one universal definition that all who advocate for feminism believe in (Gill, 2001; hooks, 2000), second-wave feminists advocated for women to have the choice to determine their own agency. For example, if a woman wanted to stay home and care for children, she could do that. Or, if she wanted to go back to her profession following childbirth – or not have children at all – she could do that, too. As Gloria Steinem (1995) stated, “The greatest gift we can give one another is the power to make a choice. The power to choose is even more important than the choices we make” (p. xxvi).

Furthermore, those who advocate for feminism recognize that gender influences our experience of living in and navigating society (Butler, 1990). However, while all women are oppressed, they experience varying degrees of privilege and subordination (Bunch, 1981) based on their intersectional identities (e.g., the oppression experienced by a genderqueer person of color) (Crenshaw, 1989). As Spelman (1990) suggested, “Though all women are women, no woman is only a woman” (p. 187). This is a lesson that second-wave feminists were slow to learn – that one group cannot speak for all because variations, similarities and differences between and amongst groups of women exist (Evans, 1995). However, it is important to understand that feminist icons moved our understanding of gendered oppression forward through both missteps as well as small victories.

Who are feminist icons?

Countless women (and some men, although not listed here) from all around the world¹ made sacrifices and used their voices to fight for gender equality to provide women the opportunities we have today. A small selection of the many noteworthy historical and present-day feminist icons who have contributed to the advancement of gender equality is provided next in chronological order of their births.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797)

Mary Wollstonecraft was an educator, activist, women’s rights activist, scholar, journalist, and philosopher. She was born in London on April 27, 1759 and was raised by an abusive father. After leaving home, she dedicated herself to writing. Her most famous work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, was published while she was working as a translator for radical text publisher, Joseph Johnson. In the work, Wollstonecraft was responding to the political and educational theorists who believed women did not have the right to education (Mary Wollstonecraft, 2018).

Sojourner Truth (1797–1883)

Sojourner Truth was an outspoken advocate for women’s and civil rights, temperance, and abolition after being an enslaved person. Perhaps her most famous

speech, “Ain’t I a Woman” was given at the 1851 Women’s Right Convention in Akron, Ohio. Because of her advocacy work, she was sent an invitation in 1864 to meet with President Abraham Lincoln. Her given name was Isabella Bomfree; she was subjected to violent punishment, harsh physical labor, and was bought and sold four times as an enslaved person in 1797 in Ulster County, New York, a Dutch-speaking county. A year before the law freeing enslaved people took affect (1827), Truth took her infant daughter, Sophia and ran away to an abolitionist family nearby, the Van Wageners. The Van Wageners helped Truth sue for the return of her son, Peter, who was illegally sold and taken to Alabama at age five and also paid 20 dollars for her freedom (Michals, 2015).

Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906)

Susan B. Anthony was an abolitionist, educational reformer, woman’s suffragist, and a temperance worker. She was raised in a Quaker family whose belief systems and activist traditions set her on a course to fight for social justice. At the age of 26, Anthony took a teaching position and later went on to fight for equal educational opportunities for women and people who had been enslaved. She campaigned for the outlawing of slavery and for full citizenship for women and people of any race, which included the right to vote. Anthony encountered persecution for her work as an abolitionist including mobs, threats and even being hung in effigy. As a women’s suffragist, she was led by the understanding that it was crucial for women to have the right to vote if they were to be able to influence public affairs (Susan B. Anthony House, n.d.)

Betty Friedan (1921–2006)

Betty Friedan was a journalist, author, and women’s rights activist. During her second pregnancy, she was forced to leave her job. Friedan later began to examine what she called “the problem that has no name” which was the idea that many middle-aged, college-educated women had a feeling of depression due to the lack of excitement in their lives caused by being shamed into staying at home for domestic purposes. She went on to write the book, *The Feminine Mystique*, which highlighted this problem. Friedan was also the co-creator of the National Women’s Political Caucus, advocating for women to run for office with the slogan “Make policy, not coffee” (Betty Friedan, n.d.).

Gloria Steinem (1934–present)

Gloria Steinem is perhaps the most well-known twentieth century feminist. As a writer, political activist, and feminist organizer, she advocates for peace and justice, focusing on race caste systems, child abuse, and gender roles. Steinem has published several best sellers including *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. In *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, Steinem (1995) described her experience while

working undercover in Hugh Hefner's Playboy Club, exposing their exploitative practices. In her work, she focuses on various topics such as race, class, social systems, rage, women and sports including an overview of the second-wave feminist movement through her lens (Gloria Steinem, n.d.).

Billy Jean King (1943–present)

While basketball was the first sport Billie Jean King played, tennis was the one she fell in love with. King went on to become a professional tennis player and gained recognition when she and Karen Hantze Susman won the Wimbledon's women's double title as the youngest pair to do so. King continued to win championships, gain world rankings, and earned over \$100,000 in prize money. However, after King won the U.S. open in 1972 and was awarded \$15,000 less than the men's champion, she began to lobby for equal prize money for both sexes. Her efforts attracted global attention when she challenged a self-proclaimed chauvinist named Bobby Riggs in what became known as the "Battle of the Sexes." More than 90 million people worldwide watched the televised event and, in the end, King beat Riggs. King later co-founded World Team Tennis and started the Women's Sports Foundation that aimed to provide girls access to sports. Unfortunately, after publicly coming out as a lesbian, King lost her endorsement deals. That, however, did not stop King from pursuing a life of advocacy which she continues today (Billie Jean King, n.d.)

Alice Walker (1944–present)

Alice Walker is a novelist and poet born in Georgia. After being shot in the right eye with a BB pellet while she was playing with her brothers, she became self-conscious and found solace in poetry. She became active in fighting for equality for African Americans (Alice Walker, 2018). Walker won the Pulitzer Prize, as well as the National Book Award for her fictional book, *The Color Purple* which later became a movie and Broadway musical. In her book, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* Walker introduced the world to the term womanism, a term women of color appreciated because they saw feminism as focusing only on white, middle-class issues (Napikoski, n.d.).

bell hooks (1952–present)

bell hooks is a writer, artist and feminist theorist known for her outspoken and controversial scholarship. She was born Gloria Jean Watkins, but took on the pen name bell hooks (lower case first initials) in honor of her great-grandmother. She chose not to capitalize her name so as to show focus on her writing rather than her name (bell hooks biography, n.d.). hooks wrote her first book, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, at the age of 19. Her goal for this book premise was to explain the injustice that black women experienced due to the combination of

their race, sex, and class; she foreshadowed Crenshaw's (1989) work on intersectional identity. hooks has published over 30 books focusing on how various issues and positions of power such as race, education, gender, and class, produce systems of oppression. She went on to establish the bell hooks Institute which advocates and encourages critical thinking (Liptrott, 2016).

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1959–present)

Kimberlé Crenshaw is a professor of law and civil rights advocate. Crenshaw suggested that black females are often legally discriminated against in ways that do not meet the legal parameters for merely racism or sexism. In fact, she is known for conceptualizing the term “intersectionality,” referring to the multiple components of intersectional identity that create compounded harm for black women (e.g., being a woman and black). She was instrumental in the development of critical race theory which emerged out of legal scholarship and focuses on a critical analysis of the ways racism is woven into the fabric of our everyday lives and legal system. She currently teaches courses at both UCLA and the Columbia School of Law (Smith, n.d.).

While we have highlighted only a small selection of women who serve(d) as trailblazers in the fight to end sexist oppression, each has contributed greatly to collective feminist movement. Next, we turn our attention to feminism as a movement.

Feminism as a movement

Feminism can be viewed as one of the notable resistance movements of the twentieth century. Those who were early advocates for the movement to end sexist oppression were successful in achieving several goals and in reaching global visibility (Ortner, 2014). While feminism is indeed a movement that began in a certain historical time period as well as in what some scholars have called “waves”, it is important to recognize that “if feminism is a protest against women’s oppression, there is no confining its story, by country, culture, or time” (Evans, 1995, p. 1).

While many feminists and feminist researchers recognize the waves of feminism (e.g., Fisher, 2014), many also find the concept of waves insufficient (Baumgardner, 2011). For example, focusing on waves obscures the diversity of competing feminisms within each wave as well as the contributions of more radical feminists and of those women marginalized in each wave (Archer Mann, 2012). However, for the purposes of providing a broad historical understanding of feminism in the United States, the waves of feminism are briefly defined next.

First wave (approximately 1800s through 1930)

The first wave of feminism grew out of the movement to abolish slavery (Baumgardner, 2011). This first wave or surge of women’s rights activism began in the 1800s and culminated around the campaign for woman suffrage that ended or at

least went into abeyance in 1920 with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Taylor, 1989). The 1848 Seneca Falls Convention is recognized by many as the beginning of the women's rights movement in the United States. The event was held in Seneca Falls, New York and resulted in the Declaration of Sentiments which was signed by 68 women and 32 men. The document demanded women's right to education, property, a profession as well as the right to vote. Thus, the first wave focused on overturning legal obstacles women faced (Taylor, 1989). At the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio Sojourner Truth, a former slave, gave what remains the most famous abolitionist and women's right speech in history, "Ain't I a Woman?" when she challenged that womanhood extends to women beyond those who are white and spoke of the double burden of being both black and female (Michals, 2015).

Information often not disseminated is the rampant overt racism satiating the first wave of feminism. Ida B. Wells, a distinguished journalist, prominent black suffragist and anti-lynching activist, fought as fiercely for women's rights as she did civil rights and began the first suffrage organization for black women called the Alpha Suffrage Club of Chicago. Moreover, when participating in the 1913 Women's Suffrage Parade in Washington, DC, white leaders demanded black participants be the last to march and she refused when an Illinois organizer maintained she must walk with all of the other black women at the end of the march. Wells marched under the Illinois banner (Branigin, 2018) and later became one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Notably, between 1930 and 1960, there was a pause in the first wave of feminism because men returned from World War II and regained jobs that women had taken over in their absence. Once men returned to the United States, women were then expected to return to their roles as housewives, mothers and caregivers (Fisher, 2014). Due to this, the feminist movement transitioned to the second wave.

Second wave (approximately 1960s through 1980s)

Since women were expected to return to their homes, the second wave of feminism denotes the resurgence of women's organizing in the 1960s. Accordingly, the second wave provided attention to women's experiences and rights in the family and workplace, women's sexuality and reproductive rights and equal educational opportunities. As more women began gaining increased access to higher education, they entered higher education and expanded feminist theory (hooks, 2000). One strength of the second wave is recognized as the expansion of feminist thinking that helped reshape feminist paradigms. More specifically, it was during the 70s that:

feminist literature and education began to thrive, and feminist critiques of all-male canons of scholarship or literary work expose biases based on gender. Importantly, these exposures were central to making a place for the recovery

of women's work and contemporary place for the production of new work by and about women.

(hooks, 2000, p. 20)

Though women gradually gained more access to education and professional work outside of the home, second wave feminism is critiqued for having a narrow view and representation of feminism. In particular, second wave feminism is critiqued for being a movement of privileged white women who “failed to respond to the experiences of women of color and non-heterosexual, working class and/or disabled women” (Buffington & Lai, 2011, p. 3). In this light, hooks (1989) charted white feminist scholarship as racist because black women were expected to provide accounts of their experiences while white feminists provided theory to decide if “black experience” was accurate. Thus, second wave feminism is critiqued for neglecting to recognize the intersectionality of oppression (e.g., the oppression of being both woman and a person of color) (hooks, 1989; 2000). This critique opened the door for inclusive feminist theories in the third wave such as Crenshaw's (1989) previously mentioned intersectionality theory, black feminism (hooks, 1981; Hill Collins, 1998; 2005), womanism (Walker, 1983), trans feminism (Califa, 1997; Koyama, 2003), and transnational feminism (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994).

Third wave (approximately 1980s to 2010?)

The third wave was described most definitively by Rebecca Walker (1992) – daughter of Alice Walker – when she wrote *Becoming the Third Wave*. In her work, Walker (1992) reflected on the outcome of the October 1991 Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings when under nationally televised Senate hearings Anita Hill spoke of being sexually harassed by Thomas before he was a Supreme Court Justice. As Walker (1992) wrote:

A black man grilled by a panel of white men about his sexual deviance. A black woman claiming harassment and being discredited by other women ... I could not bring myself to watch that sensationalized assault of the human spirit.... So I write this as a plea to all women, especially the women of my generation: Let Thomas' confirmation serve to remind you, as it did me, that the fight is far from over. Let this dismissal of a woman's experience move you to anger. Turn that outrage into political power. Do not vote for them unless they work for us. Do not have sex with them, do not break bread with them, do not nurture them if they don't prioritize our freedom to control our bodies and our lives. I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave.

(pp. 39–41)

Those who were scholars and activists in the third-wave of feminism attempted to operate outside the binaries of experience (e.g., race as either black or white, gender as either male or female, etc.) and instead recognize and embrace layers of

oppression and the contradictions and multiplicity of identit(ies) (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Cocca, 2014; Garrison, 2010).

Others critiqued the preferences of third wave feminists as problematic due to their indiscriminating approval and construction of culture, apolitical stances and activism, lack of unified feminist vision to inspire a social movement, and partiality for learning from fragmented personal narrative more than authoritative knowledge and theory (Bailey, 2007; Buffington & Lai, 2011). Even with these critiques, those who advocated for third wave feminism recognized that feminism must target men and women while intersecting all areas of oppression for the benefit of all. This position is still advocated by many today in addition to the fourth wave of feminism.

Fourth wave feminism (approximately 2008 and onward)

Undeniably, social media has unveiled unlimited opportunities for the resurgence of feminist considerations, education, interest and resistance. Thus, the online universe has been claimed as the birthplace of fourth wave feminism (Munro, 2013) and the term “online feminism” has been used to describe the fourth wave. As Martin and Valenti (2012) wrote to describe online feminism:

the explosion of feminist blogs, online organizing (including online petitions), and social media campaigns has transformed the ways in which the movement’s most scrappy young entrepreneurs, thought leaders and grass root activists think about feminism and discuss the most critical issues of the day.

(p. 3)

Social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and personal blogs have become spaces to reach the masses regarding women’s experiences, sexual violence and cultural and social oppression (e.g., The Mattress Performance, Free the Nipple, 10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman, the 2017 Women’s March, #MeToo). Fourth wave feminists are demobilizing the power of one gender over another and shaming sexist and violent rhetoric and comportment wherever it is found and in ways previous waves of feminism have been unable to do (Cochrane, 2012). Counter culture examples of current popular feminist websites include Feministing, The Establishment, Black Girl Dangerous, Everyday Feminism, Bitch Magazine and Autostraddle.

Moreover, young feminists employ the internet to tell their own multiple truths (e.g., @ihartEricka, @Rachel.cargle, @bodyposipanda, laylafaad.com) as well as share stories traditional mass media have historically ignored (Nguyen, 2013). Those who advocate for feminism are taking up new practices through the use of the internet (Walby, 2011). Therefore, contrary to some opinion, “Feminism is not dead. This is not a postfeminist era. Feminism is still vibrant, despite declarations that it is over” (Walby, 2011, p. 1). However, it would be remiss not to explore the notion that we are living in a postfeminist era (Tasker & Negra, 2007; Walby 2011) when considering what comes next for those who advocate for feminism.

Continuing to combat post-feminism into the future

Beginning in the early 1990s, feminist scholars mentioned the notion of post-feminism to make sense of the sociocultural conditions under which feminist thought had been renounced as no longer desirable as well as dispensable for women (Brooks, 1997; McRobbie, 2004; Traube, 1994). Hall and Rodriguez (2003) narrowed post-feminism into four claims: (a) support for feminism had weakened; (b) women began loathing feminism as well as feminists; (c) society attained social equality, thus making feminism antiquated; and (d) the label “feminist” was snubbed due to negative stigma. In addition, Ortner (2014) suggested that if young women had not fully rejected feminism, they were at minimum ambivalent about it and also found the label problematic. Thus, many contemporary women may claim that they believe in equality of genders rather than name themselves “feminist” so that they can avoid the culturally contentious and stigmatized term (Walby, 2011).

Optimistically, Gill (2007) suggested considering post-feminism as a sensibility to understand how circumstances brought about by neoliberal society influenced attitudes toward gender, identity and politics in our current cultural moment. However, post-feminism as a sensibility normalizes the notion that each woman is personally responsible for her own success and this leaves the structural conditions in which groups of women are privileged within culture unexamined. Furthermore, for post-feminists, women are no longer objects under patriarchy but when viewed in the context of neoliberalism, they are active participants in capitalism and consumerism responsible for their own self-making (Ortner, 2014). For instance, think of Sandberg’s book, *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead* (2013) as a perfect example of suggesting there is no oppression a woman cannot overcome in the workplace, so women just need to “lean into the corporate machine” (e.g., neoliberal feminism). Budgeon (2011) argues that “by asserting that equality has been achieved post-feminist discourse focuses on female achievement, encouraging women to embark on projects of individualized self-definition and privatized self-expression exemplified in the celebration of lifestyle and consumption choices” (p. 281).

While feminist scholars and activists sometimes fixate on examining if we are in a post-feminist era as well as the language, beliefs and epistemologies feminist and those not self-identified as feminists use, an alternative approach to feminism may be to consider people, activism and movements that pursue the goal of reducing gender equality to be feminist (Walby, 2011). For example, perhaps, younger generations of women do not need to self-define or use the label “feminist,” nor do they have to have experienced gender inequality to be a part of the movement. There are many campaigns and activities that focus on promoting gender equality and “are feminist but not named as such” (Walby, 2011, p. 24); these campaigns should not be ignored or denied.

Finally, as those who advocate for a movement to end sexist oppression continue to fight for equality in the twenty-first century (e.g., the rape culture, sex trafficking, reproductive health, etc.), it is important that all people be recognized as vital participants in the movement, regardless if they self-identify as feminists or not. While words and

language are important, if those who advocate for feminism remain preoccupied with a label, we may disenfranchise those willing to fight for the greater cause, the movement to end sexist oppression and all oppression as well as the universal rise of women's rights. We are living in the critical time when we can end the fragmentation of feminism.

Key terms

First wave feminism
Second wave feminism
Third wave feminism
Fourth wave feminism
Feminist icons
Intersectionality
Online feminism
Post-feminism

Discussion questions

1. In what ways has feminism evolved throughout the various waves?
2. What direction do you feel feminism needs to take to remain relevant in our ever-changing society, culture and world?

Reflection Question

1. If someone asked you how you define feminism, what would your response be?

Note

- 1 In this chapter, we focus on feminist icons from the United States and England.

References

- “A Bunny’s Tale” – Gloria Steinem – Show Magazine (n.d.). Retrieved March 16, 2018, from <http://dlib.nyu.edu/undercover/bunnys-tale-gloria-steinem-show-magazine>
- Alice Walker (2018, February 27). Retrieved March 16, 2018, from www.biography.com/people/alice-walker-9521939
- Archer Mann, S. (2012). *Doing Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bailey, C. (2007). When girls just wanna have fun: Third-wave cultural engagement as political activism. In D. Orr, D. Taylor, E. Kahl, K. Earle, C. Rainwater, & L. Lopez McAlister (Eds). *Feminist Politics: Identity, Difference and Agency* (pp. 81–98). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Baumgardner, J. (2011). Is there a fourth wave? Does it matter? Excerpt from F'em: Goo Goo, Gaga and Some Thoughts on Balls, Seal Press. Retrieved Jan. 7, 2018, from www.feminist.com/resources/artspeech/genwom/baumgardner2011.html

- Baumgardner, J. & A. Richards (2000). *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- bell hooks biography. Retrieved March 16, 2018, from www.notablebiographies.com/He-Ho/Hooks-Bell.html
- Betty Friedan. Retrieved March 16, 2018, from <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/friedan-betty>
- Billie Jean King. Retrieved March 16, 2018, from www.billiejeanking.com/biography/
- Branigin, A. (2018, March 16). These Are the Women of Color Who Fought Both Sexism and the Racism of White Feminists. Retrieved from www.theroot.com/these-are-the-women-of-color-who-fought-both-sexism-and-1823720002
- Brooks, A. (1997). *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Forms*. New York: Routledge.
- Budgeon, S. (2001). *The contradictions of successful femininity: Third-wave feminism, postfeminism and new femininities*. In R. Gill & C. Scharff (Eds), *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity* (pp. 279–292). Houndmills, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Buffington, M., & A. Lai. (2011). Resistance and tension in feminist teaching. *Visual Arts Research*, 37(73), 1–13.
- Bunch, C. (1981). Beyond either/or feminist options. In Quest Staff (Eds), *Building Feminist Theory: Essays from Quest*, pp. 44–56. New York, NY: Longman.
- Butler, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Califa, P. (1997). *Sex Changes: The Politics of Transgenderism*. Jersey City, NJ: Cleis Press.
- Cocca, C. (2014). Negotiating the third wave of feminism in Wonder Woman. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 47(1), 98–103. doi:10.1017/S1049096513001662
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1(8).
- Crenshaw, K. (2016, October). Kimberle Crenshaw: The urgency of intersectionality [Video file]. Retrieved from www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality
- Evans, J. (1995). *Feminist Theory Today: An Introduction to Second-Wave Feminism*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fisher, L. (2014). Feminism. In R. Ecklund and G. Tenenbaum (Eds), *Encyclopedia of Sport and Exercise Psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Garrison, E. (2011). *U.S. feminism-Grrrl style! Youth (sub)cultures and the technologies of the third wave*. In N.A. Hewitt (Ed.), *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism* (pp.379–402). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press
- Gill, D. (2001). Feminist sport psychology: A guide for our journey. *The Sport Psychologist*, 15(4), 363–372.
- Gill, R. (2007). Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10(2), 147–166.
- Gloria Steinem. Retrieved March 16, 2018, from www.gloriasteinem.com/about/
- Grewal, I., & C. Kaplan, (1994). *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hall, E., & Rodriguez, M. (2003). The myth of postfeminism. *Gender and Society*, 17(6), 878–902.
- Hill Collins, P. (2005). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hill Collins, P. (1998). *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- hooks, b. (1981). *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- hooks, b. (1989). *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

- hooks, b. (2000). *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. London: Pluto Press.
- Koyama, E. (2001). *Transfeminist Manifesto*. Retrieved January 19, 2018 from <http://feminism.org/readings/pdf-rdg/tfmanifesto.pdf>
- Liptrott, J. (2016, March 18). *Biography: bell hooks – Author, Activist*. Retrieved March 16, 2018, from www.theheroinecollective.com/bell-hooks/.
- Martin, C., & V. Valenti (2012). *#Femfuture: Online feminism. New Feminist Solutions*. New York, NY: Barnard Center for Research on Women, Columbia University.
- Mary Wollstonecraft (2018, February 27). Retrieved March 16, 2018 from www.biography.com/people/mary-wollstonecraft-9535967
- McRobbie, A. (2004). Postfeminism and popular culture. *Feminist Media Studies*, 4(3), 255–264. doi:doi:10.1080/1468077042000309937
- Michals, D. (2015). Sojourner Truth. National Women’s History Museum. Retrieved from www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/sojourner-truth
- Munro, E. (2013). Feminism: A fourth wave? *Political Insight*, 4(2), 22–25. doi:doi:10.1111/2041-9066.12021
- Napikoski, L.. Womanist: Alice Walker’s Term including Race into Feminism. Retrieved January 25, 2018, from www.thoughtco.com/womanist-feminism-definition-3528993
- Nguyen, T. (2013). From slut walks to suicide girls: Feminist resistance in the third wave and postfeminist era. *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, 41, 157–172.
- Ortner, S. (2014). Too soon for post-feminism: The ongoing life of patriarchy in neoliberal America. *History and Anthropology*, 25(4), 530–549. doi:doi:10.1080/02757206.2014.930458
- Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. New York: Knopf.
- Sharing Stories Inspiring Change. Retrieved March 16, 2018, from <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/friedan-betty>
- Siegel, D. (1997). The legacy of the personal: Generating theory in feminism’s third wave. *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 12(3), 46–75.
- Smith, S.. Black Feminism and Intersectionality. Retrieved March 16, 2018, from <https://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>
- Spelman, E. (1990). *Inessential Woman*. London: The Women’s Press.
- Steinem, G.. *Moving Beyond Words by Gloria Steinem*. Retrieved March 16, 2018, from www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/gloria-steinem/moving-beyond-words/
- Steinem, G. (1995). *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. London: Fontana.
- Susan B. Anthony House. Retrieved March 16, 2018, from <http://susanbanthonyhouse.org/her-story/biography.php>
- Taylor, V. (1989). Social movement continuity: The women’s movement in abeyance. *American Sociological Review*, 54(5), 761–775.
- Tasker, Y. & D. Negra (Eds). (2007). *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Traube, Elizabeth. (1994). Family matters: Postfeminist constructions of a contested site. In L. Taylor (Ed.), *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from Visual Anthropology Review* (pp. 301–321). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Walby, S. (2011). Gender, nations and states in a global era. *The Journal of the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 6(4), 523–540.
- Walker, A. (1983). *In Search of Mother’s Gardens: Womanist Prose*. New York, NY: A Harvest Book Harcourt, Inc.
- Walker, R. (1992). Becoming the third wave. *Ms*, 2(4), 39–41.

