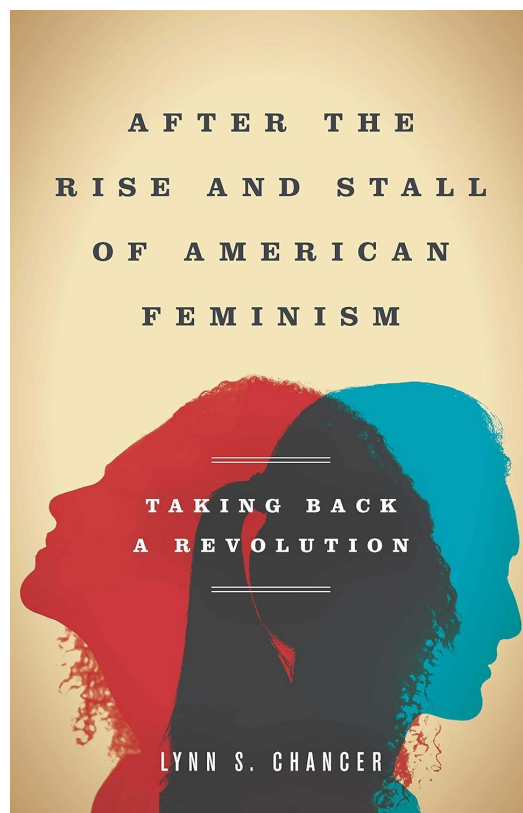


After the Rise and Stall of American Feminism

Taking Back a Revolution

Lynn S. Chancer



February 26, 2019

Contents

Synopsis	3
About the Author	3
Title Page	3
Copyright	4
Advance Praise	4
Dedication	5
Preface	6
1. Taking Stock	10
2. Debating the “F” Word	31
3. Achieving Political, Economic, and Educational Equalities	44
4. Liberating Sexual Choices	66
5. Ending Violence against Women—and Men	90
6. Changing Sexist Imagery	111
7. Taking Back a Revolution	133
Acknowledgments	143
Index	145

It is more than fifty years since Betty Friedan diagnosed malaise among suburban housewives and the National Organization of Women was founded. Across the decades, the feminist movement brought about significant progress on workplace discrimination, reproductive rights, and sexual assault. Yet, the proverbial million-dollar question remains: why is there still so much to be done?

With this book, Lynn S. Chancer takes stock of the American feminist movement and engages with a new burst of feminist activism. She articulates four common causes—advancing political and economic equality, allowing intimate and sexual freedom, ending violence against women, and expanding the cultural representation of women—considering each in turn to assess what has been gained (or not). It is around these shared concerns, Chancer argues, that we can continue to build a vibrant and expansive feminist movement.

After the Rise and Stall of American Feminism takes the long view of the successes and shortcomings of feminism(s). Chancer articulates a broad agenda developed through advancing intersectional concerns about class, race, and sexuality. She advocates ways to reduce the divisiveness that too frequently emphasizes points of disagreement over shared aims. And she offers a vision of individual and social life that does not separate the “personal” from the “political.” Ultimately, this book is about not only redressing problems, but also reasserting a future for feminism and its enduring ability to change the world.

Lynn S. Chancer is Professor of Sociology at Hunter College and Executive Officer of the Ph.D. Program in Sociology at The Graduate Center, CUNY. She is the author of four books and numerous articles on everything from gender, race, and class to pornography, prostitution, and beauty.

AFTER THE RISE AND STALL OF
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TAKING BACK A REVOLUTION
LYNN S. CHANCER
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Advance Praise

“In this sweeping, unflinching account, *After the Rise and Stall of American Feminism* tackles the paradox of American feminism. Interrogating feminism’s own thorny contradictions and challenges, Lynn Chancer offers women a bold and inspiring plan for claiming equality with men—once and for all.”

—Lisa Wade, author of *American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus*

“*After the Rise and Stall of American Feminism* is an engaging, well written, and accessible map of our feminist past, present, and future. This book should be required reading for everyone interested in gender justice and committed to the full human rights of all women and men.”

—France Winddance Twine, co-editor of *Feminisms and Antiracism: International Struggles for Justice*

“With her characteristic brilliance, Lynn Chancer charts the hard-won victories and persistent obstacles that have marked women’s changing status since the rise of second wave feminism. *After the Rise and Stall of American Feminism* is a tour-de-force diagnosis of contemporary feminism’s conundrums and a blueprint for feminists of all stripes to come together to achieve equality.”

—Kathleen Gerson, author of *The Unfinished Revolution: Coming of Age in a New Era of Gender, Work, and Family*

“Lynn Chancer offers us an alternative to ‘leaning in,’ one responsive to the needs of diverse groups of women and rooted in intersectional activism. Her insights are a welcome and revitalizing intervention, outlining a bold and practical way forward and a hopeful path toward ‘big tent’ feminism.”

—Kerwin Kaye, Wesleyan University

“Lynn Chancer, a lifelong feminist scholar, has the perspective necessary to help us understand where feminism is now, where it came from, and where it could go. Whether you’re a newly minted feminist or an old hand, this book is a fresh read on feminism’s promise for full liberation as well as the roadblocks that could stop the revolution in its tracks.”

—Laurie Essig, author of *Love, Inc. Dating Apps, the Big White Wedding, and Chasing the Happily Everafter*

“*After the Rise and Stall of American Feminism* makes a compelling case for how feminists can find common ground from an intersectional perspective to organize for social justice. Impressive and timely, this is an indispensable resource for anyone interested in gender, social movements, and contemporary culture.”

—Isabel Pinedo, Hunter College, CUNY

“Lynn Chancer’s advice for completing the feminist revolution is sage, practical, and eminently useful. Feminists young and old will be reinvigorated by this call to battle.”

—Judith Lorber, author of *Breaking the Bowls: Degendering and Feminist Change*

“Lynn Chancer illuminates the commonalities that connect feminists from across the movement. Anyone who has been marginalized because of any aspect of their being—including gender, sexuality, race, class, education, and beyond—will find solace and hope in this book.”

—Beverly-Xaviera Watkins, NYU College of Global Public Health

To
Alex
and his many feminist friends,
who inspire my conviction in the ability
of future generations to change

Preface

For reasons it has taken me a long while to divine, this book was the hardest to write of anything I have published to date. First, I fretted about titles; as the research and writing moved along, names for the book morphed in point/counterpoint with events. In 2014 I envisioned calling the book *I'm Not a Feminist but ... : Re-igniting a Stalled Revolution*. Many people, including feminist friends and my editor, appreciated the title since the phrase “I’m not a feminist but ...” had become recognizable in and beyond the purview of college classes and professors. At that historical moment, it was just about commonplace to hear people begin statements by disavowing the label “feminist” before going on immediately to agree with a major tenet—say, equal pay for equal work—that was widely associated with feminism (and feminisms). In that year, too, it was not unusual to hear talk of “postfeminism,” a term frequently associated with earlier generations of women now in their sixties and seventies—in other words, with mothers and grandmothers whose daughters had realized major benefits of a supposedly no-longer-needed social movement.

However, as feminist issues, from violence against women to political and economic inequalities, appeared to be undeniably persistent (especially considering problems of all women across races and classes) and as the word *feminist* was used positively again—for example, in 2013, Beyonce calling herself a “modern-day feminist”—I decided the title needed recasting. What I settled on was *The Rise and Stall of American Feminism: Taking Back the Gender Revolution* since, as this book states, remarkable achievements and stubborn impediments are obvious from the second wave’s heyday in the late 1960s and 1970s through the present. For feminists of the second wave, sexism began to be defined in those decades in terms of discrimination women encountered in and outside the workplace, as well as sometimes coercive controls and objectification of women’s bodies that impeded or prevented women from living full, equal, and safe lives. Yet feminist goals like universal daycare and women’s equal participation in politics and the culture industries have still not fully come to pass.

But then I started thinking, and shifting, again. Did the title sound too negative? So much was happening in the United States—not only from 2014 onward but following the 2016 presidential election—as to augur a potential renaissance in the importance of calling oneself a feminist. The #MeToo movement that rose and spread spectacularly in 2017 and 2018 bespeaks a highly significant feminist appropriation of social media. It continues to bring major effects, at a pace that is hard to keep up with, in and beyond the world of the internet and mass culture. As a result, powerful men from Harvey Weinstein (in Hollywood) to Ron Porter (in the White House), to name but a few,

have been “brought down” by people, by women, acting collectively in response to the sometimes frustrating insufficient impact of charges made at the level of individual legal cases. These effects may assist in redressing many of the sociological issues analyzed in this book that show “stalling” in some areas or by some criteria. At the same time, feminists’ concerns with nuanced thinking recommends applying #MeToo carefully so that due process issues for men and for everyone are respected, and so that unequal charges are not treated (incorrectly) as equal.

Overall, new or renewed movement is happening as women, men, people who identify as non-binary, feminists, and activists who are commonly concerned about “intersectionality” are taking on simmering problems while at the same time drawing on the many accomplishments of prior decades. But shared angers may be simmering below the surface, too, motivated in part by disappointment at the defeat of the most serious candidate for president in American history who has been a woman, and even more by shared reactions to sexist calls (themselves enraged) at mass rallies for Hillary Clinton to be “locked up.” Exemplifying such recent shifts: with the Golden Globe Awards ceremony in early 2018, I felt I was watching this book’s cultural analysis come alive—far from the academy, of which I inhabit a tiny corner—as Oprah Winfrey and others decried the paucity of women and people of color, and their lack of power and control, among directors nominated for major awards. At an anecdotal but still noteworthy level, I have heard of women working for well-known Hollywood companies who have been recently assigned to a higher-up (male) executive to be mentored by this person, a “reform” that acknowledges and reacts to the recent “calling out” of gender biases. Thus reactions are occurring that, as they spread and circulate, are not only virtual but material in their repercussions.

Toward all this, not only have I been inwardly (and to whoever will listen) cheering “bravo,” but I was also inspired to retweak the title one last time. *After the Rise and Stall of American Feminism: Taking Back a Revolution* underscores as clearly as possible that momentum may be building and that what has “stalled” may be starting to alter, to reboot, in the near future. Renewal may be taking place at a mass level, a renewal of beliefs and goals that many feminists and feminist groups have been working on stalwartly for the last fifty years. I truly hope this is so and have no pretensions of “objectivity” in this regard. Rather, my intention is for this book to partake in this dynamic process, however modestly: first and foremost, my purposes are constructively aimed and unabashedly feminist.

Why then was the book so difficult to write? Reflecting back on a book that is itself a looking back, I perceive a second, emotional difficulty in having found surveying the successes and problems of the American feminist movement to be surprisingly challenging. In retrospect, I often worried, not necessarily consciously, about whether I would offend this one or that one, one feminist group or another, if I said this or that. Would the goal of calling attention to feminist commonalities and differences be somehow attacked or criticized, and in a spirit that unwittingly partook of recurring divisions I was about to explore? Did I leave something or someone out? I have fretted

that some will think the book does not stress stalling and impediments enough; others will think it overemphasizes them. Of course, on one level this is an academic professional hazard, but on another, I felt myself reliving (in anticipation) tendencies toward fragmentation that have been a troubling, potentially destructive aspect of American progressive social movements for more decades than this book mentions. Moreover, the issue may be distinctively salient for feminisms, as the very character of sexism has been to divide women from one another, a structural tendency that calls for special attention or, at the very least, reflection, self-awareness, and memory.

Here is where I came down eventually on all of this. There has to be value, I became convinced, in examining what happened before so as to prevent patterned tendencies from happening again. Maybe more than ever, it now feels crucially important not to reinvent the wheel. For example, early second wave feminism arose from many women—and not only white middle-class women but women of color too—experiencing sexism in left-wing and racial justice social movements. After decades, though, it could be easy to forget this, as feminists veered away from cross-class and cross-racial organizing, a problem that intersectionally oriented feminists and feminisms are in a process of remedying. It was somewhat daunting to put all this together—to insist on the (long feminist) brilliance of thinking, feeling, and acting, alone and together, on things that so often are questions not of either/or but of both/and—of more than one thing having social and individual validity. Scanning the past brings back this problem of forgetting-and-remembering, as does placing issues of divisiveness on a timeline that provides a long-term context.

Just as worth remembering is that in many ways assessing “stalling,” or its inverse, is often quite a different matter in “sociological” terms and perceptions from how it is perceived in the mass media. Politicians and journalists—and feminists too—can talk about making changes to parental leave policies even as, stepping back, this has not changed the “long view” that many or most women, men, and families who badly need all-day high-quality childcare do not yet have it. Cultural changes may be starting to happen in Hollywood, but overall the structure of the American culture industries remains overwhelmingly male- and white-dominated. Without nearly enough “actualizing equalities,” its problems are (yes!) nonetheless “talked about” more regularly in media reports, as reflected in popular cultural representations. Likewise, public attitudes toward reproductive choice do still remain in favor of *Roe v. Wade*, yet poor women and most women living in rural areas have been badly affected by closing clinics, which overall makes it hard if not impossible to procure abortions.

After the Rise and Stall of American Feminism proposes markers and a sense of perspective as to where a still very young movement has been and where it still seeks to go. Above all, I hope the book will be useful to women, men, and other people, to students but also to people working and those not working. The book is aimed as widely as possible, perhaps relevant to college classes where younger-to-older students may gain from reflecting on common and different purposes of the contemporary feminist movement, but also still readable by someone’s mother, sister, brother, or cousin for

discussion. I definitely hope the book will interest those who may not be persuaded by feminist ideas and goals. At the same time, I apologize in advance for anything or anyone that has been left out, imperfectly, and hope the book is read in the constructive spirit I intended. If even a little of this happens, then overcoming small personal anxieties, which themselves are part of building and rebuilding the American feminist movement politically, has been well worth it to me and I hope to others as well. Let's see what happens next. There is one point of which I am utterly persuaded: as the twenty-first century marches on, in and beyond America, this revolutionizing movement for human equality, too long denied to over half the population, will grow.

1. Taking Stock

While it would be ridiculous to say that feminists in the United States have accomplished nothing, it would be similarly foolish to claim that nearly enough has changed. Neither statement is adequately nuanced to capture the complexities that still confront feminists since the “second wave” of feminism splashed onto the American social landscape in the 1960s and 1970s, spreading nationally and internationally, creating backlashes and so-called culture wars, touching just about everything in its path, and raising tantalizing if not yet realized expectations. In those first years, Betty Friedan diagnosed malaise among suburban housewives in *The Feminine Mystique*;¹ the National Organization of Women (NOW) was founded in 1966, becoming the country’s largest and in time the longest-lasting women’s rights organization. Long ago (or not, depending on one’s vantage point), and all in 1968, Shirley Chisholm made history as the first African American woman to be elected to the House of Representatives; NOW formed a committee to launch the easily forgotten (because failed) Equal Rights Amendment (ERA); and protests were launched at the Miss America pageant against sexist objectification of women amid an outpouring of media hoopla.² Fast-forwarding to the present, though, these events now provoke a crucial query: what exactly has been accomplished and what remains to be done? Stepping back, how has the U.S. movement fared a half century after the explosion of the second wave and in subsequent waves—the third, the fourth—through the practices of younger and older feminists?

The time seems right to take stock, to look with the benefit of hindsight at exactly where the American feminist movement has landed. This need to reevaluate came into cultural consciousness with a vengeance in the aftermath of the November 2016 election, when Hillary Rodham Clinton did not become—as many expected—the first “woman” president of the United States. Winning the popular vote by nearly three million,³ Clinton still lost the Electoral College with only 232 votes⁴ as the traditionally Democratic states of Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin voted “Trump” instead.⁵

¹ Betty Friedan. 1963. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Norton.

² See “1960s Feminism Timeline: Key Events of United States Feminism During the 1960s.” www.thoughtco.com/1960s-feminism-timeline-3528910.

³ Kenneth T. Walsh. 2016. “Clinton Wins Popular Vote by Nearly 3 Million Ballots.” *U.S. News & World Report*, December 21. www.usnews.com/news/ken-walshs-washington/articles/2016-12-21/hillary-clinton-wins-popular-vote-by-nearly-3-million-ballots.

⁴ *New York Times*. 2017. “Presidential Election Results: Donald J. Trump Wins.” January 4. www.nytimes.com/elections/results/president.

⁵ Gregory Krieg. 2016. “It’s Official: Clinton Swamps Trump in Popular Vote.” *CNN*, December 22. www.cnn.com/2016/12/21/politics/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-popular-vote-final-count/.

Accused of sexist statements and actions himself, President Donald Trump inherited a deeply divided nation within which gendered divisions were stunningly manifest. Shocking to those anticipating a large gender gap were results showing that a slim majority of white women (53%) voted for Trump over Clinton in the 2016 presidential election.⁶ Hillary won women as a group but only narrowly (54% to Trump's 42%).⁷ That narrow margin was thanks to 94 percent of African American women and 68 percent of Latinas swinging in her favor.⁸ "Intersectionality"—meaning the overlap of gender discrimination and other forms of social discrimination in people's lives and perceptions—clearly affected the election's outcome.

The upshot of the election attested to a profoundly divided U.S. electorate and revealed feminist issues as ongoing sources of contention as well as influence, although the word *feminist* remained vague as to what it meant to whom. Certainly fifty years "post" feminism, large numbers of people are proud to call themselves feminists. The shift was noticeable in popular culture, as for example Beyoncé declared herself a feminist in 2014.⁹ A few years later, on January 21, 2017, activists organized a major and phenomenally successful series of "women's marches" in Washington, New York, and other cities (nationally and internationally) in multi-issue protest against Donald Trump's November 2016 election. Marches were reorganized one year later, on January 20, 2018. Meanwhile, the #MeToo campaign against sexual harassment has become a spectacularly effective expression of feminist consciousness in its own right. Beginning with well-known men in the media world and on through entertainment moguls, actors, journalists, businessmen, political figures, and in protest against the nomination of now-Supreme Court justice Brett Kavanaugh, this campaign—against power dynamics that sexualize, objectify, and coerce women—can hardly be separated from the mushrooming of feminist awareness occurring in sometimes unexpected ways since the second wave's beginnings in the 1960s and 1970s.

Thus no longer is it unusual for women (or men, or other persons) of any age, from the millennial generation through aging baby boomers, to be deeply affected by this movement and to find themselves worried whether hard-won progress on sexual assault, reproductive rights, workplace discrimination, and other feminist issues will

⁶ Clare Malone. 2016. "Clinton Couldn't Win Over White Women." *FiveThirtyEight*, November 9. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/clinton-couldnt-win-over-white-women/>.

⁷ Alec Tyson and Shiva Maniam. 2016. "Behind Trump's Victory: Divisions by Race, Gender, Education." Pew Research Center, November 9. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/behind-trumps-victory-divisions-by-race-gender-education/.

⁸ Alison Durkee. 2016. "Here's a Breakdown of How African-Americans Voted in the 2016 Election." *News.Mic*, November 14. <https://mic.com/articles/159402/here-s-a-break-down-of-how-african-americans-voted-in-the-2016-elect>

⁹ Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley. 2014. "Black Feminism Lite? More Like Beyonce Has Taught Us Black Feminism Light." *Huffington Post*, November 7. www.huffingtonpost.com/omiseaeke-natasha-tinsley/beyonce-black-feminism_b_6123736.html.

be turned back given conservative shifts in 2016 and 2017.¹⁰ Complicating matters, though, is that many still remain unpersuaded or even antagonistic toward feminism, their primary affiliations having solidified along class, race, or ethnic more than gender lines. People have sometimes said, amid heated debates at school or work or when starting informal conversations, “I’m not a feminist but ...” To those in this category ambivalence remains, and a split sense of attraction to and dissociation from the label has not evanesced. An April 2013 *Huffington Post* / YouGov poll found that only 23 percent of women and 16 percent of men would call themselves “feminist.” Yet 82 percent of respondents reacted affirmatively—women and men equally—when the word was more precisely defined to indicate agreement with the statement “Men and women should be social, political and economic equals.”¹¹

For the millions who have been swayed by or committed to a world wherein options for women and men have expanded in all walks of life, from labor to religion to school and sex, the results of what feminist sociologist Kathleen Gerson terms a “gender revolution” appear mixed and extremely complicated. On the one hand, the feminist movement bequeathed immense transformations that have affected pretty much everyone; by now it is decidedly global, by no means simply local or U.S.-centric, in its scope and ramifications. As Gerson shows through interviews with 120 varied young women and men in *The Unfinished Revolution*,¹² changes concerning ideas about equal pay, attitudes toward divorce, and sexual preferences have broadly taken hold in people’s everyday lives—whether or not the children of this “gender revolution” call themselves feminist per se. On the other hand, feminist issues like sexual harassment and sexual assault are strikingly persistent; for instance, rape remains a serious problem within the military, on college campuses, at schools, and within communities.¹³ On the issue of sexual harassment, signs of tremendous change are palpable: the #MeToo campaign grew in 2017 and 2018 vis-à-vis the use of media and social media into a powerful wave that reveals this ongoing problem for women to be of widespread, even mind-boggling proportions.

Indeed, women who had kept silent for years about their experiences came forward about men who had exerted physical, emotional, and sexual power over them in the entertainment industries and beyond. Regarding Harvey Weinstein alone, more than sixty women reported incidents of having been harassed or assaulted over a period of

¹⁰ Jill Filipovic. 2016. “What Does President Trump Mean for Feminists?” *Washington Post*, November 9. www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/11/09/what-does-president-trump-mean-for-feminists/?utm_term=.3249b45017eb.

¹¹ Emily Swanson. 2013. “Poll: Few Identify as Feminists, but Most Believe in Equality of Sexes.” *Huffington Post*, April 16. www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/16/feminism-poll_n_3094917.html.

¹² Kathleen Gerson. 2010. * *The Unfinished Revolution: Coming of Age in a New Era of Gender, Work, and Family* *. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹³ The White House Council on Women and Girls. 2014. “Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action.” White House. www.knowyourix.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/sexual_assault_report_1-21-14.pdf (NGO archive; the White House did not maintain this report in archive).

more than twenty years.¹⁴ In 2006 Los Angeles activist Tarana Burke began the Me Too movement; it was thereafter popularized by actress Alyssa Milano through the hashtag #MeToo to which over half a million tweets and more than twelve million posts on Facebook responded across the world in twenty-four hours.¹⁵ Weeks after Weinstein’s accusers came forward, another woman charged that President George H. W. Bush had groped her from his wheelchair;¹⁶ shortly thereafter, Bill O’Reilly was fired from Fox News following multiple allegations of sexual harassment and assault and a settlement he agreed to for thirty-two million dollars (the largest of six such settlements that totaled close to forty-five million dollars).¹⁷ Previously, in 2016, Fox News chairman Roger Ailes had been fired for numerous claims of sexual assault.¹⁸

The list is growing, attesting to a new wave of feminist activism as well as feminists’ effective use of social media and new technologies. Not only #MeToo but a range of other current sites in the feminist blogosphere, such as Slutwalks and #yesallwomen, attest to activism and communication that are taking shape and gaining momentum in ways that reflect earlier feminist ideas and analyses as a new tool is being employed. These social media sites have been around through at least the 2010s; the well-known MeToo campaign has been building rather than simply bursting onto the scene. As Nisha Chittal notes on the MSNBC site, social media has “democratized feminist activism, opening up participation to anyone with a Twitter account and a desire to fight the patriarchy. By removing the barriers of distance and geography,

¹⁴ Ronan Farrow. 2017. “From Aggressive Overtures to Sexual Assault: Harvey Weinstein’s Accusers Tell Their Stories.” *New Yorker*, October 23. www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/from-aggressive-overtures-to-sexual-assault-harvey-weinsteins-accusers-tell-their-stories; Paula Wachowiak. 2017. “The Weinstein Allegations.” *Guardian*, October 25. www.theguardian.com/film/ng-interactive/2017/oct/13/the-weinstein-allegations.

¹⁵ The Me Too movement started in 2006 with Tarana Burke, an African American woman activist in Los Angeles; Milano used it in a Twitter post after the Weinstein accusers went public. It spread from there. Natalie Jarvey. 2017. “Sexual Assault Movement #MeToo Reaches Nearly 500,000 Tweets,” *Hollywood Reporter*, October 16. www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/metoo-sexual-assault-movement-reaches-500000-tweets-1049235; Emily Shugerman. 2017. “Me Too: Why Are Women Sharing Stories of Sexual Assault and How Did It Start?” *Independent*, October 17. www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/me-too-facebook-hashtag-why-when-meaning-sexual-harassment-rape-stories-explained-a8005936.html; Andrea Park. “#MeToo Reaches 85 Countries with 1.7 Million Tweets.” *CBS News*, October 24. www.cbsnews.com/news/metoo-reaches-85-countries-with-1-7-million-tweets/.

¹⁶ Kate Feldman. 2017. “Actress Heather Lind Accuses Former President George H. W. Bush of Sexual Assault.” *New York Daily News*, October 25. www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/heather-lind-accuses-president-george-h-w-bush-sexual-assault-article-1.3586520.

¹⁷ Paul Farhi. 2017. “Report: Bill O’Reilly Settled Sexual Harassment Claim from Fox News Contributor for \$32 Million.” *Washington Post*, October 21. www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/bill-oreilly-settled-sixth-sexual-harassment-claim-for-32-million/2017/10/21/ff34b24c-b68c-11e7-9e58-e6288544af98_story.html?utm_term=.17108a9d1199.

¹⁸ Jill Disis and Frank Paloota. 2017. “The Last Year of Roger Ailes’ Life Was Consumed by Scandal.” *CNN*, May 18. <http://money.cnn.com/2017/05/18/media/timeline-roger-ailes-last-year/index.html>.

sites like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram have made activism easier than ever, facilitating public dialogues and creating a platform for awareness and change.”¹⁹

Yet even as feminist activism within social media tries to address a range of ongoing sexist ills, stubborn complexities remain. Within and without the now influential Me Too movement, and as legal redresses have sometimes proved frustratingly insufficient (meriting political measures too), people are also debating how to respect simultaneously due process rights of men who have been accused. Returning to another issue that also bequeathed major sexist legacies even as generational changes occurred, most women and men do not yet experience a world wherein family and work have been restructured to avoid what another well-known feminist sociologist has dubbed the “second shift.”²⁰ Here I refer to disproportionate “dual” labor that women still perform more often and for longer periods than men. Across social categories, women still often work full-time while bearing unequal responsibility for childcare and housework. As chronicled in an early but still relevant article by a former Princeton dean and public policy professor, it is still common for women to struggle to balance family and work and to combine new and older gendered roles.²¹ Consequently, feminist-inspired changes have bequeathed “push/pull,” “on the one hand / on the other” outcomes. They have been the cause for celebration of feminist successes in many instances, while handing down frustrations and disappointments in others.

But surely there is not just one feminist movement behind the oversimplified polarity in which either America has entered a “postfeminist” era wherein gender justice has been achieved, or sexism remains untouched by massive gender-related changes.²² That inquiry shifts attention from divisions among women and men in the wider culture to debates and differences among feminists themselves. Of course, not one but many feminisms have come to characterize this now-famous worldwide movement through what many scholars and advocates have dubbed “waves” of feminist activism over the course of U.S. history. Each wave has had identifiable emphases as well as tensions within it. The first wave, going back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sought to win the vote for women, which followed the abolitionist movement’s fight to overcome slavery. In retrospect, figures like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton focused on gaining white women the vote and thereby overlooked racial biases and procuring the vote for men and women of color.²³

¹⁹ See Nisha Chittal. 2015. “How Social Media Is Changing the Feminist Movement.” *MSNBC*, March 26. www.msnbc.com/msnbc/how-social-media-changing-the-feminist-movement.

²⁰ Arlie Hochschild. 1989. *The Second Shift*. New York: Penguin Books.

²¹ Anne-Marie Slaughter. 2012. “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All.” *Atlantic*, July/August. www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/; see also Gerson 2010.

²² Jenna Goudreau. 2011. “Who’s Afraid of Post-feminism? What It Means to Be a Feminist Today.” *Forbes*, December. www.forbes.com/sites/jennagoudreau/2011/12/13/afraid-of-post-feminism-means-feminist-today-gloria-steinem-jane-fonda-ursula-burns/#782059826801.

²³ Jessie Daniels. 2014. “Trouble with White Feminism: Racial Origins of U.S. Feminism,” *Racism Review*, February 18. www.racismreview.com/blog/2014/02/18/trouble-with-white-feminism/.

Over half a century later, and again following other social movements seeking class and racial justice in the civil rights and anti-Vietnam era, second wave feminism of the 1960s and 1970s spawned liberal and radical branches. Inspired by Simone de Beauvoir's classic *The Second Sex*²⁴—a work as comparable to modern feminism as Marx's *Capital*²⁵ was to modern socialism, and likewise creating intellectual rebellions, debates, and divides in its wake—came Betty Friedan's "liberal feminist" treatise *The Feminine Mystique*, pointing to the need for women to achieve a full and broad range of equal rights in pay, law, and within families. Next Kate Millett's brilliant and best-selling *Sexual Politics* and Shulamith Firestone's theoretically innovative *The Dialectic of Sex* appeared close together just a little later, in 1969 and 1970 respectively, making arguments that were broader and more wide-ranging about gender subordination than found in more rights-oriented liberal feminist writings.²⁶ Each came to be characterized as a "radical feminist" text; in different ways, each contended that physical controls asserted by men over women's bodies have been key to maintaining male domination and patriarchal authority for centuries.

After liberal and radical second wave feminists posited a common "thesis"—namely, women as a group have suffered from unequal pay, sexual assault, bodily controls, objectification, and other gender-distinctive biases—further concerns unfolded by the 1980s and 1990s in "antithesis." With what can be called third wave feminism, the historical emphasis shifted from issues shared by women across social categories to unequal problems and differences between them; attention to "intersectional" analysis, focused on multidimensional and overlapping discriminations, slowly but surely unfolded. This sometimes generated new tensions as theorists and activists pushed back against liberal and radical feminist presumptions that women's experiences are comparable, while critiques took earlier feminists to task for underestimating the simultaneous significance of race, class, and other differences. For socialist feminists like Heidi Hartmann²⁷ and Zillah Eisenstein,²⁸ economic as well as gendered inequalities of opportunity—for example, wage differentials, unequal ability to pay for childcare or procure an abortion—required more attention than was ever emphasized in feminist theory and policy proposals. Then too the salience of not only class but racial differences was thoroughly analyzed in the work of, among others, bell hooks, who described

²⁴ Simone de Beauvoir. 1949. *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books.

²⁵ Karl Marx. 1990 [1867]. *Capital*. Vol. 1, *A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: Penguin Books.

²⁶ Kate Millett. 1969. *Sexual Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press; Shulamith Firestone. 1970. *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

²⁷ See, for example, Heidi Hartmann. 2010. "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union." In *Marx Today: Selected Works and Recent Debates*, edited by John Sitton. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan; Hartmann. 2012. *Women, Work, and Poverty: Women Centered Research for Policy Change*. New York: Routledge; and Hartmann. 2005. "The Gender Wage Gap Is Real." *Economic Policy Institute*, September 14. www.epi.org/publication/webfeatures_snapshots_20050914/.

²⁸ Zillah Eisenstein. 1981. *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*. New York: Longman.

in *Ain't I a Woman* how even socialist feminist writings had treated black women as “invisible.”²⁹ For Patricia Hill Collins, whose *Black Feminist Thought* became another feminist magnum opus on race, gender, and class connections, feminist ideas needed to be construed from the viewpoint of those experiencing deepest—because multiple—discriminations.³⁰ Like the work of legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw and that of other critical race as well as gender scholars, Collins’s book contributed to “intersectionality” becoming a broadly accepted and preferred term—a corrective lens—through which to regularly view complex, multidimensional biases of gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and other social factors that people obviously and at once experience.³¹

These among other differences and refinements unfolded from the second into the third wave according to whether a feminist’s perspective was socialist, Marxist, ecological, psychoanalytic, poststructural, black feminist, Latina feminist, global, or indeed combinations of these perspectives.³² As a consequence, richly multiple feminisms (plural) sprang onto the scene following the second wave of the 1960s and 1970s through the many political branches that emerged contemporaneously among younger feminists associating themselves with “third” or even “fourth” wave iterations.³³ In fact the term “fourth wave” brings us to the present when new social media has arguably generated—as both a tool and a form of activism in itself—heightened cultural consciousness about varied feminists and feminisms.³⁴

But looking back across these waves and concerns of feminisms, I wonder if the historical pendulum may have swung so far by the late 2010s that it can be hard to keep commonalities (across women) as well as differences (among women, men, other people) in mind. From thesis to antithesis: perhaps the moment is ripe to think and feel as synthetically as possible, taking both sets of insights and concerns into account so as to achieve maximum political efficacy. Let me explore this idea by casting it on a wider historical net. In retrospect, it is understandable that liberal and radical feminists began targeting patriarchy as a system and sexism as a problem in the 1960s and 1970s, a period when commonalities across women, as an intellectual and political matter, most needed to be insisted on. Otherwise, issues like wage gaps between women and men, or abortion, reproductive rights, or violence against women—all of

²⁹ bell hooks. 1999 [1981]. *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Boston: South End Press.

³⁰ Patricia Hill Collins. 2000 [1990].* *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment**. New York: Routledge.

³¹ See Kimberle Crenshaw. 1993. “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color.” *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241–99; see also Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, eds. 2016. *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, 9th ed. Boston: Cengage Learning.

³² Andersen and Collins, *Race, Class and Gender*.

³³ Kira Cochrane. 2013. “The Fourth Wave of Feminism: Meet the Rebel Women.” *Guardian*, December 10. www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/10/fourth-wave-feminism-rebel-women.

³⁴ See Susan Faludi. 2010. “American Electra: Feminism’s Ritual Matricide,” *Harper’s Magazine*, October. <https://harpers.org/archive/2010/10/american-electra/>; and Ealasaid Munro. “Feminism: A Fourth Wave?” www.psa.ac.uk/insight-plus/feminism-fourth-wave.

which have to do with distinctively gender- and sexuality-related biases that women, specifically, encounter—might not be understood in their political dimensions, in their connections with gender-based dynamics of power. Germane, too, is that the second wave feminist movement was propelled into existence following women’s participation, and encountering of sexism, in other New Left movements focused on class (Students for a Democratic Society, SDS, for example) or racial subordination (civil rights, black nationalist groups). The predicament facing second wave feminists recalled, in this regard, that of first wave suffragettes active from the 1890s through the 1910s. Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stanton, and others working for the abolition of slavery in the 1850s had already confirmed that securing women’s rights would not be the automatic reward of their efforts. They needed to organize themselves—although as hooks and others have shown, these first wave figures did not “see” their omissions of women of color from the allegedly universal cause of women’s suffrage.³⁵ Analogously, in the 1960s and 1970s, figures like Tom Hayden in SDS acted in sexist ways that contradicted their own demands for human justice as they asked women to do the typing and get the coffee for the movement.³⁶ And then as now, black nationalist Stokely Carmichael’s announcement at a rally that women’s proper place was “prone” was at once provocative and telling that feminist liberation would not simply and magnanimously follow women’s participation in other causes.³⁷ Women needed—no, deserved, as Virginia Woolf said with elegance and eloquence—a movement of their, of one’s, of our own.

Thus, out of lived sexism experienced while fighting other social ills, the second wave “women’s movement” was born—and born, at that, from a more diverse group of progressive participants than is often sufficiently acknowledged. As historians and sociologists have vividly documented, women of color and working-class women—among them Rosa Parks, Florynce Kennedy, Margo Jefferson, and others—played major roles alongside white women in creating and developing liberal and radical feminist organizations like Redstockings, The Feminists, and the National Organization of Women.³⁸ They were part and parcel of the ferment that became early feminist theorizing and politicking. Moreover, diverse early feminists highlighted the persistence of sexism across social movements and also inside varied ethnic groups (German, Irish, Italian, Jewish, and so on through most nations and continents) and within and across classes (upper, middle, lower/working, poor). As Michele Wallace elaborated in her radical feminist as well as intersectionally meaningful book *Black Macho and the Myth of the Super-*

³⁵ bell hooks. 2015 [1984]. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. New York: Routledge; Angela Davis. 1983. *Women, Race, and Class*. New York: First Vintage Books.

³⁶ Todd Gitlin. 1993. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. New York: Bantam Books; see also *Bluestockings Magazine*. 2013. “Justifying Sexism in Students for a Democratic Society.” June 28. <http://bluestockingsmag.com/2013/06/28/c-edit-justifying-sexism-in-sds/>.

³⁷ David Barber. 2008. *A Hard Rain Fell: SDS and Why It Failed*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 102.

³⁸ Carol Giardina. 2010.* *Freedom for Women: Forging the Women’s Liberation Movement, 1953–1970**. Gainesville: University Press of Florida; Francesca Polletta. 2002.* *Freedom Is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements**. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

woman, African American women faced not only overlapping biases themselves but compounded emotions of guilt and blame if they acknowledged their experiences of sexism.³⁹ Exploring one cultural example of machismo among many others, Wallace outlined how African American women understood both sexism and the particular discriminations African American men themselves endured in the entwined, horrific legacies of racial and class prejudices dating back to slavery.⁴⁰

Consequently, it is inaccurate and blithely stereotypical to characterize early feminism as simply a “white middle-class movement”—a narrative young women and men sometimes encounter in college courses and media accounts since the 2010s.⁴¹ Besides being misleading, such characterizations are ironically (if unwittingly) race and class biased in effect, failing to credit women of color and women of different classes with the role they actually played in launching U.S. second wave feminism. Moreover, and even if unwittingly, this characterization may subtly make it more difficult to accord distinctly feminist ideas about sexism the legitimacy they deserve.

But why is it important for feminists now to keep both commonalities (by which I mean problems shared across women) and differences (by which I mean divergent and unequal experiences between women) in mind—not either/or but both/and? For one thing, insisting on simultaneity may minimize chances of feminist movements dividing in ways that are potentially counterproductive for the ongoing realization of common and different goals and dreams. A conundrum to which I return throughout this volume is that divisiveness has been a stumbling block for progressive American social movements generally, from the past through the present.⁴² But even more salient is that commonalities and differences across women coexist; these remain since common goals of early and later feminists have not yet been fully or anywhere near sufficiently realized.

For example, sexual assault is a terrible and terribly common by-product of sexism that middle-, upper-class, and poor women encounter across these social categories. At the same time, women face this problem in divergent ways, an observation, too, that in no way ignores or obviates that men are the most numerically frequent victims of violence in America.⁴³ Likewise, should justices on the Supreme Court overturn the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion—as during the 2016 election Donald Trump vowed would be a criterion for selecting justices during his tenure—women as a group would be commonly, and also differently, affected. Should this reversal long feared by feminists actually occur, then class, racial/ethnic, and geographic differences

³⁹ Michele Wallace. 1990 [1979]. *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*. New York: Verso.

⁴⁰ Wallace, *Black Macho*.

⁴¹ My students at Hunter College.

⁴² Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper. 2015. *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

⁴³ See Erika Harrell. 2012. “Violent Victimization Committed by Strangers, 1993–2010.” U.S. Department of Justice. www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/vvcs9310.pdf.

would appear even more salient than they already are given that women in an unequal and divided America already face persistently asymmetric access to abortion.

Because this book explores both widely agreed on feminist issues and equally important divergences among women (and men), I write “feminism(s)” from time to time to denote the importance of keeping commonalities and differences in mind. At minimum, four feminist issues on which broad agreements exist—even as different experiences also pertain—remain germane for earlier and contemporary feminists. Note that the issues this book focuses on are distinctively based on gender and sexuality; they correspond to problems bequeathed by centuries of sexism. While not everyone will agree about each of these four issues (and surely other problems not distinctively gender based also require feminist prioritization), many feminists nevertheless agree on the following problems: *First*, women must have the opportunity for full and equal participation in public spheres, including but not limited to work, politics, and education. *Second*, across feminism(s), freedom in the private and intimate realms of our lives is widely accepted as a major goal, and its impediment roundly criticized. Feminists of many different persuasions have fought long and hard to obtain reproductive choices and sexual freedoms; most recently, movements centered on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) rights and liberties have won impressive cultural recognition and legitimation. *Third*, feminists from earlier to later waves have criticized and tried to influence sexism in cultural representations—on television; in films, including pornographic depictions; in music; in the news—that in patterned ways portray women as powerless and as objects, reinforcing and potentially perpetuating gender inequality and sexist stereotypes. This concern with cultural imagery traces back to early feminist concerns about sexual objectification; popular cultural representations have reinforced “seeing” women as objects of desire rather than mutually respected and multifaceted human beings equal to men. *Fourth* and last, a common and core feminist belief is opposition to violence against women. Violence is wrong in itself and in sexist societies is closely linked to gender- and sexuality-based controls that have the effect of keeping women powerless, subordinated, and too often afraid.

Ensuing chapters correspond to these common and different, distinctively feminist issues: again, equal opportunities in all public spheres; intimate freedoms and choices in private life; persistent sexism and heterosexism in media and cultural imagery; and violence against women. Each chapter offers a brief assessment of the extent of progress (if any) in each widely defined arena, and then attempts to illuminate why only partial successes have occurred from the second wave until now, and whether anything was or is still missing from feminist policy and achievements. With all four issues, my operating assumption is that there is value in rethinking about why feminist-inspired transformations emerged as both massive and incomplete: it is a paradox that may well be illuminated by stepping back to reconsider. In some cases, substantive feminist reforms occurred rapidly in decades immediately following periods of feminist activism (such as in the 1980s and 1990s), thereafter tapering off or plateauing into the 2000s and

2010s. Why this surge and political pausing, this rise and stall, of American feminism between the 1970s and now?

For one partial success, take the now popular view that women should be able to work everywhere men can and that they should be paid equally for so doing. While the Equal Rights Amendment initially failed in 1980 after being introduced as a constitutional guarantee against gender and other biases in 1972,⁴⁴ the loss was already mitigated by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which had become law in 1964.⁴⁵ Title VII provides legal redress in cases of gender and racial discrimination and is thereby in sync both with a wide array of feminist views and with opinions of a massive swath of the American public (as public opinion polling confirms).⁴⁶ As a corollary, feminists overwhelmingly believe that women are entitled to equal educational opportunities across the board, and that women should be able to participate in all previously male-dominated fields, from law and medicine through police, firefighting, and the military.⁴⁷

But while it is easy to remember that feminists generally agree about equality of access, less obvious—and more readily forgotten—is that early feminists connected these goals with a corollary change, namely daycare, if equalities of access were to be rendered meaningful. Going back to the first National Organization of Women platform in 1966 shows that calls for universal, good-quality daycare in America were high on the agenda of early feminist objectives.⁴⁸ This was effectively documented in a film commercially released in 2014 called *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*;⁴⁹ the film seeks to educate younger women about second wave history, reminding audiences about feminist goals in general and highlighting calls for daycare in particular. Daycare, as the film clearly shows, was a major “demand” precisely because equal public participation and the ability to leave children well cared for and safe are closely connected with the cause of “women’s liberation.” Of course, this is a distinctively gender-related issue

⁴⁴ Mary Frances Berry. 1988. *Why ERA Failed: Politics, Women's Rights, and the Amending Process of the Constitution*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Jane Mansbridge. 1986. *Why We Lost the ERA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁴⁵ American Association of University Women. 2017. “Know Your Rights: Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.” www.aauw.org/what-we-do/legal-resources/know-your-rights-at-work/title-vii/.

⁴⁶ Kaitlin Holmes, Jocelyn Frye, Sarah Jane Glynn, and Jessica Quinter. 2016. “Rhetoric vs. Reality: Equal Pay.” Center for American Progress, November 7. www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2016/11/07/292175/rhetoric-vs-reality-equal-pay/; Weiyi Cai and Scott Clement. 2016. “What Americans Think about Feminism Today.” *Washington Post*, January 27. www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/feminism-project/poll/.

⁴⁷ Eileen Patten. 2015. “On Equal Pay Day, Key Facts about the Gender Pay Gap.” Pew Research Center, April 14. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/04/14/on-equal-pay-day-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-gender-pay-gap/; Kim Parker, Juliana Horowitz, and Molly Rohal. 2015. “Women and Leadership: Public Says Women Are Equally Qualified, but Barriers Persist.” Pew Research Center, January 14. www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/01/14/women-and-leadership/.

⁴⁸ See Betty Friedan. 1966. “The National Organization for Women’s 1966 Statement of Purpose.” National Organization for Women. <http://now.org/about/history/statement-of-purpose/>.

⁴⁹ *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*. 2014. Directed and written by Mary Dore. New York: Cinema Guild.

given that women have been expected (and often continue) to bear disproportionate responsibility for childcare and housework. At the same time, happily, a sign of progress is that by the late 2010s men have been far more involved with these tasks than they were before second wave feminism. Furthermore, many feminist scholars and activists continue to work and write—take as one example *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*—about the need for policy provisions to help families, from daycare through legislating increased parental leave.⁵⁰

Still, and once more looking back, the goal of universally provided, affordable, and high-quality daycare has not been achieved. Rather, as early feminists like Betty Friedan identified decades ago as highly problematic, women who are mothers and caregivers too often experience daunting challenges when they need to have their childcare or elderly care responsibilities relieved. They may need help to pursue their educations, to succeed in their jobs, and to run for political offices. Here then is a first “partial success” in feminism. How did it come to pass that even amid other feminist gains, high-quality and affordable daycare in the United States has not been realized? This “lack” obtains despite the fact that the United States is an outlier on this issue, far behind the vast majority of other advanced industrial nations—from the United Kingdom to Ireland, France, Scandinavia, Canada, and Australia—which do fulfill this basic feminist need, with major implications for women, men, and families.⁵¹ Note too that linking pay, job, and educational equality with daycare exemplifies how the “public” and “private” realms of people’s lives are inextricably interconnected, a feminist theme that I discuss later in the chapter.

For feminists also tend to concur on the importance of options in private life when it comes to intimate family and sexual choices. And as with realizing gains in employment and educational spheres, great progress has been made in the arena of personal freedoms. For instance, a major victory for personal feminist and sexual freedoms occurred in 2015 when the Supreme Court issued a landmark decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, pronouncing gay marriage constitutional.⁵² Then, too, organizing in the LGBTQ movement appeared on the cultural scene from the 1990s,⁵³ rising with spectacular rapidity

⁵⁰ Janet C. Gornick and Marcia K. Meyers. 2005 [2003]. *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

⁵¹ Brigid Schulte. 2014. “The U.S. Ranks Last in Every Measure When It Comes to Family Policy, in 10 Charts.” *Washington Post*, June 23. www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/wp/2014/06/23/global-view-how-u-s-policies-to-help-working-families-rank-in-the-world/?utm_term=.cd91a1f923ac.

⁵² Robert Barnes. 2015. “Supreme Court Rules Gay Couples Nationwide Have a Right to Marry.” *Washington Post*, June 26. www.washingtonpost.com/politics/gay-marriage-and-other-major-rulings-at-the-supreme-court/2015/06/25/ef75a120-1b6d-11e5-bd7f-4611a60dd8e5_story.html?utm_term=.616a7730c1ef.

⁵³ Scott Barclay, Mary Bernstein, and Anna-Maria Marshall, eds. 2009. *Queer Mobilizations: LGBT Activists Confront the Law*. New York: New York University Press.

to cultural visibility.⁵⁴ People who are concerned about sexual discrimination in the workplace, at schools, and throughout American society are now far more aware that trans and bisexual people, as well as those who are gay or lesbian, often encounter discrimination that needs to be culturally, legally, and politically fought against and redressed. Again, many feminists are in agreement about fighting such biases to win respect for people's sexual preferences and desires.⁵⁵ Note, once more, a close intertwining of "private" and "public" concerns, since without those public and legal interventions against discrimination by sexual orientation, private choices and preferences cannot be guaranteed. This imbrication of the private and the public also affects the protection, through courts and legislatures, of reproductive rights and access to legalized abortion.

By contrast, when it comes to another central feminist issue that likewise involves procuring and maximizing intimate personal freedoms—namely, reproductive rights—quite a different picture emerges, even though childcare, reproductive freedom, and abortion rights have also long topped feminists' wish lists and priorities.⁵⁶ Here then is a second partial success for feminists: whereas legal and attitudinal changes have occurred in public sentiment (relatively speaking) in the realm of sexual freedoms, the political and ethical legitimacy of abortion dramatically declined over the same decades. Moreover, this decline occurred even as public opinion polls continue to show majorities of people supporting legalized abortion in the United States.⁵⁷ Another way of stating this is that in recent decades movements highlighting sexual freedoms could be characterized as having gained support and greater legitimacy, whereas abortion rights groups have found themselves more on the defensive, losing political ground even as a majority of people still think abortion should remain legal.⁵⁸

Again, though, why this striking discrepancy, this relative success at improving cultural awareness and legitimacy of gay rights, gay marriage, and LGBTQ life choices, on the one hand, and the relative decline in clear legitimacy of abortion rights as part of reproductive freedoms, on the other? The disparity is even more puzzling given that sexual and reproductive freedoms are linked by a kindred feminist goal: expanding human choice, flexibilities, and options as a core value across feminism(s). Yet it became increasingly difficult from the 1970s and 1980s onward for feminists to argue persuasively that only a "pro-choice" position on abortion allows women a full range of options—from passionately opposing abortion through feeling comfortable with abortion and choosing not to proceed with a pregnancy. Many people came to

⁵⁴ Urvashi Vaid, Lisa Duggan, Tamara Metz, and Amber Hollibaugh. 2013. "What's Next for the LGBT Movement?" *The Nation*, June 27. www.thenation.com/article/whats-next-lgbt-movement/.

⁵⁵ Julia Serano. 2013. *Excluded: Making Feminism and Queer Movements More Inclusive*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.

⁵⁶ Friedan, "National Organization for Women's 1966 Statement of Purpose."

⁵⁷ According to Pew Research Center polling, American public support for abortion was 57 percent for 2016. See Pew Research Center. 2017. "Public Opinion on Abortion: Views on Abortion, 1995–2016." www.pewforum.org/2017/01/11/public-opinion-on-abortion-2/.

⁵⁸ Katha Pollitt. 2014. *Pro: Reclaiming Abortion Rights*. New York: Picador.

perceive issues around sexuality as separable from reproductive issues despite their connection as two dimensions of personal freedoms.

