THE SCARLET F:
A CONCEPTUAL RE-ENGINEERING OF FEMINISM

THE SCARLET F:

A CONCEPTUAL RE-ENGINEERING OF FEMINISM

By SARAH TURNBULL, B.A (Hons.)

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

Descriptive Note

McMaster University MASTER OF ARTS (2025) Hamilton, Ontario (Philosophy)

TITLE: The Scarlet F: A Conceptual Re-Engineering of Feminism AUTHOR: Sarah Turnbull, B.A. Hons. (St. Francis Xavier University) SUPERVISOR: Dr. Allauren Samantha Forbes NUMBER OF PAGES: viii, 127.

Lay Abstract

Feminism is a powerful tool which allows women to recognize the harms they face, and provides an account of how to address these harms. While feminism is the driving force behind sociopolitical gains for women, it has become marked by excluding marginalized women, by splitting into many branches each with their own understanding of feminism, and by harmful negative stereotypes such as 'man-hating' and 'feminazi'. Feminism has lost its structural integrity; we no longer understand what feminism is or how to engage with it. This project reflects one of the first efforts to evaluate feminism as a concept, highlight its shortcomings, and propose the need for a revised concept. I propose an ameliorative concept of feminism that avoids harmful shortcomings and offers a clearer, more meaningful understanding of feminism.

Abstract

While feminism is a remarkably powerful tool in recognizing and addressing the harms women face, many individuals are quick to suggest abandoning feminism altogether. So often, feminism faces harsh opposition from outsiders. A comprehensive analysis reveals that the issue lies not in the word but in how feminism is conceptually understood. Historical manifestations, factionalization, and negative stereotypes have all clouded understandings of feminism. For starters, historical manifestations of feminism, such as women's education, suffrage, and reproductive autonomy, shape current understandings. These manifestations, however, exclude marginalized women for the social gain of white, upper-class women. As well, feminism has become exceptionally factionalized; each faction has its own meaningful conception of what feminism is, but the number of conceptions eclipses an understanding of feminism. Negative stereotypes have also tainted feminism as a concept such that outsiders have concepts of feminism as 'man-hating' and 'feminazi'. While untrue, these stereotypes have penetrated public conceptions of feminism. Each of the three issues reveals justified motivation for abandoning feminism.

Abandoning feminism certainly removes the aforementioned shortcomings, however, in doing so, women also lose the tool through which they are able to recognize and address the harms they face. Instead of abandoning feminism, I propose a conceptual re-engineering project which aims to ameliorate the harmful shortcomings while working at developing a meaningful, useful concept of feminism. A conceptual re-engineering project promises to evaluate how feminism is understood, identify the cracks in feminism's conceptual foundation, and to repair the cracks by developing an ameliorative concept. Simply put, I will argue for and develop a concept of feminism that avoids

harmful shortcomings previously presented while continuing to preserve the spirit of feminism. Rather than abandon feminism, this project marks an effort to develop a meaningful, useful concept of feminism.

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by extending my gratitude to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement which funded the research for this project. The funding enabled me to conduct high quality research, and create global connections which helped the project to flourish.

Furthermore, I would like to extend my professional thanks to the McMaster Philosophy Department for their support in this project. Specifically, I would like to address my supervisor and second reader; I would not have been able to accomplish this project without their support and assistance. I extend my gratitude to Dr. Ariella Binik for her guidance, assistance, and advice in my endeavours. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Allauren Samantha Forbes for her supervision. Allauren, thank you for believing in this project. I cannot express enough gratitude for your tireless efforts, philosophical conversations, knowing my capabilities, emotional support, and introducing me to how awesome early modern women are. I appreciate the personal and professional support over the last two years, and the willingness to internationally collaborate on this project.

As well, I would like to extend a special thank you to Dr. Jacqueline Broad at Monash University who so graciously took on external consultation through the Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement. Thank you to Monash University for welcoming me as a visiting student. Jacqui, thank you for so readily welcoming me to Monash, equipping me with the necessary resources, and sharing your intellectual resources with myself and the project. Thank you for going above and beyond expectations, and involving me in the Australian philosophy network. You have shown me that the true spirit of philosophy shines brightest through mentorship and collaboration.

Finally, I would not have been able to accomplish this project without the support of my partner, Megan, my parents, Albert and Sheila, my friends, and co-workers. Thank you for taking the time to ask how things are going, and for entertaining my senseless philosophical yapping. Iza, I especially appreciate us having stuck by each other's side through it all. To each and every individual who has played a role in this project, thank you.

Table of Contents

LAY ABSTRACT....iii
ABSTRACT....iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS....vi
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS....ix
DECLARATION....x
INTRODUCTION....1
CHAPTER 1: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF FEMINISM....7
1.1 WOMEN'S EDUCATION....8
1.2 SUFFRAGE....17
1.3 REPRODUCTIVE AUTONOMY....26
CHAPTER 2: THE FACTIONALIZATION OF FEMINISM....35
2.1 LIBERAL FEMINISM....36
2.2 RADICAL FEMINISM....40
2.3 LESBIAN FEMINISM....45
2.4 GENDER CRITICAL FEMINISM....49
2.5 MARXIST FEMINISM....53
2.6 INDIGENOUS FEMINISM....58
2.7 BLACK FEMINISM....64
CHAPTER 3: NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES AS A BARRIER TO SELF-IDENTIFICATION....72
3.1 NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES WITHIN ACTIVISM....73
3.2 NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES OF FEMINISTS....78
3.2.1 THE MAN-HATING FEMINIST....79
3.2.2 THE FEMINAZI....81
3.2.3 THE BRA-BURNER....83
3.2.4 THE FEMINIST MONSTER....85
3.3 HOW NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES ACT AS A BARRIER TO SELF IDENTIFICATION....87
3.3.1 GROUP MEMBERSHIP....88
CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUALLY RE-ENGINEERING FEMINISM....91
4.1 BACK TO THE BASICS....93
4.2 FEMINISM CANNOT BE ROOTED IN EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES....96
4.3 FEMINISM NEEDS TO ACCOUNT FOR THE VARIOUS WAYS WOMEN ARE HARMED....101
4.4 FEMINISM MUST MAINTAIN INTRACOMMUNITY RESISTANCE....104
4.5 WHAT SHOULD A CONCEPT OF FEMINISM BE?....106
4.6 OBJECTIONS....112
CONCLUSION....116
BIBLIOGRAPHY....120

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

Brazilian Federation for the Advancement of Women (BFAW)

Combahee River Collective (CRC)

Gender Critical Feminism (GCF)

Idle No More (INM)

Intrauterine Device (IUD)

Mississippi Appendectomy (MA)

Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement (MSFSS)

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

Social Justice Warrior (SJW)

Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminism (TERF)

Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)

Declaration of Academic Achievement

I, Sarah Jessica Turnbull, hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been completed in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts. As well, this thesis is completed in fulfillment of the requirements for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Canadian Graduate Scholarship for Masters Students and the Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement Award.

This thesis has not been included in another thesis submitted to McMaster or to another institution. I am the sole author of this document, and to the best of my knowledge it does not infringe on any copyrights. My supervisor, Dr. Allauren, Samantha Forbes, second reader, Dr. Ariella Binik, and external consultation, Dr. Jacqueline Broad (Monash University), have provided guidance and support for the research of the project which I have conducted.

INTRODUCTION

I begin this project with a distant memory from my undergraduate degree. During my third year, I had the opportunity to take my first feminist philosophy course. The course was run in a discussion-based format, and students were encouraged to share their philosophical quandaries in response to weekly prompts. Around midway through the course, the class was provided with the prompt "What is feminism?" I sat patiently with my thoughts, and let my mind dance through a number of conceptions of feminism. As I finally settled on a conception I deemed worthy of sharing, a male classmate (let's call him J) raised his hand. "How silly," I thought, "a man is going to explain what feminism is." J began to explain how feminism has become obscured by stereotypes of aggression and radicalism, and that it was time to move on from feminism. *Surely all feminists are not aggressive*, I thought to myself. J suggested that we should abandon feminism entirely and following his comments, a number of my other classmates raised their hands to express their sympathy. I was astounded by how many students agreed with the claim to abandon feminism.

From my limited understanding of feminism at the time, I took it to be a powerful, and necessary, tool for women to resist and address systemic inequalities they experience by way of their gender. Indeed, feminism has, and continues to, address the multitude of disadvantages that women face. The dissonance in my own understanding of feminism and the class' understandings of feminism exposed the lack of a clear and consistent understanding of the concept – some thought feminism to be a powerful tool while others thought it to be a hostile and aggressive movement; there was clearly a

need to re-evaluate how we understand feminism as a concept. So, I came to the conclusion that there is motivation to conceptually re-engineering feminism.

To understand what conceptual re-engineering is, I must first begin with conceptual *engineering*. Conceptual engineering projects are not merely crafting novel definitions or concepts; they require a deconstruction of current paradigms, an exposition of the need for new concepts, and development of new ones. In recent years, scholarship on conceptual engineering has proliferated, with discussions being led by philosophers such as Sally Haslanger[1] and David Chalmers.[2] Perhaps most renowned is Haslanger's work on conceptual engineering which understands conceptual engineering to ask the questions "What is X?" and "What does X set out to be/do?"[3] A Haslangerian approach to conceptual engineering seeks out both a descriptive and normative answer. In addition to Haslanger, Chalmers defines conceptual engineering as "...the design, implementation, and evaluation of concepts."[4] Chalmers understands that each alone, namely designing, evaluating, and implementing, is a "...mode of conceptual engineering."[5] Both Haslanger and Chalmers provide the groundwork to understand the conceptual *re-engineering* at work in this project.

If Haslanger's and Chalmers' understanding of conceptual engineering is applied to feminism, one would seek to ask and evaluate what feminism is, what it sets out to do, and embark on designing and implementing an *entirely new* understanding of feminism. Indeed, if I were to concede to my

[1] Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" *Noûs* 34, no. 1 (2000): 31–55.
[2] David Chalmers, "What is Conceptual Engineering and What Should It Be?" *Inquiry*, (2020): 1-17.
[3] Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" 32.
[4] Chalmers, "What is Conceptual Engineering and What Should It Be?" 1.
[5] Chalmers, 3.

classmates' proposal and abandon feminism, a conceptual engineering project would be appropriate. However, I want to commit to and argue for, instead, preserving and refining our understanding of feminism.

I am not embarking on a conceptual engineering project, but instead a conceptual *re-engineering* project. Unlike conceptual engineering, a conceptual *re-engineering* project seeks to rescue a concept from its shortcomings while retaining the concept's fundamental structure. Scholars often compare conceptual re-engineering to building a bridge; much like engineers fix bridges, philosophers fix concepts. If a bridge happens to be constructed on an unstable foundation, an engineer is called in to re-evaluate, and determine where the cracks lay to prevent the bridge from collapsing. In the same way, a conceptual re-engineering project takes place when a concept has a shaky foundation but is worthy of rescue. Chalmers explains that conceptual re-engineering "...[is] fixing the old concept expressed by the word".[6] Using Chalmers' understanding of conceptual reengineering as applied to feminism, a conceptual re-engineering project promises to ameliorate the shortcomings of feminism while preserving the spirit of feminism – recognizing that women are disproportionately harmed in a way that men are not.

The conceptual re-engineering project I will engage in unfolds over four chapters. First, I must explain that current understandings, or broad social understandings[7], of feminism are not working, and there exists a need to examine concepts of feminism that are canonically established. The first three chapters aim to descriptively motivate the need for a conceptual re-engineering project. Chapter

[6] Chalmers, "What is Conceptual Engineering and What Should It Be?" 7.
[7] I will use current understandings and broad social understandings interchangeably throughout the project.

one explores the historical landscape of feminism. I argue that historical manifestations of feminism shape current conceptions of feminism. Given that current conceptions are rooted in historical ones, issues within historical manifestations will persist in current conceptions. In particular, I examine three historical manifestations of feminism, namely women's education, women's suffrage, and reproductive autonomy. Within each of these campaigns, I explore four primary figures, Mary Astell, Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Margaret Sanger, respectively, whose arguments assist in understanding and representing feminism. I then expose the exclusionary practices underpinning each historical manifestation of feminism to expose how current conceptions of feminism are shaped by exclusionary practices. In turn, this motivates the need to rethink our current understanding of feminism.

The historical analysis primes the second chapter which explores the factionalization of the feminist movement. Beginning with liberal feminism, I aim to highlight how the factionalization of feminism provides tools to women with intersecting identities in which they can recognize and address the unique harm they experienced. For example, a Black woman is going to be harmed in different ways than a trans-woman. It is jointly true, though, that factionalization has led to conceptual confusion – it communicates a multitude of meaningful ways in which feminism can be understood, each which is true in its own respect. Chapter two will specifically explore the landscape of liberal feminism, radical feminism, lesbian feminism, Marxist feminism, trans-exclusionary radical feminism, Black feminism, and Indigenous feminism. While each faction seemingly communicates *its own* meaningful, and true, conception of feminism, factionalization creates conceptual confusion in understanding what a meaningful, working conception of *feminism* is. I argue that the conceptual

confusion arising from factionalization provides further motivation for a conceptual re-engineering project.

After identifying historical manifestations of feminism and their exclusionary practices, and factionalization of feminism and its conceptual confusion, chapter three provides one final motivation for a conceptual re-engineering project. Chapter three explores the negative stereotypes surrounding feminism. Outsiders to feminism often attribute pernicious stereotypes to feminists such as 'man-hater', 'feminazi', 'bra-burner', and 'monster' which come to be accepted as true. Using the work of Kate Manne, I explain how negative stereotypes act as a means of controlling and punishing feminists.[8] In turn, negative stereotypes come to be associated with concepts of feminism, reduce feminist self-identification, and hinder the collective action of feminists. Negative stereotypes provide further motivation for conceptually re-engineering feminism.

Clearly, the problem is not with the word 'feminism', rather the problem lies in how it is understood. Exclusionary practices, factionalization, and pernicious stereotypes problematize current understandings of feminism while simultaneously providing justification to re-think them. The conceptual re-engineering project will conclude with an ameliorative upshot. After demonstrating the shortcomings within current conceptions of feminism, chapter four engages in the conceptual re-engineering portion of the project. The conceptual bridge for feminism has cracks in its foundations, but these are able to be repaired in order to uphold feminism as a concept. In the conceptual re-engineering portion of the project, I propose an ameliorative concept of feminism which avoids the

[8] Kate Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 1st ed, (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017), 20.

harmful shortcomings of current conceptions, and I argue for *why* the ameliorative concept of feminism should be adopted as the referent concept. To justify this, I position my claim within that of Esa Díaz-León's work titled "Descriptive vs. Ameliorative Projects."[9] The conceptual re-engineering project will clear the intellectual landscape of feminism which has been contaminated by exclusionary practices, factionalization, and pernicious stereotypes. Given these shortcomings, I can sympathize with my classmates' claim to abandon feminism. Instead, however, rethinking what feminism is and how we should use it will help develop a more meaningful, and useful, ameliorative concept of feminism.

[9] Esa Díaz-León, "Descriptive vs. Ameliorative Projects," in *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics,* eds. Alexis Burgess, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 170-186.

CHAPTER 1: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF FEMINISM

According to Rosalind Delmar, conceptions of feminism stipulate that feminism is the acknowledgement that women endure discrimination on the basis of sex and/or gender.[10] On this stipulative definition, feminism manifests in a variety of ways such as women's right to education, the right to vote, and reproductive rights and autonomy. Certainly, such feminist campaigns reflect the fact that women are uniquely discriminated against along the axis of gender, but conceding to this weak definition of feminism obscures the nuances within feminism. For example, the fight for women's suffrage is a manifestation of feminism which sought to provide women with the right to vote. As a feminist campaign, suffrage intends to benefit *all women* but instead only benefits *white* women. Indeed, though 'women' obtained the right to vote in Canada in 1920, the same right was not extended to Indigenous women across all provinces until 1969 when Quebec was the last province to remove legislative barriers. If Indigenous women wished to vote before 1969, they had to forfeit their Indian Status.[11] The example of women's suffrage in Canada demonstrates how Delmar's stipulative definition of feminism does not consider that 'woman' has nuanced meanings, and each woman experiences harm in unique ways.

Current paradigms of feminism have their roots in historical manifestations of feminism and motivating a conceptual re-engineering project begins with an examination of how these pro-woman ideas and arguments have manifested themselves historically. Motivating the conceptual re-engineering project must show the nexus between historical manifestations of feminism and current paradigms,

[10] Rosalind Delmar, "What is Feminism?" in *Theorizing Feminism*, eds. Anne Herrmann & Abigail Stewart (Routledge, 2001), 5.
[11] John F. Leslie, “Indigenous Suffrage," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, March 31, 2016.

and demonstrate that if historical manifestations are flawed, then current conceptions must also be flawed. The upshot of the historical analysis will be largely descriptive; by exploring the unstable foundations of feminism, I will expose what elements are missing from a meaningful conception of feminism in order to structure what *is needed* for a meaningful conception of feminism. This chapter will examine historical manifestations of feminism which have helped shape current paradigms, explore *why* these manifestations are feminist, why they are so effective, and what their shortcomings are. I will use their shortcomings to demonstrate that current paradigms of feminism develop from unstable foundations. I argue that the serious problems of historical manifestations of feminism have mapped onto current paradigms which subsequently motivates a conceptual re-engineering project.

1.1 WOMEN'S EDUCATION

The fight for women's education is a cornerstone of the feminist movement. Indeed, it marks one of the first well-documented pro-woman arguments in history. Proponents advocating for women's education offered a variety of arguments in support. For instance, some scholars such as Mary Astell (1666-1731) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) argue in favour of women's education on the basis of metaphysical equality; men and women are metaphysically and spiritually equal and depriving women of education is therefore a grave moral and spiritual harmful.[12] Some, instead, present instrumental arguments in favour of women's education. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) argues in favour of women's education but only in light of their domestic service to men. Rousseau

[12] Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest* (London: Printed for R. Wilkin, 1695); Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: With Strictures of Political and Moral Subjects* (Boston: Printed for Thomas and Andrews, 1792).

believed that women ought to be educated so that they can be better wives to their husbands.[13] Other scholars, such as John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), propose that women should be educated to ensure the greater intellectual power of human beings.[14] There are a number of arguments in support of women's education though each seemingly approaches the discussion differently. The following section will explore the historical landscape of women's education as a markedly feminist campaign through the works of Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft. In doing so, I will position their arguments as representations of feminism which have shaped current understandings, and highlight how arguments in support of women's education are exclusionary in nature.

Astell is frequently credited as one of the first English feminists; she is known largely for her arguments in favour of educating women. For example, in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694;1697) Astell writes:

> For since God has given Women as well as Men intelligent souls, why should they be forbidden to improve them? Since he has not denied us the faculty of thinking, why shou'd we not (at least in gratitude to him) employ our Thoughts on himself, their noblest object, and not unworthily bestow them on Trifles and Gaities and secular affairs? Being the Soul was created for the contemplation of Truth as well as for the fruition of Good, it is not as cruel and unjust to preclude Women from the knowledge of one, as well as from the enjoyment of the other.[15]

To explain the feminism present at the core of her argument, Astell's connection to Cartesianism must be exposed. Scholars who take a feminist reading on Astell (Broad 2015, Detlefsen 2021, Forbes

[13] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (Boston, 1889).
[14] John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London: 1869).
[15] Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest*, 80.

2019)[16] often credit her subscription to the work of René Descartes. Karen Detlefsen explains how Astell "[subscribes to Cartesian] dualism of the soul and body, according to which the thinking soul... is our human essence.[17] Detlefsen continues to explain that sex, male and female, is material which ultimately makes women's souls equal to men's.[18] Astell's argument for education is deeply entrenched in metaphysical equality; the souls of men and women are equal, and education is an endeavour set out to nurture the soul. However, women's exclusion from educational opportunities denies them the ability to cultivate their souls in the same way as men. This directly contradicts the equality of the male and female soul. In the above quotation from *A Serious Proposal*, Astell clarifies that the entire basis for women's subordination by way of education is rooted in a metaphysical inequality which she finds morally problematic. She goes on to suggest a radical solution in which women would retire from the world in a private, intellectual space removed from men where they will dedicate themselves to the pursuit of knowledge.

Astell's argument for women's education can be understood as a feminist one given that she recognizes the basis for women's subordination; material bodies are used to justify inequalities of the soul, or the mind, when in actuality, women's souls are equal to men's and this *should* be reflected in

[16] Cited in Jacqueline Broad, "Mary Astell (1666-1731)," in *The Routledge Handbook of Women and Early Modern Philosophy,* eds. Karen Detlefsen and Lisa Shapiro, Routledge: New York, 2023, 493; Jacqueline Broad, "Conclusion," in *The Philosophy of Mary Astell : An Early Modern Theory of Virtue*, ed. Jacqueline Broad, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015; Karen Detlefsen, "Custom, Freedom, and Equality: Mary Astell on Marriage and Women's Education, " in *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Astell*, eds. Alice Sowaal and Penny A. Weiss, University Park, USA: Penn State University Press, 2021; Allauren Samantha Forbes, "Mary Astell on Bad Custom and Epistemic Injustice," *Hypatia* 34, no. 4, (2019).
[17] Karen Detlefsen, "Custom, Freedom, and Equality: Mary Astell on Marriage and Women's Education, " in *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Astell*, eds. Alice Sowaal and Penny A Weiss, (University Park, USA: Penn State University Press, 2021), 76.
[18] Detlefsen, "Custom, Freedom, and Equality: Mary Astell on Marriage and Women's Education, " 76.

the body. Astell also proposes a way to ameliorate the sex-based harms women face, namely through the private cloistering of women to pursue an education. Her argument is effective because it dismantles the harmful premises underpinning denying a woman access to education, and correspondingly grants women a solution by reiterating their access to education.