FEMINISM AND THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

J. R. R. CHRISTIE

1. WHAT FEMINISM SEEKS TO DO

In recent decades, feminism has resurfaced as a considerable and widespread political movement throughout the world, devoted to obtaining equal rights and status for women in the economic and political spheres. Put more generally, feminism seeks a world where the biological, *sexual difference* between female and male does not entail an economic, social and political inequality between the lives of the two *genders*, feminine and masculine. In theoretical, scholarly terms, the focus of feminism is upon the term *gender*, the socially and culturally-produced difference of identities attributed to biologically female and male persons. Around these different gender identities is organised the phenomenon known as *patriarchy*, the system which embodies and assures the inequitable distribution of power between women and men, to the continuing advantage of men. Patriarchy, then, is the structure of social relations which ensures that men tend to have better access to career, salary, status and power in any given set of economic, social and political circumstances. It further ensures that in situations usually thought of as 'private' or 'personal', men also tend to occupy the most powerful position. The point of concentrating upon gender is therefore to discover, understand, criticise and overthrow the means by which feminine and masculine identities are made; are socially-constructed artefacts which support and produce a fundamental, systematic and arguably universal condition of inequality which holds across boundaries of class, culture and race.

Feminism fights on many fronts, from the conventionally political to the personal, and does so less as a centrally-organised political party or unit than as a series of linked but diverse groups whose activities are free to be geared to the needs and demands of women as they occur in a great variety of conditions across the world. Academic feminism forms one portion of this spectrum of activities, and contains its own diversity within it. Its main presence is within

arts or humanities subject-areas such as literary and art criticism and history, but it has also made its presence felt within history generally, and more recently within history of science. There are a number of reasons why science and its history should have come to preoccupy feminism, and to these we can now turn.

2. FEMINISM AND SCIENCE

Feminist interest in science has often derived from the broader political issues and struggles with which it is engaged. Two in particular place science on feminism's agenda: the women's health movement and the anti-nuclear peace campaigns. Both of these involve confronting extremely powerful groupings of predominantly male scientific expertise, to wrest from them the rights of women to control their own bodies and what is done to them in the name of medicine, and the right to a future unshadowed by the threat of planetary destruction. In these forms, science can be seen as an obvious and often particularly dangerous location of patriarchal actions and attitudes. This in turn raises the wider, theoretical and historical question of the nature of science itself. To what extent might modern science, in its historical formation and contemporary development, be seen as a significant aspect of patriarchy?

Once this question is asked in these terms, a potentially large field of enquiry is opened up. Firstly, why does science appear historically as such a male-dominated project? Is it the case that female scientific activity has been as small and as negligible as much as conventional history of science makes out, and if so, how did this come about? Or is it the case that female presence in the history of science has tended to be ignored or marginalised, in line with the treatment meted out to women in history generally, as written by males in a male-dominated historiography? In answering these questions, feminist history of science tends to affirm that science in history has indeed often been a predominantly male-run enterprise, whose values of objectivity, instrumental rationality and manipulative, exploitative power over nature tend towards the exclusion of female practitioners from the world of science, as do the educational structures which support that world. Even so, and despite the efficacy of these values and structures, there has also been an active female presence throughout science's history which is both valuable and significantly recoverable.

3. FEMINISM IN HISTORY

A historically wide-ranging attempt to recover the significant presence of women within science's history can be found in Margaret Alic's *Hypatia's Heritage: A History of Women in Science from Antiquity through the Nineteenth Century*. Alic's introductory remarks can stand as an apt description for the feminist project of recovery generally within history of science:

... (We) think of the history of science as a history of men. More than that, we think of the history of science as the story of a very few men – Aristotle, Copernicus, Newton, Einstein – men who drastically altered our view of the universe. But the history of science is much more than that. It is the story of thousands of people who contributed to the knowledge and theories that constituted the science of their eras, and made ‘great leaps’ possible. Many of the people were women. Yet their story remains virtually unknown.¹

Alic’s work is able to demonstrate consistent female involvement in Western science since its earliest beginnings. It draws renewed attention to women scientists such as Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), who wrote on natural history, medicine, cosmology and cosmogony; Lady Anne Conway (1631–79), who produced a vitalistic cosmology; and Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1623–73), who wrote on theoretical and experimental natural philosophy. Additionally, it points to the way in which women with scientific interests clustered significantly in subjects such as natural history and botany throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Alic makes, therefore, a relatively straightforward case for recognising frequently ignored ‘women’s contributions’ to scientific development. In this perspective, women’s scientific work is seen as additional to men’s. Historical understanding can be improved and corrected by adding female achievement to the existing record. This is a perspective and method of work which, however, tends to leave certain kinds of questions unasked and unanswered. It does not address, though it sometimes documents, the kinds of social and educational pressures and prejudices which tended systematically for much of Western history to militate against the entry of women into the world of learning in general and science in particular. It also seems to accept, relatively unquestioningly, a subaltern and supplementary role for women scientists in history. ‘Great leaps forward’ remain the province of male heroes, while women labour in more humdrum and humble roles, with only occasional exceptional or aristocratic women able to move beyond this station.

4. FEMINIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

Many feminists would therefore see the project of straightforward recovery of the history of women in science as being somewhat limited, however valuable, and would wish to move beyond it. Margaret Rossiter, for example, in her study of women scientists in America, does not simply recover a significant female presence in American science.² She is able to relate this presence to more general trends in higher education. Most tellingly, she delineates the kinds of work and career to which women, in contrast with men, were assigned, and documents the specific kinds of resistances to women and side-trackings and marginalisations of their work that were produced by men able to define

and control the nature of women's scientific labour and careers. Rossiter thereby clarifies not only the sources and forms of an expanded female presence in American science from 1880, but explains further the ways in which that expanded presence was not permitted to affect the overall structure of male domination in American science. That women took up subaltern roles, as assistants in laboratories and observatories, as junior professors, or confined to 'feminine' scientific fields such as cosmetic chemistry, is no longer seen as a straightforward historical fact, but as a distinctive and problematic phenomenon to be analysed and explained. Given such notably consistent data, the category of gender has an obvious and direct explanatory relevance. Women scientists achieving careers in the Progressive Era had the kind of career they had because they were women moving into the traditionally male world of knowledge, expertise and power, and thereby constituted a potential threat to this male monopoly as it moved into an important developmental phase of more thorough professionalisation and bureaucratisation. Rossiter's work effectively demonstrates how the simple historiographical project of recovery can be widened and deepened by adopting a persistently questioning attitude towards what is factually recovered, seeking beyond the subaltern existence of women scientists for reasons which explain that subalternity. These reasons, once uncovered, tend to reveal American science as a patriarchal institution of limited adaptability, which, like the culture at large, operated gender identities to the disadvantage of women.

In this more advanced historiography there is a significantly critical dimension at work, and it is precisely this critical perspective which gives feminist historiography its own particular and distinctive purchase within history of science. The gains it can make are not necessarily confined to subject-matter which includes women scientists. Donna Haraway's challenging analysis of the genesis and production of the African Hall in the American Museum of Natural History in New York foregrounds the analytical terminology of gender and patriarchy to provide an in-depth historical account of the meanings embodied in this major cultural and scientific institution between 1903 and 1936.³ Haraway is able to show that the Museum's public activities were moulded by the perceived 'threat' of 'decadence' to American culture at this time. The activity of exhibition was to 'produce permanence, to arrest decay'; of eugenics, 'to preserve hereditary stock, to assure racial purity'; of conservation, 'to preserve resources . . . for moral formation, the achievement of manhood'.⁴ Haraway does not confine her analysis to New York, but pursues it into the kinds of labour, organisation, technology and skill which produced the African Hall, and the values which motivated and became embodied in that production. Behind the African Hall lies a fascinating narrative of African safari: hunting, killing, photography and taxidermy, all expressing an overweeningly male ethos of sportsmanship, the trial of confronting nature, of conquest over nature by

killing and of the attainment of manhood through these processes. This brought back to New York, in the form of dead gorillas and elephants, an ennobled nature, to be preserved and displayed as the sphere of possibility for the moral attainment of unadulterated manhood. The African Hall, ostensibly about the fading zoological African present, is also and equally about being a man in a threatened post-Roosevelt America.

By viewing the African Hall, realising the stories behind its activities and clarifying the ideological tenor of its complex history, Haraway reveals a relay of patriarchal meanings and a closed circuit of masculine messages. By that token, a critical feminist historiography of science obviously need not confine itself to the overt subject of women in science, but needs to pursue all the dimensions of patriarchy in science as and when they occur, whether or not this includes women.

What other such dimensions can feminist historiography reveal? A critical issue in feminism is the subject of essentialism, of whether women can be said to have an essential nature which therefore fits them for a certain sort of life. Contemporary feminist theory tends to retreat from essentialism, which ties feminine gender identity to female reproductive biology, her biological nature, rather than seeing gender identity as a changing social and cultural construct. The perils of biological essentialism for feminism are fairly obvious. If woman's nature is defined essentially by her reproductive capacities and functions, then this all too easily becomes the basis of stereotypical conceptions and images of women which have often functioned to the benefit of patriarchy: woman as wife, child-bearer, home-maker and so on. Essentialism therefore becomes a topic close to the top of feminism's critical concerns, and this in turn finds expression in feminist historiography of science.

Whereas Alic and Rossiter tackle the issue of women as subjects in science, that is, as active agents within sets of institutions and practices, the issue of essentialism raises the issue of women as objectified by science, as objects of scientific study. Here, much of the territory of the history of the life sciences and of medicine becomes immediately relevant, because, historically speaking, it is these discourses and institutionalised practices which have exercised theoretical and practical power over women, defining and treating women in authoritative ways. The objectified images of woman which science has historically produced have many variations, but contain nonetheless some dominant aspects. Woman tends to be identified with materiality, with the body, and comes to be seen, in crucial aspects of woman's life, as a creature of the material body. Aristotle, for example, identified the female reproductive role with the provision of 'matter', which was given 'form' only by male seed. In the eighteenth and then the nineteenth century, medical works increasingly portray woman as at the mercy of her own reproductive physiology and the ungovernable, literally hysterical passions which derived from it. Women thereby

becomes identified with 'nature', with animality, with the affective, the emotional, lacking the male attributes of objectivity, rationality and self-control. The life and medical sciences have therefore often produced understandings of woman which consistently characterise her by her biological nature. This biological nature in turn fits woman for wifely, motherly, domestic roles in life, while specifically unfitting her for the male activities of learning, directing and governing. In these ways too, feminist historiography can therefore see male-produced science as providing a series of authoritative sanctions for conceptions of women which serve patriarchal interests.⁵

Nor is it only in these ways which science displays deeply gendered biases at the core of its presuppositions, methods and operations. These gender biases are discernible in different forms in recent scientific specialities such as primatology, as Haraway's work has demonstrated;⁶ and are equally discernible when feminist historians examine the seventeenth century, the period of the genesis of modern Western science. This latter is important territory for feminist historiography of science. If it can be shown that modern Western science generated and deployed gender identity distinctions as part of its foundational manoeuvrings, if the origins of modern science were predicated in part upon a politics of gender, then feminism is enabled to make a strategic and structurally critical point about the connection of science and patriarchy in Western history.

5. FEMINISM AND THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

Feminist historians and philosophers have endeavoured with some success to produce new understandings of the Scientific Revolution which examine the ways in which modern science in its historical origins was a highly gendered construction. Carolyn Merchant argues that the conception of nature which eventually emerged as dominant in the seventeenth century, a mechanistic materialistic conception, was a distinctively masculinised conception which replaced an older feminised view of nature.⁷ The new, male version of nature saw it as disenchanting matter working according to mechanical principles. This replaced a feminised nature seen as vital, organic and productive. In this scenario, traced out by Merchant in many words and images from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the old, beneficent Mother Nature is increasingly deprived of her vital and productive aspects as she is subjected to the measured and measuring canons of reductive mechanistic materialism. In brief, to emerge fully, modern science has to subdue and kill off female nature, for the two cannot occupy the same conceptual and practical space. This is a process which Merchant, a feminist historian with strong ecological sympathies, sees continuing apace into present times.

The process delineated by Merchant indicated one possible and often plausible set of interpretations of the Scientific Revolution's gender politics. Other

feminist historians have added to and complexified the picture she presents. Evelyn Fox Keller's study of Francis Bacon, while recognising the consistent drive to male mastery and power over a female nature explicit in much of his writing, argues for the possibility of a more subtly gendered dialectic in Bacon than might first appear.⁸ While Bacon often emphasises that nature is a woman to be conquered, subdued and penetrated by the aggressive, scientific male mind, man is also characterised as the servant and interpreter of a nature which can only be commanded by being obeyed. The male mind is thereby also required to possess a receptive and responsive, that is, more female mode, of understanding nature. For Keller, the Baconian mind therefore actually takes on a dialectic and hermaphroditic quality, incorporating and appropriating the feminine while appearing to deny and subdue it. This kind of dialectical reading, which attempts to track all the levels and kinds of gender images and concepts in their interaction, indicates that the Scientific Revolution's politics of gender may be less straightforward than the direct confrontational politics of male conquest and female death envisaged by Merchant.

Keller's analysis of gender ideology in relation to seventeenth-century science gains further depth in an examination of the debates subsequent to the founding of the Royal Society of London over the nature of true science and the methods proper to it.⁹ Once again, although full play is given to elements demanding science as a 'Masculine Philosophy', capable of resisting 'The Woman in us . . . an *Eve*, as fatal as the *Mother* of our miseries', Keller also tracks the persistence, albeit declining, of hermetic and alchemical views which emphasised creative, feminine principles, and affective modes of understanding. The recognition of the persistence and influence of such elements is not particular to feminist historiography. What is particular is the view that these elements form part of a debate which cannot be simply understood in terms of new mechanistic science versus old magic, nor even in more complexly socialised and politicised terms of class-fractional or occupational clashes of interest over what constitutes legitimate knowledge. Particular to feminist historiography is the realisation and depiction of such debates as possessing an ineliminable and important gender dimension, which cannot be ignored if any reasonably coherent and full understanding of the Scientific Revolution is to be achieved. As Keller summarises:

It is through the analysis of such debates that we can begin to understand the selection pressures exerted by ideology in general – and gender ideology in particular – on the competition between different visions of science. These pressures are part of the process that transforms a complex pluralistic tradition into a monolithic rhetoric, overlaying, obscuring, and often distorting a wide diversity of practice.¹⁰

A certain sympathetic identification with the Puritan scientific reformers of

seventeenth-century England is also present in Sandra Harding's analysis of the origins of modern science.¹¹ This analysis comes towards the end of an extended philosophical investigation of the relations between science and feminism, and incorporates and extends many of its findings. Harding first redesignates the nature of the issues involved: it is less a question of 'women in science', more a question of science in feminism. The aims, strategies and values of feminism are hereby placed in the foreground of the analysis, whose aim is to provide a philosophical, historiographical critique of science from a feminist standpoint, and indicate a possible feminist science to succeed the patriarchal science which has hitherto held sway. In the course of this analysis, Harding overturns many of the commonplace assumptions purveyed by masculine history and philosophy of science. It takes physics as the paradigmatic, exemplary science, but why should we continue to hold with this convention? Placed alongside the array of life sciences and social sciences, the practices, methods and historical developments of the physical sciences are less than typical. And why should women accept unreflective, progressivist characterisations of science's development and impact upon the world? The relevant question is surely, 'progressive for whom?'; if it has not been progressive for women, why should we persist with this characterisation of science as a progressive endeavour? Harding comes to view Western science, produced by and tied to the needs of expanding capitalist economies and imperial polities, as deeply regressive in its nature and its effect upon the world.

One large part of this regressiveness is the patriarchal nature of Western science, the ways in which masculine gender identity and the dominant ideologies of science are bound together by deep mutual implications which act continually to reinforce one another, while consigning other kinds of work and values to the sphere of the feminine. Instead of recognising and analysing these processes, historiography of science has tended to rehearse the origins of modern science as a mythic tale, enshrining heroic male creativity which constitutes its own principle of development, producing an abstractly intellectualised activity, objective, value-free, and disconnected from any context of social and political relations.

Harding proceeds to spell out the ways in which this and other accounts of the emergence of modern science suffer from obvious contradictions and defects. Narratives which focus on scientific development as a purely rational process owing nothing to anything outside of itself erect a paradox. Science is portrayed as the true pattern of enquiry into the natural causes of things, but science itself is simultaneously exempted from an enquiry which would reveal its own causal origins as a social phenomenon. While this historiography fails to take account of social, economic and political influences on the formation of modern science, attempts which contrastingly do emphasise such features suffer from a different problem. If science develops in response to the workings

of social causation, in what coherent senses can the objectivity, rationality and progressiveness of science be maintained? We are left only with the variable standards and patterns of belief of different times and cultures against which to assess scientific development, and these do not constitute a stable ground.

Harding's critical historiography does not, therefore, wish simply to abandon criteria of rationality and objectivity with respect to science. Instead, it removes such criteria from their traditional residence in science and philosophy of science, and relocates them in political and moral discourse. By so doing, it reconnects the standards of objectivity and rationality with the sphere of values, the designation of what is good, just, non-exploitative and genuinely progressive. It is this reconnection of science and value which leads Harding to make a sympathetic identification of a new, feminist science with the science of the Puritan reformers in mid-seventeenth-century England. Feminist and Puritan science hold common assumptions: they are anti-authoritarian, have a radical belief in progress, are participatory, seek educational reform, are humanitarian, and wish for a combination of scientific with moral and political understanding. It is this conception of science which Harding sees as being replaced in the latter half of the seventeenth century by a process which included a newly institutionalised and hierarchised division of scientific labour, an atomistic cosmology, a norm-based, highly methodised version of scientific enquiry and a view of science as value-free. In taking on these attitudes and practices, science was locking itself into a patriarchal mode which erased the progressive possibilities inherent in the period of Puritan reform. It is these possibilities which the project of a feminist science seeks to revive. Harding's feminist historiography, overtly evaluative in both negative and positive ways, offers an interesting combination of radicalism and traditionalism. Its feminist radicalism insists upon foregrounding feminist values as the basis of analysis and judgement; its traditionalism consists in its refusal to abandon scientific objectivity and its willingness to learn from history.

6. CONCLUSION

The strands of feminist historiography of science surveyed here constitute an innovative and potentially powerful set of approaches to the history of science. They have much in common with Marxist-orientated, social history of science (see art. 6) and also draw upon the methods of language analysis increasingly present in the field (see art. 9). To these they add a set of concepts and questions which are more than a simple supplement to existing approaches and methods. By centralising the subjects of gender and patriarchy and beginning to trace out their relevance for history of science, feminism currently foreshadows a qualitatively altered view of science and its history. Although the contours of this view are as yet only emerging, they are becoming clear enough to suggest that some old certainties, induced by a historiography blind to the subject of

gender, will have to be radically altered or discarded. The recovery of women's place and women's work in the history of science, the reasons for women's assignment to largely subaltern positions in science, the embodiment and construction of patriarchal interests and values by science, the degrading objectification of women by science and the masculine-gendered construction of modern science in its formative phase, all demonstrate a re-mapping of the historical world of science which gives new and different meanings from those found in more conventional and unreflective historiography. As ever, new and different meanings tend to generate resistance and controversy as well as interest and support, but as feminism and feminist scholarship grow, and as it increasingly recognises the crucial position occupied by science in modern and contemporary history, further feminist attention to this subject should consolidate and further extend the insights it has so far produced.

NOTES

1. M. Alic, *Hypatia's heritage* (Boston, 1986), p. 1.
2. M. Rossiter, *Women scientists in America: struggles and strategies to 1940* (Baltimore, 1982).
3. D. Haraway, 'Teddy bear patriarchy: taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936', *Social text*, 11 (1984-5), 20-64.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
5. For work dealing with aspects of these issues, see the journal *Representations*, 14 (1986).
6. D. Haraway, 'Animal sociology and a natural economy of the body politic, parts I and II', *Signs*, 4 (1978), 21-36, 37-60.
7. Carolyn Merchant, *The death of nature: women, ecology and the scientific revolution* (San Francisco, 1979).
8. E. Fox Keller, 'Baconian science: the arts of mastery and obedience', in her *Reflections on gender and science* (Yale, 1985), pp. 33-42.
9. E. Fox Keller, 'Spirit and reason at the birth of modern science', *ibid.*, pp. 43-65.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
11. S. Harding, *The science question in feminism* (Ithaca, NY and Milton Keynes, UK, 1986), chaps. 8-9.

FURTHER READING

In addition to works cited under Notes, the following are also important and useful.

- B. Easlea, *Witch-hunting, magic and the new philosophy: an introduction to the debates of the Scientific Revolution, 1450-1750* (Brighton, 1980).
- D. Haraway, 'Sex, mind and profit: from human engineering to sociobiology', *Radical history review*, 20 (1979), 206-37.
- , 'The contest for primate nature: daughters of man the hunter in the field, 1960-1980', in M. Kann (ed.), *The future of American democracy* (Philadelphia, 1983), pp. 175-208.
- L. J. Jordanova, 'Natural facts: a historical perspective on science and sexuality', in C. MacCormack and M. Strathern (eds.), *Nature, culture and gender* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 42-69.
- E. Fox Keller, *A feeling for the organism: the life and work of Barbara McClintock* (New York, 1983).
- M. McNeil (ed.), 'Gender and expertise', *Radical science series* 19 (London, 1987).

5 Marketing education and patriarchal acculturation

The rhetorical work of women's advertising clubs, 1926–1940

Jeanie Wills

This chapter constructs a narrative that inserts early 20th-century American women's advertising clubs into discussions about histories of marketing and advertising education. Scholars such as Tadajewski (2011) and Witkowski (2012) find marketing education occurring outside of the privileged space of academic research. Tadajewski offers insight into the education offered by correspondence schools such as the Arthur Sheldon/Felton School. Witkowski, noting that the study of marketing education would benefit from examining venues other than academic institutions, analyses two Polish-language “how to” books, the first books on sales published in America. The Women's Advertising League of New York (formed 1912) and the Philadelphia Club of Advertising Women (PCAW, formed 1916) are two such venues offering marketing education to women and operating outside the academic world.

While the women's club movement in America always participated, broadly, in community education, suffrage, and social reform (Blair, 1980, 1994; Gere, 1997; Giddings, 1984; Knupfer & Woyshner, 2013; Martin, 1987; Rogow, 1993; Scott, 1993; Sharer, 2004) women's advertising clubs focused specifically on the *professional* development of women who worked in advertising and on the education of women who wanted to work in advertising.¹ Focusing on women's professional development and education meant coaching women's rhetorical or communication behaviors to construct a professional ethos suitable for work in the industry. The two forerunners in providing educational opportunities for young women were the New York League of Advertising Women (NYLAW), which later became Advertising Women of New York in 1934, and the PCAW.