Perceptions of these and other feminist issues are also affected by popular cultural and media depictions, which contribute to feminist outcomes across public and private arenas from politics, work, and family through pregnancy and sex. While images do not directly “cause” behavior, they do matter, and greatly—as feminists of myriad persuasions have concurred.⁵⁹ Without a doubt, huge progress has been made here, too: topics related to sex and gender are included far more often now in the cultural contents of movie studios and news media; it is hard to think of any medium, from film to television to music, where cultural awareness of feminism(s) has not been catapulted into media-magnified visibility. Consider the feminist influence in comedic films like Paul Samuel Feig’s *Bridesmaids* (2011) and Amy Schumer’s *Trainwreck* (2015), which attested to a new “market” for portrayals of women’s friendships and, in Schumer’s case, sexually open options and lifestyles for women. Women’s friendships and feminist solidarities (as well as divisions) have also become common features of “serious” series, as the eight-Emmy-winning success in 2017 of *Big Little Lies*—an HBO miniseries—attests.

Depictions of men shifted in mass media films and TV shows as well; this is especially obvious in comedies, since humorous representations perhaps render new ideas about gender and sexualities more familiar and less threatening. Whether it is Ben Stiller portraying a male nurse in the mass-distributed *Meet the Fockers* films (2004), comedian Will Smith in films like *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006) as a caring single father, or Paul Rudd playing a laid-back, supportive character in *Ant Man and the Wasp* (2018), clearly gender representations of men have also shifted and evolved. Likewise, inside the academy a virtual revolution has occurred in the study of popular culture and media across the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences; both gender and intersectionality are extensive topics of research and, of course, critique. Exemplified by journalism professor Helen Benedict taking news reporting to task in her still relevant *Virgin or Vamp? How the Press Covers Sex Crimes*, and Patricia Hill Collins dissecting “mammies, matriarchs and other controlling images” in *Black Feminist Thought*, a wide range of feminist scholars have called attention to taken-for-granted images of women (and men) that involve sexist, racialized, and class-biased stereotypes.⁶⁰

Indeed, the gender revolution also brought representations that were not necessarily feminist in content. These too were profoundly influenced by gender-related changes and attest not only to common concerns but to the simmering of debates, differences, and cultural ambivalence toward feminist issues. Take, for example, the

⁵⁹ See Naomi Wolf. 2002. * The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used against Women*. New York: HarperCollins.

⁶⁰ Helen Benedict. 1992. *Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes*. New York: Oxford University Press. See chap. 4, “Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images,” in Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

disparity between the increased social legitimacy of sexual freedoms in America, and the challenging of abortion rights' legitimacy as a component of reproductive choices. This defensive shift made its way into at least some popular cultural representations, like the films *Juno* and *Knocked Up*, both depicting young women's struggles to decide what to do about unintended pregnancies.⁶¹ Neither film presents abortion as much of, or even as, an option at all. But as proposed the still-debated status of the issue, the heroines of both the indie movie *Obvious Child* and the HBO series *Girls* express the reverse position: in different ways, both characters treat abortion as one valid choice (and not necessarily a traumatic, guilt-laden one) among others, which are also depicted as legitimate.⁶² Also, on the fifth season of the ABC show *Scandal*, the character played by Olivia Pope has an onscreen abortion; some controversy resulted perhaps precisely because the scene portrayed abortion as a minimally invasive procedure.⁶³

Sexual freedom, too, has been represented in ways that are as altered as they are ambivalent. This is precisely what the intelligently nuanced book *All the Rage* argues in its focus on images of gays and lesbians through the 1990s.⁶⁴ The author notes that by that decade situation comedies, in their supposedly liberal and tolerant array of characters, began to feature gay and lesbian characters almost as de rigueur figures. But these characters hardly lived out sexual preferences in the same "happily ever after" manner as straights: more common was to find one partner dying tragically (as in the film *Fried Green Tomatoes*),⁶⁵ or to see a previously happy lesbian or gay family disrupted by a heterosexual "guy" symbolizing alleged normality (as in the film *The Kids Are All Right*).⁶⁶

Here is where a third partial success for feminism arises. A sea change obviously occurred in the gender-related topics and themes of representational imagery, but things have not altered as much when it comes to the U.S. culture industries themselves. In the late 2010s a tremendous discrepancy indeed separates the reality of greatly changed images (a sign of progress) and the equally "real" gender asymmetry of who owns and controls the production of images (a sign of lack of progress). Consider, for example, the rather startling fact that all six major Hollywood studios in the late 2010s are still run by men. Or the following study, likewise troubling for its results: the Sundance Institute found that only 4 percent of all "blockbuster" movies were directed

⁶¹ *Juno*. 2008. Written by Diablo Cody and directed by Jason Reigman; *Knocked Up*. 2007. Written and directed by Judd Apatow.

⁶² *Obvious Child*. 2014. Written and directed by Gillian Robespierre; *Girls*. 2012–17. Created by Lena Dunham.

⁶³ See Emma Gray. 2017. "ABC Wanted to Cut *Scandal*'s Iconic Abortion Scene." April 12. www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/scandal-iconic-abortion-scene-abc_us_58ee37dee4b0c89f91233e44.

⁶⁴ Suzanna Danuta Walters. 2003 [2001]. *All the Rage: The Story of Gay Visibility in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁶⁵ *Fried Green Tomatoes*. 1991. Written by Fannie Flag and Carol Sobieski and directed by Jon Avnet.

⁶⁶ *The Kids Are All Right*. 2010. Written by Lisa Cholodenko and Stuart Blumberg and directed by Lisa Cholodenko.

by women between 2002 and 2012; when race is taken into account, the percentage of women of color directing major Hollywood films decreases even further. Meanwhile, while not overtly related to ownership and control, the sexual harassment scandal that surfaced in 2017 and led to the firing of movie studio head Harvey Weinstein exposed the too often subordinate position that women find themselves in: women do not (yet) hold equal power in the culture industries. Indeed one facet of snowballing charges of sexual harassment in the culture industry may be their expression of long pent-up dissatisfaction with (sexualized) dynamics of gender-based controls of women working in the supposedly progressive entertainment field.

This troubling disconnect between gender-related contents and the still male-dominated political economy of the culture industries has varied to some extent by historical decade. Changes in control and ownership slowed down in recent decades after noticeable improvements in the 1980s and 1990s. Perhaps, then, specific feminist issues have progressed most during periods—including the present—of intense feminist activism. Another way of putting this is that individual feminist issues are separable but also interconnected with the power of the feminist movement overall.

Moreover, broaching power disparities that are still evident in boardrooms and movie studios takes us back to controlling encounters between men and women that, given the long history of sexism, have too often been rife with violence. This fourth feminist issue—violence against women—raises the question of whether any kind of freedom, personal or political, public or private, is conceivable when a specter of coercion and harm, whether actual or potential, haunts women’s lives.

I call this the sadomasochism of everyday life, referring to overlapping gender, class, and racialized biases that arise in situations where dominance and subordinate relationships abound; as with domestic violence, which women disproportionately experience, people fear punitive repercussions on the basis of their gender or race simply when exercising day-to-day life choices and freedoms.⁶⁷ And again, great progress has been made at one level. Feminists have succeeded in making people far more aware that violence against women, defined from the second wave onward to encompass rape and domestic violence (battering) as well as threats of physical harm and intimidation through sexual harassment or stalking, is unacceptable. The wide-ranging Violence against Women Act, passed in 1994, was renewed in 2013, calling for harsher laws and increasing social services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault from all backgrounds (including undocumented and documented women alike).

Thus it is crystal clear that feminists of myriad persuasions and a broader public concur about the seriousness of the problem in American society writ large.⁶⁸ However, while feminists agree on the heinousness and scope of the problem, sharp disagreements persist about how legislation targeting violence against women affects women in light

⁶⁷ Lynn Chancer. 1992.* *Sadomasochism in Everyday Life: The Dynamics of Power and Powerlessness**. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch. 2013. “US: Violence against Women Act Renewed.” February 28. www.hrw.org/news/2013/02/28/us-violence-against-women-act-renewed.

of race, class, sexuality, and other overlapping social differences. As Kristin Bumiller writes in *In an Abusive State*⁶⁹ and Elizabeth Bernstein elaborates in reference to “carceral feminism,”⁷⁰ strange political bedfellows emerged from the 1990s through the 2010s as federal and state legal policies on sexual assault and domestic violence coincided with the rise of mass incarceration in the United States.⁷¹ This “punitive turn” toward mandatory and lengthy prison sentences, disproportionately affecting minority, poor, and working-class men, also meant heightened punishments for crimes of domestic violence and sexual assault. As a by-product, some women of color—well aware that minority men with whom they were involved might now face longer prison sentences than they necessarily wished imposed⁷²—also came to feel conflicted, and not always well served, by newly enacted punitive policies.⁷³ Again, not just commonalities but differences greatly matter if policies to fight violence against women are to develop sensitively and usefully.

Here a fourth and last partial success emerges: even as feminists diverge about how to redress domestic violence, violence committed disproportionately by men against women (and other men) remains persistent. It is a puzzle that harkens back to 1975, when the classic work *Sisters in Crime* predicted that as the feminist movement rose, women would move equally into both legal and illegal practices; by extension, if the book was right, gender disparities in crime commission, including violent crime, would

⁶⁹ The political scientist Kristin Bumiller contends that the 1970s saw the rise of a neoliberal political-economic regime alongside a surging culture of punishment among the American public. In light of these changes, more administrative regulation over women in the spheres of social welfare and sexual violence crystallized to the point where policies of criminalization took a center role, with the effect of bringing women into the mass incarceration net as offenders. Additionally, she argues that because of this backdrop of a neoliberal regime and calls for law and order, the feminist movement and its progressive projects were reined in and limited. See Kristin Bumiller. 2008. *In an Abusive State: How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement against Sexual Violence*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

⁷⁰ Bernstein postulates a thesis of carceral feminism as a way to help understand “feminism-as-crime-control.” In her analysis of feminism, antitrafficking campaigns, and gender justice, Bernstein finds that feminism became wedded to neoliberalism’s punitive right arm of the state (in its search for law and order), specifically in the case study of sex trafficking. Discourses of “women’s human rights” and “family values” are called forth in the endeavor to crack down on trafficking, and in the process people of color are rendered subordinate to more policing and incarceration. Thus, gender justice is achieved through a carceral feminism. See Elizabeth Bernstein. 2012. “Carceral Politics as Gender Justice? The ‘Traffic in Women’ and Neoliberal Circuits of Crime, Sex, and Rights.” *Theory and Society* 41(3): 233–59.

⁷¹ According to the Sentencing Project and data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 1970 roughly 200,000 people were incarcerated in U.S. state and federal prisons. By 2014 the prison population had exploded to 1.5 million. See Sentencing Project. 2015. “Trends in U.S. Corrections.” <http://sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Trends-in-US-Corrections.pdf>.

⁷² Bettina Muenster and Jennifer Trone. 2016. “Why Is America So Punitive? A Report on the Deliberations of the Interdisciplinary Roundtable on Punitiveness in America.” John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. www.jjay.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/news/Punitiveness_in_America_Report_March2016.pdf.

⁷³ Bumiller, *In an Abusive State*.

slowly disappear.⁷⁴ But this did not happen; rather, using Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) data comparing the thirty-year period 1980 through 2010, a more complicated picture emerges. On the one hand, in a trend that escalated through the 1990s across the United States, rates of all violent crime went down (including murder, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, and burglary). On the other hand, for the most serious violent crime—murder (and also negligent manslaughter)—nearly the same gender disparity that existed in 1980 persisted decades later. In other words, men committed murders ten times more frequently than women in 1980, and still committed murder ten times more frequently than women in 2009. Not surprisingly, gender disparities continue to characterize rape, too, a crime almost exclusively committed by men (though for particular years rapes by women are also noted by the BJS; for instance, in 1995, 297 reported rapes were committed by women).

Why, though, declines in violence overall, including crimes against women (a sign of progress), at the same time that men still commit hugely disproportionate numbers of all violent crimes (a sign of lack of progress)? When it comes to recently diminished rates of violence in the 2000s and 2010s, a host of factors—from criminal justice policies through increased cultural awareness achieved by feminists—likely account for the good news. Regarding still gender-skewed patterns, though, perhaps the feminist movement needs to focus on transforming the socialized inner and outer worlds of men, of masculinities, to the same degree that women’s options and worlds have slowly but surely altered. For instance, girls are now widely encouraged to play many sports, like soccer, that were once restricted to boys. But boys playing with, say, Barbie dolls remains by comparison relatively stigmatized.

Another way of making this point is to inspect data about legitimate occupations with regard to continuing (or not) gendered disparities. For instance, a study of the field of nursing by the Census Bureau’s Occupation Statistics branch shows that the number of registered nurses who are male tripled between 1970 and 2011.⁷⁵ This sounds like, and is, good news in terms of the permeation of gender-related changes in the culture for both men and women. However, viewed slightly differently, the tripling means only that the number of nurses who are male increased from 2.7 percent of all nurses in 1970 to just 8.1 percent of all nurses in 2011. In other words, 91 percent of all nurses remain women (nursing is an interesting example, not only because it is a traditionally “feminized” occupation but because, since the 2010s, labor shortages led to this profession becoming more highly paid). Thus, while men certainly now work much more frequently as nurses—and as kindergarten teachers—than at previous times, the

⁷⁴ Freda Adler, author of *Sisters in Crime*, saw equalities in crime commission as a logical outcome of the feminist movement; one point that she did not consider, however, is that in the illegal world no legal remedies exist when gender biases are encountered to ensure that women will “move up” in underground organizations.

⁷⁵ Linda Landivar. 2013. “Men in Nursing Occupations.” US Census Bureau: American Community Survey Highlight Report. February. www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2013/acs/2013_Landivar_02.pdf.

disparity between how many women work in previously male-dominated fields (such as law and medicine) and how many men work in previously female-dominated professions (such as nursing and childcare) remains dramatic.

In exploring this fourth feminist outcome of change-and-not-change, I suggest that the issue of violence against women needs to be addressed, and redressed, both at its “center” and at the “margins.” Quite understandably, feminists to date have concentrated a majority of political and social energy on the “extremes” of “masculine” behavior—on acted-out violence against women (and men). Perhaps efforts need to aim just as intensively toward the “center,” namely on gendered expectations and pressures at the heart of men’s day-to-day socialization experiences and character formation. Cultural mandates involving gender and sexuality bestow both privileges and highly oppressive burdens, creating asymmetric pressures for men to repress vulnerable feelings in order to act like a “man.” In other words, badly still in need of change are the cultural contexts of “masculinities,” a concept that is analogous with how I refer to feminism(s) in taking both commonalities and differences in men’s situations into account.⁷⁶ I am coining the concept of “compulsory masculinity” to connote pressures boys still experience from young ages to treat people in sexist and heterosexist ways to avoid stigmatization by other men, and to earn acceptance from them. Such pressures happen at once commonly across boys and men, and differently when race, class, and sexual differences among boys and men are considered. At the same time, of course, not all expressions of masculinity are sexist or what has been referred to as “toxic.” Moreover, the complexities of overlapping social discriminations of class, racialization, and gender mean that acting “macho” has different meanings and psychological values when intersectional factors like class and racialization are taken into account.

Interwoven across the coming chapters are four themes relevant to assessing how the gender revolution might move its broadly shared agenda into the future. The first theme entails intersectional concerns about class, race, sexuality, and their connections, and how American feminism(s) can best incorporate them not only in theory but practice. As many feminists have for years contended, without political and social movement integration, further realizing feminist dreams may be difficult and literally and ethically impoverishing.

Equally crucial, though, is a second theme, ensuring that sexism is criticized—just as firmly as other biases—so that no one bias is reduced or subordinated to others. Maintaining feminist cognizance of sexism is at once imperative and difficult given the insidious effects of patriarchal conditioning, psychically and socially, over thousands of years; unfortunately, the by-products of sexist enculturation can be taken for granted and overlooked almost as historical habit, though the depth of sexism ought not be underestimated. Take the following contemporary example, once more from the 2016 presidential election that counterposed “Hillary” versus “Trump.” In accord with what feminist Susan Bordo describes in *The Destruction of Hillary Clinton*, whatever people

⁷⁶ Raewyn Connell. 1995. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

may have thought of “Hillary” compared to the viewpoints and personality of “Bernie,” chants of “Lock her up! Lock her up!” at Trump campaign rallies invidiously blurred sexism and politics such that the former was virtually inseparable from the latter.⁷⁷ Shouting “Lock her up!” alluded subtly (actually, not so subtly) to violence; it merged with unchallenged sexism that still pervades our culture, even as other social problems, like class inequalities and racism, need desperately to be “called out” too.

A third theme asks how the feminist movement (and movements) can avoid counter-productive divisiveness, which still too often plagues most U.S. progressive movements, including the gender revolution. Feminists can be politically antagonistic toward each other, quite passionately so, and sometimes apt to emphasize points of disagreement even when shared agreements may be equally salient. I explored this problem in a book about feminist “sex debates” through the 1980s and 1990s entitled *Reconcilable Differences: Confronting Beauty, Pornography and the Future of Feminism*.⁷⁸ Here, though, I place the challenge of feminist divisions within the context of internal divisions as well as the broader American cultural landscape within which other social movements have encountered analogous divisions and fragmentations over the course of history.

Finally, a fourth theme relates to insights about the world that feminist theorists bequeathed to culture writ large. For instance, it should be possible to tap feminist insights about the constant interplay of our “private” and “public” lives, and between the emotional/unconscious and rational/conscious sides of human beings, in order to move the gender revolution and other socially egalitarian changes forward. Feminist theory, generally speaking, takes complex positions that go beyond rigid either/or divides. This has engendered an admirable refusal to treat “personal” (or allegedly only private) issues as separable from “political” (or allegedly only public) ones. Thus, acting on more holistic and multidimensional visions of individual and social life has been—and remains—crucial when it comes to policies and feminist-inspired transformations yet to be realized.

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Before elaborating on each of these themes and issues, I delve briefly but more deeply into recent feminist history, exploring the backdrop against which feminists reached the present juncture, one marked by tremendous progress as well as stalling, pauses, or in some cases turning back. My hope is to identify factors, from without or within, that might account for the persistence of unfulfilled dreams alongside massive accomplishments. In looking back before proceeding, I turn to challenges that are hard—impossible—for feminists to ignore because of traces left behind. One such challenge was strong countermovement organizing initiated almost immediately after second wave activism began in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet ambivalences emerged from within as well as without, leading to divisions that may have affected the movement

⁷⁷ Susan Bordo. 2017. *The Destruction of Hillary Clinton*. New York: Melville House.

⁷⁸ Lynn Chancer. 1998 [1992].* *Reconcilable Differences: Confronting Beauty, Pornography, and the Future of Feminism**. Berkeley: University of California Press.

for decades—sometimes uniting and other times dividing “stay at home” moms from those who pursued careers; women bisexual or queer or lesbian from those who consider themselves straight; and women who experience multiple discriminations from those who encounter a single one.

With all of this in the backdrop, we must find ways to get beyond contemporary dilemmas; to come together as did so many millions of women, men, and other people on January 21, 2017, to protest multiple discriminations and human injustices, including sexism, in the wake of now-president Donald Trump’s inauguration. For when all is said and done, this book is not only about redressing problems and ambivalences but also about furthering achievements that mark the rise of the remarkable American feminist movement. It is about how to recognize differences while also remembering the not yet irrelevant history of commonalities. And massive as the task has always been, and remains, it is about creating a better world.

2. Debating the “F” Word

On July 22, 1968, a spectacularly publicized cigarette advertising campaign for the Philip Morris brand declared, “You’ve come a long way, Baby!” The ad seems to have been directed at the “New Woman,” “sexy and free-wheeling,” who was also “independent, self-sufficient and eager to demonstrate her confidence” and whose freedom and glamour contrasted with “the drudgery and repression that women in the past had endured.”¹ A transformation was occurring as huge numbers of women moved into the workforce from the 1960s onward, joining diverse working-class women who had worked and cared for themselves and their families long before. Only a few years earlier, Phyllis Schlafly became well known as an antifeminist writer and activist, although her career commenced not in relation to women’s issues but as an anticommunist. Her best-selling *A Choice Not an Echo* was credited with helping to catapult Republican Barry Goldwater to his (failed) presidential bid following its publication.² We might ask whether anything connects these events—and whether the relationship even matters.

From the late 1960s and continuing from the 1980s and 1990s through the present, serious challenges—from without and within—confronted the efforts of American feminists to realize their early goals. Schlafly soon became committed to attacking feminists for precisely the “You’ve come a long way baby” exuberance that the Philip Morris cigarette ad conveyed with its focus on freedom from “drudgery” for the new career woman. As Schlafly and others insisted in a well-funded, highly mediated campaign that began with a 1972 “STOP ERA” (Equal Rights Amendment) effort, feminists’ stress on independence devalued women who wanted to be “stay at home” moms and care for their families. Antifeminist organizations also accused early feminists of being anti-male—man hating—and antiheterosexual to boot. Thus in Schlafly’s antifeminist organizing, born in reaction to and right alongside the second wave, a chasm opened between the new feminist woman and the conventional housewife—whether or not that accorded with feminists’ own beliefs and intentions. Hardly coincidentally, the so-called culture wars also commenced in force, pitting feminists against antifeminists who labeled the former rigid, intolerant, and determined to destroy the nuclear family.

In retrospect, an enormous problem thereby emerged from the proverbial get-go for second wave and later for third and fourth wave feminists too. The issue was, and is, as follows: how to fend off attacks concerning a career-versus-homemaker divide, as this

¹ See Wendy Christensen. 2012. “Torches of Freedom: Women and Smoking Propaganda.” *Sociological Images*, February 27. <https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2012/02/27/torches-of-freedom-women-and-smoking-propaganda/>.

² Phyllis Schlafly. 1964. *A Choice Not an Echo*. Washington, DC: Regnery.

construct quickly and powerfully threatened to undermine the popularity and spread of feminist ideas and policies. But feminists were arguably divided internally, too, about who or what constituted a “good” feminist. Divisions from outside were echoed, in different ways and for different reasons, in concerns many feminists themselves felt about whether the word *feminism* connoted particular expectations of behavior: for newly politicized feminists, were conventional, prefeminist lifestyles and choices rendered “un-cool”? Nor was a cultural chasm the only divide affecting the young movement decades before it began to age. Concerns about insufficient attention to differences among women along class, racial/ethnic, and sexual lines diluted feminists’ ability to create a sense of collective unity, in the process bequeathing mistrust and divisions of political significance.

Finally, the very character of gender itself could overdetermine divisions between feminists. This was detailed with clarity in early theoretical writings and in literary form by early feminist novelists.³ As they contended, sexist societies placed women in competitive relationship to one another vis-à-vis the structurally divisive character of gender itself. This meant that older women sometimes felt in competition with younger women, or that divisions sometimes occurred among women within classes or ethnic, racial, or religious groups. As a result, consciousness-raising strategies of early feminists sought explicitly to overcome this problem by building close feminist connections in small groups that were at once emotionally and politically solidifying.

In sum, though consciousness raising often created lasting and meaningful political and personal connections, other factors contributed to hesitations, ambivalences, and antagonisms toward and among feminists from the 1960s–70s to the 1980s–90s and continuing through the present. Progress and setbacks equated with persistent challenges that contemporary U.S. feminists have had no choice but to address: the “culture wars” bequeathed by antifeminists from without; rigidities emanating, at least to some extent, from feminists within; concerns about inadequate political attention to the implications of racial, ethnic, class, and sexual differences between women (and men); and the character of gender itself. Before I proceed to elaborate on each challenge, note that organizational calls for unity have certainly prevailed politically in some cases in recent years. Take, for example, the mass protest on January 17, 2017, against President Donald Trump’s inauguration, which gave strong voice to feminist concerns and coalitions. Unlike that protest, though, no central “organizing” explains the wave of feminist-inspired activity against sexual harassment that has been utterly collective and powerfully feminist in effect, “bringing down” influential men in politics, business, and the world of news and entertainment. Nonetheless, while thankfully not a problem all the time, the complex divisions that have unfolded over the last fifty years merit reevaluation, since these too touch importantly on the future of American feminism.

³ See Millett, *Sexual Politics*; Firestone, *Dialectic of Sex*; and Lila Karp. 1969. *The Queen Is in the Garbage*. New York: Vanguard Press.

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From the very inception of the second wave, feminists were vigorously attacked by countermovement organizations, within which a major figure was indeed conservative leader Phyllis Schlafly. If Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem were media-recognized representatives of feminism in the late 1960s and into the 1970s—Friedan as the head of the National Organization of Women, Steinem as the founder of *Ms.* magazine—so Schlafly became an analogously well-known symbol of “anti” feminism. For instance, restating themes interwoven through her writings from the 1970s on, Schlafly asserted in *Feminist Fantasies* that to be a feminist and to want a spouse and family were antithetical. She described feminists as “unhappy,” “bitter,” and “angry.”⁴ In her opinion feminists were rigid and ideological: “liberation for women [must be] ... in a paying job rather than in the confining, repetitious drudgery of the home, and ... child care must not be allowed to interfere with a woman’s career.”⁵ Nor was it clear that one could be a feminist and look pretty, as Schlafly declared; not only were feminists anti-male and antifamily but antifeminine. Her conclusion? “Feminism’s psychological outlook on life is basically negative.”⁶

It would not be astonishing if such allegations had long-range consequences. For one thing, Schlafly was setting forth a starkly binary, sharply polarized division among women: feminists were and wanted to be career women as opposed to mothers and wives; nothing outside this either/or formulation seemed to be conceivable and there was no room for envisioning gender and sexualities in more sophisticated and shifting ways. Nor did Schlafly recognize a sociological reality that would over the decades become closer to a norm than an exception: increasingly, women were moving into the workforce from desire or economic need. By 2015 only 26 percent of families conformed to the 1950s “Leave It to Beaver”⁷ or “Father Knows Best”⁸ traditional household in which men worked and women stayed at home.⁹

Schlafly sounded what she hoped would be a resonant warning bell: should women nonetheless declare themselves feminists, they might face socially deleterious consequences. To call oneself a feminist, she implied—and not so subtly—meant or could be perceived as placing oneself outside the mainstream of acceptability in the realm of familial and gender relationships. The word was a stigma, a label, according to antifeminist formulations; it could be risky if voluntarily applied to oneself and if one did not wish to veer from or be mocked amid well-trodden social conventions. Stigmas render

⁴ Phyllis Schlafly. 2003 [1993]. *Feminist Fantasies*. Dallas: Spence, 4.

⁵ Schlafly, *Feminist Fantasies*.

⁶ Schlafly, *Feminist Fantasies*.

⁷ *Leave It to Beaver*. 1957. Created by Joe Connelly and Bob Mosher.

⁸ *Father Knows Best*. 1954. Created by Ed James.

⁹ Pew Research Center. 2015. “Raising Kids and Running a Household: How Working Parents Share the Load.” http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/11/2015-11-04_working-parents_FINAL.pdf. According to the Pew Research Center, in 26 percent of male/female married or cohabiting couples with at least one child younger than eighteen in the household in 2015, the mother was not employed and the father was employed full-time.

one “different from others ... and of a less desirable kind.”¹⁰ Substituting “feminist” for “less desirable” suggests the word’s becoming loaded with associations of deviance from allegedly normal beliefs and lifestyles. Surely, though, not all stigmas “take”: was this depiction of feminists as anti-male and antifamily evocative?

Schlafly’s ideas were part of a larger, well-funded, and extensively networked backlash involving organizations dedicated to publicizing agendas of which antifeminism was a major—if not the only—part. Two major feminist successes of the early 1970s were the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) as a constitutional amendment, followed by the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion, both of which spurred Schlafly into action against the set of problems she perceived the feminist movement to augur. Schlafly became committed to criticizing and setting back the women’s liberation movement, as it was growing and exploding, through legal successes and influential publications. Soon thereafter, well-organized and determined groups, including Schlafly’s Eagle Forum (1972), Concerned Women for America (1979), and the Family Research Council (1980), went into collective high gear to halt the ERA, which was portrayed as compelling women to use “unisex” bathrooms and fight in wars on military frontlines beside (and “as though”) men.¹¹

It would be hard to believe that the intensity of this countermovement activity did not figure heftily when, after thirty states quickly passed the ERA in one year, only five ratified it over the five-year period thereafter (1974–79).¹² Other states rescinded their previous approvals until, in 1979, the amendment finally expired.¹³ As pertains to my purposes here, lines of genealogical continuity can be traced from these earlier developments to ones much closer to hand. For instance, in 2017 antifeminist stereotypes similar to those circulated by Schlafly and other conservative groups appeared on a website called “Women against Feminism.”¹⁴ The site contains page upon page of women photographed with signs hanging from their necks to publicize their dislike of the feminist movement. Many of the signs echo reasons Schlafly gave decades earlier for undermining the women’s liberation movement. To cite a few:

I don’t need feminism because if a man can’t tell me how to live, neither can a woman.

¹⁰ Erving Goffman. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Prentice Hall, 3.

¹¹ Learning Network. 2012. “March 22, 1972: Equal Rights Amendment for Women Passed by Congress.” *New York Times*, March 22. <https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/22/march-22-1972-equal-right-amendment-for-women-passed-by-congress/>.

¹² Learning Network, 2012.

¹³ By the 1979 deadline, thirty-five states had ratified the ERA. Ultimately, the amendment failed as it was short three votes of the necessary thirty-eight. See equalrightsamendment.org and also, for a fuller discussion, Jane J. Mansbridge. 1986. *Why We Lost the ERA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

¹⁴ “Women against Feminism.” <http://womenagainstfeminism.com>, last updated September 12, 2017.

I don't need feminism because I don't hate men.

I don't need feminism because almost every time I've voiced that I am a woman against feminism, feminists have told me that I *deserve* to be sexually abused or assaulted.

I don't need 3rd wave Western feminism because we *are* different to men. Get over it.

Affirmative action makes me question whether I was more qualified for the job or a box that needed to be checked.¹⁵

In 2014 author Susan Patton's *Marry Smart* took feminists and the word *feminist* to task but from a more elite, and elitist, perspective. Patton claims feminist stances on violence against women and premarital sex harmed well-educated women—including women who went to Ivy League institutions like Princeton, as she had—by encouraging them to pursue careers rather than men, in a world still deeply organized around traditionally gendered dictates. In so doing, a major opportunity for “marrying smart” was allegedly lost at a critical moment in the life cycle; Patton blamed feminism if, later on, women in their thirties or forties found themselves not only alone but lonely and perhaps childless.¹⁶ Patton's message reverberated with Schlafly-like warnings: to be a feminist who pursues expanded life options is to face potential stigma and ostracization; one incurs the risk of simmering, life-long regrets for not following centuries-old gendered mandates.

The controversial and conservative figure Milo Yiannopoulos, touring college campuses in the name of free speech in 2017, actively recirculated the same old stereotype and stigmatizing characterizations. Again, echoes of Schlafly color his hardly subtle formulation: “Most ardent haters are feminists and their fear of penises is well known.”¹⁷ Likewise, after noting that he believes in equality of opportunity, Milo rebrands earlier language as “not what modern, intersectional, third-wave, as it's called, feminism is about—which seems to me, and I think a lot of women too, primarily to be about man-hating.”¹⁸

But one can also place these countermovement reactions in a wider framework of thought, of which they were a symptom and of which they partook. Specifically, Schlafly

¹⁵ womenagainstfeminism.com.

¹⁶ Susan Patton. 2014. *Marry Smart: Advice for Finding the One*. New York: Simon & Schuster. See also Susan Patton. 2013. “Opinion: Letter to the Editor.” <https://thedailyprincetonian.wordpress.com/2013/03/29/opinion-letter-to-the-editor-march-29-2013/>; Kelly Wallace. 2014. “Should You Go to College for Mrs. Degree? Princeton Mom Weighs In.” *CNN*, March 13. www.cnn.com/2014/03/13/living/princeton-mom-book-marry-smart-matrimony/; Jeff Brady. 2013. “A Letter on Finding a Husband before Graduation Spurs Debate.” *NPR*, April 4. www.npr.org/2013/04/04/176191335/a-letter-on-finding-a-husband-before-graduation-spurs-debate.

¹⁷ Zack Beauchamp. 2017. “Milo Yiannopoulos: Breitbart's Star Provocateur and Trump Champion, Explained.” *Vox*, February 20. www.vox.com/2016/4/4/11355876/milo-yiannopoulos.

¹⁸ Dave Rubin. 2015. “Milo Yiannopoulos Hates Feminism.” *Rubin Report*, October 8. www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiESisEL43c.

and other antifeminists, earlier through later, portrayed feminists as demanding a choice between being either a housewife “or” a career woman, either pro- or anti-male, pro- or antifamily, straight or lesbian. Ironically, much of early feminist theory critiqued such binary formulations as far too simplistic, reminiscent precisely of the strictly divided categories—masculine or feminine, private or public, domestic or business, rational or emotional—that under-girded gender subordination in the first place.

Moreover, binary formulations in American cultural contexts converge with conventional media habits that likewise portray social events and social movements as strictly two-sided. This is a well-documented tendency, for example in *Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes*,¹⁹ wherein a largely male press corps is criticized for covering victims in rape cases as either bad or good women, so-called madonnas or so-called whores. And as I contend in *High Profile Crimes: When Legal Cases Become Social Causes*, the habit is even more deeply engrained and familiar in American cultural thought where, for example, sports allow only for winners or losers; the two-party system, for Democrats or Republicans; and until recently racial categorizations, for either white or black.²⁰ The legal system too in litigious America accustoms us to think of parties on one of only two sides, the prosecution or the defense, just as conventional journalistic norms often see only two sides to a story.

In this respect, antifeminists and feminists have shared a similar cultural environment in which frameworks of thought are too often simplistic; as a result, it could be that feminists have sometimes been affected by the same insufficiently complex frameworks and habits of analysis. If so, then Schlafly’s depictions of feminists as anti-male and antifamily may wittingly or unwittingly have tapped into and thereby exploited an early feminist issue from within—not just without. For it is certainly possible that *some* feminists socialized in America’s binary culture were occasionally judgmental about women remaining housewives or being involved with men. Maybe, to some extent, subtly hierarchical differentiations were made between career women and homemakers. Should this reasoning be at all apt, then Schlafly’s sharply antifeminist allegations—even though largely incorrect—could still have struck chords of recognition, which from the inside, not just the outside, made feminism and its associations vulnerable.

Let me pursue this line of exploration, for whether fully reflected on or unintended, ideological judgments do seem to have sometimes been an issue for the young feminist movement as it unfolded from the second wave through the present. The effects of such rigidities could be experienced, psychologically as well as socially, as put-downs, as stigmatizing, which in turn might reflect the label “uncool” back on to the labelers. For example, as I write this, images surface from my own college days when the headiness of early feminism was affecting and reshaping so many women’s lives, includ-

¹⁹ Benedict, *Virgin or Vamp*.

²⁰ Lynn Chancer. 2005. *High-Profile Crimes: When Legal Cases Become Social Causes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

ing my own. I recall fretting about explosive new radical ideas and how they could coexist with the conventionally gendered norms into which I, like so many, had been familiarly socialized. Even with friends, I sometimes worried about being judged and found wanting as a feminist. For instance, at meetings of my university's then-named "Women's Center" in the late 1970s, I would advocate to other young women that meetings on rape, sexual incest, and assault should be closed to men; otherwise, as with consciousness-raising groups inaugurated by early feminists, women would not feel comfortable enough to speak. But I also suspected that some of my feminist friends saw me as overly desirous of male company and attention, and not independent enough in my supposedly feminist psyche. I remember one friend suggesting indignantly that my life was a living contradiction, this touching a chord of self-doubt: was I full of bravado in some ways and utterly traditional, even submissive, in others? In response, I was torn between embarrassment and anger at this friend and, by extension, at the feminist judgments I perceived and sometimes encountered.

Nor do I believe I was alone in experiencing such complicated feelings. On the one hand, realizations about sometimes deeply sexist relations between men and women were raising disconcerting questions in many women about their choices and practices around men and families. Some second wave radical feminist texts—take *Amazon Odyssey*—took a purist position, advocating lesbian separatism for political reasons.²¹ Yet what if a woman wanted to have a "boyfriend," or to marry or have kids with a man? Or to have a big fancy wedding? Moreover, some lesbians objected to treating relationships they had chosen (for being emotionally, psychologically, and sexually preferred) as political "shoulds"; whereas some women wished to reject and move beyond the institution's historically sexist and heterosexist associations, many women and men who were gay wanted equal rights to marry. Finally troubling was an attribution of undesirable characteristics, as though intrinsic, to all men. This seeming essentialism contradicted the rejection of stereotypes that is fundamental to feminism(s), and did not resonate with positive relationships women enjoyed with some, or perhaps many, men in their lives.

In retrospect, perhaps a theoretical omission by radical feminist theories—also relatively unexplored in radical writings about class²²—was leaving practical queries like these, about what to do and how to live, relatively unexplored. Without clarification, the door was left open for radical feminist thought to become associated with judgments and rigidities, whether fairly or not. Indeed, in historical context, it is not surprising

²¹ Ti-Grace Atkinson. 1974. *Amazon Odyssey*. New York: Putnam.

²² Going back to the writings of Marx, one finds hesitancy to lay out concrete "blueprints" of a future and more (class) equitable society. From a theoretical standpoint, and as a student of Hegel's, well schooled in dialectical processes, Marx believed it was impossible to predict how society would look beyond an immediate period ahead. However, one legacy of this tradition for numerous social movements concerned with large-scale social changes—including but not limited to feminism—may be to have avoided thinking through the psychological and emotional as well as policy consequences of necessarily gradual cultural shifts.

that events through the 1980s and 1990s evidenced rebellions against “political correctness” à la feminism. Hardly coincidental, looking back, was the emergence of Madonna as a larger-than-life cultural icon popular with young women just as feminisms were evolving and reflecting on what gender transformation meant in practice and theory. Vivid memories return: I recall supervising several senior theses in the late 1980s about whether Madonna was or was not a “feminist.” Madonna may have attained stardom precisely because her cultural persona defiantly insisted that yes, of course, one could wear makeup, look sexy, and still be a feminist.

Controversies continued, this one and others. A series of “sex debates” divided feminists in the 1980s and 1990s on how to evaluate controversial and uncomfortable issues, from pornography and prostitution through beauty, cosmetic surgery, and sadomasochism.²³ Again, the issues invoked questions kindred to ones that burgeoning feminism(s) had awakened about how to reconcile older desires and habits with newer insights and feelings. A “structure versus agency” pattern of disagreements united these debates, repetitively pitting some feminists against others. On one side were some feminists, including Catherine Mackinnon and Andrea Dworkin, contending that patriarchal societies subordinated women on each of the questions; on the other side were feminists, including Ellen Willis and Carole Vance, decrying the historical repressiveness of male-dominated societies and highlighting women’s need for sexual freedoms. And throughout, a similar doubt recurred: “Can I be a feminist if ... ?”²⁴

Vis-à-vis pornography: if one was sexually excited by man-made pornography, did this mean one was somehow less, or not, a feminist? Regarding prostitution: what if a woman happened to work in the sex industry and sold sex; was she thereby not or less a feminist? On beauty and cosmetic surgery: was one a feminist if willing to undertake a breast reduction or enlargement, or remove flabby skin under a chin to look younger? As to sadomasochism, lately popularized in the *Fifty Shades of Grey*²⁵ novels and in films in contemporary circulation: if one found sadomasochistic imagery arousing, or even had rape fantasies, “should” this be a source of guilt (and, ironically enough, repressiveness)?

Years later, when I became a mother, I also found that divisions pervaded matters that came up even when having and caring for a baby. I had to have a cesarean section because the umbilical cord was wrapped around my baby son’s throat. Hearing about this later, a good (feminist) friend of mine exclaimed that I had “missed climbing the mountain” of having a “natural birth” in my own home. It would have been better if she had asked me how I felt, as I did not have that particular regret at all. In her statement was an implicit feminist standard that I had somehow failed to live up to; all I actually felt myself was grateful for having given birth to a healthy child with a minimum amount of pain. This “natural” versus “medical” division, sometimes in relation to

²³ See an account of these sex debates in Chancer, *Reconcilable Differences*.

²⁴ Chancer, *Reconcilable Differences*.

²⁵ E. L. James. 2011. *Fifty Shades of Grey*. New York: Vintage Books.

notions about feminism, also affected some women on the issue of breastfeeding, or on whether to do “attachment parenting” by sleeping with one’s baby as opposed to “Ferberizing” (or letting a baby “cry it out” to sleep). I remember asking at the time why there couldn’t be a wide range of positions on these issues that accords with the actual diversity of choices and attitudes women make and hold? My own experience with birthing and early parenting suggested that women (again sometimes) felt judged, whether intended or not, in relation to feminist standards they perceived or encountered.

Then, too, feminist theory circulating mostly in universities from the mid-1980s onward manifested analogous dissatisfaction with binary-only options and with any vision of feminism(s) that seemed too rigid. Poststructuralist theories took issue with a fixed notion of “woman” or “man”; queer theories queried binary conceptions of sexuality (to wit, a growing interest in LGBTQ studies and discrimination against people who did not fit into yet another binary: homo/hetero).²⁶ Feminists were thereby offered a philosophical basis for objecting, in theory as well as practice, to judgments, inflexibilities, and binaries (was one a feminist *or* not?) that seemed to undermine feminism(s)’ expansive intentions.

But however powerful the associations between feminists and ideological rigidity became, this was not the only factor that illuminated negative or ambivalent reactions to the word *feminist*. A series of critiques of U.S. feminism emerged from the 1980s to the present, investigating whether the gender focus of the second wave had become one-dimensional. Referring to one-dimensional feminism may be more precise and less pejorative than “white feminism”; indeed, the latter phrase is not strictly speaking historically accurate given the actual race and class diversity of many early second wave liberal and radical feminists. Detailed historical accounts like that in *Freedom for Women* confirm that African American and working-class women played important roles in criticizing New Left groups for both sexism and racism;²⁷ groups like “Poor Black Women” sought early on to highlight economic as well as gender discriminations encountered by women. Indeed, the evolution of U.S. feminism(s) was marked by criticisms coming too from socialist and Marxist feminists who took second wave liberal and radical feminists to task for insufficient attention to how class combines with gender to differentiate women’s experiences.²⁸

²⁶ Poststructuralists attend to the ways subjects are constructed by discourse. See Judith Butler. 1990. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge. Butler contends that “women” cannot be understood as a concrete category. Rather, women perform gender on the basis of culturally contingent gender norms that, in part, enforce compulsory heterosexuality. Linda Alcoff compares the poststructural approach exemplified by Butler to cultural feminism, which asserts there is an innate “female essence” and works to empower women by owning and revaluing traits and behaviors traditionally associated with femininity. See Linda Alcoff. 1988. “Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory.” *Signs* 13(3): 405–36. www.jstor.org/stable/3174166.

²⁷ Giardina, *Freedom for Women*.

²⁸ See Zillah R. Eisenstein, ed. 1979. *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Other writings went further in saying that even class-oriented socialist feminists overlooked how racialization compounded economic discriminations so as to make gender, class, and racial biases equally weighty in their day-to-day effects on people's lives.²⁹ And last but hardly least, critical writings by feminists called attention to how, even from the beginning of second wave feminism, indicting sexism was hardly identical to concerns about heterosexism. Failures to adequately recognize problems faced by women who were lesbian, bisexual, trans, or queer (those, that is, who faced LGBTQ discrimination) were decried as yet another limitation, and another internal division, which many feminists later tried to correct.

We might ask why such divisions matter. Arguably, it is because accusations of rigidity, from within and without, posed daunting challenges to the political power and collective efficacy of American feminism. These divisions cast doubt on the appeal and relevance of the movement for women in different social situations, whether alone or in couples, as parents or not, or across sexualities versus living more-or-less conventionally gendered lifestyles. Most salient here, divisions concerning class, racial, and sexual differences in women's experiences created challenges to building a mass movement capable of realizing feminists' initially ambitious political goals. Consider again the set of broadly shared issues I have broached: equality (political, economic, and educational); freedom of intimate life choices and preferences; transformations of sexist cultural imagery; and freedom from violence and harassment. Even if early feminists were more diverse than often acknowledged, and even as the term *intersectionality* within the academy has won widespread legitimacy among feminists, it did not necessarily follow that political stances and policies have reflected simultaneous commonalities and differences. Nonetheless, when it comes to political action and not just theory, and whether in the streets or by way of media and social media, issues of intersectional relevance still needed, and need, to be fought for en masse.

Take, for instance, the realm of intimate personal freedoms. Even though *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion in 1973, abortion has not truly been universally available going back as far as 1976. That year was when the Hyde Amendment inaugurated regulations that made legalized abortion difficult and sometimes impossible to obtain for women who were poor and needed federal funding. Since race and class biases often overlap in the United States, the Hyde Amendment also disproportionately affected women of color. More recently, if one is a woman who lives in a rural location, abortions may be even less readily available as new regulations continue to chip away at its availability in conservative states, especially away from urban centers. I do not mean, of course, to obscure that *Roe v. Wade* was a landmark achievement in reproductive rights for women; it was obviously a decision of extraordinary feminist significance. But I am contending that when class is taken into account, secure and affordable abortion that is truly universally accessible has not been a reality for decades, even as the situation has greatly worsened for poorer women in recent years.

²⁹ hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*; Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*; Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins."

Then, too, take the availability of childcare. It is equally evident that poor and working-class women are most affected by the absence of universal and affordable daycare in the United States. Many parents cannot afford to hire nannies or opt out of working; rather, they have to rely on friends, family, and individual resourcefulness. But even though not yet realized, the goal of universal and high-quality childcare in the United States offers feminists an opportunity to build cross-class, cross-racial alliances of women (and men) to provide such a benefit, one that is far more generously offered in most if not all other advanced industrial nations. To date, mass organizing for universal childcare in America has not been a strong collective feminist focus.

The omission is surely correctable in the future, even if impressions of one-dimensional feminism still keep many people at arm's length from the feminist movement, in some cases with an ongoing sense of cynicism. Such cynicism—as well as the need for intersectional feminist politics—may have been reinforced in November 2016 when slightly more white women than not voted for Donald Trump, even as the overwhelming majority of African American women and Latinas chose Hillary Clinton. Consequently, the feminist movement may need to adopt standpoints toward politics and policies that are based on intersectional principles. This accords with concerns outlined by Patricia Hill Collins in *Black Feminist Thought* and with the writings of critical and feminist race theory law professor Kimberle Crenshaw. Here I do not refer to individual “standpoints” (as some interpret feminist standpoint theory to mean) but to specific positions that emerge from the most severe set of discriminations women, men, and families are most likely to face.

In the case of abortion rights, this would mean protesting en masse the severe diminution of those rights that has steadily occurred, even though *Roe v. Wade* has not been overturned. In the meantime, abortion has often been rendered more difficult to obtain, especially for poor women. In the case of daycare for children and the elderly, this might mean feminists returning with renewed political vigor to pressing for universal and high-quality daycare for all women, men, and families. Middle-class women, men, and families would benefit in many cases, too, while an inclusive and uniting policy stance would move the feminist movement as a whole toward realizing its half-fulfilled original goals.

Still, this begs a question I raised earlier: why hasn't this happened already? Once more, the question of divisions—and more crucially, divisiveness—should be treated seriously and with great self- and social awareness; the fragmentation of the feminist movement is germane to whether progress becomes stalled. And yet the American feminist movement is hardly alone in having been affected by splits and divisions over the course of its history. Sectarian divisions have historically plagued progressives over issues of class, splitting Communists and Trotskyists, reformers and radicals, theorists and activists. Even the history of the recent presidential election and the bitterness of divisions between “Bernie” and “Hillary” supporters attest to a level of internal battling that might have been more productively directed toward working together, given the

many points of agreements between Sanders and Clinton and that the goal was to defeat Donald Trump.

Again, why didn't this happen, and why did it seem unlikely? One possibility that has affected tendencies toward marginalization and splitting across social movements in U.S. history is the sheer enormity of what protesters find themselves confronting in American society. American capitalism remains at once dynamic and intimidating in its strength, resiliency, and persistence. The history and profundity of racial prejudice, going back to slavery, Jim Crow, and the domination of Native Americans, is as deeply embedded as it is ongoing. Likewise, both gender and sexual oppressiveness—including the fact that the feminist and LGBTQ movements faced massive obstacles from the start—can be understandably overwhelming given the enormity of what remains to be transformed. Consequently, it may be easier to displace anger and resentment toward concrete parties closer to home, nearer to oneself than farther afield in the form of larger “forces” that are frighteningly abstract and frightening to contemplate. Moreover, whereas the larger society may only inconsistently (if at all) recognize one's social movement through media coverage and the public responses of politicians, one's colleagues and comrades inside the movement are more likely to listen; healthy debates can start as such before falling prey to the seduction of angers that are acted out when resentful antagonisms become splits, fractions, and divisions.

If this is the larger cultural context of American social movements within which feminists have acted, so too the more subtle character of gender itself adds its own conscious or unconscious legacies to divisiveness within movements. The concept of “sisterhood” was partly born out of recognition that chronic competition between women—whether over men, other women, or social or individual attentions—has been part and parcel of the oppressive consequences of patriarchal societies across variegated national, racial, ethnic, and class groups for centuries. Because of this, feminist consciousness raising in the 1970s and 1980s sought explicitly, through the narrating of stories and the sharing of experiences, to allow this structural tendency to be avoided and outwitted, and to draw on solidarities that also have long persisted and often even flourished across and between women.

None of this is to pretend that “real” differences between women simply evaporate when talked through and discussed. Yet I wish to suggest that for the millions of women who do, did, or could call themselves feminists and who see gender revolution as a vital form of human liberation, feminist politics based on both commonalities and differences are worth building and fighting for. Greater progress is still needed to ensure that people's lives are as full as possible, replete with freedom to enjoy sexual and intimate options, unfettered by violence and punitive coercion, and filled with the pleasures of creative and social expression that allow for cultural democracy to be enjoyed by all. To more thoroughly assess the successes and setbacks, the progress and problems of American feminism, I turn to unfulfilled goals that still beckon. In view of transformations that earlier feminists never dreamed possible, there is no reason that concerted actions cannot win these goals in the twenty-first century with the

energy and passion that is already reinspiring feminists of all ages, races, ethnicities, sexualities, and persuasions.