Mary Wollstonecraft is also a proponent of women's education and argues in favour of this in her work *A Vindication on the Rights of Women.* Wollstonecraft argues "...to improve both sexes, they ought, not only in private families, but in public schools, to be educated together."[19] She continues,

> If marriage be the cement of society, mankind should all be educated after the same mode, or the intercourse of the sexes will never deserve the name of fellowship, nor will women ever fulfill the peculiar duties of their sex, till they become enlightened citizens, till they become free by being enabled to earn their own subsistence, independent of men.[20]

A feminist reading of Wollstonecraft will show a similar reasoning to Astell as to why women should be educated, however, Wollstonecraft's argument is rooted in political inequality on the basis of rationality. In the passage cited above, Wollstonecraft alludes to a pronounced inequality between men and women. She explains that if mankind is not educated equally and in the same capacity, women will never be able to become free, or know their obligations as women. Wollstonecraft suggests that it is from education that men and women are able to become "rationally capable citizens."[21] If only men are able to access education, women are then denied the capacity to cultivate their rational selves.

---

[19] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: With Strictures of Political and Moral Subjects*, (Boston: Printed for Thomas and Andrews, 1792), 196.
[20] Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: With Strictures of Political and Moral Subjects*, 196.
[21] Cited in Susan J. Wolfson, "Revolution in Female Manners: *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects (1792)*," in *On Mary Wollstonecraft: A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, ed. by Susan J. Wolfson, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023), 91.

Much like Astell, Wollstonecraft's argument for women's education is rooted in an innate equality of the sexes. Unlike Astell, though, she argues that to combat inequality present through education, men and women ought to be educated *together*.

Wollstonecraft's argument for women's education is also a feminist one given that she recognizes the basis for women's subordination – women are not provided the opportunity to cultivate their rationality. Both men and women are, by nature, rational creatures, but education acts as a vehicle for women to cultivate rationality and, for example, know the duties of their sex. When women are denied access to education, they are unable to fully cultivate their rationality. Perhaps one reason Wollstonecraft's argument is so effective is that it both assumes a rationality-based equality between the sexes while also appealing to familiar social norms. For example, Wollstonecraft appeals to women's 'duties' of their sex, which many women are familiar with, and suggests that education will only make them better at these tasks.

While Astell and Wollstonecraft present compelling reasons in support of women's education, metaphysically and politically, respectively, and both are accepted as canonically feminist, they unfortunately fall short of being *truly* feminist. Recall Delmar's stipulative definition of feminism presented in the introduction of this chapter, that feminism is the acknowledgement that women endure discrimination on the basis of sex and/or gender.[22] Delmar's stipulative definition seems to assume that all women endure discrimination on the basis of sex and/or gender in the same way; she

[22] Rosalind Delmar, "What is Feminism?" in *Theorizing Feminism*, eds. Anne Herrmann & Abigail Stewart (Routledge, 2001), 5.

does not leave room for the fact that women might experience discrimination in a variety of ways. In the same manner, fighting for women's education seems to assume that access to education would extend equally and fairly to all women. Further unpacking Astell and Wollstonecraft will reveal that this is not the case. Both women were notoriously selective as to which women they believed should be educated. I will explore the exclusionary practices to first reveal how their arguments are not as feminist as previously thought. Then, I will demonstrate that if arguments for women's education are, indeed, historical manifestations of feminism, and current understandings of feminism are rooted in these historical manifestations, then there is reason to worry that current understandings of feminism are plagued similarly by exclusionary practices.

Astell seems to suggest that the education provided to women should be reserved for gentlewomen. For example, in *A Serious Proposal,* Astell states "It being suppos'd that prudent men will reckon the endowments they here acquire a sufficient Dowry; and that a discreet and virtuous Gentlewoman will make a better wife than she whose mind is empty".[23] Here, Astell argues that education will aid in cultivating virtues for women and these women will indeed make better wives than those who are uneducated. In England, the term *gentlewoman* was reserved for women of a particular social standing. The gentlewoman is an English title referring explicitly to class and virtue, namely women who were of an upper class and well-mannered. Scholar Emma Jane clarifies this further, noting that:

[23]Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest*, (London: Printed for R. Wilkin, 1695), 123.

> [gentlewomen shared many characteristics such as] The nature of their home-life, and their education [which] set them apart from the lower classes... Gentlewomen played a fundamental role as the ultimate status symbols, 'Angels in the House'. These women were perceived as exemplars of virtue, moral superiority, and leisured respectability.[24]

As Jane points out, gentlewomen in early modern England had a much higher social standing, in both their character and social life, than their counterparts. Unpacking an understanding of who the gentlewomen were reveals that Astell, in a *Serious Proposal*, seemingly advocates for the education of gentlewomen, namely women of higher social standing. If only the women of elevated status were to be educated, women of a lower status seem to then become those 'whose mind is empty'.

Furthermore, Astell also speaks extensively on 'Ladies of Quality'. As stated previously, Astell's resolution to the issue of women's education is for women to retire from society in a private space whereby they can dedicate themselves to education. Author Patricia Springborg clarifies that "Astell's project... was to establish a religious community for 'Ladies of Quality' funded by the dowries they brought with them and monies earned by founding a school."[25] Even Astell's solution for women's education is saturated with class; the only women she wishes to undergo cloistered education are those ladies coming from a higher social class. As a result, her arguments put forward for women's education can be read as exclusionary, and privileging a very small portion of English society.

Wollstonecraft's arguments also seem to suggest that education ought to be reserved for particular classes of women. To begin, woven throughout a number of her works are sentiments

---

[24] Emma Jane Curtain, "Daughters of Empire: British Gentlewomen in Alberta, 1880-1914" (PhD diss., University of Calgary, 1990), iii, National Library of Canada (0-315-61726-8).
[25] Patricia Springborg, *Mary Astell: A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Parts I and II*, (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2002), 12.

expressing disdain with excess and deficiency. For example, in *Maria: or The Wrongs of Women* (1798), Wollstonecraft's character Jemima notes "...I began to consider the rich and the poor as natural enemies..."[26] Through the character of Jemima, Wollstonecraft sets herself up as partisan towards the middle-class by pitting the wealthy and the poor against one another.[27] Some interpretations of Wollstonecraft, such as that of political philosopher Lena Halldenius, take her already unfavourable views of the rich and poor and understand Wollstonecraft to frame the rich as the poor's "lawful prey".[28] Wollstonecraft's claims do not position her to then speak favourably on the education of the rich or the poor. More interesting is Halldenius' animalistic reading which frames the poor as capable of hunting the rich. If Wollstonecraft's claims on class are to map on to education, it seems as though her arguments for educated women are exceptionally limited to the 'middle-class'. The rich and the poor seem to be excluded from participating in or gaining access to education. Like Astell, themes of class are woven throughout Wollstonecraft's work, and her argument for educating women falls short in its application to upper and lower classes.

Exclusionary practices are especially harmful to concepts of feminism. Delmar's stipulative definition of feminism suggests that feminism is the acknowledgement that women endure discrimination on the basis of sex and/or gender.[29] Exclusionary practices undermine the foundation of feminism by securing freedom for some women at the expense of others. For instance, access to

[26] Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, *Maria: or The Wrongs of Women,* (Philadelphia: James Carey, 1799), 90.
[27] Lena Halldenius, "Liberation: Economic Independence and Civil Existence," in *Mary Wollstonecraft and Feminist Republicanism,* ed. by Lena Halldenius, (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2015), 113.
[28] Halldenius, "Liberation: Economic Independence and Civil Existence," 115.
[29] Delmar, "What is Feminism?" 5.

education secures freedom for upper-class, or middle-class women while excluding lower-class suffering, thereby reinforcing class-based inequality. Moreover, exclusionary practices also naturalize hierarchy amongst women which seems to suggest that some women are more deserving of rights and freedoms, such as access to education, than others. Both securing freedom for some women but not others, as well as naturalizing hierarchy, subverts the idea that feminism sets out to acknowledge that women are harmed on the basis of sex and/or gender. Instead, exclusionary practices seem to thwart some women's autonomy by suggesting that *only some* women are harmed on the basis of sex and/or gender.

The fight for women's access and right to education is merely one historical manifestation of feminism. Indeed, Astell and Wollstonecraft's arguments can serve as representations of this recognizably feminist endeavour. While Astell argues in favour of women's education on the basis of metaphysical equality, Wollstonecraft argues in favour of women's education on the basis of rationality and political equality. As evident in their work, however, arguments for women's education are distinctly marked by class; both Astell and Wollstonecraft's argument appear to exclude certain classes in society, particularly the lower class. Instead of recognizing that *all* women are harmed on the basis of sex and/or gender, exclusionary practices suggest that only *some* women are harmed on the basis of sex and/or gender. Women's education is one way of historically representing feminism. If current understandings of feminism are rooted in historical manifestations, and the arguments in favour of women's education are inherently exclusionary, there is justifiable cause to question our

current understanding of feminism; current understandings of feminism preserve these exclusionary practices.

1.2 SUFFRAGE

Another historical representation of feminism, and arguably the most recognizable, is the suffrage movement. Indeed, suffrage provides a fruitful avenue to understand the mobilization of sociopolitical power for women.[30] Suffrage refers to women's political liberation in the form of obtaining elective franchise, which women did not have access to until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The right to vote provides women with a political voice which entails a number of positive outcomes. For example, the right to vote was an affirmation of identity; being granted electoral enfranchisement was a marker of civilian status by solidifying the relationship of the voter to the state, and in turn meant that one was afforded rights and protections under the law.[31] Being a citizen meant having a stake in property ownership, marriage equality, the ability to file for divorce, and child custody.[32] Changing women's sociopolitical position, though, threatened the basis of women's subordination by way of establishing a direct relationship between women as citizens and the state. The right to vote radically shifted the sociopolitical standing of women.

The reasons for suffrage varied by geographical and social location; given this, suffrage must be understood within the complex political, religious, and social context of a given country.[33] For example, white women in America and Britain saw suffrage as a means to ameliorate poor working

[30] In some times/places, though, suffrage was not the central issue affecting women.
[31] Marlene LeGates, *In Their Time : A History of Feminism in Western Society*, (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), 241.
[32] June Hannam, *Feminism* (London: Routledge, 2013), 33.
[33] June Hannam, *Feminism*, 45.

conditions and low salaries.[34] On the contrary, Black American women saw suffrage as a symbol of equal rights and a medium to address specific needs such as the sexual exploitation of enslaved Black women.[35] Others viewed suffrage as a marker of imperialist-nationalist responsibility in which women voters, or improvements to women's status, were viewed as a marker of civilization.[36] While the right to vote was, undeniably, politically significant, reasons for affording it drastically varied. Suffrage certainly contains nuances but nevertheless remains identifiably feminist. The following chapter will explore the historical landscape of suffrage as a markedly feminist campaign through the works of suffragists across the globe, but I will examine the work of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) in particular. I will position Stanton's arguments as representations of suffragists, explore why they are feminist and why they are effective, and highlight how arguments in support of suffrage are exclusionary in nature.

Stanton is often credited as the leader of the women's rights movement throughout the late 19th century; she is well known for her arguments in favour of women's suffrage. For example, in an Address to the legislature of New York, Stanton states:

> 1st. Look at the position of women as woman. It is not enough for us that by your laws we are permitted to live and breathe, to claim the necessities of life from our legal protectors – to pay the penalty of our crimes; we demand the full recognition of all our rights as citizens of the Empire State. We are persons; native, free-born citizens; property-holders, tax-payers; yet are we denied the exercise of our right to the elective franchise.[37]

---

[34] LeGates, 241.
[35] LeGates, 241.
[36] Hyaeweol Choi, "The Nineteenth Century," in *The Routledge Global History of Feminism,* eds. Bonnie Smith and Nova Robinson, (UK: Routledge, 2022), 107.
[37] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Address to the Legislature of New-York : Adopted by the State Woman's Rights Convention, Held at Albany, Tuesday and Wednesday, February 14 and 15, 1854,* eds. Rebecca Jo Plant, Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Thomas Dublin, (Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1854), 1.

Much like Astell and Wollstonecraft, Stanton understands the sociopolitical disparities between men and women. Stanton, though, exposes such disparities through a political avenue by accentuating women's lack of personhood as evident in legislation. Stanton acknowledges that women lack the right to vote, primarily because they were not considered persons under the law. As a result, women were also denied the right to own property, to attain a credit card, or to participate in government. For Stanton, legislation is complicit in, and perpetuates, women's subordination.

Stanton's argument in favour of women's suffrage can be understood as a feminist one. According to Delmar's stipulative definition of feminism, it ought to recognize that women endure discrimination on the basis of sex and/or gender.[38] Indeed, the fight for women's suffrage recognizes women's subordination as inequality between the sexes which has become deeply entrenched in legislation and, as a result, women are denied pivotal aspects of personhood. Women's subordination is upheld and perpetuated in the constitution, which fails to recognize women as persons.

While Stanton's arguments can be understood as feminist, the fight for women's suffrage was not monolithic; suffrage was pioneered by a number of individuals and groups alike and had an international presence. Though Stanton is often praised as the figurehead of the women's suffrage movement, and her contributions are undeniably pivotal in the United States, the credit attributed to her eclipses suffrage efforts across the globe. Countries such as Australia, New Zealand, France, Canada, Sweden, and Norway were simultaneously cultivating full-blown suffrage movements of their own.[39] As the fight for women's suffrage began spreading across the globe, suffrage movements also

[38] Delmar, "What is Feminism?" 5.
[39] Hannam, 30.

emerged in Brazil, Uruguay, and India. Indeed, there was an international effort to recognize women's rights as fundamental and constitutional.[40]

The international push for suffrage resulted in a number of strategies to grant women the right to vote. One favoured method of support which gained international traction were suffrage groups or unions. Both Australia and New Zealand saw the development of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in 1874 which was responsible for producing suffrage literature and campaign advertisements, while also placing pressure on their respective parliaments to change legislations around women's right to vote.[41] In Russia, women formed the All Russian Union of Equal Rights for Women which called on the Russian parliament to overturn legislation excluding women from suffrage.[42] As well, Brazil saw the development of the Brazilian Federation for the Advancement of Women (BFAW) in 1922.[43] The goal of the BFAW was to ally with the International Women's Suffrage Alliance in order to advocate for a women's right to vote.[44] In Uruguay, women formed the Uruguay Alliance of Women for Suffrage in 1919 which launched a campaign to emphasize reform for women's rights, especially the right to vote.[45] India also launched a campaign in 1917 led by Sarojini Naidu to advocate for constitutional reform in enfranchising Indian women.[46] Though the reform was not approved, Naidu led women in pursuing women's right to vote in India until it was

[40] Hannam, 49.
[41] Hannam, 48.
[42] Hannam, 31.
[43] Hannam, 48.
[44] Hannam, 48.
[45] Hannam, 48.
[46] Hannam, 58.

granted in 1949.[47] Indeed, the global formation of suffrage groups and unions demonstrates that a lack of a woman's right to vote is a pervasive issue. International suffrage groups and unions demonstrate the global conversation surrounding women's enfranchisement, and solidifies the legitimacy of suffrage as a recognizably feminist issue.

There was also no singular strategy in advocating for suffrage. Suffragists relied on a number of tactics to support their case such as petitions, public hearings, and feminist newspapers.[48] In particular, some suffragists relied heavily upon militant strategies to achieve their goals. Militant strategies include arson, destroying mail, smashing windows, and disrupting parliament sessions.[49] For example, members of the Women's Suffrage Alliance in China would arm themselves with pistols and storm parliament to demand that their concerns were heard.[50] As well, Canadian suffragists carried out mock parliamentary skits in which sex roles were reversed and 'women politicians' debated the issue of granting men the right to vote.[51] Indeed, suffragists across the globe used a variety of strategies to prompt legislative change concerning the legal status of women. The number of strategies used by women's groups across the globe emphasizes the importance of achieving suffrage for women, further solidifying it as a feminist issue.

The work of suffragists led to the enfranchisement of women in several countries across the globe. The first country to grant suffrage to women was New Zealand in 1893.[52] Australia followed

[47] Hannam, 50.
[48] Hannam, 21.
[49] Hannam, 42.
[50] Hannam, 42.
[51] Marlene LeGates, *In Their Time : A History of Feminism in Western Society*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), 241.
[52] Hannam, 35.

suit in 1902.[53] In the 1920s, countries across Europe and North America also began granting suffrage. While suffrage was achieved, the efforts to do so were nothing short of easy. The historical landscape that was painted communicates exactly how complex the road to achieving suffrage was, and why it serves as a historical manifestation of feminism.

While suffrage maintained a number of supporters, there were also a significant number of politicians, married men, and anti-suffrage groups who were firmly opposed to extending the right to vote to women. Those opposed to suffrage often positioned their fear of the destruction of the rigid public/private sphere which were to be kept entirely separate.[54] The public/private sphere centres itself around the home in which the public sphere is concerned with that outside of the home, such as political and social life, whereas the private sphere is concerned with that within the home, such as domesticity, reproduction, and family life. Men dominated the former whereas women were expected to nurture, and work (unpaid), in the latter. Opposers to suffrage argued that the enfranchisement of women would radically disrupt and sever the public/private spheres that were so deeply ingrained in society. Less time would be spent on domestic tasks and child rearing, and women would therefore neglect their domestic duties; the family structure would ultimately come under threat.[55] Suffrage challenged was the entire basis of women's subordination; it threatened to remove women from the confines of domestic duties and anti-suffragists feared the radical change that could be brought about.

Despite pushback to suffragists' efforts, the effectiveness of suffrage is clearly communicated in its international uptake; achieving the right to vote resonates with women everywhere. Perhaps

[53] Hannam, 35.
[54] Hannam, 32.
[55] LeGates, *In Their Time : A History of Feminism in Western Society*, 21.

arguments for suffrage are so effective for the simple fact that women want to be considered persons under the law. Without personhood status, women were not equal partners in their marriages, were not able to own property, they could not file for divorce, nor could they have custody of their children.[56] Being considered a person under the law meant that women were granted *autonomy*. Suffrage is an effective, historical manifestation of feminism.

While Stanton, and an international suffragist presence, provided persuasive arguments in favour of women's right to vote, arguments for suffrage ended up creating a harsher divide between women by way of race and class. Suffrage intended to do what Delmar's definition states: acknowledge women are discriminated against on the basis of sex and/or gender. The right to vote, however, separated women who could vote from those who could not; many Black and Indigenous women were excluded from reaping the benefits of suffrage.[57] Much like the fight for access to education, suffrage is also marked by exclusionary practices and therefore falls short of being *truly* feminist. A closer examination of Stanton's address will reveal how her argument is inherently exclusionary. I will argue that if arguments for women's suffrage are historical manifestations of feminism, and current understandings of feminism are rooted in these historical manifestations, there is reasonable cause for concern that current understandings of feminism also maintain similar threads of exclusion.

At the time when women's suffrage was being hotly debated, extending the right to vote to Black men was also being discussed. In her "Address to the Legislature of New York" Stanton suggests that suffrage ought to be extended to white women before Black men. To advance her argument, she

[56] Hannam, 33.
[57] Rumi Yasutaki and Nova Robinson, "The Twentieth Century," in *The Routledge Global History of Feminism,* eds. Bonnie Smith and Nova Robinson, (UK: Routledge, 2022), 123.

relies on a common trope in feminist discourse, namely, the comparison of a married white woman's status to Black slaves. For example, she states:

> True, the unmarried woman has a right to the property she inherits and the money she earns, but she is taxed without representation. And here again you place the negro, so unjustly... in a superior position to your own wives and mothers... We are moral, virtuous, and intelligent, and in all respects quite equal to the proud white man himself, and yet by your laws we are classed with idiots, lunatics, and negroes...[58]

Stanton incorrectly juxtaposes the rights and freedoms of Black men against those of white women. Her argumentative strategy characterizes Black men as undeserving of rights and freedoms because they are 'uncivilized'. Stanton's comparison of white women, then, suggests that they *are* civilized, and should be granted elective franchise before Black men – this logic strategically denigrates the status of Black men, and also Black women, to elevate the status of white women. Stanton seemingly represents feminism as a recognition of socio-political inequality which most significantly impacts white women and manifests as a legal issue – white women were not permitted to vote and as a result were not considered persons.

Stanton's unwillingness to extend the right to vote to Black people provides the foundation for exploring the connection of suffrage to *civilizing missions* which further disproportionately marginalizes Black people, but especially Black women. There exists a relationship between the ability to vote and being a civilian. The notion of civilization is deeply racist; being civil is often referred to as being well-mannered, in-tune with social norms, pure, and *white*. Women of colour were often not considered civilized, and were so often deemed barbaric or savage. White women in particular, were

[58] Stanton, "Address to the Legislature of New York," 1.

presumed to hold a higher status, or be more civilized, than their racialized counterparts.[59] For example, practices in the Eastern world, such as polygamy and veiling, were viewed as oppressive; they served as a benchmark to demonstrate what would happen to women who did not have rights, especially voting rights, in a society.[60] White women were called upon to save these women from their 'uncivilized culture' and embarked on a civilizing mission.[61]

Suffrage came to take on a function as a marker of civilization and progress in society.[62] If a given nation had extended the right to vote to women, they were considered to be a civilized nation. As highlighted by Stanton, however, the vote was only extended to white women. By providing white women suffrage, they were considered civilized – this meant, however, that women of colour, by lacking the right to vote, were not. As a result, and with the civilizing mission in mind, white women were authorized to civilize the uncivilized. Suffrage became a tool to maintain subordination over women of colour whilst elevating white women.