These clubs, like other educational associations and jurisdictions, served a larger social agenda. Witkowski (2012, 110) notes that the Polish language books, in addition to educating their audiences about sales and marketing, may have served as an agent for acculturating those audiences into the “American economic mainstream” and normalizing “the character and behavior of salesmen and market exchange within the framework of American business norms.” Likewise, the courses the women's advertising clubs offered acculturated women into American business norms and taught women how their male peers and colleagues would tend to see them; however, they also implicitly taught women rhetorical strategies with which to navigate the social, historical, and economic constraints of the corporate and professional world. Thus, while the overt pedagogical objectives of the PCAW may have been to give “complete information on women's work in Advertising in the many fields in which they are successful and told ‘how to’ enter and advance in those fields” (Clair & Dignam, 1939, 9), a symbolic objective was to accustom their students to business culture. Thus, the adwomen also implicitly prompted their students to develop a professional ethos that would enable

them to grow and thrive in advertising and marketing positions within the social and cultural constraints of their business communities.

The PCAW's advertising courses, and subsequent textbook that was an outgrowth of its course, introduced students to advertising and marketing and the various careers one could have, as a woman, in the industry. They linked marketing and advertising with caretaking, teaching, and ethics and morality, thus rhetorically linking their advertising and marketing work with gendered expectations of behavior. In effect, the textbook is a site of struggle to view competence through a gendered lens. While this group of privileged white women absorbed, recreated, reimagined, and repackaged stereotypes of a monolithic white middle-class womanhood, they also inserted women advertising and marketing professionals into a narrative of American advertising success. Along with an introduction to a technical education, club education prepared women for the social and cultural experience of corporate America in ways that a formal education simply could not, primarily because a formal business and marketing education did not serve women the same way it served men. The teaching and training offered by the women's advertising clubs countered both the educational and social prejudices that women faced.

This chapter offers a brief history of the PCAW's foray into advertising and marketing pedagogy; outlines the symbolic functions of the club's pedagogical strategies; and demonstrates how the club's pedagogical practices obliquely countered the prejudice against women in business and armed students with rhetorical strategies to combat it. At the same time, the instructional philosophy coached students to position themselves in conventional ways that would be palatable and non-threatening to their male peers, as subordinate, helpful, and supportive.

The PCAW began their incursion into women's education in 1926, with the Advertising League of New York Women following in 1928. Both clubs produced "textbooks" as a result of courses that were designed and taught by their members. These textbooks were used by high school guidance counsellors to help them recommend careers for students, by women taking courses with PCAW, and by a general audience who might be interested in the subject matter. Because PCAW's textbook appeared first, in 1939, before the New York Club's 1942 publication, this chapter focusses primarily on it.

According to an informational pamphlet about PCAW, the club's work in educating young women started in 1926 when they began awarding two-year scholarships in the Charles Morris Price School of Advertising and Journalism for the young women whose essays most effectively addressed "Better English in Business (PCAW, History-Informational Pamphlet, ND, 6).² This pamphlet claims that "the value of elementary instruction in advertising largely influenced the decision to establish a course of our own;" The PCAW's first annual free class in advertising, developed and taught by club women who worked in these areas of specialization, started in 1927. By a decade later, the "eighth class has just been completed with 37 graduates. Over five hundred women thus far have studied this course" (PCAW, nd, 6. History-Information Pamphlet). By 1938, PCAW had developed an "Advanced Lecture Course" called "Advertising Beckons Women" and by the following year, it had produced a textbook with 22 chapters written by 22 different women who were experts in various fields of advertising and marketing. The book *Advertising Careers for Women* surveys opportunities for women in advertising and marketing, and offers practical advice on pursuing work in the industry. It was the first textbook of its kind directed to women for women and by women. However, as others have noted, the definition of "woman" focused narrowly on white, middle-class, and married (Scanlon, 1995; Westkaemper, 2017). People of color were actively excluded from the advertising profession (Chambers, 2008; Davis, 2017), and

women of color were actively excluded from women's advertising club memberships (Westkaemper, 2017). The adwomen reified stereotypes of the "typical" *white* middle-class housewife in their pedagogical approaches to teaching advertising.³

These adwomen exploited cultural stereotypes using quantitative knowledge about women's economic influence to qualitatively assert their "natural" role in this industry. Because empirical evidence showed that women were primary consumers of household goods, including vehicles, adwomen claimed sales, advertising, and marketing expertise *because* they were women, as is evidenced in an article by Dorothy Dignam (1936) entitled "Women Know Women" (Dignam Collection, Schlesinger Library) which tautologically expresses this essentialist philosophy as it obscures diversity. Likewise, the textbook pairs thematic clusters of assertions about the adwoman's "natural" fit for the business with a paradoxical "rhetoric of expectations." In this latter cluster, the instructor adwomen identify and affirm sexist stereotypes, but they also coach their students in what constitutes "professional behavior" for women. Their work outlines expectations of women's professional behavior, which often means identifying appropriate behavior and juxtaposing it with inappropriate behavior. For example, "*Is being friendly necessary?* Yes! And this is one of the most difficult lessons for a shy novice. Clams, exhibitionists, and society queens do not impress Business" (Kidd, 1939, 90). Most of the authors in the textbook advocate skill in gender presentation as well as in technical areas, thus emphasizing the message that women belonged in advertising and marketing *because* of their gender.

These messages countered the ones that women might receive from other venues that offered advertising and marketing courses. Because education stabilizes and perpetuates the ideologies of the dominant culture, it also excludes those who are marginalized. Education and business historians Antler (1977), Gordon (1990), and Strom (1992) each chronicles the struggles women faced in the pursuit of post-secondary education. Gordon notes protests from male students and faculty alike at the "feminization" of higher education. Strom (1992, 68) observes that "Business professionals ... did not see womanly benevolence (or womanliness in general) as positive qualities... Promoters of the new professionalism ... emphasized its inherent manliness." Thus, for many women, an academic education "function[ed] as yet another mode of exclusion" (Enoch, 2008, 6). Education primarily serves three symbolic functions: it stabilizes and perpetuates the values of the dominant culture, and it includes and acculturates as it simultaneously excludes and disenfranchises.

Educational agendas not only teach skills, but they also acculturate students with both an explicit and implicit rhetoric of expectations for appropriate behavior. As the drive for professionalization changed how people entered the workforce, universities, and colleges adapted by developing business courses and offering credentials. In the U.S., the first post-secondary level marketing class, called distribution, was taught in 1902/1903 at the University of Michigan (Ross, 2008, 7). Other business courses followed soon after. The new business courses taught students the technical and economic mysteries of marketing and distribution as they simultaneously modeled and shaped the ideal ethos of the successful business and marketing professional. In this way, business education stabilized and perpetuated the values of the dominant culture. Those traits and habits were cast as exclusively male according to Hilkey (1997, 143–144):

'manhood' became an indispensable aspect of the American ideology of success ... [with] far-reaching implications for how men might see themselves [and] how womanhood and the feminine would be defined. Indeed, the equation of manhood and success was built in part on the equation of the feminine with failure.

According to Strom (1992, 69), the newly developing world of business professionals was, in fact, hostile to the presence of women and other demographics of “outsiders”:

intellectuals of the Progressive period, including the founders of the business professions, sought to link their academic training and intellectual values to a masculine American tradition of heroism rooted in pragmatism, experimentation, and exploration, while rejecting pure idealism as inherently feminine and merely sentimental. Casting activities of the new professionals in the heroic mold was critical to making them manly.

While American women did have access to higher education, they did not have *equal* access to all disciplines, especially those concerned with business. When they did have access to such educations, they would not have seen in themselves the characteristics of the “successful businessman” or, especially, of the successful “adman” whose portraits are drawn in books such as those authored by American advertising pioneers such as Claude Hopkin or Ernest Elmo Calkins.⁴

When women wanted a business education and sought the training, prestige, and networking opportunities that a professional education from a college or university business program might give them, they were often funneled into program streams that prepared them for secretarial and support work. Scanlon (1995, 173) states,

When an adult extension program in business at Columbia University attracted as many women as it did men, the university decided to segregate the women in secretarial training, limiting the business training only to men. The Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration kept its doors closed to women until 1963.

While universities and colleges educated women for the so-called caring and nurturing professions (social work, nursing, and teaching), they were less welcoming when women attempted business studies. Antler (1977, 59) notes that while there was a great influx of women students into colleges and universities in the 1890s and 1900s, administrators and trustees at various institutions began to set arbitrary limits on the amount, kind, and quality of education that women could receive. The result of these educational limits meant that when women applied to these programs, they might be streamed into clerical and administrative courses, while men learned the business of business. When women were streamed into “appropriately feminine” areas of study, women like pioneer adwoman Helen Woodward (1926, 6) may have lamented that their “natural aptitude was hidden by the wrong training.”

When educated women did succeed in entering the business world, “most” according to Antler (1977, 333) “experienced conflict between the ideals they learned in college and the values of the business and professional world.” Woodward (1926, 7) scoffs at the values of “Honor, Courage, Justice, and Steadfastness” that her public-school education advocated. When Woodward notes, cynically, one might argue, that business is the pursuit of money above all else, she acknowledges the competitive nature of business. Woodward’s recognition of the dissonance in values suggests that she underwent an acculturation process in her early career in business and advertising. Other authors pointed to the potential conflict a lack of acculturation causes: a 1920 article, “Women

in Business" in *The Office Economist* written by Katherine Chamberlain, claims that girls do not receive the same "training" in childhood that boys do because boys are always aware of the expectation that they will have to earn their living (Dignam Scrapbook, nd, WHS). Antler (1977, 335) asserts that because educational institutions did not encourage women to earn their livings or compete with men, few women were prepared to do so. She also observes that women who were interested in careers that were considered "ill-suited" to stereotypical feminine virtues found it difficult to legitimize their aspirations. However, when the adwomen identified themselves with their audience, they symbolically paired advertising and marketing to those stereotypical virtues, thus creating an associative link between the audience's imagined characteristics and the adwomen's professional roles.

The rhetorical education the PCAW stabilized and perpetuated patriarchal hierarchies and attitudes, including and acculturating the "right" kind of adwoman, while excluding the "wrong" kind. That the club women sought male approval for their endeavors is evident from a 1939 note to "Our Lecture Course Committee" from one of the book's editors, Blanche Clair; she apprises stakeholders of the steps remaining before the club-sponsored publication, *Advertising Careers for Women*, will be available for retail sale. Along with bubbling enthusiasm, the note expresses anxiety about bringing the book to the attention of their male colleagues. Clair asks the committee members, "Can we afford to take a booth at the Advertising Convention...? It's the only way the men members of advertising clubs will know about the book." Underpinning the PCAW's textbook is a commitment to developing an experiential and gendered heuristic which serves a dual persuasive purpose. First, by claiming that women's socially proscribed gender roles gave them a special advantage in advertising and marketing, adwoman built a topos that legitimized and familiarized, to both businessmen and wider society, their ambitions to work in sales, marketing, and advertising; second, this trope functioned as a device of (limited) inclusion because it countered the cultural perception of business as exclusively male territory. Women were cued to see their domestic experiences and aspirations as a significant prerequisite to working in advertising, thus demonstrating the substantial benefit of housewifery and mothering, but this was a convenient fiction since many adwomen seemed to prefer their careers to the lives they imagined their audience had. Likewise, adwomen routinely claimed that the influence of feminine virtues benefitted the profession of advertising, an argument that, again, addressed both male and female advertising professionals and students, as well as the wider community.

However, the adwomen did not leave their students to flounder around trying to mobilize gendered domestic experience into advertising and marketing experience, but instead they gave students the gift of a disciplinary vocabulary. This very practical gift meant that the students from the Advertising Beckons Woman course had access to an "insider's knowledge" and specialized understanding which is crucial to joining a professional community: one must develop competency using the vocabulary of the community to participate in it (Blyler & Thralls, 1993). This training would also give them an advantage should they choose to advance their advertising training or to work in the business. Lastly, the PCAW's textbook also taught a "rhetoric of professional expectations" to women, inviting them to see themselves the way their male peers and other members of society would and then coaching them to behave in ways that would both counter and affirm stereotypes of women.

The pedagogical strategies of the ad club educators relied on a heuristic of personal experience combined with reflective practice. For example, a PCAW newsletter *Adland* (1936, 12) notes that “Club members give lectures on the various phases of advertising, merchandising, writing and selling, based on present successful practice and valuable personal experience;” one chapter’s author insists that an advertising career begins in a girl’s home: “It may be a bore to ‘help mother,’ but putting three well-balanced meals on the table 365 days a year gives you an understanding of home problems you’ll need all through your business career” (Ebbot, 1939, 115), and thus, the logic goes, domesticity itself can be leveraged into a kind of professional activity, perhaps to make it less of a bore. Similarly, Dorothy Dignam (1939), in “Ideas and Copy,” advises young women to shop mindfully with an eye to writing an advertisement about their experience, for example, of fabrics that would answer questions about value and economy, durability, and fashion. In essence, the adwomen are instructing their students in the art of becoming, in the words of Donald Schoen, a reflective practitioner. Schoen explores how professional practitioners from a variety of disciplines develop what he describes as intuitive or artistic professional knowledge as they “think in action.” The adwomen instructors attempted to train their students’ judgments about significant questions to ask of a product on behalf of the consumer so that they could craft an effective and convincing campaign or marketing strategy. However, the ad club’s heuristic of personal experience was predicated upon the supposition that all women would have access to the same (middle-class, gendered) experiences, and these suppositions led to an unspoken assumption that there was a way to extrude an essence “natural” to women.

For example, a “Fashion Coordinator” for department store window displays, Mary Northrup, says, “Naturally, a woman is better equipped by *instinct*, background, and common interests to understand what will appeal to other women” (48) [my emphasis]. Northrup offers advice about art training, but notes, “Primarily, a woman is hired for her understanding of fashion, color, and the feminine viewpoint” (56). The direct article “the” that proceeds “feminine point of view” emphasizes that there is only one and it is, of course, white, middle class, heterosexual, and obedient to the social order.

This monolithic point of view enables the adwomen to claim that women in advertising and marketing elevate the industry from sheer commercialism to the nurture of the nation. Ida Wells held a rare position for a woman, as a space buyer, and, according to Dignam, was renowned for being ethical in a branch of the marketing and advertising business that lent itself to financial abuse and conflicts of interest (Dignam, ND, Scrapbook). Thus, Wells’ ethical reputation becomes a warrant that explains why a woman could, and should, do this job. In a similar fashion, home economics expert and one of the founders of the NYLAW, Christine Frederick (1939, xix), pens the “Historical Introduction” to the textbook, saying,

It is my belief that women have always been more vigorous than men in their denunciations of unrefined, and sometimes misleading, copy. And advertising women today have a double responsibility, to the profession and to the purchaser, in maintaining a standard of good taste, honesty, and sincerity in every word of advertising.

Continuing with a rhetorical tradition of American women claiming the right to speak in public because of their role in raising its future citizens, Frederick affirms women’s roles as moral conscience, not for the nation, but for the advertising and marketing industry. Likewise, she links the adwoman’s purpose to the consumer movement, and thus

gains rhetorical legitimacy for the claim that a woman's knowledge is more authoritative than a man's. For example, Frederick (1939, xxi) claims the consumer movement presents "a peerless opportunity for women in advertising" because

it offers a medium for thorough discussion and consumer testing of products before any advertising is written, and it backs up the woman copywriter when she and the manufacturer differ as to what women actually want in advertising information.

Of course, Frederick presumes the manufacturer is male; however, she positions female advertising copywriters as advocates for the consumer, rather than as sales agents for products. Thus, Frederick performs a symbolic merger wherein "consumer" and "advertiser" are consubstantial, and the characteristics associated with the consumers' movement accrue to the adwomen. For example, Frederick (1939, xxi) describes a

consumer movement of the helpful and cooperative sort during the war when women willingly curtailed the use of certain foods and experimented with substitutes. And after the war there was a consumer movement 'out of the kitchen' which was met by new housekeeping aids and all the beauty and efficiency of the modern kitchen.

Here Frederick symbolically links the consumer movement's advocacy for better quality, cooperation, and liberation with the role of the adwoman and her obligation to be the interlocuter between the consumer movement and the manufacturers. The adwomen themselves helped to stabilize women's roles in advertising while simultaneously perpetuating stereotypes about women's nature and "natural talents."

If the pedagogical strategies of PCAW and other women's clubs sought to balance competing understandings about women's roles in advertising, they also worked to exclude those women who were not "suitable" for the adwoman club. Many of the textbooks chapters pinpoint the kind of "female" behaviors and traits that adwomen deemed "inappropriate" to the marketing and advertising industry. Women are variously accused of being emotional, petty, mentally unstable, and lacking ambition. The authors lavishly illustrate the behaviors that women are "known for" but must work to overcome. For example, Elizabeth Hale Lally's (1939, 35) "The Advertising Manager's Job" notes:

The opportunities are increasing, therefore, and it is only difficult to figure out why women haven't moved up faster. The retail advertising professional would seem a "natural" for feminine temperaments ... But let me be frank and tell you that women are likely to become emotionally involved in inner store politics and handicapped by their own short, and sometimes petty rather than long-range, views of the situation. This, of course, does not lessen the prejudice against them.

This author (1939, 36) goes on to say,

Then, too, the long store hours, ... play havoc with feminine nerves. A retail advertising job demands a sensitive, alert, penetrating, and volatile intelligence, but it takes a pretty thick-skinned individual to stand the pressure of long hours and the constant drive to push up the store's sales figures.

Dorothy Reid Daub's chapter (1939, 58–59) "Fashion Copywriting" outlines some of the skills students should acquire to succeed in this branch of advertising, but notes, "Too many copywriters stay in a rut because they are content to do their daily job as it is handed to them: they do not have the ambition nor the gogetiveness to keep pushing ahead." Ann Schlorer Smith (1939, 132) identified as the Treasurer and Advertising Director of "Mrs. Schlorer's, Inc." tells her audience, "The job you finally acquire depends on you ... especially on the driving force within you." According to these adwomen, those without ambition need not apply, and adwomen alone bear responsibility for not being successful.

The adwomen's textbook is filled with negative examples of "feminine behavior" juxtaposed with ideals for gendered professional behavior. For example, the authors caution their students about being over-confident, unavailable, or insubordinate. Martina Gilchrist (1939, 79) advising on "Buying and Producing Fashion Artwork" says, "Don't alienate the art director's interest by being unintentionally bumptious" and proclaiming you can do " 'as well as *that*' – pointing to the work of his head artist in a current ad," Women are advised to eschew any sort of social networking when she says,

Don't come in via the president's office, even if your father does play golf with him. The head of an advertising department intends to hire on ability alone [and] ... Don't show the slightest hesitancy to start in any capacity.

Once one has work, so another author advises she must "be willing to give up dinner and theatre because a fashion copywriter has responsibilities to too many people" (Daub, 1939, 59). The PCAW instructors seek to exclude what they deem as inappropriate or unprofessional behaviors, thus creating their own hierarchy of what it took to be a successful.

The club's advertising and marketing curriculum prepared students what to expect on the job which not only included being technically competent but also becoming cognizant of how to "manage" professional relationships with male colleagues. Edith Ellsworth (1939, 14) in "Plans, Media, and Management" notes that "a woman taking full responsibility as production manager" is rare, while observing the duties of the production chief. She follows the list of duties with, "And most of those you deal with in engraving houses and printing establishment will be men who are used to dealing with men." Because it is the last sentence of the paragraph, it is not immediately clear how this statement links to the early part of the paragraph which introduces this branch of advertising. However, it becomes clear in the topic sentence of the next paragraph: "Two *other* factors that make this field difficult for women are time pressure and nerves" (14) [my emphasis].

The women who taught advertising courses through their clubs were not only offering their students vocational training but preparing women to participate in the industry, which meant outperforming men while managing socially constructed work conventions and masculine expectations; for example, in a June 1927 *Adland News* issue, the editor reports that

Dr. Reinhardt, also a fellow-member of PCAW gave an interesting talk] on the ... subject of efficient businesswomen. It was rather disturbing to hear that we must be 400% fit mentally and physically. Pretty soft for a man to make the 100% mark.

The club members also prepare women to accept less money for the same work. Hale Lally (1939, 36) claims women advertising managers are on the rise for two reasons:

the first is economic. Women have worked under men for so long, learning the details and demands of an advertising job, that they are frequently able to 'take over the desk' at less salary, of course, when a man is moved to another position.

Predictably, the second is because of the eternally needed feminine point of view.

In addition to teaching their students about managing and relating to denizens of industry and business, each adwoman instructor also introduced the students to a professional vocabulary. Each profession and each branch of each profession requires a specialized vocabulary, and another important aspect of the club's pedagogical philosophy was to give the students the power of "discipline specific speech" by teaching them both skills and the vocabulary of the profession.

The PCAW's courses introduced students to "the advertiser's parlance – layout, copy, media, color, engraving, typography, direct mail – all come to have significance to these ambitious young women" (*Adland News*, 1930). Edith Ellsworth (1939, 2) writes about the opportunities for women, asking her audience to consider what kind of "mind" they have and linking agency jobs to particular strengths – this strategy introduces students to a common language when she describes the various areas of specialty that are housed within agency work, such as "space buying," "merchandising," and "electrotypes." She starts the body of her piece, "Plans, Media, Management," with a definition of the term "account executive":

The account is a collective term meaning the advertising and [the] product. The advertiser is your client, and together with his products and his problems you have an account. The account executive 'controls' certain accounts; contacts the client, advises with him, gets plans and copy okayed, and is the representative of the agency in general... It is a top agency position, in responsibility and remuneration; but women have already proved that they are equal to the task.

One of the keys ways of fitting in is understanding the hierarchy of an organization, as well as understanding the specialized jargon of a discipline. Gilchrist (1939, 75–76), discussing the process of creating art layouts, introduces some of the technical aspects of the process that includes telling her readers that artists will have to be able to talk about the persuasive intentions that occur through light, dark, dominance, unity, and vitality. Each of the authors introduces some specialized aspect of vocabulary which gives their students a semantic framework within which to understand the hierarchies and disciplinary jargon of the industry. Ellsworth (1939, 14) notes the significance of learning the technical vocabulary of a discipline when she says,

a secretarial or clerical position in a busy mechanical department is excellent training for any girl who is going to make advertising her career. She will learn terms and processes that are ... necessary to an advertising manager. Also, this knowledge will give her opinions an authority that raises her in the estimation of masculine coworkers and employers.

The PCAW's education made clear that the most conventional way into an advertising and marketing career for a woman was to become a secretary and provide performative evidence of competence to gain masculine approval. Alongside this advice, the adwomen smuggled in unspoken advice: be a helper and be humble and give credit to others more than to yourself. Ellsworth (1939, 11) says, "Take a business course and sell yourself to the head to the research department as a superintelligent stenographer, who can also assist in compiling figures and analysing questionnaires." Her point is to advise students to be seen to "work their way up" by rhetorically linking their professional capabilities to a traditional and normalized career stream for women. Another author (Roché, 1939, 181) suggests that women cannot be attached to their creative work:

Women are well-fitted for promotion work. But you cannot be possessive with your ideas. You must find your satisfaction in evolving workable ideas; then relinquish them freely to the agents. And never assume more credit than is due you; rather, assume less.

The club's pedagogical materials suggest the various ways that women in advertising and marketing could be rejected and dismissed. That everyday sexism was routine is evident in the cautions they share with their students. Dorothy Dignam (1939, 23) most directly expresses that expectations are gendered when she warns students about how to accept criticism of their ads:

"Even if good copy is 'killed' (that is, put aside entirely), it isn't cricket for you, *as a woman*, to cry or sulk or bang doors or show other signs of defeatism." [my emphasis] Dignam also notes, "The advertising agency is, and probably always will be, a masculine stronghold."

Adwomen positioned themselves in advertising and marketing as irreplaceable and inevitable because of their gender. They built this identity on a foundation of misogynistic beliefs that they perpetuated but from which they also benefitted. They sold this narrative to themselves, to students, and to the men with whom they competed for jobs. They made their arguments based on essentialist stereotypes of women and affirmed "the rightness" of women's place in the home from their vantage place in business; however, they also made successful careers for themselves and made advertising education more democratic for the "right kind" of women, first, by providing access to education through scholarships and then by developing and teaching a curriculum that they sold as gender specific.