3. Achieving Political, Economic, and Educational Equalities

By the late 2010s a sea change occurred in the United States as huge numbers of women moved into the workforce while feminism(s)—plural, not singular—marched on.¹ Of course, many working-class women of diverse backgrounds had long been working and caring for themselves and their families.² Yet the U.S. feminist movement deserves credit for legitimating the immense expansion of public freedoms for women that produced unprecedented opportunities over the last fifty years, moving women beyond historical associations with primarily the domestic sphere. Newly held political offices for women, jobs at workplaces of all kinds, educational achievements: all altered in the direction of gender parity, a term I use to denote the goal of women being represented in public life in approximately the same proportion (51%) as their percentage of the overall population.³ The question is whether gender parity—not the only indicator of power, but an important one—has been attained across public spheres and professions to the extent that women have equal opportunities and comparable influence as men. Moreover, as women moved by the millions into the labor force, another concern has been whether feminists managed to avoid the unintended consequence of freshly sown divisions between working women and women who chose to remain home or become stay-at-home moms. The Philip Morris cigarette ad confidently and prematurely droned, “You’ve come a long way, Baby!” Have we?

A good reply is yes—and no. The story of women’s achieved public powers is a complicated one, especially when all women’s lives are considered and the politics of pay and parenting are conjoined. What is accurate to say now is that while huge achievements have occurred, comparably enormous transformations await realization. For instance, while millions of women have long worked outside the home, they have often done so in lower-paying jobs—teaching, caring for children and the elderly, clean-

¹ “Women’s labor force participation, which was at a rate of 33.9 percent in 1950, increased significantly during the 1970s and 1980s, climbing to 57.5 percent in 1990. In 1999, the women’s participation rate reached a peak of 60 percent.” See Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2007. “Changes in Men’s and Women’s Labor Force Participation Rates.” United States Department of Labor. www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2007/jan/wk2/art03.htm.

² Alice Kessler-Harris. 2003. *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press.

³ United States Census Bureau. 2017. “ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates—2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.” <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>.

ing, housekeeping—that reproduce in the public sphere labor they already perform and are responsible for in the private sphere. As a result, women frequently find themselves both stressed about making ends meet and working a “second shift” involving housework and childcare in their own home after working outside the home too.⁴ On the other hand, the feminist movement has radically altered public possibilities that now allow women to occupy jobs men previously dominated—from jobs in science, technology, engineering, the military, and police and fire departments, on through within the legal, medical and political fields. Then, too, in many cases, former “boys clubs” at colleges and universities, which once kept women out, can no longer legally maintain their exclusivity and, subject to challenge, operate far less easily than they did in the past.

Anything in theory is now possible, but has this added up to enough in practice? I argue that despite extraordinary changes registered in a relatively short time, progress remains inadequate. Important feminist goals pertaining to public powers and to gendered equalities across other social divides like class and race are still unfulfilled in politics, economics, and education; moreover, progress has been uneven as some decades have evidenced much more change than others. Further, the United States seriously lags behind many other countries in the world in women’s political participation. Economically, in the world of corporations and boardrooms, a long road remains to be traveled to the point where women have achieved financial equality with men, whether as CEOs or simply as comparable holders of wealth and power. In the hallways of schools, it remains the case that the higher one ascends from elementary to university teaching, the fewer the number of women one is likely to encounter. Indeed, the wave of sexual harassment charges that rocked American society, culture, and politics in 2017—jeopardizing the political careers of men like Al Franken as well as the careers of established media and entertainment figures, including Roger Ailes and Harvey Weinstein; and threatening the presidential candidacy of Donald Trump himself—attests to workplace environments that have sexualized women rather than provided them with equal opportunities. In effect, coercion has tended to keep a gendered status quo in place; charges of sexual harassment at the workplace manifest and also symbolize unfulfilled hopes for equal public participation and power for people of all genders.

Inequalities in the “public” spheres of work and labor are in many ways inseparable from, and deeply entwined with, the “private” worlds of intimacy and care. It is a point already well elaborated in writings of major feminist scholars.⁵ My argument is that among the myriad factors that keep women from realizing full public equalities,

⁴ See Arlie Russell Hochschild. 2003. *The Second Shift*. New York: Penguin Books.

⁵ Martha Fineman. 1995. * *The Neutered Mother, the Sexual Family, and Other Twentieth Century Tragedies* *. New York: Routledge; Jerry Jacobs and Kathleen Gerson. 2004. * *The Time Divide: Work, Family, and Gender Inequality* *. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Stephanie Coontz. 1992. * *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* *. New York: Basic Books; Pamela Stone. 2007. * *Opting Out? Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home* *. Berkeley: University of California Press.

a major one needing redress in America is the lack of universal, high-quality daycare comparable to what is available in other countries around the world. Without universal daycare, which is a fight still needing to be won after second wave feminism, many women—still disproportionately in charge of the household and childcare—encounter limitations in their ability, and sometimes their desire, to work as they would and could if those duties were relieved well and with minimal guilt. In addition, if the feminist movement is to become a truly cross-class, cross-racial movement, daycare is arguably a sine qua non: its lack of achievement in the United States disproportionately affects poorer and working-class women, while remaining relevant to the public power equality of many middle-class women too. In addition, without daycare widely available as a high quality and affordable public good, many women who are disproportionately poor and of color end up doing a form of ‘dual labor’ taking care of middle and upper class people’s children as well as their own. Thus, a feminist standpoint that builds policy and political positions from the point of view of those most in need—as an important idea for feminists, generally speaking—would have to take daycare, in particular, seriously, like other issues including healthcare and education that affect women differently depending on their resources. Last, yet important, I suggest that linking “public” and “private” issues by interconnecting employment and daycare will work against subtly gendered divisions that from the second wave until now have sometimes counterposed “career women” and “housewives.”

I will begin by assessing an explicit realm of power—politics—before exploring the status of work, pay, and education from the standpoints of progress made and problems remaining. Starting with politics, where better to begin than with Hillary Clinton, who despite obvious qualifications and intelligence did not become the first female president of the United States? Sarah Palin ran for vice president in 2008 on the failed ticket of presidential nominee John McCain (though she was not the first vice presidential candidate who was a woman; many years before Palin, in 1984, Geraldine Ferraro ran for VP on the failed Democratic ticket of Walter Mondale). While controversial and widely satirized, Palin’s candidacy nonetheless signaled women’s growing visibility in politics. Then, too, after President Barack Obama delivered his final State of the Union address on January 12, 2016, the Republican Party rejoinder came from South Carolina governor Nikki Haley, rumored to be another potential Republican presidential running mate, and later—in the Trump administration—the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Moreover, it seems clear that the idea of women in presidential and vice-presidential roles—almost, though not yet, attained in reality—is materializing commonly in at least the American cultural imagination. There are many instances in which a woman has played the American president in television and movies. From the silent science fiction film *The Last Man on Earth* (1924) and ABC’s comedy *Hail to the Chief* (1985) to Geena Davis’s President MacKenzie Allen in *Commander in Chief* (2005), Alfre Woodard’s Constance Payton on *State of Affairs* (2014), and Robin Wright’s Claire Underwood in *House of Cards* (2013), women have portrayed the American

presidency again and again.⁶ Most recently, in the 2017–18 season of *Homeland*, Carrie Mathison reports to Madame President of the United States, begging the question whether HBO’s writers and producers expected Hillary Clinton to have attained the office in late 2016.⁷ Think too of Julia Louis-Dreyfus in *Veep*, a multiple–Emmy Award-winning portrayal of a woman who at least fictionally attains the vice presidency and then even the presidency, endowing the office with a combination of flair, humor, and competency.⁸ Despite these examples, in nearly all cases a woman ascends to the presidency after the president is somehow incapacitated; she has not been elected by a popular vote, even in cultural representations.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to think of any cultural venue, fictional or nonfictional, from television to digital and print media, without being struck by a sense of women’s increasing presence and visibility in politics. Take, for instance, Nancy Pelosi’s high profile in recent years as Speaker of the House of Representatives, as well as other visible and well-respected senators’ careers, like those of senators Barbara Boxer, Susan Collins, Diane Feinstein, Kirsten Gillibrand, and Elizabeth Warren, among others on both sides of the aisle. And certainly, on the plus side, more women than ever have altered the face of previously male-dominated congressional politics: according to the Pew Research Center, more than half the women who have served in the House were elected since 1992, and twenty-three of forty-six women in the Senate took office in 1996 or later.⁹ Going back to 1992, the “Year of the Woman,” one finds the number of women in the Senate doubling from two to four; and in the House, increasing from twenty-eight to forty-seven.¹⁰ When all women in both houses are considered, the total figure in 1992, forty-nine, increased to one hundred and four by 2017.¹¹

When the situation is construed as a glass half-empty rather than half-full, though, the fact remains that despite improvements the United States lags behind many countries in not yet having had a leader who is a woman.¹² By contrast, Germany has had

⁶ See “Female President of the United States in Popular Culture.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_president_of_the_United_States_in_popular_culture; *The Last Man on Earth*. 1924. Directed by John G. Blystone. Fox Film Corporation; *Hail to the Chief*. 1985. Created by Susan Harris. ABC; *Commander in Chief*. 2005–6. Created by Rod Lurie. ABC; *State of Affairs*. 2014–15. Created by Alexi Hawley. NBC; and *House of Cards*. 2013–18. Created by Beau Willimon. Netflix.

⁷ *Homeland*. 2017–18. Created by Gideon Raff. Showtime.

⁸ *Veep*. 2012–18. Created by Armando Iannucci. HBO.

⁹ See Drew Desilver. 2015. “Women Have Long History in Congress, but until Recently There Haven’t Been Many.” Pew Research Center, January 14. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/01/14/women-have-long-history-in-congress-but-until-recently-there-havent-been-many/.

¹⁰ Judith Warner. 2015. “The Women’s Leadership Gap.” Center for American Progress, August 4. www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2015/08/04/118743/the-womens-leadership-gap/.

¹¹ Abigail Geiger and John Gramlich. 2017. “The Changing Face of Congress in 5 Charts.” Pew Research Center, February 2. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/02/the-changing-face-of-congress-in-5-charts/.

¹² According to the World Economic Forum’s “Global Gender Gap 2016” report, the United States ranked 73rd out of 144 countries in the category of “Political Empowerment” with a score of 0.00 in the subindicator “years with female head of state (last 50).” See World Economic Fo-

Angela Merkel as chancellor from 2005 to the present; Scotland has had Nicola Sturgeon as first minister since 2014; Spain has had Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría as deputy prime minister (first vice president) from 2011 to 2018; Australia had Julia Gillard as prime minister from 2010 to 2013; India had Pratibha Patil as president from 2007 to 2012; and Chile has had Michelle Bachelet as president from 2006 to 2010 and again from 2014 to 2018. As to the gender composition of the US Congress, while dramatic improvements were obvious by 2018—when a record 23 percent of senators and a record 19.3 percent of 435 House members were women¹³—Congress remains male dominated, making gender parity still an aspiration for the future. At the level of state governments, the situation is even worse: in 2017 only 11 percent (or six) of the nation’s fifty governors were women;¹⁴ in the same year, the proportion of women mayors in the nation’s one hundred largest cities was 21 percent, an increase from 2015, yet still obviously a minority).¹⁵

When statistics for both gender and race are considered, the situation is even more troubling. On the one hand, changes can and should be noted: whereas only twelve members of Congress in 1993 were women of color (nine African American and three Latina),¹⁶ by 2017 the figure had grown to thirty-eight women of color.¹⁷ Regarding the Senate, whereas Senator Mazie Hirono was the only woman of color after her election in November 2016,¹⁸ three women of color were elected thereafter in the wake of the newly elected 115th Congress: Kamala Harris (part African American, part Indian American) from California, Tammy Duckworth (Thai American) from Illinois, and Catherine Cortez Masto (the nation’s first Latina senator) from Nevada.¹⁹ But clearly women and men of color were not represented in anywhere near their proportions of the population; for example, at the state level, only three of the nation’s governors

rum. 2017. “Global Gender Gap 2016.” <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=USA>.

¹³ Center for American Women and Politics. 2018. “Current Numbers.” Rutgers University. www.cawp.rutgers.edu/current-numbers.

¹⁴ See Eagleton Institute of Politics, Center on the American Governor. “Fast Facts about American Governors.” Rutgers University. <http://governors.rutgers.edu/on-governors/us-governors/fast-facts-about-american-governors/>.

¹⁵ Center for American Women and Politics, “Current Numbers.”

¹⁶ Women of color in the 103rd Congress: Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (1989–present), Barbara-Rose Collins (1991–97), Eleanor Holmes Norton (1991–present), Maxine Waters (1991–present), Carol Moseley Braun (1993–99), Corrine Brown (1993–2017), Eva Clayton (1993–2003), Eddie Bernice Johnson (1993–present), Cynthia McKinney (1993–2003), Carrie Meek (1993–2003), Lucille Roybal-Allard (1993–present), and Nydia Velazquez (1993–present). See Women of Color in Congress. <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Data/Women-of-Color-in-Congress/>.

¹⁷ Reena Flores. 2016. “Record Number of Minority Women Elected to the Senate.” *CBS News*, November 11. www.cbsnews.com/news/record-number-of-minority-women-elected-to-the-senate/. For further breakdown, see www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-color-elective-office-2018; and <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/WIC/Historical-Data/Women-of-Color-in-Congress/>.

¹⁸ See Center for American Women and Politics. 2015. “Women in the 114th Congress.” Rutgers University. <http://cawp.rutgers.edu/footnotes/women-114th-congress>.

¹⁹ Flores, “Record Number of Minority Women Elected to the Senate.”

were people of color (two Hispanic American governors and one Asian American) and only one of these a woman (Susana Martinez, governor of New Mexico). In 2017 not one governor, male or female, was African American.²⁰

When all of this is placed in comparative perspective, relevant statistics become even harder to interpret in a positive light only; instead, the United States emerges as well behind many other countries in women's public political participation (and the comparable powers this brings). Take, for instance, the average proportion of women in national parliaments: 22.5 percent.²¹ This figure is very much behind Finland, Iceland, and Norway, where 42, 48, and 40 percent (respectively) of national legislators were women in 2017;²² at projected rates, the United States will not reach the same figure seen in the Scandinavian countries until the end of the twenty-first century.²³

Even more, there seems to be an historical dimension to this assessment insofar as the position of the United States in women's political participation has worsened in recent decades. Whereas the United States in the 1970s was relatively ahead of other nations by the criterion of women participating in national legislatures, by 1997 the Inter-Parliamentary Union ranked the nation as forty-first in such political participation—after which the number continued to fall.²⁴ In 2002 the Hampton Institute reported the United States as fifty-seventh of 188 countries with women in leadership positions; by 2013 the cited rank dropped to seventy-seventh, and by 2014 to eighty-fourth.²⁵ This was in accord with the Inter-Parliamentary Union's later 2013 ranking that listed the United States as eighty-second on a list of countries with high representations of women in national legislatures; America lagged behind Europe, China, and Kyrgyzstan.²⁶ The United States dropped further to 102nd in the world in IPU's 2018 ranking.²⁷ Writing in *The Nation*, Steven Hill remarks with dismay and even incredulity, "America now ranks ninety-eighth in the world for percentage of women in its national legislature, down from 59th in 1998."²⁸ Updating to 2017, the World Economic Forum ranked the United States seventy-third out of 144 nations for political empowerment of women

²⁰ Eagleton Institute of Politics, "Fast Facts about American Governors."

²¹ Warner, "Women's Leadership Gap."

²² See World Bank. 2017. "Proportion of Women in National Parliaments (%)." <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>.

²³ Warner, "Women's Leadership Gap."

²⁴ Inter-Parliamentary Union. "Women in National Parliaments." www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif010197.htm, updated January 1, 1997.

²⁵ Cherise Charleswell. 2015. "Disproportionate Representation: A Look at Women Leadership in Congress." www.hamptoninstitution.org/women-in-congress.html#.WNV__HQrKsp.

²⁶ Bonnie Erbe. 2013. "US Overtaken as Leader in Women's Progress." *Korea Times*, January 20.

²⁷ Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2018. "Women in National Parliaments." <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

²⁸ Steven Hill. 2014. "Why Does the US Still Have So Few Women in Office?" *The Nation*, March 7. www.thenation.com/article/why-does-us-still-have-so-few-women-office/.

(across all strata and offices).²⁹ However, this may change in 2018 as large numbers of newly energized women run for political office.

One reason for the United States lagging further and further behind may have to do with the rate of change over time. Again, the number of women in the House of Representatives steadily climbed from forty-seven in 1993 to eighty-four in 2017³⁰ (constituting the hefty progress already cited). But the number of *new* members is less impressive when changes over time are figured in. Whereas twenty-four new women were elected to the House's 103rd Congress in 1992 (the so-called Year of the Woman), the number of new representatives fell to eleven in 1995 and declined even further through 1999, never again reaching the rate of increase evidenced in 1992 in any other year during the 2000s.³¹ Consequently, even amid increasing numbers of women in the House and Senate overall, the number of new women added each year steadily declined;³² this may be one reason why women's political participation rates in the United States fell so sharply behind other nations' figures.

Given these trends, the question would be how to account for this lack of political progress and the noted slackening off. One reason for lowered participation is that women are often found to have a "confidence gap." In 2011, Fox and Lawless concluded that "despite comparable credentials, professional backgrounds, and political experience, highly accomplished women from both major political parties are substantially less likely than similarly situated men to perceive themselves as qualified for elective office."³³ Using a wide array of other studies on this topic, Lawless and Fox report that women are only half as likely as men to say they would definitely run for office at some time in their lives (7 percent of women; 14 percent of men), whereas women were more than 50 percent more likely than men to state they would never run and had

²⁹ World Economic Forum. 2017. "The Global Gender Gap Report 2016." <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/>.

³⁰ Center for American Women and Politics. 2015. "History of Women in the U.S. Congress." Rutgers University. <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/history-women-us-congress>.

³¹ Kelly Dittmar. 2015. "Women in the 114th Congress." January 5. cawp.rutgers.edu/footnotes/women-114th-congress.

³² Despite the overall historic increases of women elected to Congress, here too we observe "stalling" in a particular sense having to do with rate of change (rather than no change at all). Women's political representation in Congress steadily increased from the 1970s (the 92nd Congress had a total of fifteen women: two in the Senate and thirteen in the House) up until 2015 (104 women in total in the 114th Congress). In 1992, "The Year of the Woman," there was an all-time high of twenty-four newly elected women to the 103rd Congress: twenty in the House, and four in the Senate. After this watershed moment, however, there was a decline in the number of newly elected women, even as the overall ratehistory.house.gov.

³³ Richard L. Fox and Jennifer L. Lawless. 2011. "Gendered Perceptions and Political Candidacies: A Central Barrier to Women's Equality in Electoral Politics." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(1): 59–73. www.jstor.org.proxy.library.nyu.edu/stable/25766254.

“absolutely no interest” in doing so.³⁴ Further, they report that disinterest coexisted, in many women, with a sense of being “not at all qualified” and a questioning of one’s abilities; for instance, men were more likely than women to believe they were skilled public speakers (35 percent compared with 29 percent) and knowledgeable about politics (22 percent compared with 14 percent).³⁵ Related to confidence, too, are studies of business school students showing that men initiate salary negotiations four times as often as women, and that women ask for 30 percent less in pay when they do initiate.³⁶

One wonders, following the 2016 presidential election, whether such perceptions and self-doubts were compounded both by Hillary Clinton’s loss and by accusations against her that reached disturbingly intense and sexist levels through collective cries to “lock her up” and other attacks on her character. Hardly was the election likely to make the prospect of running for high political office more appealing; it may have added to, rather than helped to overcome, hesitations about running for office that some women already experience. Importantly, these gender-related concerns are by no means confined to politics; they extend to the economic realm. According to one study,³⁷ men disproportionately (48 percent as opposed to 33 percent of women) expect to earn over fifty thousand dollars in their first jobs out of college.³⁸ By one account, women on average can expect to make \$434,000 less in income over the course of their lifetime than men.³⁹

Indeed, data suggest that when it comes to economic power, women have again experienced both improvements and hefty remnants of discrimination. On the bright side, wage-gap measures, which gauge the portion of a dollar earned by women compared with men, improved greatly from sixty cents on the dollar in 1959 to seventy-eight

³⁴ Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox. 2013. “Girls Just Wanna Not Run: The Gender Gap in Young Americans’ Political Ambition.” School of Public Affairs, American University, 2. www.american.edu/spa/wpi/upload/girls-just-wanna-not-run_policy-report.pdf.

³⁵ Lawless and Fox, “Girls Just Wanna Not Run,” 13.

³⁶ Katty Kay and Claire Shipman. 2014. “The Confidence Gap.” *Atlantic*, May. www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/05/the-confidence-gap/359815/.

³⁷ This finding pertains to all of the men enrolled in college included in the sample. PRNewswire. 2015. “Graduation and the Glass Ceiling: Female College Students Lack Confidence in Their Career Prospects.” May 20. www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/graduation-and-the-glass-ceiling-female-college-students-lack-confidence-in-their-career-prospects-300086452.html. The online job site Monster used the following methodology for the survey: “The survey was conducted by Survey Sampling International on behalf of Monster in April 2015 to a nationally representative sample of nearly 1, 500 individuals aged 18–34 in three segments: one-third currently in college (502), one-third out of college less than five years (498), and one-third out of college over five years (497).”

³⁸ Emily Peck. 2015. “Women Still Face a Persistent and Troubling Confidence Gap, Study Reveals.” *Huffington Post*, May 20. www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/20/women-salary-confidence_n_7332282.html.

³⁹ See Yasemin Besen-Cassino. 2018. *The Cost of Being a Girl: Working Teens and the Origins of the Gender Wage Gap*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 4.

cents for full-time, year-round workers in 2007.⁴⁰ In updated figures for 2017, the wage gap diminished even further to eighty cents,⁴¹ and to a highly impressive ninety-three cents for “Millennial” women (defined in one report as ages twenty-five through thirty-four), who by then had entered the workforce.⁴² Gender-stratified earnings tended toward “substantial” convergence between the 1960s and the late 1990s as the gender gap narrowed and women entered traditionally male occupations.⁴³

And more good news: as sociologist Pamela Stone noted on the fiftieth anniversary of women’s admission to Harvard Business School in 2013, women were not only working but had made significant inroads by the 2010s into the upper echelons of a wide range of workplaces.⁴⁴ Scanning from the top of the economic hierarchy shows that the number of women heading Fortune 500 corporations—certainly a high-level indicator of gender public power—was only one out of five hundred CEOs in 1998, but twelve in 2011 and twenty-four in 2014, a doubling of this figure in only three years.⁴⁵ Moving down the hierarchy toward midlevel positions reveals major changes having occurred prior to the first woman CEO arriving on the scene in 1998. As Stone describes, women came to occupy 41 percent of professional and managerial positions by the 2010s,⁴⁶ reflecting a substantial change since the 1970s when they held a majority of only lower-paid positions like administrative assistants and clerks. According to one study, women accounted for 34.8 percent of professional and managerial occupations in 1975.⁴⁷ The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that by 2014 women accounted for 52 percent of all workers employed in management and professional jobs.⁴⁸

However, while these figures indicate progress, they also point to less than fully achieved gender parities. For example, in 2016, 94% of administrative assistants are still women (indicating a lack of change from women having also occupied this posi-

⁴⁰ This takes into account both increases in women’s earnings and stagnation of men’s. Maria Charles. 2011. “A World of Difference: Participation of International Trends in Women’s Economic Status.” *American Sociological Review* 37: 355–71, 360.

⁴¹ Kevin Miller. 2017. “The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap.” American Association of University Women. www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/.

⁴² Pew Research Center. 2013.* On Pay Gap, Millennial Women Near Parity—For Now: Despite Gains, Many See Roadblocks Ahead*. December 11. www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/12/11/on-pay-gap-millennial-women-near-parity-for-now/.

⁴³ Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2000. “Gender Differences in Pay.” NBER Working Paper No. 7732, June. JEL No. J3, J7, 3. www.nber.org/papers/w7732.pdf.

⁴⁴ Pamela Stone. 2013. “Opting Out: Challenging Stereotypes and Creating Real Options for Women in the Professions.” Research Symposium, Harvard Business School.

⁴⁵ Claire Cain Miller. 2018. “The Number of Female Chief Executives Is Falling.” *New York Times*, March 23. www.nytimes.com/2018/05/23/upshot/why-the-number-of-female-chief-executives-is-falling.html.

⁴⁶ Stone, “Opting Out.”

⁴⁷ Barbara H. Wootton. 1997. “Gender Differences in Occupational Employment.” Bureau of Labor Statistics, 7. www.bls.gov/mlr/1997/04/art2full.pdf.

⁴⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2015. “Women in the Labor Force: A Databook.” Report 1059. www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/archive/women-in-the-labor-force-a-databook-2015.pdf.

tion, very asymmetrically, in previous decades).⁴⁹ Returning to the wage-gap question, which compares all women with all men, one author writes that previously noted improvements may be the effect not of major increases in women's pay but rather, largely, of declines in men's wages due to loss of manufacturing jobs they frequently filled.⁵⁰ It is important to look at the top of the income scale, too, rather than just the overall measure that wage-gap figures provide. Take the CEOs of the Fortune 500 corporations. In 2018, *The New York Times* reported a disturbing trend: while the article focused on Indra K. Nooyi, the chief executive of PepsiCo about to step down, another five female chief executives had also recently resigned, all replaced by men; this left "women's corporate clout" fading, with only 25 women still heading corporations of the Standard & Poor's 500.⁵¹ In 2017, though, thirty-two women held these corporate leadership roles, accounting for 6.4 percent of the five hundred positions.⁵² Out of these, only three were women of color.⁵³

Caution is even more justified, then, when intersectionality is taken into account to assess not only gender but the racial/ethnic backgrounds of CEOs. Between 1999 and 2010, fourteen newly appointed CEOs were African American men,⁵⁴ by 2015 only four remained in the Fortune 500.⁵⁵ This downward trajectory began by the end of 2013, when the number of African American CEOs dropped from seven to six; Latinos, from thirteen (in 2008) to ten; and Asian Americans, from fifteen (in 2011) to ten.⁵⁶ Even more skewed is the number of CEOs who were African American women in 2016. Out of twenty women CEOs in 2016, only one was African American: Ursula Burns (chair and CEO of Xerox), who was named CEO in 2010.⁵⁷ This represented a much slower growth rate for 1998–2015 (from none to one, as there were no black women CEOs in

⁴⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2017. "Women in the Labor Force: A Databook," 41. www.bls.gov/pub/reports/womens-databook/2017/pdf/home.pdf. The Bureau of Labor Statistics notes, "This report presents historical and recent labor force and earnings data for women and men from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a national monthly survey of approximately 60,000 households conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics."

⁵⁰ Besen-Cassino, *Cost of Being a Girl*.

⁵¹ Julie Creswell. 2018. "As PepsiCo's C.E.O. Plans Exit, Women's Corporate Clout Fades." *New York Times*, August 7, A1.

⁵² In 2018 the number of female CEOs dropped to 24 (4.8%), down 25 percent from 2017's record. See Zameena Meija. 2018. "Just 24 Female CEOs Lead the Companies on the 2018 Fortune 500—Fewer than Last Year." *CNBC*, May 28. www.cnn.com/2018/05/21/2018s-fortune-500-companies-have-just-24-female-ceos.html.

⁵³ Catalyst. 2017. "Women CEOs of the S&P 500." March 14. www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-ceos-sp-500.

⁵⁴ Richard L. Zweigenhaft, Guilford College, at the American Sociological Association, New York City, August 12, 2003, presented "Diversity among CEO's and Corporate Directors: Has the Heyday Come and Gone?" See G. William Domhoff website: Who Rules America, Sociology Department, UC Santa Cruz, whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu.

⁵⁵ Gregory Wallace. 2015. "Only 5 Black CEOs at 500 Biggest Companies." *CNN Money*, January 29. <http://money.cnn.com/2015/01/29/news/economy/mcdonalds-ceo-diversity/>.

⁵⁶ Zweigenhaft, "Diversity among CEO's."

⁵⁷ Catalyst, "Women CEOs of the S&P 500."

the twentieth century) than it did for white women, even though women as a whole continued to be only a small percentage of all CEOs.

When we turn to education, certainly some developments are both striking and encouraging. At every level of educational attainment, from high school to bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, the percentage of women earning these degrees not only equals but now exceeds that of men. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 22.8 percent of women between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine received college degrees or higher in 1990, whereas by 2014 this figure had grown to 37 percent. This compares with 23.7 percent of men in the same age bracket earning college degrees and higher in 1990 (slightly more than women), and 31 percent (6 percent less than women) by 2014. Moreover, the National Center for Education Statistics reports that by 2013—one year earlier—women were receiving 57 percent of all bachelor's, 59.8 percent of all master's, and 51.3 percent of all doctoral degrees conferred.⁵⁸

Yet digging deeper into the educational data reveals old cultural stereotypes still unfolding in gender-skewed patterns in what women and men study, at different levels of educational attainment. For example, reflecting older gendered divisions between sciences and the humanities / social sciences, women are still more likely to major in literature, education, and psychology, according to 2013 education data. Among literature majors, women were granted roughly two-thirds of all bachelor's and master's degrees and 59 percent of all doctorates in that year. In the field of education, women dominated across all levels of degree attainment, receiving 79 percent of all bachelor's degrees, 77 percent of all master's degrees, and 67 percent of all doctorates. Psychology too remains a popular field of study among women in the United States; in 2013, 76 percent of all bachelor's, 79 percent of all master's, and 74 percent of all doctoral degrees were granted to women. On the other hand, on the traditionally masculinized side of gender binaries, men continue to dominate in the fields of engineering, economics, and math, according to 2013 data. In engineering, men received 82 percent of all bachelor's degrees conferred, 76 percent of all master's degrees, and 77 percent of all doctorates. Economics degrees given were not quite as disproportionate, though gender again seems relevant: 69 percent of all bachelor's, 62 percent of all master's, and 65 percent of all doctoral degrees were granted to men. In mathematics, men earned 56 percent of all bachelor's and 60 percent of all master's degrees. The percentage of doctoral degrees conferred to men in mathematics was slightly higher, namely 70 percent.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ National Center for Education Statistics. "Table 104.20. Percentage of Persons 25 to 29 Years Old with Selected Levels of Educational Attainment, by Race/Ethnicity and Sex: Selected Years, 1920 through 2014." U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_104.20.asp, accessed March 7, 2016.

⁵⁹ National Center for Education Statistics. "Table 318.30. Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctor's Degrees Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions, by Sex of Student and Discipline Division: 2012–2013." U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_318.30.asp, accessed March 7, 2016.

Stepping back, this means that while in 2015 women earned more PhDs than men⁶⁰—a figure that steadily increased over the last several decades⁶¹—men in the United States still hold 77 percent of all engineering, 71 percent of all mathematics, and 66 percent of all physical science PhDs.⁶² Moreover, many fewer women than men are landing tenure-track jobs in the American academy after obtaining their PhDs. Indeed, a 2000 study, “PhD’s-Ten Years Later,” surveyed six thousand people who had earned doctorates in the early 1980s ten to thirteen years after these degrees were conferred. The study found postdoctorate women almost twice as likely as their male counterparts to be employed in non-tenure-track positions across subject areas from political science to English to math. Specifically, in political science 8.8 percent of women with PhDs were not in tenure-track positions, as opposed to 4.8 percent of men; in English 17 percent of women, as opposed to 9.8 percent of men; in math 9.2 percent of women, as opposed to 5.6 percent of men.⁶³

On the basis of this summary, at least two implications arise. One is that despite noteworthy changes, gender equality and gender parities have not yet been reached in the political, economic, and educational spheres of power. But a second point is also striking: while significant improvements in women’s public powers have occurred fifty years after second wave feminism in America, these changes have not happened at similar rates in each decade from the 1960s and 1970s through the present. Although some progress continued or took off in the 2000s and 2010s—for example, women becoming CEOs and moving into Congress—in other areas plateaus were reached or declines occurred over time. It appears a great deal of movement toward gender parities occurred from the 1960s through the 1990s, pausing or stalling afterward.

A similar pattern of initially clear progress followed by a falling off appears in work participation rates and the rate of change of occupations moving toward gender parities. Starting with labor participation rates, labor economists Blau and Kahn dub as a “stunning reversal”⁶⁴ that whereas in 1990 the United States had the sixth-highest female labor participation rate among twenty-two developed countries, the number fell to seventeenth by 2010.⁶⁵ Whereas 74 percent of women had been participating in paid labor in 1990, the figure had risen only slightly by 2010 to 75.2 percent; in the same period, other countries’ rates rose from 67.1 percent to 79.5 percent, thereby surpassing the United States.⁶⁶ Slowdowns also characterized the movements of women into

⁶⁰ National Center for Education Statistics, “Table 318.30.”

⁶¹ See Richard Van Noorden. 2015. “US Women Progress to PhDs at Same Rate as Men.” *Nature: International Weekly Journal*, February 7. www.nature.com/news/us-women-progress-to-phd-at-same-rate-as-men-1.16939. See also E. Rudd and L. Homer. 2005. “CIRGE Charts Paths of Female Ph.D.’s.” *Women in Higher Education* (September): 36–37.

⁶² National Center for Education Statistics, “Table 318.30.”

⁶³ Rudd and Homer, “CIRGE Charts Paths.”

⁶⁴ Francine D. Blau and Laurence M. Kahn. 2013. “Female Labor Supply: Why Is the US Falling Behind?” Working Paper 18702, January. National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA.

⁶⁵ Bonnie Erbe. 2013. “US Overtaken as Leader in Women’s Progress.” *Korea Times*, January 20.

⁶⁶ Blau and Kahn, “Female Labor Supply.”

formerly male-dominated occupations. Whereas large numbers of women had entered traditionally male-dominated fields in the 1970s and 1980s, the trend slowed down in the 1990s and all but stopped by the 2000s.⁶⁷ For example, the percentage of women who were electrical engineers doubled in each decade from the 1960s through the 1970s and into the 1980s. Since 1990, though, the percentage went up by only 1 percent,⁶⁸ so that by 2010 women made up only 10 percent of all engineers, and by 2017 only 11 percent.⁶⁹

If we turn to academic studies that are prerequisites for entry into historically male-dominated and well-paying fields, we find that the percentage of women majoring in computer and information sciences in college rose from 14 to 37 percent between 1970 and 1985; by 2008, though, the figure was back down to 18 percent.⁷⁰ Findings also show the percentage of women earning bachelor's degrees in computer and information sciences remaining stagnant even through the late 2010s.⁷¹ Philosophy is another field of study in which men have long disproportionately majored. At the undergraduate level, philosophy has come closer to gender parity insofar as by 2013 women were earning 36 percent of the bachelor's degrees awarded for this major.⁷² On the other hand, a less impressive result appears when we evaluate the number of women who go on to become philosophy professors in departments across the country following graduate studies. Since 2003 women have made up only 16.6 percent of the full-time academics in philosophy, and none of these professors have been women of color. By 2013 the situation had hardly improved.⁷³

Such data over time are revealing, and they beg a key question: why did improvements occur markedly during some decades while stalling or sharply slowing down at others? A first explanation is historically as well as politically oriented: at first, women may have enthusiastically and in rapidly swelling numbers seized new opportu-

⁶⁷ Stephanie Coontz. 2012. "The Myth of Male Decline." *New York Times*, September 30. www.nytimes.com/2012/09/30/opinion/sunday/the-myth-of-male-decline.html.

⁶⁸ Coontz, "Myth of Male Decline."

⁶⁹ See Rebecca Adams. 2014. "40 Percent of Female Engineers Are Leaving the Field: This Might Be Why." *Huffington Post*, August 12. www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/12/female-engineers_n_5668504.html. See also Catalyst. 2016. "Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)." December 9. www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics-stem. In 2014–15, women of color's share of STEM fields bachelor's degrees was reported as comprising even smaller percentages: only 2.9 percent of black women, 3.6 percent of Latinas, and 4.8 percent of Asian women earned STEM degrees.

⁷⁰ Coontz, "Myth of Male Decline."

⁷¹ For all bachelor's degrees conferred for the year 2013, 57 percent were attained by women (43 percent by men). See National Center for Education Statistics, "Table 318.30."

⁷² National Center for Education Statistics, "Table 318.30."

⁷³ Sally Haslanger. 2013. "Women in Philosophy? Do the Math." *New York Times*, September 2. <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/09/02/women-in-philosophy-do-the-math/>. According to philosopher Linda Alcoff of Hunter College, 21 percent of employed philosophers are women. See Linda Alcoff. 2011. "A Call for Climate Change." APA Committee on the Status of Women. www.apaonlinecs.org/.

nities to enter politics, boardrooms, middle managerial positions, and a diverse array of academic programs and jobs. But over time, structural factors that differentiate the United States from other advanced capitalist democracies may have kicked in. The feminist argument that private and public realms of life are closely related implies that when public policy is not based on that connection it impedes the realization of gender equalities in both spheres. The United States does not have a substantial family policy providing high-quality and affordable universal childcare, generous parental leave, and other related benefits. Because these provisions are absent, working women may have indeed accumulated disadvantages, even though the feminist movement made spectacular progress in opening previously foreclosed opportunities to people across genders.

In other words, for large numbers of women whose lives require making child or other care-related arrangements, the absence of governmentally supported and affordable childcare and paid-time-off policies leaves them to their own devices in an individualistic American culture and society. Given gendered pressures that still leave women disproportionately responsible for children, household duties, and care of aging relatives, it often becomes difficult to take jobs that require long hours, or to commit, for example, to political campaigns or advanced degree work. As Blau and Kahn argue in relation to the simultaneous improvement and persistence of pay gaps, “At least some of the remaining pay gap is surely tied to the gender division of labor in the home, both directly through its effect on women’s labor force attachment and indirectly through its impact on the strength of statistical discrimination against women. Women still retain primary responsibility for housework and child care in most American families.”⁷⁴

If valid, this explanation also suggests that having children or other dependents may bequeath ongoing disadvantages—very disproportionately and unfairly still—for women in the world of work. Take, for instance, academia. Some research concludes that differentials in academic achievement between male and female professors have diminished, though by some measures like teaching evaluations⁷⁵ and discrimination in service distribution,⁷⁶ serious problems remain. For women with children, though, disadvantages accumulate with particularly gender-skewed outcomes.⁷⁷ To offer an anecdote, I encountered this potential barrier myself as a young assistant professor at

⁷⁴ Francine Blau, Mary Brinton, and David Grusky, eds. 2006. *The Declining Significance of Gender?* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

⁷⁵ See Kristina W. Mitchell and Jonathan Martin. 2018. “Gender Bias in Student Evaluations.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51(3): 648–52.

⁷⁶ See Colleen Flaherty. 2017. “Relying on Women, Not Rewarding Them.” *Inside Higher Ed*, April 12. www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/04/12/study-finds-female-professors-outperform-men-service-their-possible-professional.

⁷⁷ Nicholas H. Wolfinger et al. 2009. “Stay in the Game: Gender, Family Formation and Alternative Trajectories in the Academic Life Course.” *Social Forces* 87(3): 1591–1621. <http://sf.oxfordjournals.org/content/87/3/1591.full.pdf+html>. See also Nicholas Wolfinger. 2013. “For Female Scientists, There’s No Good Time to Have Children.” *Atlantic*, July 29. www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/07/for-female-scientists-theres-no-good-time-to-have-children/278165/.

Barnard College, feeling at once joyous and pressured at having given birth while going through the Barnard/Columbia tenure process. Likewise, a graduate student (of color) with whom I was very friendly, and who had three children, was asked several times by senior male professors when she was planning to have her next baby. She felt that her work was not taken as seriously and that she had to fight for equal treatment, having become stereotypically associated with the world of family and domesticity so that her standing in the world of work was negatively affected. Or take law: the existence of so-called mommy tracks in law firms, allowing women to go home at five or six in the evening rather than work much longer hours, has for years been discussed as an arrangement that makes it less likely (if not sometimes impossible) for women to “make” partner. Women with children simply cannot clock the same number of payable hours as men if they wish to spend more time with their kids. Thus, rather than care being built into the system as a recognized option for some people and families—recognizing too that women and men without children ought not to be disadvantaged either in realizing workplace flexibilities—the lack of daycare and childcare policy in the United States often compels women to prioritize either work or family. As feminist theorists advocate, though, both our inner and our outer, our intimate and professional, lives matter—both, not either/or.

Disparities also persist in the home, where they are not yet offset by public provisions that might ease gender-disproportionate responsibilities. In 1989 sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild’s well-known work *The Second Shift* showed that women regularly work far more hours in the home than men, creating a “leisure gap” in private that parallels “wage gaps” in public. Updating her analysis reveals the problem as persistent. For example, a 2015 article observed that despite egalitarian attitudes, millennial males still sometimes fall back on neo-traditional practices, acting as though the vestiges of their traditional breadwinning role release them from contributing equally to childcare and housework.⁷⁸

But issues also arise in situations where, given ongoing differences in gender socialization, women disproportionately wish to stay home. For example, another well-known study by Pamela Stone focused on middle- and upper-middle-class professional women, including doctors, lawyers, corporate executives, professors, and other women in high-level positions who elected to stay home rather than work while their children were small; this may apply to as much as 20 percent of working women.⁷⁹ However, when

⁷⁸ Claire Cain Miller. 2015. “Millennial Men Aren’t the Dads They Thought They’d Be.” *New York Times*, July 30. www.nytimes.com/2015/07/31/upshot/millennial-men-find-work-and-family-hard-to-balance.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=second-column-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&_r=1&abt=0002&abg=1. Article based on David S. Pedulla and Sarah Thèbaud. 2015. “Can We Finish the Revolution? Gender, Work-Family Ideals, and Institutional Constraint.” *American Sociological Review* 80(1): 116–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122414564008>.

⁷⁹ C. Reimers and Pamela Stone. 2008. “Explaining Trends in ‘Opting Out’ among Women, 1981–2006.” Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Population Association of America, New Orleans, April 7.

the author returned twenty years later to re-interview the same group of professional women, she discovered that “opting out” had bequeathed long-term, and not only happy consequences. As so much in this volume documents, from a feminist perspective she saw mixed outcomes. On the one hand, most of the women, motivated to return to work after their children were grown, did find new jobs twenty years after the original study. On the other hand, whereas 65 percent had previously occupied “prestigious” positions in professions like law, medicine, or engineering, only 25 percent were able to obtain comparable high-level jobs when seeking work again a decade later.⁸⁰

Imagine, though, if women who “opted out” had experienced what one author calls “gender flexibility,” where work/family arrangements were easily available prior to making life decisions when their children were young.⁸¹ Had there been flexible, easy arrangements that included shorter hours, part-time work, and generous parental leaves, perhaps women might have felt differently about leaving the workforce—thereby avoiding negative consequences of opting out or working part-time when they later attempted to resume their careers.⁸² Of course, some women might have opted to stay at home in any event. For others, though, flexible work arrangements might have been helpful and meaningful. Such support could have affected the situations I observed, again in academia, when a colleague or I was torn between career and family. Because of limitations in available options, Stone believes it misleading to conclude that the women she studied had acted from “choice.” Rather, as she contends, “in reality women left their jobs because of their workplaces, not their families.”⁸³

The issue is of course significantly compounded when we look at the situation of poorer and working-class women, for whom opting out and staying home may not be financially feasible in the first place. Women in Stone’s sample were middle- and upper-middle-class professionals; had they continued to work in full-time jobs with lengthy hours, most could have afforded expensive childcare services or to hire a nanny. As I write these words, I recall raising my own child in Park Slope, Brooklyn. My ability to research a book needed at the time for tenure would have been impossible without the help of a wonderful woman from Barbados who took care of my son when he was small. Natalie had left her four daughters in Barbados to work in New York City, hoping to earn enough to give them schooling and a better life back home. My husband and I worked together to procure a green card and eventually citizenship for her, but close as we remain to Natalie, I know that class, racial, and unequal life experiences obviously divided our childcare possibilities. She took care of my child and her own (from afar),

⁸⁰ Pamela Stone. 2007. *Opting Out: Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁸¹ Gerson, *Unfinished Revolution*.

⁸² Blau and Kahn, “Female Labor Supply.” The authors note how the European model allows part-time work, but it is a mixed blessing insofar as part-time women workers may not get to the high levels that women have attained in the United States, in part because they work full-time. Thus, part-time work, while important, may in some fields also bequeath disadvantages.

⁸³ Stone, *Opting Out*.

all the while working outside, and disproportionately within, her own home as well. As scholars have described, this is often the case for working-class and poor women from the Caribbean or Latin America who come to the United States to work, making large sacrifices to forge a better life for their families, who would otherwise stay poor.⁸⁴ Their lives frequently present examples of what Ruth Sidel called *unsung heroines*, in a moving book by the same name.

Consequently, family support and high-quality daycare are arguably key to achieving greater gender power and parities across the board for women of varying experiences and resources, mattering particularly, though not at all exclusively, for working-class and poor women. But are better family policies indeed slowly starting to materialize in the United States? Unfortunately, the fact remains that in recent decades only one comparatively incremental change in family policy has occurred—albeit a significant one in the American context. This was the Family and Medical Leave Act, which for the first time, in 1993, mandated employers to provide up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave for parents. Overall, though, America remains exceptional in that even expanded leave amounts to much less family support than exists in many other comparably well-to-do nations,⁸⁵ where parental leave is available for longer periods with mandated pay.⁸⁶

In Canada, for example, up to one year of paid parental leave is offered.⁸⁷ Childcare too is subsidized by the Canadian state with the monthly cost of childcare varying across its provinces; Quebec ranks as the most affordable. In other places, too, leave is part of family policies. For instance, Sweden provides up to sixteen months in parental leave as well as other benefits related to families, like access to regulated, twelve-hour

⁸⁴ Nancy Foner and Joanna Dreby. 2011. “Relations between the Generations in Immigrant Families.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 37: 545–64.

⁸⁵ Gretchen Livingston. 2016. “Among 41 Nations, U.S. Is the Outlier When It Comes to Paid Parental Leave.” Pew Research Center, September 26. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/26/u-s-lacks-mandated-paid-parental-leave/.

⁸⁶ See Friederike Heine and Spiegel. 2013. “A Place for Everyone: Germany Promises Daycare for All Parents.” *ABC News*, August 4. <http://abcnews.go.com/International/place-germany-promises-daycare-parents/story?id=19847116>. Heine reports that Germany has passed a new childcare policy that guarantees German parents the right to a slot in a daycare facility for every child over twelve months. This policy is a follow-up to historic legislation passed in 1992, which granted children from the age of three the legal right to government-regulated daycare. In addition to this, Chancellor Angela Merkel, early in her tenure, passed generous parental leave benefits: up to 65 percent of a parent’s monthly salary can be received for as long as fourteen months. See also Maire Sinha. 2016. “Child Care in Canada.” Statistics Canada. www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2014005-eng.htm. In Canada, childcare is subsidized by the state and the monthly cost of childcare varies across the provinces. Quebec has the lowest monthly cost of childcare (\$152), whereas Ontario has the highest (\$677). Sinha observes that state subsidization has led to a notable increase in women’s labor force participation.

⁸⁷ Rahel Gebreyes. 2014. “How Canada’s ‘Generous’ Parental Leave Policy Is Benefitting Real Families.” *Huffington Post*, December 5. www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/03/canada-parental-leave_n_6258932.html.

accessible daycare facilities and credits to help with child-rearing costs.⁸⁸ In Australia, paid parental leave is available for up to eighteen weeks.⁸⁹ Outside the United States, the proportion of GDP paid by a number of countries for publicly provided childcare services grew from an average of 0.35 percent to 0.47 percent from 1990 to 2007. By comparison, U.S. expenditures grew but at much smaller percentages (from 0.03 to 0.11). In addition, between 1990 and 2010 five countries gave workers the right to change their jobs from full-time to part-time classification without repercussions for their job security; and in 2010 twelve foreign countries forbade discrimination against part-time workers.⁹⁰

By dint of this explanation, then, the United States' lagging behind other countries in family care benefits may have diluted women's perceived and actual options over time, thereby contributing to inequalities and stalled progress. A disparity, a chasm, did not so much diminish as persist, separating women's growing public powers outside the home from their not-yet-liberated private freedoms at home around family and caretaking responsibilities. And thus, even though antifeminists like Phyllis Schlafly derided second wave feminists as "antifamily," the indisputable fact that millions more women now work means they require precisely the kind of support that feminists have long advocated to assist with familial commitments—the very kind of support conservatives often oppose.

But a second potential explanation for slowed feminist progress over consecutive decades is also thought-provoking: the possible role of social movement protests in slowing down feminist progress on particular issues. Certainly, major and historic collective marches occurred in the 1970s and 1980s over reproductive rights,⁹¹ including over the *Roe v. Wade* decision, and beyond.⁹² However, arguably, with some notable exceptions, such as the January 2017 protest following Donald Trump's inauguration, mass feminist demonstrations have been relatively less visible from the 1990s on.⁹³ This slowdown in protests coincided broadly with decades when feminist-inspired social changes appeared to be pausing as well—even though young feminists during this

⁸⁸ Jonathan Cohn. 2014. "I'm Insanely Jealous of Sweden's Work-Family Policies. You Should Be, Too." *New Republic*, June 22. <https://newrepublic.com/article/118294/us-should-copy-sweden-and-denmarks-work-family-policies>.

⁸⁹ Australian Government. 2017. "Parental Leave Pay." Department of Human Services. www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/parental-leave-pay.

⁹⁰ Blau and Kahn, "Female Labor Supply," 4–5.

⁹¹ See Jennifer Nelson. 2003. *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*. New York: New York University Press.

⁹² See Jael Silliman. 2004. * *Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organizing for Reproductive Justice* *. New York: South End Press; Pollitt, *Pro*.