Like the fight for education, suffrage is another historical manifestation of feminism. Stanton represents suffrage as a feminist endeavour by illustrating the subordination of women in the constitution and legal system. As evident through her speeches, though, arguments for suffrage cannot be disentangled from race; Stanton believes that white women should be afforded the right to vote before anybody else. Her arguments for suffrage demonstrate, then, that *only some* women endure discrimination on the basis of sex and/or gender.[63] Women's suffrage is a historical manifestation of

[59] Choi, "The Nineteenth Century," 107.
[60] Choi, 107.
[61] Yasutaki and Robinson, "The Twentieth Century," 121.
[62] Choi, 110.
[63] Delmar, "What is Feminism?" 5.

feminism. If current paradigms of feminism are shaped by historical manifestations, and arguments for suffrage are exclusionary, there is motivation to rethink current understandings of feminism which uphold exclusionary practices.

1.3 REPRODUCTIVE AUTONOMY

The final historical manifestation of feminism which I will discuss is reproductive health. The desire to exert control over one's reproductive health is a concept of antiquity. For centuries, women have sought out means and methods of managing if and/or when they conceive. Some of the earliest means of contraception, such as silphium, Ferula, grass, and garlic weed, were passed down through oral tradition and folklore.[64] In Ancient Greece and Rome, sea sponges and stones acted as a contraceptive method.[65] In the Middle Ages, amulets constructed from beaver testicles, mule earwax, and bones of animals were thought to provide protection from contraception.[66] As well, in the 21st century, the first intrauterine devices (IUD) made from silkworm and silver wire were developed.[67] Indeed, the number of contraceptive methods present over centuries highlights the importance of reproductive autonomy to women. This section will focus on historical discourse around reproductive health which have shaped current paradigms of feminism. I will position the arguments of Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) as representations of the fight for women's reproductive autonomy. Then, I will examine why these arguments are feminist and why they are effective. Finally, I will expose the

[64] Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women : A History of Birth Control Politics in America*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 3.
[65] Sophie Poblome et al., "The Pill Exhibition." *The Pill Expo*, 2021.
[66] Poblome et al., "The Pill Exhibition."
[67] Poblome et al., "The Pill Exhibition."

shortcomings within Sanger's arguments to illustrate the exclusionary practices present at the heart of reproductive autonomy.

While women were certainly committed to exerting control over their reproductive health, this was truncated by women's domesticity and the needs of the nuclear family. Since women were bound to the home, they were unable to attend school, seek out work, participate in political life – their primary role was to remain home and rear children. Especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, many women were facing forced pregnancies via marital rape or the impregnation of enslaved women. The reproductive health of women was at the disposal of men, and women lacked reproductive autonomy.

Margaret Sanger, a travelling nurse in poor Black and Jewish neighbourhoods and the founder of Planned Parenthood, jump started the reproductive rights movement in the early 1900s.[68] At the time, Sanger was working in neighbourhoods where many immigrants settled upon coming to America.[69] The neighbourhoods she worked in were incredibly impoverished, and she witnessed a number of deaths, both mother and fetus, during birth. Sanger understood the immigrant population to problematize births, if not in death then by way of low quality babies.[70] Sanger believed that granting women reproductive autonomy, or control over their reproductive health, would help mitigate the problem.

In the 1950s, Sanger partnered with American biologist Gregory Pincus to develop the first oral, hormonal contraceptive pill known as Enovid. Sanger was the driving force behind the invention

[68] Madeline Gray, *Margaret Sanger: A Biography of the Champion of Birth Control, (*New York: Richard Mark Publishers, 1979), 40, 368.
[69] Margaret Sanger, *Margaret Sanger: An Autobiography, (*New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1938), 86-87.
[70] Kyla Schuller, *The Trouble With White Women: A Counterhistory of Feminism,* (New York: Hachette Book Group, Inc, 2021), n.p.

of the pill which was anticipated to revolutionize women's reproductive autonomy. For example, Sanger notes:

> To-day, however, woman is rising in fundamental revolt. Even her efforts at mere reform are, as we shall see later, steps in that direction. Underneath each of them is the feminine urge to complete freedom. Millions of women are asserting their right to voluntary motherhood. They are determined to decide for themselves under what conditions and when. This is the fundamental revolt referred to. It is for woman the key to the temple of liberty.[71]

Sanger is addressing reproductive autonomy. While men are able to father as many children as they like, whenever they please, women are only able to carry one child at a time, and lack tools to assert, on their terms, *when* they want to have children. Women are also required to take time off work, halt educational pursuits, and dedicate time to care for the child after birth. Given that the bulk of reproduction falls on women, Sanger positions birth control as the tool that will diffuse the disparity. She goes on to state that "Even as birth control is the means by which woman attains her basic freedom, so it is the means by which she must and will uproot the evil she has wrought through her submission."[72] Sanger presents women with birth control as the means to which they can control their reproductive health and gain reproductive autonomy.

Oral contraception was also praised as a tool to strengthen women's economic prosperity by way of education. If a woman were to become pregnant while attending school, it could risk derailing her education. She may miss class, require time off for appointments, and is required to dedicate time

[71] Margaret Sanger, *Woman and the New Race* (New York: Bretano's, 1922): 5.
[72] Sanger, *Woman and the New Race,* 5.

to raising the child.[73] The introduction of the pill, however, meant that instead women could attend post-secondary school without pregnancy and fear of interrupting their education.[74] Indeed, Heinrich Hock finds that for women who could access the pill, there was a 12% increase in the likelihood of college enrollment.[75] A heightened presence in education was anticipated to increase workforce participation since education is an avenue to becoming employed.[76] Not only did Sanger introduce birth control as a way of enhancing women's reproductive autonomy, but it also had an upshot of economic prosperity for women.

Delmar's stipulative definition of feminism is based on the idea of acknowledging that women are discriminated against on the basis of sex and/or gender.[77] Sanger, through her own experience working as a travelling nurse, recognizes that women are in a position where they do not have reproductive autonomy and, in turn, are suffering. Women are having births in poor, unsafe environments and it is jeopardizing the life of the child and of the mother. Her argument in support of birth control can be read as feminist given her acknowledgement that women seriously lack reproductive autonomy. Sanger's argument is also effective in that it appealed to women in a deeply personal way. Her emphasis on choice came at a time when women had little choice. Whether it was through forced pregnancies, an inability to attend post-secondary education, or an inability to enter

[73] Sarah Turnbull, "Reframing the Oral Contraception Debate: A Subversion of Feminism?" BA Hons. Thesis, St. Francis Xavier University, 2023, 31.
[74] Turnbull, "Reframing the Oral Contraception Debate: A Subversion of Feminism?" 31.
[75] Heinrich Hock, "The Pill and the College Attainment of American Women and Men," *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc* (2007): 9.
[76] Turnbull, 21.
[77] Delmar, "What is Feminism?" 5.

the workforce, many women resonated with Sanger's argument to provide women with reproductive autonomy so they could be autonomous in other spheres of their life.

Indeed, Sanger's work allowed her to see the pernicious consequences stemming from a lack of reproductive autonomy. Like Delmar suggests, Sanger recognizes women were being discriminated against on the basis of sex and/or gender, and so Sanger advocated for the development of birth control. While she positioned birth control as a tool to provide women with reproductive autonomy, this was only the case for *some* women. The development of birth control follows an intense period of eugenics during WWII. Given that birth control was a means for women to control their reproductive health, it could just as easily be masqueraded to prevent certain women from having children. Much like the fight for education and suffrage, the fight for reproductive autonomy is marked by exclusionary practices. Not all women were able to seek out birth control for the purposes of reproductive autonomy; some women were forcibly given birth control to prevent the reproduction of those deemed unfit. A closer examination of Sanger's argument will reveal how it is inherently exclusionary and rooted in eugenics practices. I will argue that if arguments for reproductive autonomy are historical manifestations of feminism, and current understandings of feminism are grounded in historical manifestations, then there is reasonable justification to rethink current conceptions of feminism.

Eugenics is a process of selecting certain traits as desirable or favourable within a population. One means of carrying out eugenics is weeding out those deemed unfit and birth control, by way of

targeting who gave birth, when, and to what children, was an ideal method to achieve this.[78] For example, in her work titled *Woman and the New Race,* Sanger states:

> Birth control itself, often denounced as a violation of natural law, is nothing more or less than the facilitation of the process of weeding out the unfit, of preventing the birth of defectives or of those who will become defectives. So, in compliance with nature's working plan, we must permit womanhood its full development before we can expect of it efficient motherhood. If we are to make racial progress, this development of womanhood must precede motherhood in every individual woman. Then and then only can the mother cease to be an incubator and be a mother indeed. Then only can she transmit to her sons and daughters the qualities which make strong individuals and, collectively, a strong race.[79]

Eugenics suggests that if these so-called 'defectives' were eliminated, a more successful society could be created. Though earlier positioned as a tool to enhance reproductive autonomy, birth control merely presents a lethal illusion of choice. 'Defective' women were given birth control with the understanding that it would grant them reproductive autonomy when in actuality it was a means of controlling their reproduction.

A common method to control the sexualities of Black and Indigenous women was through forced sterilization programs. Forced sterilization programs were part of the broader eugenics movement which sought to control *who* was giving birth, and *what kinds* of children were being born. For example, consider the procedure which came to be known as the Mississippi Appendectomy (MA). The MA referred to the unwanted sterilization of Black women who would undergo surgery for minor procedures and awake having had a full hysterectomy performed without their consent.[80]

[78] Sanger, *Woman and the New Race,* 229.
[79] Sanger, *Woman and the New Race,* 229.
[80] Tina K. Sacks, "The Mississippi Appendectomy," 99.

Indeed, Black women are having hysterectomies at a much higher rate than their white counterparts with 6.2/1000 Black women having hysterectomies compared to 5.3/1000 white women.[81] There was a preconceived desire to control and regulate the sexualities of Black women which was weaponized by the medical system.

Another example of birth control as a eugenics tool is the coerced use of Depo-Provera amongst Indigenous women. Depo-Provera is an injectable form of hormonal contraception. After clinical trials resulted in animals developing breast cancer and breast nodules, the FDA denied the application to market the drug and the Department of Health and Welfare in Canada released the drug prior to approval.[82] Despite denial from the FDA, UpJohn Corporation and Canadian healthcare workers began targeting marginalized women who were deemed an acceptable market.[83] In Canada, Indigenous women were particularly targeted.[84] Scholar Andrea Smith notes that Depo-Provera has been a persistent conduit for controlling the reproductive health of Indigenous women.[85] The use of Depo-Provera on Indigenous women demonstrates an illusion of choice masquerading Sanger's eugenics legacy to control the reproductive health of those deemed unfit.

Much like suffrage, if reproductive rights have been rooted in exclusionary practices and have shaped current understandings of feminism, then current understandings of feminism are

---

[81] Sacks, 109.
[82] Cited in Jeannie Morgan, "Depo-Provera and the Regulation of Indigenous Women's Health," *Simon Fraser University*, Simon Fraser University, 2007, 6-7; Phillida Bunkle, "Calling the Shots? The International Politics of Depo-Provera," in *Test-Tube Woman: What Future for Motherhood?* eds. Rita Arditti, Renate Duelli, and Shelly Minden. 1st edition. (Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 1984), 166.
[83] Morgan, "Depo-Provera and the Regulation of Indigenous Women's Health," 6-7.
[84] Morgan, 7.
[85] Cited in Morgan, 15; Andrea Smith, "Not an Indian Tradition: The Sexual Colonization of Native Peoples." *Hypatia* 18, no. 2 (2003): 79.

problematic. While reproductive rights, namely through oral contraception, have afforded women a number of opportunities, the eugenics undercarriage of the movement undermines the benefits it has purportedly made. Indeed, the reproductive rights movement was built on the exploitation of racialized, impoverished, and mentally ill women. Reproductive rights is arguably a pillar of feminism, and a recognizably feminist campaign. Given the exclusionary and exploitable practices inherent to the movement, though, reproductive rights expose current understandings of feminism as problematic.

A closer examination of the fight for reproductive autonomy reveals that Black and Indigenous women were not provided with reproductive autonomy. Instead, Black and Indigenous women were given an illusion of choice which so often resulted in forced sterilization and control over their reproductive health. Excluding Black and Indigenous women from reproductive autonomy thwarts their autonomy in every sense and as a result, undermines the idea that feminism acknowledges *all* women are discriminated against on the basis of sex.[86]

The fight for reproductive autonomy is a significant historical manifestation of feminism for which Sanger serves as a representation of. Sanger's first hand experiences as a travel nurse in impoverished neighbourhoods lead to her argument that women seriously lack reproductive autonomy. Also evident in her work, however, is tangible support for eugenics. Sanger excluded Black and Indigenous women from attaining reproductive autonomy by framing birth control as a tool to positively control their reproductive health when in reality, it was an illusion of choice to control the reproduction of those deemed unfit. Like the fight for education and suffrage, the exclusionary

[86] Delmar, "What is Feminism?" 5.

practices in Sanger's work suggest that only *some* women are harmed on the basis of sex and/or gender, and only *some* women are worthy of having their harm ameliorated. If current understandings of feminism are rooted in historical manifestations, and the arguments in favour of reproductive autonomy are inherently exclusionary, there is sufficient reason to question current paradigms of feminism; current understandings of feminism preserve exclusionary practices.

While feminism has been, and continues to be, responsive to pro-woman issues, this chapter identified three major historical manifestations of feminism: women's education, suffrage, and reproductive rights. Each historical manifestation has been successful in its own respect; women were granted access to education, women were permitted to vote, and women did gain access to birth control which allowed them to achieve reproductive autonomy. Despite the successes of historical manifestations, each one is distinctly marked by exclusionary practices. Indeed, representations of these historical manifestations such as Mary Astell, Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Margaret Sanger, respectively, reveal the exclusionary practices at work. Lower-class women were not suitable subjects for education, Black people were excluded from enfranchisement, and Black and Indigenous women were denied reproductive autonomy. Historical manifestations of feminism shape current conceptions of feminism. Given these exclusionary practices present in three major historical manifestations of feminism, there is reasonable concern that current conceptions of feminism have been shaped by these exclusionary practices which motivates a conceptual re-engineering of feminism. We want a concept of feminism that avoids exclusionary practices, not one that has been built on an unstable, exclusionary foundation. The following chapter will continue to motivate the conceptual re-engineering project by exploring feminism's factionalization and subsequent conceptual confusion.

CHAPTER 2: THE FACTIONALIZATION OF FEMINISM

Recall Delmar's stipulative definition of feminism: at the very least, feminism is the recognition that women face discrimination on behalf of their sex and/or gender.[87] While broad conceptions of feminism provide the scaffolding necessary for a rudimentary understanding of the concept of feminism, it lacks nuance. Specifically, broad conceptions of feminism cannot account for the myriad of ways in which women are harmed in virtue of their intersecting identities. In recognizing the promises and failures of feminism, the feminist movement began to factionalize. A variety of feminist groups developed such as Black feminism, Indigenous feminism, lesbian feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, gender-critical feminism, transnational feminism, radical feminism, liberal feminism, cultural feminism, conservative feminism, Asian feminism, eco-feminism, white feminism, psycho-analytical feminism, libertarian feminism, structural feminism, postmodern feminism, and difference feminism. Indeed, the diversification of the movement even prompted some scholars to refer to *feminisms* instead of feminism.[88] The variety of ways to address women's harms has resulted in a number of ways to meaningfully conceptualize feminism. In turn, this has frustrated a unifying conception of feminism.

While factionalization has, in some ways, responded to the failures of broad, social understandings of feminism, it is jointly true that factionalization has led to conceptual confusion. Consider the following thought experiment which better captures the conceptual confusion.

> Suppose an alien were to come to Earth having never before been exposed to feminism. The concept intrigues her and she wishes to better understand it. She asks a passing

[87] Rosalind Delmar, "What is Feminism?" in *Theorizing Feminism*, eds. Anne Herrmann & Abigail Stewart, (Routledge, 2001), 8.
[88] Sandra Kemp, and Judith Squires, *Feminisms* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

> radical feminist "What is feminism?" The radical feminist might respond by saying that feminism is the recognition that women are harmed by way of biological predispositions and feminism works to repair this. Suppose that the alien then approaches a Marxist feminist, asking "What is feminism?" The Marxist feminist might respond by saying that feminism is intentionally recognizing and ameliorating burdens that capitalist modes of production place on women. The alien has been presented with two markedly different ways of conceptualizing feminism and is confused: how can there be such deep disagreement?

The problem, as the alien demonstrates, is that having myriad ways to understand feminism generates conceptual confusion. It is not entirely clear what feminism *is* nor what (or who) *it is for* (e.g. what is feminism for Indigenous women as opposed to what is feminism for lesbians) thereby frustrating a meaningful understanding of the concept. In not having a settled concept of feminism, we lose a way to understand what feminism is and in turn, lose meaningful ways to speak about feminism.

The factionalization of feminism further motivates a conceptual re-engineering of feminism. This chapter will explore various factions of feminism to illustrate how each faction communicates its own meaningful conception of feminism. This descriptive project has an analytic upshot; given the multitude of factions and meaningful ways of understanding feminism, I will expose the conceptual confusion at the heart of factionalization. In doing so, I continue motivating the need for a conceptual re-engineering project.

2.1 LIBERAL FEMINISM

Perhaps known as one of the first formal iterations of feminism, liberal feminism is concerned with women's freedoms and autonomy. Liberal feminism is a subsidiary of the liberal school of thought which emphasizes "the values of freedom and holds that the just state ensures freedoms for

individuals".[89] Liberal feminism positions the central tenet of liberalism and applies it to women such that "[liberal feminism] emphasizes freedom as a value especially important for women, and the state plays a role in ensuring this".[90] Liberal feminism approaches freedom for women in two ways. Classic liberal feminism argues for a traditional sense of equality in its opposition to laws which treat women differently from men.[91] These feminists reject laws aimed at affirmative action and anti-discrimination which they believe to position women above men.[92] On the contrary, egalitarian liberal feminists argue for equality in any capacity in which it supports women's personal and political autonomy.[93] These feminists support laws aimed at affirmative action and anti-discrimination if they enhance women's autonomy. Classic and egalitarian liberal feminists agree that personal and political freedom is important for women, but differ in terms of the means by which this freedom is achieved (e.g. positioning women above men and disrupting equality, or merely enhancing women's autonomy). Moving forward, liberal feminism will be referred to as the security of personal and political freedom for women.

Liberal feminism upholds the value of freedom for women on the premise that men and women are naturally equal; their inequality manifests itself in social structures such as politics whereby women could not vote, the workforce whereby women were paid substantially less than men, and marriage and family whereby women take on the bulk of childcare and domestic tasks. In each of

[89] Amy R Baehr, "Liberal Feminism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, March 21 2021, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-liberal/.
[90] Baehr, "Liberal Feminism."
[91] "Liberal Feminism."
[92] "Liberal Feminism."
[93] "Liberal Feminism."

these examples, liberal feminism illustrates how natural equality between men and women is lost, subsequently causing, and justifying, women having their freedoms and autonomy thwarted.

One representation of liberal feminism is found in the 1848 Declaration of Sentiments. Liberal feminists Elizabeth Cady Stantion and Lucretia Mott developed a response to the 1776 Declaration of Independence which they argue restricts and compromises women's freedoms. The Declaration of Independence, the founding document of the United States of America which announced their separation from Britain, opens with the line "...all men are created equal."[94] The language in the document upon which the entire United States of America is founded excludes women; it notes that 'all men are created equal' but mentions nothing about women. So, in crafting their response, Stanton and Mott open the Declaration of Sentiments with the line "...all men and women are created equal."[95] Stanton and Mott echo the foundation of liberal feminism, namely, that all men and women are created naturally equal. In echoing this, they highlight a shortcoming of the Declaration of Independence: the statement that 'all men are created equal' limits equality to existing *between* men, which contradicts the fact that *both* men and women are created equal. By excluding women from participating in equality, the founding document of the United States of America has inequality built into it. The established inequality is then anticipated to bleed into other social structures.[96]

[94] Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence,* (New York: Seaver & Co., 1860), 1.
[95] Seneca Falls Convention, "Declaration of Sentiments," in *Feminist Manifestos*, ed. Penny A. Weiss, (New York: New York University Press, 2020), 77.
[96] Suzanne M. Marilley, "'Liberal Feminisms' and Political Autonomy," in *Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States, 1820-1920,* (Germany: Harvard University Press, 1997), 47.

Liberal feminism has manifested in a variety of ways. One of the most notable ways in which liberal feminism has manifested is through the fight for women's suffrage. Liberal feminists argue that equality is withheld from women in the political realm. Indeed, women were not permitted to vote in many countries until the mid-twentieth century. It is not just lacking the right to vote that concerned liberal feminists, though; it was also the pernicious consequences that stemmed from lacking enfranchisement which further solidified women's inequality. As noted in chapter one, being a voting citizen meant women could own property, file for divorce, and have custody of their children.[97] The right to vote would access many more freedoms for women, further securing their equality.

Another prominent way in which liberal feminism manifested is the fight for access to education. Liberal feminists, like Mary Wollstonecraft, argue that women's inequality is withheld in the political realm and education is an avenue for women to realize their natural equality with men as rational creatures. Wollstonecraft suggests that denying women access to education denied them the ability to develop their rational powers, and created a distinct inequality with men. Much like the right to vote, access to education would grant women more opportunities to substantially enhance their autonomy.[98] It is likely that access to education increases workforce participation and is thereby an avenue to become financially independent.[99] Access to education would secure a wealth of freedoms for women and guarantee their equality with men.[100]

---

[97] June Hannam, *Feminism* (London: Routledge, 2013), 33.
[98] Rosemarie Tong, and Tina Fernandes Botts, "Liberal Feminism," in *Feminist Thought : A More Comprehensive Introduction*, Fifth edition, eds. Rosemarie Tong and Tina Fernandes Botts, (Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018), 14.
[99] Heinrich Hock, "The Pill and the College Attainment of American Women and Men," 9.
[100] Turnbull, 21.