Like their suffragette sisters justifying the right to speak in public (Campbell, 1989) the advertising women developed a rhetorical justification for their place in business, and particularly in advertising and marketing. The women defended their fitness for advertising and marketing and in doing so reveal the kinds of backlash that many may have faced in their careers. Reading the textbook generated and sponsored by the PCAW reveals an implicit rhetorical agenda that sought to prepare their students to engage productively which meant teaching students how to reason and construct arguments; how to analyse audiences and develop appropriate persuasive appeals; and, perhaps, most importantly, how to construct a public *ethos*, most simply defined as "character as it emerges in language" (Baumlin, 1994, 263). To be heard, speakers had to be *accepted* by an audience. Thus, a "student" who received this rhetorical education learned that

speakers or authors must build common ground with an audience so that their messages will be given a hearing. That a rhetor's public character is fashioned by her but only completed upon the audience's acceptance of that ethos demonstrates a key element of *all* rhetorical transactions: "rhetorical structures work best when they 'fit into' or 'work on' psychological structures already in place" (Alcorn, 1994, 15). That the advertising woman's pedagogical strategies may have worked against them to exclude them from executive and leadership positions may be true, but it is also true that women's clubs and especially business and professional clubs like the Philadelphia club and the NYLAW were leaders in educating women. The PCAW and NYLAW taught marketing and advertising, but also rhetorical strategies, like language practices and social behaviors that made possible their success in advertising.

Notes

- 1 The Associated Advertising Clubs of America, formed 1906, started offering these kinds of courses for their members in 1910 (Schultz, 1982, 22); however, in the eastern USA at least, women were not allowed to join men's clubs, so it is likely these courses would not have accepted female students
- 2 The Advertising Federation of America (AFA) originated the essay topic and the women's clubs promoted the contest, but invited only women to enter the essay contest, which changed yearly. For example, in 1927, the topic invited contestants to explain what constituted a "good advertisement" and provide a clipping of an ad that exemplified the qualities discussed. This was not an egalitarian contest open to any young woman: contestants had to submit a letter of recommendation with the "head of the contestant's firm" (PCAW Adland, 1927).
- 3 Laird (1989, 286–287) traces the historical progression of the logic of women writing to women and the associated targeting of the female consumer of "comfortable income."
- 4 On the other hand, the J.Walter Thompson agency's "Women's Editorial Department" (1920s–1930s), under the authority of Helen Resor-Stanley, was populated by mostly university and college educated women, some with PhDs. These women had degrees from prestigious women's universities such as Vassar and Radcliffe, but Resor-Stanley provided opportunities to women that were rare in other advertising agencies (Applegate, 2012; Fox, 1984; Scanlon, 1995, Scott, 2005; Sutton, 2009). According to Jennifer Scanlon (1995, 179–180), it was not uncommon for American women who worked in advertising to hold degrees and even PhDs; However, these same highly educated and skilled women most often ended up in clerical work with little chance for advancement because they were not, usually, trained and practiced in the business culture.

References

- Alcorn, Marshall W. (1994). "Self-Structure as a Rhetorical Device: Modern Ethos and the Divisiveness of Self." In Tita French Baumlin & James S Baumlin (eds.), *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory*, 3–6. Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press.
- Antler, Joyce. (1977). *Educated Women and Professionalization: The Struggle for a New Feminine Identity, 1890–1920*. New York: Garland.
- Applegate, Edd, ed. (1994). *The Ad Men and Women: A Biographical Dictionary of Advertising*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Baumlin, James S. (1994). *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory*. Edited by Tita French Baumlin. Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994.
- Blair, Karen J. (1980). *Clubwoman As Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868–1914*. New edition. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers.
- Blair, Karen J. (1994). *The Torchbearers: Women and Their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890–1930*. Philanthropic Studies. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Bledstein, Burton J. (1978). *Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America*. 6th edition. New York: W W Norton & Co Inc.
- Blyler, Nancy Roundy, and Charlotte Thralls, eds. (1993). *Professional Communication: The Social Perspective*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs. (1989). *Man Cannot Speak for Her*. New York: Praeger.
- Chambers, Jason. (2008). *Madison Avenue and the Color Line: African Americans in the Advertising Industry*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Clair, Blanche, and Dorothy Dignam, eds. (1939). *Advertising Careers for Women*. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Daub, Dorothy Reid. (1939). "Fashion Copywriting." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, 58–68. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Davis, Judy Foster. (2017). *Pioneering African-American Women in the Advertising Business: Biographies of MAD Black WOMEN*. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Dickenson, Jackie. (2016). *Australian Women in Advertising in the Twentieth Century by Jackie Dickenson*. London: Palgrave Pivot.
- Dignam, Dorothy. (nd). *Scrapbook. Dignam Collection*. Madison: Wisconsin State Historical Society.
- Dignam, Dorothy. (1936). "Women Know Women." *The Wharton Review*, 9,18,20.
- Dignam, Dorothy. (1939). "Ideas and Copy." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, 17–33. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Ebbott, Dorothy. (1939). "The Home Economist in the Advertising Department." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, 107–119. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Ellsworth, Edith. (1939). "Plans, Media, Management." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, 1–16. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Enoch, Jessica. (2008). *Refiguring Rhetorical Education: Women Teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/a Students, 1865–1911*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Fox, Stephen. (1997). *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Frederick, Christine. (1939). "Historical Introduction." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, xiii–xxi. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Gere, Ann. (1997). *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs, 1880–1920*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Giddings, Paula J. (1984). *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Gilchrist, Martina. (1939). "Buying and Producing Fashion Artwork." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, 1–16. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Gordon, Lynn D. *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Hilkey, Judy Arlene. (1997). *Character Is Capital: Success Manuals and Manhood in Gilded Age America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Kidd, Elizabeth. (1939). "How to Advertise Cosmetics and Toiletries." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, 84–96. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Knupfer, Anne Meis, and Christine A Woyshner. (2013). *Educational Work of Women's Organizations, 1890–1960*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kwolek-Folland, Angel. (1994). *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870–1930*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Laird, Pamela Walker. (1989). *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Laird, Pamela Walker. (2007). *Pull: Networking and Success since Benjamin Franklin*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.
- Lally, Elizabeth Hale. (1939). "The Advertising Manager ." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, 34–46. New York: Harper & Brothers.

- Lears, Jackson. (1995). *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Martin, Theodora Penny. (1987). *The Sound of Our Own Voices: Women's Study Clubs 1860–1910*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Northrup, Mary. (1939). "The Display Woman's Job." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, 47–57. New York: Harper & Brother.
- PCAW, (nd). History-Informational Pamphlet, Bryn Mawr. Philadelphia Club of Advertising Women Archives. Collection.
- PCAW. "Adland," 1936. Bryn Mawr. Philadelphia Club of Advertising Women Archives.
- PCAW. "Adland News," 1927. Bryn Mawr Philadelphia Club of Advertising Women Archives.
- Roché, Alice. (1939). "How to Advertise Insurance." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, 176–185. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Rogow, Faith. (1993). *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893–1993*. Judaic Studies Series. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Ross, Billy I. (2008). *A Century of Advertising Education*. St. Petersburg, FL: American Academy of Advertising.
- Rutherford, Janice. (2003). *Selling Mrs. Consumer: Christine Frederick and the Rise of Household Efficiency*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Scanlon, Jennifer. (1995). *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender and the Promise of Consumer Culture by Jennifer Scanlon*. New York: Routledge.
- Schön, Donald A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schultz, Quentin J. (1982). "An Honorable: The Quest for Professional Advertising Education: 1900–1917." *Business History Review* 56(1): 16–32.
- Scott, Anne Firor. (1993). *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Scott, Linda. (2010). *Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Femininism*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Sharer, Wendy B. (2004). *Vote and Voice: Women's Organizations and Political Literacy, 1915–1930*. Studies in Rhetorics and Feminisms. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Smith, Ann Schlorer. (1939). "From Manufacturer to Grocer to Pantry Shelf." In Blanche Clair and Dorothy Dignam (eds.), *Advertising Careers for Women*, 47–57. New York: Harper & Brother.
- Strom, Sharon Hartman. (1992). *Beyond the Typewriter: Gender, Class, and the Origins of Modern American Office Work, 1900–1930*. Women in American History. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Sutton, Denise H. (2009). *Globalizing Ideal Beauty: How Female Copywriters of the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency Redefined Beauty for the Twentieth Century*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tadajewski, Mark. (2011). "Correspondence Sales Education in the Early Twentieth Century: The Case of The Sheldon School (1902–39)." *Business History* 53(7): 1130–1151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00076791.2011.590935>.
- Westkaemper, Emily. (2017). *Selling Women's History: Packaging Feminism in Twentieth-Century American Popular Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ ; London: Rutgers University Press.
- Witkowski, Terrence H. (2012). "Marketing Education and Acculturation in the Early Twentieth Century: Evidence from Polish Language Texts on Selling and Salesmanship." Edited by Ben Wooliscroft. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* 4(1): 97–128. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17557501211195082>.
- Woodward, Helen. (1926). *Through Many Windows*. New York: Garland Publishing.

4

FEMINISM AS GLOBAL ENDEAVOR

Temma Kaplan and Nova Robinson

For more than two centuries, feminist activists have worked to ensure that women regardless of class, race, or nationality have access to a good quality of life filled with sufficient food, good housing, adequate healthcare, access to education, self-government, and all life's possibilities. Winning the right to vote, ending violence against women, stopping war, overcoming the social costs of disease, and, more recently, fighting to assure the worldwide provision and protection of clean water have been the target of feminist organizing around the world. Addressing these and other issues has often led feminists to create global solidarity networks, which have led to positive change in the lives of men, women, and children. This essay explores issues addressed by feminists around the world.

Defining global feminism

Solidarity, transnational, and international feminism all describe different modes of global feminist organizing. The most common form is solidarity feminism, or feminists working directly in concert across world regions to address a common issue or set of issues. International feminism unites like-minded feminists across borders, often in formal organizations, such as the International Alliance of Women (IAW), often with the goal of effecting change in an international governing body, such as the League of Nations or the UN.¹ International women's organizations – those composed of feminists from more than one nation – need not represent more than one world region, though sometimes they do. The Pan-African Women's Union or the Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres (Inter-American Commission on Women) exemplify current international women's organizations that represent a single world region. "International" and "transnational" organizations often overlap, but scholar and activist Chandra Mohanty argues that an organization can only be considered "transnational" if it unites women across borders in an attempt to reform or dismantle power structures, such as colonialism or neoliberalism.²

Sometimes global feminist organizing leads to momentary collaborations, such as US feminists helping Japanese, Indian, and Egyptian feminists address excessive alcohol consumption in their countries in the 1920s and 1930s.³ Sometimes solidarity feminism leads to the development of a lasting transnational feminist network, such as DAWN (Development Alternatives with

Women for a New Era), which was established in 1984 by feminists from the Global South. DAWN members declared:

We want a world where inequality based on class, gender, and race is absent from every country and from the relationships between countries. We want a world where basic needs become basic rights and where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated.⁴

The target of DAWN's activism was not just improving the status of women but restructuring the global system, which they saw as the root cause of the impoverishment and disenfranchisement of women in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In an effort to decentralize power, the organization's headquarters rotates throughout member nations. The organization's first general coordinator was Brazilian Neuma Aguiar and its first seat was in Rio de Janeiro; its headquarters moved to Barbados when Peggy Antrobus took over as general coordinator and continues to migrate with each leadership transition.

In general, scholars who have studied transnational feminist organizing argued it was either issue or identity based.⁵ Philosopher Sergio Gallegos has observed that many feminist activists operating beyond the confines of their nation-state actually do both: they build coalitions because of a shared issue *and* a shared identity. Since 1993, the members of Via Campesina, encompassing mostly women farmers from Belgium to Honduras and from Indonesia to Zimbabwe, have come together through a shared peasant identity *and* because they want to improve agricultural practices and protect the land.⁶ For the feminists of DAWN, the shared issue was deconstructing global capitalism and the shared identity was "Third World Woman," an identity that emerged from the UN Decade for Women, 1975–1985, which brought feminists and government representatives together in three conferences in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), and Nairobi (1985). During the UN Decade for Women's conferences, feminists from the Global South, or the "Third World," felt that the UN prioritized its conception of "women's rights" – political, social, and economic rights and the right to bodily integrity – over the economic reforms DAWN viewed as essential to improving women's lives. Feminists from DAWN member countries reclaimed the "Third World" label as a point of unity and pride, and pushed to get the UN to enact reforms focused on addressing economic inequality, environmental degradation, and food insecurity.

Often feminists direct their activism toward international governing bodies in order to create a global standard for an issue affecting women's quality of life around the world. The "international women's rights system," which started to take shape after World War I, encompasses the declarations and treaties according to which nation-states have pledged their support for women's rights. Initially, the male leaders of the League of Nations did not consider women's rights an international concern, but savvy feminists used the issue of a married woman's nationality to prove its significance to League officials. In the 1920s, sometimes a woman was rendered nationless when she married a non-national, and a woman without a nationality was an international problem.⁷ The League of Nations and later the UN started to study and draft treaties on specific issues, such as a woman's right to nationality or the political rights of women. Often, however, these treaties reflected the views of elite feminists from the United States and Europe. In the 1930s, Syrian feminists lobbied the League of Nations in an effort to get it to recognize different women's rights systems.⁸ Their activism reveals early efforts to decenter the views of white, egalitarian feminists from the Global North in the international women's rights system.

In 1979, the UN moved away from this single-issue approach and drafted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which defines and

details the many modes of discrimination against women. CEDAW prohibited *de facto* (by fact) and *de jure* (by law) discrimination “on the basis of sex” that impeded or nullified a woman’s ability to exercise “fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”⁹ Ultimately, CEDAW did not bind signatories to enforce the terms of the treaties at the national level, which is a major weakness. Even so, CEDAW and other international declarations and treaties that address women’s rights are an important resource for feminist activists around the world. For example, the United Nation’s Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, passed in 1993, enabled groups like the All-India Women’s Conference to pressure their governments to create binding legislation to penalize violence against women at the national level. Studying global feminist organizing reveals the dynamic interplay between national and international women’s rights organizations.

The first instances of proto-global feminist organizing took shape in the 1830s. This early global network united women from capital cities in Western Europe and the Eastern United States. As historian Kathryn Kish Sklar has observed, certain women who were excluded from anti-slavery organizations applied their considerable talents to a wide array of other movements.¹⁰ As feminists, they fought for women’s education, property rights, custody rights, and, perhaps most significantly, women’s rights to vote.¹¹

“International” women’s organizations headquartered in London, Paris, New York, and Washington, DC, emerged in the 1880s and frequently assumed the role of spokeswomen for all women, even though their membership was initially almost exclusively from Central and Western Europe, the United States, and Canada. Some of these international organizations, like the World’s Young Woman’s Christian Association, sought social uplift; some, like the IAW, sought political rights. The organizations eagerly welcomed support from feminist organizations in other regions of the world, but they seldom included them as equals. Women of the dominant classes generally overlooked or underestimated the needs and desires of feminists living under European colonialism in Asia and Africa. Thus, many feminists from the colonized world became disillusioned with the Western-dominated international women’s rights organizations and focused instead on securing national liberation and women’s rights for their own regions.

Today and in the past, feminists engaged in activism across borders generally agree that the status of women needs to be improved but disagree about how to do so. Should feminists prioritize legal or economic reforms? Should they focus on ending colonialism or capitalism before addressing entrenched gender inequality? These debates and the different modes of global feminist organizing – direct solidarity or activism directed at international governing bodies – have given rise to the international women’s rights system in force today. Some feminists in the Global South feel that the international women’s rights system, with its emphasis on individual rather than collective rights, has never been fully separated from its colonial roots.

Many feminists resist working with members of the international women’s rights systems because they are disillusioned by the biases and power imbalances they perceive. Instead, they frequently engage in various local campaigns at the grassroots level to achieve cumulative victories locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally. Today, grassroots feminists and feminists connected to formal organizations are continuing to work, sometimes in concert across borders, sometimes separately, to expand international women’s rights protections so they reflect the views of non-elite women of color from the Global North and the Global South. Whether fighting epidemics; gaining fresh, running water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and bathing; winning equitable wages and working conditions; or avoiding sexual attacks on the job, dedicated women throughout the world have worked together across borders to win political and social rights for themselves and others.

Global struggle for the vote

In 1848, white women gathered on Haudenosaunee land in New York State for the Seneca Falls Convention, the first women's conference in the United States. The Declaration of Sentiments contained 11 resolutions on women's rights, which at the time included the right to an education, the right to own property, and the hotly debated issue of women's suffrage.¹² Indeed, the suffrage resolution was so contentious it almost derailed the passage of all the declarations. In the end, it was the only resolution that failed to receive unanimous support from the female delegates. Rather than looking to the collectivist, matrilineal systems of power found in the Indigenous communities in the Northeast of the United States, the feminists demanded inclusion in the liberal systems of government that valorized individual rights.¹³ In time, many feminists came to believe that the key to other rights was the right to vote, through which women could gain access to the political systems shaping their lives. Over time isolated calls for the right to vote grew into a global feminist movement focused on securing the franchise.

The first successes of the global women's suffrage movement were in Wyoming, New Zealand, and Australia, far from the centers of world power in Western Europe and the Eastern United States. The enfranchisement of women in settlement zones often came at the expense of Indigenous populations or was used as a political bargaining chip. According to local historian Tom Rea, between 1854 and 1869, territorial legislatures in Nebraska, Washington, Wyoming, and the Dakota Territory attempted (and in the case of Wyoming succeeded) to grant votes to white women. At the end of the Civil War, many Yankee and Confederate veterans departed for territories west of the Mississippi River, bringing their racial prejudices with them.¹⁴ The dominant political parties of the day, the Republicans and the Democrats, were divided about allowing Black men in Wyoming the right to exercise their constitutionally guaranteed voting rights but decided to give white women the right to vote. The extension of the franchise to white women was an effort to attract more white women to the territory, where white men outnumbered white women six to one. In addition, the territorial government assured teachers equal pay regardless of sex and guaranteed all white women property rights. When Wyoming was about to become a state in 1890, the US government pressured it to disenfranchise women. But Wyoming's governor proclaimed that the state would "stay out of the union a hundred years rather than come in without our women."¹⁵ When Wyoming entered the union, both Black and white women gained full voting rights, though Indigenous men and women were barred from voting until 1924.

Similar efforts to enfranchise white women developed in New Zealand and Australia. In South Australia, where both Indigenous and white men gained the right to vote in 1856, wealthy women property owners in New South Wales secured the right to vote in local elections in 1861. In 1891, with the aid of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's Suffrage League, women in the Victoria province gathered 33,000 signatures to a petition asking the province to grant votes to women, but their petition was rejected. Numerous groups of women organized further demonstrations and sent letters to the press as Parliament was carrying out its final debate on passing the legislation. Finally, in 1908, all white Australian women gained voting rights in Commonwealth elections, while Aboriginal women had to wait until 1962 to gain the right to vote. In 1893, New Zealand became the first self-governing territory in the world to grant women voting privileges in parliamentary elections. The enfranchisement of Māori as well as white women in New Zealand, the result of the concentrated efforts of suffragists and Indigenous activists, established New Zealand as a model for all other suffrage campaigns around the world.

Suffragists started to pool resources and share strategies through women's organizations and through the pages of the women's press, a site of solidarity feminism. The first international feminist organization dedicated to the franchise was the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), founded in 1904. In Russia the All-Russian Union for Women's Equality published the *Soiuz Zhenshchin* (*Women's Union*, 1907–1909), which ran articles advocating for suffrage after the 1905 revolution.¹⁶ In New Delhi, *Stri Darhma* (*Their Right Way*, 1918–1936), the magazine of the Women's Indian Association, ran articles on the suffrage movement in the UK, the United States, and other parts of Asia.¹⁷ Similar articles about the women's movement elsewhere ran in *Seitō* (*Bluestocking*, 1911–1916), a women's literary magazine in Japan, and in *L'Egyptienne* (*The Egyptian Woman*, 1925–1940), the official organ of the Egyptian Feminist Union.¹⁸ News of another country's award of national voting rights or even the ability to vote in municipal or regional elections rippled through this news network and was used to pressure states that had not yet granted women voting rights.

Feminists turned the enfranchisement of women into a barometer of a nation's progress. States started to do the same. But not all suffrage campaigns were successful. In Beirut in 1920, feminists pressured their national leaders to grant voting rights to educated women. After a lively debate, their demands were ignored.¹⁹ Even if a state granted the right to vote, other laws often impeded access to the franchise. For example, many states in the US South used literacy tests and poll taxes to prevent Black men and women from exercising their right to vote.²⁰

Efforts to secure women's rights to vote brought more women into feminist organizations and marked the beginning of a more representatively global feminist network. Elite feminists from North and South America; Central, South, and East Asia; the Eastern Mediterranean; North Africa; Western Europe; Russia; and Australia united under the umbrella of the IWSA. While the organization may have represented many world regions, the women who participated in the IWSA were all members of the elite. Initially, the IWSA worked to change national laws, but when the League of Nations was founded in 1920, the IWSA broadened its focus and began lobbying it to address women's issues. For various reasons, in the late 1920s, feminists in Beirut, Damascus, Havana, Honolulu, New Delhi, and Montevideo started to create alternate women's rights advocacy spheres to vie with those headquartered in Western Europe.²¹ Suffrage was often on the agenda at these conferences, even as it started to fade from activist agendas in Western Europe and the United States.

The global struggle to end violence against women

For centuries, feminist activists have been struggling to end violence against women. Recognizing that drunkenness often resulted in the physical abuse of women, women's rights advocates sought to address what they perceived to be the root cause of the abuse: alcohol. The temperance movement, which sought the prohibition of the consumption or sale of alcohol, started in Ohio in the 1860s and quickly spread around the world. It was the earliest global campaign to end violence against women. The temperance movement led to the passage of the 18th Amendment to the US Constitution in 1919. Though repealed in 1933, the passage of the amendment was initially heralded by feminists around the world. In fact, feminists from India and other places sought advice from US feminists about how to secure similar reforms in India.²²

Feminist activism to end violence against women assumed new forms in the 1960s and 1970s with the creation of shelters for abused women. Of course, the practice of aiding women escaping from abusive husbands and fathers predated these shelters. Buddhist Kakekomi Dera and Catholic convents, among other religious institutions, had provided shelter to abused women as far back as the early modern period. The temperance movement and the shelter movement

reveal innovative ways to return to women control over their own lives. And, by the 1990s, the UN started to recognize the physical, psychological, and emotional abuse of women as significant barriers to women's well-being around the world. Many nations have established severe penalties for abusing women. Changing culture and implementing national and international reforms is another story altogether. SOS Mujer, a Uruguayan women's organization founded in 1987, directs their work "at society as a whole. It's no use just changing the women, the other half of society has to be changed as well." They begin all events emphasizing that "it's not a question of feminism or machismo but a question of violence."²³

Despite feminists' progress on penalizing sexual assault and intimidation, the abuse of women remains all-too-pervasive on the job, as the global success of the #MeToo movement reveals. When Hollywood actresses began speaking out in the #MeToo movement about the sexual abuse they had suffered at the hands of producers, directors, and other Hollywood moguls, the first group to back them up was the Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, made up of largely Mexican American women farmworkers and their families.²⁴ Claiming to "represent some 700,000 female farmworkers who are said to 'suffer in silence' because of the widespread sexual harassment they face in their work on a regular basis," the Alianza Nacional de Campesinas brought cross-class gendered interests into view. The group later added, "even though we work in very different environments, we share a common experience of being preyed upon by individuals who have the power to hire, fire, blacklist, and otherwise threaten our economic, physical and emotional security."²⁵ The courage and solidarity of these women, a large proportion of whom were undoubtedly undocumented workers, was not lost on the over 300 women who worked in the arts – television, theater, film – who responded by raising millions of dollars to support the women farmworkers.