⁹³ See National Organization for Women. 2017. "History of Marches and Mass Actions." <http://now.org/about/history/history-of-marches-and-mass-actions/>; and Barbara Epstein. 2001. "What Happened to the Women's Movement?" *Monthly Review* 53(1). <https://monthlyreview.org/2001/05/01/what-happened-to-the-womens-movement/>.

time were contributing to a steady circulation of new and older feminist ideas online.⁹⁴ On the other hand, large-scale social movement protests in the twenty-first century have occurred over hugely important issues involving class and race. On economic inequalities, the Occupy Wall Street movement became highly visible and influential in the 2000s, protesting the shifting of resources over decades from poor and working-class people to corporations and the rich.⁹⁵ On racial injustices, the Black Lives Matter movement grew during recent decades, organizing against incidents of racialized police brutality and the growth of race-and-class-biased incarceration of (mostly) men.⁹⁶

The question is why, for many years in the early twenty-first century, there was no analogously visible and memorable activism over the need for universal high-quality and affordable childcare, flexible work/family arrangements, and generous leave and caretaking benefits. Happily, by the late 2010s, it can no longer be said that feminist mass protests have declined; the trend has sharply begun to change. In addition to the women's movement organizing mass marches all over the country on January 21, 2017, a "Day without Women" occurred on International Women's Day—March 8, 2017—illustrating the indispensability of women's labor to individual, familial, and social well-being (while recalling the idea of the ancient play *Lysistrata*, in which women go on [sexual] strike, updated for modern audiences by Spike Lee in his 2015 film *Chi-Raq*). These 2017 marches were refreshingly multi-issued, taking intersectional concerns about race, class, gender, sexuality, and other social dimensions into account much more explicitly than in feminist marches of previous decades. Yet while many political concerns were understandably voiced after Donald Trump's election, the need for universal childcare in the United States did not emerge as one strong focus of advocacy despite its arguable connection with equality in the political, economic, and educational spheres.

By way of caveat, I am by no means suggesting that universal daycare and overall family policies are the only cross-class, cross-racial issues feminists ought to emphasize in the late 2010s and 2020s. Being cognizant about intersectional discriminations and their ramifications means taking feminist positions on other social problems too; for example, protesting harsh new immigration policies that affect women, men, and children across classes, races, and nationalities is extraordinarily urgent and of vital feminist concern. But I do see three respects in which realizing universal and high-quality daycare in the United States has distinctive meaning for feminism(s). The first has already been elaborated; that is, the lack of better, socially provided family policies places American women at a disadvantage in achieving full gender parities and equal public influence. The second and third reasons, though, relate to ongoing ambivalence

⁹⁴ See Faludi, "American Electra," for generational battles over feminist tactics during the 2010 NOW elections.

⁹⁵ Megan Leonhardt. 2016. "The Lasting Effects of Occupy Wall Street, Five Years Later." *Time*, September 16. <http://time.com/money/4495707/occupy-wall-street-anniversary-effects/>.

⁹⁶ Alex Altman. 2015. "Person of the Year: The Short List, No. 4, Black Lives Matter." *Time*. <http://time.com/time-person-of-the-year-2015-runner-up-black-lives-matter/>.

toward the feminist movement, and to divisions that have had effects from within and without.

Secondly, then, repoliticizing universal daycare (as part of better family policies overall) attests to an awareness of intersectionality's importance insofar as universal daycare constitutes a cross-class, cross-racial issue for women, men, and families. Renewed energy and mass activism to achieve universal childcare, in practice as well as theory, can help to redress ongoing associations between feminism and the exclusive interests of white middle-class women—whether or not such associations have been historically merited. Whatever happened until now, the renewal of mass organizing around public and private equities offers opportunities across feminism(s) on a distinctly gender-related issue that involves commonalities and differences across all women. By this analysis, middle- and upper-class women, as feminists, cannot afford to deprioritize the needs and concerns of poorer women, on both political and moral grounds. Rather, feminism(s) are likely to have greater political power when acting in concert and on the basis of practical issues bequeathed by sexism to women as a whole.

Consequently, the attainment of full equality necessitates standpoint positions and policies that reflect the needs of those who are most socially excluded. Here I mean to distinguish “standpoint positions” from “individual standpoints” so as to remain practical, veering away from potentially divisive questions about whether so-and-so appears to be a “good” or “good enough” feminist. In the case at hand, a feminist standpoint position on politics/policy is quite clearly that a lack of family policies disproportionately affects poor women, and harms all women, too. This needs to change, which will move America toward far greater parity in progressive policies with other advanced industrial societies. It is a position that many feminists in and outside have already taken, as architects and sociological analysts of intersectionality from Kimberle Crenshaw and Patricia Collins through Kathleen Gerson, Janet Gornick, Ruth Sidel, and other feminist scholars previously (and for good reason) recognized. Each and all have long advocated and used their academic and policy skills to intelligently urge better family policies from daycare to parental leave.⁹⁷

Once again, the question persists as to why this issue largely faded from political and social discourse in the 2000s. This prompts a third reason for claiming daycare's ongoing relevance: as a mass issue, daycare may recall the career-versus-housewife split, which I suggested can be traced back to the early days of the second wave, with antifeminist organizing by Phyllis Schlafly and through the Milo Yiannopouloses of the present. Is daycare an issue that has itself become associated with the domestic sphere but not the “business” sphere (let alone the imbrication of private and public spheres)? Perhaps daycare has been perceived, subtly and beneath the surface, to

⁹⁷ See Jacobs and Gerson, *Time Divide*; Gerson, *Unfinished Revolution*; Coontz, *Way We Never Were*; Gornick and Meyers, *Families That Work*; Janet C. Gornick and Marcia K. Meyers, eds. 2009. *Gender Equality: Transforming Family Divisions of Labor*. New York: Verso; and Ruth Sidel. 1998. *Keeping Women and Children Last: America's War on the Poor*. New York: Penguin Books.

be not as “sexy” as other issues, such as women finally moving into previously male-dominated arenas where work is more socially valued and better paid. And perhaps, then, deeply embedded patriarchal tendencies to divide women may still be operating in ways that unwittingly recycle political separations—between housewives and career women, between women/men without children and those with children, and between feminist activists organizing around reproductive issues and those organizing around sexuality biases. More images come to mind for me, once more anecdotally, of subtle but real feelings of distance between myself—a professor who basically never stopped working—and friends who stayed home, indeed “opting out”; and of New York City playgrounds where stay-at-home moms would (do they still?) congregate in groups separated just a few feet from where women working as nannies, who are very often moms themselves, hung out. The two groups rarely if ever communicated between themselves. This tension is cleverly captured in an intentionally humorous Similac formula ad well worth watching, and made in 2015, which shows various groups of caretakers (stay at home moms, working moms, nannies, stay at home dads, LGBTQ parents) keeping various kinds of physical and social distances from each other.⁹⁸

But daycare also has not happened for another crucial factor, which relates to its cultural and political context. High-quality, affordable, and universally available daycare, as part of a larger program of family policies, is likely to be especially hard to achieve in an America that has been historically individualistic, leaving such supposedly private arrangements to people’s own devices.⁹⁹ Then, too, universal policies of all kinds, including but not limited to daycare, are under attack in the particularly conservative direction augured by the 2016 presidential election, with stated intentions to downsize rather than expand welfare-state entitlements, whether Medicare, Social Security, or healthcare.

Yet this chapter has contended that such downsizing of social securities goes against rather than along with the fulfillment of the gender revolution, in which so many women, men, and others across ages and races and classes and sexualities are now invested and by which they have benefited. It is the kind of thought that may inspire feminist activists to push farther, whether they are younger, older, or have otherwise been stymied from realizing earlier dreams in the face of aggravated socioeconomic inequalities, which have grown steadily from the 1990s through the present. For no one could have imagined in the 1960s and 1970s that so much could change in such a relatively short time, but that has happened. Thus, feminists’ common and different interests—both, not either—call to renewed action: fighting for all women’s (and by extension, people’s) lives necessarily means moving social policies and politics in more progressive directions.

⁹⁸ Similac. 2015. “The Sisterhood of Motherhood.” Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kz4BUwaxj5c.

⁹⁹ For a broader argument about the cultural logics of the welfare state, see Gøsta Esping-Andersen. 2002. *Why We Need a Welfare State*. New York: Oxford University Press.

I will return later to this point about the redistributive and equalizing impulses of feminist dreams, past and future. For now, I turn to yet another separation, namely between the issues of reproductive freedom and those of sexual freedom. These are two sides of the same feminist project: advocating for greater human choices and options in the enmeshed private and public dimensions of our lives, beyond either /or categories that fail to acknowledge their interconnections.

4. Liberating Sexual Choices

What happens intimately with women's bodies has always been, and remains, basic to feminist concerns, starting with the formative years of the second wave. What do I wish to do with my physicality, unencumbered and in complex connection with my feelings, my mind, my sexuality or sexualities? Do I wish to sleep with people who are female, male, trans, or nonbinary? Do I wish to live alone or with another or cohabit with several people; to marry or not? Then too the remarkable dynamism of technology has still not found a way around another question: do I wish to have children and, if so, would that be one, two, or three? Will I have social support for this choice if I do want kids? Or perhaps I feel that while having children is joyous and gratifying for some people, it is not necessarily for me—maybe I would prefer to exercise other freedoms, to enjoy other ways of spending my time, and not have a child.

Options, choices, possibilities, opportunities: the flowering of flexibilities, as opposed to the restrictiveness of tradition, is a theme running with variations through common and different feminisms from the 1960s through the 2010s. The transformation of policies bears on the freedom to seek fulfillment in the personal realms of human existence, from the intimacies of sex and the warmth of friends through the relationships one experiences with family and children or by oneself. Let us turn to the American feminist movement to assess its role in achieving goals related to these intimate freedoms. Once again, the question is whether major progress has occurred, here in the flexibility of sexualities, intimacies, and families—or whether stalling has happened in the realm of private as well as public possibilities.

A mixed answer again appears to be most precise. As with issues of economic, political, and educational equalities, a *mélange* of both progress and setbacks is in evidence regarding intimacies. However, this mixed bag is in one way distinctive. With other, related feminist issues, progress and setbacks moved in parallel directions: for instance, gendered political and economic equalities both improved to some extent from the 1960s through the present; in contrast, reaching gender parities across realms (political, economic, educational) may have been impeded by the lack of childcare in America. When it comes to intimate freedoms, a dissimilar picture arises in some ways (though this may be changing in the Trump era): sexual freedoms and reproductive options/justice moved in different directions over the last couple of decades with the first expanding and the second contracting. This was especially so regarding legal infringements and ideological beliefs surrounding the legitimacy of these freedoms.

I begin with a significant caveat: by no means have discrimination, backlash, and “resistance” against intimate freedoms related to sexualities disappeared in recent years.

Indeed, backlash against freedoms that expanded during the Obama administrations may be seen as part of a greater conservatism unfolding, by some political markers, in the years since. For example, new laws have allowed adoption agencies in some cases to refuse to place children with gay parents.¹ In 2018, the Supreme Court heard a case that attests to remnants of biases rather than to the legitimacy and acceptance of diverse sexual preferences, for which the LGBTQ movement has fought hard and in many ways successfully. The case before the Supreme Court involved a Colorado bakery owner's pushback on whether enterprises that provide wedding services ought to be required to serve same-sex couples or should be able to refuse service if it would contravene their religious beliefs; in 2018, the former argument was upheld and the Court ruled in favor of the bakery owner.² Another case the Supreme Court had been set to hear but temporarily remanded entails a North Carolina Assembly ruling allowing transgender people to use the bathroom of their choice (the gender with which they identify).³ Most worrisome of all may be that on October 21, 2018, the *New York Times* reported that the Health and Human Services department under Trump was considering redefining gender as biologically immutable, a change that threatens to reverse significant protection of transgender and LGBTQ rights recently won.

Despite these setbacks, public opinion remains split on the matters taken up in these Supreme Court cases. In the bakery case, 49 percent believe businesses should be required to provide equal services to same-sex couples, and 48 percent say they ought to be able to refuse.⁴ In the second case, 51 percent of Americans believe transgender people should be able to use bathrooms of their choosing, while close to half (46%) believe they should have to use restrooms of their gender identification at birth.⁵ Other contemporary developments show a trajectory of change over the last decades inclining toward new levels of legitimacy on issues of sexuality. Particularly noteworthy is that through the 2000s and 2010s politicians increasingly came out in favor of increased tolerance for gay rights and gay marriage as federal and state laws codified shifts in public sentiments. In North Carolina, the initial bathroom bill was repealed and replaced by another that does not dictate which bathrooms people must use in the state;

¹ See Mary Emily O'Hara. 2017. "Dozens of Anti-LGBT Bills Proposed This Year Target Kids and Families." *NBC News*, March 14. www.nbc-news.com/feature/nbc-out/dozens-anti-lgbt-bills-proposed-year-target-kids-families-n733366.

² For analysis of ruling, see Adam Liptak. 2018. "In Narrow Decision, Supreme Court Sides with Baker Who Turned Away Gay Couple." *New York Times*, June 4. www.nytimes.com/2018/06/04/us/politics/supreme-court-sides-with-baker-who-turned-away-gay-couple.html.

³ See Michael Gordon, Mark S. Price, and Katie Peralta. 2016. "Understanding HB2: North Carolina's Newest Law Solidifies State's Role in Defining Discrimination." *Charlotte Observer*, March 26. www.charlotteobserver.com/news/politics-government/article68401147.html.

⁴ Pew Research Center. 2016. "Where the Public Stands on Religious Liberty vs. Nondiscrimination." September 28. www.pewforum.org/2016/09/28/where-the-public-stands-on-religious-liberty-vs-nondiscrimination/.

⁵ Pew Research Center, "Where the Public Stands."

likewise, to take another state-based example, New York adopted a law legitimizing and legalizing gender-neutral bathrooms.⁶

Then too, in June 2015, the Supreme Court rendered a decision stating that the Constitution guarantees a right to same-sex marriage in all fifty states; in supportive acknowledgement of the historic ruling, the White House was lit up like a rainbow.⁷ As noted about public opinion a little later, in 2017 seven in ten Americans agreed with the statement, “Homosexuality should be accepted by society,” whereas only 51 percent held this view in 2006. Support for same-sex marriage, too, rose over a decade to the point where 62 percent of American adults supported the change as legalized by the Supreme Court’s ruling.⁸ Here again, though, optimism requires cautious tempering due to examples of backlash against gay marriage that have also unfolded. For instance, in 2018 six South Carolina Republican lawmakers introduced a bill entitled the “Marriage and Constitution Restoration Act,” aimed at amending state law (and thereby defying the Supreme Court) so as to define marriage as a “union between a man and a woman,” which otherwise fails “to check out the human design.”⁹ Still, one can argue that until recently the overall direction of (at least) legal changes in the United States had moved—over the first decades of the twenty-first century—toward greater liberalization as opposed to increased restrictiveness.

Compare this with reproductive freedoms, especially the issue of abortion—the latter anchoring a range of reproductive options for women—during the 2000s. Once more, a preliminary caveat is useful: just as biases regarding sexual freedoms have not simply disappeared, so too have attitudes toward abortion rights not simply reversed; again, such a statement would be insufficiently nuanced. More accurate to say is that public opinion for an even longer period, that is from the 1980s through the present, shows attitudes shifting up and down but only slightly. Overall, a slim majority of people—but importantly, a majority—continue to believe in the right to choose for women “in all cases.” In other words, major support remains for *Roe v. Wade* and legalized abortion rights.¹⁰

⁶ Jason Hanna, Madison Park, and Elliott C. McLaughlin. 2017. “North Carolina Repeals ‘Bathroom Bill.’” *CNN*, March 30. www.cnn.com/2017/03/30/politics/north-carolina-hb2-agreement/index.html.

⁷ Allie Malloy and Karl de Vries. 2015. “White House Shines Rainbow Colors to Hail Same-Sex Marriage Ruling.” *CNN*, June 30. www.cnn.com/2015/06/26/politics/white-house-rainbow-marriage/index.html.

⁸ Michael Lipka. 2017. “Supreme Court Same-Sex Wedding Case Reflects Split among American Public.” Pew Research Center, December 5. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/12/05/supreme-court-same-sex-wedding-cake-case-reflects-split-among-american-public/.

⁹ David Brennan. 2018. “South Carolina Republicans Table Bill to Define Gay Marriage as ‘Parody Marriage.’” *Newsweek*, February 19. www.newsweek.com/south-carolina-republicans-gay-marriage-811839.

¹⁰ Tom W. Smith and Jaesok Son. 2013. *General Social Survey 2012: Final Report*. NORC, University of Chicago, May. <https://gssdataexplorer.norc.umd.edu/documents/878/display>.

Nevertheless, one can see patterns, and here the overall direction of federal and local changes has shifted toward greater constriction rather than increased liberalization of abortion rights compared with previous decades.¹¹ In particular, women who are poor or who live in rural locations are likely to find it increasingly difficult to procure funding for and access to abortions. For women as a whole, procedures now exist that compel them to reexamine their decision, even if they would not otherwise feel that this was desirable or necessary; an extreme example is a local law that recently even required women to bury fetal remains regardless of their own individual feelings and beliefs.¹² Thus, a slow but sure process of restriction has occurred, which is traceable back to the Hyde Amendment's limiting of federal funding for abortion soon after the landmark 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*. It is a process that has continued, and intensified, state by state into the 2000s through the present. Most troubling from the standpoint of optimizing feminist freedoms is that President Donald Trump has indicated interest in appointing Supreme Court justices who are open to overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Specifically, his nomination of Brett Kavanaugh as the next Supreme Court justice after the announced retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy in July 2018 was characterized by at least one feminist as potentially rendering *Roe v. Wade* "likely dead."¹³ Consequently, abortion rights, as part of women's overall options to have a child or not, weakened over the last half century of feminist transformations, to the point where the return of illegalization is possible—just as more "conservative" decisions may continue to be rendered when it comes to sexual freedoms, too, in the late 2010s.

In sum, the gamut of feminist sexual and reproductive freedoms—from sexual preferences, to the ability to go through a pregnancy, or to end one—cannot be taken for granted. It is also well worth remembering that advocacy for sexual rights and advocacy for reproductive rights emerge from different histories and that each has had to deal with specific biases, obstacles, and countermovement organizing. Thus, the issues are at once distinct and interwoven, separate but related dimensions of intimate human freedoms, both of which are intrinsic to realizing feminist dreams for all women, men, and others. At the same time, these two kindred feminist goals involving intimate bodily choices—sexual and reproductive freedoms—seem to be in similar as well

¹¹ Katha Pollitt. 2015. "There's a Reason Gay Marriage Is Winning, While Abortion Rights Are Losing." *The Nation*, April 22. www.thenation.com/article/theres-reason-gay-marriage-winning-while-abortion-rights-are-losing/.

¹² See Amy Goodman. 2018. "Texas Woman: I Was Forced to Consent to Bury Fetal Remains after Miscarriage in 'Horrific' Ordeal." *Democracy Now!*, April 25. www.democracynow.org/2018/4/25/texas_mother_recalls_being_forced_to

¹³ See Carole Joffe. 2018. "With the Appointment of Brett Kavanaugh, *Roe v. Wade* Is Likely Dead." *Washington Post*, July 10. www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2018/07/10/with-the-appointment-of-brett-kavanaugh-roe-v-wade-is-likely-dead/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.3d475389962f; and Tessa Stuart. "Here's What Brett Kavanaugh Has Said about *Roe v. Wade*." *Rolling Stone*, July 13. www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/brett-kavanaugh-roe-v-wade-697634/.

as in somewhat different positions a half century after the American second wave. We might ask what accounts for the point about contrasting directions of change, legally speaking, when it comes to progress and setbacks in these areas.

To explore this query, I suggest that there may be benefits to not only viewing sexual and reproductive rights separately, respecting their distinct histories and differences, but also *together* as components of an overall feminist commitment to maximizing personal freedoms. To this end, I offer three arguments, two pertaining to feminist strategy and the third to the framing (or reframing) of issues by antifeminists and feminists in the past and going forward. First, bringing these issues together may amass collective feminist movement power by linking gender- and sexuality-related concerns that have inspired feminist activism through this shared commitment. But the second point relates to a different thread of argumentation that stretches from previous chapters into this one: how to reduce divisions and separations within the movement so as to maximize further successes into the future. For somehow, and likely unwittingly, feminist issues involving home, housework, and children, on the one hand, and sexuality and sexual freedom, on the other, have often been thought about and acted on separately. Thereby, and subtly, separations continue to be recycled going back to the housewife-versus-career dynamics early on exploited by antifeminists, and to the issue of daycare pursued separately from issues of political and economic equalities. In this sense, too, reproductive justice and sexual freedoms may gain from being advocated, relatively more often, together rather than separately; it may be symbolically and concretely meaningful to do so.

At the same time, this book's theme of taking both commonalities and differences into account for all women—across classes and races as well as sexualities—recommends thinking about how people experience issues related to both gender and sexuality in divergent ways. Take the example of reproductive rights, which can be thought about in terms of common infringements women encounter but can also be considered through what the group SisterSong has called a “reproductive justice” perspective that is cognizant of class, racial, and other social biases rendering women's experiences unequal. SisterSong has defined reproductive justice as entailing both differences and commonalities, that is, as the “human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.”¹⁴ As Erin Ward and Tiloma Jaysinghe elaborate on the Barnard Center for Research on Women website,

SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective ... has been a leader in developing “reproductive justice” as a framework for organizing that extends beyond the idea of “choice” as a basis for reproductive rights... Groups like SisterSong acknowledge a need to fight not only for the legality

¹⁴ SisterSong. “Reproductive Justice.” <http://sistersong.net/reproductive-justice/>.

of abortion, but also its accessibility (as many women of color cannot afford it), increased accessibility more broadly, and for the right to bear children.¹⁵

Consequently, to encompass the concerns of all women means redressing impediments to having a baby as well as not having one. This involves both intimate freedoms as well as the importance of affordable, high-quality daycare, healthcare, and greater economic equality. A group I was involved with in the 1980s could be characterized in retrospect as having adopted a reproductive justice—not only a reproductive choice—framework. The New York City-based Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA) was an organization that insisted on linking the issues of abortion rights and sterilization abuse. Sterilization abuse has affected many (though not exclusively) Puerto Rican women who were led to “choose” sterilization when they did not understand permission documents they were asked to sign regarding medical procedures. Racially discriminatory sterilization abuse thus prevents women from having children they want.¹⁶ Again, exemplified here is the importance of a broad reproductive justice orientation that supports women choosing to, and choosing not to, have children. Such ‘intersectional’ concerns are also evident in several organizations formed to address sexuality related discriminations. For example, the group Queers for Economic Justice, a “multi-racial, multi-classed, multi-cultural group of people of diverse marginalized sexual and gender identities, as well as diverse ages, skills, educational levels, backgrounds, and abilities,” aims to “challenge and change the systems that create poverty and economic injustice in our communities, and ... promote an economic system that embraces sexual and gender diversity.”¹⁷

The third argument involves how social movements have framed these issues: whether or not reproductive and sexual freedoms have been connected within feminist politics, antifeminist strategies often make precisely such linkages. Key to conservative efforts in the United States to halt or stave off intimate freedoms has been a breaking down, a gradual blurring, of constitutionally guaranteed First Amendment separations between church and state, which are crucial to maintaining American feminist interests overall. Take, for example, an article connecting the two issues that appeared in the *New York Times* in 2017, entitled “Fighting Gay Rights and Abortion with the First Amendment.” Addressing the religious liberty group Alliance for Defending Freedom—an organization with more than three thousand lawyers, which according to the *Times* piece brought in \$51.5 million of revenue in 2015–16, more than the ACLU’s revenue in the same period—Attorney General Jeffrey Sessions spoke as follows: “The First Amendment has become the most powerful weapon of social conservatives fighting to limit the separation of church and state and to roll back laws

¹⁵ Erin Ward and Tiloma Jaysinghe, “Responding to Violence, Restoring Justice,” <http://bcw.barnard.edu/projects/critical-inquiry-labs/theorizing-activisms/>.

¹⁶ See Iris Lopez. 2008.* *Matters of Choice: Puerto Rican Women’s Struggle for Reproductive Freedom**. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

¹⁷ See “Queers for Economic Justice.” www.queersforeconomicjustice.org/.

on same sex marriage and abortion rights.”¹⁸ But keeping church and state separate is of course fundamental to achieving and maintaining feminist intimate freedoms, both in maintaining legalized abortion and in protecting LGBTQ rights against religiously based biases and incursions. Both issues therefore call out for passionate advocacy insofar as protecting this core church/state separation guaranteed by the Constitution prevents the religious or philosophical views of some from being imposed on everyone.

In framing terms too, and as feminist journalist Katha Pollitt has argued, antifeminist conservatives may have been more effective in recent decades at directing attention away from the problem of blurred church/state separations over the abortion issue than over LGBTQ rights and freedoms (especially the gay marriage issue).¹⁹ This relatively greater ideological effectiveness may help to explain why abortion rights advocates have found themselves often on the ideological defensive in recent times. LGBTQ issues have been culturally processed within a predominantly secular American discourse of individual differences, and of discriminations encountered in recognizing them, whereas—despite American feminists’ admirable efforts to the contrary—the religious right has managed to effectively impose its nonsecular views regarding abortion, alleging it to be a crime.

To investigate these arguments, I commence with a brief overview comparing major landmarks achieved and challenges encountered as advocacy for sexual and reproductive freedoms grew since the second wave. Though much has been written on sexual and reproductive rights and justice separately (and to some extent together), my aim is to assess how each issue fared as part of the feminist movement’s overall achievements and challenges. My point of course is not to counterpose one issue against the other—exactly the opposite aim of this book—but rather to compare how their kindred aims and goals can be brought together in the overall interests of feminism and the common interests of both issues, namely protecting and expanding bodily integrities and freedoms.

Moreover, given that some have perceived feminism(s) as insufficiently attuned to rigid inequalities of class and race in America, I take up intersectional issues reflecting how sexual and reproductive freedoms are actually experienced differently across all women. Without taking differences as well as commonalities into account, we run the risk that terms like *freedom*, *choice*, and *options* will ring hollow. Nonetheless, it remains radical, and still historically fresh, to laud calls for preferences as opposed to determinism. Gay marriage may have become increasingly tolerated and legitimized on the basis of arguments that are biologically deterministic; as one feminist scholar shows, in successful advocacy for gay marriage people’s sexuality was framed not as the elective expression of freely chosen preferences but as a “they can’t help themselves”

¹⁸ See Jeremy W. Peters. 2017. “Fighting Gay Rights and Abortion with the First Amendment.” *New York Times*, November 22. www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/us/politics/alliance-defending-freedom-gay-rights.html.

¹⁹ Pollitt, “There’s a Reason Gay Marriage Is Winning.”

biological imperative easily encompassed within a rights framework that is opposed to express discrimination and bias.²⁰

I look not only at the past but to the future to reflect on why women feel doubt and ambivalence toward feminism(s), even amid signs of reinvigoration. Sexual and reproductive freedoms may be best framed so as to proceed in sync, and progress needs to occur without compromising either the distinctiveness of these movements or their commonalities.

...

Let me commence with sexual freedoms by focusing on major events of historical import for the unfolding of gay rights, gay marriage, and the LGBTQ movement from the second wave through the present. The 1960s and 1970s were years when social movement activism around gay rights grew sharply, spurred in part by the June 28, 1969, Stonewall raid in New York City. Thereafter, important milestones became the removal of “homosexuality” from the American Psychiatric Association’s list of “mental disorders” in 1973, the election in 1974 of Elaine Noble as an openly gay member of the Massachusetts State Legislature, and the election that same year of Kathy Kozachenko as an openly LGBTQ member of the Ann Arbor, Michigan, city council.²¹ In the late 1970s, Harvey Milk became the first openly gay man elected to political office in California, and in 1982 Wisconsin became the first state to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation.²² The decade of the 1990s, however, was more mixed. In addition to progressive developments like Vermont becoming the first state to legalize civil unions between same-sex couples, Bill Clinton signed a military policy in 1993 preventing gays and lesbians from serving openly in the military; rather confusedly, this policy also prohibited explicit “outing,” leading to the nickname “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Equally if not more problematic, in 1997 Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act, which banned federal recognition of same-sex marriage and reasserted traditional definitions of marriage as legal unions “between one man and one woman as husband and wife.”²³

Reflecting consistent organizing and passionate commitment to rights obviously still denied, further progress and recognition accrued steadily and culminated in increasingly significant achievements through the 2000s and 2010s. Rather than changes plateauing in the 2000s, as happened with other issues concerning gender and sexual equality, legitimacy heightened in the form of political and legal recognition through the early decades of the twenty-first century. Take the cultural milestone represented actually, as well as symbolically, by gay marriage: in May 2004 the first legal same-sex

²⁰ Suzanna Danuta Walters. 2014.* *The Tolerance Trap: How God, Genes, and Good Intentions Are Sabotaging Gay Equality**. New York: New York University Press.

²¹ See “The American Gay Rights Movement: A Timeline.” www.infoplease.com/us/gender-issues/american-gay-rights-movement-timeline.

²² CNN Library. 2016. “LGBT Rights Milestones Fast Facts.” *CNN*, July 1. www.cnn.com/2015/06/19/us/lgbt-rights-milestones-fast-facts/.

²³ CNN Library, “LGBT Rights.”

marriage in the United States occurred in Massachusetts; other states²⁴ followed suit, slowly but surely. Later, in a May 2012 television interview, Barack Obama became the first sitting president to support the freedom of LGBTQ couples to marry; in 2013, sections of the Defense of Marriage Act were struck down; and finally, on June 16, 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage was a federal right above the ability of individual states to affect or impede.²⁵ In other realms of public life, analogous progress also began to happen fast and decisively. In 2011 “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) was repealed, paving the way for gay men and lesbians to serve in the military.²⁶ In 2015 the Military Equal Opportunity policy was adjusted (and announced as such) to include gay and lesbian military members, while in 2016 Eric Fanning was confirmed as Secretary of the Army, making him the first openly gay secretary of a U.S. military branch.²⁷ Alongside these overt successes, even setbacks were often met with public support for the LGBTQ community. Two examples of many: celebrities and protesters decried President Trump’s tweet declaring trans people banned from military service after the hard-won repeal of DADT;²⁸ violence against the LGBTQ community at Pulse nightclub in Orlando in 2016 was met with outpourings of support for LGBTQ people such as *Hamilton*’s Lin-Manuel Miranda’s iconic “Love is Love is Love” speech at the 2016 Tony Awards.²⁹

²⁴ In 2008 Connecticut became the second state to legalize same-sex marriage. In 2009 Iowa, New Hampshire, and Vermont followed suit, as well as the District of Columbia. In 2011 New York became the sixth state in this process. In 2012 Maine, Maryland, and Washington joined the aforementioned states, thereby bringing the total to nine states. The year 2013 brought California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, Rhode Island, New Mexico, and New Jersey into the fold. In 2014 the total count of states legalizing same-sex marriage went up to thirty-five as Indiana, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Nevada, Alaska, Idaho, West Virginia, North Carolina, Arizona, Wyoming, Kansas, South Carolina, and Montana followed suit. See Pew Research Center. 2015. “Same-Sex Marriage, State by State.” June 26. www.pewforum.org/2015/06/26/same-sex-marriage-state-by-state/.

²⁵ Adam Liptak. 2015. “Supreme Court Ruling Makes Same-Sex Marriage a Right Nationwide.” *New York Times*, June 26. www.nytimes.com/2015/06/27/us/supreme-court-same-sex-marriage.html?_r=0.

²⁶ According to the Center for American Progress, the era of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) during the years 1993–2011 led to the discharge of “14, 346 qualified service members on the basis of only their sexual orientation.” In addition, “this figure does not include the estimated 4,000 men and women who refused to re-enlist each year due to the discriminatory policy and the thousands more who refused to even join.” Common arguments heard in defense of DADT consisted of claiming “that open service would undermine the unit cohesion and readiness of the U.S. military.” See Center for American Progress. 2012. “The Repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell—1 Year Later.” September 20. www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/report/2012/09/20/38764/the-repeal-of-dont-ask-dont-tell-1-year-later/.

²⁷ CNN Library, “LGBT Rights.”

²⁸ See Alexia Fernandez. 2018. “Celebs & Politicians React to Trump’s Order to Ban Most Transgender Troops from Military Service,” March 23. <https://people.com/politics/celebs-react-trump-proposed-ban-transgender-troops/>.

²⁹ *New York Times*. 2016. “Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Sonnet from the Tony Awards.” June 12. www.nytimes.com/2016/06/13/theater/lin-manuel-mirandas-sonnet-from-the-tony-awards.html.

At the same time, these major signs of progress did not occlude attacks on LGBTQ rights at the level of states' rights. The Human Rights Campaign advocacy organization reports that millions of Americans live on a daily basis without adequate legal protections from discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Most alarmingly, various bills were introduced across the country that aimed to legalize discrimination against transgender people in public spaces, as occurred in North Carolina and Mississippi.³⁰ Additionally, the ACLU reported that in twenty-eight states (most of which are in the Midwest and South) no employment nondiscrimination laws are to be found on the books.³¹ Federal law does not protect LGBTQ employees from workplace discrimination,³² and only twenty-one states have passed employee nondiscrimination laws to counteract the national omission.³³ In more than twenty states, hate-crime statutes do not protect people from discrimination against non-hetero, non-cisgender persons.³⁴ Highly problematic is that in twenty-nine states no laws protect queer people from being denied public bathroom accommodations. Finally, the Human Rights Campaign recently and disturbingly reported 129 "anti-LGBTQ" bills introduced across thirty states in one year during Trump's presidency.³⁵

³⁰ In their 2015 report, the Human Rights Campaign notes that while states like Utah, Illinois, and New York made great legal strides in protecting the rights of LGBTQ individuals, states such as "Arizona, North Carolina, Texas, and Florida, have many laws that undermine LGBT equality, from those that criminalize HIV and sodomy, to measures allowing religious-based discrimination against LGBT people. None have non-discrimination laws that explicitly include sexual orientation or gender identity protections; few have hate crime laws with those protections." See Liz Halloran. 2016. "Millions of LGBT People across America Still Denied Basic Statewide Non-discrimination Protections." Human Rights Campaign Foundation, February 3. www.hrc.org/blog/millions-of-lgbt-people-across-america-still-denied-basic-statewide-non-dis.

³¹ American Civil Liberties Union. 2016. "Past LGBT Nondiscrimination and Anti-LGBT Bill across the Country." www.aclu.org/map/non-discrimination-laws-state-state-information-map; see also Tom McKay. 2015. "One Map Shows Where You Can Still Be Fired for Being Gay in 2015." *Policy.Mic*, June 29. <https://mic.com/articles/121496/one-map-shows-where-you-can-still-be-fired-for-being-gay-in-2015#.SfRfRQUcN>.

³² Jennifer Calfas. 2015. "Employment Discrimination: The Next Frontier for LGBT Community." *USA Today*, August 1. www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/07/31/employment-discrimination-lgbt-community-next-frontier/29635379/.

³³ The twenty-one states are Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, and Hawaii. See Movement Advancement Project. 2016. "Non-discrimination Laws." www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/non_discrimination_laws.

³⁴ Wyoming, Arkansas, Indiana, Georgia, and South Carolina do not have any hate-crime laws in the juridical code. Alaska, Idaho, Utah, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Alabama, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania have hate-crime laws, but they do not cover sexual orientation or gender identity. See Movement Advancement Project. 2016. "Hate Crime Laws." www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/hate_crime_laws.

³⁵ National Public Radio. 2015. "Did You Know It's Legal in Most States to Discriminate against LGBT People?" April 28. www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2015/04/28/402774189/activists-urge-states-to-protect-the-civil-rights-of-lgbt-people. Maya Salam, "For Transgender Americans, the Political Gets Ever More Personal," *New York Times*, October 26, 2018.

Yet despite these ongoing problems, social movement activism has remained strong and LGBTQ advocacy has become extraordinarily well known in a short period. The cultural permeation of queer theory and LGBTQ social movement activism in and outside academia has by now familiarized Americans with bisexuality and transgender sexual preferences. Among people who say their attitudes toward gay marriage have become more tolerant in the 2010s, recent surveys show that actually knowing someone who is gay or lesbian often swayed their newly liberalized views.³⁶ In the realm of popular culture, too, television shows and films from the 1990s on regularly featured gay individuals, couples, and families—a trend that only escalated through the 2000s and 2010s as shows featuring gay families, like *Modern Family* (2009–), topped Nielsen ratings. By contrast, many '90s depictions were only partly progressive, frequently depicting lesbian or gay partners dying from sickness or other tragedies rather than living “happily ever after.”³⁷ But, at present, even some children’s books include queer families in a way that normalizes rather than exceptionalizes this family formation; the fact that the protagonist might have two dads, for example, is not central to the plot of the story itself.³⁸ Overall, by the late 2010s it seems inarguable that the increasingly routine inclusion of gay and lesbian characters in films and on television publicizes the reality of people’s actual sexualities as diverse rather than homogeneous. Cultural changes en masse have pointed toward rather than away from recognizing heterosexism as a problematic form of bias,³⁹ as adults in the 2010s are more tolerant of gays and lesbians than were previous cohorts of American adults.⁴⁰ Greater awareness of people’s heterogeneous sexualities, as publicized through popular culture and as confirmed through experiences with friends, family, and colleagues, seems to have resulted in increased awareness as diverse sexualities align with widespread American values favoring freedom of individual choice.

Let me shift now to surveying the history of reproductive and abortion rights over the last half century. First, women have reason to feel more hesitant about admitting that they have had abortions in their lives. Whereas sexual preferences have become more culturally recognized (at least in many regions) and relatively “out,” having abortions appears to be less culturally tolerated—leading one author to advocate that women go back to openly speaking about abortions they have experienced and about the positive effects this has wrought on the course of their lives.⁴¹ From a legal perspec-

³⁶ Michael J. Rosenfeld. 2017. “Moving a Mountain: The Extraordinary Trajectory of Same-Sex Marriage Approval in the United States.” *Socius*, September 15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023117727658>.

³⁷ Suzanna Danuta Walters. 2003. *All the Rage: The Story of Gay Visibility in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

³⁸ For example, see Jessie Sima. 2018. *Harriet Gets Carried Away*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

³⁹ Gary Hicks and Tien-Tsung Lee. 2006. “Public Attitudes toward Gays and Lesbians: Trends and Predictors.” *Journal of Homosexuality* 51(2): 57–77.

⁴⁰ Jean Twenge, Nathan Carter, and W. Keith Campbell. 2015. “Time Period, Generational, and Age Differences in Tolerance for Controversial Beliefs and Lifestyles in the United States, 1972–2012.” *Social Forces*: sov050v1–sov050.

⁴¹ Pollitt, *Pro*.

tive, the social landscape is characterized by steadily increasing restrictions following the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which granted women the ability to terminate pregnancies anywhere in the country through abortion on the basis of their right to privacy. In one respect, *Roe v. Wade* remains a larger-than-life landmark decision for having rendered abortion legal across the fifty states. In another, the apparent “universality” of legality bestowed by *Roe* was deceptive, as its reach across diverse classes, races, and ethnicities of women was quickly delimited.

Indeed, in 1976, just three years after the decision, the Hyde Amendment passed,⁴² making federal funding unavailable for any woman who required monies to afford the procedure. In effect, this meant that abortion rights had been won only if federal assistance was not required for a woman to be able to afford the procedure in a medically safe and recognized clinic or hospital. The relevance of economic differences between women, and not only similarities among women, was thus immediately rendered apparent vis-à-vis the Hyde Amendment’s class-biased character and its infringement of the reach of *Roe v. Wade*. This put women, on the basis of class and sometimes also racial differences, in an only somewhat better position than all women found themselves in the 1950s and into the *Mad Men* 1960s, when “back alley” illegal abortions endangered the lives of all women across economic statuses.

Second, as social movement scholars have described, countermovement organizing against abortion rights started right after *Roe v. Wade*.⁴³ High on the agenda of antifeminist “backlash”⁴⁴ was the repeal of abortion rights, an effort that began to accumulate its own successes moving into the 2000s and 2010s.⁴⁵ Little by little, state after state began to pass a variety of restrictions on abortion rights so that by 2013 a whopping forty states had prohibitions based on specified stages of pregnancy.⁴⁶ In Arkansas, lawmakers approved the most restrictive abortion law of all, banning abortions after the twelfth week of pregnancy, with some exceptions.⁴⁷ These prohibitions included so-called partial-birth abortion bans; limitations on whether abortions can be performed unless at a hospital (a restriction that greatly diminished this “option” for many women living in rural areas); limitations on private insurance coverage; and—as with the Hyde

⁴² Planned Parenthood. 2016. “Abortion Access: Hyde Amendment.” www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/issues/abortion/hyde-amendment.

⁴³ David Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg. 1996. “Movements, Countermovements, and the Structure of Political Opportunity.” *American Journal of Sociology* 101(6): 1628–60.

⁴⁴ Susan Faludi. 1991. * Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*. New York: Crown.

⁴⁵ Joshua Wilson. 2013. * The Street Politics of Abortion: Speech, Violence, and America’s Culture Wars*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

⁴⁶ Sean Sullivan. 2013. “Where All 50 States Stand on Abortion.” *Washington Post*, March 7. www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2013/03/07/where-all-50-states-stand-on-abortion-in-two-charts/?utm_term=.136b4529a23a.

⁴⁷ Sullivan, “Where All 50 States Stand.”

Amendment—class-biased prohibitions on public funding for abortion except in cases of rape, incest, or the endangerment of a woman’s life.⁴⁸

Moreover, into the 2010s more and more states began to legislate waiting periods and mandatory counseling before abortions could be performed, as well as parental involvement and targeted regulation of abortion providers.⁴⁹ Soon, too, fewer medical schools around the country were offering to train doctors in how to perform safe abortions; indeed, many doctors and Planned Parenthood providers were threatened, and in some cases even murdered, for providing women with legal abortions.⁵⁰ The sum effect of these measures “progressively” circumscribed abortion rights.⁵¹

This does not mean that reproductive freedoms were not extending in other ways, nor that cultural mores toward sex—as exemplified, say, in the newly circulating term *hook-up culture*—were not likewise tilting toward greater liberality. But it does mean that a schizophrenic situation was now in evidence insofar as supportive attitudes about the full range of reproductive rights did not extend across the board, and across classes, from contraception and the morning-after pill on through abortion. Rather, when it came to abortion, antifeminist attacks and depictions of abortion as “murder” were slowly taking hold.

However, to say that abortion rights diminished culturally and legally from the 1990s through the present would be as simplistic as declaring, in reverse, that LGBTQ rights have simply been won. Indeed, on several recent occasions when abortion rights came to be threatened at legislative or upper court levels, handed-down decisions stepped back from the precipice, so to speak. For instance, in 2011 Mississippi voters rejected a “personhood amendment” that would have outlawed all considerations

⁴⁸ Sullivan, “Where All 50 States Stand.”

⁴⁹ Guttmacher Institute. 2016. “Counseling and Waiting Periods for Abortion.” September 1. www.guttmacher.org/state-policy/explore/counseling-and-waiting-periods-abortion.

⁵⁰ According to the National Abortion Federation, more than a dozen attacks of extreme violence against abortion providers and clinics have been carried out in the past decade across the United States (many of which are acts of arson and murder). See National Abortion Federation, “Violence Statistics.” The National Abortion Federation reports that in November 2015, “Officer Garrett Swasey, Jennifer Markovsky, and Ke’Arre Stewart were shot and killed when an attacker entered a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Robert Lewis Dear is in custody pending charges in the shootings.” National Abortion Federation. 2016. “Violence Statistics.” <https://prochoice.org/education-and-advocacy/violence/violence-statistics-and-history/>. As of May 2016, Dear was found by the presiding judge to be “mentally incapable” of standing trial thereby putting the criminal case on hold. See Emanuella Grinberg. 2016. “Planned Parenthood Shooting Suspect Ruled Incompetent.” *CNN*, May 11. www.cnn.com/2016/05/11/us/planned-parenthood-shooting-robert-lewis-dear-hearing/. The second most recent and well-known case of antiabortion violence is that of extremist Scott Roeder in May 2009. The National Abortion Federation notes: “Dr. George Tiller was shot and killed in his church in Wichita, Kansas. Anti-abortion extremist Scott Roeder confessed to the murder and was found guilty of first-degree murder and two counts of aggravated assault and sentenced to life in prison with the possibility of parole in 50 years.” See National Abortion Federation. “Violence and Disruption Statistics.” 2016. <https://5aa1b2xfmfh2e2mk03kk8rsx-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016-NAF-Violence-and-Disruption-Statistics.pdf>.

⁵¹ Pollitt, “There’s a Reason Gay Marriage Is Winning.”

for abortion, including rape, incest, and life-threatening pregnancies.⁵² Most critically, the Supreme Court in 2016 reaffirmed and strengthened constitutional protections for abortion rights, striking down parts of a restrictive Texas law that greatly reduced the number of abortion clinics in the state.⁵³ These legal decisions, especially the Supreme Court's 2016 finding, simultaneously affirmed cultural opinions expressed in polling results time after time over the last several decades, namely that the majority of people in the United States still favor legalized abortion and do not wish to see *Roe v. Wade* overturned.⁵⁴

But if important battles have been won, the fate of a larger cultural war to maintain abortion as legal—and more critically still, legitimate—seems at best undecided and at worst seriously endangered. It may have become hard by the late 2010s to discern whether women are undertaking fewer abortions than in previous decade because of elective preference or myriad circumstantial and emotional obstacles. For instance, the Guttmacher Institute found that the number of abortion procedures undertaken by women in 2014 was at a much lower level, 14.6 per 1,000, compared with 16.9 per 1,000 in 2011 and the 1980 high of 29.3 in the age group fifteen to forty-four.⁵⁵ Likely, abortions were being performed proportionally less often for reasons ranging from fewer women choosing to have them to state-by-state restrictions that made obtaining abortions harder than ever. This was especially the case for women with less funding at their disposal, and who faced measures aimed at making them feel guilty about electing this option.

This troubling cultural milieu that produces—and encourages—feelings of guilt among women across race and class was further amplified when outright hostility toward abortion rights manifested in the passing of new antiabortion laws. In 2016 alone, fifty new antiabortion bills were codified into law in individual states, bringing the total of new state laws since 2010 to a whopping 338.⁵⁶ An antifeminist backlash was most evident in the 1970s as individual states went on the offensive against abortion access; it continued well into the 1980s and 1990s, despite a slight dip in the number of restrictions.

And it has made a powerful return in the last several years. The hostile sociopolitical context can be analyzed geographically. A number of states in the South and

⁵² Aaron Blake. 2011. "Mississippi Anti-abortion 'Personhood' Amendment Fails at Ballot Box." *Washington Post*, November 9. www.washingtonpost.com/politics/mississippi-anti-abortion-personhood-amendment-fails-at-ballot-box/2011/11/09/gIQAzQ195M_story.html.

⁵³ Adam Liptak. 2016. "Supreme Court Strikes Down Texas Abortion Restrictions." *New York Times*, June 27. www.nytimes.com/2016/06/28/us/supreme-court-texas-abortion.html?_r=0.

⁵⁴ Citing data from Gallup, Lydia Saad reports that 50 percent of Americans are in support of abortion. See Lydia Saad. 2015. "Americans Choose 'Pro-Choice' for First Time in Seven Years." *Gallup*, May 29. www.gallup.com/poll/183434/americans-choose-pro-choice-first-time-seven-years.aspx.

⁵⁵ Guttmacher Institute. 2018. "Induced Abortion in the United States." May. www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states.

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Nash. 2017. "Policy Trends in the States: 2016." Guttmacher Institute. www.guttmacher.org/article/2017/01/policy-trends-states-2016.

in the Midwest are extremely hostile to abortion, while the Northeast and the West are marked by a strong stance of support for abortion. Moreover, the amplification of hostile cultural and legislative assaults on abortion by individual states is even more pronounced when we consider a recent shift in which states that were previously characterized as “hostile” became marked “extremely hostile.”⁵⁷ One of the ways this extreme hostility appears on the ground is in the closing of abortion clinics, which viscerally impacts millions of women. In particular, Texas has seen the largest drop in abortion clinics out of all fifty states. In 2013 alone, the number of abortion clinics dropped from forty-one to twenty-two in Texas. The immediate consequence is that increasing numbers of women now live over fifty miles from a clinic in Texas: from 1.2 million to 4.2 million women, to be exact. Nationally, abortion clinics have fallen in number to 788 in 2014, down from 839 in 2011.⁵⁸ Analysis by the Guttmacher Institute shows that the backlash against abortion crystallized to a point where, in 2016, 57 percent of American women of reproductive age lived in a state considered either hostile or extremely hostile to abortion rights.⁵⁹

With this I arrive at one dimension of what may have differentiated movements for sexual and reproductive freedoms as they unfolded from the 1990s through the present. Whereas progressives felt little doubt whether advocating sexual options and nondiscrimination was “right,” at least some progressives and feminists may have begun to wonder themselves whether abortion might not be “wrong” (or at minimum, best avoided—an option of last resort). Consequently, it has been not just laws and political rights that have come to require defending, but abortion’s standing in legitimacy. If the moral high ground has slowly eroded for the reproductive rights and justice movements, what will be needed to gain it back?

My contention is that the right to abortion, in particular, still anchors reproductive freedom, in general. In many cases, terminating a pregnancy through the morning-after pill or surgical abortion may appear to be a woman’s best choice, making abortion rights fundamental at one end of any meaningful continuum of reproductive rights. With abortion as a sine qua non of reproductive options all told, I will now attempt to outline and restate what might be a less defensive position than what feminists of various persuasions have found themselves pressed to adopt by the late 2010s. This ‘outline’ is also for the purpose of bringing together reproductive justice and sexual freedom based arguments so that both are as positively, effectively and ethically framed as possible. Note, too, that if the following reflections adopt a more “personal” narrative tone, they are meant to stay close to and very much interconnected with the “political” matters at hand.

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⁵⁷ Nash, “Policy Trends.”

⁵⁸ Rebecca Harrington. 2017. “The Supreme Court Overturning *Roe v. Wade* Isn’t the Biggest Threat to Abortion Rights.” *Business Insider*, April 10. www.businessinsider.com/state-abortion-laws-pro-life-pro-choice-reproductive-rights-2017-2.