In each of these examples, liberal feminism illustrates how the natural equality between men and women is lost, subsequently causing, and justifying, women to have their freedoms and autonomy thwarted. Liberal feminism is aimed at securing women's legal and political freedoms through state power, often through the law or other state institutions like education. Given its focus on women's freedom, liberal feminism is arguably the first formal, organized branch of feminism in Western history. It was the first time feminists had coalesced around a central goal and paved the way for other branches of feminism to develop. While I turn to other factions of feminism in what follows, liberal feminism lingers in the background – its legacy echoes through all other factions of feminism.

2.2 RADICAL FEMINISM

Radical feminist Mary Daly (1928-2010) published her 1993 work titled *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* which radically argues that there is a sexual caste system which groups men and women separately based on biology, and creates a sexual hierarchy in which women are subordinate and men are superior. In her work, Daly states "Women of all 'types' having made the psychic breakthrough to recognition of the basic sameness of our situation as women, have been initiated into the struggle for liberation of our sex from its ancient bondage".[101] Daly continues that "The bonding is born out of shared recognition that there exists a worldwide phenomenon of sexual caste, basically the same whether one lives in Saudi Arabia or in Sweden".[102] Daly's point is that there is a grave sexual disparity between men and women in which women are subordinate to men. Her criticism of the disparity leads her to suggest that the sex caste system

[101] Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father : Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation,* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 1.
[102] Daly, *Beyond God the Father : Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation,* 2.

"...could not be perpetuated without the consent of the victims as well as of the dominant sex, and such consent is obtained through sex role socialization – a conditioning process which begins to operate from the moment we are born, and which is enforced by most institutions".[103] Daly criticizes the socialization that men and women receive; she notes that social systems and processes of socialization are responsible for weaving the sexual caste system into every facet of society. For example, even children's toys are victim to the sexual caste system in which young girls are advertised playing with kitchen sets and young boys are advertised playing with construction trucks thus reinforcing from a young age that a woman's duties are domestic, and a man's duties are to work in the public sphere. Daly's criticism is a precursor to understanding the radical feminist movement. She seemingly represents radical feminism as a movement which both recognizes and aims to overthrow rigid sex roles that position and justify men as superior and women as subordinate.

Radical feminism gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s. Core arguments for radical feminism suggest that "...it has become necessary to free humanity from the tyranny of its biology".[104] The tyranny of biology refers to the vicious oppression women face, and privilege men receive, that is rooted in biology and sex roles which has created a sexual hierarchy. As explained by radical feminist Shulamith Firestone, radical feminists advocate to change the fundamental biological condition of humans which has transposed itself onto the social realm.[105] Radical feminists subscribe to the belief that the ontology of humans is bound to their biological predispositions which naturally place men in a superior position and women in a subordinate position. If one is to entertain the radical feminist

[103] Daly, 2.
[104] Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex : The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: Morrow, 1974), 108.
[105] Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex : The Case for Feminist Revolution*, 2.

hypothesis, their proposed solution becomes much easier to understand, namely that the binary ought to be abolished. Radical feminists believe the only way to escape the tyranny of biology is to eliminate sex roles entirely.[106]

The premises of radical feminist arguments are alluded to in the words of Firestone. Indeed, radical feminists defend themselves against those who suggest that if men and women are not biologically equal, then it is morally permissible to treat them differently. On this account, men and women are not biologically equal, therefore it is morally permissible to treat them differently. Radical feminists argue that the foundations for the first premise of the argument are unstable. In terms of biology, men and women certainly are different, but radical feminists correctly point out that the issue of biology has become embedded into social institutions. Differences in biology have manifested into the sex-caste system that Daly and Firestone point out which incorrectly places men in a superior position to women. If notions of biological differences are removed from social institutions and socializations, then perhaps the sex-caste system will follow suit.

Radical feminists maintain the sentiments of abolishing gender and execute this in various ways. For example, the Redstockings, founded by Shulamith Firestone and Ellen Willis, believed consciousness-raising was one step towards eliminating the sex-caste system.[107] Consciousness-raising is a form of activism in which women gather in groups and listen to one another speak on shared lived experience. Through consciousness-raising, the Redstockings explored a rejection of institutional analyses of women's oppression in order to accentuate underlying male-supremacy. For example, one

[106] Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 6.
[107] Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, 153.

topic the Redstockings explored in consciousness-raising sessions was sex-roles in marriage. Political theorist Carole Pateman explains how "...our social life is as if it were based on a sexual contract, which both establishes orderly access to women and a division of labour in which women are subordinate to men."[108] A sexual division of labour manifests in the marriage contract which places a husband as superior to his wife.[109] The Redstockings explored issues of the marriage contract and concluded, as Pateman spells out, that the issue was not the institution of marriage, rather, the issue lay in male-supremacy and sex-roles in marriage.[110] Consciousness-raising was especially useful for radical feminists in re-framing feminist issues to expose the cruelty of sex roles.

Another radical feminist method of eliminating sex-roles are separatist practices which consisted of physical, political, and ideological separation from men.[111] Radical feminists who subscribe to separatist practices cloister from male-dominated institutions, relationships, roles, and activities.[112] Radical feminists resort to, instead, creating alternative structures that centre women and their experiences.[113] For example, some separatists opted for women-only relationships and titled themselves 'political lesbians'. Separatism provided radical feminists with a tool to organize themselves with. If the sex-caste system was the primary issue for radical feminists, then removing themselves from it to live entirely with other women seemed like a justifiable solution. As well, if men are the enemy, then women ought to separate.

---

[108] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988), 136.
[109] Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, 135.
[110] Interview with Rosalyn Baxandall cited in Echols, *Daring to Be Bad : Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, 153.
[111] Echols, *Daring to Be Bad : Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, 64.
[112] Patricia Elliot and Nancy Mandell, "Feminist Theories," in *Feminism: Race, Class, and Sexuality 1st Edition,* ed. Nancy Mandell (Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall, 1995), 14.
[113] Elliot and Mandell, "Feminist Theories," in *Feminism: Race, Class, and Sexuality*, 15.

Critics of radical feminism are quick to point out that the arguments of radical feminists rest upon the notion that men and women are biologically different and inherently bound to their nature; for example, men are aggressive, and women are incapable, helpless victims.[114] The logic here suggests that men and women are biologically predisposed to certain behaviours such as aggression and submission, respectively. The essentialization of sex neglects room for change – men will be men and women will be women[115], or, as commonly stated, 'boys will be boys'. Feminist author bell hooks, in her book *Feminist Theory: From Centre to Margin,* adds that the essentialization of sex by radical feminists overlooks the crucial dual-reality that "Men do oppress women... [and] people are hurt by rigid sex role patterns. These two realities co-exit".[116] Men are also harmed through rigid sex role patterns, especially through rigid notions of masculinity. It seems, then, there is concern that the essentialization of sex actively upholds the sex-role rigidity which radical feminists claim to tear down.

Radical feminists pioneered early feminist movements, and the way in which they conceptualize feminism provides a meaningful avenue for both examining sex-based oppression and organizing resistance. In contrast to liberal feminism, though, radical feminism endorses different premises in support of rectifying the social and moral harms that women face. While liberal feminism emphasizes the importance of providing freedom to women through state apparatuses, radical feminists emphasize the importance of removing biologically driven sex-roles which actively work to marginalize women. Indeed, as we will see, each faction of feminism has its own focus and approach

[114] Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought - Second Edition* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993), 228.
[115] Rosemarie Tong and Tina Fernandes Botts, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018), 67.
[116] hooks, bell, *Feminist Theory : From Margin to Center* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 74.

which complicates the path to understanding what feminism is ultimately creating conceptual confusion. Moreover, the narrow focus on sex-based oppression in radical feminism points to the need for an ameliorative project, one which avoids sex essentialism.

2.3 LESBIAN FEMINISM

An exclusive focus on biological sex was a major shortcoming of radical feminism. Not only did this narrow focus simplify the manner in which women are harmed, but it also crystallized the idea that women were biologically predisposed to heterosexual relationships with men. The relationships women had with men, especially in marriage, were an access point for radical feminists to examine those relationships as disadvantageous to women. For example, as discussed in the previous section, Pateman highly criticizes heterosexual marriage and the ways it positions women as sexually inferior to men.[117] Born from a central focus on the relationships that women had to men, a new faction of feminism emerged which sought to decentralize those relationships: lesbian feminism.

The primary concern of lesbian feminists is that the relationships between men and women are harmful towards women; heterosexual and heterosocial relationships cannot exist separate from the tyranny of biology which places men in a superior position and women in an inferior position. On this idea, all relationships between men and women are inherently unequal to some degree. One lesbian feminist group, the Radicalesbians, carefully explains the beliefs and commitments of lesbian feminism. In their manifesto, *The Woman-Identified Woman* (1970), the group writes, "Lesbian feminism is the primacy of women relating to other women, of women creating a new consciousness

[117] Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, 135-136.

of and with each other, which is at the heart of women's liberation".[118] Lesbian feminists identify inherent inequalities in women's relationships to men. Some lesbian feminists even suggest that male-domination organizes itself in a way that prevents love and friendship between women by swaying their focus to be on their husbands.[119] While Radicalesbians' criticisms of heterosexual and heterosocial relationships is necessary to their argument, the crux of their position lies in the solution: to regain equality and autonomy, women ought to position themselves in homosocial relationships. The Radicalesbians illustrate lesbianism as a political identity which suggests that women ought to have relationships only with other women for political and personal gain; women can choose to be lesbian as a political identity. Thus, the Radicalesbians represent lesbian feminism as the recognition that biological sex roles are magnified in heterosexual and heterosocial relationships which, in turn, work to subjugate women. There is a responsibility placed on women to then engage in solely homosocial relationships to ameliorate the inequality from men and women's relationships.

Another reason lesbian feminists identify men and women's relationships as problematic is that these relationships uphold "...the foundation of a male worldview – a view that is based on competition, aggression, and acquisition."[120] Much like radical feminists, lesbian feminists subscribe to the belief that biology shapes the socialization of men and women; men are born and socialized with traits such as competition, aggression, and acquisition which influences the way they exist in

[118] Radicalesbians, "The Woman-Identified Woman," in *Feminist Manifestos*, ed. Penny A. Weiss (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 225.
[119] Sheila Jeffreys, *The Lesbian Revolution : Lesbian Feminism in the UK 1970-1990* (Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018), 82.
[120] Cited in Anne M. Valk, "Living a Feminist Lifestyle: The Intersection of Theory and Action in a Lesbian Feminist Collective," *Feminist Studies* 28, no. 2 (2002): 310-11.

relationships. Women cannot achieve equality when they exist in a social and intellectual space dominated by masculinity and masculine ideologies. Instead, lesbian feminists "...choose to reject that worldview and to live apart from men who have perpetuated those values for thousands of years".[121] Indeed, lesbian feminists also identify the harm present in masculine worldviews and ideologies which dominate women and men's relationships.

Similar to radical feminists, the beliefs of lesbian feminists often manifested in separatist practices which had far greater uptake in the lesbian feminist community. Women would opt to live in so-called women-only spaces such as houses, relationships, or intellectual spheres.[122] By prohibiting biological men from these spaces, they were believed to be free from masculinity and masculine ideologies masculine traits spoken of earlier such as competition, aggression, and acquisition. Separate spaces provided a fruitful avenue for a new relational epistemic community amongst women subsequently allowing them to become political lesbians.[123]

As noted earlier, political lesbianism engages in a *choice* to become lesbian, which need not be attributed to sexuality. For example, political lesbians state "Lesbianism is not a matter of sexual preference, but rather one of political choice which every woman must make if she is to become woman-identified and thereby end male supremacy".[124] Certainly, a number of arguments have been marshalled against lesbian feminism but perhaps most notable is the argument which addresses the

[121] Cited in Valk, "Living a Feminist Lifestyle: The Intersection of Theory and Action in a Lesbian Feminist Collective," 310-11.
[122] Jeffreys, *The Lesbian Revolution: Lesbian Feminism in the UK 1970-1990*, 55.
[123] Denise Thompson, *Reading Between the Lines: A Lesbian Feminist Critique of Feminist Accounts of Sexuality* (Sydney, Australia: Lesbian Studies and Research Group, Gorgon's Head Press, 1991), 55.
[124] Ginny Benson, "Lesbian/Feminist Monthly," *The Furies,* January 1972, 354.

separation of political lesbianism from sexuality. When political lesbians suggest lesbianism is something women can and *should* choose, they hastily overlook harms to women associated with lesbian as a sexuality.[125] For example, a butch lesbian will experience more social exclusion than a political lesbian who has freely chosen the social exclusion. Political lesbians are able to reap benefits from choosing the word 'lesbian', invoking a separation from heteronormativity which restores power to women without having to endure the harms, such as social ostracization, associated with lesbianism as a sexuality.

The lesbian feminist movement was both politically and personally significant for women. It gained traction by placing an emphasis on relationships as the site of gendered harms and was an organizational tool for women to escape from and resist dangerously oppressive norms associated with masculinity. Lesbian feminism demonstrates the affinity of the feminist movement to factionalize in response to shortcomings with other meaningful conceptions of feminism. In concert with radical feminism, though, lesbian feminism allows one to see the beginnings of myriad ways to meaningfully understand feminism. Whereas radical feminism emphasizes the importance of biologically driven sex-roles that marginalize women, lesbian feminists examine how these sex-roles manifest in relationships, and then examine how the relationships marginalize women. In the coming chapters, each faction of feminism will continue to develop its own focus which continues to complicate a working concept of feminism. In addition, the appropriation of the word 'lesbian' by lesbian feminists motivates the need for a conceptual re-engineering project, one which avoids political lesbianism.

[125] Gabriele Griffin, "Political Lesbianism," in *A Dictionary of Gender Studies*: Oxford University Press.

2.4 GENDER CRITICAL FEMINISM

Gender-critical feminism (GCF) is laterally related to both radical feminism and lesbian feminism, with some scholars even arguing that GCF is a contemporary revival of radical feminism.[126] GCF developed in response to questions of *who counted as a woman* which arose during the radical feminist movement. Trans women were looking to participate and fight alongside the feminist movement, but many established feminists denied them a place. Anti-trans feminists believed that trans women were biological men in disguise. Much like radical feminism, gender critical feminists argue that biology is the basis of oppression. If one is biologically a woman, they are oppressed by way of being a woman. Gender critical feminists, however, argue that trans-women are biologically male. Therefore, gender critical feminists conclude trans women are not oppressed by way of being women.

Though the term GCF was not popularized until the 21st century, feminists expressing gender critical feminist attitudes emerged from 20th century feminism. For example, radical lesbian feminist Janice Raymond published her work titled *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* in 1979. In her work, Raymond writes "The male-to-female transsexual is a 'fantastical woman,' the incarnation of a male fantasy of feeling like a woman trapped in a man's body, the fantasy rendered flesh by a further male medical fantasy of surgically fashioning a male body into a female one".[127] Raymond details how the male-to-female transgender individual is one who is engaging in a child-like fantasy; they are not a woman, but rather a man who is the product of a fantastical medical surgery. In this excerpt from her book, the logic Raymond uses to guide her trans-exclusionary feminism is

[126] Holly Lawford-Smith, *Gender-Critical Feminism*, (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2022), 25.
[127] Janice Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire : The Making of the She-Male* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1994), xx.

exposed. If feminism is a movement which recognizes that women are placed at a disadvantage because of their sex, and if trans women are, as argued by gender-critical feminists, to be biologically male and therefore not women, then trans women do not have a place in or cannot benefit from feminism. Raymond's excerpt helps to navigate the philosophical arguments set up for modern day GCF.

Much like radical feminists, gender-critical feminists argue that women are exceptionally harmed by way of sex. For example, in her book titled *Gender-Critical Feminism*, Holly Lawford-Smith notes that "...women are a sex-caste, and... sex [is] a distinct and important axis of oppression".[128] Gender-critical feminists, like Lawford-Smith, suggest that women are a biological category, better known as female-people, who require protection from various forms of oppression.[129] On this account, women are biologically predisposed to be vulnerable and placed in closer proximity to harm. Indeed, Lawford-Smith defends GCF as a single-axis, non-intersectional movement.[130]

Gender-critical feminists execute their single-axis conception of gender various ways. Most notably, they have advocated for the adoption of wombyn-only spaces in which *only* biological women are permitted to enter. Wombyn-only spaces are an avenue for gender critical feminists to express their concerns for women's safety which they believe is compromised when non-biological women are permitted to enter. Gender critical feminist medical doctor, Dr. Nicola Williams, is especially concerned for the state of healthcare. She suggests that if "...[biological women] cannot be sure of getting an actual biological woman when they specifically request a female doctor, they won't go to get

[128] Lawford-Smith, *Gender-Critical Feminism*, 25.
[129] Lawford-Smith, 47.
[130] Lawford-Smith, 58.

screened. Their cancer will be missed and lives will be lost".[131] Gender critical feminist beliefs also manifest in washroom spaces. Again, Dr. Nicola Williams adds that "Female toilets are being turned mixed-sex around the country, leading to a huge rise in crimes against females, including sexual assault and rape".[132] The concerns of Dr. Williams resonate with many gender critical feminists whose comments are grounded in the essentialization of male violence. The spirit of masculinity essentializes notions of violence such that if one wants to present as masculine, they must be violent. Donald L. Mosher and Mark Sirkin explain that "Violence as manly refers to the attitude among some men that violent aggression... is an acceptable, even preferable, masculine expression of power and dominance..."[133] Such essentialization suggests that if one is a man, they are inherently predisposed to be violent. Given that gender critical feminists do not separate notions of masculinity or femininity from biological sex, and also understand trans women to be biologically male, they conclude that trans women are also inherently predisposed to being violent.

Gender-critical feminists are subject to a number of criticisms. For example, gender-critical feminists are alternatively referred to as trans-exclusionary radical feminists (TERF) which they believe to be a derogatory turn designed to discredit the work of gender-critical feminists. Indeed, the name TERF alludes to the most prevalent criticism of gender-critical feminists, namely, that the movement

[131] Williams, Nicola. "It's Now or Never." *Fair Play for Women,* 2018. Podcast, https://fairplayforwomen.com/backgrd/, 11:50-11:55.
[132] Williams, Nicola. "It's Now or Never." *Fair Play for Women,* 2018. Podcast, https://fairplayforwomen.com/backgrd/, 16:20-16:31.
[133] Donald L Mosher and Mark Sirkin, "Measuring a Macho Personality Constellation," *Journal of Research in Personality* 18, no. 2 (1984): 151.

is an "...opposition to trans rights".[134] Such a focal point labels the movement as anti-trans.[135] Lawford-Smith responds to this criticism suggesting that "While gender-critical feminists reject legal conflation between sex and gender identity, and advocate for continued protection of sex under the law, there is no tension with *also* supporting the protection of gender identity, transgender status, or gender expression."[136] Lawford-Smith purports to defend GCF by showing that it is not anti trans given that one can reject the conflation of sex and gender while simultaneously protecting legislation on gender identity. Lawford-Smith defends this position on the grounds that, in her view, because feminism and transgender issues are two markedly different endeavours.

Lawford-Smith attempts to divorce modern GCF from early discourse, however, a historical analysis reveals that there is, in fact, tension between a sex/gender distinction and the protection of gender identity. The fallacious logic of Lawford-Smith's defence is evident through Raymond's *Transexual Empire* which helps to historically contextualize the tension. Raymond writes "...transsexuals are not participating in a performance in which the audience suspends disbelief for the duration of the show. [Transsexuals] purport to be the real thing. And our suspension of disbelief in their synthetic nature is required as a moral imperative".[137] Raymond, one of the early gender-critical feminists, details the moral danger transgender individuals place on society by demanding that outsiders suspend their moral beliefs and epistemic frameworks. Raymond's words certainly highlight the moral deviance of transgender individuals, which does not provide justification in favour of

[134] Lawford-Smith, 66.
[135] Lawford-Smith, 94.
[136] Lawford-Smith, 66.
[137] Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire : The Making of the She-Male*, xxiii.

protecting gender identity; instead, it sides in favour of denying gender identity protections by arguing that transgender individuals are morally dangerous to society. Raymond demonstrates the tangible presence of tensions between gender protections and the sex/gender distinctions which gender-critical feminists, like Holly-Lawford Smith, deny.

The GCF movement provided arguments which necessarily shape one way of understanding feminism. Despite criticism, GCF was politically and personally significant for many women. Much like radical feminism, it gained a great deal of traction by placing an emphasis on biological sex as the site of women's oppression. While GCF is certainly one way of understanding feminism, it is problematic due to its exclusion of transgender individuals by way of focusing on biological sex; the entire foundation of gender critical feminism is built on exclusionary practices. Liberal feminism, radical feminism, lesbian feminism, and GCF present their own meaningful ways of understanding what feminism is, but the multiplicity of understandings are beginning to highlight conceptual confusion.