Even before the actresses captured public attention, women hotel workers around the world had been fighting against sexual attacks by men whose rooms they attempted to clean. One survey of hotel workers indicated that 58% of women who worked in local hotels had suffered sexual attacks by members of the staff or visitors. These frequent attacks were often ignored by hotel management in the name of protecting guilty customers. In 2011, a crisis publicized what the cleaning staff of New York hotels often faced. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, head of the International Monetary Fund and widely believed to be in line to become the next president of France, was accused of assaulting hotel worker Nafissatou Diallo, an immigrant to the United States from Guinea who was a single mother and the sole support of her daughter. According to Diallo, he attacked and raped her. When the hotel management refused to stand up for her, she hired a lawyer who specialized in cases of sexual harassment and won a civil settlement.

Because of the #MeToo movement, working-class women finally began to win the public attention they had long been denied. And it became increasingly possible to stand up to those who used violence and humiliation to silence scores of women who were simply trying to earn a living. In 2018, coordinated, cross-country feminist activism forced the five largest hotel chains in the United States to provide "panic buttons" to all workers to allow them to call for help if a hotel guest (or a member of the hotel staff) attempted to assault them.²⁶ What makes the #MeToo movement different from past struggles for political and social rights is that it has built on the efforts of women of all races and classes to control their own bodies and define their personal and collective rights through direct action.

#MeToo spread globally, but the hashtag and corresponding movement have been an especially potent organizing force in East Asia. In 2015, five young former women's studies students in China who were planning to protest the harassment they encountered on public transportation got arrested and were held in prison for a month. Young Chinese feminists turned to social media to raise awareness about the violence the "Feminist Five" were facing in prison. Feminists

worldwide picked up on the hashtag, and the pressure led to the release of the activists. Although Chinese internet censors are vigilant, feminist activists are agile at evading them to raise awareness about feminist causes.²⁷ In South Korea, where spycams in public toilets were used to create 6,500 images uploaded to pornography websites in 2017 alone, feminists used #MeToo to call for an end to the practice.²⁸ Rallies against the spycam images and in protest against the acquittal of high-profile public figures accused of rape drew upward of 70,000 women, making them some of the largest in South Korean history.

Feminists and grassroots activists proclaiming their motherhood for practical and strategic reasons have worked together to protest against various forms of state and foreign violence. On a warm spring morning in 1977 in Buenos Aires, a group of grandmothers joined the other mothers gathered in the Plaza de Mayo holding a banner that read, “where are the hundreds of babies we bore and raised?” The women holding the banner or clutching photos of their sons and daughters were the mothers of the hundreds of people who were missing and “disappeared” – a euphemism for the state-sanctioned killing of its citizens during this particular period of political conflict – under the military dictatorship in Argentina that lasted from 1977–1983.²⁹ The mothers and grandmothers continued their weekly protests until 2006.

This mode of popular, grassroots organizing, which played on the reproductive labor of women, spread globally, and mothers around the world in conflict and post-conflict zones gathered to pressure the state for information about their missing family members. Holding photos of their sons, husbands, and brothers, women gathered in Martyrs Square in Beirut during and after the civil war that took place between 1975 and 1990.³⁰ Similar tactics were used by women in Sri Lanka between 2005 and 2015 in an effort to get the state to investigate the missing and “disappeared” Tamil men.³¹ During the First Intifada (1988–1993), Israeli women started to don all-black clothing and gather in silence to protest their state’s violence against Palestinians.³² Their small gatherings led to Women in Black, a decentralized international organization that continues to organize silent protests for peace and in opposition to war, state violence, and militarism in general. Today, Israeli Women in Black protesters hold signs reading “Stop the Occupation.”³³ The mothers of Plaza de Mayo and the Women in Black protestors attempted to bring attention to the gendered consequences of war.

US-backed wars and direct US belligerency in the Middle East contributed to the formation of new anti-war feminist activist networks. During the Iran-Iraq War, Iraqi and Iranian women tried to cultivate global activist networks in support of their advocacy to end the war and to get support for female refugees.³⁴ During the period of UN-backed sanctions in Iraq following Operation Desert Storm, Iraqi women also sought to establish solidarity networks with feminists in other countries.³⁵ Global feminist solidarity for Iraqis, but especially women and children, took on new urgency in the months before the US invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003. US-based feminist organizations such as the Missile Dick Chicks and the Raging Grannies publicly protested the war.³⁶ Code Pink, a reference to the US’s Homeland Security’s threat rating system that emerged after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, attempted to cultivate global solidarity in opposition to the war.³⁷ On February 15, 2003, feminist anti-war activists and others in opposition to the war organized the largest global protest in history, with 6 to 10 million protestors filling streets and avenues in capital cities around the world.

Since the 1970s, feminist scholars have identified the ways in which women disproportionately bear the brunt of conflict. In 2000, feminist pacifists and practitioners in the women in development field rejoiced when the UN Security Council issued Resolution 1325. The resolution paved the way for greater inclusion of women in the peacemaking process and more attention to the gendered consequences of conflict and war. More work remains to be done to ensure the principles of UNSCR 1325 are achieved in peace negotiations.³⁸

Clean water: A global feminist issue

Some of the most consequential global feminist movements address inequalities in access to clean water and safe working conditions, issues that affect the lives of women all around the world. Such activism reveals the ways in which feminist organizing focuses on improving the quality of life for all people. Few demands made by feminists have been more important than demands for the fair distribution of clean water. CEDAW was the first international convention to recognize the importance of water and sanitation in shaping women's lives.³⁹ In 2010, the General Assembly of the United Nations, concerned that over 800 million people were subject to typhoid and cholera because they lacked clean water, resolved for the first time that the "right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation [is] a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights."⁴⁰ In spite of the UN's position, in 2019, the World Health Organization noted that 2.2 billion people, or one in three people worldwide, lacked access to clean water and nearly half of the world's population did not have access to safe sanitation.⁴¹ The situation is not expected to get any better anytime soon. Experts claim half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas by 2025.⁴² By contrast, in 2002, 500 million people lived in water-scarce countries.⁴³

Disappearing wetlands, falling water table levels, and desertification force women to go long distances to get the water they and their families need. Finding and transporting clean water for personal hygiene, washing, cooking, cleaning, and drinking is principally the responsibility of women in the Global South and other places in the developed and developing world. Globally, water collection is gendered. UN Women reports that "in 80% of water-deprived households, women and girls carry the burden of water collection."⁴⁴ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has reported that women and girls spend 200 million hours a day collecting water, describing it as a "colossal waste of time."⁴⁵ Put another way, nearly a majority of the world's women spend at least one-quarter of their waking hours securing water for cooking, drinking, bathing, and sanitation. And the distance they have to travel to get water is increasing because of desertification and pollution of the world's water supplies. In sub-Saharan Africa 29% of the population needs to travel more than 30 minutes roundtrip to collect clean water.⁴⁶ In Kyrgyzstan women like Shakhodat Teshebayeva are taking matters into their own hands and are pressing for increasing women's participation in water management because they are, after all, largely responsible for water collection.⁴⁷

Concentrating on grassroots feminist organizing in relation to water use brings into view some of the gendered ways women, especially those who are feminists, have contributed to formulating broad claims for an improved quality of life. Over the past 50 years, they have added to new notions of human rights, including land reform and the provision of clean, unpolluted water. The specific political content of women's social movements over water as well as over other necessities of life may vary depending on world region and time period, but many women activists feel empowered to speak when the well-being of their communities, including the provision of safe, clean, plentiful, and easily accessible water, is at stake. This is not a new phenomenon.

Cholera, a potentially lethal waterborne bacterial infection that leads to diarrhea and severe dehydration, reveals the gendered effects of lack of access to clean water. Cholera originated in eastern India and was spread throughout the world in the 1820s by the British army and navy. Such outbreaks persisted until the early twentieth century and continue to occur all over the world in areas with poor water treatment facilities. In most nineteenth-century outbreaks of cholera, women and girls died at a greater rate than men and boys due to their work cooking fresh and often contaminated food; cleaning latrines and bathrooms; and working in

washhouses, public laundries, and public markets, all while providing medical care to members of their families who were already infected. For example, when cholera ripped through Spain in 1855, rural Torrelaguna, outside Madrid, lost 30% of its population, and the majority of the fatalities were women.⁴⁸

Women who sold fruits and vegetables at the Barley Market in central Madrid took to the streets to protest local tax hikes during a cholera epidemic in 1892.⁴⁹ Already facing declining demand because local customers were afraid to eat fresh vegetables as a result of the epidemic, the women planned a demonstration. They wove through the city brandishing fruit and vegetables on sticks and carrying a banner proclaiming “Asparagus, Lettuces, and Artichokes against Cholera.” When they arrived at the Plaza Mayor (Central Plaza), they faced down the military brandishing swords. The women responded by proclaiming that they were confronting “Hunger, not Cholera.” When the governor attempted to speak, someone threw a head of lettuce that hit one of his political aids. To retaliate, the governor ordered the troops to attack the demonstrators. The *verduleras*’ protest lasted for a week and gained the support of laundresses and other working-class women. By some accounts, the women did “everything possible to make those taunting them throw potatoes: [which they claimed was] their only hope of getting something to eat.”⁵⁰ Historian Sara López has described these fruit vendors, many of whom were single mothers and working-class women who sometimes cultivated vegetables on open lots on the outskirts of the city, as early feminists.⁵¹

While the disproportionate vulnerability of women to waterborne disease was abundantly clear in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it took several decades for feminists to explicitly address access to water as a feminist issue that transcended borders. For instance, consider a mining strike that took place over a nine-month period in 1951 and 1952 in New Mexico when the Latina women decided that the provision of hot, running water and indoor toilets for Latino as well as white miners should be one of the union demands. Facing an injunction against striking, the men had to withdraw from the picket lines or go to prison. The working-class women of the mining community – who were not, technically speaking, “workers,” although they had become intuitive feminists – took over the strike, and the gender roles were reversed. When the men were forced to care for their children while hauling water and cutting wood to heat it, they quickly began to understand that housework – including the provision of food and clean clothing – is real work, and they recognized the importance of adding a provision about hot, running water to their strike demands.

Water, of course, is essential to agricultural production, and some women have been mobilized to take action when there was not enough water to grow the food needed to feed their families. For example, in the 1970s, rural women in Kenya began realizing that their marshes, streams, and ponds were drying up and that they had to go farther and farther to collect the wood and water they needed. As proto-feminists who realized that collecting wood and water were women’s issues, a group of women farmers contacted the National Council of Women of Kenya, a non-governmental organization (NGO) made up of social activists, some of whom taught at the University of Nairobi. The local women grew coffee for market and farmed subsistence crops for their own survival. These farmers realized that cutting down indigenous trees to grow coffee as a cash crop, which they and their relatives had been forced to undertake over the previous half century, had contributed to the lowering of the water table.

Deforestation and the lowering of the water table interfered with the women’s ability to provide healthy food for their families. Some mothers had to feed their children more processed food since it required less water for cooking. Consequently, some of the children began to suffer malnutrition and related diseases. Working together and with the help of a university professor of veterinary anatomy, Wangari Maathai (1940–2011), who had grown up in rural Kenya, the local

women started planting trees. They planted the first seven saplings at a gathering in Nairobi on World Environment Day in 1977. The movement spread throughout Kenya, creating battalions of barefoot “foresters without diplomas.” The women, who first met together to discuss economic and social changes that had led to environmental degradation, quickly turned to human rights, including feminism. Since the organizations’ founding, it has planted billions of trees throughout Africa, launching the Pan-African Green Belt Network and the Green Belt Movement International.⁵² Their work has inspired similar women-led reforestation efforts around the world. Today, the organization focuses on four initiatives: tree planting, water harvesting, resistance against climate change, and advocacy for gender rights. In 2004, Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize.⁵³

In South Africa, where the post-apartheid Constitution of 1997 defines water as a human right, privatization has conflicted with access rights for the poor, especially for the women who have primary responsibility for getting and using the water. One of the distinctive characteristics of the apartheid regime was its effort to determine the settlement patterns of different ethnic and racial groups. But the regime’s need for the labor of such groups resulted in the creation of segregated townships where poor Black and brown workers, especially poor women, lived in shanties and lean-tos. Lacking physical amenities such as electrical outlets, running water, or individual toilets, the women and girls of these communities frequently traveled to water spigots, where they lined up with buckets to secure water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and washing. Women and men from these poor communities were forced to use outdoor latrines or open fields to relieve themselves. This was a special problem for women and young girls who were subject to sexual attacks or were forced to miss five days a month from school because they lacked safe facilities when they were menstruating. Some feminists such as Fatima Meer (1928–2010) founded organizations such as the Clare Estate Environment Group, which attempted to offer services the state failed to provide. The end of apartheid, among other benefits, was supposed to bring improvements in sanitation and access to water for women.

In principle, the South African constitution of 1997 and successive legislation guaranteed 6 free kiloliters of water per person per day to every household through privately funded water companies. Unfortunately, for the majority, who lived seven or eight to a household frequently led by a single woman, the 6 kiloliters amounted to approximately 25 liters a day per person to wash, drink, bathe, and clean. The World Health Organization says that everyone needs a minimum of 100 liters a day. For the rich and middle classes, the 6 free kiloliters of water might top off their private swimming pools; for the poor, this water might be all the household could count on for all its needs.⁵⁴ Although a small amount of water was free, only those who paid for additional water in advance could access the guaranteed supply of water.⁵⁵ Often, however, there was not enough money to secure access to water. When water ran out, women and girls were responsible for finding the funds to purchase it from water sellers, and often they could not do so.⁵⁶ According to the executive director of Durban Water Services, during the first six months of 2000, nearly 24,000 households – or nearly 100,000 people – had no water service at all because they were unable to pay their water bills.⁵⁷ Lack of access to clean water led to a cholera epidemic in the KwaZulu-Natal province in 2000. Faced with a public health crisis and pressure from women, Durban dedicated itself to improving access to water for the city’s poor, though need still outstrips supply.⁵⁸

South African women activists involved in water struggles took immediate action at the start of the COVID-19 crisis. Working along with feminist water justice organizations like the Blue Planet Project centered in Canada, they began to attend to the needs of some of the world’s poorest people. Local feminist activists like Koni Benson of the University of the Western Cape and the Blue Planet Project responded to this crisis by bringing together frontline women

leaders from South Africa, Chile, and Detroit, Michigan, to report on how they were serving local people through direct action.⁵⁹ Throughout Africa, other women are creating alliances to improve access to water. Benson is also building Pan-African solidarities around improving water access.⁶⁰

The Bolivian women's collective known as the *Habitat Para la Mujer Comunidad María Auxiliadora* (Habitat for Women's Community of Maria Auxiliadora) has also focused on the fundamental importance of water to the well-being of women and their children. Their organization showcases the intersection of issues many women need to navigate. In September 1999, five Bolivian street vendors, whose partners and landlords made them victims of domestic violence, had begun discussing how they could pool their scant resources to live together in peace.⁶¹ They attracted the attention of Rose Marie Irusta, a Bolivian social worker concerned with the degree of violence and battering directed against Bolivian women of all classes. By pooling the resources of the original five women, and adding the holdings of their neighbors and Irusta's own resources, they assembled sufficient money to buy land on which they built 55 houses between 1999 and 2003. By 2016 they had constructed 370 mini homes (200–300 square meters) and have plans to build 700 more.⁶² In a country like Bolivia with competing Indigenous and capitalist legal systems, there was no modern precedent for collective or community ownership of land, so the land had to be registered as the property of Irusta. Having secured a means of collective ownership of the land, the women of Maria Auxiliadora, who were largely Indigenous working-class women, sought water autonomy, especially as the cost of water rose astronomically in the early 2000s. Sociologists and historians have frequently written about women's consumer rebellions, although they have generally focused on food and fuel rather than the provision of clean water for human consumption, sanitation, cleaning, and agriculture, but these issues have also galvanized feminist action.

Since the 1970s, increasingly in the 1990s, and now in the twenty-first century with the rapid expansion of deserts such as the Sahara and the lowering of water tables from the Central Valley of California and Monterey, Mexico, to Cape Town, South Africa, and Cochabamba, Bolivia, to São Paulo, Brazil, and Tucuman, Argentina, the control and distribution of water has become a central survival issue, akin to the need to breathe fresh air or freely exercise individual and collective rights. The question of whether water will be privatized and turned into a commodity – for sale to the highest bidder – increasingly becomes a source of conflict between nations, one that grassroots feminists have been at forefront of raising awareness about. But that is nothing new; feminists have long been focused on efforts to improve the collective good.

Conclusion

Global feminist issues around political enfranchisement, physical security, and health have led to global solidarity networks, some formal, many grassroots, to improve the quality of life for people around the world. While the League of Nations and the UN were initially loath to address women's concerns, the current international system, not just the international women's rights system, is largely the by-product of formal and grassroots feminist organizing, frequently from the Global South. Often overlooked or underestimated, feminist campaigns about life and death issues such as stopping violence against women and ending disease outbreaks have led to international conventions that improve the lives of men, women, and children. With many basic protections guaranteed, at least in theory, by the UN and other international governing bodies, feminists around the world are working to ensure that the rights and protections are implemented.

Thanks to the brave activism of women from around the world, the vision of the Seneca Falls feminists has mostly come to pass: women can get an education, they can become professionals,

they can own property, they can divorce. And it has come to pass for most of the world's women, not just elite, white women in the Global North. Global feminist activism in the twentieth century led to increased educational opportunities for women in all world regions. In 1970, women made up 8% of college students around the world; by 2020, women made up 41% of college students worldwide.⁶³ Women are welcomed into most professions around the world, though sexism and structural barriers persist in many industries, especially in the fields of the sciences and technology. While women still earn considerably less than men for equal work, women fortunate enough to make good salaries can open a bank account in most countries without her husband's permission, giving her much-needed economic independence. Women can initiate divorces when needed in most countries. Women can vote almost everywhere. And the likelihood of women dying in childbirth has been greatly reduced thanks in large part to feminist efforts to improve the healthcare of women and children. The rights and protections gained through persistent activism on local and international levels are far from secure, as evidenced by the ongoing efforts to severely restrict women's rights to abortions in the United States. Rights that are won can be lost.

Work to improve women's lives continues, and feminism will continue to evolve to meet the challenge of ensuring basic human rights for all women regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and/or ability. While feminist activists have created networks of transnational NGOs to improve women's working lives and health conditions, winning quotas to bring more women into the existing power structures of government, and adding women's voices to debates, the struggle goes on. Patriarchal power is unlikely to relinquish control without continued struggle.

Notes

- 1 This organization was founded in 1904 as the International Woman Suffrage Alliance; it assumed its current name in 1946.
- 2 Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Transnational Feminist Crossings: On Neoliberalism and Radical Critique," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38, no. 4 (2013): 967–91.
- 3 Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press Books, 1991).
- 4 Gita Sen and Caren Grown, "Alternative Visions, Strategies, and Methods," in *Development Crises and Alternative Visions: Third World Women Perspectives* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), 80.
- 5 Sergio Gallegos, "Building Transnational Feminist Solidarity Networks," in *Decolonizing Feminism: Transnational Feminism and Globalization*, ed. Margaret McLaren (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 231–56.
- 6 Annette Aurélie Desmarais, "The Power of Peasants: Reflections on the Meanings of La Vía Campesina," *Journal of Rural Studies* 24, no. 2 (2008): 138–49.
- 7 Ellen Carol DuBois, "Storming the Hague—The 1930 Campaign for Independent Nationality for Women Regardless of Marital Status," *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies* 16, no. 4 (2013): 18–29.
- 8 Nova Robinson, *Truly Sisters: Arab Women and International Women's Rights* (forthcoming).
- 9 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979. Full text of the convention can be accessed on the UN Women website: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm.
- 10 Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Women's Rights Emerges Within the Antislavery Movement, 1830–1870: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000).
- 11 Margaret H. McFadden, *Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-century Feminism* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014).
- 12 Nancy Hewitt, "Re-rooting American Women's Activism: Global Perspectives on 1848," in *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789–1945*, ed. Karen Offen (New York: Routledge, 2010), 18–25.
- 13 Cynthia Feathers and Susan Feathers, "The Iroquois Influence on American Democracy," *The Guild Practitioner* 63, no. 1 (2006): 28–34.
- 14 Tom Rea, "Right Choice, Wrong Reasons: Wyoming Women Win the Right to Vote," *WyoHistory.org: A Project of the Wyoming State Historical Society*, November 8, 2014. <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/right-choice-wrong-reasons-wyoming-women-win-right-vote>.

- 15 Jennifer Helton, *Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Plains* (Pierre, SD: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2019).
- 16 Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild, *Equality and Revolution: Women's Rights and the Russian Empire, 1905–1917* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).
- 17 Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, "Writing *Stri Dharma*: International Feminism, Nationalist Politics, and Women's Press Advocacy in Late Colonial India," *Women's History Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 623–49.
- 18 Pauline C. Reich and Atsuko Fukuda, "Japan's Literary Feminists: The 'Seito' Group," *Signs* 2, no. 1 (1976): 280–91; Beth Baron, *The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society, and the Press* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); Marilyn Booth, *May Her Likes be Multiplied: Biography and Gender Politics in Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).
- 19 Elizabeth F. Thompson, *How the West Stole Democracy from the Arabs: The Syrian Arab Congress of 1920 and the Destruction of its Liberal-Islamic Alliance* (London: Atlantic Books, 2020).
- 20 Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894–1994* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1999).
- 21 Marie Sandell, *The Rise of Women's Transnational Activism: Identity and Sisterhood between the World Wars* (London: IB Tauris, 2015).
- 22 All-Asian Women's Conference Report, "All-Asian Women's Conference, First Session, Lahore, Jan. 19–25, 1931," Mumbai, Maharashtra: *Times of India*, 1931, 77.
- 23 "Gender and Health in Latin America: Interview, Violence Against Women (Uruguay)," in *World History Commons*, <https://worldhistorycommons.org/gender-and-health-latin-america-interview-violence-against-women-uruguay>.
- 24 "Sexual Abuse and Insurance in the Agricultural Industry," IRMI [2000–2019 International Risk Management Institute, Inc. (February 2018), p. 2, www.irmi.com].
- 25 Sarah Jaffe, "The Collective Power of #MeToo," *Dissent Magazine* (Spring 2018), www.dissentmagazine.org.
- 26 Rosie Spinks, "In the #MeToo Era, U.S. Hotels Are Giving Workers Panic Buttons," (Sept. 10, 2018), Quartz Membership, www.qz.com; Allison Herrera, "Chicago Hotel Workers Join #MeToo, Demand Protections Against Sexual Assault," *PRI's The World* (October 09, 2018), www.pri.org.
- 27 Suyin Haynes and Aria Chen, "How #MeToo Is Taking on a Life of Its Own in Asia," *Time*, October 9, 2018.
- 28 Laura Biker, "#MeToo Movement Takes Hold in South Korea," *BBCNEWS Seoul*, March 26, 2018.
- 29 Temma Kaplan, *Taking Back the Streets: Women, Youth, and Direct Democracy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 130.
- 30 Lyna Comaty, *Post-Conflict Transition in Lebanon: The Disappeared of the Civil War* (London: Routledge, 2019).
- 31 Malathi De Alwis, "'Disappearance' and 'Displacement' in Sri Lanka," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 22, no. 3 (2009): 378–91.
- 32 Sara Helman and Tamar Rapoport, "Women in Black: Challenging Israel's Gender and Socio-political Orders," *British Journal of Sociology* (1997): 681–700.
- 33 Tova Benski, "Emotion Maps of Participation in Protest: The Case of Women in Black against the Occupation in Israel," *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 31 (2010): 3–34.
- 34 Nadjé Al-Ali and Nicola Pratt, eds., *Women and War in the Middle East: Transnational Perspectives* (London: Zed Books, 2009).
- 35 Zahra Ali, *Women and Gender in Iraq: Between Nation-building and Fragmentation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Nadjé Al-Ali, "Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and Occupation," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 4/5 (2005): 739–58.
- 36 Rachel V. Kutz-Flamenbaum, "Code Pink, Raging Grannies, and the Missile Dick Chicks: Feminist Performance Activism in the Contemporary Anti-War Movement," *NWSA Journal* 19, no. 1 (2007): 89–105.
- 37 Valentine Moghadam, "Transnational Feminism," in *Gender Matters in Global Politics: A Feminist Introduction to International Relations*, ed. Laura Shepherd (London: Routledge, 2015): 331–46.
- 38 Nicola Pratt and Sophie Richter-Devroe, "Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13, no. 4 (2011): 489–503.
- 39 CEDAW (1979), Article 14(2)(h).
- 40 UN General Assembly Resolution A/Res/64/292 (July 2010).
- 41 www.who.int/news/item/18-06-2019-1-in-3-people-globally-do-not-have-access-to-safe-drinking-water-unicef-who.