⁵⁹ Nash, “Policy Trends.”

In 1989 I wrote an article for the *Village Voice* entitled “Abortion without Apology.” It ran as a front-page story with the title in bold letters. That same month, copies of the issue were handed out on buses leaving for a large march on Washington in support of reproductive freedom, and I recall feeling proud to have made even a small contribution to feminist thinking about reproductive rights. But other feelings at that time also rise to the surface as I look back now, many years later and in a different context, on that more youthful journalistic effort.

In retrospect, one reaction was a vague sense of fear. Even years later, I remember feeling slightly nervous after a colleague told me that “Abortion without Apology” had been cited on an antiabortion website. At once, I was gratified that something in the article reverberated enough to be worth mentioning—and I was worried. Had arguments in favor of options, and of women’s right to safe and legal abortion, become virtually unspeakable? I recalled media accounts of many doctors and nurses working in clinics who came to feel threatened as they worked without guilt, without apology, to provide women with safe abortions. Had a cloud of danger, even violence, settled almost imperceptibly around the issue? Indeed, at a talk in Toronto in 2015, a feminist professor described how several women recently quoted as “speaking up” for abortion rights in the *New York Times* had received threatening letters and e-mails in the immediate aftermath of that article.⁶⁰

But a second recalled reaction involved my personal rather than academic life. A number of friends called to congratulate me on the day the *Voice* article appeared in 1989; however, one friend, one of my closest at the time, had a peculiar comment. As she well knew, I was experiencing difficulty becoming pregnant and had been trying for a while to do so. “Have you ever thought that maybe your attitude toward abortion has something to do with why you’re having trouble?” my friend inquired. “The article makes you sound so cold, so detached.” Aside from the fact that her attitude was hurtful and made little sense—other factors, not only attitudinal ones, affect becoming pregnant—her comment was also revealing. For she was voicing exactly one of the points I had been trying to make in “Abortion without Apology,” namely that it had become very difficult to express a range of views about abortion, to air a spectrum of attitudes that include not only those who intensely oppose abortion but those who do not find abortion, especially in the first trimester, problematic on their own religious, moral, psychological, and ethical compasses. Once the abortion issue had become a symbol of conservatism and a sine qua non of the so-called culture wars, the continuum of attitudes on which women (and men) felt free to express themselves had become constrained, contaminated, as though you were “supposed” to feel guilty about abortion and that there was something wrong with you if you did not. Let us place the abortion

⁶⁰ Tamar Lewin. 2015. “#ShoutYourAbortion Gets Angry Shouts Back.” *New York Times*, October 1. www.nytimes.com/2015/10/02/us/hashtag-campaign-twitter-abortion.html. This “speaking up” was in just the open manner that writer Katha Pollitt recommends in her precisely named *Pro*.

issue on a larger canvas of recent American history, then, to examine how this defensive attitude came to pass.

With the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, feminists had clearly won a huge legal victory. Yet that same turning point also became an opportunity for conservative opposition to feminisms, as represented in the Right to Life movement spearheaded by Phyllis Schlafly, among others, to begin presenting itself as the moral right as well. In this respect *Roe v. Wade* was a triumph at once monumentally real and pyrrhic, as from 1973 through the present feminists have found themselves on the defensive about reproductive choice, especially abortion.

But recall, too, that pro-choice arguments made through the 1960s and into the early 1970s, prior to *Roe v. Wade*, were highly effective and morally motivated in their own time and place. Parties filing amicus briefs presented vivid documentation in their pre-*Roe* arguments to the Supreme Court—photos, stories, statistics—confirming that women, too many women, had suffered and died since the 1950s as a result of unsafe back-alley abortions. It was the time when Richard Yates wrote his best-selling novel *Revolutionary Road* (1961) and Betty Friedan penned her resonant *Feminine Mystique* (1963). Clearly, human beings whose ontological status no one debated were losing their lives out of desperation and fright, sometimes due to lack of money but also as a result of middle-class women's not infrequent senses of isolation and alienation.

For a host of reasons, then, women were determined to stop pregnancies early when they were unable or did not wish to have a child. Therefore, feminists and other pro-choice proponents pre-*Roe v. Wade* were very much in favor of both choice and life—a full range of women's lives—in demonstrating that like it or not, abortions did occur, due to circumstances and strong feelings about unwanted pregnancies. Because of this “truth,” this reality, abortion needed to be safe as well as legal to guarantee women's well-being and choices. Decades later, though, in the greatly altered cultural climate of the 2010s, this moral dimension of the abortion issue—that is, if abortion is illegal, women are likely to die from botched and unsafe procedures, and poor women more often than rich—tends to be forgotten.

But another, equally critical argument remains germane years after *Roe v. Wade*. This is, again, that attacks on legal abortion of the last decades also manifest growing incursions on the separation of church and state, the guarantor of personal and religious freedoms so fundamental to basic constitutional rights in the United States. In the case of abortion, this means that the issue may be both about and *not* about what it appears to concern.⁶¹ By extension, both narrow and broader arguments may be necessary to acknowledge the abortion issue's sui generis status and its connection with other social and political developments in post-1960s America. Of course, on one level the abortion issue is unique. Again, though, on another and more generally speaking, its threatened status bespeaks wider infringements of the guaranteed separation between

⁶¹ Kristin Luker. 1975. *Taking Chances: Abortion and the Decision Not to Contracept*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

church and state in complex realms of life involving diverse philosophical, spiritual, sexual, personal, and religious beliefs.

Let us explore these levels simultaneously, starting with the range of opinions and options surrounding reproductive and abortion rights per se and how they might be classified. Take, to begin, opposition to abortion, which many women and men across social differences feel, and which deserves to be treated with utmost seriousness and respect. Here it may be helpful to note an approach taken in a remarkable study of capital punishment.⁶² The author strove to put himself in the mind of others by taking seriously an opinion he himself did not necessarily hold, namely advocacy of the death sentence. With our case, let us place ourselves carefully in the mind and feelings of someone who is personally and also perhaps religiously opposed to abortion.

For many women who become pregnant, a gift of life, of incumbent life, has been bestowed upon them. Having a baby is a potential for family connections like no other. To some people, of course, the feeling is based on religious views and backgrounds and equates with the belief that life begins at conception. For some strict Catholics, birth control itself is believed unnecessary or wrong, and pregnancies that arrive in marriage, however early on, are seen as blessings from God. Whether a woman is alone or in a relationship with a husband or boyfriend, to abort a pregnancy would be as akin to murder as killing animals is for a person in another religious context. It is felt to be deeply wrong according to her and perhaps her family's religious beliefs—opinions she has every right to uphold. If one is within this woman's mind, being antiabortion is a moral position that reflects her own positive view of life and accords with her sense of decency and good values. Hardly is any harm meant by her view. It is quite the reverse: antiabortion is perceived as highly ethical, while having an abortion is seen as terrible.

Needless to say, this woman should not, should never, be prevailed upon to have an abortion, or be made to feel badly for not doing so, as many women across races and ethnicities and religions have experienced when forced into sterilization or faced with the biases of eugenicists. It would be problematic, not to mention illegal, for a woman with these feelings and beliefs to be compelled to have an abortion or required to read literature urging her to feel guilty against her convictions if she decides not to abort but to carry her pregnancy to term.

But what about another woman, and her family and partner, if any, who simply does not feel or believe this way? For example, some who are brought up in different cultural or religious traditions do not believe—especially when it comes to first-trimester abortions—that they are committing a wrong, let alone a murder. Catholics in earlier centuries often believed that life did not begin until “quickening” (when movement is apparent, after approximately the first three months of pregnancy).⁶³ In other religions,

⁶² David Garland. 2010. *Peculiar Institution: America's Death Penalty in an Age of Abolition*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

⁶³ Luker, *Taking Chances*.

too, or among atheists, whose views also merit protection, a newly fertilized egg is not necessarily believed to yet constitute a human life.

Some number of women and men surely feel this way, especially about first-trimester abortions, when the overwhelming number of women who seek abortions actually obtain them. Although pregnancy was unintended, this second group of women does not believe they are doing something unethical or terrible by seeking an abortion. Like the first woman, though, surely the beliefs of the woman in this second category—whose views may be as religious as the first person's, or simply secular—require protection so that she is allowed to proceed and not forced to feel badly in so doing. She too should be free from forcible exposure to material that makes her think she ought to feel guilty. It is arguably this second party's convictions that have been placed solidly on the defensive over the last several decades, as feminists have found it difficult to maintain the moral and ideological high ground on the issue of abortion.

If we turn to the second level, it is precisely here, with broader and more general questions about the separation of church and state, where analogies to reproductive rights may be drawn. No one would think of forbidding someone with particular religious or secular beliefs to eat meat, a decision—whether or not to be a vegetarian—that reflects wide differences in attitudes and beliefs. Equally evident is that views about what occurs after death differ according to individual religious or secular beliefs, which from America's founding are understood to be a person's right. And as with beliefs about the nature of death, beliefs about the nature of life, for example what defines the onset of an individual life, are protected under the Constitution.

A position according equal respect to the first and second category of women's views need not be one of complete moral relativism: obviously, states forbid murder or rape, even if some fictionalized religion were to find these crimes permissible. Most people, nations, and religions are remarkably in agreement about many ethical and moral issues around condemned behaviors and actions. Once the reality of genocides, from Rwanda to Nazi Germany to Bosnia, was horrifically established, there was close to universal agreement that these are wrong, and laws quite rightly do not respect individual opinions that diverge from this consensus.

Yet the difference between the first and second woman's views falls into a realm of hazy philosophical and religious divergence that requires individual protections precisely because the views vary from person to person in ways not universally recognized and agreed upon. To fail to protect both women—as an antiabortion position does—is by extension to threaten guaranteed separations between church and state that are fundamental to individual freedoms that have proudly defined the United States and other contemporary societies like our own.

But a third category of women's views is also germane to this discussion of diverse positions, all of which are valid, by definition, in a pro-choice feminist stance. This woman feels that should she become pregnant, the decision to be made about this potential life inside her would be tremendously difficult. She may find herself avoiding sex on the off chance it could lead to pregnancy, or being especially careful about birth

control because she simply does not wish to be in an uncomfortable and ambivalent situation facing a pregnancy, as part of her wishes might be to bring a child to term to raise. Perhaps she is deeply in love with her partner, their lovemaking joyous and their commitment long-lasting, these too rendering her decision-making complex and sobering. For this third person abortion would be troubling, she knows or imagines, regardless of her religious or cultural background; it would be a decision unlike any she would have to make in her life. Still, this woman feels strongly, maybe as deeply as the second woman, that the option of a morning-after pill or abortion ought to be legitimately and safely available to her. She does not know in advance if she would opt for one. But she believes in the choice.

Last but maybe not least to consider is the simple fact that people change, sometimes greatly, at different stages and over the ups and downs of their lifetimes. Here only a pro-choice position allows for such possibilities. For example, the second woman may find her attitudes toward pregnancy and abortion evolving with age as her own situation and perspectives morph. A forty-one-year-old woman who becomes pregnant, knowing well that her body may not be able to conceive again anytime soon, or ever again, is likely to feel extraordinarily different about having an abortion than she did as a young woman with no good life chances on the horizon, no loving partner, and/or no job to feel secure about. At that young age, abortion was a legitimate and necessary option; later on, being pregnant strikes her as the most cosmically wonderful news she can imagine. At the later age pregnancy is a reason for congratulations; when she was younger it would have been a cause of consternation, panic, and anxiety (though not necessarily guilt, unless that were socially foisted on her).

The same holds for the reverse situation. For it is possible that a younger woman who welcomed the arrival of a first child, and then a second, and a third, knows well by the fourth pregnancy that she cannot afford another member in her household; nor could she live with giving away a child she bears to term. For this woman, too, attitudes may change over the life course and as a result of unforeseen developments. Whereas once she would never have considered abortion, now it strikes her as a welcome option, if safely and financially available to her.

All three women—the first deeply against abortion for religious or cultural reasons; the second comfortable with it, on one of the same grounds, after pregnancy unintentionally arrives; the third ambivalent but strongly believing in all options being open and preserved for her—should be protected, as should the possibility of viewpoints changing over the years of one's life. Prochoice positions held by early feminists, and by the majority of Americans according to public opinion even years after *Roe v. Wade*, have the virtue—and I am daring to claim the moral virtue—of allowing people choices, at once philosophical, spiritual, and religious, that are basic for human freedoms in the realms of intimate and familial life.

...

In summary, in the areas of reproductive as well as sexual rights, feminists of different varieties are committed to protecting and expanding human choices and options.

Another way of stating this is that feminists across these issues object to the imposition of homogeneities by force. Thus, whether advocating for reproductive justice or sexual freedoms, feminists share two major similarities. For one, both issues stem from feminist beliefs in women’s self-determination and control of their own bodies, and entail opposition to incursions of this basic feminist principle concerning bodily integrity. For another, advocates for both issues face a late 2010s climate in which conservative efforts over the last several decades threaten to, and have in some respects been able to, break down constitutionally guaranteed separations of church and state on which these feminist freedoms depend.

But I wonder whether someone like Phyllis Schlafly—if we imagine a hypothetical scenario where she and other like-minded and sometimes antifeminist conservatives are sitting around a conference table assessing their own gains and losses—would conclude that relatively more “success” resulted for them in recent decades on the reproductive justice front (namely regarding abortion) than with respect to growing acceptance of people’s diverse sexual preferences. Looking back, from a conservative perspective antiabortion politics may seem to have been relatively more effective at imposing religious beliefs, even amid church/state separations supposedly long guaranteed in U.S. law and society. On the other hand, if indeed a blurring of church/state separations has already been occurring for decades and is intensifying under the Trump administration, then feminists cannot take for granted that LGBTQ gains are safe from incursion either.

Think back, for instance, to events under the Obama administration: almost immediately following Barack Obama’s public statement of his personal support for gay marriage in May 2012, Pastor Charles Worley gave a Sunday sermon in which he expressed his strong opposition to the president’s position. Worley’s words went viral on the internet as he envisioned locking up all lesbians “and gays and queers” within a large fence—“150 or 100 miles long”—and having it “electrified.” He then contended, with some people in the audience saying “Amen” in apparent approval, that if “you” dropped food in from time to time, you would eventually “get rid of these people” because they would be unable to reproduce.⁶⁴ The pastor’s speech was delivered in North Carolina, one of thirty states to have passed a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, where many residents had hoped the amendment would change federal law.⁶⁵

Given such attitudes and the depth of homophobia they reflect, it may make more sense than ever for feminists committed to maximizing progress in the realms of personal and private life to work together—even while preserving activist organizations that understandably focus on the distinctiveness of particular issues. As I have argued

⁶⁴ Rene Lynch. 2012. “Put Gays, Lesbians behind Electric Fence? Pastor’s Sermon Goes Viral.” *Los Angeles Times*, May 22. <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/may/22/nation/la-na-nn-pastor-wants-to-put-gays-lesbians-behind-el>

⁶⁵ CNN. 2012. “North Carolina Passes Same-Sex Marriage Ban, CNN Projects.” May 11. www.cnn.com/2012/05/08/politics/north-carolina-marriage/.

here, combined (in addition to separate) advocacy may be most helpful, and synergistic, especially in a context where the two issues are linked in antifeminist cultural and political discourse. But in thinking about the future of feminisms, commonly and separately, together and apart, what is also apparent is that cultural framings matter.

Here it seems wise to recast both sexual freedom and reproductive justice issues as less uneven than parallel in their longterm concerns: both express feminist positions that are moral and ethical insofar as they respect and value people's actual feelings, preferences, and lives. There is no reason for either issue to be approached defensively, or for either to be out of sync with the other when framed under the aegis of a larger umbrella of positive feminist goals. For both issues, and the advocacy groups they spawned, start from facts that can be gleaned right in front of our individual and collective eyes: people are different as well as similar, and have richly variegated needs and preferences as they seek happiness and fulfillment, hoping to be cared about and respected in their individual and social lives.

As was apparent going back to the 1940s and 1950s, some women will wish for, seek, and obtain abortions, and for a panoply of reasons—whether or not the law acknowledges such individual decisions. In decades past, women sometimes died in pursuing what they felt, believed, or needed when they sought “back alley” abortions, which after *Roe v. Wade* ceased (or ought to have ceased) to involve procedures endangering women's lives. Then and now, other women will not have abortions because of religious objections, which deserve to be respected and protected just as fervently. Analogously, sexual freedom advocates in LGBTQ organizations can be seen advocating for the freedom of people to live what they actually feel, namely a richly diverse set of sexual desires that correspond to a range of legitimate and uniquely individual feelings.

This emphasis on the legitimacy of recognizing actual diversities in people's needs and choices taps two deeply embedded strains of American cultural and political discourse. The first has been relatively more visible in the case of the LGBTQ movement, namely a distinctively American distaste for discriminating and treating people unequally on the basis of gender, race, religion, or sexuality (among other patterned biases that have grown, through social revolutions and movements, to be recognized and objected to over time). Americans, on the whole, tend to understand that blatant forms of discrimination are unethical and wrong. On the other hand, and relatively speaking, discrimination against women who do not believe early abortions to be immoral has been far less recognized in the cultural framings of feminists concerned about reproductive rights and justice.

The second strain of engrained cultural and political discourse invokes the constitutionally guaranteed separation between church and state that has been blurred in recent decades, exclusively but not solely with regard to the abortion issue. Thus, although particular religions may embrace homophobic attitudes or cast abortion as a crime, these cannot be the basis of law. Yet, as I have argued, the breakdown of church and state separations has particularly manifested itself in efforts to legislate antiabortion, and anti-LGBTQ, provisions of many and varied kinds. Part of this suc-

cess comes from one point I have not made previously; namely, attacks beginning in the 1970s on abortion rights were extremely well funded. Indeed, resource-rich countermovements may be part of the explanation for the disparity between the issues on which I have concentrated, a factor that should not be ignored. The sheer extent of countermovement activism against abortion might well have been intimidating for any social movement faced with such determined and extensively financed opposition.⁶⁶

At this juncture, I recall an interesting debate I had with a smart graduate student in relation to this point: is the problem simply one of cultural framings, he inquired, or resources? Or, as we might agree, both? But even in the face of considerable “countermovement” financing, good arguments matter; they even have an interactive relationship with resources and a movement’s ability to muster them. Moreover, the recent history of abortion, and the defensive position in which pro-choice feminists have found themselves, means that of late framings and reframings may count more than ever. This defensive situation of feminists may have made it more difficult than in the 1960s or 1970s to mount mass demonstrations in Washington so as to maintain and protect reproductive choices, whether or not in conjunction with advocating for LGBTQ issues.⁶⁷

Last, and alongside attention to framings and funding, I wish to reemphasize that both commonalities and differences associated with attaining reproductive and sexual freedoms need to be kept in mind going forward. The Hyde Amendment quickly limited abortion’s availability by class and geography such that reproductive rights and justice still require fighting for across categories of women (and men); the organization Queers for Economic Justice points out that issues involving sexual and class-based freedoms are often connected too. Thus taking a feminist political standpoint on issues rather than on individuals means feminist policies should start with women, with people, who stand to be most left behind unless those policies are equitably thought through and implemented. Taking a feminist standpoint on issues, not individuals, thus speaks to one source of ambivalence women have felt toward the feminist movement, namely its sometimes racial, class, or sexual one-dimensionality.

For finally, to insist on the importance of linking reproductive and sexual freedoms—and to strongly advocate for the two progressing in the same rather than divergent political directions—addresses ambivalences that in some cases have divided women between those who want children and those who don’t, between those who are lesbian

⁶⁶ Deana Rohlinger further spearheaded this examination of the countermovement against abortion, specifically its dynamics manifested through the media’s active role in this public debate. See Deana Rohlinger. 2002. “Framing the Abortion Debate: Organizational Resources, Media Strategies, and Movement-Countermovement Dynamics.” *Sociological Quarterly* 43(4): 479–507. See also, as background, Joshua Wilson. 2016. *The State of Abortion Politics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

⁶⁷ See Katha Pollitt’s analysis of how the struggles and movements for same-sex marriage and reproductive rights have been different, so much so that that difference has germinated a cultural context where the former has been on the advance while the latter has been consistently under attack in recent years. Pollitt, “There’s a Reason Gay Marriage Is Winning, While Abortion Rights Are Losing.”

or bisexual and those who are heterosexual. It is time to take a new stance toward feminist intimate freedoms and regain political strength, to move beyond defensiveness toward the complex and multidimensional understandings that have been a spectacular by-product of feminisms fifty years after the famous second wave. At the same time, and moving on, freedom in the realm of personal life is only possible in a world where freedom from violence and coercion has been secured. For the issue of violence against women, to which I now turn, is also a fundamental component of feminists' common and different dreams in the United States. How has this fared over the last half century? What has been accomplished and which challenges remain?

5. Ending Violence against Women—and Men

Before the rise of second wave feminism, acts of violence against women, ranging from rape and sexual assault to domestic violence, were often considered private rather than public issues. Before the explosion of feminist theory and the second wave women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s, violence against women was indeed hardly understood, let alone politicized. It took the advent and historical unfolding of the American feminist movement—deserving of special credit in this regard—to understand close connections between sexism and violence, and to mount forceful demands for the elimination of violence. Violence against women is not a random form of crime but a lynchpin of gender-based subordination.¹ Its diminution and elimination were, and remain, preconditions of women's safety and happiness. Rape has been a distinctive means of keeping women in check over the history of male-dominated societies, just as violence has been used as a means of maintaining social control over men and women in other contexts (for example, the horrors of racial violence as manifested under slavery). Fear of violence intimidates women, and in some cases men, and limits our humanity. Whether or not a woman has actually been raped or assaulted, violence against women means worrying that violence can happen any day, any time. Security and violence then are opposites—violence against women being a form of patriarchal power that can be perceived as lurking around the corner, haunting and affecting a person's ability to feel mentally and physically free.

Fast-forward to 2017, though, when we can ask whether this influential early feminist critique of violence against women rings a little pat, or whether it is still very much relevant. Can feminists be satisfied that violence against women has become a well-recognized and diminishing problem, or has progress in this area, too, started to stall? At present, sexual assault remains very much an issue on college campuses and in the military, and gang rapes among adolescent youth are now sometimes even videotaped, as in the highly profiled Steubenville, Ohio, rape case.² In June 2016 media reports widely publicized efforts to recall a California judge who had sentenced a former Stan-

¹ See Kate Millett. 1970. *Sexual Politics*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis.

² Matt Lombardi, Lisa Soloway, and Sean Dooley. 2013. "The Steubenville Rape Case: The Story You Haven't Heard." *ABC News*, March 12. <http://abcnews.go.com/2020/steubenville-rape-case-story-heard/story?id=18705357>. See also Anna Gjika. Forthcoming. "Going Viral: Youth and Sexual Assaults in the Digital Age." PhD dissertation, Department of Sociology, Graduate Center, City University of New York.

ford student to only six months in prison for raping an unconscious woman following a party.³ Yet as with other issues of feminist concern, the case for progress—or lack thereof—can be argued in several ways.

On the one hand, it is certainly the case that massive changes for the better have taken place in cultural consciousness about violence against women, in reformed laws, and in recently declining rates of violence. On the issue of cultural consciousness, power dynamics are now widely perceived to pervade the private spaces of bedrooms and dorm rooms, as well as the public spaces of boardrooms and legislatures. Widely acknowledged, too, is that domestic violence is a social ill needing to be addressed through public policies and community efforts, and that families and intimate partners cannot deal with it alone.

Following years of feminist activism, calls for legislation intensified as thousands of rape crisis centers, hotlines, and domestic violence shelters formed across the United States through the 1970s and 1980s, culminating in the Clinton administration with the 1994 passage of the federal Violence Against Women Act.⁴ During the same period, thousands of criminal justice systems in the country were pressured to develop better and more sensitive responses to reports of violence against women. And in the aftermath of 1960s and 1970s feminist theory, a wide range of interpersonal dynamics were redefined as entailing distinctly gender-based harms: not only rape and domestic violence but harassment at workplaces and stalking were identified as seriously affecting, frightening, and harming women in their everyday lives. Finally, all major forms of violence⁵—including violence against women⁶—declined since the 1990s according to both victimization surveys and police reports (these being important to look at together since the latter often underestimates actual crime in cases like rape and domestic violence, which victims can be hesitant or afraid to report).⁷

³ For details on the case, see Liam Stack. 2016. “In Stanford Rape Case, Brock Turner Blamed Drinking, Promiscuity.” *New York Times*, June 8. www.nytimes.com/2016/06/09/us/brock-turner-blamed-drinking-and-promiscuity-in-sexual-assault-at-stanford.html. After serving his six-month sentence, Turner filed an appeal. See John Bacon. 2018. “Ex-Stanford Swimmer Brock Turner Appeals Rape Conviction.” *USA Today*, July 24. www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2018/07/24/brock-turner-appeal-rape-conviction-gets-hearing/827709002/.

⁴ Available at <http://legcounsel.house.gov/Comps/DOMVIOL.PDF>.

⁵ According to the FBI, “When considering 5- and 10-year trends, the 2014 estimated violent crime total was 6.9 percent below the 2010 level and 16.2 percent below the 2005 level.” See Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2014. “Violent Crime.” In *Uniform Crime Report*. www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/violent-crime.

⁶ The 2014 *Uniform Crime Report* also notes: “There were an estimated 84,041 rapes (legacy definition) reported to law enforcement in 2014. This estimate was 2.4 percent higher than the 2013 estimate, 1.8 percent lower than the 2010 estimate, and 10.9 percent lower than the 2005 estimate.” See Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2014. “Rape.” In *Uniform Crime Report*. www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/rape.

⁷ The U.S. Department of Justice’s National Crime Victimization Survey reports, “From 1993 to 2014, the rate of violent crime declined from 79.8 to 20.1 per 1,000.” Further, a total of 284,350 cases of rape/sexual assault were reported, which is almost four times the amount reported by the *Uniform*

On the other hand, even with verified declines by varied measures, violence against women continues to occur with sufficient frequency as to render it more commonly heard of than rare. According to many well-reputed feminist criminologists, legal changes have not proved nearly as helpful to women as originally hoped. Regarding rape, legal changes such as rape shield provisions had not produced higher rates of conviction in rape cases by the 2000s, nor had they led to women feeling that crimes—whether committed in fraternities or on a date in an apartment or hotel room—were significantly easier to prosecute than twenty to thirty years ago.⁸ Then there is domestic violence, difficult and complicated to redress for large numbers of women who see no option but to leave their homes and procure physical, psychological, and socioeconomic support that may or may not be available to them. Precisely because battering can generate hopelessness (and what has been called “battered women’s syndrome”⁹) and well-founded fears of reprisal, it is still notoriously underreported. Writers and scholars estimate the scope of the problem as disturbingly large—enough so that demand for domestic violence shelters appears to exceed capacity by significant numbers in many states.¹⁰

But a second problem also emerged from the time of second wave feminist reforms through the late 2010s. Measures to combat violence against women—especially those aimed at legal reforms—have been viewed skeptically in their effects, if not their intentions, by some feminist scholars. Such skepticism pertains to ambivalence toward one-dimensionality that some feel has characterized the feminist movement overall, and focuses on whether sufficient sensitivity has been shown toward women’s intersectional experiences of not only gender but class and racial discriminations as well.¹¹ Regarding violence against women, these scholars argue that feminist legal reforms produced unanticipated consequences and strange bedfellows. As they contend, unexpected po-

Crime Report in the same year of 2014. See U.S. Department of Justice. 2014. “Criminal Victimization, 2014.” www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv14.pdf.

⁸ Susan Caringella-MacDonald. 2008. *Addressing Rape Reform in Law and Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁹ See Michelle Strucke and Kate Hajjar. 2010. “Battered Women Syndrome.” Cornell University Law School, Social Science and Law. http://courses2.cit.cornell.edu/sociallaw/student_projects/BatteredWomanSyndrome.htm.

¹⁰ The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) reports that across the country domestic shelters have experienced an increase in demand while facing shortages in federal funding in the wake of cuts in funding to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Figures for 2016 are cited on the basis of a National Domestic Violence Counts Census where 72, 959 adults and children received services related to domestic violence problems whereas 11, 991 requests were unmet. In 2014, 1.3 million victims received shelter or nonresidential services funded by the Family Violence Prevention Services Act, whereas 196, 467 shelter service requests were unmet. See National Network to End Domestic Violence. “Funding and Appropriations.” <https://nnedv.org/content/funding-appropriations/>.

¹¹ Kristin Bumiller. 2008. *In an Abusive State: How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement against Sexual Violence*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; Bernstein, “Carceral Politics as Gender Justice?”

litical alliances emerged between progressive feminists and conservative politicians, the latter hardly being feminist on other issues, such as reproductive rights.

Indeed, attention to rape reforms—and the 1994 Violence Against Women Act—coincided historically with a “punitive turn” and the rise of mass incarceration in the United States. Men prosecuted for rape or battering who are poor and minority have often found their arrests for violence against women overlapping with class and racial discriminations, which have differentiated the severity of their punishments from that of punishment meted out to higher-status offenders. This has meant relatively lengthy sentences for poor and minority men in a distinctively punitive environment in the United States; in turn, this has spurred a search for alternative modes of social response that might also effectively address battering and rape. Paradoxically, the adoption in many states of mandatory sentencing laws has left some women with feelings of diminished control over their circumstances. Obviously, class and racial differences also matter greatly in the issue of domestic violence and what options do or do not exist for women to act in the interests of their safety. Thus, for women who may face racial and class as well as gender biases, feminist laws and reforms have not necessarily brought unequivocal improvement in the quality of their lives.

With this as backdrop, I now turn to progress made and issues remaining (and perhaps unintentionally created) when viewed approximately fifty years after feminists, in theory and practice, called out violence against women. I wish to argue in this chapter that over the last fifty years feminist reforms have succeeded relatively more at emphasizing the relevance of the gender revolution for women than for men; in other words, many men still do not perceive that while the feminist movement has focused on improving women’s lives, it also bodes immense human liberation for men as well. By no means am I suggesting that feminisms(s) have not affected men’s lives at all. Quite the contrary, cultural expectations of men have shifted greatly, and it is now relatively unsurprising to see male nurses in hospitals, men taking care of their children, middle-aged men getting pedicures in nail salons, and younger men in pink shirts not batting an eye over potential stigmatization. Clearly, by these and other cultural signals, which also appear in popular cultural representations, previously gender-divided spheres have become far more porous. Nor should the birth of masculinities studies within academia be overlooked, nor scholars’ concerns about issues of violence as expressed by people across genders. Partly because of growing interest in topics concerning men and masculinities, by the late 2010s women’s studies programs have more often been renamed “women and gender studies,” or “women, gender, and sexuality studies,” or simply “gender studies,” both in and outside the United States.

But simultaneously, a revolution against both the privileges and the burdens of socialized “masculinities”—to use R. W. Connell’s influential term—has not yet sufficiently seeped into everyday levels of casual interaction that affect many men and boys inside their families and communities, their classrooms and schoolyards, and via the influence of mass media. A similar point was recently made by Jessica Valenti in a 2018 op-ed in the *New York Times*: “Though feminists have always recognized the

anguish that boys face in a patriarchal system, we haven't built the same structures of support for boys that we have for girls."¹² Yet supports are needed, according to Connell, given that different "masculinities" exist in a given culture, and of course in America's.

Most influential is "hegemonic masculinity," representing the dominant ideal of "being a man" held out for all men to achieve in a particular time and place. In the U.S. culture explored here, this means not only being "handsome" but possessing power in economic, social, political, and sexual terms. "Subordinated" masculinities also can result from challenging dominant standards either through one's sexuality ("outing" heterosexuality as only one form of sexual preference among others) or by holding and acting on feminist principles that conflict with hegemonic masculine attitudes. Just as important, for Connell, are "marginalized" masculinities in which men who do not possess status in social, economic, and political terms may still have—as though by way of compensation—gender-based power over women. Yet whether one has access to hegemonic or marginalized masculinity, it is common across class and racial differences that "being a man" is enculturated to the extent that sexist attitudes toward women are routinely imbibed and learned, becoming thereafter difficult to unlearn.¹³

Boys, and then men, can still often find themselves teased if playing with dolls, or pursuing caretaking careers, or otherwise acting in ways not associated with traditional traits of masculinity often contrasted with (as though opposed to) "feminine" spheres.¹⁴ Thus, drawing on Adrienne Rich's famous coining of the term "compulsory heterosexuality,"¹⁵ I suggest that despite major feminist progress, cultural expectations still generate, across masculinities, what could be called "compulsory masculinity." As used here, I do not mean that all expressions of masculinity are sexist or heterosexist, or what one scholar has called "toxic" masculinity because of biased attitudes stated or enacted.¹⁶ People can and do often express masculinity in ways not simply reducible to, or equatable with, aggressiveness or exertions of biased powers and control. Rather, my intention here is to call attention to ongoing cultural patterns and *pressures*—ones that arise, for example, at schools, in teams, at work, that is, in group and institutional contexts—to enact aspects of behavior associated with forms of masculinity that are hard to separate from deeply embedded patriarchal attitudes.

Even acknowledging hugely significant cultural changes to date, then, boys and men still too often feel compelled by a need for approval, not only from women but often from each other, to live up to gender norms that have changed not nearly as much for them as they have for women. These expectations still falsely divide expressions of emotionality along gendered lines and continue to literally "engender," in subtle and

¹² Jessica Valenti. "What Feminists Can Do for Boys." *New York Times*, July 25, 2018.

¹³ R. W. Connell. 1995. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

¹⁴ Jessie Klein. 2011. *The Bully Society*. New York: New York University Press.

¹⁵ Adrienne Rich. 1980. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." *Signs* 5(4): 631–60.

¹⁶ Michael A. Messner. 2004. "On Patriarchs and Losers: Rethinking Men's Interests." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 48: 74–88.

not-so-subtle ways. As a result, boys and men may still often fear social repercussions and isolating or punishing consequences should they deviate from expected normative standards of masculine behavior. This may be a key feminist issue still in need of fuller redress, since until these expectations and associations change, masculinity in its varied incarnations may continue to influence gender-skewed patterns of violence against women, and against men as well.

Let me begin by looking back. From the 1990s through the present, rates of violence against women diminished along with all violent crimes for complicated and multiple reasons about which criminologists do not always agree; during these same years, and in this sense perversely, mass incarceration in the United States grew at incomparably higher rates than elsewhere in the world. Still, violence against women remains a major social ill; while the 1990s witnessed sharp declines, analogous decreases did not continue through the 2000s and 2010s. Here I will focus on the best-known and widely documented kinds of violence against women—sexual assault/rape and domestic violence—while alluding to other recently acknowledged gender-based harms that include stalking and sexual harassment.

According to the Justice Department, sexual violence against females twelve years and older went down 64 percent in the United States from 1995 to 2005 and then remained relatively the same from 2005 to 2010.¹⁷ This corresponds with a decline from the peak rate in 1995 of 5 crimes per 1,000 (or 556,000 incidents of sexual violence) to 1.8 crimes per 1,000 in 2005 (or 270,000 incidents).¹⁸ Strikingly, the rate of all violent crime during the same period, 1995–2005, declined at a similar rate (65%); in contrast with sexual violence, which actually increased, overall violence kept diminishing through 2010 and beyond.¹⁹ For domestic violence, an apparent leveling off followed years of sharper decline.²⁰ According to Justice Department data, domestic violence declined 64 percent between 1994 and 2010, while the rate of women murdered by men in one-on-one incidents of intimate partner violence dropped 26 percent.²¹ Between 2005 and 2010, the rate of intimate partner violence for women saw a small increase

¹⁷ *CBS News*. 2013. “Justice Dept.: Violence against Women Fell 64 Percent over Decade.” March 7. www.cbsnews.com/news/justice-dept-violence-against-women-fell-64-over-decade/.

¹⁸ *CBS News*, “Violence against Women Fell.”

¹⁹ The U.S. Department of Justice’s 2014 report on criminal victimization notes that in 2005 the rate of violent crime was 28.4 victimizations per 1,000 (persons age twelve or older), and by 2014 this rate had decreased to 20.1 per 1,000. However, for the category of rape/sexual assault, in 2005 the rate was 0.8 victimizations per 1,000, and by 2014 the rate had increased to 1.1 per 1,000. See Jennifer L. Truman and Lynn Langton. 2015. “Criminal Victimization, 2014.” U.S. Department of Justice. www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv14.pdf.

²⁰ The U.S. Department of Justice’s 2014 report on criminal victimization (Truman and Langton) notes that in 2005 the rate of domestic violence victimizations was 5.1 per 1,000. By 2013 the rate decreased to 4.2 per 1,000 and has leveled off.

²¹ Much of this decline in violence against women unfolded during the 1990s in the wake of VAWA. See Tara Culp-Ressler. 2012. “How the Country Has Changed under the Violence Against Women Act.” *Think Progress*, September 12. <http://thinkprogress.org/health/2014/09/12/3566115/vawa-20-anniversary/>.

from 5.8 to 5.9 victimizations per 1,000, which suggests not much change during that five-year period.²²

While the decreases are obviously very good news (and borne out by police reports and victimization surveys), approximately 270,000 violent incidents against women per year still remains very high, with some estimates predicting that one in five women in the United States will experience sexual assault at some point in their lives.²³ This estimate is precisely the same rate given for countries across Europe,²⁴ and the problem is obviously severe in other parts of the world such as India (with high reported rates of rape amid a campaign to combat this²⁵). In the United States, even though violent crime has declined overall, violence against women is still a significant issue on college campuses and elsewhere.²⁶

This pattern of sharp declines and then stabilization also holds when rates of all violence against women are differentiated by race; indeed, violence declined across racial groups. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, big drops in the 1990s occurred for black, Hispanic, and white women; in the new millennium, rates became relatively constant. In 1994 white non-Hispanic women experienced close to 16 victimizations per 1,000; by 2010 this rate dropped to a low of 6.2. For black non-Hispanic women, the 1994 rate of victimization was approximately 20; by 2010 the rate dropped dramatically to 7.8. For Hispanic and Asian women, including Native American women,

²² Shannan Catalano. 2015. "Intimate Partner Violence, 1993–2010." U.S. Department of Justice. www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipv9310.pdf.

²³ National Sexual Violence Resource Center. 2015. "Statistics about Sexual Violence." www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_factsheet_media-packet_statistics-about-sexual-violence_0.pdf.

²⁴ In England and Wales approximately 85,000 cases of rape are reported to the authorities on an annual basis. Together the two countries have an estimated total population of sixty million people. See Rape Crisis England and Wales. 2015. "Statistics." <http://rapecrisis.org.uk/statistics.php>.

²⁵ A strong campaign has emerged in India to combat sexual violence against women in the wake of a 2012 gang rape and murder of a twenty-three-year-old woman in a New Delhi bus. See Madison Park. 2013. "India Grapples with Rape and Sexual Violence." *CNN*, August 15. www.cnn.com/2013/08/15/world/asia/india-rape-problem/; see also Al-Jazeera America. 2015. "The Red Brigade: Rape Survivors Fight Sexual Violence in India." July 24. <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/7/24/the-red-brigade-rape-survivors-fight-sexual-violence-in-india.html>. Before this surge in activism, a group of Dalit (a low caste) women, who experience dual discrimination along the lines of caste, class, and gender, formed the Gulabi (Pink) Gang, who "wield sticks" against perpetrators of violence against women. See Shweta Desai. 2014. "Gulabi Gang: India's Women Warriors." *Al-Jazeera*, March 4. www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/02/gulabi-gang-indias-women-warriors-201422610320612382.html.

²⁶ Christopher Uggen. 2014. "Thankfully, Violence against Women on the Decline." *Sociological Images*, May 29. <https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2014/05/29/thankfully-violence-against-women-on-the-decline/>. Uggen notes, "Rates of sexual violence in the United States, whether measured by arrest or victimization, have declined by over 50 percent over the last twenty years ... the rape and sexual assault victimization rate dropped from over 4 per 1000 in 1993 to about 1.3 per 1000 in 2012." And yet the "big drop" obfuscates that in 2010 females nationwide experienced roughly 270,000 rape or sexual victimizations. See Michael Planty and Lynn Langton. 2016. "Female Victims of Sexual Violence, 1994–2010." U.S. Department of Justice. www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvsv9410.pdf.

diminishing rates of intimate partner victimization occurred: Hispanic women saw the greatest decline between 1994 and 2010, when rates of victimization declined by 78 percent, the most precipitous drop of the racial groups (from 18.8 to 4.1).²⁷

But something else is striking about the character of declines in all violent crime since the 1990s, including but not limited to violence against women across races. While all violence decreased, the ratio of men to women committing violent crimes remained similarly skewed; men remained overwhelmingly the majority of those enacting violence. Conceivably, differences in crime commission by gender might have lessened “post” feminism—precisely what Freda Adler anticipated, though obviously mistakenly.²⁸ Adler hypothesized that as feminism progressed, women would likely engage much more equally in both legal and illegal occupations; in other words, gender differences would diminish and crime rates would converge (a kind of gender parity but in the world of illegality). But according to Uniform Crime Report statistics, this did not occur. Rather, between 1980 and 2009 the most serious violent “index” crimes—including but not limited to rape and sexual assault—continued to be committed at nearly the same male-to-female ratios as in the 1980s, even as overall rates of violent crime declined.²⁹

Of course, it should also be noted that the picture varies from crime to crime; getting more specific makes Adler’s prediction less mistaken in retrospect. More precisely, it is with regard to the most serious and violent crimes that Adler seems to have underestimated the power of gender to affect disproportionate rates of commission. Thus, in the case of murder and negligent manslaughter, the gender disparity that existed in 1980—with men committing murders ten times more frequently than women—is close to exactly the same thirty years later, in 2009, indicating a persistence of gendered disparities in violence commission.³⁰ Of course, a gender disparity also persists when it comes to rape: rape has been and remains a crime committed almost exclusively by men (not to be deterministic, though, women accounted for 2 percent of violent offenders for sexual assaults³¹). Adler’s predictions came a little closer to realization—though not to the point of gender parity—when turning to other violent crimes like aggravated assault and robbery. For aggravated assault, the gender disparity ratio

²⁷ Catalano, “Intimate Partner Violence, 1993–2010.”

²⁸ Freda Adler. 1975. *Sisters in Crime: The Rise of the New Female Criminal*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

²⁹ *Uniform Crime Report*, 2014.

³⁰ Alexia Cooper and Erica L. Smith. 2011. “Homicide Trends in the United States,” NCJ 236018. www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/htus8008.pdf. This still holds true in 2016 with 10,310 murders committed by men and only 1,295 murders committed by women (and 5,359 murders without data on the sex/gender of the offender). See “Crime in the United States 2016.” <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s./2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/tables/expanded-homicide-data-table-2.xls>.

³¹ According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, for the 1993–97 period approximately one in fifty offenders committing a violent sex offense including rape and sexual assault were women, as reported by victims. See Lawrence Greenfeld and Tracy Snell. 2000. “Women Offenders.” Bureau of Justice Statistics. www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/wo.pdf.

shrank, from men committing eight times the number of assaults as women in 1980 to men committing four times the number in 2009. The picture with robbery is likewise more nuanced: gender ratios fell from 14:1 male-to-female commission in 1980 to 8:1 in 2009. It is murder, rape, and domestic violence, then—the most serious crimes of sexist violence against women—that remain “male dominated,” even as women have become relatively more involved with other violent crimes like assault and robberies.³² In addition, it is important to emphasize that men have committed the vast majority of crimes, not only against women but against each other. Men commit the majority of all murders against other men, and men are not only disproportionately perpetrators but the numerical and disproportionate majority of victims. The crime of rape is predominantly male-to-female, although male-on-male rapes are common in particular social contexts, such as prison.³³

Before we explore reasons for the gender disproportionate commission of murder, rape, and domestic violence and why so much violence remains, several takeaways can be summarized from this brief assessment of progress and problems on the issue of violence against women post-second wave. First, victimization surveys and police reports indicate meaningful declines in violence against women—rape and domestic violence—especially from the 1990s through the present. This progress may reflect, among other explanations, ongoing feminist efforts to change cultural consciousness and to call attention to badly needed criminal justice and legal reforms. Second, although declines were particularly dramatic from the 1990s through the mid-2000s, rates of decline leveled off—or went up and down only slightly from year to year—from the mid-2000s through the 2010s. Third and finally, the ratios of men to women committing violence have remained strikingly consistent even with violent crimes declining overall over time. Overwhelmingly, then, it remains men—and at fairly steady gender ratios for most violent crimes—who generally enact violence against women and against each other. I move now to the reasons for this, not so much to summarize as to analyze. Perhaps a leftover puzzle from the 1960s is how and why it came to pass that vestiges of socialized masculinities so stubbornly persist.

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³² *Uniform Crime Report*, 2014.

³³ According to the FBI's 2015 crime statistics from the National Incident-Based Reporting System, there were roughly four million individuals who were victimized in 2015 for all reported offenses (violent and property crimes). Of these, 51 percent of victims were females, while men accounted for 49 percent. For offenders, there were 4.6 million known offenders. Of these, the majority of offenders were male (63%) and 26 percent were women offenders. The sex/gender of 11 percent of the offenders is “unknown.” See Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2016. “FBI Releases 2015 Crime Statistics from the National Incident-Based Reporting System, Encourages Transition.” December 12. www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-releases-2015-crime-statistics-from-the-national-incident-based-reporting-system-encourages-transition. For an in-depth analysis of male-on-male rape in American prisons, see Maurice Chammah. 2015. “Rape in the American Prison.” *Atlantic*, February 25. www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/02/rape-in-the-american-prison/385550/.

It may be useful to reiterate the possibly provocative contention that feminist changes to date appear to have affected women's everyday lives more than men's. Let's compare, for one thing, what happened to the gender composition of occupations from the early second wave through the present. Clearly, women have moved en masse into formerly male-dominated occupations like law and medicine: at present, women make up a third of all doctors and lawyers;³⁴ furthermore, 47 percent of entering law school and medical school students are women.³⁵ By contrast, men have moved at much lower rates into previously female-dominated occupations like teaching. For example, from 1970 to 2011 the gender composition for elementary school teaching, traditionally an occupational province of women, has altered but to a far lesser extent than women entering male-dominated occupations.³⁶

What stops men from moving into traditionally female-dominated fields such as elementary and daycare teaching, domestic cleaning, and nanny work? One obvious factor is that women's occupations historically pay less; in and of itself this is an effect of gender and the undervaluation of care-related occupations.³⁷ But pay differences do not adequately explain cases like nursing—which have become higher paid even as women remain overwhelmingly the majority of nurses—nor can it explain ongoing concentrations of men in relatively low-paying but traditionally masculinized professions like janitorial services. A more multidimensional and cultural explanation is that working in long-“feminized” positions may be perceived as an affront to some men's socially approved sense of masculinity (and masculinities)—a confidence, a sense of self that might be compromised or embarrassed when crossing a gender-dominated occupational line.

Anecdotally, my experience teaching gender classes in sociology to undergraduates also leads me to suspect that the world of men may have changed inadequately since the evolution of second wave feminism(s). I often raise a hypothetical query to stimulate discussion: What color clothing would you purchase as a baby gift for a friend who has just had a baby? Invariably, conversation turns to whether one would be more or less likely to give a pink outfit to a baby boy than a blue outfit to a baby girl. Students frequently have said they would surely give blue to a girl, but they often express concern about offending new parents if they bought a pink outfit for a baby

³⁴ Philip Cohen. 2012. “More Women Are Doctors and Lawyers Than Ever—But Progress Is Stalling.” *Atlantic*, December 11. www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2012/12/more-women-are-doctors-and-lawyers-than-ever-but-progress-is-stalling/266115/.

³⁵ Steve Contorno. 2014. “Rand Paul Says More Than Half of Students at Medical, Dental and Law Schools Are Females.” *Politifact*, January 28. www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2014/jan/28/rand-paul/rand-paul-says-more-half-students-medical-dental-a/.

³⁶ National Center for Education Statistics. “Digest of Education Statistics 2015: 51st Edition,” 72. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016014.pdf>.

³⁷ Claire Cain Miller. 2016. “As Women Take Over a Male-Dominated Field, the Pay Drops.” *New York Times*, March 18. www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/upshot/as-women-take-over-a-male-dominated-field-the-pay-drops.html?_r=0.

boy. Some students laughingly respond that in following cultural changes wrought by feminism, they might opt for something green or yellow to avoid hassles altogether.

The point of the exercise, though, is that by now it seems less culturally shocking to give a blue outfit to a baby girl than a pink outfit to a baby boy. Of course, the latter too is changing; it is certainly much less “unheard of” than in previous decades. But it is to the relative pace of change that I am alluding: if a difference remains at all, why? Likely this example connects with the previous observation that women have moved more into “masculine” occupations, which are well paid and of traditionally higher status, compared to the number of men who have done the reverse, into relatively lower-paid and traditionally lower-status “feminized” jobs. On the whole, it remains more uncommon for men to be nurses or nannies or elementary school teachers—though the higher one moves on the ladder of traditionally female-occupied jobs, from teachers through, say, cooking, the more men start to appear in administrative positions or as three-star chefs. The traditional “feminized” occupations remain devalued. By contrast, to be a “soccer mom” who takes a daughter or son to games or to other activities previously associated with “masculine” realms of business and work life (and the color blue) has become socially acceptable and common. But what is the equivalent of the now well-known term “soccer mom” for a father who takes his son or daughter to activities long associated with “feminine” realms (and the color pink)—a “Barbie dad”?

However, even more than this is likely going on, involving overlapping stigmatized associations not only between gender and sexual norms but between sexism and heterosexism. Following the influential work of Judith Butler in feminist theory as well as the development of queer theory, major linkages are now understood to persist between biases of gender and of sexuality, and between sexism and heterosexism. Thus, for a little boy to wear pink (or for his parents to dress him in pink) or for a young man to pursue a nursing or daycare career may carry negatively loaded connotations of being both gay and like a woman: in other words, both gender and sexuality-related barriers and biases are entailed. To the extent that this still remains the case in many circumstances, double stigmatization can result. (By the same token, the greater frequency of men wearing pink in the late 2010s may in some cases mark a change in both sexism and heterosexism.)