2.5 MARXIST FEMINISM

Marxist feminism began to shift focus away from examining biological predispositions as the sole reason for women's subjugation and instead suggested that sex was not the only axis on which women were oppressed. Instead, Marxist feminists retained the argument that women were harmed by way of gender, but focused specifically on how capitalist modes of production disproportionately harm women. Marxist feminists utilized the revolutionary work of Karl Marx to explore the ways in which capitalism dually harmed women. In particular, capitalism harmed women most significantly

through domestic work. In her book titled *Women Workers Struggle for Their Rights*, Alexandra Kollontaĭ explains,

> [Women's] inequality, on economic and political grounds together with the enslavement of the woman to her family and the running of the house, created a psychological division between men and women workers, and provided the soil from which grew those independent organizations of women workers which sprang up in all countries alongside the general socialist parties in the form of societies or unions of women workers.[138]

Kollantaĭ's sentiments exposes that men and women remain divided through paid and unpaid labour respectively. While men receive wages for their employment in the public sphere, women are not paid for their work within the private sphere for jobs such as cooking, cleaning, and raising children. Such tasks are not formally classified as work, and as a result are not treated as paid labour. As represented by Kollantaĭ, Marxist feminism is a framework for understanding how economic systems disproportionately marginalize women by neglecting to distinguish their work in the private sphere as work that is deserving of a liveable wage.

As noted above, Marxist feminists align themselves with the political philosophy of Karl Marx. Some brief clarification on Marxist guiding principles are required. Marx identifies class as an oppressive factor in which those in the upper/middle class reap extensive benefits and those in the lower class are disadvantaged.[139] Economic systems, like capitalism, are designed to continue benefiting

[138] Alexandra Kollontaĭ, *Women Workers Struggle for Their Rights* (Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1971) Foreword.
[139] Elisabeth Armstrong, "Marxist and Socialist Feminism," *Study of Women and Gender: Faculty Publications* (2020): 1.

the upper/middle class while the lower class continues to remain in a powerless position. The upper/middle class are those who retain control of producing goods and accumulating wealth while continuing to profit from underpaid workers, the lower-class, who produce the goods.[140]

Marxist feminists position Marx's ideas of class as oppressive to analyze the ways in which the class division spills over into the nuclear family, which is host to numerous traditionally masculine and feminine roles.[141] Here, men are positioned to work – they are able to produce material goods for the family. Women, however, are required to remain at home while continuing to work; their work in the private sphere, though, such as raising children, neglects to be perceived as work, and they are subsequently not compensated. In this situation, men are the upper-class individuals reaping profits, whereas women are the underpaid and unpaid workers. The household is a site of production in which women's work is exploited.[142] Marxist feminism exposes how gender roles, such as those within the nuclear family, structure means of production and actively subjugate women.

Marxist feminist analysis does not stop at the private sphere, though. Suppose women were permitted to work, as was the goal in imperialism.[143] Indeed, women's freedoms and status is a marker of civilization for many Western countries.[144] For example, imperialism resulted in the mobilization of rural women from their subsistence agricultural economies.[145] Women in Asia, Latin America, and

[140] Armstrong, "Marxist and Socialist Feminism," 1.
[141] Armstrong, "Marxist and Socialist Feminism," 1; The nuclear family structure is one in which the husband is a breadwinner, attending work to bring home financial stability for the family, and the wife stays at home to fulfill her domestic duties and care for their children.
[142] Armstrong, 5.
[143] Armstrong, 3.
[144] Hyaeweol Choi, "The Nineteenth Century," in *The Routledge Global History of Feminism,* eds. Bonnie Smith and Nova Robinson, (UK: Routledge, 2022), 107.
[145] Armstrong, 3.

Mexico were granted paid labour in rapidly developing factories.[146] Women's work at these factories was broken into smaller parts which required less skill.[147] Given that women were performing tasks deemed unskilled and markedly easier, employers were not required to pay them liveable wages and were able to replace women workers quickly should they decide to quit. The exploitation of women allowed factories to both move their operations quickly and start new ones, and prevented women from organizing in unions.[148] Capitalists' operations sought to prevent women from becoming revolutionaries who were able to organize themselves and demand radical transformation.[149] The dispensability of women and constant means of moving factories prevented women from organizing against the harms they faced.

One of the ways in which Marxist feminism manifested to combat economic exploitation of women was through waged housework. The proposal of paying women for their housework sent the message that housework was productive work, and that it was necessary for sustaining capitalism. The move to wage housework would effectively shift women's position in the private domain to the public domain, and work at eliminating gendered divisions of labour.[150] Indeed, classifying domestic tasks as labour would not only close gender disparities created by capitalist modes of production, but it would also provide women with the *language* to speak about their household duties as *work;* this seemingly

[146] Armstrong, 8.
[147] Armstrong, 8.
[148] Diane Elson, and Ruth Pearson, "'Nimble Fingers Make Cheap Workers': An Analysis of Women's Employment in Third World Export Manufacturing," *Feminist Review* 7, no. 1 (1981): 93; Armstrong 7.
[149] Hellen Stuhr-Rommereim and Mari Jarris, "Nikolai Chernyshevsky's What Is to Be Done? And the Prehistory of International Marxist Feminism," *Feminist German Studies* 36, no. 1 (2020): 167.
[150] Patricia Elliot and Nancy Mandell, "Liberal, Socialist, and Radical Feminism: An Introduction to Three Theories about Women's Oppression and Social Change," in *Feminism: Race, Class, and Sexuality 5th Edition,* ed. Nancy Mandell (Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall, 2010), 15.

removes gendered divisions of labour and the notion that women are naturally predisposed for household tasks.

Marxist feminists demonstrate a break away from the single axes of liberal, radical, lesbian and GCF. Instead, Marxist feminism theorized that women can be oppressed on a number of axes like class and gender. Critics question, though, if Marxist feminism places too rigid of an emphasis on capitalism.[151] Marxist feminism's focus on capitalism prohibits it from engaging with and analyzing how other axes of oppression, such as disability, race, and class, intersect and manifest in systems of production. For example, it has been well-established that women are disproportionately harmed by capitalist modes of production, but a Black woman or a queer woman experience these harms in different ways. On average, women are paid 80 cents for every dollar that men make, however, Black women are paid 61 cents to their male counterparts, resulting in an average lifetime loss in wages of $946,120.[152] The focus on capitalism generates worry that other axes of oppression, such as race, will be neglected. Indeed, sexism is not a capitalist monopoly.[153]

Marxist feminism provides a fruitful framework for examining feminism as the recognition that women are disproportionately marginalized by capitalist modes of production. Unlike liberal, radical, lesbian, or GCF, Marxist feminism instead focuses on women's oppression which manifests in class; it does not centre itself upon biology as the sole reason for the subjugation of women. Marxist

[151] Patricia Lomire, "Marxist Feminist Theory: A Review, A Critique, and an Offering," *Great Plains Sociologist,* vol. 2, article 5 (1989): 59.
[152] Jasmine Tucker, "The Wage Gap for Black Women: Working Longer and Making Less," *National Women's Law Centre,* August 2019, https://nwlc.org/resource/the-wage-gap-for-black-women-working-longer-and-making-less/#.
[153] Isaac D. Balbus, *Marxism and Domination: A Neo-Hegelian, Feminist, Psychoanalytic Theory of Sexual, Political, and Technological Liberation* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1982), n.p.

feminism provides a meaningful avenue for understanding women's oppression through the lenses of class and gender. Though it avoids the essentializations of sex made by liberal, radical, lesbian, and GCF, Marxist feminism still presents its own challenges. There are concerns for intersecting identities and how they ought to be incorporated into the theory, which motivates an ameliorative project that avoids these shortcomings.

2.6 INDIGENOUS FEMINISM

Liberal, radical, lesbian, gender-critical, and Marxist feminism are all ways of meaningfully understanding feminism. Each presented faction of feminism has its own focus and approach which complicates the path to understanding what feminism is. Their shortcomings, such as the essentialization of sex and inability to account for intersecting identities, define the need for an ameliorative conception of feminism, one which avoids the outlined shortcomings. Indigenous feminism is a response to some of the identified harms given that Indigenous women were both excluded from feminist discussions and subsumed under the title of 'woman of colour' which catalyzed the neglect of the specific needs of Indigenous women. [154] This section will illustrate what Indigenous feminism is, how it is practiced, and offer a critique of the movement to continue motivating a conceptual re-engineering of feminism.

Indigenous women were excluded from matters which directly concerned and impacted them. For example, Yankton Indigenous writer Zitkála-Šá, in her 1898-1929 letters, writes

> Your idea of an organization seems like a plausible project. Why do you think the men are able alone to do it – and in a queer afterthought – suggest the Indian woman should have theirs too... Only I do not understand *why* your organization does not

[154] Cheryl Suzack, *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 1.

> include Indian women. Am I not an Indian woman capable to think on serious matters and as thoroughly interested in the race – as any one or two of you men put together? Why do you dare to leave us out?[155]

Zitkála-Šá details the exclusion of Indigenous women, especially from decision making processes and political affiliations, in the above passage. In the latter half of her exhortation (ie; "Am I not an Indian woman capable to think on serious matters...?) Zitkála-Šá outlines the foundations of Indigenous feminism, namely, the recognition that Indigenous women are harmed on two axes: gender identity and Indigeneity, both of which are inseparable for Indigenous feminism.

The core argument underpinning Indigenous feminism is that colonization has *distinctly* impacted Indigenous *women* in a variety of ways. Scholar Mary Ellen-Kelm defines colonization as "...a process that includes geographical incursion, sociopolitical dislocation, the establishment of external political control and economic dispossession, the provision of low-level social services, and the creation of ideological formulations around race and skin colour which position the colonizers at a higher evolutionary level".[156] Colonization severs Indigeneity from both physical spaces and systems of belief. In particular, colonization has resulted in the forceful removal of Indigenous women from positions of power and replaced their roles with Western, patriarchal ones.[157]

While colonization is certainly harmful to both Indigenous men, women, and two-spirited people, Indigenous feminism recognizes the ways it has disproportionately harmed Indigenous women in particular. Colonization works to remove any power and status from Indigenous women.

---

[155] Zitkála-Šá, and Tadeusz Lewandowski, *Zitkála-Šá: Letters, Speeches, and Unpublished Writings, 1898-1929* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 39.
[156] Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50*, (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 1998), xviii.
[157] Suzack, *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*, 1.

Australian Indigenous scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson of the Koenpul nation uses themes discussed in Patricia Hill Collins 1990 work *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment,* to illustrate the contours of an Indigenous woman's standpoint:

> They include sharing an inalienable connection to the land; a legacy of dispossession, racism, and sexism; resisting and replacing disparaging images of ourselves with self-defined images; continuing our activism as mothers, sisters, aunts, daughters, grandmothers, and community leaders, as well as negotiating sexual politics across and within cultures.[158]

Moreton-Robinson echoes Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality which reflects the unique experiences of Black women as a result of the intersection between their race and gender.[159] Intersectionality evolved to analyze and understand the complex nexus between various identities such as race and gender, which power operates through.[160] Moreton-Robinson reflects on the intersection of race and gender as shaped by legacies of colonialism, leading Indigenous women to be marginalized in ways which are not captured by other feminist factions. It is not just that Indigenous women have a unique standpoint, but also that broad, social understandings of feminism fail to consider or incorporate those experiences shaped by colonization.

Recall the case study from chapter one of Depo-Provera and its disproportionate distribution to Indigenous women.[161] Prior to the approval of DP by the Department of Health and Welfare in

---

[158] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism,* First edition, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021, xxii.
[159] Kimberlé Crenshaw, *Blackness at the Intersection: Intersectionality and the Black Diaspora* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), 1.
[160] Crenshaw, *Blackness at the Intersection: Intersectionality and the Black Diaspora*, 1.
[161] Jeannie Morgan, "Depo-Provera and the Regulation of Indigenous Women's Health," Simon Fraser University, Dissertation, 2007, p. 7.

1997, healthcare workers were instructed to provide DP birth control to Indigenous women.[162] In a study conducted by Hampton and McWatters, they note that of the three First Nations women they interviewed about DP, two of the three were either coerced or given DP without informed consent.[163] The words of Douglas Campbell Scott, the deputy superintendent for the Department of Indian Affairs, helps to explain the connection of Indigenous women's reproductive autonomy to colonization. Before the amendment to the Indian Act in 1920, Scott states:

> I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. That is my whole point...Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian department, that is the whole object of this Bill.[164]

The goal of Scott was to eliminate Indigenous people entirely. Indeed, the thwarting of Indigenous women's reproductive autonomy via DP was an active effort to remove the reproduction of Indigeneity. Indigenous women were the target market for DP to ensure that Indigenous women did not reproduce. This example demonstrates how Indigenous women are uniquely harmed by legacies of colonialism and helps to justify a need for a branch of feminism for Indigenous women that addresses the unique harms of colonialism.

The central claims of Indigenous feminism, namely that colonization has distinctly impacted Indigenous women in ways that neglect to be addressed by other factions of feminism, manifest in a

---

[162] Morgan, "Depo-Provera and the Regulation of Indigenous Women's Health," p. 7.
[163] Mary Hampton and Barb McWatters, "A Process Model of Depo-Provera Use in Canadian Women," *Health Care for Women International* 24, no. 3 (2003): 200.
[164] Robert L McDougall, "Duncan Campbell Scott," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Historica Canada, August 11, 2008, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/duncan-campbell-scott.

variety of ways. Indigenous and non-Indigenous women alike organize themselves to address the unique ways in which Indigenous women are marginalized. Consider one way in which Indigenous feminism manifests. In Canada, environmental racism is defined by Dr. Ingrid Waldron as the environmental policies, practices, or directives that disproportionately disadvantage groups or communities based on race.[165] Environmental racism is rooted in legacies of colonialism, white supremacy, and patriarchy, particularly marginalizing Black and Indigenous communities.[166] For example, resource extraction, hazardous waste sites, and dumps for environmental pollutants, are often strategically located near these communities that lack the political power to remove or clean up the project, such as Indigenous communities.[167] As well, policies and legislation further sanction the harmful presence of life-threatening toxins.[168] Government legislation and a lack of political power from communities *protects* the placement of an environmentally harmful site such as a pipeline. Given that environmentally harmful sites are often strategically located near communities that lack political power, like Indigenous reserves, many communities are at a substantially greater risk for rare cancers, upper respiratory disease, congenital anomalies, cardiovascular disease, skin disease etc...[169]

One Indigenous feminist group coalesced to protest the Canadian government's removal of environmental protection laws.[170] The removal of the laws would make Indigenous communities significantly more vulnerable to negative health outcomes such as those identified in the previous

[165] Ingrid Waldron, *Environmental Racism in Canada,* Ottawa: UNESCO, 2020, iv.
[166] Ingrid Waldron, "Women on the Frontlines: Grassroots Movements Against Environmental Violence in Indigenous and Black Communities in Canada," *Kalfou* vol. 5 issue 2 (2018): 251.
[167] Waldron, *Environmental Racism in Canada,* 1.
[168] Waldron, *Environmental Racism in Canada,* 2.
[169] Waldron, *Environmental Racism in Canada,* 3.
[170] "Visual Herstory of the Movement," *Idle No More,* November 10, 2012.

paragraph. The group, known as Idle No More (INM), was founded by four women: Nina Wilson, Sylvia McAdam, Jessica Gordon, and Sheelah McLean.[171] The women "...felt it was urgent to act on current and upcoming legislation that not only affects our First Nations people but the rest of Canada's citizens, lands and waters."[172] The four women organized teach-ins which are forums on contentious political issues.[173] In the following week of the first teach-in, there were a series of other teach-ins and protests across the Western provinces of Canada.[174] INM gained significant traction and has since organized a number of protests against the placement of environmental hazards on or near Indigenous communities which have particularly detrimental impacts on Indigenous women.

While Indigenous feminism addresses the unique needs of Indigenous women, some gender-critical feminists are skeptical of the intersection that Indigenous feminism makes between race and gender. Indeed, gender-critical feminist Holly Lawford-Smith defends feminism as a single-axis, non-intersectional movement.[175] She suggests that "If we instead maintain feminism as a single axis movement for women's liberation, then the members of feminist groups are equal in that context, so long as they are all women."[176] Lawford-Smith worries that the treatment of intersecting identities, as is seen through Indigenous feminism, will result in more division amongst women as opposed to unification, which is necessary in combating oppression. Indigenous women do, however, have

[171] "Visual Herstory of the Movement," *Idle No More.*
[172] "Visual Herstory of the Movement," *Idle No More.*
[173] "Visual Herstory of the Movement," *Idle No More.*
[174] "Visual Herstory of the Movement," *Idle No More.*
[175] Holly Lawford-Smith, *Gender-Critical Feminism*, 58.
[176] Holly Lawford-Smith, *Gender-Critical Feminism*, 58.

different experiences which uniquely shape their relationships with power and oppression; Lawford-Smith's criticism of intersectional feminism undermines this claim.

Indigenous feminism provides a framework for understanding how colonization has shaped distinct experiences at the intersection of gender and Indigeneity. In this way, Indigenous feminism has addressed the necessity of acknowledging and understanding the intersecting identities missed by previous conceptions of feminism, and marks yet another meaningful way of conceptualizing feminism. However, some feminists are skeptical of intersectionality as a feminist framework, suggesting that it hinders the ability of women to unite across a single-axis, and subsequently, prevents collective action. Ongoing conceptual confusion continues to motivate the need for a conceptual re-engineering of feminism.

2.7 BLACK FEMINISM

The 1950s and 1960s define a period of intense social and political activity. The time period saw the development of a number of transformative movements such as early branches of feminism, the gay rights movement, anti-war movements, and the civil rights movement. While the 50s and 60s were a sociopolitical hotbed, a significant connection developed between early branches of feminism and the civil rights movement with the former addressing and ameliorating harms to women and the latter addressing and ameliorating harms to Black people. Both movements strived for a shared goal of liberation, but each missed the mark. Neither movement was able to adequately capture the needs of those at the intersection of race and gender: Black women.

While the civil rights movement made significant strides to advance the rights of Black people, it often found itself wrapped up in patriarchal ideologies resulting in the exclusion of Black women.

For example, in groups such as the Black Panthers, Black nationalist male leaders "...wanted Black women to embrace “traditional” gender roles based on White middle-class conceptions of womanhood, wifehood, and motherhood".[177] When Black women excluded from civil rights movements turned to feminism, they instead found themselves excluded in virtue of their Black identity. Factions of feminism which sought to advance the rights of white women were notoriously exclusive of Black women's standpoint. For example, recall again Elizabeth Cady Stanton who juxtaposed the status of white women to that of slaves to argue that white women were more deserving of legal personhood. Indeed, the exclusion of Black women from both the civil rights movement highlighted an inability to consider the ways in which race and gender intersect. Black feminism developed in response to this which sought to explicitly consider Black women's experiences as shaped by intersections of race and gender.

The central claim of Black feminism is to examine and address the multitude of ways in which Black women are harmed along axes of race and gender. Core arguments within Black feminist discourse are best articulated within Black feminist organizations. One of the most famous Black feminist organizations is the Combahee River Collective (CRC). Formed in 1974, the CRC tasked themselves with developing a Black feminist politics. For example, the Collective notes that "[Black women] have had a shared awareness of how their sexual identity combined with their racial identity... make their whole life situation and the focus of their political struggle unique".[178] Black feminism

[177] Reiland Rabaka, *Black Women’s Liberation Movement Music: Soul Sisters, Black Feminist Funksters, and Afro-Disco Divas* (Oxford: Routledge, 2023), 15.
[178] Combahee River Collective, "The Combahee River Collective Statement," In *Encyclopedia of African-American Writing, Third Edition,* eds. Bryan Conn and Tara Bynum (Amenia, NY: Grey House Publishing, 2018), 971.

strives to prioritize the specific harms of Black women; in this "...Black women are inherently valuable and liberation is a necessity...".[179] The CRC is a lens for analyzing and understanding Black feminism. They seemingly represent Black feminism as the recognition that Black women experience intersecting axes of oppression, most notably race and gender but also class and sexuality. These intersecting axes of oppression uniquely situate Black women in the social sphere, and Black feminism assists in providing a framework to both understand and liberate Black women.

The inability to understand how race and gender intersect encourages the intellectual and social traditions of Black women to be ignored. Patricia Hill Collins details how feminist theorists will advocate for 'universal sisterhood' which understands all women to be united across a single axis, namely gender, but they expend little effort to incorporate and engage with Black women's ideas.[180] Patricia Hill Collins echoes criticisms of early manifestations of feminism which sought to ameliorate women's harms but failed to recognize the various ways in which women are harmed. Indeed, the removal or overlooking of Black women's voices, either from the social or intellectual sphere, has led to the erasure of Black women's knowledge. Within Black feminist thought is lived experience such as workplace violence, knowledge about hairstyles, the denial of personhood, and controlling images such as the mammy or jezebel.[181] Knowledge on these is generationally transmitted. The removal of knowledge subsequently removes transmission, which contributes to a greater project of erasing Black

[179] Combahee River Collective, "The Combahee River Collective Statement," 972.
[180] Patricia Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 1990), 5.
[181] Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 9, 100.

women's experiences. Black women were, and continue to be, barricaded from having the language to speak of their unique experiences which arise from the intersection of race and gender.

In response to a lack of language and attempts at erasing Black women's voices, Black women were tasked with developing a new, group consciousness, namely one that was intersectional.[182] But, Black women, however, lacked traditional spaces like academia to accomplish this. Patricia Hill Collins notes that instead of turning to the ivory towers of academia to foster group-consciousness, spaces such as music and conversation were utilized as sites of consciousness development.[183] For example, the contributions of Black feminism can often be found in soul, funk, and disco, and are a site for Black women's theory to develop and be heard.[184] Black women's music articulates the struggles of Black American women in the 1960s and 1970s.[185] Within their music, Mark Anthony Neal notes that Black women "...infused public narratives of Black rage and militancy, with nuanced demands for human respect and human decency.[186] Reiland Rabaka adds to Neal's understanding of Black struggles infused in music that "...soul-sisters, Black-female funksters, and Afro-disco divas composed, selected, and sang songs that intimately reflected Black women's lives and struggles in the mid-to-late 60s and the late 1970s".[187] Songs and songwriting provided an avenue for Black women to both share their

[182] Hill-Collins, 22.
[183] Hill-Collins, 251-252.
[184] Reiland Rabaka, *Black Women's Liberation Movement Music: Soul Sisters, Black Feminist Funksters, and Afro-Disco Divas*, 30.
[185] Rabaka, 30.
[186] Mark Anthony Neal, *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture*, (Oxford: Routledge, 1999), 75.
[187] Mark Anthony Neal, *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture*, 75; Rabaka, 74.

experiences at the intersections of race and gender as well as to develop a group consciousness. Indeed, Black feminist thought developed in a number of spaces removed from white-dominated ones.