- 42 World Health Organization Fact Sheet on Drinking Water, June 14, 2019.
- 43 The Guardian, May 14, 2008.
- 44 UN Women, “Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda,” Report (2018). Sustainable Development Goals 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- 45 UNICEF Press Release, “Collecting Water is Often a Colossal Waste of Time for Women and Girls,” August 29, 2016.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 UN Women, “Women in Rural Kyrgyzstan Bring Change Through Water, Technology, and Better Infrastructure,” March 4, 2019.
- 48 Francisco Feo Parrondo cites these figures In “La Epidemia de Colera en San Fernando de Henares (1865)” Departamento de Geografía. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, (2005) no. 15–16, pp. 57–72; p. 59.
- 49 “El motín de al verduleras: el día que las mujeres trabajadoras sublevaron Madrid,” in *ACTUALIZADO*, February 18, 2020.
- 50 Henríque Mariño, “El motín de las verduleras: el día que las mujeres trabajadoras sublevaron Madrid,” *ACTUALIZADO* (Madrid), February 18, 2020, p. 10.
- 51 Ibid., p. 10.
- 52 Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 121.
- 53 Ibid., 125.
- 54 Ashwin Desai, *We Are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002), 69–71.
- 55 Coalition Against Water Privatisation & the Anti-Privatisation Forum, *Lessons From the War Against Prepaid Water Meters: The Struggle Against Silent Disconnections Continues . . .*, August 16, 2006, www.apf.org.za. A report on Phiri, Soweto in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 56 Ibid., 17–19.
- 57 Desai, *We Are the Poors*, 72–4.
- 58 David Hemson, “Easing the Burden on Women? Water, Cholera and Poverty in South Africa,” in *Poverty and Water: Explorations on the Reciprocal Relationship*, eds. D. Hemson, K. Kulindwa, H. Lein, and A. Mascarenhas (London: Zed Books, 2008), 144–67; Keith Schneider, “Durban Water and Sanitation for Poor Sets Global Standard,” *Circle of Blue*, February 12, 2016, www.circleofblue.org/2016/africa/durban-water-and-sanitation-for-poor-sets-global-standard/.
- 59 Meera Karunanathan, “Water Justice in the Time of Covid-19,” *The Blue Planet Project*, April 3, 2020, <https://blueplanetproject.net/index.php/water-justice-covid/>.
- 60 Koni Benson, “Pan-Africanism, Feminism and Popular Education in the Struggle against Water Grabbing in Africa: An Interview with Coumba Toure,” *Agenda* 34, no. 4 (2020): 112–21.
- 61 “Buscar un lugar . . . y construir una comunidad: La comunidad María Auxiliadora en Cochabamba, Bolivia: Documento de respaldo preparado para el Foro Social Urbano de Medellín, elaborado en base a extractos y elementos de la historia de la comunidad, que en ocasión posterior se completara y publicara” Documento con elementos del texto de la Comunidad Maria Auxiliadora en Cochabamba (March, 2014), p. 7.
- 62 Rosemary Irusta and Maria Eugenia Torrico, “The Maria Auxiliadora Community,” *Women and Environments International Magazine*, (Toronto, Canada) Spring 2004, 11–12; Amonah Achi, “Habitat para la Mujer – Comunidad Maria Auxiliadora,” *Centro de Planificación de Gestión (CEPLAG) de la Universidad Pública de Cochabamba*, 2008; Amy Booth, “Barrios en Cochabamba toman las riendas de su suministro de agua,” *The Guardian*, June 9, 2016.
- 63 School enrollment, tertiary, female (% gross), UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Data as of September 2020), <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR.FE>.

9

THE DIGITAL AGE AND BEYOND

Kate Eichhorn

For the purposes of this chapter, the “digital age” refers to a period that began in the late 1990s and extends to the present. Depending on who you ask and where you are in the world, this period of history has either been a time when feminism has flourished or a time when feminism has been grossly misappropriated and undermined. For a variety of reasons, the production and circulation of feminist slogan tees are a useful place to begin exploring the most recent chapter in feminist history.

In the mid- to late twentieth century, feminist slogan tees didn’t circulate as fashion. They were something acquired because one belonged to a feminist collective or organization; had participated in a feminist protest, conference, or event; or at least wanted to belong or participate. In other words, with few exceptions, you only got the t-shirt if you engaged in some type of action or community building effort. Even on those rare occasions when feminist slogan tees were purchased, the exchanges were rarely simply about commerce. For example, the original “The Future Is Female” t-shirt was designed to promote Labyris Books, New York City’s first feminist bookstore.

A lot has changed since Labyris Books starting selling its “The Future is Female” t-shirt in 1975. To begin, most feminist bookstores, including Labyris, no longer exist. In the 1980s to 1990s, there were over 100 feminist bookstores across North America.¹ By 2020, less than a dozen of these stores remained. Rather than view the demise of feminist bookstores as tantamount to the demise of feminism, many people would argue that their demise is just a sign of the times. After all, we now live in an era when one doesn’t need to visit a feminist bookstore to purchase feminist books or swag. New titles in feminist theory, feminist slogan tees, and even socks emblazoned with caricature of one’s favorite feminist icon can now just as easily be purchased on Amazon. But it isn’t simply that feminist products are now more accessible. Feminism has found a home in contexts with which it would have once appeared at odds. In the process, feminism itself has become commodified, and this seems to have happened across the shopping budget spectrum.

Again, consider the sheer variety of feminist slogan tees now on the market. High-fashion options include the “We Should All Be Feminist” t-shirt – a \$710 t-shirt designed by Maria Grazia Chiuri for her debut collection at Christian Dior in 2016 (as of 2020, the t-shirt was still available from Dior but now for \$860).² On the more affordable end of the feminist slogan tee market, a new version of “The Future Is Female” t-shirt can be purchased for just \$30 from Los

Angeles-based designer Malia Mills, who has made a name for herself by designing swimwear for women of all body sizes. In the twenty-first century, however, feminist slogan tees aren't just being turned out by high-end and niche designers. In 2017, the discount retailer Forever 21 appropriated gender-queer clothing line Wildfang's "Wild Feminist" slogan and slapped it on a t-shirt that sold for just \$10.90 – that is, until Wildfang's founders took legal action.³ At Wildfang, the original "Wild Feminist" t-shirt costs nearly four times the Forever 21 price tag, but as the company's founders like to point out, they donate part of all sales to Planned Parenthood, among other charities.⁴

If "the future is female" and we're now in the future, one thing is certain – it is likely not the future that the women at Labyris Books imagined in the mid-1970s. It is a future where feminism seems to be popular and where many of feminism's original goals seem to have drifted. It is a future where feminist slogans are just as likely to be found on the catwalk as the front lines. It is a future where capitalism's reach has become so vast that it has even found a way to successfully turn feminist slogans – and even aspects of feminist activism – into something that can be effectively commodified. In short, it is a future where feminism increasingly appears to exist in concert with neoliberalism, with its persistent focus on markets, entrepreneurship, and individualism. For this reason, while feminism may very well have found new fans in surprising places in the twenty-first century, it is also wrought with contradictions and conflicting agendas. Not surprisingly, these tensions are especially apparent when one considers the striking disparities in how feminism is experienced in the world's different global economies.

In 2014, London-based fashion brand Whistles teamed up with the Fawcett Society, a British-based feminist organization with roots dating back to the nineteenth-century suffrage movement, to sell a "This Is What a Feminist Looks Like" slogan tee for £45. Before long, everyone from Britain's deputy prime minister, Nick Clegg, to celebrity Emma Watson were wearing the t-shirt and posing for selfies. With promotional support from *Elle* magazine and the viral power of social media, the campaign was initially a huge success. Then, the *Daily Mail* published an investigative article claiming the Fawcett Society's t-shirts had been produced by women making just 62 pence (about 80 cents) per hour in a Mauritian sweatshop. While subsequent investigations revealed the workers – many migrants from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam – were being paid the standard hourly rate in the region, the society's failure to fully investigate where their t-shirts had been manufactured and under what conditions put a permanent damper on the campaign.⁵ But the Fawcett Society controversy didn't just go away – it has become a cautionary tale about feminist activism in the twenty-first century. After all, the Fawcett Society incident not only revealed the potential power of embracing fashion, celebrities, and digital networks to promote feminism but also revealed that these things are often a double-edged sword.

To be fair, while previous generations of feminists may have printed their own t-shirts rather than teaming up with an established retailer, this doesn't mean they were not printing on sweatshop-produced garments (in fact, many probably were since sweatshop t-shirts have always been less expensive than those made domestically under decent labor conditions). In the twenty-first century, however, a combination of citizen journalism, social media, and viral campaigns has not only increased the likelihood of discovering such contradictions but also increased the likelihood that such mistakes will be rendered visible and keep circulating online, even years after they happen. In a digital age, what is popular can just as easily be "cancelled," often by the same social media influencers who supported a campaign in the first place. In many respects, this is what feminism looks like in a digital age. It is a feminism deeply entangled with popular culture and digital media platforms. It is a feminism that can take hold anywhere and be just as quickly dismissed. It is the tenuous, fleeting, and contradictory nature of feminism in the twenty-first century that is the focus of this chapter.

Post-feminism and popular feminism

If feminism appears to be adrift as we move deeper into the twenty-first century, the problem certainly isn't new. The idea of "post-feminism" was already gaining ground in the late 1990s.

In her 2004 essay "Post-Feminism and Popular Culture," cultural studies scholar Angela McRobbie – who would later dedicate an entire book to the subject (*The Aftermath of Feminism* from 2008) – observed,

Post-feminism positively draws on and invokes feminism as that which can be taken into account, to suggest that equality is achieved, in order to install a whole repertoire of new meanings which emphasise that it is no longer needed, it is a spent force.⁶

Post-feminism, according to McRobbie, doesn't rail against feminism as much as it effectively appropriates it and, in the process, renders it unnecessary. But that is not all it does. Post-feminism also shows up in the assumption that women can and arguably should have the right to choose anything – any style, anyway of being in the world, any path forward. For example, under post-feminism, McRobbie observed,

There is quietude and complicity in the manners of generationally specific notions of cool, and more precisely an uncritical relation to dominant commercially produced sexual representations which actively invoke hostility to assumed feminist positions from the past in order to endorse a new regime of sexual meanings based on female consent, equality, participation and pleasure, free of politics.⁷

Said another way, post-feminism asserts that we now live in a world where women have choices and that with excessive choice, liberation naturally follows. Subject to increased interrogation, however, the logic of post-feminism quickly starts to break down. On this account, it is useful to consider the logic underpinning SlutWalk.

SlutWalk, the brainchild of two university students, launched in Toronto in 2011 after a police officer suggested women "avoid dressing like sluts" if they want to avoid sexual assault. The comment sparked the inaugural SlutWalk, which soon morphed into a global but not necessarily inclusive movement. At its best, SlutWalk is a distinctly twenty-first-century response to older annual feminist events like Take Back the Night. However, in sharp contrast to Take Back the Night marches, which were popular in the late twentieth century, SlutWalk isn't just about saying no to sexual assault – it is also about saying yes to women's right to walk around at any time of day wearing anything they like. In this respect, SlutWalk isn't about negation but about affirmation and choice. This may explain why – in contrast to Take Back the Night marches where women generally walked through the streets at night wearing feminist slogan tees, carrying placards, chanting, and blowing rape whistles – SlutWalk is more parade than march and more spectacle than protest. After all, SlutWalks, unlike most feminist marches, not only attract allies who cheer along on the sidelines but, in many cases, men who come out to ogle and jeer at the women who choose to participate in the event wearing little more than thongs and nipple pasties.

For some feminists, SlutWalk is a powerful statement about women's rights in the twenty-first century. The movement challenges rape culture, rejects victim culture, and reclaims the word "slut" not just for women but anyone who might be denigrated as a "slut."⁸ For many of its proponents, it is a deeply inclusive movement prepared to respond to the specific issues facing women in a new century. But not everyone, including all feminists, agree with SlutWalk's

mandate or approach. In a 2012 article published in *Feminist Theory*, Kathy Miriam summed up SlutWalk in just a few scathing words:

SlutWalk, at its core, is the example of the kind of feminism that has effectively supplanted a collective world-changing project with individualized empowerment. Feminism here is converted from a term referencing a political movement to an identity term with no content save whatever empowers the individual woman who chooses the identity.⁹

If Miriam's critique centers of SlutWalk's tendency to focus on women's individual rights, others have argued that the movement fails on a different basis – its inability to account for the fact that some women may be more able to reclaim the term “slut” than others. From its inception, SlutWalk has been specifically critiqued by many visible minority women. Black Women's Blueprint issued a statement in 2011 explaining why they couldn't support the walk:

Although we vehemently support a woman's right to wear whatever she wants anytime, anywhere, within the context of a “SlutWalk” we don't have the privilege to walk through the streets of New York City, Detroit, D.C., Atlanta, Chicago, Miami, LA. etc., either half-naked or fully clothed self-identifying as “sluts” and think that this will make women safer in our communities an hour later, a month later, or a year later.

Their statement also explicitly states, “We do not want to encourage our young men, our Black fathers, sons and brothers to reinforce Black women's identities as ‘sluts’ by normalizing the term on t-shirts, buttons, flyers and pamphlets.”¹⁰

Whether SlutWalk is simply what feminism looks like in the twenty-first century or what post-feminism looks like is a matter of perspective. It certainly does appear, however, to embrace the very things that McRobbie lays out as hallmarks of post-feminism. Above all else, it is about choice – specifically, the choice of individuals to do and say and dress as they like when they like – rather than about collective action. Certainly SlutWalk carries forward some long-standing feminist concerns (a rejection of rape culture and victim blaming), but how it pursues the eradication of rape culture and victim blaming is enacted along entirely different lines. To be fair, however, SlutWalk didn't emerge in a vacuum, and it is not entirely disconnected from earlier feminist struggles. If SlutWalk has a lineage, it is arguably in the feminist sex radical cultures of the 1980s and 1990s, which also vehemently attempted to make a case for women's right to choose to embrace many things that an earlier generation of feminists had rejected, including the right to choose to engage in acts of sexual submission and to produce, circulate, and consume pornography. But isn't this the power of post-feminism? Post-feminism has arguably become pervasive because it doesn't consistently reject but often overlaps with established feminist practices, ideas, and histories. However, one doesn't need to look to an exceptional example such as the SlutWalk to find post-feminism at work. It is just as apparent in many aspects of “popular feminism.”

In *Empowered*, cultural studies scholar Sarah Banet-Weiser teases out the overlaps between post- and popular feminism. Banet-Weiser observes,

On the face of it, popular feminism seems quite distinct from postfeminism's disavowal of feminist politics. After all, popular feminism takes up the mantle of traditional feminist issues, pointing out that girls and women have experienced crises of gender in the twenty-first century, from low self-esteem to low numbers in leadership positions.¹¹

However, despite popular feminism's persistent attempts to challenge sexism – by pointing out that men still far outnumber women in executive positions and in the tech world – popular feminism is by no means entirely divorced from post-feminism. As Banet-Weiser explains, “Popular feminism in the current moment also shares great structural similarities with postfeminism.”¹² Specifically, Banet-Weiser maintains that both post-feminism and popular feminism appear to rely on the same affective politics that pivots around entrepreneurial spirit, resilience, and gumption. In other words, post-feminism and popular feminism appear to both be deeply structured by a focus on the individual and the individual's ability self-actualize or self-realize. Following from McRobbie, Banet-Weiser observes that discourses of post- and popular feminism both call for one to become a better economic subject, not necessarily a better feminist subject. To be clear, earlier generations of feminists (sometimes categorized as “liberal feminists”) were also preoccupied with getting more women into board rooms and other mainstream leadership positions, but as Catherine Rottenberg argues in her 2014 essay, “liberal feminism's *raison d'être* was to pose an immanent critique of liberalism,” but neoliberal feminism (and both post- and popular feminism can be lumped under this category) doesn't ultimately aim to critique neoliberalism – it is intent on reifying its core principles, which include an exaltation of the market economy, the individual, and the individual's rights not simply as a person but as a consumer and producer within the market economy.¹³

Given popular feminism's focus on individuals and their status as consumers and producers within a market economy, it is no surprise that this form of feminism has impacted women in developed nations differently than it has impacted women elsewhere in the world. As Chandra Mohanty suggests, “the hegemony of neoliberalism alongside the naturalization of capitalist values, influences the ability of make choices on one's own behalf in the daily lives of economically marginalized as well as economically privileged communities around the globe.”¹⁴ In other words, everyone is impacted by neoliberalism's reach, but this doesn't mean everyone is impacted in the same way. In the West, neoliberalism turns choice into a consumer practice and freedom itself into a circulating commodity. Elsewhere in the world, the reach of neoliberalism is also present, but it doesn't necessarily “empower” women by expanding their options as consumers or giving them the right to buy their freedom. “Third World Women,” a category Mohanty continues to embrace as an analytical category that encompasses what she acknowledges to be a diverse and heterogenous group of women of color around the world, experience neoliberalism differently due to their historical location in the private market. If neoliberalism divides the world into consumers and producers, Third World Women broadly defined are more likely to end up further entrenched in the role of producer while economically privileged women gain increased power as consumers. Popular feminism in developed nations, then, arguably rests upon the backs of Third World Women. After all, the growing choices now available to women in developed nations, especially as consumers, are both directly and indirectly contingent upon the exploited labor of Third World Women.

Networked feminism

The SlutWalk's viral spread had everything to do with the fact that the event didn't just happen – it was documented and recirculated across social media platforms. For this reason, the relatively small SlutWalk held in Toronto in 2011 was able to become a global movement in a timeframe that would have been unimaginable in the pre-digital era. This is the power of what is sometimes referred to as “networked feminism” and sometimes as “hashtag feminist” or “digital feminism.” Whatever you call it, it is pervasive and often stunningly effective. It is also rife with contradictions.

The most well-known example of hashtag feminism is #MeToo, though the movement wasn't initially a hashtag but rather a phrase that activist Tarana Burke popularized on her MySpace page 2006. Although hashtag feminism is often characterized for its speed, it took over a decade for #MeToo to go viral – this happened only after a long-standing investigation into the sexual-abuse allegations of producer Harvey Weinstein went public and several celebrities started to use the MeToo hashtag in posts about the investigation. But hashtag feminism isn't reducible to #MeToo. Over the past decade, there have been myriad other campaigns around the world that have shown the powerful potential of digital organizing. These campaigns include but are not limited to #WhyIStayed, #EverydaySexism, #SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen, and #RapeCultureIsWhen.

Not surprisingly, networked feminism has already received considerable attention from feminist media studies scholars in the twenty-first century. As Rosemary Clark-Parsons argues in *Networked Feminism: How Digital Media Makers Transformed Gender Justice Movements*, and in several related articles, hashtag feminism is not beyond critique, but it does do something that earlier feminist actions often failed to do – reach women who aren't already part of a feminist organization or network or institution. As Clark-Parsons observes in “Hope in a Hashtag: The Discursive Activism of #WhyIStayed”:

Digital media . . . have eclipsed feminist movement organizations, providing access to a visible platform and wide audiences without necessitating membership within a formal organization, league, or caucus. Organizations no longer structure communication within the feminist movement; rather, communication, itself, from blog posts to Twitter hashtags, has become an important organizational structure for the movement.¹⁵

In *Digital Feminist Activism*, Jessalynn Keller, Jessica Ringrose, and Kaitlynn Mendes reach a similar conclusion:

The promise and potential of hashtag feminism lies in the way it offers an easily consumable, brief way of addressing feminist issues that are transferable across media platforms. Popular hashtags such as #MeToo, #YouOkSis, #YesAllWomen, and #RapeCulture-IsWhen become ways for women to talk back to the hostility, misogyny, and sexist practices surrounding rape culture, sexual harassment, and everyday sexism.¹⁶

Yet, as Carrie Rentschler observes, hashtagged conversations are frequently just a starting point. Using #YouOkSis as a central example, Rentschler argues that some hashtags also “serve as key sites of knowledge production about feminist bystander intervention that feed into the development of movement organisations and their own processes of community accountability and survivor support.”¹⁷ In other words, some hashtags lay the groundwork for the emergence of support structures and services that may share much in common with earlier forms of feminist infrastructure.

It is important to note that networked feminism didn't necessarily originate in the United States and later spread outward. Since its development, it has been global in scope. Moreover, although some hashtags and online movements do eventually connect women across regions, in other cases, digital interventions with overlapping agendas appear to arise independently and remain localized in focus. In 2016, for example, before the #MeToo hashtag gained momentum in the United States, women organizers in South Africa had already popularized several related hashtags, including the #EndRapeCulture hashtag that initially emerged as a protest against the normalization of sexual assault on university campuses.¹⁸ Later, just a few

months before #MeToo started to spread virally as a hashtag, the South African advocacy group known as Sisters Working in Film and Television (SWIFT) launched their own hashtag campaign, #ThatsNotOk, as a way to expose the different forms of sexual harassment that regularly take place in the South African film and television industries.¹⁹ It is important to note, however, that while women around the world increasingly share the same digital tactics, the stakes and consequences can be remarkably different.

In their 2014 study on women's digital activism in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, for example, Elham Gheytnchi and Valentine N. Moghadam emphasize the extent to which digital technologies and platforms have radically changed the structure of feminist organizations and organizing. As they note,

The model of loose networks that are decentralized and relatively leader-less has permeated the women's movement. . . . Women's activism has thus shifted into loose social networks of advocates of women's equality, participation, and rights in their respective countries.²⁰

In this respect, Gheytnchi and Moghadam appear to agree with North American and European feminist scholars whose research indicates that networked feminism's strengths lies in part in its ability to reach a much-wider audience – an audience that includes individual women who may not have the time or agency to join feminist organizations or participate in feminist events. Yet, as Gheytnchi and Moghadam further emphasize, the reasons why these technologies matter to women in MENA societies and the consequences of using these technologies often remain region specific. In many MENA societies, for example, state control of the media is the norm, and as such, “the free flow of communication afforded by ICTs [information communication technologies] allows activists to plan ahead, communicate with the outside world, and circumvent state censorship.” In the face of state control of the media, however, becoming a digital activist also brings different consequences. There are, as Gheytnchi and Moghadam state, numerous examples of women bloggers and Facebook activists in the MENA region being arrested and even incarcerated due to their online activism. Simply put, for women in MENA societies, organizing online may be driven by many of the same goals as it is for women in North America and Europe, but the consequences are often profoundly different and more dangerous.²¹

While there is little question that networked feminism holds the potential to reach women who may have previously been left out of feminist dialogues and frontline feminist activism, networked feminism also raises a host of new problems and contradictions that apply to women living across global regions of the world.

As political scientist Jodi Dean argues in *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics*, in a digital era, “the exchange value of messages overcomes their use value.” In other words, messages are no longer primarily sent from senders to receivers. Part of a circulating stream of data, a message's content is irrelevant and so is its need to be received at all. As Dean notes, “The only thing that is relevant is circulation, the addition to the pool.”²² For activists, the fact that private companies can now profit simply from the generation of data – whatever the content of that data happens to be – means that the content they produce, including their counter-hegemonic content, can perversely benefit private companies, including those that are simultaneously fueling the very sexist and misogynist practices these activists may seek to rail against. Take, for example, Facebook. While the platform has certainly offered a new platform for feminist activists (e.g., much of the organizing for the 2017 Women's March happened on Facebook), the platform is rife with problems.