What does this line of reasoning have to do with violence against women? I am suggesting that for men cultural transformations have not yet occurred to allow deviation from expected masculine behaviors to be as widely acceptable as when women have departed from gender norms by wanting to play soccer or become a doctor. Still common are expectations that to be a man means being tough and macho and holding “masculine” (and historically heterosexual) occupations and preoccupations. To construct and maintain a “masculine” persona may well be to define oneself in opposition to women, and to feel pressured to partake in collective sexualization and objectification of women as part of a normal and normalized way of being-in-the-world. Moreover, concerns over social repercussions if a man does not live up to these mandates are still

arguably present at the heart of American culture, even if people's actual behavior, desires, and interests are far more diverse and variegated.

And here is where a connection does emerge. For what I am saying is that "normal" masculinity may be permeated with sexism and gendered norms, while the focus for most Americans and for feminists is the "extreme" cases, where violence against women occurs. It is the rapist, the batterer, whose immediate threat feminists and society understandably seek to curtail, and on whom most people targeting violence against women have with good reason initially concentrated. But in so doing, the importance of envisioning and acting upon all masculinities—along a continuum from the ordinary to the extraordinary—may recede from intensive social and policy attentions. An analogy with medicine springs to mind: treating diseases matters, but preventive medicine has increasingly been recognized as crucial for avoiding ills. In our social context, "prevention" may entail closer examination and changing normal expectations of masculinity and masculinities.

Indeed, several important works in sociology and criminology have concluded precisely this: given the persistence of rape and sexual assault, and these crimes' close relationship to the history of male-dominated societies, "everyday" and "extreme" sexism appear to be dramatically interrelated. Diana Scully conducted in-depth interviews with rapists and other felons who had been convicted and were serving federal prison sentences for their crimes.³⁸ She concluded that what differentiated men who raped from felons committing other crimes was not childhood background factors as might be anticipated. Instead, it was a distinctive tendency for perpetrators to believe the same rape myths about women—for example, that women really "want it," and that "no" somehow means "yes"—which pervade sexist attitudes in American culture generally, whether or not a man holding these attitudes has ever actually been involved in sexual violence. Scully also differentiated between "deniers" and "admitters" among the men she interviewed; the former parties used justifications and the latter used excuses to retrospectively assess their crimes. But her most germane finding was that "normal" and "deviating" men were often surprisingly similar in the sexist notions they held, even given the crucial difference that only the latter enacted their myths about women violently.³⁹

A kindred notion of a continuum of masculinities is also at the heart of Bernard Lefkowitz's powerful study of sexual assault.⁴⁰ Lefkowitz brilliantly showed that following a highly publicized sexual assault on a young, developmentally disabled girl by high school football captains and their friends in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, in 1991, these star athletes remained heroized by many people within their communities. These popular boys' "ordinary" sexist and harassing acts had been routinely and blithely overlooked

³⁸ Diana Scully. 1990. *Understanding Sexual Violence*. Routledge.

³⁹ Diana Scully and Joseph Marolla. 1990. "Convicted Rapist's Vocabulary of Motive: Excuses and Justifications." www.d.umn.edu/~bmork/2306/readings/scullyandmarollis.htm.

⁴⁰ Bernard Lefkowitz. 1997. * Our Guys: The Glen Ridge Rape and the Secret Life of the Perfect Suburb*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

as they moved from elementary to middle and high school in a white upper-middle-class suburban neighborhood. On the basis of this study, the sexual assault seems less astonishing than “normalized,” an outgrowth of cultural attitudes that involved admiring—rather than criticizing and punishing—deeply sexist school athletes. After the assault, many community members took a “boys will be boys” attitude toward the young men’s gang rape. One can argue that the causes of the crime were at once individual and social; sexist and disrespectful behavior toward women had been tolerated, and in this sense enculturated, throughout the young men’s lives.

Why does such normalization persist? One way of illuminating the problem is to examine relations between generations of men, relations that are part of the socialization process in still male-dominated cultural contexts like schools, sports, and later the outside business and political worlds as well. Key to this inquiry is what it means for boys to defy, rebel from, or ignore still dominant social codes of masculinity and masculinities. Recent feminist scholarship on masculinities includes important studies on precisely these questions. For example, Michael Kimmel has written about angry young men and about pressures and burdens on men.⁴¹ C. J. Pascoe has coined and illustrated the notion of “compulsive heterosexuality”—an idea that predates what I am calling “compulsory masculinity.”⁴² Though slightly different, both concepts are similar insofar as they illustrate ongoing pressures men feel to “perform masculinity” (and masculinities) in ways that maintain sexism (and heterosexism) as well as intense and continuing pressures on boys and young men.

Pascoe draws on a classic essay by feminist poet and theorist Adrienne Rich entitled “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” to which I am also indebted here. Rich argued that women are channeled into heterosexuality by influences including economic fears, cultural socialization, and actual violence. Heterosexuality has therefore been socially constructed as “compulsory” and then held out as biologically “natural.” Amid such long-standing coercion and obstacles, she continued, women have nonetheless lived lesbian existences; they have survived double stigmatization, defying both sexism (conventional gendered expectations) and heterosexism (conventional expectations about sexuality). What about men, if we attempt to translate and adapt the concept?

Pascoe carefully documented that for young men in high school, proving oneself properly “masculine” is often experienced as only possible if one shows oneself “not gay,” not a “fag.” One could argue that what clearly emerges here is how Rich’s “compulsory heterosexuality” is maintained by practices still quite alive in contemporary high schools wherein young men are socialized; these practices are simultaneously sexist and heterosexist and reveal Rich’s work as unfortunately far from outdated.⁴³ To

⁴¹ Michael Kimmel. 2008. * Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. New York: Harper.

⁴² C. J. Pascoe. 2007. *Dude, You’re a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁴³ Pascoe, *Dude, You’re a Fag*.

Pascoe's work, I add a similar emphasis: I use "compulsory masculinity" to stress the punitive effects that sexist and heterosexist aspects of masculine socialization can still impose, with terrible effects, on people across genders, classes, races, and sexualities (at the same time, and no doubt, also differently). Whether dubbed compulsive heterosexuality or compulsory masculinity, this refers to en-culturation that makes boys and later men feel pressured, and fearful of disapproving consequences, should they fail to live up to so-called normal mandates. Thus, men can hold power within patriarchal societies and be both burdened and "privileged" in ways that thereafter demand nuanced feminist perspectives to adequately explain.

Again, if we build on both Rich's and Pascoe's excellent analyses, men from childhood through teenage years through adulthood face an analogously intense set of pressures. At once economic, cultural, and social—and too often involving objectifying and even violent behavior toward women—such pressures convey that one had better live up to gendered expectations about masculinity or else face stigmatizing reprisals. Examples drawn from popular culture, and often based on and researched through real-life situations, bring the point to life. Take the famous film *The Accused* (1988), for which director Jodie Foster won an Oscar for best actress and which was explicitly made to counter rape myths about women. The film was based on the actual New Bedford, Massachusetts, rape case of 1983, in which a woman was raped on a pool table in a bar full of men shouting, "Do it! Do it!" None of the young men present and involved in this gang rape cared to face the isolating, punitive stigmatization likely resulting should any, right then and there, have moved to stop the assault.⁴⁴ Or take the superbly realized third season of the British crime drama *Broadchurch* (2017), which acknowledges help from Dorset, England, rape centers and counselors. A serial rapist is on the loose; as it turns out, the crime was committed by two young men, local guys who are soccer players and who hardly seem out of the ordinary. Yet one of the young men had clearly been pressured into the rape by the other's unmistakable message that he would otherwise not be a socially and sexually experienced, confident, and acceptable man.

In differentiating men's situation from women's, it is significant that the latter have already been demeaned and stigmatized by their historic role as "the second sex." As a lesbian, to challenge both sexism and heterosexism is to double the stigmatization one already faces by dint of discrimination. On the other hand, men are supposedly born with gendered power, with phallic privileges. Consequently, what does it mean for a person to voluntarily renounce advantages he has been granted, and which society and culture insist are valuable and worth appreciating; moving, in other words, from the overvalued "blue" to the undervalued "pink"?

For perhaps it is particularly threatening, and especially daring, for people to reject the alleged benefits of power. Gendered stakes may remain high and particularly

⁴⁴ Lynn S. Chancer. 1987. "New Bedford, Massachusetts, March 6, 1983–March 22, 1984: The 'Before and After' of a Group Rape." *Gender and Society* 1(3): 239–60.

loaded for men who would risk stigmatization to defy the prerogatives and apparent advantages of sexist and heterosexist versions of masculinity. In this context, then, giving pink to a baby boy may still be a blatant and unconventional rejection of gender mandates. Thereafter, the boy may appear both “feminized” and “sissified” in sexist terms but also quite immediately and at the same time “gay” in the biased terms of heterosexuality. For boys and men, compulsory masculinity continues to meld sexism and heterosexism into an intensely negative stigma—operating, by implicit or explicit threat, to keep a highly biased system of gender and sexuality in place. We might elaborate this idea to suggest, more specifically, at least three pressures that remain in place, even across “masculinities” that vary according to race, ethnicity, and class. Each pressure refers to social expectations that if renounced could generate fears about social, cultural, and even economic retribution. And each suggests cultural progress that feminists, above any other parties or movements, are well positioned to help change.

A first pressure linked with compulsory masculinity involves emotional expressiveness, regarding which feelings are permissible, or not, for one’s “presentations of self.”⁴⁵ Whereas popular culture has moved away from depictions of conventionally “macho” guys toward representations of more “sensitive” men, mainstream gender expectations still bequeath differences in the extent to which men and boys are allowed to appear emotionally vulnerable and dependent compared to women and girls. The phrase *mama’s boy* is still alive, a term of opprobrium used to denote a person who is too attached and not showing the level of independence and separateness (from women) that is still culturally valued in a man. It is okay for men to be expressive, but not too much, as the characters played by “new” Hollywood film actors like Owen Wilson and Ben Stiller and, on TV, Anthony Anderson (known for his roles in the 2014–18 show *Black-ish* and the 2012–13 show *Guys with Kids*) exemplify through their postfeminist “sensitive” yet still conventionally masculine portrayals.⁴⁶ Certainly, more feelings can be shown than in prefeminist days—more no doubt than in the 1960s of *Mad Men*—yet still a “guy” does not break down often or wallow neurotically in emotional self-examination.

A second purported pressure of compulsory masculinity involves traditional expectations of the “breadwinner.” The idea has not yet fully obsolesced that for men more than women, social approval involves working and making money—enough so that one can support a family (though this pressure may have relaxed somewhat) but at least enough to support oneself. Internal social differences among “masculinities” again come into play, since one’s ability to meet this pressure of masculinity is greatly affected by overlapping factors of class and racial discrimination. For men who have been born into money, or whose middle-class position allows them to accumulate cultural and

⁴⁵ Erving Goffman. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books.

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Owen Wilson in *Wedding Crashers* (2005); Seth Rogen in *The Guilt Trip* (2012); and Ben Stiller in *Meet the Fockers* (2004).

social capital,⁴⁷ hegemonic (as the dominant social form of masculinity) is relatively in reach. Arguably, though, economic issues such as recession often mean that middle-class men—across racial and ethnic differences—may find themselves without work in what has been called a “jobless future.”⁴⁸

The breadwinner expectation may be altogether out of reach for men who are working class or poor (and who therefore experience marginalized masculinities). To the argument that men sometimes turn to underground economies when jobs are scarce,⁴⁹ and do so on the basis of class pressures alone, one can add the specifically gendered demands of compulsory masculinity. By this simultaneously gendered and classed logic, it may indeed be hardly surprising if people who are locked out of economic sources of approval find in sexism—and heterosexism—compensatory prerogatives. Thus, if class and cultural capital have not been in one’s grasp, the character of sexism means that many men can yet feel a sense of superiority stemming from masculinities’ long associations with “power over” women (that is, all masculinities, not just hegemonic, even as this dominant form exerts a disproportionately influential role on all men). This “power over” relates too to anyone whose sexuality does not accord with the kind of sexuality—heterosexuality—that has been rendered compulsory for men as well as women.

Masculinities have historically involved not only unemotional presentations of self, and taking on the breadwinner role, but also widely accepted notions of what should be appreciated in a woman and how a man should act toward women as sexual partners. A third expectation of compulsory masculinity, then, is that one ought to conform to dominant understandings of a combined gender-sexuality system. For instance, what I call “looksism”—the conventional pressure on women to be or stay “good-looking” in order to attract and keep male sexual partners—is utterly inseparable from the dictates of compulsory masculinity. Looksism’s discrimination against women, and its social expectations for men’s attitudes toward women, are two sides of the same familiar coin. For how much is it still the case that men across varied masculinities feel that social and cultural approval adheres to them when they appear with, date, or marry a “good-looking” woman? By contrast, to go out with someone who is not conventionally attractive may make a man feel less validated and socially approved as a man, even if a less “hot” woman is more interesting and has a better personality. Thus, compulsory masculinity continues to engender—literally—standards that boys and men feel pressured to follow, whether or not those standards make sense in light of other values a person may hold about friends and intimate partners.

Then, too, men may feel that following gender-sexuality norms means one must be heterosexual or risk being teased and possibly bullied, from early ages on; supposedly,

⁴⁷ Pierre Bourdieu. 1984 [1979]. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁴⁸ Stanley Aronowitz and William DiFazio. 1994. *The Jobless Future: Sci-Tech and the Dogma of Work*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

⁴⁹ Robert K. Merton. 1968 [1949]. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press.

one must “do” gender and sexuality in particular ways. Thus, compulsory masculinity pressures men to be assertive, to make the first move, to more or less exercise sexual initiation. Tellingly, cultural exceptions exist; for instance, in her film *Trainwreck* (2015),⁵⁰ comic Amy Schumer reverses this convention, boldly initiating sex and seeking only one-night stands with men. Arguably, this remains enough of an exception as to be the reason for the comedic character of the depiction; for many men, pressures remain to keep enacting traditional roles. Consequently, American culture may not yet have transformed sufficiently so that women and men feel similarly comfortable asking each other out (though writings on hook-up culture indicate the convention may be fading away in some contexts⁵¹).

That expectations of masculinity continue to circulate in American culture can be illustrated, too, by surveying examples from other arenas of everyday cultural life: childhood influences, including toys and books, as well as experiences in school, from elementary through middle and high schools. A propos of childhood, I went to five toy stores and five children’s bookstores to see whether the gendered character of shops and books seemed much altered. What I found is that much remains remarkably unchanged for both genders—the range of toys offered little girls is disturbingly limited in terms of dolls, colors, and options. Yet Mattel, the manufacturer of Barbie, began in the early 2000s to make Barbie dolls that were ethnically and racially diverse—Barbie is no longer necessarily white—and with more realistic body measurements. Small alterations, no doubt, but I noticed no evidence of even small analogous efforts to change GI Joes in the direction, say, of having smaller muscles or carrying something other than a gun (perhaps a doll!). On the other hand, some toys on the girls’ side of the stores gave children an opportunity to play doctor or dress up for what looked like a corporate job at an office. The world of children’s books shows greater signs of change, and certain books for children and adolescents have cross-gender appeals (for instance, the Harry Potter series, as well as books like *The Hunger Games*).

While toys and books indicate ongoing pressures and expectations for both genders, exposés of bullying in schools—a problem that can start in elementary school and go through middle and high schools—likewise suggest compulsory masculinity’s persistence. Highly profiled incidents in 2000 and 2010 made news when several young men took their lives after being “outed” as gay and having their sexual lives displayed on the internet.⁵² While bullying certainly affects both young men and young women,

⁵⁰ *Trainwreck*. 2015. Directed by Judd Apatow.

⁵¹ Lisa Wade. 2017.* *American Hook Up: The New Culture of Sex on Campus**. New York: Norton.

⁵² See the 2000 case of Marcus Wayman, whose suicide was sparked by Minersville Police Department officers, who “threatened to tell Wayman’s grandfather that he was gay.” American Civil Liberties Union. 2000. “Court Rules That Tragic Police Outing of Gay Teen Violated Constitutional Rights; ACLU Sees Broad Impact.” November 7. www.aclu.org/news/court-rules-tragic-police-outing-gay-teen-violated-constitutional-rights-aclu-sees-broad-impact. The 2010 death of Tyler Clementi, a Rutgers University student, was a key cultural moment in which social issues of cyberbullying and homophobia were brought to the fore of public discussion. See Ian Parker. 2012. “The Story of a Suicide.” *New Yorker*, February 6. www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/02/06/the-story-of-a-suicide.

the same kind of ongoing pressures that make pink gifts unacceptable may also make young men—the latter not always allowed a full range of emotional expression—turn inward or outward, perhaps destructively toward self or others, when confronted with the pain of social disapproval and rejection. For instance, in 2016 an American-born man terrorized a gay club in Orlando, Florida, murdering forty-nine people and declaring loyalty for ISIS, but also expressing both hatred and apparent obsession toward gay men. And in *The Bully Society*, which highlights pressures on young girls (often the targets of mean behavior from other girls) and young boys, the author describes young boys turning in extreme cases to terrible school violence in the face of gendered and sexuality-related teasing.⁵³

It should be strongly emphasized that the pressures of masculinities do not in and of themselves cause crime. Of course, most men do not turn to violence and aggression, even if men still perpetrate far more violence than women. Furthermore, many men are identified with women and with feminists and do not act in ways that bequeath serious problems of ordinary or extraordinary masculinities. This is a point beautifully made in an essay entitled “Essentializing Manhood in the Street,” which argues that especially for men who are poor and of color, stereotypes of sexism and sexist violence tend to overlook, and minimize, the large numbers of “marginalized” men who do not act in these ways at all.⁵⁴ Still, across masculinities—seductively, especially when other forms of social power may be unavailable—power over women in its more and less subtle forms remains too often taken for granted and easily imbibed by a man, across other social differences of class, race, ethnicity, and nationality. Moreover, clearly in the United States as well as other places around the world, it is still too common for men to enact rape, violence, and other forms of illegal intimidation and harassment against women—sometimes coercively and sometimes brutally—as well as against each other.

Again, the sweeping Me Too campaign targeting sexual harassment comes to mind. In late December 2017, almost on a daily basis, accusations appeared in social and other media from groups of women about sexist advances from a particular, and particularly powerful, man: unwanted gropings, workplace sexual harassment, and rapes and assaults. These involved varied charges: within politics, in Roy Moore’s case, accusations of approaching underage women; in Al Franken’s, of groping; in Donald Trump’s, of sexual assault. In entertainment, in Louis CK’s case, accusations were of masturbation in front of women; in Aziz Ansari’s, of date rape; in Harvey Weinstein’s, of serial rape. But the main relevance of these charges here is that the outpouring of accusations attests to an almost mind-boggling commonality: these experiences of sexually based victimization appear hardly rare; rather, they accord with my underlying and troubling argument that sexism and misogyny remain all too ordinary rather

⁵³ Klein, *Bully Society*.

⁵⁴ See Albert De La Tierra. 2016. “Essentializing Manhood in ‘the Street’: Perilous Masculinity and Popular Criminological Ethnographies.” *Feminist Criminology* 11(4), special issue, “Is Criminology Still Male Dominated?”

than extraordinary, and that feminists may need to address and redress the still-salient prerogatives of masculinity along a normal continuum, not just at its extremes.

With this, then, a connection with disproportionate rates of crime commission comes finally back into view. Let us look at the implications of these reflections for whether the feminist goal of diminishing violence against women (and people generally) can be more fully realized, and for what this has to do with the American feminist movement from the second wave into the future. For one thing, my suggestion that feminists still need to change men's lives and experiences as much as women's would demand further transformation of and attention to educational priorities. Feminists need to make as clear as possible to children across genders, from young ages, why moving beyond harmfully sexist as well as heterosexist attitudes is in everyone's interest. This is just as potentially liberating and humanly helpful for boys as it is for girls, including children who identify as trans or nonbinary. Yet arguably, the insights of feminist theory from the second wave through important intersectional texts—many mentioned throughout this volume—still do not figure often enough in the mainstream of educational curricula, from elementary through middle school, high school, and college. Changes have occurred, without a doubt, but feminist ideas need to be taught in ordinary ways and not at extraordinary moments or as add-ons to school curricula.

One might perhaps think of this as a renewed feminist cultural campaign to reconstruct school curricula. Gender-based insights of feminist thought and the ills of sexism need to be discussed routinely, such that commonalities as well as differences, and gender as well as other social biases like race and class, are co-considered. This is already occurring at many schools in response to campaigns against bullying. The argument here is that cultural transformation in school has to make sexism itself, and its ills, an elementary part of learning; if studying sexism and heterosexism were more common, bullying, for example, might be affected in turn. Then, too, gender studies need to be a central part of college curricula and distribution requirements, not only for women but for students across genders.

This recommendation is also germane to violence against women insofar as academic criminology tends to treat race and class, but not gender, as “causes” of crime. The lack of gender consciousness needs badly to alter; as we have seen, compulsory masculinities play a role in everyday sexism. And while that does not of course simplistically determine violence, the pressures of compulsory masculinity undoubtedly play influential social and cultural roles in generating gender-skewed patterns. Consequently, feminists have a better chance of changing the “margins” of men's more extreme (and violent) activities if they can transform the “center.”

A second implication of this analysis involves whether differences of class, race/ethnicity, and sexualities have been adequately considered together when developing feminist responses to sexism in the area of violence against women. Again, it seems important to advocate policies that reflect and are based on the experiences of women

for whom intersectional biases are the most severe.⁵⁵ This requires attention, for example, to domestic violence in LGBTQ relationships,⁵⁶ and to hate crimes, especially the epidemic of violence, particularly murder, against trans women of color.⁵⁷ This would also mean giving serious thought to how policies aimed at remedying violence against women overlap with punitive social reactions to poor, working-class, and minority men; in other words, taking standpoint positions matters for the issues reviewed here, too. New and increased numbers of programs are needed that bring communities and criminal justice agencies together to reeducate (as well as punish) men who have been convicted of violence. For a major feminist challenge will be giving priority to protecting victims while also revisiting mandatory prosecution and sentencing policies that can be overly punitive and that remove almost all choice (or “agency”) for women regarding punishment for their assailants. Much work needs to be done by community activists, lawyers, and feminists to ensure that reactions to violence against women—in law and culture—are sensitively and intelligently conceived. Otherwise, women of diverse backgrounds who face multiple discriminations in their lives may find themselves resenting feminism(s) and feeling misunderstood given the actual complexity of their lives. Thus, sophisticated feminist policies are needed that do not divisively create guilt by playing one social discrimination against another.

In addition to requiring intersectional sensitivity, the issue of violence against women underscores another crucial point: the need for positions that reflect both differences and commonalities between women. In addition to divergences, women crucially have common interests in violence “withering away.” This concern extends to men, of course, especially since men are the most common victims. Further changes are needed for violence against women to no longer be disproportionately committed by men (nor be committed at all). This will involve striving across classes, races, and ethnicities to reduce the kinds of masculine pressures, the “compulsory masculinities,” that currently make little boys feel that women are “other,” that is, sexually objectified beings whom they learn (and feel pressured) to control, own, or—much more subtly—dominate. Revisiting feminist approaches to violence against women, too, suggests further efforts are needed to best respond to victims of committed violence in ways at once sensitive and effective. This is because, too often, present criminal justice responses may not sufficiently protect women nor consistently incorporate rehabilitative aims (reflecting, instead, only harshly punitive policies that may recycle rather than help to prevent repetitions of violence).

This is an ambitious agenda, no doubt, but one that can be realized. Cultural transformations are already underway; we are not there, yet we are arguably on a path that

⁵⁵ Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins.”

⁵⁶ Nesa E. Wasarhaley, Kellie R. Lynch, Jonathan M. Golding, and Claire M. Renzetti. “The Impact of Gender Stereotypes on Legal Perceptions of Lesbian Intimate Partner Violence.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 32(5): 635–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515586370>.

⁵⁷ See Maggie Astor. 2017. “Violence against Transgender People on the Rise, Advocates Say. *New York Times*, November 9. www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/us/transgender-women-killed.html.

continues to unfold and improve. As with changes in political, economic, and educational equality, obvious improvements on the issue of violence occurred more dramatically in the decades immediately following second wave feminism—in particular, from the 1980s through the early 2000s—before slowing down or reaching a plateau through the 2010s. With violence against women, then, as with other issues and framings, stepping back to reflect on what remains to be done once again matters. The feminist movement was always about changing the lives of women, but the gender revolution is equally about people; my biggest compliment as a “women’s studies” professor was when male students sometimes came up to me after class and said, “Everyone should have to take a class like this.”

In addition to designing policies more sensitive to multidimensional aspects of women’s lives, the feminist movement will gain from educating about and transforming sexism, which men are at once advantaged by and suffer from. On the one hand, the Me Too movement has aptly called out the disturbing and all too frequent persistence of sexist and misogynist acts of violence against, and sexual harassment of, women (and men). But feminists also need to learn from past problems of one-dimensionality so that issues of due process are respected in a criminal justice system that is often biased in racial and class (not just gender) terms, as well as being punitively oriented from the 1980s through the present in the United States. In addition, feminist caution needs to be exercised when reacting to less and more severe crimes alleged or committed by men so that appropriately nuanced distinctions are made among purported or actual crimes. On the other hand, feminists are distinctly positioned to help create a world where young men learn that both ordinary and extraordinary sexism are major problems, not just for women but for themselves. For everyone.

But how do media images of issues involving sex, reproduction, and gender come into play, and what role do these have in pushing feminism(s) forward or backward? Next we will explore how popular cultural representations reflect both the influence of feminism and ambivalence toward it. Given that cultural representations reflect the ups and downs of particular feminist issues, it is important to explore how much these representations have changed and been affected by the feminist movement since the second wave. For across mediated images, from film to television, music, and news, virtually all the issues feminists have discussed—from political, economic, and educational equality and daycare, through sexual freedom and LGBTQ rights, through reproductive rights and reproductive justice, and through violence against women—all, whether positively or not, are there to be found.

6. Changing Sexist Imagery

Has the gender revolution been televised? When it comes to media representation, it seems obvious that radical transformations across a wide array of cultural venues occurred from the second wave of the 1960s and 1970s through the present. Watching television, or going to see a film, or listening to music—it is hardly possible not to perceive shifts in representations of women and men as well as altered portrayals of people of varied races, classes, and sexualities. From movies to television, music, and magazines, and news coverage from mainstream to alternative, gender consciousness has increasingly permeated the American cultural landscape. Once again, the question is whether enough has changed that feminists of common as well as differing persuasions have reason to be satisfied.

To assess feminist progress and ongoing problems in the culture industries, let us begin by noting that media images are relevant to, and affect, each and every feminist issue this book explores—from political, economic, and educational equalities, day-care, and family/work arrangements to sexual and reproductive freedoms and violence against women. Reflecting and (re) creating the influence of feminist ideas as well as debates in the wider society, a veritable tidal wave of gender-related representations exploded on the American cultural landscape from the 1960s through the present. To start with an example from the news media, as the 2016 presidential election unfolded, counter-posing Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, newscasters spoke frequently of voters' (especially women voters') gendered concerns. Gender-inflected discussions started by feminists about women's and families' workplace needs (for example, the issue of paid parental leave), about sexual assault, and about sexism in general appeared virtually everywhere as the campaign went on. These were amplified after a videotape of Donald Trump bragging about sexual assault was released in October 2016, followed by eleven women alleging coercive actions Trump had taken against them. By November and December 2017, news and other media coverage of feminist issues became even more spectacularly publicized and influential as women began to bring charges of sexual harassment, unwanted sexual advances, and assault against a range of other political as well as media figures, from Harvey Weinstein, Dustin Hoffman, Kevin Spacey (accused by men), Brett Ratner, and Charlie Rose through Senator Al Franken, Congressman John Conyers, and Roy Moore (the Alabama candidate accused of having sexually approached underage women). Without the feminist movement, interpretations of the objectification, demeaning, and powerlessness of women that the charges signify—which led not only to further charges but to the resignation after resignation of influential men, obviously in and outside the culture industries—would be virtually

impossible. The American feminist movement and the contemporary wave of sexual harassment charges in the news are closely linked.

Within popular culture too, of course, and not just the news, feminist ideas and issues seeped into television shows like Lena Dunham's *Girls* (2012) or Sarah Jessica Parker's earlier hit show *Sex in the City* (1998). More recently, binge-watched cable series have distinctively elevated far more complex women characters than would have been found on TV before second wave feminism in the 1950s or 1960s. For example, the Danish series *The Killing* (2014, remade in the United States), the Northern Irish series *The Fall* (2013), and BBC's *Killing Eve* (2018) feature fascinatingly unconventional "women detectives" who lead cat-and-mouse hunts for violent men; the Australian series *Wentworth* (2013) and the Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black* (2013) depict interesting arrays of conventional and unconventional personalities among women working in and confined to a gender-segregated prison.

The movie industry, too, has lately aimed films toward audiences of women, given the profitability of feminist-tinged comedies like *Bridesmaids* (2011), of feature films starring Melissa McCarthy (who is outside the thin-starlet mold), and of Amy Schumer's successful film *Trainwreck* (2015, featuring brilliant pro-sex reversals of stereotypes about women). Further, women are more often portrayed as powerful agents than passive props to advance the plot. Think of the Dora Milaje warriors as well as the characters Shuri and Nakia in *Black Panther* (2018) and the all-female remake of *Ghostbusters* (2016). In the 1970s, Leia was a princess in the *Star Wars* trilogy, but in the 2010s *Star Wars* films *The Force Awakes* (2015) and *The Last Jedi* (2017), she is General Leia Organa. All of these films reflect a trickling down into popular culture of feminist awareness and interpretations of gender-related everyday dilemmas and extraordinary circumstances. In the music world, the influence of megastars like Beyoncé has helped to spread feminist ideas and destigmatize "feminism" itself to people across races, classes, and sexualities who might otherwise be loath to use this "F" word. And in the academy, a panoply of courses taken by millions of undergraduate and graduate students have been taught by feminist professors. These courses have frequently involved feminist themes and approaches employing academic as well as popular treatments of gender.

All of this bespeaks progress and makes a case for viewing the feminist glass as half full, not half empty, in cultural and media matters. If indeed media representations relevant to feminism have grown exponentially, then the gender revolution has effectively outpaced the gender-conservative pulls of tradition dating back to the years of the 1950s and 1960s when television series such as *Father Knows Best* and *Leave It to Beaver* dominated the airwaves. On the flipside, though, we must turn to ongoing problems that feminists of different and common persuasions still need to confront.

My contention is that while the contents of gendered images shifted greatly, not nearly as much has altered with respect to these images' political economy—that is, to questions of control, ownership, and power. In gendered terms, the reins of power in heading news networks, movie studios, or television stations remain largely in the

hands of men. Although lately starting to change, overall this still appears to be the case for both management and ownership in varied culture industries, from film (including pornography) through news, magazines, and video, all of which from the standpoint of political economy produce enormous profits. Indeed, beneath the surface of explicit awareness, it is interesting to speculate whether relatively greater attention to gendered contents may have initially substituted for pointed critiques of the cultural industries' unequal ownership and direction—even though by now pushback against this problem is slowly but steadily occurring among feminist actors, directors, and producers in Hollywood.

Further, though, I suggest that insufficient changes have occurred even with the cultural contents of images and representations, especially with regard to what I will explain and have elsewhere described as the gendered biases of looksism.¹ Finally, and also whether or not recognized, this chapter contends that while at one level the November–December 2017 wave of sexual harassment charges is about just what it appears to concern—exertions of power through the sexualization of coercion—at another level, women's charges simultaneously function to indict sexism's role in maintaining a male-dominated status quo in the culture industries.

I explore these questions through a three-part argument before assessing, vis-à-vis empirical sources, what actually occurred in myriad media over the last fifty years since second wave feminism. I concentrate on four cultural venues: the news industry, the film industry; the television industry, and magazines and music videos. (Within the film and video category, I leave it to others to assess whether my analysis also applies to the pornography industries.) Across these broad categories, I highlight the decades when major gender-related changes seem to have occurred, or not. Finally, I circle back to scan the feminist future, inquiring how can we ensure that the gender revolution is televised, that is, that this hugely historic social movement not only continues to transform cultural processes by which women and all people are portrayed, but also achieves equitable influence and power in the American culture industries—for women and for people of diverse colors, ethnicities, and sexualities who have long been underrepresented.

Let me begin this gradually developing argument as follows: regardless of changes in the contents of culture—within news, films/pornography, television, magazines, and music—gender parity in control and ownership has not yet been realized; indeed, it has eluded otherwise considerable feminist-inspired transformations. When we survey industry after industry, we see little sign of gender parity, for that would mean that approximately half the films were now directed and produced by women; about half the television stations were franchised and directed by women; and about half of the pornography industry were controlled across gendered differences. On the contrary, while gendered images have changed, not so much the political economy of the American culture industries. Yet both content and form need to transform if feminist visions

¹ Chancer, *Reconcilable Differences*.

about representational changes in culture are to be actualized. It is not enough for lesbian couples and lesbian marriages to be portrayed so that no one tragically dies at the end, or for older women to be shown happily involved with younger men (and not just the reverse). Nor is it enough for women to be portrayed as intellectual, emotional, and spiritual beings, as well as sexual beings. In addition to this—not instead—women need material powers of control and ownership over the forms and structures of media. It matters who has the power to choose the direction of films, to make decisions about which television shows will run, and to select which news stories will be aired and with what “pegs” and framings. It is not all that counts but it matters—as does who takes home profits that are likely to be substantial in our highly creative and mediated society.

I will not make an essentialistic claim that women are so “different” by nature that their holding positions of control (let alone ownership) will automatically be socially “healthy”; nor would I insist, simplistically, that each and every cultural product controlled by women would necessarily differ from what men with similar power in their hands produce. In particular instances, some men might even produce more progressive representations of gender than some women. Rather, gender parity is a worthwhile goal in and of itself, especially since a wide discrepancy persists between gendered contents and gendered contexts. To repeat, the contents of media appear to have shifted far more than ownership and control; the present picture remains far from equitable—almost suspiciously so from a gender-conscious perspective. For instance, according to *Forbes*, “America’s news media companies” are owned by fifteen billionaires who, rather remarkably at this point in history, are all male.²

While greater gender equality is in this sense a categorical imperative, even more is at stake. Because sexism has been so engrained over centuries, gender-skewed images and representations are likely to result from male-dominated societies and institutions. Of course, images will not necessarily change if equal numbers of men and women are in charge; again, such a claim would be simplistic because of deeply embedded patterns of gender-divided socialization and enculturation. While several examples can be cited, I concentrate here on one in particular: *looksism*. By looksism, I refer to a cultural system—often produced and reproduced in media images as well as within families, schools, and among peers—whereby women are disproportionately expected to be “beautiful” and “attractive” by conventional standards, and may encounter social

² Kate Vinton. 2016. “These 15 Billionaires Own America’s News Media Companies.” *Forbes*, June 1. www.forbes.com/sites/katevinton/2016/06/01/these-15-billionaires-own-americas-news-media-companies/#5453578930b4. These media “moguls” prominently include Michael Bloomberg of Bloomberg LP and Bloomberg Media; Rupert Murdoch of News Corp; Donald and Samuel “Si” Newhouse of Advance Publications; James Cox and the Cox Family of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; Jeff Bezos of the *Washington Post*; John Henry of the *Boston Globe*; Sheldon Adelson of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*; Joe Mansueto of *Inc.* and *Fast Company* magazines; Mortimer Zuckerman of *US News and World Reports* and the *New York Daily News*; Peter Barbey and the Barbey family of the *Village Voice*; Stanley Hubbard of Hubbard Broadcasting; Patrick Soon-Shiong of the Tribune Publishing Company; Carlos Slim Helu; Warren Buffett; and Viktor Vekselberg of Gawker.

disadvantages if they are not. At the heart of looksism's historically discriminatory character is that women are more likely than men to be judged and granted socially successful outcomes on the basis of their appearance. These outcomes include potentially greater or lesser desirability as companions or as sexual or spousal partners, and job and economic advantages affected by assessments based on looks.

From this it is not hard to understand how it comes to pass that the cosmetics industry's multibillion-dollar profitability (approximately sixty billion dollars per year³) depends on looksism for its disproportionate clientele of women (although the industry endeavors increasingly to draw in men⁴). In parallel, the cosmetic surgery industry, thriving as a medical subfield both in and outside the United States, draws its gendered and racialized cues from the anxieties and concerns that diverse women commonly feel about their attractiveness. It has been estimated that the average American woman will spend about fifteen thousand dollars on cosmetics over her lifetime.⁵ To many black and brown women, looksism is indeed both institutionalized and experienced as deeply racialized as well as gendered; for instance, women sometimes undertake skin lightening in the Caribbean or Latin America to attain supposedly preferable whiter looks. Similarly harmful is the internalization of looks-based standards that has led some Asian women to seek blepharoplasty ("double eyelid surgery") operations so that their eyelids may appear Westernized.⁶ Also recently reported, in 2017, is that labiaplasty is on the rise, taking looksism to new levels that promote even internal appearance expectations of women. (Can we imagine, in reverse, men frequently worrying to the same extent about the *appearance* of their penises?)⁷ And looksism and ageism have long joined forces in collusive influence on people of myriad races, classes, ethnicities, genders, and sexualities who jointly come to perceive devaluation and shame in growing old. Despite

³ Olga Khazan. 2015. "The Makeup Tax." *Atlantic*, August 5. www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/08/the-makeup-tax/400478/.

⁴ Barbara Booth dubs the rise of cosmetics and cosmetic services specifically tailored to men as "mampering." According to Booth's analysis, "in 2014, total U.S. sales for the men's personal care market hit \$4.1 billion, up 6.7 percent from 2012 and 19 percent from 2009, making it one of the fastest-growing segments of the beauty industry. Mintel [market research firm] predicts sales will grow to \$4.6 billion by 2019." See Barbara Booth. 2014. "Real Men Don't Cry—But They Are Exfoliating. Say Hello to 'Mampering.'" *CNBC*, December 6. www.cnbc.com/2014/12/05/real-men-dont-cry-but-they-are-exfoliating.html.

⁵ Khazan, "Makeup Tax."

⁶ For young Asian women, undergoing a double eyelid surgery is perceived as an investment. According to Kyung Lah, "investing in plastic surgery to slightly westernize the face will bring a return on the investment of 100 times, through more confidence, a better job and obtaining a better marital partner." See Kyung Lah. 2011. "Plastic Surgery Boom as Asians Seek 'Western' Look." *CNN*, May 23. www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/05/19/korea.beauty/.

⁷ Statistics on labiaplasty have been collected since 2015 by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). The 2016 ASPS statistics report showed that labiaplasty is more popular than ever, with over twelve thousand procedures performed by ASPS members last year (a 39 percent increase). See Karen Horton. 2017. "Stats Show Labiaplasty Is Becoming More Popular." April 25. www.plasticsurgery.org/news/blog/stats-show-labiaplasty-is-becoming-more-popular.

the unavoidable universality of aging, people may find themselves desperately trying to look young, understandably wishing to feel attractive, sexual, sexy, and just plain wanted.

Consequently, looksism as a cultural and economically profitable expectation tends to deflect attention from an alternative, far more realistic and experiential comprehension of attraction. Sociologists among others may not have gone far enough toward popularizing a more sophisticated and less looksist theory of attraction.⁸ Yet attraction appears to be far more diverse, dynamic, and complicated than is frequently acknowledged; arguably, it combines a multidimensional and complex blend of ingredients, from humor to intelligence, kindness, gentleness, generosity, and psychological insight, among other components.⁹ But if so much harm has resulted from looksism and from its overlooking the more genuine, idiosyncratic character of attraction, how and why has this occurred? My reply is that looksism tends to be enculturated in its own complex ways, no doubt involving socialization in families and amid peers at school but also, and perhaps most of all, through the influence of omnipresent cultural representations.

For it cannot be doubted that mass-mediated images play a significant role in promoting sexist representations (looksism) that tend to be commodified, homogeneous, age biased, and racialized—in other words, problematic from many social and human perspectives. Of course, men gain social status and power from good looks, too, but many male actors who are not particularly handsome by conventional standards—take for example Jack Nicholson, Bill Murray, or director-actor Woody Allen—nonetheless manage to keep working in starring roles as they age. By contrast, women in varied media often do not have the luxury to relax about aging or being overweight or not having “pretty faces” if they wish to be well positioned and powerful in American culture industries. As detailed in de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, this disproportionate emphasis for women on looks is hard to dissociate from the long history of patriarchal cultures wherein women’s sense of positive identity regularly involved being “pretty” or “beautiful” and laboring to sustain and even create particular looks over time.

Thus, a correspondence may well persist between gender imbalances in who owns and controls the culture industries, and how looksism in cultural imagery comes to reflect sexism in society. I will elaborate this argument by looking in a different way, and more carefully, at each of the previous contentions. First, from an industry-by-industry standpoint, to what extent has ownership altered? The question of control and that of ownership require separate exploration: the two may be the same, but not necessarily. For example, within the cultural companies owned by (male) billionaires, women may sometimes control particular programs, magazines, or news organizations, while bottom-line power defined by ownership still rests with men. Second, then, to what extent have culture industries changed vis-à-vis control, power, and direction moving more into women’s hands? Here I investigate the gendered composition of

⁸ Chancer, *Reconcilable Differences*.

⁹ Chancer, *Reconcilable Differences*.

those with power in newsrooms and other journalistic venues; of directors and writers in Hollywood; and of those who control magazines and music video productions.

Third, to what extent have the contents of imagery actually changed? To investigate this final point, I concentrate on whether particular culture industries seem to be perpetuating looksism. I suspect that the systematic and long-institutionalized practice of treating women's "looks" with disproportionately greater importance than men's—perpetuating a culturally imbalanced, unfair, and harmful set of standards—has changed relatively little, even amid other content-related shifts. This practice may have stayed the same over time, or in some cases worsened. Clearly, empirical assessment is needed to check the claim that without a tripartite transformation—namely, gender parity of ownership, equitable control and power, and shifted cultural contents, including but not limited to looksism—a gender revolution in cultural imagery and production will not yet be achieved.

...

Starting with news media, while assessing the gender composition of ownership reveals recent changes and mixed findings, men still dominate the industry overall. Contemporary media conglomerations are so widespread that the owner of a newspaper may well be different from the president or editor in chief, underscoring the need to keep in mind distinctions between control and ownership. Consider the "big three" television networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC. ABC is owned by Disney and by Robert Iger, a white man, who holds the largest share of Disney stock of any single individual (1.2 million shares).¹⁰ ABC's president, as of 2016, is Channing Dungey, an African American woman who was promoted after her success as ABC's drama chief overseeing television programming, which brought black women to the forefront in programs such as *Scandal* (2012), starring Kerry Washington, and *How to Get Away with Murder* (2014), starring Viola Davis.¹¹ NBC is owned by Comcast, in which chairman, president, and CEO Brian L. Roberts holds an "undilutable" 33 percent voting interest.¹² While its news division was run by president Deborah Turness from 2013 to 2017, another white man, Noah Oppenheim, became president of NBC News soon thereafter.¹³ Conversely, CBS is owned by National Amusements; Sumner Redstone still technically controls his 80 percent family share, while his daughter, Shari Redstone, controls the media

¹⁰ J. B. Maverick. 2018. "The Top Five Individual Shareholders." *Investopedia*, July 19. www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/102715/top-5-disney-shareholders.asp.

¹¹ Kristen Korosec. 2018. "Meet the Woman Who Canceled ABC's Roseanne Sitcom." May 29. <http://fortune.com/2018/05/29/channing-dungey-abc-cancel-roseanne-barr/>.

¹² All of Comcast's class B common stock, which controls 33.3 percent of voting power, is owned by CEO Brian Roberts. See "Form S-3, p.10." Comcast. September 21, 2004.

¹³ Marisa Guthrie and Georg Szalai. 2017. "NBC News Names Noah Oppenheim President, Deborah Turness Moves to International Role." *Hollywood Reporter*, February 14. www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/nbc-news-names-noah-oppenheim-new-president-deborah-turness-moves-international-role-976054.

empire, which is worth \$30 billion.¹⁴ However, the former CEO of CBS Corporation, Leslie Moonves (mired in sexual harassment allegations from six women over thirty years),¹⁵ and CBS News president David Rhodes are both men.

In 2018 the news anchors of network nightly news programs were all men: *ABC World News Tonight* with David Muir, *CBS Evening News* with Jeff Glor, and *NBC Nightly News* with Lester Holt. However, in line with other developments in the upper echelons of the entertainment industry, morning news shows' anchors recently became more diverse in gender and race. ABC's *Good Morning America* is hosted by Robin Roberts, a black woman; George Stephanopoulos, a white man; and Michael Strahan, a black man, who hosts the third hour with Sara Haines, a white woman.¹⁶ Savannah Guthrie and Egyptian American Hoda Kotb, both women, anchor NBC's *Today Show*, in the wake of longtime anchor Matt Lauer's dismissal for sexual harassment, alongside weather anchor Al Roker, a black man.¹⁷ Similarly, in the aftermath of Charlie Rose's "Me Too" moment, Gayle King, a black woman, Norah O'Donnell, a white woman, and John Dickerson, a white man, host *CBS This Morning*.¹⁸ Note that this increasing diversity in morning news shows is a relatively recent occurrence and, in some cases, happened in the immediate aftermath of #MeToo charges when white men in major positions stepped down.

While there has been progress in gender and race parity among anchors, a statement by the president of the Women's Media Center in the preface of that center's 2017 report on the status of women in the media summarizes that there are

areas of progress, regress, and sadly, outright pushback. Men still dominate media across all platforms—television, newspapers, online and wires—with change coming only incrementally ... women still report far less of the news than men report. That gender gap is especially big at the major TV news networks—where our study shows men report three times more news than women correspondents.

Let us turn to documenting changes, and the timing of changes, in the gendered composition of television news. On the one hand, overall, women comprise a higher percentage of the TV news force than ever (44.2%), exceeding the 2014 record of 42.3

¹⁴ Keach Hagey. 2018. "Shari Redstone's Path to Power." *Wall Street Journal*, June 22. www.wsj.com/articles/shari-redstones-path-to-power-1529659921.

¹⁵ Ronan Farrow. 2018. "Les Moonves and CBS Face Allegations of Sexual Misconduct." *New Yorker*, August 6 and 13. www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/08/06/les-moonves-and-cbs-face-allegations-of-sexual-misconduct.

¹⁶ Emily Smith and Oli Coleman. 2018. "More Changes to Come in 'Good Morning America' Lineup." *Page Six*, April 16. <https://pagesix.com/2018/04/16/more-changes-come-to-good-morning-america-anchor-line-up/>.

¹⁷ www.today.com/about.

¹⁸ www.cbsnews.com/team/.

percent.¹⁹ Also, and starting from the top down, in 2017 at least one woman was among the top three editors at all responding (77%) organizations of the American Society of News Editors, with at least one person of color among the top three editors at 28 percent of those responding news organizations.²⁰ Both figures attest to increases from earlier decades.

On the other hand, neither gender parity nor a situation of significantly improved racial diversity has been achieved. While research shows that news directors who are women are at their highest point ever (33.1%), the proportion for minorities—whether evaluated by market size or staff size of newsrooms—does not in any place exceed one third, and in some places is as low as 17.1 percent of the total number of news directors.²¹ In addition, among general managers of television news stations, who have been said to have more power than news directors,²² 18.9 percent were women in 2017, a 1.6 percent increase from 2015.²³ But this means, of course, that 81.1 percent of general managers at TV news stations were still men. With respect to those who present television news, on *ABC World News*, 88.2 percent of on-camera credits were men and 11.8 percent women in 2017, a decrease of 29.7 percent; for *NBC Nightly News*, 67.7 percent were men and 32.3 percent women, down from 43.1 percent; and for *CBS Evening News*, 67.8 percent were men and 32.2 percent women, up from 29.1 percent.²⁴

If we turn from television coverage to newspapers, women made up more than one third of newsroom staffs across the country, but they are predominantly white women; black and Hispanic women each make up only a little more than 2 percent of newsroom staff.²⁵ Clearly, then, joint efforts are needed from an intersectional perspective to alter the social composition of news producers and “controllers” so as to include not only more women but people of diverse races.

Note, too, that women write far fewer editorials. *Foreign Policy Interrupted* reviewed foreign policy op-eds in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Los Angeles Times* in 1996, 2006, and 2016. In total, women penned just 15 percent of the 3, 758 op-eds the group reviewed. That share did increase over time but still topped out in 2016 at just 19 percent.²⁶ Even when it comes to issues more typically associated with women, the gap remains. At top newspapers and wire services, men

¹⁹ Bob Papper. 2016. “RTDNA Research: Women and Minorities in Newsrooms.” Radio Television Digital News Association, July 11. www.rtdna.org/article/rtdna_research_women_and_minorities_in_newsrooms.

²⁰ Women’s Media Center. 2017. *The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2017*, 4. www.womensmediacenter.com/reports/the-status-of-women-in-u.s.-media-2017.

²¹ Papper, “RTDNA Research.”

²² See Liz Chuday. 2008. “NAB’s Guide to Careers in Television.” National Association of Broadcasters, 8. www.nab.org/documents/television/NABTelevisionCareersSecondEdition.pdf.

²³ Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2017*, 46.

²⁴ Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2017*, 7.

²⁵ Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2017*, 4, 17.

²⁶ <http://fortune.com/2018/08/03/ivanka-trump-lisa-brennan-jobs-female-friendships-broadsheet-aug>

covered reproductive issues (52%) more often than women, and the people quoted were mainly men (specifically, men only quoted women 27 percent of the time).²⁷

Regarding other newsroom workers, in 1999 women reported approximately 38 percent of the stories, and in 2013 they were 35 percent of supervisors (barely up from 34 percent in 2012).²⁸ Between 2012 and 2013, the proportion of female copy and layout editors and online “content producers” went from 39.9 to 41.6 percent, and the proportion of photographers, artists, and videographers went from 24.9 to 26.8 percent.²⁹ Moreover, according to one study, changes did not steadily improve in the 2010s, now almost forty years after second wave feminism(s).³⁰ Rather, its author concluded, “We’ve hit a plateau” without a steady increase of women “making strides in these areas.”³¹ Confirming this observation, while the overall number of women in newsrooms increased in 2006 to an all-time high of 37.7 percent (up only slightly from 36.9 percent in 1999), the figure then declined to 37.2 percent in 2014.³²

Whereas sharp improvements occurred in earlier decades, the rate of change leveled off by the mid-2010s.³³ From 2015 to early 2017, gender parity did not merely plateau but declined. For example, combining figures for ABC, CBS, and NBC, men report three times as much of the news as women do. In that broadcast sector, work by women field reporters and correspondents has actually declined, falling to 25.2 percent of reports in 2016 from 32 percent when the Women’s Media Center published its 2015 “Divided” report.³⁴ In late 2017 and early 2018, many women, particularly women of color, ascended to higher and often more visible positions. However, one cannot discount the optics of hiring women for positions left vacant by men facing allegations of sexual harassment and assault.