Black feminism is responsible for the development and introduction of intersectionality. As noted in the introduction, intersectionality examines how "...particular forms of intersecting oppressions, for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation... remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice".[188] Some scholars, though, are critical of notions of intersectionality. For example, consider the work of Jennifer C. Nash who reframes the centrality of intersectionality to Black feminist theory in her 2019 book *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality.* Nash notes that intersectionality has become somewhat untouchable, and is perceived to be in need of shielding from 'violent criticism'.[189] Indeed, those who criticize intersectionality are often painted as the villain, and are disavowed by Black feminists.[190] Nash describes that debates on intersectionality turn into debates on whether one is for or against intersectionality, which then turn into debates on whether one is for or against Black feminism, and then whether one is for or against Black women.[191] While intersectionality is undeniably tethered to Black feminism, Nash's criticism suggests that its centrality has turned Black feminism into a "...tradition... designed... to correct, rather than to exist as its own vibrant field of debate," in which case "...black feminists find themselves mired in the impasse of the present, one marked by the intersectionality wars that again attempt to tether black feminism to one

[188] Hill-Collins, 18.
[189] Jennifer C. Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 35.
[190] Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*, 35.
[191] Nash, 36.

intellectual product—intersectionality—and to reduce and collapse 'black woman,' 'black feminism,' and 'intersectionality.'"[192] Nash does not want to remove intersectionality from Black feminist theory, but instead attempts to reframe the centrality of intersectionality which has led to an inability to engage fully with Black feminist thought.

Black feminism aims to expose the ways in which race and gender intersect to disproportionately harm Black women. Black feminism also challenges earlier, single-axis, conceptions of feminism that focus on either biology or class such as radical feminism. While Black feminism is yet another way of meaningfully conceiving of feminism – one which addresses the intersections of identity missed by other factions – it has also been heavily criticized for its connection to intersectionality by some scholars who argue that intersectionality has come to misrepresent Black feminism. Nonetheless, a discussion of Black feminism continues to motivate the conceptual re-engineering project by way of continuing to create conceptual confusion.

Recall the alien thought experiment presented at the beginning of the chapter. It is abundantly clear that the radical feminist and the Marxist feminist would provide a different answer to the alien. The same can be said for each faction of feminism which was discussed. The descriptive portion of the project revealed that each branch of feminism presents a different answer when asked the question "What is feminism?" Liberal feminists will say that feminism is recognizing that women lack freedom through state apparatuses. Radical feminists will say that feminism is recognizing that biological sex roles when manifested in social institutions are the root of women's harms and sex roles ought to be

[192] Nash, 57.

eliminated to ameliorate the harm. Lesbian feminists will say that feminism is recognizing heterosexual and heterosocial relationships create a hierarchy of inequality between men and women, and women ought to pursue homosocial relationships to ameliorate the inequality. Gender-critical feminists will say that feminism is recognizing women are harmed solely on the basis of biology, and permitting biological men to participate in feminism will thwart women's capacity to ameliorate their harm. Marxist feminists will say that feminism recognizes women are disproportionately harmed by capitalist systems of production. Indigenous feminists will say that feminism is recognizing that Indigenous women are disproportionately harmed by the interplay of gender and colonization. Finally, Black feminists will say that feminism recognizes that Black women are harmed by intersecting axes of gender and race. Each faction of feminism presents a meaningful, but markedly different way of conceptualizing feminism.

The answer to the question "What is feminism?" then remains unclear; there is no one way to respond to the question, rather, there are a multitude of ways to meaningfully conceptualize feminism. While each faction has been necessary to ameliorate the harms for women it is directed at, it is not clear what feminism exactly is or who it is for – feminism loses its conceptual coherence. The lack of a settled concept makes it remarkably difficult to understand feminism, and the concept becomes harder to speak meaningfully and consistently about which can cause further barriers to ameliorating women's harms. There is serious concern that without a meaningful way to speak about feminism, it may lose its political and theoretical effectiveness. Feminism may struggle as a tool to mobilize collective action or to articulate the various ways in which women are harmed. In the absence of a clear concept, feminism also becomes vulnerable to being co-opted and diluted. As demonstrated in the

descriptive sections, feminism can be used for exclusionary agendas as well as liberatory ones, all under the same concept. The descriptive project, then, has an analytic upshot: to motivate the need for a conceptual re-engineering of feminism. Part of feminism's cracked foundation is a lack of a clear concept by way of factionalization. Conceptually re-engineering feminism is an essential task if it wishes to remain a meaningful and useful concept.

Feminism has a myriad of ways of being meaningfully conceptualized: liberal feminism, radical feminism, lesbian feminism, GCF, Marxist feminism, Indigenous feminism, and Black feminism. Each faction offers a meaningful way to conceptualize feminism, but each is markedly different and carries its own shortcomings. The factionalization of feminism has generated a great deal of conceptual confusion. This confusion, in tandem with shortcomings of each faction, motivates a conceptual re-engineering of feminism. The ameliorative project aims to develop a working, meaningful conception of feminism that avoids the conceptual confusion and various shortcomings presented in each of the above sections. The following chapter will continue to build the motivation for a conceptual re-engineering project.

CHAPTER 3: NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES AS A BARRIER TO SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Feminism remains a powerful movement. By being a tool women use for resistance and liberation, feminism has driven support for and secured access to education, suffrage, and reproductive rights. In addition, feminism can manifest in a variety of ways such as liberal feminism, lesbian feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, gender-critical feminism, Black feminism, and Indigenous feminism. While feminism wields a great deal of sociopolitical power and manifests in a diversity of expressions, many individuals choose to distance themselves from feminism. For example, one Canadian study found that 75% of individuals *do not* identify as feminists; of this, 38% of women and 53% of men do not identify as feminists.[193] Studies on feminist self-identification reveal a significant disparity between those who identify with feminists and those who do not, with the vast majority of individuals choosing not to identify.

I suspect that the pernicious stereotypes which haunt feminism deter many individuals from self-identifying as feminists. Feminists are so often labelled as angry, feminazis, bra-burners, social-justice warriors (SJW), hairy, unattractive, and unhygienic – all of which track means through which women are rendered undesirable and thus less valuable. For instance, on the "Rush Limbaugh Show", political commentator Rush Limbaugh states that feminism is a movement which "...allow[s] unattractive women easier access to the mainstream of pop culture".[194] Limbaugh capitalizes on the unattractive stereotype to suggest that feminism is merely for unattractive women to gain social

[193] Andrew Parkin, *Women's Equality and the Women's Movement: An Update,* (Toronto: Environics Institute, January 4 2022), 10-11.
[194] Rush Limbaugh, "The Rush Limbaugh Show," (radio show, Premier Radio Network, September 11, 2015).

capital. Limbaugh's statement demonstrates the use of a harmful stereotype to render those who identify as feminists, undesirable.

Pernicious stereotypes obstruct a clear, meaningful understanding of feminism and subsequently deter individuals from identifying. Indeed, in larger numbers, social movements have the potential to wield more sociopolitical power in order to affect meaningful change. The same can be said of feminism: if more individuals self-identify as feminist, perhaps collective action would aid in feminism becoming a more powerful movement. Indeed, studies confirm that group identification, which first requires self-identification with the group, is a positive indicator of willingness to engage in collective action.[195] In this sense, by barring self-ID, negative stereotypes act as a vehicle for control to prohibit women from collectively organizing. This chapter explores the negative stereotypes associated with feminism to illustrate how pernicious stereotypes bar feminist self-identification. I will show that negative stereotypes are deployed to both render women undesirable and valuable, while simultaneously prohibiting the ability to do feminism in a coordinated manner. I will then position negative stereotypes as further motivation for a conceptual re-engineering of feminism – one which avoids pernicious stereotypes.

3.1 NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES WITHIN ACTIVISM

In the 20th and 21st centuries, social movements profusely boomed. For example, the late 20th century saw the development of the women's liberation movement, the civil rights movement, and the

[195] Martijn van Zomeren, Tom Postmes, and Russell Spears, "Toward an Integrative Social Identity Model of Collective Action: A Quantitative Research Synthesis of Three Socio-Psychological Perspectives," *Psychological Bulletin* 134, no. 4 (2008): 504; Martijn van Zomeren, Maja Kutlaca, and Felicity Turner-Zwinkels, "Integrating Who 'We' Are with What 'We' (Will Not) Stand for: A Further Extension of the Social Identity Model of Collective Action," *European Review of Social Psychology* 29, no. 1 (2018): 123.

gay liberation movement. Moreover, the 21st century followed shortly after with the Black Lives Matter movement, Women2Drive movement, the #MeToo movement, the 4B movement, and the You Know Me movement. Each movement relies on the collective action of activists who seek to change society, address social problems, and correct social injustices.[196] The contours of social movements are defined by activists and outsiders. Activists are the heart of social movements – without them, social movements would not gain any traction. Activists can either belong to the privileged group, or belong to the group being oppressed; in either case, though, they contribute to the relevant cause. On the contrary, outsiders are not involved in social movements. Often, they cast hasty judgements on the work of activists in the form of negative stereotypes which then go on to shape public understandings of social movements. Negative stereotypes control the narrative around activism[197] and subsequently cloud meaningful understanding of activism's relevant concepts (e.g. feminism, environmentalism). In turn, this limits self-identification for social movements and reduces support and collective action.

Stereotypes are beliefs about a group, shared by another group, that are influenced by negative perceptions.[198] Stereotypes can be classified as either amoral such as 'All Canadians live in igloos,' or 'All animals in Australia will kill you,' or moral such as 'All lesbians are evil,' or 'All women are overly-emotional.' While amoral stereotypes do not assume there is a morally permissible or impermissible

[196] Brooke Burrows, Hema Preya Selvanathan, and Brian Lickel, "My Fight or Yours: Stereotypes of Activists From Advantaged and Disadvantaged Groups," *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 49, no. 1 (2023): 111.
[197] The language of 'controlling the narrative' is cited in Kate Manne's *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* which will be taken up later in the chapter.
[198] Daniel Katz and Kenneth Braly, "Racial Stereotypes of One Hundred College Students," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 28, no. 3 (1933): 280.

way to act and does not iterate a moral judgement on a particular group, moral stereotypes inherently assume there is a permissible or impermissible way to act and iterate a moral judgement, one that invokes sentiments of rightness/wrongness, onto a particular group. For example, the stereotype that 'All Canadians live in igloos' makes no moral judgement on Canadians; it simply assumes that all Canadians live in a particular kind of ice dwelling. On the contrary, 'All lesbians are evil' assumes that women loving other women is itself evil, or causes lesbians to act in evil ways; the stereotype manifests a moral judgement onto lesbians. The focus of this chapter will be on the moral kind of stereotypes.

Moral stereotypes are especially harmful to activists and their work. For instance, widely held moral stereotypes about the activists are that the activist is radical, emotional, aggressive, morally superior, and associated with the 'woke left'.[199] Although activists engage in meaningful work, these pernicious stereotypes result in reduced public support and general feelings of animosity towards activists. It is unclear, though, how the meaningful work of activists is translated into negative stereotypes and subsequently reduced support. Feinberg et al. offers an explanation which I will continue to build on: affinity to the morality of an action. Those engaged with activism often resort to a variety of strategies to get their message heard such as applying pressure to politicians, petitions, sit-ins, boycotts, and extreme protests. Of the four strategies mentioned, extreme protests often garner the most media attention due to their inherent disruptiveness.[200] Extreme protests can take the form of

[199] Burrows, Selvanathan, and Lickel, "My Fight or Yours: Stereotypes of Activists From Advantaged and Disadvantaged Groups," 111, 119.
[200] Matthew Feinberg et al., "The Activist's Dilemma: Extreme Protest Actions Reduce Popular Support for Social Movements," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 119, no. 5 (2020): 1086.

threats, blocking traffic, physical violence, and damaging property[201]; they are disruptive by design. Feinberg et al. explains that public observers are unable to connect with the morality of the action.[202] The argument made by Feinberg et al. depends on two factors: perceived immorality of an action and emotional connectedness.[203] If the extreme protest action is perceived as immoral (e.g. destruction of property), outsiders will have a more difficult time emotionally connecting with the action. Emotional connection is imperative for resonance and identification with a social movement. Therefore, Feinberg et al. argue that an extreme protest which is perceived as immoral will lead to reduced support.

I suggest the leap Feinberg et al. makes from immorality to reduced support can be better explained by a close examination of how negative stereotypes operate. What seems to be missing from Feinberg et al. is an understanding of the way in which moral negative stereotypes seek to control the narrative, create conceptual confusion, limit self-identification, and subsequently reduce support. Negative stereotypes can heavily influence public perception, and can become crystallized to be accepted as true. If negative stereotypes are then accepted as having truth value, outsiders' concepts of activists become contaminated by negative stereotypes. These outsiders are then less likely to self-identify or resonate with the activist movement, resulting in reduced support for the relevant cause. Consider an example which may make this explanation clearer. A common negative stereotype associated with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is violence (e.g. BLM protesters are violent, BLM protests are violent). BLM activists are undeniably doing good work; the movement highlights

[201] Feinberg et al., "The Activist's Dilemma: Extreme Protest Actions Reduce Popular Support for Social Movements," 1086.
[202] Feinberg et al., 1088.
[203] Feinberg et al., 1088.

and seeks to ameliorate the disproportionate police brutality against Black people. Media discourse, however, has painted the BLM movement as violent.[204] Indeed, one study suggests that 43% of individuals say protesters for BLM were trying to incite violence.[205] The stereotype of BLM activists being violent has shaped public perceptions of BLM. When such a negative stereotype is accepted as true, public observers lose a clear conceptual understanding of what BLM sets out to do. Instead, outsiders see a movement that is trying to 'incite violence'. Such a perception will discourage outsiders from identifying with the movement, and subsequently reduce collective action.

Negative stereotypes about activists cause serious harm for activists and their work. Despite outsiders not being involved in the movement, their pernicious stereotyping are accepted as legitimate in broader understandings of social movements, Feinberg et. al offers to explain why negative perceptions garner reduced support, namely affinity to the morality of an action. I also add, though, that negative stereotypes are responsible for controlling the narrative of activists, subsequently creating conceptual confusion, limiting self-identification, and reducing collective action. Public perceptions shape concepts of social movements, and this is especially detrimental when public perceptions are negative. The discussion of negative stereotypes primes the discussion for their place in feminism. If 75% of individuals choose not to identify as a feminist,[206] this section provides the foundation for

[204] Aliki Kraterou, "Hundreds of BLM Rioters, Looters, and Vandals Have Charges Dropped Despite Destruction from Violent Protests," *The U.S Sun*, June 20, 2021, https://www.the-sun.com/news/3123181/hundreds-blm-rioters-looters-vandals-charges-dropped/; Linda Schmidt, and Kayla Mamelak, "BLM Threatens 'Riots, Bloodshed' in NYC if Adams Brings Back Police Unit, Mayor Elect Responds," *Fox News,* November 12, 2021, https://www.fox5ny.com/news/black-lives-matter-threaten-riots-fire-bloodshed-in-nyc-if-adams-brings-back-police-unit

[205] Skelley, Geoffrey. "How Americans Feel About George Floyd's Death And The Protests." *ABC News FiveThirtyEight,* June 5, 2020. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-americans-feel-about-george-floyds-death-and-the-protests/

[206] Parkin, *Women's Equality and the Women's Movement: An Update,* 10-11.

answering *why*. After all, why would they if feminists are stereotyped as man-hating, lesbian, or feminazi? These are socially undesirable identities. I will explore how these specific negative stereotypes are deployed as a means of control subsequently clouding a meaningful concept, and reducing collective action to further motivate the need for a conceptual re-engineering of feminism.

3.2 NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES OF FEMINISTS

Feminism is a meaningful way of engaging in activism. Indeed, feminism's classification as an activist movement means it cannot escape negative stereotypes associated with activists and subsequent consequences. The cultural understanding of feminism is plagued by pernicious stereotypes such as man-hating, lesbian, loud, unhygienic, mean, assertive, forceful, abrasive, self-righteous, over-reactive, intolerant, annoying, forceful, unattractive, hairy, liberal, woke, harsh, ambitious, bitchy, bossy, whiney, obnoxious, opinionated, unloveable, anti-social, hostile, and radical. While negative stereotypes purposefully misconstrue a concept of feminism, they also serve another function: control.

Kate Manne's work on misogyny in her book *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* helps to clarify the controlling nature of negative stereotypes. Manne draws a useful distinction between sexism and misogyny, suggesting that unlike sexism "Misogyny *is* then what misogyny *does* to some such, often so as to preempt or control the behaviour of others. Misogyny takes a girl or woman... [and] threatens hostile consequences if she violates or challenges the relevant norms."[207] Manne's conception of misogyny is a tool to police women's behaviour, by way of instilling fear, and punishing them when

[207] Kate Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 1st ed, (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017), 20.

they destroy or interrupt patriarchal order.[208] Manne's framing of misogyny as a mechanism of control clarifies the work of negative stereotypes, especially in feminism which actively seeks to disrupt and ameliorate the gendered harm women face. Feminism inherently sets out to frustrate and question well developed social structures such as marriage, the workplace, and family, which actively subjugate women. By way of disrupting these social structures, though, there is a Manneian need to punish feminists in order to maintain control. One useful way to control feminists is to, accidentally or intentionally, deploy harmful negative stereotypes such as man-hater, feminazi, bra-burner, and the feminist monster. Negative stereotypes are similarly deployed in hopes of halting feminists from organizing in a coordinated manner; stereotypes are used to frame these women as undesirable to scare feminists from continuing to cross rigid social boundaries. I will use Manne's notion of control to explore four negative stereotypes and the ways they seek to police feminism. This exploration reveals the conceptual confusion and lack of desire to self-identify as feminist, further motivating the need for an ameliorative concept of feminism – one which avoids the shortcomings of negative stereotypes.

3.2.1 The Man-Hating Feminist

Perhaps one of the most common, and enduring, tropes associated with the feminist movement is that all feminists hate men. Those who subscribe to such a belief suggest that feminists are angry, and that their anger is exclusively directed at men. The man-hating feminist trope reduces feminist anger to a senseless anger – it is not directed at gendered violence that men commit, rather, it is directed at men. On this account, and given the trope's framing of women's anger, feminism allows

[208] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 88.

women to advance their own rights at the expense of men; rights are conceived of as a zero-sum game. Consider the following quote from Reverend Pat Robertson on the aims of the angry feminist: "[Feminism] is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbian".[209] Robertson's words manifest the man-hating feminists trope.

Built into his statement is the assumption that women *ought* to be active participants in particular patriarchal social structures. To say that feminism is 'anti-family' assumes that women should be pro-family to begin with and a very specific version of 'family' at that. To say that feminism turns women into lesbians also assumes that women *ought* to love men, and doing otherwise is morally problematic or perhaps unnatural. Indeed, the social institutions referenced by Robertson, namely the family, marriage, and economic systems, have historically benefitted men while disadvantaging women; each structure continues to be dominated by masculine ideologies. For example, the traditional family structure, also known as the nuclear family, consists of a breadwinning father, a domesticated mother, and their children. The nuclear family structure places financial power in the hands of men while confining women to the private sphere, ultimately truncating women's power. Moreover, the institution of marriage favoured the rights of men at the expense of women until around the late 20th century. For example, marital rape was legal and unpunishable until 1994 in all 50 American states.[210] If a woman refused to have sex with her husband, his forced sexual contact was not legally considered to be rape since a marriage contract was understood as guaranteeing ongoing

[209] Robertson Letter Attacks Feminists," 1992.
[210] Jennifer A. Bennice and Patricia A. Resick, "Marital Rape: History, Research, and Practice," *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse* vol. 4, issue 3 (2003): 228.

consent. Finally, economic systems have also favoured the welfare of men. As discussed in the Marxist feminism section of chapter two, capitalism exposes how production results in gender disparities. For example, the development of factories mobilized rural women from their subsistence agricultural economies by evicting them from their land.[211] Most, if not all, social institutions have historically, and continue to, favour the welfare of men. Maybe women do have a reason to be angry after all. Robertson's words, however, frame feminists as hating men so extensively that they are willing to exit all of the previously mentioned social institutions and structures.

Indeed, Robertson understands feminism to challenge male-dominated systems in a forceful manner; he uses language such as 'anti-family', 'kill their children', and 'destroy capitalism'. Robertson's words echo the man-hating feminist trope when he frames feminists as being so angry that they must leave male-dominated systems. Robertson's words assume feminists *must be* communicating that they hate men. The man-hating feminist trope seeks to dismantle and discredit the work feminists are doing. In a Manneian sense, the man-hating feminist trope is deployed to control and dissuade women who desire to exit male-dominated social institutions from leaving. If feminists choose to leave these institutions, they will be punished by being labelled as a man-hater. ‘Man-hating' feminists did not begin with Reverend Robertson and will not end with his words either.