Many of these problems were confirmed in fall 2021 when Frances Haugen, a former product manager at Facebook, confirmed that Facebook, which also owns the popular social media platform Instagram, has known about its harmful impact of girls and young women for years and yet knowingly dismissed evidence of these harms.²³ This, however, is precisely Dean's point. In a digital world where the only thing that matters is that content is being posted and liked and reposted on a constant basis, whether the content is a post about an upcoming anti-violence march or a post of a gang rape doesn't matter. More content means more data, and more data means greater research and development potential and, ultimately, increased profits for technology companies.

To fully appreciate how digital activism differs from earlier forms of print-based activism, consider the difference between today's digital activism and the type of activism that pivoted around the deployment of earlier information technologies, including copy machines. Certainly the companies responsible for making copy machines were far from innocent. In fact, in the 1960s, Xerox did its own part in fueling disparaging views on women in the workplace with a popular series of advertisements that alleged its copy machines were an ideal replacement for the average female secretary and far less likely to make errors. Still, ultimately, when the company's machines started to be used by activists (often surreptitiously since activists often relied on copy machines in their workplaces and never paid for access), Xerox did not benefit from the flyers and posters being printed on its machines. The same thing can't be said for a platform like Facebook or Instagram or Twitter or YouTube. Every time an activist deploys a digital platform to post information or share a relevant article or circulate a statement with a hashtag, the companies stand to gain. As Dean suggest, in a digital age,

Capitalism has subsumed communication such that communication does not provide a critical outside. Communication serves capital, whether in affective forms of care for producers and consumers, the mobilization of sharing and expression as instruments for 'human relations' in the workplace, or contributions to ubiquitous media circuits.²⁴

For all of hashtag feminism's potential, then, one can't forget that it exists within this circuit – one that is constantly supporting infrastructures that also undermine feminist causes in a persistent and insidious manner.

Feminist issues in a networked world

Networked feminism has pried open new possibilities for resistance, albeit not without a notable cost. At the same time, networked life has quickly given rise to new forms of exploitation and abuse and, in some cases, retooled existing forms exploitation and abuse. One of the most obvious concerns is the extent to which the networked technologies have augmented how violence against women is experienced and promoted. The growing problem of "revenge porn" offers insight into how one existing feminist issue (pornography) now requires both a new analyses and approach to activism.

"Revenge porn," also known as "non-consensual pornography," "image-based sexual abuse," or "digital rape," describes the recording, uploading, and circulating of intimate and sometimes violent moments of non-consensual contact. Revenge porn is sometimes used as a form of coercion or to shame and humiliate a former spouse or casual sexual partner. In other cases, these recordings circulate on digital pornography platforms, often disguised as "amateur videos" (a term that suggests the recordings were voluntarily uploaded). The images in question not only document sexual acts but, in some instances, non-consensual sexual assaults. While the conditions under which these images are produced vary (in some cases, individual may have agreed to be recorded but not to have the recordings shared, and in other cases, the documentation itself may have taken place without consent), what is clear is that the emergence of image-based sexual abuse has taken the existing problem of sexual violence against women and expanded its reach

and complexity. As Sophie Maddocks observes in her 2018 study, if revenge porn is difficult to address, it partly reflects the fact that it is difficult to categorize. “The rise of the internet has ushered in a raft of new harmful behaviours and conventional abuses have gained dangerous online dimensions,” observes Maddocks. “To be effectively communicated, these harms must be accurately named and defined. But in practice, coinages tend to emerge organically without consideration of their explanatory power.”²⁵ Maddocks further observes that “revenge pornography,” by any name, is also experienced differently across cultures. After all, in some cultures, an image of an unmarried woman simply posing – fully clothed – next to a man to whom she is neither married nor related may be considered inappropriate and even criminal in some instances.²⁶

Adding to the problem of revenge porn is a new and even more complex variable – the use of “deep fakes” in the production of pornography. A deep fake is typically understood to refer to any moving image generated using artificial intelligence. In short, a deep fake is a moving image that looks real but is machine generated. For some, the arrival of deep fakes solves a problem that has long plagued the pornography industry – human exploitation. After all, with deep fakes, one can now produce pornography without relying solely on the exploitation of human subjects. So far, however, this is not how deep fakes have impacted the pornography industry. Rather than dehumanize pornography, deep fakes are ushering in a new era of pornography that exploits a different class of actors – generally recognized mainstream celebrities. As reported in *Wired* magazine in August 2020, as deep fakes become increasingly popular and inexpensive to produce, up to 1,000 explicit deep fake videos, usually featuring female celebrities and musicians, are being uploaded to the world’s biggest pornography websites each month.²⁷

While the circulation of deep fakes may seem problematic, as Jacquelyn Burkell and Chandell Gosse note, “Producers of fake pornography, and those who consume it, are quick to defend the practice on the grounds of freedom of expression, noting their right to produce and consume parody and satire, and asserting that neither practice is intended to harm the targets.”²⁸ But is fake pornography any less harmful than pornography produced using human actors? In the history of debates about pornography and violence against women, pornography hasn’t simply been defined as sexually explicit material that is obscene but also as sexually explicit material that harms women by endorsing violence against women. As Andrea Dworkin and Catherine Mackinnon argued in their 1988 treatise, *Pornography and Civil Rights: A New Day in Women’s Equality*, “the more pornography is consumed, the more observers’ views are shaped by it, and the more the world it makes confirms that view.”²⁹ From this perspective, pornography doesn’t just depict violence, it endorses and, in turn, reproduces it. If one adheres to this position, deep fakes, which can be excessively violent, may easily be viewed as a way to extend the harms already being done through the production and circulation of pornography. Both revenge porn or intimate image abuse and the use of deep fakes in pornography reveal the extent to which the networked world has not only raised new feminist issues but also, in some cases, complicated existing feminist debates.

The future is (not) female (or male)

Although “The Future Is Female” slogan tee has been reclaimed and enthusiastically embraced in the twenty-first century, including by a younger generation of feminists, in many respects, the slogan itself is an anachronism. In the twenty-first century, feminism is no longer necessarily female. Indeed, the idea that a feminist politic might hinge on a fixed biologically based female subject has become an increasingly contestable claim, at least in some parts of the world. The rise and demise of the Michigan Women’s Music Festival offers insight into how the relationship between understandings of gender and feminism have changed since the late 1990s.

When the festival, which eventually came to be known as “Michfest,” started back in the early 1980s, it was grounded on the premise that women (that is, biologically born females) could do it for themselves. Indeed, this premise underpinned the nearly 40-year experiment that would unfold each August on a 650-acre plot of land in Hart, Michigan. The dream was to build a community, if only once a year for one week, where everything – construction, electrical work, security, cooking, firewood collection, transportation, and so on – was solely carried out by women. While children were welcome from the onset, the festival segregated boys (that is, all biologically born males). Boys under 12 were cloistered at Brother Moon Camp. Once over 12, boys were no longer permitted on “the land,” as it was called, at all. And the festival wasn’t just in the business of policing boys and men. Anyone born male who identified as a woman was also generally unwelcome. But the policy wasn’t without its critics, even within the Michfest community.

If Michfest once represented a radical feminist experiment in living and culture, by the 1990s, the idea of a festival based on a fixed and stable understanding of gender was increasingly at odds with both feminist and queer political mandates. The festival’s controversial biologically essentialist admission criteria would eventually result in the establishment of Camp Trans – an event that ran simultaneous to the festival from the 1990s to the festival’s eventual demise. While trans women were admitted to the festival on at least two occasions over the years, in the end, Michfest’s founder, Lisa Vogel, opted to end the festival rather than embrace trans women. The decision was made despite indications that by 2015 many Michfest attendees, especially younger attendees who had come to feminism in an era defined by books like Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* rather than Charlotte Bunch’s *Lesbianism and the Women’s Movement*, supported the inclusion of trans women and trans men.

In the twenty-first century, Michfest, with its blatant transphobia, isn’t the only feminist institution to have ultimately come undone as new understandings of gender and feminism have taken hold. How many people experience gender on an everyday basis has also started to unravel, and in the process, so have many of the feminist institutions that once pivoted around a stable notion of gender, including women’s bookstores, women’s presses, women’s centers, and women’s studies departments and programs. Some of these institutions, including most bookstores and presses, no longer exist. Some of these institutions have simply been rebranded. As of 2020, most women’s studies program in North America, for example, have officially changed their names to gender studies or gender and sexuality studies. In many respects, however, this is precisely what Susan Stryker appeared to predict in her 2007 essay, “Transgender Feminism: Queering the Woman Question”:

“Gender”, transgender tells us, is not related to “sex” in quite the same way that an apple is related to the reflection of a red fruit in the mirror; it is not a mimetic relationship. Perhaps “sex” is a category that, like citizenship, can be attained by the non-native residents of a particular location by following certain procedures. Perhaps gender has a more complex genealogy, at the level of individual psychobiography as well as collective socio-historical process, than can be grasped or accounted for by the currently dominant binary sex/gender model of Eurocentric modernity. And perhaps what is to be learned by grappling with transgender concerns is relevant to a great many people, including nontransgendered women and men. Perhaps transgender discourses help us think in terms of embodied specificities, as *women’s studies* has traditionally tried to do, while also giving us a way to think about gender as a system with multiple nodes and positions, as *gender studies* increasingly requires us to do.³⁰

Over a decade later, Stryker’s observations ring even more true than they did when she first published “Transgender Feminism.” Transgender feminism hasn’t just changed how people who

identify as transgender are perceived. Transgender feminism has changed how people across genders think about and understand gender and its relationship to feminism. The result, especially among people who have come of age since the new millennium, is an increasingly fluid understanding of both gender and sexuality and an orientation to feminism that is increasingly unmoored from a fixed female subject.

However, like so many aspects of feminism, the idea of a feminism unmoored from a stable female subject or binary conception of gender isn't a universal experience. While a growing number of college-age students in North America may feel free to identify as genderless and adopt "they" as their personal pronoun, this embrace of fluidity isn't universal. Indeed, the ability to reject a fixed and stable notion of gender and choose where and how to locate oneself on a gender continuum may itself be a privilege afforded to only a small part of the world's population.

The future is the past

In the twenty-first century, there is little question that feminism has drifted. Most notably, it has become increasingly mainstream and rendered itself increasingly commodifiable, at least in post-industrial nations. As feminism has drifted from its original mandate, however, it has also become paradoxically preoccupied with its past. While earlier generations of feminists were also preoccupied with their own histories (as early as the 1930s, feminists were actively engaged in preserving the documentary traces of earlier generations of feminist activism),³¹ in the twenty-first century, embracing the past has emerged as a sort of *raison d'être* for many younger feminists.

Titles such as Clare Hemming's *Why Stories Matter*, Elizabeth Freeman's *Time Binds*, and Victoria Hesford's *Feeling Women's Liberation* are just a few of the feminist publications since 2000 that have sought to explore the pull of the past on the present. As Hesford observes, "The women's liberation movement was a historical event of great significance, but what the significance was and is remains subject to intense feelings of attachment and disidentification that occlude its historical complexity."³² Hesford's thesis that women's liberation wasn't just a historical event but something that remains subject to intense attachments and contestation appears to be lived out across domains. These domains include but are not limited to the work being carried out by feminists in academe, archives, and, perhaps most notably, contemporary art.

A survey of work by feminist artists born since the late 1960s reveals that many of these artists haven't sought to distance themselves from feminist pasts but rather sought to actively mine feminist histories to build connections between past and present feminist struggles. Consider, for example, artist Sharon Hayes's 2014 exhibit, '77, which pivots around the monumental National Women's Conference that took place in Houston, Texas, in 1977. As Hayes has said, "The conference is intriguing to me as a failure or impossible forum – a limit to the enfranchisement of a feminist political agenda." Yet, as Hayes further observes, "The proposals of the conference, like many other unfulfilled political promises, productively haunt public and political imagination."³³ Alyson Mitchell and Deirdre Logue's *Killjoy's Kastle* – an interactive installation that has now been staged in multiple cities around the world – is also concerned with the powerful ways in which feminist pasts quite literally haunt the present. Using carnival fun houses, haunted houses, sideshows, and even Christian hell houses as a model, participants – who often line up for hours – are eventually led through Mitchell and Logue's installation by "Demented Women's Studies Professors" (the artists often solicit the help of actual gender studies professors to play these roles). While the installation is meant to be fun, it is also part of a more serious exploration of feminist histories. As Mitchell has explained, in *Killjoy's Kastle*, "camp aesthetics, sculpture, installation,

and performance” are used to undermine some of the ridiculous stereotypes that continue to haunt perceptions of both feminist and queer pasts while also “trying to strike a balance between not only being celebratory, but also trying to dig up some of the more painful ghosts and spirits that are part of our legacies.”³⁴

For Hayes, Mitchell and Logue, and other contemporary feminist artists, as well as many contemporary feminist scholars and activists, one might conclude that now the “future is the past.” To suggest that the future is the past may appear defeatist, but this would be to misread how history operates – perhaps especially for feminists. To conclude that the future is the past, is not to suggest that feminism is in decline or that one’s only hope is to recover or resurrect the energy of past revolutions.³⁵ On the contrary, to suggest that the future is the past is to acknowledge that we have arrived in a very different era – an era in which feminism itself is no longer the coming revolution it once was but rather a deep, complicated, and at times contradictory groundwork upon which future worlds can now be built. Feminism, in the twenty-first century, no longer has a clean slate upon which to imagine what it will be. It is, like any other “ism,” burdened and defined by its own past struggles and tensions.

Notes

- 1 Kristen Hogue, *The Feminist Bookstore Movement: Lesbian Antiracism and Feminist Accountability* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 168.
- 2 Steff Yotka, “Maria Grazia Chiuri Makes a Feminist Statement at Her Dior Debut,” *Vogue*, September 30, 2016, www.vogue.com/article/dior-we-should-all-be-feminists-t-shirt-maria-grazia-chiuri.
- 3 Channing Hargrove, “Forever 21 Accused of Ripping Off the Wild Feminist T-shirt Everyone Loves,” *Refinery29*, August 18, 2017, www.refinery29.com/en-us/2017/08/168773/forever-21-wildfang-copy-wild-feminist-shirt.
- 4 See “About Us” on the Wildfang home page, www.wildfang.com/meet-wf/.
- 5 Tansky Hoskins, “The Feminist T-shirt Scandal Exposes an Entire System of Exploitation,” *The Guardian*, November 3, 2014, www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/sustainable-fashion-blog/2014/nov/03/feminist-t-shirt-scandal-exposes-entire-system-exploitation-elle-whistles-fawcett-society.
- 6 Angela McRobbie, “Post-Feminism and Popular Culture,” *Feminist Media Studies* 4, no. 3 (2004): 255.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 260.
- 8 Kaitlynn Mendes, *SlutWalk: Feminism, Activism and Media* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), Chapter 1.
- 9 Kathy Miriam, “Feminism, Neoliberalism, and SlutWalk,” *Feminist Studies* 38, no. 1 (2012): 262–6.
- 10 “An Open Letter from Black Women to SlutWalk” was originally published on the Black Women’s Blueprint website on September, 23, 2011; it was reprinted as, “An Open Letter from Black Women to the SlutWalk,” in *Gender & Society* 30, no. 1 (2015): 9–13.
- 11 Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 20.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Catherine Rottenberg, “The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism,” *Cultural Studies* 28, no. 3 (2014): 418–37.
- 14 Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Practice, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 229.
- 15 Rosemary Clark-Parsons, “Hope in a Hashtag: The Discursive Activism of #WhyIStayed,” *Feminist Media Studies* 16, no. 5 (2016): 3.
- 16 Jessalynn Keller, Jessica Ringrose, and Kaitlynn Mendes, *Digital Feminist Activism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 17.
- 17 Carrie A. Rentschler, “Bystander Intervention, Feminist Hashtag Activism, and the Anti-carceral Politics of Care,” *Feminist Media Studies* 17, no. 4 (2017): 14.
- 18 Amanda Gouws, “#EndRapeCulture Campaign in South Africa: Resisting Sexual Violence Through Protest and the Politics of Experience,” *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies* 45, no. 1 (2018): 3–15.
- 19 Gairoonisa Paleker, “‘These Things Happen’: Hashtag Activism and Sexual Harassment in the South African Film and Television Industries,” *Agenda*, May 2020, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10130950.2020.1720162?scroll=top&needAccess=true.

- 20 Elham Gheytaichi and Valentine N. Moghadam, "Women, Social Protests, and the New Media Activism in the Middle East and North Africa," *International Review of Modern Sociology* 40, no. 1 (2014): 4.
- 21 Ibid., 12–13.
- 22 Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 26.
- 23 Jeff Horwitz, "The Facebook Whistleblower, Frances Haugen, Says She Wants to Fix the Company, Not Harm it." *Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 3, 2021), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-whistleblower-frances-haugen-says-she-wants-to-fix-the-company-not-harm-it-11633304122>.
- 24 Jodi Dean, "Communicative Capitalism and Class Struggle," *Spheres*, November 11, 2014, <https://spheres-journal.org/contribution/communicative-capitalism-and-class-struggle/>.
- 25 Sophie Maddocks, "From Non-consensual Pornography to Image-based Sexual Abuse: Charting the Course of a Problem with Many Names," *Australian Feminist Studies* 33, no. 97 (2018): 345–61.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Matt Burgess, "Deepfake Porn is Now Mainstream. And Major Sites Are Cashing in," *Wired*, August 27, 2020, www.wired.co.uk/article/deepfake-porn-websites-videos-law.
- 28 Jacquelyn Burkell and Chandell Gosse, "Nothing New Here: Emphasizing the Social and Cultural Context of Deepfakes," *First Monday* 24, no. 12 (2019), <http://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v24i12.10287>.
- 29 Andrea Dworkin and Catherine Mackinnon, *Pornography and Civil Rights: A New Day in Women's Equality* (New York: Organizing Against Pornography, 1988), 27.
- 30 Susan Stryker, "Transgender Feminism: Queering the Woman Question," in *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 59–70.
- 31 Kate Eichhorn, *The Archival Turn in Feminism* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2013), Chapter 1.
- 32 Victoria Hesford, *Feeling Women's Liberation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).
- 33 Sharon Hayes, Artist website, '77 (artist statement), <http://shaze.info/work/77/>.
- 34 Matt Stromberg, "A Queer Feminist Haunted House Filled with Riot Ghouls and Polyamorous Vampires," *Hyperallergic*, October 21, 2015, <https://hyperallergic.com/245803/a-queer-feminist-haunted-house-filled-with-riot-ghouls-and-polyamorous-vampires/>.
- 35 Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), xvi.

Third-Wave and Queer Feminisms

Third-Wave Feminism

Most scholars think that third-wave feminism officially started with the coining of the term in 1992 by Rebecca Walker¹ and the activism of feminist/womanist women of color. The 1980s and 1990s saw “white feminism” fade as women of color voiced the matters of most concern to them. According to R. Claire Snyder, third-wave feminists made two significant “tactical moves that responded to a series of theoretical problems within the second wave [of feminism].”² First, in response to the collapse of the essentialist concept of woman, they brought to the fore “personal narratives that illustrate[d] an intersectional and multiperspectival version of feminism;”³ second, “in response to the ascendance of postmodernism, third-wave feminists embraced multivocality over synthesis and action over theoretical justification.”⁴

Third-wave feminism resists simple description. Its writers have produced numerous varied and multifaceted works in a short period, a phenomenon that makes the approach difficult to thematize. Nonetheless, if third-wave feminists share any single characteristic, it is their willingness to accommodate diversity and change. They are fairly characterized as feminist sponges, able and ready to absorb some aspects of all the modes of feminist thought that preceded the third wave’s emergence. They are particularly eager to understand how various forms or axes of oppression cocreate and comaintain each other. The term they use for this phenomenon is “intersectionality” (see Chapter 4).

Broadly speaking, for third-wave feminists, difference is the way things are. Moreover, they expect and even welcome contradiction, including

self-contradiction, as well as conflict. In fact, two leading third-wave feminists, Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake, commented, “Even as different strains of feminism and activism sometimes directly contradict each other, they are all part of our third-wave lives, our thinking, and our praxes: we are products of all the contradictory definitions of and differences within feminism, beasts of such a hybrid kind that perhaps we need a different name altogether.”⁵

Intersectionality, as mentioned in previous chapters, is the overriding principle for third-wave feminists. Originating in Black/African American feminist thought⁶ and standing for the proposition that race, gender, class, ability status, sexuality, and other identity markers overlap and generate distinct forms of oppression in the lives of the oppressed, intersectionality has many facets.⁷ For different feminists it operates as a research program, a description of personal identity, a counterhegemonic political agenda, a symbolic antidote to mainstream legal theory, a critique of the methods and practices of mainstream philosophy, and, most centrally, a theory of oppression.

As a research program, the concept of intersectionality stands for the proposition that no phenomenon is adequately researched or understood without factoring in how race, gender, sexuality, ability status, and class interact and affect the topic under investigation.⁸ As a description of personal identity, it stands for the idea that personal identity cannot be described in terms of neat, monolinear, timeless categories.⁹ As a counterhegemonic political agenda, it is a call to remember the oppositionality that originally motivated intersectional analysis,¹⁰ as well as the concept’s roots in radical women-of-color feminism.¹¹ As a symbolic antidote to mainstream (liberal) legal theory, it is a practical recognition of the complex legal and social needs of the oppressed, including a suspicion that mainstream jurisprudence cannot meet those needs adequately.¹² As a critique of the methods and practices of mainstream philosophy, it calls the discipline of philosophy to take account of its European, androcentric, and white biases as a rudimentary first step toward opening its curricular and conceptual vista to the myriad ways of knowing and being that the discipline currently systematically excludes from the realm of legitimate knowledge and reality claims.¹³ And finally, as a theory of oppression, it holds that axes of oppression (such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability status) overlap and fuse in the lives of the oppressed.¹⁴

As part of their study of intersectionality, third-wave feminists engage in research and writing that attends to the lives and problems of specific groups of women. Like women-of-color, global, postcolonial, and transnational feminists, they stress that women and feminists come in many colors, with numerous ethnicities, nationalities, religions, and cultural backgrounds.

Thus, a typical third-wave feminist text will include articles representing a wide variety of perspectives held by feminists of color: Latin American/Latina/Chicana, Black/African American, Mixed Race, Asian American, Indigenous, and so on.

For fear of misrepresenting the identities and issues of particular groups, however, third-wave feminists take pains to hear what very different groups of women are actually saying. More than other feminists so far, they have brought more different kinds of women, particularly women of color, to the feminist table. A hopeful sign that feminism is well on its way to finally overcoming its “whiteness” is the publication of books like Daisy Hernández and Bushra Rehman’s *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today’s Feminism*.¹⁵ Hernández and Rehman claimed they aimed primarily to “introduce some of the ideas of women of color feminists to women who have thought that feminism is just a philosophy about white men and women and has nothing to do with our communities.”¹⁶ They viewed their book as enabling women of color to forge their own unique brands of feminism by directly addressing their differences.

Hernández and Rehman’s book, among others, has gone a long way to correct in part what women of color, global, postcolonial, and transnational feminists identified as the foremost failing of the second-wave women’s movement—namely, the imposed invisibility of women of color (see Chapters 4 and 5). Third-wave feminists let women of color speak for themselves about their experiences of intersectional oppression. For example, being a woman per se is not necessarily a Black/African American woman’s worst problem. Her blackness, as it intersects with her womanness, may constitute her paramount liability.

Third-wave feminists emphasize that soon not white people but people of color will constitute the majority of the US population. Significantly, third-wave feminists note that, in general, US society is already increasingly comfortable with mixed-race and multiethnic people—individuals who have transcended the boundaries of any one race or one ethnicity. They also observe that parents of children with mixed race or ethnicity are starting to report that their children find white/nonwhite oppositions of little meaning or concern. In a *New York Times* article, for example, one mother of three mixed-race and diversely ethnic sons commented, “Race takes a backseat to what they listen to on their CD players, what movies they see. . . . One is into Japanese anime. Another is immersed in rap. Basically it’s a ghetto culture, but ghetto doesn’t mean poor or deprived, but hip.”¹⁷ The same mother noted that one of her sons has a “hip-hop persona” and friends whose skin color ranges from very white to very black.