As a final piece of this exploration of news media ownership and control, another study looked at the gender and racial composition of the boards of the top ten newspapers in the United States. Assuming an average board size of eleven members, the

²⁷ Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2017*, 18.

²⁸ Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2015*, 19.

²⁹ Women’s Media Center. 2015. *The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2015*, 7. www.womensmediacenter.com/bsdimg/statusreport/2015/Status.of.Women.2015.pdf?p=page/-/statusreport/2015/Status.of.Women.2015.pdf.

³⁰ Dustin Harp coauthored the study, entitled “Where Are the Women? The Presence of Female Columnists in U.S. Opinion Pages,” as quoted in Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2015*, 20.

³¹ Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2015*, 20.

³² Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2015*, 18.

³³ In their chapter “Women and Production: Gender and the Political Economy of Media Industries,” Carolyn Byerly and Karen Ross also note the important gains women have made longitudinally throughout the second half of the twentieth century, specifically from the 1970s through the early 2000s, in the realm of media production (television news directors/managers and newspaper editors). However, the authors make a powerful case that such gains are consistently troubled by the glass ceiling effect and, in some instances, not just by a plateauing effect but also by real declines in women’s involvement in decision-making media roles. See Carolyn Byerly and Karen Ross. 2006. *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 78.

³⁴ Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2017*, 6.

study concluded that on average seven members were men and four were women; in addition, the overwhelming majority of these board members, especially among men, were white.³⁵ In sum, for television and print news, ownership remains largely male dominated. The assessment is definitely better for programmatic direction and control, yet benchmark changes have not occurred here either toward gender parity and improved gender and racial representation.

What about looksism, and the need for change? While look-sist biases may or may not be relevant to hiring practices in print newsrooms, there is clearer evidence that the question is germane for television journalism. One article describes ten cases of television news anchors who were replaced by younger anchors, attesting to a close relationship between looksism and ageism.³⁶ Indeed, lawsuits brought by women in prominent television news broadcasting positions are by now well known, based as they often have been on claims that top jobs were lost because of discrimination over looks and age rather than on the basis of merit. In 1999 Janet Peckinpugh was awarded \$3.79 million after suing a CBS-affiliated television station in Hartford, Connecticut.³⁷ Age discrimination lawsuits were filed in 2002 by Carol Kaplan;³⁸ in the same year by Susan Hutchison;³⁹ in 2003 by Marny Midkiff;⁴⁰ and in December 2015 by Colleen

³⁵ Women's Media Center, *Status of Women 2015*, 20.

³⁶ Kirsten Acuna. 2012. "Age Discrimination on TV: 10 Anchors Who Were Replaced by Younger Women." *Business Insider*, August 8. www.businessinsider.com/age-discrimination-on-tv-10-anchors-who-were-replaced-by-younger-women-2012-8.

³⁷ Janet Peckinpugh was initially awarded \$8.3 million in January 1999 by a federal jury, but a few months later that amount was reduced to a final total of \$3.79 million. See Mike Allen. 1999. "Anchorwoman Wins \$8.3 Million over Sex Bias." *New York Times*, January 29. www.nytimes.com/1999/01/29/nyregion/anchorwoman-wins-8.3-million-over-sex-bias.html.

³⁸ Kaplan filed a lawsuit of age discrimination against a local NBC affiliate station in Buffalo, New York, specifically after she was demoted to a reporter from a tenure of eleven years as news anchor. See Joe Flint. 2005. "An Old Story in TV News: Former Weather Channel Reporter Charges Age Bias." *Wall Street Journal*, January 6. www.wsj.com/articles/SB110485505348316481.

³⁹ Hutchison sued KIRO-TV, a CBS-affiliated station based in Seattle, for age discrimination when she was abruptly replaced by a "younger, Asian-American woman, Kristy Lee, 31, in December 2001." After almost twenty years of service as evening news anchor to KIRO-TV, Hutchison, forty-seven, was deemed unfavorable to management when "\$1 million in market research showed the station had the lowest rating among the three network stations in Seattle and Hutchison was one of the lowest-rated anchors." Thereafter, Hutchison immediately took paid medical leave and never returned to the station, even when management offered her a position of noon anchor and special assignments with a salary of \$150,000. Ultimately, Hutchison did not win her case in court. See Jonathan Martin and Bob Young. 2009. "Hutchison Had Stormy Relationship with Bosses." *Seattle Times*, August 8. www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/hutchison-had-stormy-relationship-with-bosses/.

⁴⁰ Marny Stanier Midkiff was fired by the Weather Channel because according to court documents, the station sought "'younger women on camera' who promoted a 'sexier look' with 'top buttons open on the blouse.'" Not long after, the Weather Channel and Stanier Midkiff settled out of court. See Kevin Blackstone. 2016. "TV Industry Has No Moral High Ground to Claim in Erin Andrews Case." *Chicago Tribune*, March 14. www.chicagotribune.com/sports/breaking/ct-tv-industry-erin-andrews-case-20160314-story.html.

Dominguez, who sued Fox Sports 1.⁴¹ All told, at least five lawsuits have been brought by women anchors against networks who had allegedly dismissed them in order to hire younger, “sexier” women. In 2012 Kyle Hunter sued CBS for overlooking his qualifications in favor of young women candidates, showing that ageism and looksism had affected a man as well.⁴²

If gender parity eluded the world of journalism with regard to ownership and control in both television and print newsrooms, the situation is just as sexist—if not more starkly so—in the world of Hollywood filmmaking. An assessment of mainstream films commences with the six major studios: Disney, Universal, Warner, Paramount, Sony and Twentieth Century Fox, whose CEOs are all men.⁴³ Relatedly, as a result of hacked documents from Sony released to public view in 2014, viewers were able to see that of seventeen employees who earned more than one million dollars annually, only one, Amy Pascal, was a woman.⁴⁴ More concerning here is that Pascal was the only top Sony employee to be fired in the wake of the hacking scandal.⁴⁵ It should be simultaneously noted that of the six major studio heads, only one, Kevin Tsujihara, is a person of color (he is Japanese American).⁴⁶ Similarly, of the Sony executives who earn more than one million dollars yearly, fifteen of the seventeen were Caucasian, one (Dwight Caines) was African American, and one other (Man Jit Singh) was South Asian. This

⁴¹ Dominguez, fifty-four, sued Fox Sports 1 with charges that assignments such as interviews during the Super Bowl were withheld from her and given by managers to younger and inexperienced female reporters. See Tom Kludt. 2016. “Fox Sports Is Fighting Gender Discrimination Suit.” *CNN Money*, August 13. <http://money.cnn.com/2016/08/13/media/colleen-dominguez-lawsuit-fox-sports/>.

⁴² Hunter was an ideal candidate for the two meteorologist openings at the CBS-owned KCAL and KCBS stations in Los Angeles, given his twenty-plus years of work experience in the field and a bachelor’s degree in geosciences and broadcast meteorology. Despite this, Hunter claims that his qualifications were rebuffed by the stations for young and attractive women candidates. Recent court documents indicate that the presiding judge, Justice Laurie Zelon, found that Hunter “failed to demonstrate a probability of prevailing on the merits of his FEHA (The California Fair Employment and Housing Act) claims” (27). Therefore, CBS was within its rights to deny the position to Hunter, given that it “provided undisputed evidence that it interviewed, promoted and hired several other male weather anchors over the age of 40” (26). See Court of Appeal of the State of California. 2016. *Hunter v. CBS Broadcasting, Inc.*, Case #B258668, January 19, pp. 1–27. www.courts.ca.gov/opinions/nonpub/B258668.PDF.

⁴³ Jessica P. Ogilvie. 2015. “Hollywood Executives’ Quiet Ban on Women in the Movies, by the Numbers.” *LA Weekly*, November 18. www.laweekly.com/news/hollywood-executives-quiet-ban-on-women-in-the-movies-by-the-numbers-6289655. The CEOs, as of 2017, are Robert Iger (Disney); Ronald Meyer (Universal Studios); Kevin Tsujihara (Warner Brothers); Brad Grey (Paramount Pictures); Michael Lynton (Sony Pictures); and Jim Gianopulos (Twentieth Century Fox).

⁴⁴ Sharon Waxman. 2014. “Leaked! Sony’s Multi-million Dollar Executive Salaries Revealed Online after Hack.” *The Wrap*, December 1. www.thewrap.com/leaked-Sonys-multi-million-dollar-executive-salaries-revealed-online-after-hack/.

⁴⁵ Maureen Dowd. 2015. “The Women of Hollywood Speak Out.” *New York Times Magazine*, November 20. www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/magazine/the-women-of-hollywood-speak-out.html.

⁴⁶ Ben Fritz. 2013. “Warner Bros. CEO Guards the Old, Tests the New.” *Wall Street Journal*, March 25. www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323466204578382732747903420.

reveals, again, both a gender and racial bias in the film industry's social composition regarding ownership.⁴⁷

While this is evidently problematic, Hollywood filmmaking does not seem to have improved much for women in directorships either. Certainly some improvement has occurred as, looking back, not one director who was a woman was nominated for an Oscar until 1976,⁴⁸ and the proportion of women who directed major Hollywood films was 0.19 percent between 1949 and 1979.⁴⁹ Still, in both 2013 and 2014, only 1.9 percent of the directors of the one hundred top-grossing Hollywood films were women.⁵⁰ In 2016 the 250 top-grossing domestic films saw the number of female directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and cinematographers, combined, fall to 17 percent—the same rate as in 1998. Ninety-two percent of those films had no women directors, and 58 percent had no women executive producers.⁵¹ Moreover, according to one report, women comprised only 23 percent of the producers of Hollywood films and only 11 percent of writers on the 250 top-grossing films.⁵² Strikingly too for when change has or has not occurred, these figures went up very slightly (1%) from 2013 but were down 2 percent compared to the results of a 1998 study.⁵³

For Maureen Dowd, writing at length about the extent of such gender disparities, this renders Hollywood even worse than other realms of ongoing sexism in issues of control and direction. Hollywood emerges quite unfavorably, as by her analysis, “Hollywood’s toxic brew of fear and sexism has kept women even more confined than those in legendary male bastions like Silicon Valley, where 10.8 percent of executive officers are women; corporate America, where about 16 percent of executive officers at S&P100 companies are women; and Congress, where 20 percent of the House and Senate are women.”⁵⁴ Why? While the Hollywood culture industries share with other occupations

⁴⁷ Kevin Roose. 2014. “Hacked Documents Reveal a Hollywood Studio’s Stunning Gender and Race Gap.” *Fusion*, December 1. <http://fusion.net/story/30789/hacked-documents-reveal-a-hollywood-studios-stunning-gender-and-race-gap/>.

⁴⁸ The first woman to ever receive an Oscar nomination for Best Director was Italian film director Lina Wertmüller for the film *Seven Beauties*. In 1993 the New Zealand film director Jane Campion became the second woman to be nominated in this category for *The Piano*. A decade later, in 2003, the American Sofia Coppola, of the well-known Coppola family, became the third woman nominated for this category for her *Lost in Translation*. The fourth woman to receive the nomination and the first to win the category of Best Director was Kathryn Bigelow in 2009 for *The Hurt Locker*. See Esther Zuckerman. 2016. “15 Female Filmmakers Who Deserve Academy Love.” *Refinery29*, February 29. www.refinery29.com/2016/02/104247/oscars-female-directors-filmmakers#slide.

⁴⁹ Maya Montañez Smukler. 2011. “Liberating Hollywood: Thirty Years of Women Directors.” UCLA Center for the Study of Women. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3pd5t9m6>.

⁵⁰ Dowd, “Women of Hollywood Speak Out.”

⁵¹ Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2017*, 5.

⁵² Martha Lauzen. 2015. “The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women on the Top 250 Films of 2014.” Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University. http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/files/2014_Celluloid_Ceiling_Report.pdf.

⁵³ Child, “Women Are Directors on Just 7 Percent.”

⁵⁴ Dowd, “Women of Hollywood Speak Out.”

the problem, described in Chapter 3, of women's careers often being impeded by lack of universal and affordable childcare, more must be going on by way of explanation if Dowd's observation is apt.

Another factor may be that indeed initially, and understandably, feminist critiques of the culture industries focused on the sexist and objectified character of media and representational *contents*—from boycotting early objectification as televised in the Miss America and other beauty pageants, through contemporary concerns about the sexist contents of movies and shows (like the Bechdel Test, which requires films to have at least two named women who talk to each other about something besides a man).⁵⁵ Again, this may have deflected attention away from the industries' biases of ownership and control; it may have been too much to take on at once. As previously suggested, looksism too may play a further role. For just as looks biases clearly pertain to women's jobs and careers in the news industry, the situation becomes at least as discriminatory, if not more blatantly so, under the combined effects of beauty standards and age-related norms of appearance in Hollywood. Just as looks biases can be credibly documented for news anchors in the world of television, so too they may be more likely to affect women in Hollywood who are in visually conspicuous places, as in acting. This situation has explicitly concerned actors from Meryl Streep, Rita Moreno, Helen Hunt, and Maggie Gyllenhaal to many others who have long spoken out against the influence of Hollywood ageism and sexism on their careers.⁵⁶

Indeed, for women who are actors in Hollywood, looksist biases are by now well known. For instance, while her ex-husband, Bruce Willis, appeared in thirteen films into his early fifties, Demi Moore, at forty-four, publicly bemoaned: "It's been a challenging few years, being the age I am. Almost to the point where I felt like, well, they don't know what to do with me. I am not 20. Not 30. There aren't many good roles for women over 40. A lot of them don't have much substance, other than being someone's mother or wife."⁵⁷ In addition, and completely in contrast to her husband (and likely many other aging male stars), Moore said that she spent approximately 226,000 British pounds on plastic surgery in order to keep up with looksist standards.⁵⁸

Notably, some popular films and television series have appeared in the last twenty years that explicitly take up (and even by example try to alter) symbiotically enmeshed problems of looksism and ageism. Strikingly, many of these are comedies. For instance,

⁵⁵ <https://bechdeltest.com/>.

⁵⁶ Joe Otterson. 2015. "11 Leading Ladies Who Have Spoken Out against Ageism, Sexism in Hollywood." *The Wrap*, May 21. www.thewrap.com/11-leading-ladies-who-have-spoken-out-again-ageism-sexism-in-hollywood-photos/.

⁵⁷ When this article was published, Moore was forty-four. She is now fifty-three and has a record of appearing in only one film per year since 2010—none of which were major features in Hollywood. See Lucretia Munro. 2007. "She's Spent £226k on Plastic Surgery But 'I Still Can't Get a Hollywood Part,' Says Demi." *Daily Mail*, September 13. www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-481455/Shes-spent-226k-plastic-surgery-I-Hollywood-says-Demi.html; IMDB. 2016. "Demi Moore." www.imdb.com/name/nm0000193/.

⁵⁸ Munro, "She's Spent £226k."

in *The Truth about Cats and Dogs* (1996), Janeane Garofalo hosts a radio show and is mistaken for her neighbor, played by Uma Thurman, after a listener falls for Garofalo's wit and charm rather than her looks, which were initially unknown to him. Garofalo's character is afraid to allow the young man she has connected with to see her and substitutes Thurman's character, after which a non-looksist happy ending ensues. In another film, *Something's Gotta Give* (2003), Jack Nicholson plays a man with a clear predilection for younger, "good-looking" women, before he slowly becomes fond of the feminist-leaning and successful "older woman," played by Diane Keaton. While the Keaton-Nicholson vehicle plays with ageism, Keaton herself is conventionally attractive by looks-based standards. Demonstrating some improvement in this area, in the 2018 season of the Netflix show *Grace & Frankie* (2014), Jane Fonda, at eighty, strips off her fake eyelashes, hair extensions, and heavy makeup and reveals her knee brace and cane to her boyfriend who is in his fifties. While an emphasis on thinness certainly continues throughout popular culture, in television shows like NBC's *This Is Us* (2016), Chrissy Metz's character, who is quite obese, is not only a main character but has a significant romantic and sex life. In Melissa McCarthy's films, from *Bridesmaids* (2011) through *Spy* (2015), this younger comedian is also "allowed" to be sexual and appealing even though, in conventional looksist terms, she is overweight (albeit having a "pretty face").

Such variations to the problematic rule suggest a growing level of awareness of ageism and looksism in Hollywood. Even more importantly, "older" female actors (by which I mean women in their fifties and sixties) have by now become vocal and explicit in their critiques of a film industry that greatly decreases the number and importance of roles given to women as they age even as parts for men of similar age remain relatively plentiful and central in significance. But small numbers of films that protest this point cannot erase the persistent problem which looksism, combined with ageism, poses for women in the movie industry—a problem that appears to require stronger actions if it is to be combated more successfully than has happened by the late 2010s.

Not only are sexism, looksism, and age discrimination ongoing problems in Hollywood; in addition, and of commensurately profound significance, are racialized concerns that have also led to critiques of the U.S. movie industry. For instance, just prior to the 2014 Academy Awards ceremony, controversy erupted about the "passing over" of black female director Ava DuVernay (*Selma*), especially in relation to the disproportionately few directors, writers, and actors of color in this culture profession.⁵⁹ Even as women of color gain access to more dynamic acting parts, pay equality still remains an issue. In 2018 Viola Davis proclaimed, "If I am the black Meryl Streep then pay me what I'm worth."⁶⁰ In another case, Jessica Chastain, after discovering that her pay

⁵⁹ Amanda Hess. 2015. "Are the Oscars Biased against Female Directors?" *Slate*, January 15. www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2015/01/15/ava_duvernay_oscar_snub_for_selma_are_the_oscars_biased_against_female_directors.html.

⁶⁰ See Mike Miller. 2018. "Viola Davis to Hollywood: If I'm a Black Meryl Streep, Then 'Pay Me What I'm Worth.'" *People*, February 14. <https://people.com/movies/viola-davis-hollywood-if-im-black-meryl-streep-then-pay-me-what-im-worth/>.

for the film *The Help* (2011) was five times what Octavia Spencer was compensated for her role in the same film, insisted that going forward, salaries for women of color acting in Hollywood be pegged to hers.⁶¹ Related to this point, a study analyzed the two hundred highest-grossing films on the basis of 2012 and 2013 box-office returns. It found that women were starkly underrepresented “on nearly every front.”⁶² The author, noting that this is not just a question of gender but also one of race, emphatically reported, “White men hold the power.”⁶³

Other researchers developed an inclusivity index, a kind of report card for how well major studios (including such giants as Twentieth Century Fox, CBS, Sony, and Walt Disney) scored in including female, minority, and LGBTQ characters, as well as writers and directors among the people they employed. As a University of Southern California (USC) study reported, none of the six major studios ranked better than 20 percent overall, leading the authors to conclude that the film industry “still functions as a straight, white, boys’ club.”⁶⁴

Is TV any better, as some have suggested?⁶⁵ On the one hand, the USC report found that some of the same major studios scored better in employee diversity when their TV and digital offerings were included; for instance, scores for Disney, Amazon, and Hulu increased to over 60 percent by these criteria.⁶⁶ Progress in the world of television seems in evidence, then. On the other hand, citing data from a San Diego State University study on women in television and film, one author concluded in 2014 that women’s gains in the television industry had been stalling.⁶⁷ She noted that the total percentage of women working behind the scenes in broadcast television—as creators, directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and directors of photography—was only 27 percent.⁶⁸ While a greater percentage of people in these capacities were women compared to the early 2000s, changes had slowed or plateaued in that the 27 percent figure was basically the same as what was approximated from 2009 through 2013. Moreover, gender parity was not particularly better for cable and Netflix than for

⁶¹ See Luchina Fisher. 2018. “Jessica Chastain Explains Why She Fought for Equal Pay for Octavia Spencer.” *ABC*, June 6. <https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Culture/jessica-chastain-explains-fought-equal-pay-octavia-spencer/story?id=55691417>.

⁶² Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2015*, 30.

⁶³ Women’s Media Center, *Status of Women 2015*, 31.

⁶⁴ Associated Press. 2016. “Hollywood Studios ‘Whitewashed,’ Given Failing Diversity Grades in New Study.” *Hollywood Reporter*, February 21. www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/hollywood-studios-whitewashed-given-failing-868097.

⁶⁵ Martha Lauzen. 2014. “Boxed In: Employment of Behind-the-Scenes and On-Screen Women in 2013–2014 Prime-Time Television.” Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University. http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/files/2013-14_Boxed_In_Report.pdf.

⁶⁶ Associated Press, “Hollywood Studios ‘Whitewashed.’”

⁶⁷ Tierney Sneed. 2014. “Study: Women’s Gains in TV Have Stalled.” *US News*, September 16. www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2014/09/16/womens-gains-in-tv-industry-have-stalled-study-finds.

⁶⁸ Sneed, “Study: Women’s Gains in TV.”

broadcast TV, despite many people's assumptions that cable and Netflix were more progressive in this regard in myriad creative roles.⁶⁹

The situation changes noticeably for the gender breakdown of characters in broadcast television programming.⁷⁰ According to the San Diego State study, women portray 46 percent of the characters in comedies and 39 percent of the characters in dramas. However, suggesting the presence of looksism in television, 59 percent of women in both types of shows are portrayed in their twenties or thirties whereas 58 percent of men in broadcast programs are represented in their thirties and forties.⁷¹

Undoubtedly, not everything can be covered in this brief overview of American culture industries. Still, it is possible to say something here about gender parity in the cultural worlds of the recording industry and magazine publishing in the United States. As before, I explore three criteria—ownership, control, and the presence or absence of looksism—as indicators of ongoing sexism in the culture industries. We will begin with music, where the CEOs of the “big three” recording labels in the United States are all men.⁷² While these executives have a great deal of power within the realm of control, even greater power lies in the hands of the companies' owners.⁷³ They are major—and arguably *the* major—power brokers insofar as they hold large chunks of corporate stock and have disproportionate power in administrative decision-making.⁷⁴

The situation is different for the gender composition at top magazines, especially those aimed at women; in that market, one might expect to find a larger number of women than men in charge, or at least a fairly equal number. And indeed, at the top nine women's magazines⁷⁵—*Cosmopolitan*, *Seventeen*, *Elle*, *Marie Claire*, *Bazaar*, *W*,

⁶⁹ Sneed, “Study: Women's Gains in TV.”

⁷⁰ Broadcast networks includes major TV studios such as ABC, CBS, Fox, CW, and NBC. Sneed reports that ABC has the highest percentage of female characters on its programs, coming in at 44 percent. The lowest is NBC with 39 percent.

⁷¹ Sneed, “Study: Women's Gains in TV.” The study was conducted by Martha Lauzen.

⁷² These are Lucian Grainge at Universal Music Group; Doug Morris, CEO at SONY Music Entertainment; and Stephen Cooper, CEO at Warner Music Group. Robert Levine. 2016. “No. 1: Lucian Grainge—Power 100.” *Billboard*, February 12. www.billboard.com/articles/business/6874748/no-1-lucian-grainge-power-100; Ed Christman. 2016. “No. 4: Doug Morris—Power 100.” *Billboard*, February 12. www.billboard.com/articles/business/6874748/no-1-lucian-grainge-power-100; *Billboard* Staff. 2016. “No. 13: Stephen Cooper—Power 100.” *Billboard*, February 12. www.billboard.com/articles/business/6874748/no-1-lucian-grainge-power-100.

⁷³ For instance, the French industrial group Bolloré owns the Universal Music Group, with Vincent Bolloré as its CEO. Sony (a Japanese corporation) owns Sony Music Entertainment, and its chairman is Osamu Nagayama. Sony. 2013. “Sony Corporation Executive Appointments.” June 20. www.sony.net/SonyInfo/News/Press/201306/13-075E/. Lastly, Leonard Blavatnik owns Warner Music Group at Access Industries.

⁷⁴ The “big three” control about 88 percent of the market: Universal Music Group (CEO Lucian Grainge), Sony Music Entertainment (CEO Rob Stringer), Warner Music (CEO Stephen Cooper). <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/solutions/measurement/music-sales-measurement.html?clid=Cj0KCQjwnZXbBRC8ARIsABEYg6BvUNSGRQ9PyPvX1WEjAO92Bf7pAsZY9vxV4CmE9T>

⁷⁵ Magazines are branded as being “top magazines” on the basis of sales / total circulation in the United States. See Edith Zimmerman. 2012. “99 Ways to Be Naughty in Kazakhstan—How Cosmo

Teen Vogue, *Glamour*, and *Vogue*—nearly all of the editors in chief are women, all white women except for *Teen Vogue*'s Elaine Welteroth, who has been praised for featuring “intersectional” feminist articles in the magazine.⁷⁶ In contrast, for this same group of nine magazines, all of the CEOs (who are closer to ownership than editors in chief) are men. Apparently, in the world of magazines, especially those aimed at women, a gender disparity exists between directorial power and ownership power, whereas both administrative and ownership controls at music companies rest disproportionately in the hands of men.⁷⁷

It is beyond my reach here to offer a detailed analysis of the “looks” of women in music videos and magazines. But little evidence exists to dispute that the potentially sexist combination of looksism and ageism has disappeared or even waned from the imagery presented in music videos or magazines.⁷⁸ Take, for example, an academic study of *Cosmopolitan* magazine from 1959 to 2014; according to one website, this was the ninth-most popular magazine in the United States in April 2018.⁷⁹ According to the author, Azalee Maslow, “Moving into the 2010s, in a snapshot, a woman on the cover of *Cosmopolitan* magazine would be a Caucasian female in her 20s with blonde hair or brunette hair with blonde highlights... The shot she would be in would show off her thin body.” Maslow concluded that women of color were sometimes also featured on *Cosmo* covers, but not more often than in previous decades and always only when the person featured was a well-known figure like Beyoncé Knowles-Carter.⁸⁰ Updating this

Conquered the World.” *New York Times Magazine*, August 3. www.nytimes.com/2012/08/05/magazine/how-cosmo-conquered-the-world.html.

⁷⁶ Personal tabulation. As of August 2018, Michele Promaulayko is the editor in chief of *Cosmopolitan*, Roberta Myers of *Elle*, Anne Fulenwider of *Marie Claire*, Glenda Bailey of *Bazaar*, Elaine Welteroth of *Teen Vogue*, Samantha Barry of *Glamour*, Anna Wintour of *Vogue*, and Stefano Tonchi (the only male editor) at *W. Seventeen Magazine* does not currently have an editor in chief; *Cosmopolitan*'s Promaulayko is an editorial director and listed as the magazine's editor online.

⁷⁷ *Cosmopolitan*, *Seventeen*, *Marie Claire*, and *Bazaar* magazines are all owned by the multinational conglomerate company Hearst; the CEO of Hearst is Steven Swartz. *Vogue* and *W* are both owned by Condé Nast, which is under the control of CEO Bob Sauerberg. *Elle* is owned by Lagardere SCA, a French company; Xavier de Sarrau is the chairman of Lagardere SCA. Lastly, *Teen Vogue* and *Glamour* are both owned by Advance Publications (which also happens to own Condé Nast); the chairman of Advance Publications is Steven Newhouse.

⁷⁸ See Maura Johnston. 2016. “Sexism on Repeat: How the Music Industry Can Break the Cycle.” *Guardian*, March 11. www.theguardian.com/music/2016/mar/11/music-industry-sexism-kesha-dr-luke-miles-kane; Veronique Hyland. 2015. “Yes, the Fashion Industry Can Be Sexist, Too.” *New York Magazine*, August 11. <http://nymag.com/thecut/2015/08/yes-the-fashion-industry-can-be-sexist-too.html>; Robin Givhan. 2011. “New York Fashion Week's Mean Girls.” *Daily Beast*, February 14. www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/02/15/new-york-fashion-week-mean-girls-sneer-at-victoria-beckham.html.

⁷⁹ “Reach of Popular Magazines in the United States in 2018.” www.statista.com/statistics/208807/estimated-print-audience-popular-magazines.

⁸⁰ Azalee Maslow. “Depictions of Beauty in *Cosmopolitan* Magazine: Content Analyses of Covers (1959–2014),” 94. digitalscholarship.univ.edu.

study in August 2018, CNN and other news channels ran stories about and featured panelists discussing the “historic dominance” of black women that would mark their September 2018 issues.⁸¹ Specifically, Beyoncé was to be on the cover of U.S. *Vogue*; Rihanna on *British Vogue*; Tracee Ellis Ross on *Elle*; Zendaya on *Marie Claire*; and Tiffany Hadish on *Glamour*. The new development at once signals change and confirms Maslow’s surmise that only well-known figures—rather than unknown but “beautiful” models—were making coveted cover appearances.⁸²

Overall, women in girls’ and women’s magazines are still disproportionately expected to be thin, conventionally beautiful, and young. Moreover, while racial and ethnic diversity is greater than in prior eras,⁸³ whiteness still tends to be valued in imagery.⁸⁴ What does not appear to be happening to a huge extent is a diversification of looks in which people are portrayed in rich variety, all of which is seen as worthwhile, attractive, dynamic, and sexy, across ages and races and sexualities and, of course, genders. Furthermore, even when women are the editors of magazines about women, looksism as an ongoing social influence may be so strong—and these editors’ power limited by ownership power—as to constrain the kind of thorough, organization-wide transformations needed to make these industries approach gender parity and equality of power and influence.

...

Coming full circle to the American culture industries and questions of ownership, control, and looksism, we can conclude, for one thing, that content-related changes within news media, film, television, magazines, and music videos are undeniable and significant. The feminist movement has succeeded in immensely transforming each

⁸¹ “Black Women Dominate Prestigious Magazines.” [Edition.cnn.com/videos/cnnmoney/2018/08/08beyonce-vogue-black-women-dominate-cover-panel-nr-vpx.cnn/video/playlists/mos-popular-domestic](http://edition.cnn.com/videos/cnnmoney/2018/08/08beyonce-vogue-black-women-dominate-cover-panel-nr-vpx.cnn/video/playlists/mos-popular-domestic).

⁸² Sabrina Barr. “Women Taking Centre Stage on September Issues Covers.” www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/blackwomen-September-magazine-cover-beyonce-rihanna-zendaya-vogue-glamour-98484566.

⁸³ According to Robin Givhan, the fashion editor at the *Washington Post*: “nearly 32 percent of the models on the fall 2016 runways in New York were women of color. It has been a slow slog to reach this point; in the mid-1990s, the percentage was closer to zero.” See Robin Givhan. 2016. “The Fashion World Is Keeping Stats on Runway Diversity, But What’s the Real Goal?” *Washington Post*, March 21. www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2016/03/21/the-fashion-world-is-keeping-stats-on-runway-diversity-but-whats-the-real-goal/; and Jessica Andrews. 2016. “Despite Gains, the Fall 2016 Runways Were Still Less Than 25 Percent Diverse.” *Fashion Spot*, March 16. www.thefashionspot.com/runway-news/685109-runway-diversity-report-fall-2016/.

⁸⁴ Rebs Lim. 2013. “Whiteness and Tokenism on the Runway.” *Sociological Images*, April 27. <https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2013/04/27/whiteness-and-tokenism-on-the-runway/>; Nicole Adlman. 2015. “Why Is New York Fashion Week Still So White? The Problem of Sameness on the Runway.” *E! News*, September 4. www.eonline.com/news/690421/why-is-new-york-fashion-week-still-so-white-the-problem-of-sameness-on-the-runway; Vanessa Friedman. 2015. “Fashion’s Racial Divide.” *New York Times*, February 11. www.nytimes.com/2015/02/12/fashion/fashions-racial-divide.html; Arabelle Sicardi. 2014. “Fashion’s Hottest New Trend: Whiteness.” *Jezebel*, October 7. <http://jezebel.com/fashions-hottest-new-trend-whiteness-1643477864>.

and every one of these industries, especially in response to distinctive sexist biases in American society; “women’s issues,” from the relevance of sexual assault and groping in the 2016 presidential campaign⁸⁵ through Hollywood and television programming, are now discussed everywhere. The very emergence of protests, of critiques against sexism and racism in Hollywood, attests to the salience of changes and to alterations in cultural consciousness. Further, many powerful, famous, and extremely well-to-do “entrepreneurs” who are women of color have emerged as influential players in and around the culture industries. This group prominently figures, among others, Oprah Winfrey (the founder of the Oprah Winfrey Network and the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy of Girls); Beyoncé Knowles-Carter; and the Colombian model turned actress Sofía Vergara (who founded a media company called Latin WE).⁸⁶ Moreover, in *Forbes*’s 2016 list of “The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women,” Bonnie Hammer (chair of NBCUniversal Cable), Dana Walden (chair and CEO of Fox Television Group), Donna Langley (chair of Universal Pictures), and Zanny Minton Beddoes (editor in chief of *The Economist*) figure prominently in the entertainment and news worlds.⁸⁷

All this and more is on the “glass half full” side of the culture picture. On the other hand, and as many feminists in the culture industries have noticed and are now acting upon, feminist achievements in this sphere too have been partial, leaving much to be done. Indeed, the glass is far emptier when dual considerations of ownership and control are included, not on the basis of particular individuals, as sampled above, but on overall statistical trends. Issues of control and ownership are not identical; one finds an example in the world of women’s magazines, where women dominate editor in chief positions while the CEOs are overwhelmingly male. Across news companies (and the conglomerates that own them as well as television franchises), Hollywood studios, and the music and magazine industries, ownership statistics clearly indicate that there is a long way to go toward gender parity. Although directorial control varies and has improved relative to what existed decades ago, the overall situation remains highly problematic; in some cases, especially Hollywood and the directorship of high-grossing films, the situation appears to be quite discriminatory. Moreover, the evaluation here suggests that the late 2000s and 2010s have not been years of large improvement. Rather, it appears that improvements in the gender composition of positions in ownership and

⁸⁵ Karen Tumulty. 2016. “Woman Says Trump Reached under Her Skirt and Groped Her in Early 1990s.” *Washington Post*, October 14. www.washingtonpost.com/politics/woman-says-trump-reached-under-her-skirt-and-groped-her-in-early-1990s/2016/10/14/67e8ff5e-917d-11e6-a6a3-d50061aa9fae_story.html.

⁸⁶ Meghan Casserly. 2013. “The World’s Most Powerful Female Entrepreneurs, 2013.” *Forbes*, May 22. www.forbes.com/sites/meghancasserly/2013/05/22/the-worlds-most-powerful-female-entrepreneurs-2013/#52365e38451b.

⁸⁷ Caroline Howard. 2016. “The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women.” *Forbes*. www.forbes.com/power-women/#/tab:overall_category:Mediapercen20&</verbatim> percent20Entertainment.

control leveled off after much sharper rises in earlier decades, including the 1970s and 1980s.⁸⁸

What then is to be done? Concentrating on only one feminist issue or area of culture in isolation from others would seem insufficient. Rather, changes in the culture industries writ large are most likely to occur in conjunction with concerted feminist activism, preferably en masse. This may be related to what has been happening with the wave of charges of sexual harassment, unwanted advances, and sexual assault that women brought in late 2017 against men in the worlds of media as well as government. These charges manifest and symbolize political awareness and anger over women having long been coerced and disrespected through sexualization and objectification, which has correlated with the exclusion of women from positions of influence and power—positions that men have long occupied in the American culture industries. By this argument, looksism and its perpetuation may also mix with sexism to maintain a gender-skewed status quo. Furthermore, achieving gender parity should be integrated with feminist insights into intersectionality that highlight, in racial terms, the lack of diversity at the highest levels of the culture industries.

In addition, diminishing the sway of looksism will be no small matter. Reducing the emphasis on looks and the biases looksism bequeaths women should be seen not as an afterthought or a utopian goal, but as a needed reform if deep change is to be achieved across all cultural venues. From an early age, sexism still leaves a little girl worried, and her anxieties are fueled rather than dissipated by popular cultural imagery. It is a problem that has major ramifications for how we evaluate our own social worth and self-esteem across classes, races, ethnicities, sexualities, and ages. She looks in the mirror, and the mirror looks back, not only literally but representationally, magnified in a wide array of images, online ads, and billboards that are frequently skewed by gender, race, and class.

This is not to deny that looks figure into our human evaluations of each other, nor to deny that gender equality can coexist with having fun and dressing up amid complex and multidimensional connections between our inner and outer worlds. But it is to say that attraction is complicated and that there can be and have been significant and patterned gendered harms in rigidly holding up homogenous standards of looks—whether weight, age, racial criteria, or sexuality—for men and women (though the harm to women has been disproportionate and systematic). Looksism is deeply connected with sexism; it is reproduced by, and it reproduces, gender-biased effects. Its legacies continue to affect the contents and contexts, the images and the structures, of the culture industries. The reform of looksism suggested here relates to the feminist future in practice as well as in theory. For Marx may have been right: the purpose of philosophy, and of social analysis, is not only to interpret but to change the world. To

⁸⁸ Montañez Smukler notes that the women's liberation movement was pivotal in pushing Hollywood to open up to women across the complete gamut of roles (writers, directors, producers). See Smukler, "Liberating Hollywood."

further realize the dreams of the gender revolution, the culture industries ought to be high on the list of transformations still to be insisted upon.

7. Taking Back a Revolution

In the 1990s, young feminists like Rebecca Walker declared themselves “third wavers” to denote continuities as well as changes from the 1960s and 1970s onward. In Walker’s words:

I am ready to decide, as my mother decided before me, to devote much of my energy to the history, health, and healing of women... As the days pass, I push myself to figure out what it means to be a part of the Third Wave of feminism... To be a feminist is to integrate an ideology of equality and female empowerment into the very fiber of my life. It is to search for personal clarity in the midst of systemic destruction, to join in sisterhood with women when often we are divided, to understand power structures with the intention of challenging them. While this may sound simple, it is exactly the kind of stand that many of my peers are unwilling to take. So I write this as a plea to all women, especially the women of my generation: Let [Clarence] Thomas’ confirmation serve to remind you, as it did me, that the fight is far from over... Turn that outrage into political power... I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave.¹

Walker’s plea—“the fight is far from over”—seems especially resonant in the context of this book’s assessment of successes and problems feminists have encountered since the second wave. Regarding the latter, and updating to the present, sexual harassment charges have swept the United States qua collective protest. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump provides good reason to fear that many feminist-inspired achievements, including abortion rights legalized in 1973 in *Roe v. Wade* and extending to transgender rights, could be turned back and lost again.

Apropos of this book’s argument for the simultaneous relevance of commonalities and differences across and between women, the “Third Wave” terminology emphasized multifaceted analyses that are now almost routinely referred to—at least among feminist scholars—as “intersectional” positions. If we go back to the 1990s, according to the Third Wave Fund’s website, the “Third Wave’s definition of feminism explicitly connects women’s issues to issues of race, sexuality, class and ability.” Referring at that point to the Rodney King trial and decision, the William Kennedy Smith rape case, and the Supreme Court’s upholding of restrictions on abortion, the site goes on to state: “All of these events brought urgency to pressing issues that affect young

¹ Rebecca Walker. 1992. “Becoming the Third Wave.” *Ms. Magazine*, January.

women: sexual harassment, rape, race in America, reproductive health, economics and class... Third Wave was created as a multi-issue feminist organization that supported the leadership and vision of young women as they worked on issues like environmental justice, prison reform, living wage campaigns, as well as on more traditional feminist issues like reproductive rights.”² I myself, writing in the *Village Voice* in May 1991, penned the term *third wave* just beforehand to advocate for a “revitalized radical feminist movement” that incorporated differences and pushed beyond where second wave feminists had left off.³ A multifaceted awareness of related issues, the third wave predated and presaged yet remains kindred with the intersectional orientation of mass protest marches organized by feminists locally, nationally, and around the world on January 21, 2017, the day after Donald Trump’s inauguration.

Why then did I open *After the Rise and Stall of American Feminism* with a return to the second wave of the 1960s and 1970s rather than picking up with the third wave of the 1990s? Indeed, why refer to “waves” at all? My difficulty in writing this book and my anticipatory fretting, described in the Preface, are evoked again now: if I have gone too far in one direction, will I be called out antagonistically? Will I have veered too much or too little toward emphases on race, class, sexuality, or gender? Will I have left out one or another of the rich instances of writings, policy work, protest movements, or media images, all part of the outpouring of feminist energies and passions that have astoundingly changed the contemporary world in a mere half century? Probably.

Some kind of feminist superego was in my mind and heart even though my own sense of commitment to feminism, locally and beyond, has very much resonated then and now with Walker’s passionate words of the early 1990s. One reason for these recurrent concerns is that over the course of the last half century of the American feminist movement, it has sometimes struck me as strangely difficult to compliment, to properly recognize, liberal and radical feminist theorists and activists of the 1960s and 1970s second wave. The first wave of American feminists, suffragettes among whom Lucy Stone and Susan B. Anthony remain particularly well known, were themselves criticized, aptly, for treating as though invisible the cause of African American women’s equally important suffrage. Likewise, critiques of second wave feminists for inadequately taking class and racial issues into account in both theory and activism remain well taken. Such critiques and interventions, made by feminist scholars from bell hooks to Michelle Wallace, Kimberle Crenshaw, and Patricia Hill Collins and rendered indeed around the 1990s, deserve huge credit for the unfolding of multidimensional, rather than one-dimensional, feminist positions from then to now.

But it is the building of one generation after another, one type of feminism after the next, that strikes me as another effort worth realizing. It has impressed me as noteworthy, because somehow controversial, that young feminists I have met in courses

² See “Third Wave History” on the Third Wave Fund website, www.thirdwavefund.org. The Third Wave Fund became the Third Wave Foundation with a multiclass, multigendered, multiracial board.

³ Lynn S. Chancer. 1991. “Third Wave Feminism.” *Village Voice*, May 21, 28.

in the late 2010s, across genders, races, ethnicities, classes, and sexualities, are often quick to dismiss rather than recognize, or reread in nuanced ways, the ideas of early feminists, from those of de Beauvoir in France to, more salient in America, those of Betty Friedan, Shulamith Firestone, and Kate Millett, among others. Little known is that some of these early feminists, like Firestone, faced ridicule, social marginalization, and mental stress for their initial bravery, for their ideas in their own time, now more than a half century ago. And they hardly ended up in academically well-recognized, respectable positions as many feminist scholars occupy now, deservedly. Nor is it well known that these early feminists were often distinctly anticapitalist and against racism, and included women of color (ironically, not always credited for their early feminist contributions)—not just middle-class white women.

We might wonder about this apparent “killing” of the mothers, to adapt a Freudian conceit. Without the early feminists, the gender revolution would hardly have been conceivable, and necessary refinements to the theoretical foundations they laid would scarcely have been able to take root and blossom. In a related vein, I also wonder if other movements—concerning say class and racial justice—are apt to show such dismissiveness amid critique of their forebears. Karl Marx, for example, is now subject to huge criticism and adjustment; yet respectful recognition and ongoing close reading of his work continue despite the conclusion that some of his predictions were wrong, let alone oblivious to dynamics of racialization and sexism. Nor, in the area of racial justice, are many people likely to dismiss the contributions of Malcolm X on the basis of critiques of his early deterministic attitude toward whites (who were the “devil”)—this being a political stance comparable perhaps to radical feminist Ti-Grace Atkinson’s principled, and of course now discredited, arguments that men should not go to feminist meetings or that women, like Lysistrata, should not have sex with men lest feminist consciousness become diluted.

If American feminists do not give their own early proponents respectful credit alongside well-founded critique, it might accord with a thought sprinkled through previous discussions, namely, that some structural effect of gender itself makes feminist coalitions distinctively challenging. Divisions, by contrast, may give at least displaced expression to anger at awful biases and exclusions, and may be unwittingly seductive. As we have seen, this problem is hardly limited to feminism; progressive movements concerned with class inequalities and racial injustices have also found themselves devolving into sectarianism. Such divisiveness helped marginalize the U.S. left in the early twentieth century. This is not at all to suggest that feminist differences and antagonisms should be blithely and simplistically ignored, but it does aim to reveal them to be overdetermined. Ironically, part of the cause may be a lack of sufficient recycling of early feminist ideas about structurally bequeathed effects inherent in gender itself.

Nonetheless, by no means did the seductions of divisiveness stop feminist coalitions from forming over the last half century in America, which witnessed a remarkably successful, charismatic feminist movement using “consciousness raising” to bring women together across complex differences. Coalitions, not divisions, were very much

in evidence at the locally and nationally scheduled “Women’s Marches” of January 21, 2017, and January 20, 2018. And what is #MeToo if not a sign of women refusing to be divided over common experiences of sexual harassment, assault, inequality, and disrespect? Moreover, different experiences and needs ought to have become well recognized, based as they are on unequal experiences of racialization, class stratification, and sexuality-based biases; these should be the basis for feminist “standpoint positions” that take the perspective not so much of individuals but of disadvantaged parties. Such recognition of intersectional differences reflects not divisiveness but the significance of a movement that is loudly recognizing diverse voices as it grows, refines itself, and undergoes critique, from wave to wave and from decade to decade.

This book’s point about gender’s overdetermination of divisiveness was also applied to a less often acknowledged, subtler division that has nonetheless affected the feminist movement since the second wave. The division broaches questions about feminists and antifeminists and why they became and remain so deeply antagonized, why women (primarily white but not only white) voted for Donald Trump even after accusations against him of sexual assault. And it is a point that takes us back to the heart of the famously dubbed “culture wars” that started in the 1970s and 1980s in the wider mass-mediated society, just as feminism(s), too, began to unfold and emerge. The division, readily overlooked yet deeply embedded, goes back to the 1960s and 1970s, and it concerns whether established or future homemakers come to feel in competition with “career” women, and somehow threatened by them—a thread of divisiveness that was readily seized by antifeminist conservatives, from Phyllis Schlafly in the 1970s and 1980s through Milo Yiannopoulos’s antifeminism in the 2010s.

This division, I argued, may have continued—again, subtly and subliminally—by way of political gulfs between issues of the private home, such as universal daycare, and issues of public labor involving gender biases in workplaces and schools. The division appeared again when for varied reasons issues of reproductive rights and abortion became political struggles that were set apart from protesting sexuality-related discriminations. This reflects the observation that issues salient to traditionally gendered spheres (e.g., reproduction) sometimes seem separate from ones entailing newly freed choices beyond conventionally gendered mandates (e.g., sexualities). Even though this happened for good reasons, such separation could dilute feminist strength and efforts on behalf of people who commonly root for a resurgence of the American feminist movement. Moreover, retiring this particular feminist division by going back to advocating en masse for cross-class, cross-racial solutions, like universal daycare, may address ambivalences that women and men have long felt about calling themselves feminists, as expressed from time to time through phrases like “I’m not a feminist but ...”

However overdetermined or historically justifiable the reasons for divisiveness may be, the time has come in the United States, more than ever, for coalitions to be cherished. Feminists and feminism(s), as much as progressives advocating other political issues, cannot afford to do otherwise. My chief goal here has been to be constructive,

to argue that divisions ought not distract us from extending a renaissance of American feminism qua mass movement, one that is extraordinarily important for cultural and social justice. But this lengthy rationale for my beginning a retrospective evaluation with the theorists and ideas of the second wave—while incorporating those of the third wave—is conjoined with another reason, namely, the importance of reassessing gender-related issues today with the benefits of hindsight.

Distinctively gender-based issues still very much matter, even as successive decades have forcefully shown gender's close intercourse with other social issues, from universal healthcare through immigration rights. My intention in going back decades to the second wave is to show that the healing of common ills that were then posited—gender biases experienced in workplaces, politics, and schools; women's disproportionate shouldering of household and childcare responsibilities; unprotected reproductive rights and sexual freedoms; objectifying cultural imagery; harassment of and violence against women—remains short of achievement, as the ills are sustained by ongoing sexism, among other factors. I looked back at the second wave, then, to see what appears today to have been accomplished, or not, concerning these commonly held feminist issues, which are experienced differently across other social stratifications. This does not mean that other issues, such as universal healthcare or the overly punitive American criminal justice system, are not also important for feminism(s). But it does mean that gender-distinctive issues still require redress, even as that is likely to elude realization without taking other progressive goals simultaneously into account for synergistic and mutual support.

Let us look back, then, once again. By dint of empirical evidence and by several criteria, improvements that registered noticeably in the 1980s and 1990s stalled or even declined by the 2010s. According to several measures, women's achievement of gender parities and equal power and influence remains further off in America than early feminists hoped and anticipated for the second decade of the twenty-first century. How might any of the suggestions made in previous chapters actually work? One answer returns us to the intellectual endeavor itself: analysis matters, and hopefully it can help. Recall then the contention that "partial successes" can be identified in gender-based goals regarding common and different feminist issues (Chapter 1). These partial successes may be useful in identifying new priorities. In the case of political, economic, and educational equalities, I suggested (Chapter 3) that universal daycare and generous family policies are needed if substantial improvements are to occur in gender parities, let alone comparable gender power and influence; otherwise, America may fall further behind in these goals.

In the case of reproductive freedoms and LGBTQ rights (Chapter 4), I noted that these two areas of "intimate freedoms" shifted in recent decades, and to some extent in different directions regarding their respective ideological legitimacies. This difference should not be exaggerated, though, since discrimination against LGBTQ persons continues (say, in the form of ongoing debates over the right to use bathrooms of one's choice, backlash against gay marriage, and questioning transgender rights). Both sep-

arate advocacy and collectively strong coalitions nevertheless matter here too. As I recommended for this “partial success,” sexual and reproductive rights, as well as the broader concept of reproductive justice, merit joint advocacy as related dimensions of an important feminist goal: maximizing intimate freedoms and women’s ownership of their own bodily integrities, including their right to have children or not have children.