3.2.2 The Feminazi

Much like the man-hating feminist, the 'feminazi' trope continues to permeate perceptions of the feminist community. The 'Feminazi' is a contemptuous stereotype used to draw an analogy

[211] Elisabeth Armstrong, "Marxist and Socialist Feminism," *Study of Women and Gender: Faculty Publications* (2020): 3.

between Nazi Germany soldiers and feminists. During WWII, the Nazi Party rose to power under the rule of Adolf Hitler. Members of the Nazi Party, known for their violence, militancy, dogmatism, and intolerance, were responsible for carrying out Hitler's vision of Germany as a superpower, part of which required establishing a master race known as the Aryan race. Establishing the Aryan race meant exterminating all of the European Jewish population, homosexuals, Soviet Union soldiers, and communists. The Nazi Party carried out the deaths of these individuals in violent, cruel ways often in concentration camps, extermination camps, death marches, or by firing squads.

Rush Limbaugh, a political commentator, is widely known for popularizing the term 'Feminazi'. In his 1992 book titled *The Way Things Ought to Be,* Limbaugh states "I prefer to call the most obnoxious feminists what they really are: feminazis. [A friend of mine uses] the term to describe any female who is intolerant of any point of view... I often use it to describe women who are obsessed with perpetuating a modern day holocaust: abortion".[212] Limbaugh makes a startling comparison between feminists and Nazis in suggesting that feminists, much like Nazis, are violent, militant, dogmatic, and intolerant. Limbaugh furthers the comparison by drawing similarities between feminism's fight for reproductive rights (e.g. the right to access safe abortions) and the holocaust, suggesting that access to abortion is analogous to the genocide committed by the Nazi party.

Indeed, certain manifestations of feminism engage in militant action. Consider the British suffragettes who had an era defined by militancy. Between 1913-1914, the suffragettes organized an arson and bombing campaign against government officials.[213] In one instance, suffragettes placed a

[212] Rush H. Limbaugh, *The Way Things Ought to Be* (New York ; Pocket Books, 1992) 194-195.
[213] Christopher J. Bearman, "An Examination of Suffragette Violence," *The English Historical Review* 120, no. 486 (2005): 365.

bomb in the Home Secretary's office; in another instance, suffragettes attacked the homes of three anti-suffragist ministers.[214] While the suffragettes certainly engaged in militant campaigns, it is nowhere near the same scale as the Nazi regime. On Manne's account, the feminazi trope is deployed to control women seeking to challenge patriarchal norms. These women are framed as Nazis, and being associated with a genocidal regime is a severely undesirable trait to have. Framing feminists as Nazis controls the narrative on the work of feminists and subsequently discourages women from challenging rigid social norms.

3.2.3 The Bra-Burner

The feminazi stereotype is not the only one which links feminists to violence. Another enduring feminist stereotype which has impacted broad social understandings of feminism and effectively deterred individuals from associating with the movement is the bra-burner. The bra-burner stereotype holds its roots in the Miss America Pageant of 1968. The Miss America Pageant is known for parading women onstage to compete for excellence in beauty, poise, and talent; it has become notoriously known for its rampant sexism.[215] The pageants praise stereotypically desirable feminine qualities such as petite figures, long hair, and coquettishness. The pageant removed any aspect of personal identity from the women and instead focused on their physical appearances. At the 1968 pageant in Atlantic City, a protest erupted to oppose the sexism ingrained so deeply in the pageants. Protesters tossed feminine garments such as corsets, high heels, hair rollers, and bras were tossed in

[214] Bearman, "An Examination of Suffragette Violence," 365.
[215] Patricia Bradley, *Mass Media and the Shaping of American Feminism, 1963-1975*, 1st ed (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), 59-62.

Freedom Trash Cans.[216] The placing of items into Freedom Trash Cans represented a separation and destruction of objects which both oppressed and objectified women.

The placing of objects into the Freedom Trash Bins became grossly misrepresented by the media from which the 'bra burner' stereotype emerged. Media reporters detailed women burning the items they threw into the bins. News stories conveyed the protest with headlines such as 'Bra-Burners and Miss America'.[217] The trash cans were ultimately never set on fire though since protesters hoped to avoid being arrested for any criminal activity.[218] Though the bra-burning was simply untrue, the stereotype stuck and continued to perpetuate a trope of the angry, violent feminist; it became a term of disparagement.[219]

The gesture of burning objects is a symbolic one, and has been used in previous social movements and protest demonstrations.[220] Burning is a sort of symbolic anger which represents the destruction of the system or social institution that the object is associated with. In the case of the purported bra-burning, it is a symbolic gesture of destroying hyper-femininity. A Manneian framework reveals that the bra-burning trope is deployed to control the narrative surrounding the Ms. America pageants. While feminists were organizing against the sexism upon which the pageant is based, they were portrayed as violent protesters willing to burn their belongings to have their message

[216] Bradley, *Mass Media and the Shaping of American Feminism, 1963-1975*, 59.
[217] Bradley, 60.
[218] Bradley, *Mass Media and the Shaping of American Feminism, 1963-1975*, 60.
[219] Bradley, 62.
[220] BBC. "Trump's 'Make America Great Again' Hats Burned Over Daca Deal." *BBC News.* September 15 2017. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41279520; Chiang, Chuck. "Leaders Condemn B.C Rally Where 'Death to Canada' Cry Went Up." *CBC,* October 8th 2024. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/death-to-canada-vancouver-rally-1.7346760

heard. Indeed, the stereotype of the bra-burner continues to linger and discourage feminists from identifying with the movement.

3.2.4 The Feminist Monster

One of the markers of early feminism was women gaining access to education. Access to education meant that women were put in closer proximity to intellectual and financial power; the need to rely on men for things such as income was bound to decrease with education. Many men were threatened by women's growing access to education. Consider the following quote which expresses common sentiments about educated women: "A learned girl is one of the most intolerable monsters of creation".[221] Indeed, educated women were portrayed as monstrous. In an undated letter to Lady Ann Coventry, Mary Astell comments on women who pursue learning, adding that "...if we venture to step outside of it [the beaten road], we become Suspected, are clog'd with reserve and censure, are taken for Monsters fit only to be star'd at and avoided".[222] Monsters are the outcasts of society; they have a distinguishing feature(s) that deems them as less than human. This distinguishing feature paints monsters as 'the other', ultimately subjecting them to natural human curiosity (e.g.; staring). In a similar manner, education transforms women into monsters. As Astell points out, when women turn to education they are marked with a feature, namely education, that is atypical of being a woman, causing these women to be deemed 'the other'. Access to education births a new stereotype for feminists: the monster.

[221] "'Monsters of Creation': Snapshots of Women in Higher Education, *"Women's Museum of Ireland,* March 2, 2024.
[222] Ruth Perry, *The Celebrated Astell: An Early English Feminist* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 368.

Stephen Asma, author of *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears*, provides insight on the function of monsterification which is useful in determining its function for feminism. Asma distinguishes between two kinds of monsters: literal and symbolic. Literal monsters are those found in folklore, such as dragons, Dracula, Grendel, sirens etc...[223] Symbolic monsters, however, compare a person or thing to a monster by way of mapping undesirable qualities onto the person or thing.[224] The individual, or object, undergoes monsterification by possessing some attribute that is deemed 'inhuman'. Monstering others is an effective tool for the social construction of an enemy.[225] By being deemed a monster, the individual or thing is cast out of society as social pariahs and are feared to be around.

The educated woman, and feminism more broadly speaking, has undergone monsterification: the feminist is violent, unattractive, unlikeable, and no longer desired by men. Monsters in the canon, such as dragons, Dracula, Grendel, and sirens, share similar perceptions of violence, unattractiveness, unlikeability and undesirableness, making the uncanny resemblance to social understandings of feminists. In a Manneian sense, the function of monsterification seems to control and punish feminists for daring to cross social boundaries. Attributing such qualities to feminists scares others from associating with the movement and crossing patriarchal boundaries – if one does, they will also become the violent, unattractive, unlikeable, and undesirable monster. By controlling the narrative surrounding feminists, monsterification is a means of preventing women from collectively organizing.

---

[223] Stephen T Asma, *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears*, 1st ed (Oxford ; Oxford University Press, 2009), 26.
[224] Asma, *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears*, 27.
[225] Asma, 256.

The historical quote on the monstrosity of educated women nicely captures the comparison of feminism and monstrosity in which an educated woman, or more broadly speaking, feminists, are violent, unattractive, and unlikable; she will no longer be desirable to men. The historical quote creates a narrative of the feminist monster which society fears. If feminism is portrayed as monstrous, outsiders may not want to adopt the feminist label for fear of being perceived as an undesirable monster.

There are a number of stereotypes associated with the feminist movement that go beyond the four discussed in the previous paragraphs. Indeed, there are more negative stereotypes associated with feminism than positive ones. Many women are discouraged from association with the movement but more troubling is the way in which pernicious stereotypes cloud broad social understandings of feminism. The stereotypes of the man-hating feminist, the feminazi, the bra-burning feminist, and the monster *are* the ways in which the public can, and does, understand feminism. Such understandings of feminism obstruct the meaningful ways in which feminism works to ameliorate women's disadvantages. Stereotypes harm more than just the individual or group they are directed at – they also harm concepts which motivates the need for a conception of feminism which avoids the negative stereotypes discussed in the previous paragraph.

3.3 HOW NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES ACT AS A BARRIER TO SELF-IDENTIFICATION

There remains a dearth of individuals who openly identify as a feminist. While feminists actively work to ameliorate women's disadvantages, and have a robust understanding of the ways in which oppressive systems work to subjugate women, many continue to choose not to identify as

feminists. There is a marked disconnect, then, between the work of feminists and the number of people who identify, for which negative stereotypes can serve to explain. Negative stereotypes cloud conceptions of feminism and as a consequence, act as a barrier to self-identification. Pernicious stereotypes associated with broad social understandings of feminism then deter outsiders from becoming feminists *even if* they agree with feminism's core values. There are a number of explanations as to why negative perceptions of feminists bar self-identification which will be explored in the following paragraphs:

3.3.1 Group Membership

Bashir et al explores the hesitancy to self-identify in a 2013 study. While a wealth of research focuses on the actions of activists, there exists a lack of research on public perceptions of activists' work. Through their criticism of and comments on mainstream practices, activists tend to garner perceptions of hostility and unlikeability.[226] This finding is confirmed by Feinberg who notes that public observers perceive activists as inherently disruptive and immoral; two character traits which many report finding unlikeable.[227] Humans are naturally social creatures, and negative perceptions risk damaging social connections and reducing group membership. In order to preserve group membership, individuals may avoid association with activists.[228]

[226] Nadia Bashir et al., "The Ironic Impact of Activists: Negative Stereotypes Reduce Social Change Influence," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 43, no. 7 (2013): 624.
[227] Feinberg et al., "The Activist's Dilemma: Extreme Protest Actions Reduce Popular Support for Social Movements," 1087.
[228] Bashir et al., "The Ironic Impact of Activists: Negative Stereotypes Reduce Social Change Influence," 625.

Bashir et al tested this hypothesis on feminists, and developed a study in which they listed attributes ascribed to a typical feminist, an atypical feminist, and an undefined target.[229] Attributes associated with typical feminists included man-hating, unattractive, lesbian, angry, and unhygienic.[230] The study revealed that participants were less motivated to adopt pro-equality feminist behaviours when advocated for by *typical* feminists due to their strong association with negative traits, even if individuals agreed with the work that was being done.[231] The Bashir et al study confirms the tendency to prefer group membership. If individuals are perceived negatively by a group, they are more likely to be ostracized or excluded. Feminists have a tendency to be perceived negatively by groups, therefore, identifying as a feminist risks social exclusion. Pernicious stereotypes of feminists as violent or hostile cloud a meaningful conception of feminism. As a consequence, there is a noticeable barrier to self-identification through group membership.

Negative stereotypes are an exceptionally powerful tool in preventing individuals from identifying as a feminist. The connection to barring self-identification begins with negative stereotypes being accidentally or intentionally deployed as a means of controlling feminists. In a Manneian sense, negative stereotypes around feminism threaten 'hostile consequences', like social ostracization, if one is to challenge patriarchal norms.[232] By controlling both feminists and the narrative around feminism, concepts of feminism are clouded. For example, broad social understandings of feminism become associated with 'man-hating' or 'aggressive' when that is not at all what feminism is. Unclear, and

[229] Bashir et al., 615.
[230] Bashir et al., 617.
[231] Bashir et al., 617.
[232] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 88.

harmful, conceptions of feminism lead individuals to hesitate self-identifying as a feminist. The gravely concerning consequence of limiting self-identification, however, is a hindrance of collective action. Feminists need feminism to make social progress. If individuals are unwilling to identify as feminist, there is serious concern that collective action will decline and subsequently threaten the spirit of feminism.

At this point, I have done three things to reveal the structural cracks in feminism's foundation. I have highlighted the exclusionary practices in historical manifestations of feminism which have bled into current conceptions. I have demonstrated the factionalization of feminism which clouds a working, meaningful concept of feminism. Finally, I have emphasized the harmful nature of negative stereotypes which bar collective action. Now that feminism has been stripped back, I will move forward with developing a concept of feminism that avoids the aforementioned shortcomings. Chapter four will work at constructing an ameliorative concept of feminism.

CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUALLY RE-ENGINEERING FEMINISM

Conceptual re-engineering is compared to repairing a bridge; much like engineers fix bridges, philosophers fix concepts. David Chalmers expands on the bridge analogy suggesting that building a bridge requires design, implementation, and evaluation.[233] The bridge is, ideally, built on a stable foundation such that it does not collapse in on itself. Similarly, concepts are designed, implemented and evaluated.[234] If the bridge happens to be constructed on an unstable foundation, an engineer is called in to re-evaluate, and determine where the cracks lay to prevent the bridge from collapsing. In the same way, a conceptual re-engineering project takes place when a concept has a shaky foundation but is worthy of rescue; the concept, or bridge, does not have to be torn down. Chalmers explains that conceptual re-engineering "...[is] fixing the old concept expressed by the word".[235] Chalmers' understanding of conceptual re-engineering helps to position the goal of this chapter – a conceptual re-engineering of feminism.

Conceptually re-engineering feminism first requires identifying the cracks in feminism's foundations which were revealed in chapters one-three. Chapter one maps a historical account of feminism by way of analyzing historical manifestations of feminism such as access to education, the right to vote, and the fight for reproductive autonomy. Each of these historical manifestations, however, are marked by exclusionary practices. While each campaign purported to ameliorate the social ills of women, they were restricted to doing so for white, middle-class women and often left the needs of Black and Indigenous women (amongst others), behind. Given that historical manifestations

[233] David Chalmers, "What is Conceptual Engineering and What Should It Be?" *Inquiry (Oslo)*, (2020): 2.
[234] Chalmers, "What is Conceptual Engineering and What Should It Be?" 2.
[235] Chalmers, 7.

of feminism shape current understandings of feminism, if historical manifestations are flawed by exclusionary practices, then current conceptions must also be flawed in a similar way. Moreover, chapter two explores a number of feminist factions such as liberal feminism, radical feminism, lesbian feminism, Marxist feminism, gender-critical feminism, Black feminism and Indigenous feminism. While each faction cultivates a meaningful conception of feminism, they differ drastically. Recall the alien thought-experiment in which an alien encounters both a Marxist feminist and a radical feminist; when asking each feminist what their conception of feminism is, they will both present a different answer – and, more troubling, both are right given their respective paradigms. Factionalization has clouded a clear conception of feminism by way of *too many* concepts. Finally, chapter three highlights the negative stereotypes associated with feminism. In a Manneian sense, negative stereotypes act as a means of controlling and punishing feminists. Given how effective negative stereotypes are at controlling feminists and narratives around feminism, they also lead to conceptual confusion. For example, some outsiders have a concept of feminists as 'man-hating lesbians'. This conceptual confusion resulting from negative stereotypes leads many to avoid self-identifying as a feminist which in turn bars the collective action of feminists. Indeed, a large part of feminists collectively organizing is identifying themselves as feminists.

The cracks in feminism's foundations identify the need for an ameliorative concept of feminism which avoids the shortcomings presented in chapters one-three. A conceptual re-engineering of feminism will reveal that the concept ought to do the opposite of the identified shortcomings: be non-exclusionary, be able to account for the various ways in which women are harmed, and be able to sidestep Manneian control and punishment from negative stereotypes. Repairing these cracks in

feminism's foundations will begin to rebuild a much stronger foundation for feminism, and work at developing a meaningful, clearer concept. This chapter will be the conceptual re-engineering portion of the project. I will reflect on the descriptive chapters which identified the cracks in feminism's conceptual foundation. I will position those shortcomings to reveal what a meaningful concept of feminism is, namely the opposite of the identified conceptual shortcomings in chapters one-three. I will then use the work of Esa Díaz-León to understand what a *useful* concept of feminism should be and square this with the ameliorative concept of feminism. In doing so, I expose what a useful concept of feminism is and explain why that is the ameliorative concept developed in this chapter. Finally, I will conclude with objections to the conceptually re-engineered feminism.

4.1 BACK TO THE BASICS

As the prior chapters illustrate, there are clear cracks in the foundations of feminism – cracks which take the form of exclusionary practices, factionalization, and negative stereotypes. To develop an ameliorative concept of feminism that is useful for achieving social justice for women, the cracks in feminism's conceptual foundation must be stripped. While feminism is obscured by harmful shortcomings, this does not mean that we should do away with the spirit of feminism, namely, ameliorating the harms that women face; *something* must remain fundamental to a concept of feminism to, as Chalmers notes, retain the structure of feminism's conceptual bridge, despite cracks. I hold that one claim, *but not the only*, which remains fundamental to concepts of feminism is that in some way, women are disproportionately harmed in a way that men are not. Indeed, women are marginalized in various ways. For example, a Black woman is harmed along axes of race and gender whereas a trans woman is harmed along axes of gender and sexuality.

Despite harmful shortcomings, retaining the spirit of feminism is necessary to the concept. Miranda Fricker's work on epistemic injustice in her book *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* helps to justify the need to retain this claim in a conceptual re-engineering of feminism. Fricker's work provides a fruitful avenue to explain how losing this fundamental idea of feminism, that women are harmed in a way that men are not, results in women's loss of the ability to conceptualize the harm they face. Fricker opens her discussion with the story of Carmita Wood, a 44-year old woman who worked in Cornell's nuclear physics department as a lab and administrative assistant. During her employment, she was inappropriately touched and harassed by a distinguished professor. She eventually left her job, applied for unemployment insurance, but when asked why, she wrote with hesitation 'for personal reasons' and was denied the claim. She lacked the language to identify the harm she experienced.[236] The lack of language in accurately identifying a harm is what Fricker calls a hermeneutical injustice.[237] Fricker identifies a conceptual lacuna when there is a lack of language or precedent to map one's experience on to.[238] When individuals or groups are unable to communicate their experiences due to this conceptual lacuna, they experience what Fricker calls a 'hermeneutical injustice'.[239] The survivor is unable to identify and explain their harmful experience resulting in a cognitive handicap; they do not have a proper understanding of the harm done to them.[240]

[236] Miranda Fricker, "Hermeneutical Injustice," in *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 150.
[237] Fricker, "Hermeneutical Injustice," 149.
[238] Fricker, 149.
[239] Fricker, 149.
[240] Fricker, 151.

Fricker's work on hermeneutical injustice helps to understand why retaining the spirit of feminism is fundamental to a conceptual re-engineering of feminism. First, consider entertaining the idea of abandoning feminism. In practice, this would mean losing that which is fundamental to feminism, namely, that women are harmed in a way that men are not. Like Carmita Woods, who lacked the ability to conceptualize and speak on the harms she experienced, abandoning the concept of feminism would mean that women also lack the ability to conceptualize and speak on the harms they experience which men do not. Without feminism, women would experience a hermeneutical injustice.

Merely recognizing that women are disproportionately harmed compared to men cannot be the only fundamental claim of feminism. The recognition of harm, then, is necessary but not sufficient; it must be supplemented with *amelioration.* Feminism is, and always will be, an ameliorative project. In addition to recognition, a second claim that must remain fundamental to feminism is that feminism must provide an account of how to address the harms that women face. For example, to address the harms women faced in heterosexual and heterosocial relationships, lesbian feminists advocated for separatist practices; this was an account of how they believed women should address the harms they face. Fricker's work on hermeneutical injustice can similarly help to understand why feminism must also be able to provide an account of how to address the harms women face. When filing for unemployment insurance, Wood explained on the form that it was for 'personal reasons' instead of disclosing the assault and harassment she experienced.[241] Wood had no account of how to address the harm she faced; she was immobilized by her experience and as a result, was denied

[241] Fricker, 150.

her claim for unemployment. Something similar can be said of feminism. Feminism must be able to provide women with an account of how to ameliorate the harms they face otherwise women will have no way to move forward.

There are two fundamental claims which cannot be separated from feminism, despite shortcomings. Feminism must be able to recognize that women are disproportionately harmed in a way that men are not, and feminism must be able to provide an account for how to ameliorate the harms. Without recognition, women cannot conceptualize the harm they face. Without amelioration, women cannot repair the harm they face. Both recognition and amelioration are necessary and jointly sufficient to feminism; the conceptual foundation of feminism must include, but is not limited to, these two claims. Now that a foundation for feminism's conceptual bridge has been concretely established, the conceptual re-engineering project will work at forging a meaningful, useful concept of feminism which ought to do the opposite of the identified shortcomings: be non-exclusionary, be able to account for the various ways in which women are harmed, and sidestep the Manneian control and punishment.

4.2 FEMINISM CANNOT BE ROOTED IN EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES

An ameliorative concept of feminism recognizes that, at the very least, women are disproportionately harmed in ways that men are not, and it provides an account of how to address the harm. An ameliorative concept of feminism also seeks to avoid previously discussed harmful shortcomings. The first shortcoming I will address is exclusionary practices. When re-engineering an ameliorative concept of feminism that avoids the harmful pitfalls of previous conceptions, the spirit of feminism must remain intact while simultaneously divorcing feminism from its exclusionary practices.