Being a third-wave feminist in a society where a growing number of young people choose their racial or ethnic classification differs from being a feminist in second-wave feminist days, when racial and ethnic identities were largely neglected. Doing third-wave feminism is very challenging in a global context, where women in developing and developed countries interact. According to third-wave feminist Chilla Bulbeck, women in developing countries lead a particularly complex life because their world, the “Third World,” is “double valenced.” In other words, the “Third World” can be understood either negatively, as a backward, poor, and bad place to live, or positively, as “a subversive, immense, repressed voice about to burst into centre stage of the globe.”¹⁸

Oftentimes, in addition to being open to women’s different racioethnic, social, economic, political, and cultural differences, third-wave feminists are open to women’s sexual differences. In contrast to most second-wave feminists, they are less prescriptive about what counts as good sex for women. They are also more comfortable with women enhancing their bodies to suit social norms and cultural expectations about what counts as beautiful. If a woman wants to put on makeup, have cosmetic surgery, wear sexually provocative clothes, or sell her sexual services, then, as far as many third-wave feminists are concerned, she should do so, provided she feels empowered by her actions and not somehow demeaned, diminished, or otherwise objectified by them. Unlike their second-wave predecessors, third-wave feminists do not think, for example, that a woman’s choice to work as a porn model or prostitute necessarily stems from economic desperation, a history of past sexual abuse, or some sort of false consciousness that makes her think she likes using her body to make money when she really does not. On the contrary, many third-wave feminists maintain that a woman can be both a feminist and a porn star, call girl, or lap dancer, so long as she likes her job and thinks she is good at it (see discussion of prostitution in Chapter 2).

For these reasons and others, third-wave feminists are shaping a new kind of feminism interested not so much in getting women to want what they should want as in responding to what women say they want and not second-guessing or judging whether their wants are authentic or inauthentic. Third-wave feminists describe the context in which they practice feminism as one of “lived messiness.”¹⁹ According to Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake, part of this messiness includes “girls who want to be boys, boys who want to be girls . . . blacks who . . . refuse to be white, people who are white and black, gay and straight, masculine and feminine.”²⁰ Similarly, Rebecca Walker speculated that because many third-wave feminists grew up both “transgender, bisexual, interracial, [and] knowing and loving people who

are racist, sexist, and otherwise afflicted,²¹ they are not as judgmental about people's sexual lives as their second-wave counterparts were. Walker stressed that because "the lines between Us and Them are often blurred," third-wave feminists seek to create identities that "accommodate ambiguity" and "multiple positionalities."²²

Amy Richards further explained the nonjudgmental, nonprescriptive stance of third-wave feminism: "I don't think these women are saying, 'I'm going to be female, going to be objectified, going to wear sexy clothes and so on and be part of the backlash against feminism.' I think they're saying, 'I'm going to do all these things because I want to embrace my 'femininity.'"²³ Although many second-wave feminists take issue with third-wave feminists playing up their femininity, some do not. For example, second-wave feminist Anne Braithwaite reacted to third-wave feminists' overt sexiness more sympathetically, commenting that this is 2017, not 1967: "An engagement with . . . practices of seemingly traditional femininity does not necessarily carry the same meanings for young women today or for the culture they live in [that it] might have to earlier feminists periods, and thus cannot be the point upon which to write off specific cultural practices as somehow apolitical and therefore 'post'—or 'anti' feminist."²⁴ For second-wave feminist Cathryn Bailey, the fact that younger feminists are focusing on their femininity is "a wake-up call for older feminists that what appears, from one perspective, to be conformist, may from another perspective have subversive potential."²⁵

An icon of third-wave feminism is probably Donna Haraway, whose "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century"²⁶ is a feminist classic. In this essay, Haraway argued that contemporary people have replaced the image of the simple machine with that of the Man-machine—the hybrid of man and machine, the so-called cyborg. According to Jim Powell, Haraway says that the old myths about what makes a human being a person are being replaced by new myths about what makes a cyborg a person. Old myths go back to some primeval place of unity and innocence, like the Judeo-Christian Garden of Eden in which Adam and Eve were whole and unified until they ate from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge and were banished from paradise to bear children in pain and toil. The cyborg myth is very different, in Powell's estimation: "a cyborg is always a split, a hybrid identity, a cybernetic organism: a human computer."²⁷ From a feminist point of view, if women can think of themselves as cyborgs, they can come to terms with the fact that feminists have "always already fractured identities, never just one."²⁸ Feminism takes on a new dynamic in which we cannot tell where the computer stops and the human organism begins, suggested Powell.²⁹

Of course, wherever there are cyborgs, said Powell, there are “hip,” “anti-authoritarian,” and rebellious people who use “big data” to identify their own desires and states of mind even before they are self-consciously aware of them.³⁰ The hacker becomes an “ethical hero” who gets maximum information to the people through his or her mastery over computer systems. This state of affairs is mind-exploding, in Powell’s estimation, because “information” exists in a space where “TV, telex, tape recorder, VCR, laser disk, camcorder, teledildo [for the purpose of a kind of computer sex game between people], audio animatronic paparazzi [sound-activated robotic photographers that snap your photo as if you were a celebrity], nanorover [a very small robot that sends back pixel images from the planet Mars], and telephone”³¹ are all wired together like a kudzu plant gone wild. In a wired world, feminists need to ask some new questions about women’s situation. They can do so through so-called cyberpunk—that is, the use of computers “to fight against the technological powers of giant international mega-corporations.”³²

Third-wave feminists often use the Internet to engage in micropolitics. They are generally against constituting organizations, networks, and institutions that have a life of their own as well as a relatively set agenda. An exception to this rule might be a network like the International Network for Feminist Approaches to Bioethics, whose members can meet on the spur of the moment, addressing issues such as female genital mutilation or hyperstimulation of egg donors with potentially harmful hormones. Supposedly, third-wave feminists can define and confidently espouse their own brands of feminism. They believe that even if not individual in nature, feminism is at least generational in form and content. Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards voiced this view in *Manifesta*:

The fact that feminism is no longer limited to arenas where we expect to see it—NOW, *Ms.*, women’s studies, and redsuited congress women—perhaps means that young women today have really reaped what feminism has sown. Raised after Title VII and *William Wants a Doll [sic]*, young women emerged from college or high school or two years of marriage or their first job and began challenging some of the received wisdom of the past ten or twenty years of feminism. We’re not doing feminism the same way that seventies feminists did it; being liberated doesn’t mean copying what came before but finding one’s own way—a way that is genuine to one’s own generation.³³

Worried about imposing labels on their own behavior and subscribing to any sort of sex-gender binary that suggests one’s biology is one’s cultural

destiny, third-wave feminists reject both the “feminist” and the “womanist” labels. Rather they prefer to call themselves “grrls” (girls), at one and the same time both seriously and playfully coalescing with whomever they must to achieve their immediate ends or goals. Sally J. Scholtz stated in *Feminism: A Beginner’s Guide*, “Girl power celebrates the power of youth culture” and deliberately chooses a name for itself that many second-wave feminists would call “demeaning or infantilizing.”³⁴ Scholtz also said, “The double r of girl also indicates anger and aggression. Girl power is ‘a movement to claim agency and effectiveness in spite of a culture that devalues contributions from young people.’”³⁵ In Scholtz’s opinion, “Third-wave’ feminism works to bring girls and women to feminism by breaking feminism out of the ranks of upper- and middle-class educated women.” As third-wave feminists see it, working-class, homeless women and women in the so-called sex industry can be just as feminist as women who belong to the National Organization for Women or subscribe to *Ms.*

To get a better appreciation of the popularity of the grrl movement, it is important to note it’s nationwide with strong bases on the West Coast (Olympia, Washington) and the East Coast (Washington, DC). Third-wave feminists make considerable use of social media, particularly blogging, tweeting, and e-zines, according to Powell. No longer does a woman deliver her message just to her immediate family or, at most, her neighborhood. Instead she delivers it to the world and can expect a response nearly immediately. Part of delivering one’s message, for many third-wave feminists, includes patronizing only “politically correct” stores. Rather than purchasing their clothes from a name-brand manufacturer who exploits child labor, they shop at thrift, second-hand, and consignment shops or at stores known for their progressive policies, said Powell.³⁶

Third-wave feminists also use music to disseminate their message as widely as possible. To do this, they reappropriate rap and hip-hop, giving new meanings to the misogynistic messages those genres usually contain. All-girl bands give young feminists the opportunity to voice “woman” as they see her: feisty, resilient, and bold enough to cause mini riots. Finally, many third-wave feminists are becoming savvy computer programmers and hackers, eager to subvert causes and companies that show scant regard for people’s, especially women’s, rights. They use the Internet to write “fan fiction” or to further liberatory movements like the so-called Arab Spring.

Third-wave feminists borrow second-wave feminist Mary Daly’s technique of substituting positive meanings for negative terms used to hurt women. A case in point is the notorious word “bitch.” Third-wave feminist Elizabeth Wurtzel said, “I intend to scream, shout, race the engine, all when

I feel like it, throw tantrums in Bloomingdale's if I feel like it and confess intimate details about my life to complete strangers. I intend to do what I want to do and be whom I want to be and answer only to myself: that is, quite simply, the bitch philosophy."³⁷

Another dramatic reappropriation of a negative term involves the word "slut." In 2011, a Toronto police officer said, "Women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized."³⁸ Angered by this all too familiar tendency to blame the victim, many feminists in North America started to stage Slutwalks in which women wore any clothes they wished.

Critiques of Third-Wave Feminism

Critique One: Grrls Fail to Address Everyday Socioeconomic Problems

Although much about third-wave feminism is liberatory, its second-wave critics questioned the feminist value of "girlie culture" and its emphasis on female self-empowerment as exhibited in shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, performances by activist groups like Riot Grrrl, and books like Elizabeth Wurtzel's *Bitch*. Equating dressing like a slut with female empowerment, however clever or ironic, may distract from the accomplishments of second-wave feminists who demanded they be taken seriously as women and not dismissed as lightweight girls.

The question to ask third-wave feminism, said Tamara Strauss, is "Can a Third Wave that tries to push forward urgent feminist issues—such as national health care and child care as well as the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment—also champion girlie power with its penchant for adolescent role playing?"³⁹ Baumgardner and Richards say yes because, as they see it, women who dress to the hilt are simply saying, "I'm going to be female, and being female is just as valuable as being male." They are not saying, "I'm going to be female, going to be objectified, going to wear sexy clothes and so on and be part of the backlash against feminism."⁴⁰ Critics of third-wave feminism also faulted its subscribers for avoiding the term "feminist" in articulating their identity. But, say third-wavers, there are good reasons not to identify as a feminist in a society that makes jokes about being feminist. In addition, there are, says feminist Martha Rampton, good reasons to develop "a 'rhetoric of mimicry,' which reappropriates derogatory terms like 'slut' and 'bitch' in order to subvert sexist culture and deprive it of verbal weapons."⁴¹ Particularly empowering is women's ability to use social media to make a special space for themselves, where they can hide as much of their identity, including gender and sex, as they wish.

In response to the critique that third-wave feminists are just “airhead” girls out to have fun, Walker and Shannon Liss pointed out that the coalition they started, the Third Wave Direct Action Corporation, aims to get young men as well as women to be more socially and politically involved in their immediate communities. By 1995, the corporation was raising funds to support women’s initiatives, a much-needed activity because of a lack of research funds for gynocentric socioeconomic projects.⁴² Unlike many foundations, the corporation is extremely dynamic, refusing to pin itself down to only certain causes and operating mainly online. Indeed, according to Kira Cochrane, the online feminist movement is huge. It is about people saying, “Here is something that doesn’t make sense to me, I thought women were equal, I’m going to do something about it.”⁴³ Action can range from protesting misogynist pages on Facebook to demonstrating against racist immigration laws and propaganda.

Critique Two: Third-Wave Feminism Is Too Individualistic

On the surface, third-wave feminists seem better equipped than second-wave feminists to deal with women’s differences. On a deeper level, however, this may not be the whole story. Critics say that the “kitchen” of third-wave feminists seems so “messy” that it may not have enough clean pots and pans to cook a satisfying feminist meal. Sometimes third-wave feminists seem just a collection of strongly individual women expressing their differing feelings to one another and leaving it at that. As Alison Howry and Julia Wood put it, “Many young women today wear their feminism lightly.”⁴⁴

Critics also say that third-wave feminists need some sort of unitary goal—an agenda that rallies women to go beyond just being themselves, doing what they want, or being someone whose identity is almost overwhelmingly hyphenated. Whereas the challenge of second-wave feminism was to learn to recognize how all women are necessarily oppressed in the same sort of way, the challenge for today’s feminists is to recognize that no matter how different certain groups of women are, they need to coalesce from time to time to serve common goals and interests. Just because some women are empowered does not mean all women are, stress critics of third-wave feminism.⁴⁵

Critique Three: Third-Wave Feminism Shares Too Many Characteristics with So-Called Power Feminism

Particularly concerning to some second-wave feminists is the tendency of some third-wavers to dismiss them as “victim feminists” and to identify themselves as “power feminists.” In the writings of such third-wave feminists

as Heywood, Drake, and Walker, so-called power feminism seems fairly benign, but in the hands of other thinkers, best labeled “postfeminists,” power feminism can get mean-spirited. For example, by insisting that nowadays women are free to be whomever they want and to do whatever they want,⁴⁶ postfeminist writers such as Katie Roiphe, Camille Paglia, and Rene Denfeld implied that women’s only enemy today is themselves.

But the facts do not support these assertions. Women in the United States and many other developed countries may be more equal with men and freer than they were fifty or even twenty-five years ago, but, as noted in Chapter 3, in the United States they earn only about seventy-seven cents for every dollar men earn, they still do a disproportionate amount of the housework, child care, and elder care, and the “glass ceiling” still limits their full potential. Moreover, violence against women is still a worldwide problem that transcends race, class, and socioeconomic status, as evidenced by the recognition that domestic violence is today the leading cause of injury to women. In addition, women of color in the United States continue to suffer the consequences of institutionalized and intersectional oppression and marginalization, and women worldwide—particularly women of color in developing countries—live in conditions more oppressive than even those that challenged first-wave US feminists at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Feminist Queer Theory

One of the most dynamic developments in contemporary feminist thought is the ascendancy of queer theory. Although the term “queer” originally had a negative connotation, as in “weird,” “odd,” “peculiar,” it has a positive, even celebratory connotation among those who use it currently. Queer theory has in some ways displaced/replaced gay and lesbian studies. Scholars who do queer studies interrogate gender, sexuality, and human desire strenuously, shredding to pieces old norms about heterosexuality being the only acceptable sexual behavior between human beings.

Clearly, queer theory puts into question everything traditionally assumed about the “rightness” of heterosexual behavior and the “wrongness” of homosexual desire. A quick survey of queer terminology reveals it to be the antithesis of a stable identity politics. Tongue in cheek, some queer theorists say that the old acronym LGBT should be replaced by the new “quilt bag” acronym LGBTQQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual). Teresa de Lauretis coined the term “queer” in 1991 in a special issue of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.

According to Annamarie Jagose, when de Lauretis used the term “queer” in her article “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities,” she meant to make three points: (1) heterosexuality is not the norm, either descriptively or prescriptively, for all of human sexuality; (2) all gay and lesbian studies do not boil down to the same set of narrow assumptions and/or questions; and (3) race “crucially” shapes “sexual subjectivities.”⁴⁷

Queerness draws its power from “its opposition to whatever happens to be normative,” said Jagose. It is a concept that “evokes endless possibilities of self-understanding,” in her opinion.⁴⁸ Moreover, queer theory makes problematic issues even more complex and complicated. Sally J. Scholtz offered the issue of transsex marriages to make this point emphatically. If marriage is between one man and one woman, then what do we say, said Scholtz, “if a woman who has only the top surgery, keeping the genitals of a female wants to marry an ‘ordinary woman.’ Does s(he) count as a man who wants to marry a woman? Or a woman who wants to marry a woman?”⁴⁹

At its deepest levels, the main teachings of queer theory are, as Ralph R. Smith stated, fivefold: “(1) all categories are falsifications, especially if they are binary and descriptive of sexuality; (2) all assertions about reality are socially constructed; (3) all human behavior can be read as textual significations; (4) texts form discourses that are exercises in power/knowledge and which properly analyzed, reveal revelations of dominance within historically-situated systems of regulation; (5) and deconstruction of all categories of normality *and* deviance can best be accomplished by queer readings of performative texts ranging from literature . . . to other cultural expressions.”⁵⁰ Reflecting on Smith’s observations leads to one conclusion—namely, that what makes the category queer so powerful is its continual deviance from whatever society views as normal. It is everything that family situation comedies like *Leave It to Beaver* and *Eight Is Enough* are not. Largely in sync with Smith, J. Jack Halberstam said he is a queer person, assigned female at birth but living his life as a queer male. A forgiving person, Halberstam maintained that he does not mind being called Jude by his sister and Judith by many other people with whom he has cordial relations. Best known for his work on “the bathroom problem” (transsexual people’s use of bathrooms that correspond to their chosen gender rather than their gender at birth), Halberstam refuses to be “policed” when it comes to the bathroom he uses. He is also known for using Lady Gaga as a symbol of aspects of sexual and gender expression in the twenty-first century. According to Halberstam, there are five tenets of “Gaga Feminism”: “(1) wisdom lies in the unexpected and the unanticipated; (2) transformation is inevitable, but don’t look for the evidence of change in the everyday—look around, look on the peripheries, the margins, and there you will see its impact; (3) think counteractively,

act accordingly; (4) practice creative nonbeliefs; and (5) Gaga Feminism is outrageous, impolite, abrupt, abrasive and bold.”⁵¹

In a succinct online queer theory timeline, shmoop.com chronologically itemized the main steps in the development of queer theory. Arguably, it began in 1895 with the trials of Oscar Wilde, who was the Victorian “poster boy” for the stereotypical homosexual: a male person who is “nonchalant, witty, intellectual, fancily dressed, and long-haired.”⁵²

A decade after the trials of Oscar Wilde, observed shmoop.com, Sigmund Freud published *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, which forced European society to rethink the stages of “normal” human sexuality as described in Chapter 6, with boys developing love for women other than their mothers and girls forsaking love of their mothers in order to attain a man, more specifically, a penis/phallus and all the power it represents, as well as a new life—a baby.⁵³

The next stop on shmoop.com’s timeline was the 1950 founding of the Mattachine Society in Los Angeles, which provided gay men and women with private spaces in which to gather quietly and feel at home with each other’s “deviance.” Gaining comfort from each other, gay people produced works of literature and poetry like the 1955 poem “Howl,” in which Allen Ginsberg unleashed his own homosexual identity and ranted against all that the very straight man in the grey flannel suit represented—namely, the respectable, “all-American,” heterosexual family.⁵⁴

According to shmoop.com, Ginsberg’s howl was loud enough to prompt gay people to become more conspicuous in American society, as they did during the 1969 Stonewall Riots in Manhattan. Provoked by police officers (arguably emblematic of society’s repressive forces), the patrons of gay bars started to resist the “men in blue,” who seemingly enjoyed disrupting gatherings of gay people.⁵⁵

Also, according to shmoop.com, homosexuality became not only more visible but more acceptable in 1973 when the American Psychiatric Association removed it from the list of mental disorders. Only three years after this historic development did Michel Foucault publish *The History of Sexuality*, where he argued that in order to confront human sexuality truthfully and honestly, society must look through the lenses of those living at society’s margins rather than at its center.⁵⁶

More than any other book of its kind, Foucault’s served to disempower “old, rich, straight, white” men. However, said shmoop.com, it took the 1980s AIDS epidemic to make homosexuals fully visible in American society. By the time it had peaked, a sizable number of gay men and lesbians had come out of their closets, a movement that continued into 1990

with the publication of *Queer Nation* and the emergence of the group ACT UP, which, according to shmoop.com, “took the term *queer* away from homophobic people and turned it into a fierce symbol of resistance.”⁵⁷ To be queer was to be proud of one’s (non)identity.⁵⁸

Another important moment for queers, said shmoop.com, was the 1990 publication of Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (see Chapter 9). Over the years Butler established a preeminent presence in the queer community. She has put into question everybody’s professed gender and sexuality; so too has Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. In *Epistemology of the Closet*, she argues, “Queer theory . . . is about talking about what people have often kept hidden.”⁵⁹ According to shmoop.com, Sedgwick believes that “there is a language of silence. This occurs when one speaks in codes, or tries to suggest something in what one wears, or in how one reacts to questions of identity. And the longer closet doors are shut, the more vivid and outlandish the stories become of what’s inside.”⁶⁰

Critiques of Feminist Queer Theory

Critique One: Queer Theory Is Divisive

One critique of queer theory is that by celebrating difference, queer policies leads to “individualism” and “fragmentation.” This critique, said commentator David Gauntlet, is all too reminiscent of “what white feminists said to black women to keep them quiet.”⁶¹ Attention to the sexual, socioeconomic, political, and legal problem of all kinds of queer people, especially transpeople, is well over due. More than most other people, said Gauntlet, they experience discrimination, be it through threats to parental rights, fewer work and school opportunities, or enforcement of bathroom etiquette.⁶²

Critique Two: Queer Theory Is Too Easily Institutionalized and Normalized

Interestingly, Sedgwick, a heterosexual woman who does queer theory brilliantly nonetheless, expressed reservations about its future. She said, “Queer politics may, by now, have outlived its political usefulness”⁶³—that is to say, it may have been “institutionalized” and “normalized” in queer studies programs. Sedgwick said that queer theory is only useful “so long as it holds open non-referentiality as a political strategy for thinking about a future that will be nonterritorial, domestic, and provisional but that remains for the present unimaginable.”⁶⁴

In other words, queer theory must always ask questions like shmoop.com formulates. Examples include “Are males of a species always really tough or really handsome, and are females always coy and homely and patient? Where do native American history . . . and transgendered people fit into our society’s cultural narratives? Why do Western ethnic groups stigmatize what the Native American peoples called ‘two-spirited’ individuals”⁶⁵—that is, people said to have both a masculine spirit and a feminine spirit living in their bodies at the same time and who wear the clothing and do the work of both men and women.

Critique Three: Queer Theory Has a Shaky Relationship to Feminist Thought

In the estimation of sociologist Suzanna Walters, some queer theorists seek to distance themselves from gay men and lesbians on the grounds that they are too conformist, too anxious to show that down deep they are like straight people—eager to get legally married, for example. Walters found queer people’s distancing themselves from gay and lesbian people disconcerting because it seemed to flow from some amorphous ideal of “queer,” floating above the real lives of actually marginalized people. As Walters saw it, talk about “camp,” “drag,” and “cross-dressing” is well and good, but it is not the *raison d’être*⁶⁶ of feminist thought. Although Walters affirmed queer theory’s desire to interrogate gender more vigorously than anyone had before, she also said, “Destabilizing gender (or rendering its artifice apparent) is not the same as overthrowing it. Indeed in a culture in which drag queens can become the hottest fashion, commodification of resistance is an omnipresent threat. Moreover, a queer theory that posits feminism (or lesbian theory) as the transcended enemy is a queer theory that will really be a drag.”⁶⁷

Conclusion

Third-wave feminism and queer theory have much in common. They are intersectional ways of thinking about personal identity, the human experience, sexuality, knowledge, and politics. Both third-wave feminism and queer theory transcend traditional male-female dichotomies. Their interrogation of the concept of gender is thoroughgoing. Gender is more of a “choice” now than it has been. Because gender is an open-ended classification, with room for heterosexual people, bisexual people, gay people, transsexual people, and queer people, we think it is important to reflect on how it shapes our particular identities.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you identify with third-wave feminism? If so, why?
2. Do you think “slut walks” really empower women?
3. Should transsexual people be allowed to use facilities and access services originally meant for one or the other of the traditional genders (male/female)?
4. Do all feminists regard a transgender woman as a “real” woman? Why or why not?
5. Is a “fourth wave” of feminism in the making, or has feminism gone just about as far as it can go? What would a “fourth wave” of feminism look like?