The partial success presented in Chapter 5 entails why violence against women, notably rape and domestic violence, along with violent crimes overall, diminished in the United States in recent decades, while rates of gender-skewed commission—in other words, a large disparity in men committing more violent crimes than women—continues. This is the case especially for murders and rape but also, not surprisingly given still male-dominated spheres of political and economic power, sexual harassment as well. As I suggest, then, feminists may have to work to have greater impacts on men’s (as well as women’s) perception of the relevance of feminist thinking for their lives. At the same time, feminists need to advocate effectively against the marginalization of feminist ideas that would make their academic study optional; these ideas should be significant, mandatory components of school curricula, from early childhood education through middle and high school, and in college readings and discussions. In so doing, feminists would continue to work not only on changes dealing with “extraordinary” sexism (sexist violence) but on the reproduction of “ordinary” sexist attitudes as well.

In that chapter, too, I discussed the importance of efforts to diminish what C. J. Pascoe has called “compulsive heterosexuality,” and I treat the kindred notion of “compulsory masculinity.” As Pascoe demonstrated through revealing ethnographic research, the high school experience of too many boys and young men still tends to enculturate sexism as well as heterosexism. Young men often feel that to not behave in ways that are sexist and objectifying would be to risk losing social acceptance and legitimation. Indeed, such compulsive and compulsory masculinity—along a continuum from “hegemonic” to “marginalized,” where, in the latter, sexism compensates for social powers withheld elsewhere—often create burdens as much as privileges for men. Here ongoing transformation is needed if, as feminists originally envisioned, people across genders are to be freed from the historical weight of gender and the discontent around it. This may also spur more of a resurgence of the American feminist movement that has already happened through the commitments and accomplishments of feminist activists, younger and older, in the late 2010s.

Finally, potentially benefiting from analysis of partial success, too, is a trend in the culture industries in which gendered contents have changed more than their political economic forms (Chapter 6). In other words, although mediated and popular cultural images have been transformed in less sexist directions (as early and later feminists endeavored to bring about), equal control and ownership of the culture industries, extending from film and television through music and news, is dramatically further from realization. Now would be the time to actively revisit the goal across common and different feminism(s), namely, ensuring that diverse people, including minorities as well as women, come to hold equal power, influence, and ownership in Hollywood,

at news stations, and across other varied cultural venues and institutions. Perhaps the Me Too tide of sexual harassment charges in the culture industries manifests women having grown tired of sexual objectification and of course coercive assaults, as well as an awareness that the eroticization of violence and sexual disrespect can correspond with exclusion and with keeping status quo power dynamics in place.

One final point relates to making future changes more likely. For this book also returns to an early feminist aphorism about the “personal as political”; that is, feminist theory conceives of our outer and inner lives, our logics and our emotions, and sees our habits at home being not completely separate from how we act at work, and vice versa. Another way of putting this is that feminist theory, and the history of feminism(s), has pointed to the desirability of “psychosocial” awareness. One of feminist theory’s many advantages over other forms of social theory is its explicit understanding of rigidly gendered binaries; when broken down, these reveal human beings to be constantly motivated and characterized in their practices by both emotional and rational considerations, by conscious as well as unconscious processes and dynamics (once again, by both, not either). Rather than an afterthought, this insight, if increasingly incorporated into political and personal practices, would shed light on why divisions within progressive social movements may occur for both unwittingly emotional as well as rational reasons. As discussed in Chapter 2, fragmentation within American progressive movements may be particularly likely given the enormous task of bringing forth structural changes in the United States; it may be easier to express anger at parties closer to home than, more abstractly, at a larger society. Emotional, not just rational, modes of multidimensional analysis may likewise assist with psychosocial insights into why, in November 2016, an American president was elected who had been accused of sexual assault. Indeed, a sufficiently sophisticated level of understanding is probably hard to obtain without taking people’s actual multidimensional reactions into account, as feminist theories—with their emphasis on going beyond falsely held social binaries—recommend.

Indeed, contemporary feminist thought, across its wide-ranging varieties, tends to recognize that the gendered universe of subjectivity “versus” objectivity has long been associated with such divides between emotionality and rationality. But people are not merely “masculine” or “feminine,” emotional or rational; often we partake of both aspects, if one often more than the other. Following on these strands of thought, recent feminists who are psychosocially oriented, myself included, seek to link the psychological and the social by envisioning people as multidimensional and complicated, motivated by feelings like desire, guilt, anxiety, or rage as much as by logic and intentionality. Anxieties and defenses may be explicitly acknowledged—or only dimly glimpsed, or unconscious—yet in any case feelings and logic are enmeshed; they are experienced and are very much present in the many spheres of our individual and collective lives.

Extending this understanding, we see that feminist thought has yet more to offer on movement politics and the resurgence of movements. For also basic to feminist

thought and its application to feminist issues is a proclivity to think and feel about everyday life in terms of “both/and” and not necessarily “either/or.” Contemporary events and political action demand increasingly nuanced modes of thought of the kind feminist theories have pursued by necessity. It follows that gender-related issues likewise defy either/or classification, not only for the private “versus” the public, but also for commonalities “or” differences between people—as explored throughout this book. Whether discussing the availability of daycare and abortion, or redressing sexual harassment and domestic violence, it is clearly not the case that either gender or race or class or sexuality is entailed; instead, complicated permutations of these social and sociological considerations are at play.

I suggest, then, that embracing the concept of *intersectionality* points to the very character of feminist-based analyses themselves. Certainly, as Kimberle Crenshaw has shown, some issues call out racial discrimination’s salience at some moments and in some contexts; in other cases, gender or sexuality-based biases may be most relevant to resolving overlapping problems. Adding to such characteristically feminist complexity is that some matters *are* of a distinctly either/or nature. For instance, did this person or that person assist with a particular task? Did *A* commit a crime known to have happened, or did *B*?

Feminist habits of thought—the breaking down of private/public boundaries, the proclivity toward both/and framings—apply not only to social life but also to individual life. This provides theoretical grounding for concrete problems raised in the book. To use a familiar example, it is argued that the lack of universal daycare in the United States contributes greatly to gender-based inequalities in the public sphere. By this analysis, the fate of gender justice lies within the private and the public, where a highly porous connection exists.⁴ The connection is important because women still shoulder disproportionate responsibility for childcare, household work, and “emotional” labor.⁵ When Hochschild’s “leisure gap” is considered, women work close to a month longer per year than men.⁶

Perhaps, too, feminism gains by developing consistent standpoints based not only on individuals but on specific policy positions that represent the needs of people most likely to be affected by them. This accords with a necessity emphasized by Patricia Hill Collins to include race, class, and gender perspectives (all of them) so as to “see,” not only personally but also politically, with the greatest possible inclusivity. Applying this to the need for universal childcare means that working-class and poor women have most to gain from this and other policies to assist families financially. Since

⁴ C. Wright Mills. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁵ Hochschild, *Second Shift*.

⁶ According to the Pew Research Center, “fathers, on average, have about three hours more leisure time per week than mothers.” In this “leisure gap,” fathers are more likely to use that time watching television or exercising/playing sports. See Wendy Wang. 2013. “The ‘Leisure Gap’ between Mothers and Fathers.” Pew Research Center, October 17. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/17/the-leisure-gap-between-mothers-and-fathers/.

racial and ethnic biases often correlate with class discrimination, universal daycare would also target those women of color who experience economic stresses. Middle-class women across social categories would benefit, too, in many cases; most important, an inclusive and uniting policy stance has the potential to move the feminist movement toward realizing an original goal that remains only half fulfilled.

Once more, though, one must wonder why anyone would go along with all of this, given that by the late 2010s the welfare state and entitlement policies are under attack and in the process of being dismantled. Here is where the realization of cross-class, cross-racial feminist goals will likely require an alignment with progressives advocating for other universal entitlements, such as high-quality healthcare. Thus, a universal childcare movement to achieve gender justice in politics, business, and academia—as well as equalities at home—will require people coming together across similarly motivated movements calling for social justice.

What about white women, though, who voted in slightly greater numbers for Donald Trump instead of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, even though Clinton would have come far closer to agreeing about the need for universal daycare and better family policies? The number of white women who voted for Trump was lowest at higher educational levels, and highest for white women without high school degrees. This confirms many political polls' findings that education is highly significant in establishing progressive and more liberally tolerant attitudes. Moreover, the availability of education across race, ethnicity, and class would itself be facilitated if high-quality and affordable childcare were available to women across class and racial/ethnic differences—suggesting yet another reason to resuscitate this issue.

If public and private realms are interlocking, if the rational and emotional dimensions of human beings cannot safely be separated in our politics and analyses, and if both/and modes of understanding have advantages over more rigid either/or modes, then feminist theory has a great deal to offer to the feminist future. This might be called a fifth wave, since “fourth” has already been used—and if wave imagery is still useful. By any name, its hallmark is the principle of commonalities and differences, which recognizes and builds critically on the contributions of foremothers and diverse sisters and brothers. Feminist thought today insists on increasingly complicated and subtle ways of thinking. We have seen this complexity in discussing political, economic, and educational equalities alongside daycare; the availability of abortion alongside LGBTQ freedoms; the democratization of power and control in culture industries alongside transformations in cultural representations; and in considering domestic violence, rape, and sexual harassment alongside ordinary sexism.

The feminist movement is here to stay. And there is every reason to hope and trust that it will expand so as to realize more of its dreams in the twenty-first century than were actualized in the twentieth. If in some ways it has stalled, in other ways signs abound of renaissance and resurgence, of common and different commitments to “take back the gender revolution.” Both in the United States and abroad, feminisms have the potential to go beyond divisions, to recognize differences as well as commonalities, to

embrace gender, race, class, and sexualities, and emotions as well as rationalities—in short, to turn aspirations about just societies into realities, and to move the currently troubled, and troubling, world forward. For the opportunity now exists to redress ambivalences about what came before. This opportunity badly needs to be seized in the Trump era, when the feminist wheel may have to be reinvented given what present circumstances have bequeathed. It is necessary and possible for people to become more reflective, to avoid recycling political divisions that prevent people from realizing interests that are at once different and common.

Feminists have come a long way from the past to the present. It is time to go even farther, inspired by the richness of our diversities and the common cause of our humanity.

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Index

Note: page numbers followed by *n* refer to notes, with note number.

- ABC: gender and race of on-air news personalities, 145–46, 147; ownership and control of, 144–45
- abortion(s): back-alley, as argument for legalized abortion, 93, 94, 101; declining number, reasons for, 89; importance to reproductive freedom, 91; opposition to, as legitimate individual choice, 95–96, 102
- abortion providers, violence and threats against, 88, 92, 205n50
- abortion rights: author’s *Village Voice* article on, 91–93; and beginning of life, 96; conservatives’ relative success in challenging, 100; declining ethical legitimacy of, 17, 19, 81, 86, 88, 89–90, 91, 93; inclusion of intersectionality concerns in unified feminist action on, 44; ongoing backlash against, 87, 88, 90; opponents of, as well-funded, 103; potential loss of, 12, 77, 162; practical constraints on poor and rural women, xiii, 42–43, 77, 87, 103; pro-choice arguments, 93–99; pro-choice as moral position, 99; and pro-choice stance vs. moral relativism, 97–98; public support for, xiii, 17, 76; range of women’s views on, 95–99; regional differences in views on, 90; and separation of church and state, 94–99, 102–3; as shared goals across feminisms, 12; successes in defending, 88–89; trend toward greater legal restrictions on, 76–77, 86–88, 89, 90; women’s development of defensive attitude toward, 89–90, 93, 103
- “Abortion without Apology” (Chancer), 91–93
- academia: increased focus on gender and intersectionality, 18–19; penetration of feminist ideas and issues in, 137
- The Accused* (1988 film), 122
- ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union), 85
- Adler, Freda, 113, 114, 188n74
- adoption by LGBTQ persons, state laws restricting, 74
- ageism: in film industry, 153; films and television shows addressing, 152–53; and lookism, 142, 152–53, 156–57; in television news, 149, 216–17nn37–41
- Ain’t I a Woman (*hooks*), 8
- Alcoff, Linda, 190n26
- Alliance for Defending Freedom, 81
- All the Rage (*Walters*), 19–20
- Amazon Odyssey (*Atkinson*), 38
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), 85

American Psychiatric Association, removal of homosexuality from list of mental disorders, 83

Ansari, Aziz, 129

Anthony, Susan B., 7, 10, 163

Atkinson, Ti-Grace, 164, 165

Barbie dolls, new ethnic and racial diversity of, 127

Bechdel Test, 151

Beddoes, Zanny Minton, 158

Benedict, Helen, 19

Bernstein, Elizabeth, 22, 187n70

Beyoncé: as entrepreneur, 158; as feminist,x, 2, 137; on magazine covers, 157

binary thinking: feminist critiques of, 36, 40–41, 171, 172–73; of feminists, 36–38, 40–41; of feminists, opponents accusations of, 35–36; media and, 36; in U.S. culture, 36

Black Feminist Thought (*Collins*), 8, 19, 44

Black Lives Matter movement, success of, 68

Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman (*Wallace*), 11

Blau, Francine D., 60, 62–63

blogs, feminist, 5

Bordo, Susan, 26

Boxer, Barbara, 52

breadwinner status, as requirement for masculinity, 124–25

Broadchurch (TV series), 122–23

bullying in schools: campaigns against, 130; and compulsory masculinities, 127–28

The Bully Society (*Klein*), 128

Bumiller, Kristin, 22, 187n69

Burke, Tarana, 4–5

Burns, Ursula, 58

Butler, Judith, 118, 190n26

Byerly, Carolyn, 215–16n33

CARASA (Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse), 80

Carmichael, Stokely, 10

CBS: gender and race of on-air news personalities, 145–46, 147; ownership and control of, 144–45

Chastain, Jessica, 154

child-rearing work: career effects of taking leave for, 64–65; flexible work provisions and, 65, 187n72; men’s increasing share of, 15; women’s disproportionate share of, 6, 15, 48, 64

children: as disadvantage to working women, 63; ongoing traditional gender roles in books and toys for, 127

Chi-Raq (2015 film), 68

Chisholm, Shirley, 1

Chittal, Nisha, 5

A Choice Not an Echo (*Schlaftly*), 29–30

Civil Rights Act. *See* Title VII of Civil Rights Act

CK, Louis, 129

Clinton, Hillary: calls for imprisonment of, as sexist, xi, 26, 55–56; defeat in 2016 election, xi, 2, 50, 55–56

Clinton, William J. “Bill”: and LGBTQ rights, 83; and Violence Against Women Act, 106–7

Collins, Patricia Hill, 8, 19, 44, 163–64, 174

Collins, Susan, 52

Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA), 80

compulsive heterosexuality, 121, 122, 170

compulsive masculinity, 121, 170

compulsory heterosexuality, 111, 121–22, 190n26

“Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (Rich), 121

compulsory masculinity, 111, 121–22, 170

Concerned Women for America, 34

Congress, number of women in, 52–53, 193–94n32

Connell, R. W., 110

consciousness-raising, as strategy to combat divisiveness, 31, 46, 165

Conyers, John, 136

Cortez Masto, Catherine, 53

cosmetics industry: and looksism, 141–42; and men, 141, 213–14n4

cosmetic surgery: acceptability of, as issue, 39–40; as gendered and racialized, 141–42, 214nn6–7

Cosmopolitan magazine, 156–57, 221n76

Crenshaw, Kimberle, 8, 44, 163, 173

crime: nonviolent, convergence of male and female commission rates, 113–14; violent, high percentage of male perpetrators, 23, 113–15, 210–11nn30–31, 211n33. *See also* violence against women

cultural feminism, vs. poststructuralism, 190n26

cultural framing, importance in activism for sexual and reproductive freedom, 101–3

cultural representations: of compulsory masculinity, 122–23; feminism’s effect on portrayals of races and classes in, 135; feminism’s effect on portrayals of women in, 135–36; and gender consciousness, increase in, 135, 136; and mainstreaming of feminist issues, 18, 134, 157–58, 170; portrayals of LGBTQ persons in, 20, 85–86; relevance to other feminist issues, 135; women in politics in, 51. *See also* magazines; media; movie industry; music industry; news media; television

cultural representations, sexist: impact on girls, 160; mixed success in removing, 18–20; removal of, as broadly shared feminist goal, 13

cultural transformation: educational program for, 130–31, 133; reeducation of men necessary for, 129–31, 133, 169–70. *See also* social justice

culture industries: broad, forceful action required against, 159–60, 171; feminist influence on, 158; gender and racial parity of ownership as goal of, 171; intersectionality issues in, 159; male dominance of, xiii, 20–21, 170–71; ongoing issues in, 158–59; women of color entrepreneurs in, 158. *See also* cultural representations; magazines; media; movie industry; music industry; news media; television

culture wars, and divide between feminist and nonfeminist women, 166

Davis, Viola, 154

daycare, universal: importance as feminist issue, 69–71; importance for poor and working-class women, 43, 50, 65–66, 174; inclusion of intersectionality concerns in unified feminist action on, 43, 44, 50, 69–70, 174; lack of, as barrier to gender parity, 14–16, 49–50, 62–64, 66, 169; need for mass feminist protests to demand, 68–69; reasons for lack of progress on, 68–69, 71–72; and unity of housewives and working women, 71, 167; as unrealized feminist goal, 14–15, 43, 169; U.S. lag in adopting vs. other countries, 15–16, 43, 66–67, 198–99n86

Day without Women (2017), 68

de Beauvoir, Simone, 7, 143, 164

Defense of Marriage Act of 1997, 83, 84

The Destruction of Hillary Clinton (*Bordo*), 26

The Dialectic of Sex (*Firestone*), 7

divisiveness: and divide between feminist and nonfeminist women, 166–67; and election of 2016, 45; as impediment to progressive social movements, 11–12, 26, 44–45, 165, 171–72; as product of frustration, 172

divisiveness in feminist movement: avoiding, as key to future progress, 26; on child-care issues, 40; competition between women as source of, 46; consciousness-raising strategies to combat, 31, 46, 165; criticisms of one-dimensional (white) feminism, 41–42; effort to heal, 167; frequency of, 26; as impediment to political power, 11–12, 30–31, 42, 44, 78–79, 104, 167; judgmental attitudes and, 36–39; need for coalitions to overcome, 167; as result of frustration, 45, 165; sex debates and, 39–40, 46; sexism as ultimate source of, xii, 31; as source of rancor, xii, 163; sources of, 31, 165

domestic violence: and battered women’s syndrome, 107; limited effectiveness of new laws on, 107–8, 208n10; mixed success in reducing, 112; as social rather than private ill, 106

“Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, 83, 84, 202n26

Dowd, Maureen, 151

Duckworth, Tammy, 53

Dungey, Channing, 145

DuVernay, Ava, 154

Dworkin, Andrea, 39

Eagle Forum, 34

economic inequalities, intersectionality theorist’s focus on, 8

economic power, mixed success in attaining gender parity in, 56

education and gender parity: faculty with children and, 63; mixed success in attaining, 49, 58–60; need for feminist reeducation of men, 129–31, 133, 169–70; need for gender studies as required curriculum, 130, 133, 169–70; ongoing discrepancies in traditionally gendered fields, 59–60; ongoing gender-skewed patterns in choice of fields, 59, 61

Eisenstein, Zillah, 8

election of 2016: analysis necessary to understand, 172; Clinton’s defeat in, 2; and conservative efforts to downsize government, 72; democratic divisiveness in, 45; feminists’ anger at Clinton’s defeat, xi; and gender parity in politics, 50; and news media gender consciousness, 136; potential effect of Clinton’s defeat on other women candidates, 55–56; presence of feminist issues in, 2, 158; and resurgence of feminist activism, x

emotion: as human motivation, 171–72; restraint of, as requirement of masculinity, 124

employment, equality of opportunity and pay in: criticism of housewives implicit in activism for, 30; lack of daycare and, 14–16; mixed success of movement for, 14–16, 56; movie industry and, 152, 154; number of women in management positions, 56–57; reluctance of men to take traditionally female jobs, 24, 116, 117. *See also* workforce, women in; workforce and gender parity

equal participation in public spheres: as broadly shared feminist goal, 12–13. *See also* employment, equality of opportunity and pay in; gender parity

Equal Rights Amendment (ERA): defeat of, 34, 38; efforts to stop, 30, 34; introduction of, as feminist success, 33; legislation accomplishing similar goals, 14; NOW and, 1 “Essentializing Manhood in the Street” (De La Terra), 128

expansion of human choice: as broadly shared feminist goal, 17, 73–74; feminists’ support for, over constraints of tradition, 73–74; sexual and reproductive freedom as, 17. *See also* sexual and reproductive freedom

Families That Work (Gornick and Meyers), 15

family, nuclear, claimed feminist desire to destroy, 30

Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, 66–67

family care benefits: conservative efforts to downsize government and, 72; lack of, as barrier to gender parity, 67, 169; need for mass feminists protests to demand, 68–69; U.S. lag in providing, vs. other countries, 67. *See also* daycare; parental leave

Family Research Council, 34

Fanning, Eric, 84

Feinstein, Diane, 52

The Feminine Mystique (Friedan), 1, 7, 93–94

feminism(s): multiple forms of, 6; and psychosocial awareness, 171–72; support for freedom and choice over constraints of tradition, 17, 73–74; in third wave feminism, 8–9. *See also* divisiveness in feminist movement

The Feminists, 10

Feminist Fantasies (*Schlafly*), 32

feminist goals, broadly shared, 12–13; elimination of violence against women as, 13, 22; equal participation in public spheres as, 12–13; expansion of human choice as, 17, 73–74; and intersectionality, 42–44, 69–70, 166, 173, 174, 175–76; public support for, 3–4; removal of sexist cultural representations as, 13; sexual and reproductive freedom as, 13, 16; as source of unity, 42; themes relevant to future progress toward, 25–27. *See also* progress toward feminist goals

feminist issues: media mainstreaming of, 18, 134, 157–58, 170; persistence of, ix–x, 4, 12

feminist label: Beyoncé’s adoption of, x, 2, 137; common disavowal of, ix, 3, 167; growth in popularity, 2; imprecise meaning of, 2; percentage of population adopting, 3; as stigma, in antifeminist view, 33

feminist movement, waves of, 6–9; and building of one generation on another, 164. *See also specific waves*

feminists, required behavior for: debate on, 30, 38, 39, 40; inadequate treatment in feminist theory, 38

feminist thought: increasing subtlety of, 175; rejection of binary thinking, 36, 40–41, 171, 172–73

Ferraro, Geraldine, 50

fifth wave feminism, 175

Fifty Shades of Gray, 40

Firestone, Shulamith, 7, 164

First Amendment separation of church and state: and abortion rights, 94–99, 102–3; conservative strategies to undermine, 80–81, 100; importance to feminist agenda, 80, 81; and LGBTQ rights, 100, 103

first wave feminism, 6–7; appropriate focus for issues of period, 10; criticisms of, 163; ignoring of people of color, 7, 10, 163

Forbes magazine, 141, 158

fourth wave feminism, 9

Franken, Al, 49, 129, 136

Freedom for Women (*Giardina*), 41

Friedan, Betty, 1, 7, 15, 32, 93–94, 164

gay marriage. *See* same-sex marriage legalization

gender, poststructuralist views on, 190n26

gender-based issues: ongoing importance of, 167–68; ties with other social issues, 167–68

gender parity: definition of, 47; in economic power, mixed success in attaining, 56; and mass protest, effectiveness of, 67–68; movement toward, 47; rise and stall pattern in, 48, 60–62

gender parity in education: discrepancies in tenure-track job placements, 59–60; faculty with children and, 49; mixed success in attaining, 49, 58–60; ongoing gender-skewed patterns in choice of fields, 59, 61

gender parity in home: gender socialization and, 64; women's disproportionate share of housework and child-rearing work, 6, 15, 48, 64

gender parity in politics: cultural representations and, 51; mixed success in attaining, 50–53; rise and stall pattern in, 54–55, 193–94n321; U.S. lag in vs. other countries, 48–49, 52, 53–55; women's confidence gap and, 55

gender parity in workforce: children and, 63; daycare and, 49–50, 62–64, 67; imbrication of public and private life and, 62–63; mixed success in attaining, 48, 49, 56–58; parental leave provisions and, 62; rise and stall pattern in, 60–62; sexual harassment as barrier to, 49; U.S. lag in, vs. other countries, 61, 62

gender roles: media impact on public perception of, 18; ongoing traditional gender roles in children's books and toys, 127

gender-sexuality system, conformity to, in masculinity, 125–27

gender studies, need for adoption as required curriculum, 130, 133, 169–70

Gerson, Kathleen, 4, 44

Gillibrand, Kirsten, 52

Givhan, Robin, 222n83

Golden Globe Awards (2018),xi

Goldwater, Barry, 29

Gornick, Janet, 44

governors of U.S. states, poor gender parity in, 52

Grace & Frankie (2014 television series), 153

Haley, Nikki, 51

Hammer, Bonnie, 158

Hampton Institute, 53

Harris, Kamala, 53

Hartmann, Heidi, 8

Hayden, Tom, 10

hegemonic masculinity, 110

Heine, Friederike, 198–99n86

heterosexism: enculturation in males, 170; increasing cultural disapproval of, 86; need for school-based education on, 130; ties to sexism, 118, 123

heterosexuality: claimed feminist opposition to, 30; compulsive, 121, 122, 170; compulsory, 111, 121–22, 190n26; as requirement of masculinity, 118, 123, 126; as socially constructed, Rich on, 121

High Profile Crimes (*Chancer*), 36

Hill, Steven, 53

history of feminist movement, value of knowing,xii–xiv, 163–65

Hochschild, Arlie Russell, 64, 173

Hoffman, Dustin, 136

Hollywood. *See* movie industry

homosexuality, removal from list of mental disorders, 83. *See also entries under* LGBTQ

hooks, bell, 8, 10, 163
 Horono, Mazie, 53
 House of Representatives: first woman elected to, 1; number of women in, 52, 193–94n32; women of color in, 53
 housewives: claimed feminist devaluing of, 30, 36–37, 47–48, 71; divisiveness separating feminists from, 166–67; Schlafly’s binary opposition to feminists, 32–33, 35–36, 36–37
 housework, women’s disproportionate share of, 6, 48, 64
 human beings, emotional and rational components of, 171–72
 Human Rights Campaign, 84–85, 203n30
 Hyde Amendment of 1976, 43, 77, 87, 103
 Iger, Robert, 145
 immigration policies, and feminist commitment to address intersectionality, 69
 In an Abusive State (*Bumiller*), 22, 187n69
 India, violence against women in, 113, 210n25
 Inter-Parliamentary Union, 53
 intersectionality: addressing of, as means to heal divisiveness in feminist movement, 167; culture industries and, 159; daycare and, 43, 44, 50, 69–70, 174; definition of, 2; and divisiveness in feminist movement, 41–42; and election of 2016, 2; and feminist involvement in range of issues, 69; and freedom in intimate life choices, 82; incorporation into unified feminist action, 42–44; increased focus of academics on, 18–19; and integrating feminisms as key to future progress, 25; and legal reforms to address violence against women, 108–9, 131, 133; masculinities and, 25, 125, 128; need for inclusion in unified feminist action, 42–44, 69–70, 166, 173, 174, 175–76; renewed progress in addressing, xi; and reproductive justice, 79–80; second wave feminism and, xii–xiii; and sexual and reproductive freedom, 42–43, 82, 103–4; and standpoint positions, 44, 50, 70, 104, 131–32, 166, 174; third wave feminism and, 7–8, 162. *See also* one-dimensional (white) feminism
 intimate life choices, freedom in. *See* sexual and reproductive freedom
 Jefferson, Margo, 10, 164
 judgmental attitudes in feminists, and divisiveness, 36–39
 Kahn, Laurence M., 60, 62–63
 Karp, Lila, 164
 Kavanaugh, Brett, 3, 77
 Kennedy, Florynce, 10
 Kimmel, Michael, 121
 Kozachenko, Kathy, 83
 Langley, Donna, 158
 Latin America, heroism of women migrants from, 66
 Lauer, Matt, 145
 leave benefits: Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, 66; U.S. lag in providing, vs. other countries, 199n86. *See also* parental leave

Lefkowitz, Bernard, 120

left-wing movements of 1960s-70s, sexism in, xii–xiii, 9–10

leisure gap, 64, 173, 223n6

LGBTQ persons: bullying of, 127–28, 212n52; criticism of feminists for failure to adequately address, 42; deterministic vs. choice-based accounts of sexuality of, 82; and “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, 83, 84, 202n26; media portrayals of, 20, 85–86; normalization in cultural representations, 86; state laws restricting adoption by, 74

LGBTQ rights: cultural framing of issue, 101–3; cultural permeation of, 85–86; and feminist goals, 13, 16; and First Amendment separation of church and state, 100, 103; increasing public support for, 75, 76; milestones in history of, 83–84; ongoing backlash against, 74–75, 76, 100–101, 169; ongoing risk of reversals in, 100–101; public opinion on, 75; recent cultural recognition of, 13, 16, 169; state efforts to restrict, 84–85, 203n30, 204n34; successful positioning within antidiscrimination framework, 81, 82, 102. *See also* same-sex marriage legalization

looksism: and ageism, 142, 152–53, 156–57; and attraction, denial of complexity of, 142–43, 160; compulsory masculinity and, 126; cosmetics industry and, 141–42; definition of, 141; difficulty of overcoming, 160; films and television shows addressing, 152–53; importance of overcoming, 160; in magazines, 156–57; in media, 141, 142–43, 144; in movie industry, 138, 143, 151–53, 159; in television news, 149, 216–17nn37–42; as tool to maintain sexist status quo, 159; women of color and, 142

Mackinnon, Catherine, 39

Madonna, 38

magazines: gender and race parity levels in, 156–57; increased presence of feminist issues in, 157–58; and looksism, 156–57; top women’s magazines, 156; women’s magazines, ownership of, 156, 221n76

Malcolm X, 165

marginalized masculinity, 110

Marry Smart (*Patton*), 35

Martinez, Susana, 53

Marx, Karl, 160, 164–65

Marxist feminists, criticism of second wave feminism, 41

Marxist theory, hesitancy to lay out plans for future society, 38, 190n22

masculinities: academic study of, 109; and breadwinner status, as requirement, 124–25; compulsive, 121, 170; compulsory, 111, 121–22, 170; and conformity to gender-sexuality system, 125–27; cultural representations of, 122–23; disease analog for, 119; and emotional restraint, requirement for, 124; and heterosexual bias, 118, 123, 126; intersectionality and, 25, 125, 128; men’s insufficient revolution against, 110; and need for reeducation of men, 129–31, 133, 169–70; nontoxic forms of, 25; ongoing influence in U.S. culture, 127–29; reinforcement across generations of men, 120–21, 126; as root of sexism, 118–19, 122–23; as root of violence against women, 23–24, 24–25, 118–20, 130–31, 132; segments of men free from, 128; as spur to violence,

128; stigmatization of individuals rejecting, 123; toxic, 111; transformation of, as means of addressing violence against women, 23–24, 24–25; types of, 110

Maslow, Azalee, 156–57

mass incarceration: increased penalties for violence against women and, 22, 108–9, 112, 131, 187nn69–70; and women as offenders, 187n69

mass protest by women: in 2017, 68; defensive attitudes and, 103; effectiveness of, 67–68; necessity of, for social justice, 167; new focus on intersectionality in, 68–69; against Trump, 3, 28, 31, 68, 162–63, 165–66; unity of Women’s Marches, 165–66

mayors of U.S. cities, poor gender parity in, 53

McCarthy, Melissa, 137, 153

media: and binary thinking, 36; looksism in, 141, 142–43, 144; and perception of feminist progress,xiii. *See also* cultural representations; magazines; movie industry; music industry; news media; television

media and gender parity: as categorical imperative, 140–41; lack of, 139–41; possible effects of, 140, 141; rise and stall pattern in, 148, 155, 215–16n33

media ownership and control: feminists’ early failure to address, 138, 151; potential difference between ownership and control, 143–44, 158; as still male-dominated, 138, 139–41, 158–59, 213n2

men: claimed feminist hatred of, 30, 36–37; as high percentage of violent crime perpetrators, 23, 113–15, 169, 210–11nn30–31, 211n33; as high percentage of violent crime victims, 115; and masculinities, insufficient revolution against, 110; need for feminist reeducation of, 129–31, 133, 169–70; sexist attitudes, en-culturation of, 110–11, 170; and stigma of jobs traditionally occupied by women, 24, 116, 117; unresolved conflicts in feminist view of, 38. *See also* masculinities; poor and working-class men

men, cultural expectations of: and compulsory heterosexuality, 111, 121–22; and compulsory masculinity, 111, 121–22, 170; insufficient change in, 111, 129–30, 133; limited effect of feminisms on, 109, 116–17

men of color: equal share of power, inadequate progress toward, 58; and legal remedies for violence against women, 22, 108–9, 112, 131, 187nn69–70; and masculinities, 128

Merkel, Angela, 52, 199n86

Me Too movement: and due process rights,x–xi, 5–6, 133; effectiveness of,x, 3, 4–5; as evidence of pervasive sexism and misogyny, 129, 162; as expression of feminist consciousness, 3; and increasing unity of women, 166; as indictment of male domination in culture industries, 20–21, 139, 159, 171; origins of, 4–5, 182n15; and potential progress toward feminist goals,x; powerful men brought down by, 129, 136; and removal of men from television news, 145–46, 148

Milano, Alyssa, 5

military, U.S.: “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, 83, 84, 202n26; first openly gay Secretary of Army, 84

Milk, Harvey, 83

Millett, Kate, 7, 164

Miranda, Lin-Manuel, 84

Miss America pageant, feminist protests against, 1, 151

models, racial parity in, 222n83

Moonves, Leslie, 145

Moore, Demi, 152, 219n57

Moore, Roy, 129, 136

movie industry: feminist protests against sexist content, 151; and inclusivity index, low score on, 154; increased presence of feminist issues in, 157–58; looksism in, 138, 143, 151–53, 159; male dominance of, xiii, 20–21, 150–54, 159, 218n48; #MeToo movement as indictment of male domination in, 20–21, 139, 159; ownership and control, feminists' early failure to address, 138, 151; and pay equality, 154; penetration of feminist ideas and issues in, 137; race-related criticisms of, 154

Ms. magazine, 32

music industry: big three recording labels, 155–56, 220nn72–74; gender and race parity levels in, 155–56; increased presence of feminist issues in, 157–58; penetration of feminist ideas and issues in, 137

National Organization of Women (NOW): Friedan and, 32; impact of, 1; working-class women and women of color's involvement in, 10

NBC: gender and race of on-air news personalities, 145–46, 147; ownership and control of, 144–45

neoliberal regime, and stalling of feminist progress, 187nn69–70

news media: and gender consciousness, increase in, 136; increased presence of feminist issues in, 157–58. *See also* newspapers; television news

newspapers: gender and race of board members, 148–49; gender and race of staffs, 147–48

New York Times, 57, 80–81, 92, 110

Noble, Elaine, 83

Nooyi, Indra K., 57

North Carolina: constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, 101; and transgender bathroom use, 75, 85

Obama, Barack: support for freedom in intimate life choices, 74; support for gay marriage, 76, 100

Obergefell v. Hodges (2015), 16

Occupy Wall Street movement, success of, 68

one-dimensional (white) feminism: criticisms of, 41–42; criticisms of second wave feminism for, 41, 163–64; as off-putting for some potential feminists, 43–44. *See also* intersectionality

Oppenheimer, Noah, 145

opponents of feminism: critique of binary thinking in feminists, 35–36; critiques of feminist views, 30, 32; current critiques of feminism, 34–35; as large, well-funded network, 33; as ongoing challenge, 29; organizations among, 34. *See also* Schlafly, Phyllis

O'Reilly, Bill, 5

Palin, Sarah, 50

parental leave: career effects of, 64–65; and Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, 66; lack of, as barrier to gender parity, 62

Parks, Rosa, 10

part-time work, legal protections for change from full-time work to, 67

Pascal, Amy, 150

Pascoe, C. J., 121, 170

patriarchal conditioning, and invisibility of sexism, 26

Patton, Susan, 35

Pelosi, Nancy, 51–52

Philip Morris cigarette ads, 29, 30, 47–48

physical control of women, as key to patriarchal authority, 7

politics, women in: and confidence gap, 55; in cultural representations, 51; mixed success in attaining gender parity, 50–53; rise and stall pattern in, 54–55, 193–94n32; U.S. lag in gender parity vs. other countries, 48–49, 52, 53–55

Pollitt, Katha, 81, 207n67

poor and working-class men: and breadwinner expectation, 125; and increased penalties for violence against women, 22, 108–9, 112, 131, 187nn69–70; and masculinities, 128; sexism as only outlet for masculinity for, 125

poor and working-class women: importance of daycare for, 43, 50, 65–66, 174; involvement in second wave feminism,xii–xiii, 10–11, 41, 164; need for daycare, 65–66; practical constraints on abortion rights for,xiii, 42–43, 77, 87, 103. *See also* intersectionality

pornography, as issue, 39

Porter, Ron,x

postfeminism, debate on,ix

poststructuralism, and feminist theory, 40–41, 190n26

power, equal share of: gender parity as measure of, 47; men of color’s inadequate progress toward, 58; women of color’s inadequate progress toward, 48, 53, 57–58. *See also* gender parity

power dynamics: cultural representations and, 13; feminists’ exposure of, 4, 9; increased cultural consciousness about, 106. *See also* gender parity; violence against women

private and public spheres, imbrication of, 16; as basic principle of feminism, 27, 171, 173; emphasis on, as key to future feminist successes, 26–27; and necessity of government intervention, 16; working women and, 49, 50, 61–62

progressive social movements: divisiveness as impediment to, 11–12, 26, 44–45, 165, 171–72; need for feminist alliances with, 174; support of educated elite for, 175

progress toward feminist goals: alliances with other progressive movements, benefits of, 174; and analysis, role of, 168; concerns about loss of, 3; divisiveness in feminist movement as impediment to, 11–12, 30–31, 42, 44, 78–79, 104, 167; intersectionality and, 42–44, 69–70, 166, 173, 174, 175–76; issues in assessment of,xiii; neoliberal regime and, 187nn69–70; pattern of rise and stall in, 14, 60–62, 168; persistent

challenges to, 31; recent renewal of, x–xii, 5; themes relevant to, 25–27; unfinished work, strategies for addressing, 168–69; unity and, 175. *See also* gender parity; mass protest by women

progress toward feminist goals, mixed success of, 1, 4, 6; in diminishing violence against women, 21–23, 106–9, 111–12, 115, 169, 207–8nn5–7, 209nn19–20, 210n26; in economic power, 56; in equality of employment opportunity and pay, 14–16, 56; in gender parity in education, 49, 58–60; as inspiration toward further action, 72; in politics, 50–53; in removing sexist cultural representations, 18–20; in sexual and reproductive freedom, 16–18. *See also* gender parity

prostitution, as issue, 39

psychosocial awareness, as feminist principle, 171–72

Pulse nightclub shooting, 84, 128

Queers for Economic Justice, 80, 103–4

queer theories, and binary thinking, 41

race and class differences. *See* intersectionality

racial justice movement of 1960s–70s, sexism in, xii–xiii, 9–10

rape and sexual assault: efforts to recall judge giving light sentence for, 106; limited effectiveness of new laws on, 107; of mentally retarded girl by football players (1991), 120; as persistent problem, 4, 12, 106–9. *See also* violence against women

Ratner, Brett, 136

Reconcilable Differences (*Chancer*), 26

Redstockings, 10

Redstone, Shari, 145

Redstone, Sumner, 145

reproductive freedom: cultural framing of issue, 101–3; as ethical position respecting individual choice, 101–2; importance of abortion to, 91; improvements in some areas, 88–89; increase in, 88; reproductive justice as importance component of, 79–80; trend toward restrictions on, 169. *See also* abortion rights; sexual and reproductive freedom

reproductive justice: definition of, 79; importance to reproductive freedom, 79–80

Revolutionary Road (*Yates*), 93

Rhodes, David, 145

Rich, Adrienne, 111, 121

Right to Life movement, and moral high ground, 93

Roberts, Brian L., 145

Roe v. Wade (1973): as feminist success, 33–34; possible overturning of, 77. *See also* abortion rights

Rohlinger, Deana, 207n66

Rose, Charlie, 136, 146

Ross, Karen, 215–16n33

sadomasochism, acceptability of, as issue, 40

sadomasochism of everyday life, 21

same-sex marriage legalization, 16, 75, 84, 202n24; backlash against, 169; Obama's support for, 75–76, 84, 100; public opinion on, 76

Schlafly, Phyllis: as antifeminist activist, 29–30, 32, 34, 166; binary opposition of feminists and wives/mothers, 32–33, 35–36, 36–37; and moral high ground on abortion, 93; and STOP ERA movement, 30

Schumer, Amy, 18, 126, 137

Scully, Diana, 119–20

SDS. *See* Students for a Democratic Society

The Second Sex (de Beauvoir), 7, 143

second shift. *See* housework, women's disproportionate share of

The Second Shift (Hochschild), 64

second wave feminism, 14–16; anticapitalism and antiracism of, 164; appropriate focus for issues of period, 9–10; criticism by young feminists, 164; criticism for one-dimensionality, 41, 163–64; and growth of feminist awareness, 3; mixed success of, x, 4, 6, 16–18; notable events of, 1, 7; notable figures of, 164; schism within, 30–31; suffering endured by supporters of, 164; unfinished work of, 168; value of acknowledging contributions of, 163–65; working-class women and women of color's involvement in, xii–xiii, 10–11, 41, 164

Senate: number of women in, 52, 193–94n32; women of color in, 53

Sessions, Jeffrey, 81

sexism: dividing of women by, xii, 31, 46; enculturation in males, 110–11, 170; invisibility of, through patriarchal conditioning, 26; masculinities as root of, 118–19, 122–23; need for school-based education on, 130, 133; relentless focus on, as key to future feminist progress, 25–26; ties to het-erosexism, 118, 123

sexual and reproductive freedom: backlash against, as ongoing, 74; as basic feminist principle, 169; benefits of viewing sexual and reproductive freedoms jointly, 78–79, 82–83, 101–4; as broadly shared feminist goal, 13, 16; conservative strategies to undermine, 80–81; and control of body as basic feminist principle, 73, 100, 169; deterministic accounts of LGBTQ sexuality and, 82; differing trends in sexual vs. reproductive freedoms, 74, 77; as expansion of human choice, 17; feminisms' support for, over constraints of tradition, 73–74; and feminist opposition to homogeneities by force, 99–100; and intersectionality, 42–43, 82, 103–4; mixed success in obtaining, 16–18; Obama administration support for, 74. *See also* reproductive freedom; sexual freedom

sexual assault. *See* rape and sexual assault

sexual freedom: cultural framing of issue, 101–3; as ethical position respecting individual choice, 101–2. *See also* LGBTQ rights; sexual and reproductive freedom

sexual harassment: changes in attitudes toward, 4; powerful men accused of, 5, 32, 145, 148; as type of violence against women, 21, 107; in workplace, and gender parity, 49. *See also* #MeToo movement

sexual objectification of women: in beauty pageants, 1, 151; in cultural representations, 13; feminist focus on, 7, 136, 151; masculinities and, 118; #MeToo movement and, 159, 171. *See also* looksism

Sexual Politics (*Millett*), 7

She's Beautiful When She's Angry (2014 film), 15

Sidel, Ruth, 44, 66

Silicon Valley, male dominance of, 151

Similac formula ad (2015), 71

Sisters in Crime (*Adler*), 22–23, 188n74

SisterSong, 79

Slutwalks, 5

socialist feminists, criticism of second wave feminism, 41

social justice: feminist alliances with other progressive movements for, 174; necessity of mass feminist movement to achieve, 167. *See also* cultural transformation

social justice movements: divisiveness as impediment to, 11–12, 26, 44–45, 165, 171–72; tendency to criticize founders of, 164–65

social media: feminist activism on, 5; and fourth wave feminism, 9. *See also* #MeToo movement

social welfare benefits: conservative efforts to reduce, 72, 174; importance to many, 72

Something's Gotta Give (2003 film), 152

Spacey, Kevin, 136

Spence, Octavia, 154

standpoint positions: benefits of, 174; on criminal justice system, 131; on daycare, 50; vs. individual standpoints, 44, 70, 104, 174; intersectionality and, 44, 50, 70, 104, 131–32, 166, 174

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, 7

Stanton, Lucy, 10

Star Wars, penetration of feminist ideas in, 137

states: and abortion, trend toward increased restrictions on, 76–77, 87–88, 90; and LGBTQ rights, efforts to restrict, 84–85, 203n30, 204n34

stay-at-home moms. *See* housewives

Steinem, Gloria, 32

Stiller, Ben, 18, 124

Stone, Lucy, 163

Stone, Pamela, 56, 57, 64, 65

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), sexism in, 9–10

subordinated masculinity, 110

Supreme Court: and abortion rights, defense of, 89; and gay marriage, legalization of, 75–76; and LGBTQ rights, 75; and possible overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, 77; on right of Christian baker to refuse wedding services to LGBTQ persons, 74–75. *See also* *Roe v. Wade* (1973)

television: increased presence of feminist issues in, 157–58; network ownership and control in, 144–45; penetration of feminist ideas and issues in, 136–37

television, gender parity levels in: inclusivity index scores, 154; in programs, 155, 220n70; rise and stall pattern of, 155; in staff and management, 155

television news: gender and race of on-air personalities, 145–46, 147; gender and race of staff and management, 146–47, 148; looksism in, 149, 216–17nn37–42; ownership and control of, 144–45

Texas, closing of abortion clinics in, 89, 90

third wave feminism: focus on intersectionality, 7–8, 162; multiple feminisms in, 8–9; principles driving, 161; and revitalization of feminism, 162

Third Wave Fund, 162

title of this book, ix–xii

Title VII of Civil Rights Act, gender provisions in, 14

Trainwreck (2015 film), 18, 126, 137

Trump, Donald: ban on transgender military service, 84; potential reversal of feminist achievements by, 74, 75, 85, 162; and *Roe v. Wade*, 77; sexual harassment accusations against, 49, 129, 136, 166, 172; women’s marches protesting, 3, 28, 31, 68, 162–63, 165–66; women voting for, 2, 44, 174–75

The Truth about Cats and Dogs (1996 film), 152

Tsujihara, Kevin, 150

Turness, Deborah, 145

The Unfinished Revolution (*Gerson*), 4

unity of feminists: broadly shared goals as potential source of, 42; and future impact, 175–76; and inclusion of intersectionality concerns in unified feminist action, 42–44, 69–70, 166, 173, 175–76; political benefits of, 11–12, 30–31, 42, 44, 78–79, 104; recent successes in, 31–32; through synthesis of commonalities and differences, 9, 11–12, 22, 46, 70, 79, 82–83, 103, 130, 132, 162, 166, 173, 175–76. *See also* feminist goals, broadly shared

Valenti, Jessica, 110

Vance, Carole, 39

Vergara, Sofia, 158

Village Voice, 91–93, 162

violence against women: decline across all racial groups, 113; increased cultural consciousness about, 106; as lynchpin of gender-based subordination, 105; masculinities as root of, 23–24, 24–25, 118–20, 130–31, 132; as persistent problem, 4, 12, 107, 169; rates in other countries vs. U.S., 112–13, 209–10nn24–25; view of, before feminist second wave, 105. *See also* domestic violence; rape

violence against women, elimination of: approaches to, 23–25, 129–32; as broadly shared feminist goal, 13, 22; differences and commonalities of women and, 132; mixed success in, 21–23, 106–9, 111–12, 115, 169, 207–8nn5–7, 209nn19–20, 210n26; need for feminist reeducation of men, 129–31, 133, 169–70; rise and stall pattern in, 132

violence against women, legal reforms to address, 107; feminists' demands for, 106, 115; intersectionality concerns and, 108–9, 131, 133; limited effectiveness of, 107–8, 132; and mass incarceration of poor and minority men, 22, 108–9, 112, 187nn69–70; search for alternatives to, 108; sentencing policies and, 131–32; Violence Against Women Act, 21–22, 106–7, 108, 208n10, 209n21
 Violence Against Women Act of 1994, 21–22, 106–7, 208n10, 209n21
Virgin or Vamp (Benedict), 19, 36
 Walden, Dana, 158
 Walker, Rebecca, 161, 163
 Wallace, Michele, 11, 163
 Ward, Erin, 79
 Warren, Elizabeth, 52
 Weinstein, Harvey,x, 4, 5, 20, 49, 129, 136
 Willis, Bruce, 152
 Willis, Ellen, 39
 Wilson, Owen, 124
 Wilteroth, Elaine, 156–57
 Winfrey, Oprah,xi, 158
 Women against Feminism website, 34–35
 women of color: daycare and, 50; entrepreneurs in culture industries, 158; equal share of public power, inadequate progress toward, 48, 53, 57–58; first wave feminism and, 7, 10; involvement in second wave feminism,xii–xiii, 10–11, 41, 164; and looksism, 142; on magazine covers, 156–57; in television management, 145. *See also* intersectionality
 women's marches protesting Trump, 3, 28, 31, 68, 162–63, 165–66
 Women's Media Center, 146
 women's studies programs, refocusing on gender studies, 109
 Woolf, Virginia, 10
 workforce, women in: and confidence gap, 55, 56; feminism's credit for increase in, 47; and flexible work arrangements, benefits of, 65, 187n72; in formerly male-dominated professions, rise and stall pattern in, 61; increases in, 47, 191n1; and jobs reproducing traditional private-sphere labor, 48; taking leave to raise small children, career effects of, 64–65. *See also* employment, equality of opportunity and pay in
 workforce and gender parity: children and, 63; daycare and, 49–50, 62–64; imbrication of public and private life and, 62–63; mixed success in attaining, 48, 49, 56–58; parental leave provisions and, 62; rise and stall pattern of increase in, 60–62; sexual harassment as barrier to, 49; U.S. lag in, vs. other countries, 61, 62
 working-class men. *See* poor and working-class men
 working-class women. *See* poor and working-class women
 working women, as new norm, 33
 Worley, Charles, 100–101
 Yates, Richard, 93

#Yesallwomen,5
Yiannopoulos, Milo, 35, 71, 166

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