If historical conceptions of feminism shape current conceptions, and historical conceptions are exclusionary in their idea of which women can benefit from feminism, then current conceptions of feminism are rooted in, and founded upon, similar exclusionary practices. Consider some of the previously mentioned exclusionary practices. Advocates of the right to education, such as Astell and Wollstonecraft, encouraged its extension only to *gentlewomen*, namely, those of an upper-class ranking. Advocates of suffrage, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, encouraged the right to vote only be extended to middle-class, white women. Finally, advocates for reproductive autonomy, such as Margaret Sanger, fought for access to birth control for those women deemed 'unfit' in order to prevent them from reproducing. Indeed, historical conceptions of feminism highlight that only *certain* women would benefit from feminism.

The exclusionary practices pervasive in historical manifestations of feminism seemingly stem from understandings of the category of woman and *who* fits into the category. Since feminism is aimed at ameliorating the harms women face, a natural consequence is to question who will benefit from feminist campaigns. Some feminists believed biological women ought to be the object of feminist campaigns, while others thought upper-class, white, or heterosexual women ought to be. Consider two examples which better help to position the exclusionary practices at work. Firstly, gender-critical feminists concede that women are disadvantaged by way of sex. In this sense, those who are not biological women, such as transwomen, are excluded from participation in, and benefitting from, feminism. Gender-critical feminists represent one way of characterizing the category of woman which has resulted in exclusionary practices. Secondly, recall the historical analysis of the right to vote. Elizabeth Cady Stanton notoriously advocated for the right to only be extended to white women. For

example, in her address to the legislature of New York, she states "And here again you place the negro, so unjustly degraded by you, in a superior position to your own wives and mothers".[242] Stanton's logic explicitly appeals to the superiority of white women over Black people, but Black people also did not have the right to vote. Regardless, Stanton places white women as superior to Black people, irrespective of gender. She makes clear that the status of white women ought not to be compared to Black people, which she uses to justify extending the vote to white women first. If Stanton is interested in extending the right to vote to women, but does not include Black people in her extension, it does not seem as though Stanton considers Black women to be women at all. These two examples demonstrate that feminism is a movement that recognizes women are disadvantaged in a way that men are not, yet places restrictions on *who* is considered to be a woman. Given that historical manifestations provide the foundation for current conceptions of feminism, there is justified concern that current conceptions of feminism would suggest that *only some* women are disadvantaged in ways that men are not, and an account must be provided *only for some* women to ameliorate the harms.

An ameliorative concept of feminism strives to avoid exclusionary practices in order to achieve social justice aims. Indeed, scholars involved in conceptual re-engineering and the philosophy of feminism have provided a blueprint on how to move forward by way of avoiding exclusivity inherent in exclusive categories of woman. For example, Sally Haslanger (2000) and Katharine Jenkins (2016) develop an ameliorative concept of gender which attempts to ameliorate harmful and exclusive conceptions of 'woman'. In her article titled "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We

[242] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Address to the Legislature of New York," *Archives of Women's Political Communication,* February 14, 1854.

Want Them To Be?" Haslanger suggests that it is unclear what gender is and how to understand it.[243] Haslanger argues that an ameliorative concept of gender is needed and presents three conditions for identifying as a particular gender:

> A group G is a gender relative to context C iff df members of G are all and only those:
> 1) who are regularly observed or imagined to have certain bodily features presumed in C to be evidence of their reproductive capacities;[244]
> 2) whose having, or being imagined to have, these features marks them within the context of the ideology in C as motivating and justifying some aspects of their social position;
> 3) whose satisfying 1 and 2 plays or would play a role in C in their social position having one or another of these designated aspects.

When applying 'woman' to Haslanger's conditions, I understand her to suggest that one is a woman if they are regularly observed to have certain body features (breasts and a vulva) congruent with female reproductive capacities, and these features justify their subordinated position in society. A woman, on Haslanger's account, is someone socially subordinated on the basis of a presumption that they are of the female sex. Haslanger's attempt to re-engineer an ameliorative concept of gender is dependent upon biological sex; in doing so, she problematically marginalizes trans-women who may not have the reproductive features typical of a female, but are nonetheless socially subordinated.

Unsatisfied with Haslanger's account but continuing to endorse the problem, Katharine Jenkins offers a counter-ameliorative concept of gender which seems to avoid the harms of Haslanger's concept. In her article titled "Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of Woman", Jenkins draws a useful distinction between 'being classed as a woman' and 'having a female

[243] Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" *Noûs (Bloomington, Indiana),* 32.
[244] Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" 50.

gender identity', the latter of which refers to Haslanger's conception.[245] Jenkins notes that being classed as a woman refers to "being targeted as a woman for subordination on the basis of actual or imagined bodily features presumed to be evidence of a female's biological role in reproduction."[246] On the contrary, having a female gender identity refers to "having an inner map that is formed to guide someone classed as a woman through the social and material realities of someone who is so classed."[247] Indeed, there is much scholarship rooted in the issue of unclear, or exclusive categories of woman. Haslanger and Jenkinson both identify the need for an ameliorative concept, and recommend that amelioration is the path forward.

If feminism hopes to establish itself as a movement that recognizes women are disadvantaged in a way that men are not, and provides an account to rectify this, it must grapple with the natural tendency to call on categories of women. To avoid the harmful pitfalls of historical conceptions of feminism, feminism cannot be an exclusionary endeavour. In a similar manner to Haslanger and Jenkins, a conceptual re-engineering of feminism ought to ameliorate exclusivity inherent in the category of woman. For the category of woman, this means placing descriptive demands on feminists to be non-exclusionary in who they consider to be a woman, who can be a feminist, and who is the object of feminist campaigns. The problem does not begin with feminism, but rather in the category of woman which bleeds into the feminist movement.

[245] Katharine Jenkins, "Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of Woman," *Ethics* 126, no. 2 (2016): 414.
[246] Jenkins, "Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of Woman," 421.
[247] Jenkins, 421.

At this point, two things have been accomplished. First, the conceptual landscape for feminism was wiped clean, and the undercarriage of feminism was revealed: feminism recognizes that women are disproportionately harmed in a way that men are not, and feminism provides an account to address this harm. Feminism surely seeks to address marginalization, and in a conceptual re-engineering ameliorative project it also seeks to avoid the pitfalls and harms of historical conceptions which provide the foundation for current conceptions. So, given that exclusionary practices, in relation to the category of woman, are an issue for current understandings of feminism, an ameliorative concept of feminism which seeks to avoid previous pitfalls and harms will not be an exclusionary endeavour; feminism ought to be willing to remain dynamic in its understanding of the category of woman.

4.3 FEMINISM NEEDS TO ACCOUNT FOR VARIOUS WAYS WOMEN ARE HARMED

An ameliorative concept of feminism recognizes women are disproportionately harmed, provides an account of how to address these harms, and is non-exclusionary in its understanding of the category of woman. An ameliorative concept of feminism also seeks to avoid other harmful shortcomings such as factionalization. The second shortcoming I will address is factionalization and its subsequent conceptual confusion. One upshot of factionalization is a myriad of ways in which feminism can be meaningfully understood. Liberal feminism, radical feminism, lesbian feminism, Marxist feminism, Black feminism, and Indigenous feminism have each meaningfully contributed to the political gain of women. While feminist factions have accomplished something necessary for the problems they set out to address, it also has left the concept devoid of a clear meaning. Recall the alien thought experiment. If an alien came to Earth and encountered a radical feminist and Marxist

feminist, both would claim different, but equally true, understandings of feminism. Certainly, the alien would be left without a clear conception of feminism. We have seen that an ameliorative concept of feminism must avoid the harmful pitfalls of broad, social conceptions, such as conceptual confusion, to achieve its social justice aims. It follows from this, then, that an ameliorative concept of feminism must retain the ability to account for the various ways in which women are harmed while avoiding conceptual confusion. If feminism is going to be non-exclusionary in who it considers to be a woman, it must also recognize that each and every woman is not harmed in the same way.

In developing an ameliorative concept of feminism, the concept must have a way to account for the various ways in which women are harmed. For feminism to be able to account for the various ways in which women are harmed, I am conceptually indebted to Kimberlé Crenshaw's work on intersectionality.[248] Crenshaw's focus is on the lives and experiences of Black women. She explains how Black women are dually subjugated at the intersection of race and gender.[249] Crenshaw states "With Black women at the starting point, it becomes more apparent how dominant conceptions of discrimination condition us to think about subordination as disadvantage occurring along a single categorical axis".[250] Feminist discussions have historically focused on a single axis approach to discrimination – gender – and as a result black women are misrecognized.[251] Intersectionality, then, is a

[248] Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality is discussed in her 1989 article titled "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics". Crenshaw is not the first to discuss intersectionality, though; it had previously been discussed by figures such as Pauli Murray, Patricia Hill Collins, and the Combahee River Collective.
[249] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," in *Feminist Legal Theories*, ed. Karen J Machke, (United Kingdom: Routledge, 1997), 57.
[250] Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," 57.
[251] Crenshaw, 58.

politically significant framework for addressing discrimination rooted in a complex nexus of race and gender.

Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality helps to carve out the claim that if feminism aspires to be an ameliorative concept, and move beyond the shortcomings of factionalization, it must be able to account for the various ways in which women are harmed. The ability to account for variation helps to understand and makes sense of the harms that women face, which in turn allows feminism to recognize the harm and provide an account to address it. To explain, consider the following situation: at her male-dominated place of work, a Black woman is getting paid substantially less than her male coworkers, but also much less than her white female coworkers at the firm. Two things seem to be working in tandem here. The Black woman getting paid less is a result of her social position as a woman, and also as her social position as a Black person. Race and gender actively work together to subjugate the Black woman in different ways than her white women co-workers who may be harmed in a male-dominated workplace only along the axis of gender. If feminism is to be a useful tool for intervening, it must recognize that the Black woman is not harmed in the same way as her white women co-workers.

The ability to account for various ways women are harmed ensures that the unique needs of women are addressed. In addition, variation helps women to recognize and relate to one another as women. Recall in the previous section how exclusivity in categories of woman led to the needs of many women being excluded. If feminism can account for the various ways women are harmed, it will better help women to understand the harm that other women face, subsequently removing barriers to seeing and relating to one another as women. Given that factionalization, and its conceptual

confusion, are an issue in current understandings of feminism, an ameliorative concept of feminism will account for the various ways in which women are harmed. Allowing for variation in the ways women are harmed will actively remove conceptual confusion.

4.4 FEMINISTS MUST MAINTAIN INTRA-COMMUNITY RESISTANCE

Presently, I have established that our target concept of feminism will have three fundamental features: (1) recognition that women are discriminated against in a way that men are not, and feminism must provide an account for how to address these harms; (2) feminism cannot be rooted in exclusionary practices; and (3) feminism must be able to account for the various ways in which women are harmed. I have addressed the concerns raised in chapters one and two, namely exclusionary practices and factionalization, respectively, but the issue of negative stereotypes remains from chapter three. Chapter three highlighted pernicious stereotypes that are heavily associated with feminism, some of which include feminazi, man-hating, lesbian, and unhygienic. Such stereotypes have been detrimental to both feminists, acting as a tool, in a Manneian sense, to control and punish feminists and the narrative around feminism.[252] Controlling the narrative around feminism allows for outsiders to develop conceptions of feminists as feminazi, man-hating, lesbian, and unhygienic which they believe to be true. The conceptual confusion resulting from negative stereotypes then limits the number of feminists and outsiders who wish to self-identify as feminists. In turn, a hindrance of self-identification can bar feminist collective action.

[252] Kate Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 1st ed, (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017), 88.

A number of issues, including conceptual confusion, barriers to self-identification, and limiting collective action, stem from pernicious stereotypes surrounding feminism. An ameliorative concept of feminism should work to avoid negative stereotypes in order to avoid the onslaught of issues they present. Criticism towards feminists, however, is inevitable. So long as feminists continue to defy patriarchal norms and de-centre men, they will continue to be portrayed as monstrous. If feminists cannot avoid harmful negative stereotypes, they ought to find a path forward that does not lead to conceptual confusion, barriers to self-identification, and does not diminish collective action.

One solution for feminists to remain a united front and challenge negative stereotypes lies within intra-community resistance. Intracommunity resistance refers to resistance within a given community stemming from a shared understanding of a social group's goals. When members of a social group share an understanding of their movement, they are better equipped to engage with and respond to external opposition. Consider intracommunity resistance as applied to feminism. When feminists share an understanding that feminism is not an exclusionary endeavour, and are able to account for the various ways in which women are harmed, they are better positioned to discern which actions are feminist, and which are not ultimately allowing them to more effectively ameliorate the harms women face. Fostering intracommunity resistance will allow feminists to remain steadfast in their commitments and organize themselves around a clear concept. In this way, while outside criticisms will undoubtedly persist, they will not penetrate the feminist community as harshly and disrupt collective action.

An ameliorative concept of feminism, then, must promote intracommunity resistance amongst feminists. Negative stereotypes have swayed many feminists and outsiders from the

movement which has had impacts on collective action. If feminists get clear on a meaningful and useful concept of feminism, they are more able to foster intracommunity resistance and withstand the impact of negative stereotypes. Given that negative stereotypes are an issue for feminism, an ameliorative concept of feminism does not seek to avoid them, rather to promote intracommunity resistance amongst feminists which shields them from pernicious stereotypes hurled their way.

4.5 WHAT *SHOULD* A CONCEPT OF FEMINISM BE?

A much more recent discussion has exploded in the conceptual engineering scholarship regarding the normative application of concepts. While it is useful for one to know what a concept is, it is equally as important, if not more, to know what concept one *should* use. The question of how one *should* use a concept has motivated a growing hub of philosophical inquiry known as conceptual ethics which seeks to explore the normative implications of concepts used everyday. Indeed, established concepts influence the beliefs we hold, the judgements we cast, and the relationships we have. In their paper titled "Conceptual Ethics I + II", Alexis Burgess and David Plunkett pioneer the discussion on conceptual ethics by exploring its importance, and laying the groundwork for how to engage with it. Burgess and Plunkett's interpretation of conceptual ethics works to understand what concepts we should use to talk about and engage with the world.[253] Burgess and Plunkett, however, do not provide a guideline for distinguishing which concept *should* be used when there are multiple working concepts. Instead, the work of Esa Díaz-León, in her paper titled "Descriptive vs. Ameliorative Projects," will provide a justification for favouring one concept over another. In this

[253]Alexis Burgess and David Plunkett, "Conceptual Ethics I," *Philosophy Compass* 8, no. 12 (2013): 1096.

section, I will rely on Burgess and Plunkett, as well as Díaz-León, to help understand what a meaningful conception of feminism *should* be, and which concept of feminism we *should* use given the myriad of ways to conceptualize it.

Burgess and Plunkett understand conceptual ethics to be a meaningful endeavour. Indeed, conceptual ethics sets out to address (1) if we should use a given concept; and (2) how we should use a given concept.[254] These questions intend to challenge and question the concepts one holds and how they are applied to other areas of life. Conceptual ethics develops from the idea that concepts have a moral dimension; concepts that we hold shape and inform aspects of everyday life. Burgess and Plunkett note that concepts are the "...ingredients of our thoughts".[255] Concepts profoundly influence individual thought, which subsequently shapes the sorts of decisions we make and beliefs we hold. These roles, in turn, dictate the types of individuals we can become. Given that concepts do influence the decisions we make and beliefs we hold, we ought to ask what concepts we should be using.

Burgess and Plunkett's framing of the normative implications of concepts can be applied to concepts of feminism. Their work probes at how concepts of feminism shape everyday life, including the sociopolitical sphere. For example, consider the recent overturning of Roe v. Wade in the United States. Perhaps the Supreme Court had no concept of feminism; they did not recognize the disproportionate harm women face. Their decision to place decision-making power in the hands of states to decide whether or not women can have access to safe abortions highlights that they do not have a concept of feminism likely because they do not believe feminism is true. One's concept, or lack

[254] Burgess and Plunkett, 1091.
[255] Burgess and Plunkett, 1096.

thereof, shapes the decisions they make and beliefs they hold. Indeed, the Supreme Court judges' lack of conception of feminism shaped their overturning of federal legislation. Concepts do not exist in a vacuum; they have tangible, normative implications and given the severity of some implications, such as the overturning of Roe v. Wade, it is important to consider Burgess and Plunkett's question of how we should use certain concepts.

Burgess and Plunkett illustrate that concepts are responsible for shaping aspects of daily life. There are instances, though, where one can have multiple meaningful concepts. If concepts inform daily life, but there are multiple, meaningful iterations of a given concept, there ought to be a way to decide which concept *should* be used. In her paper titled "Descriptive vs. Ameliorative Projects," Díaz-León challenges the stalemate produced by a descriptive project that births multiple concepts. Oftentimes, individuals are quick to surrender and merely accept that there are multiple, working concepts; this, however, does not provide a path forward for a project in conceptual ethics. Díaz-León notes that, generally, two things can come of a descriptive project: (1) "...either there is a unique candidate meaning that is the most joint-carving (and therefore this will turn out to be the referent...)" or (2) "...there are several candidates that are equally explanatory, and then it will be indeterminate what the referent is".[256] In the first instance, a descriptive project will produce a concept with multiple meanings, but one meaning will particularly carve out the concept and ultimately serve as the primary meaning, or, in the second case, there are multiple meanings equally capable of explaining the concept, and it is unclear which will serve as the primary meaning. In the event of the latter, Díaz-León suggests

[256] Esa Díaz-León, "Descriptive vs. Ameliorative Projects," in *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics,* eds. Alexis Burgess, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 184.

that moral and political reasons ought to be considered in favouring one referent over another; if the reasons are strong, one can justify adopting that concept as having the unique referent.[257] In the case of there being multiple working meanings for a concept, one ought to consider the moral and political ramifications of each.

Díaz-León's framework for determining a referent when there are multiple meanings for a given concept can be applied to feminism. Up to this point, I have identified multiple ways of conceptualizing feminism, each which uniquely impacts and informs the lives of women. Historical manifestations suggest that feminism can be thought of in terms of suffrage, the fight for education, or reproductive autonomy. Factionalization demonstrates that feminism can be thought of in terms of liberal feminism, radical feminism, lesbian feminism, Marxist feminism, gender-critical feminism, Black feminism, and Indigenous feminism. As well, a conceptually re-engineered feminism suggests women are disproportionately harmed and provides an account to ameliorate the harm, avoids exclusionary practices, is able to account for variation in the diverse ways women are harmed, and promotes intracommunity resistance. The framework Díaz-León presents asks that given all iterations of feminism are equally meaningful, which one *should* be adopted as the referent term for the concept? She suggests the answer lies in an exploration of the moral and political implications of each conception.

Three axes, which have been discussed thus far, help to carve out moral and political implications of the conceptions of feminism. First, consider the moral and political implications of the

[257] Díaz-León, "Descriptive vs. Ameliorative Projects," in *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics,* 184.

ways in which feminism is conceptualized in chapters onethree. Indeed, moral and political implications can be explored through feminism's exclusionary practices, factionalization and ensuing conceptual confusion, and pernicious stereotypes. In chapter one, I outlined how exclusionary practices are woven through historical, and thereby current, manifestations of feminism. From the fight to access education, lower-class women were excluded. From the fight for suffrage, Black and Indigenous women were excluded. From reproductive autonomy, Black and Indigenous women were also excluded, Certain women were deemed unworthy of extending rights and privileges to and were stripped of a sociopolitical identity. Moreover, feminism is notoriously unable to account for the various ways in which women are harmed. Feminism has factionalized due to its inability to respond to the unique needs of women. For example, Indigenous feminism developed to respond to the unique ways in which colonialism impacts the lives of Indigenous women. As well, negative stereotypes prevent collective action which can slow women's sociopolitical progress. In these ways, some conceptions of feminism fail to hold up in the moral and political realm; they actively fail to address the sociopolitical needs of women. Díaz-León's framework suggests there is a serious moral and political reason to *not* adopt current conceptions of feminism as the unique referent.

The failure of current conceptions does not justify adopting the conceptually re-engineered concept, rather, Díaz-León's framework still requires sufficient moral and political reason for adopting the conceptually re-engineered feminism. As stated earlier, a conceptually re-engineered feminism has four fundamentals: 1) a recognition that, in some way, women are disproportionately harmed in a way that men are not, and feminism provides an account to address these harms; 2) feminism ought to be non-exclusionary in its consideration of the category 'woman'; 3) feminism ought to be able to

account for the various ways in which women are harmed; and 4) feminism must promote intracommunity resistance. On these four fundamentals, a conceptually re-engineered feminism accounts for the moral and political shortcomings of current conceptions; its foundations of non-exclusionary practices, ability to account for the various ways in which women are harmed, and lack of concern with negative stereotypes circumvents moral and political harms. By ameliorating the obvious harms of current conceptions of feminism, a conceptually reengineered feminism extends moral agency and political freedom to far more women. On Díaz-León's account, a conceptually reengineered feminism provides favourable moral and political outcomes which justify adopting it as a unique referent over current conceptions.

A critic might worry, though, that the conceptual ethics project is more complex than a simple 'either/or'. Perhaps the critic sees the argument as: either one adopts the current conception of feminism as the unique referent, or one adopts the conceptually reengineered feminism as the unique referent. Were this the case, I do not seem to leave any room for other presentations of feminism. Certainly, there are more ways of conceptualizing feminism than the myriad of conceptions in chapter two, and the conceptually re-engineered concept I present; perhaps other conceptions might even offer a more fruitful account of the movement. Recall, though, that conceptual ethics asks which concept *should* be adopted, since concepts shape and inform aspects of daily life. Indeed, current conceptions of feminism are having real, political implications (see, again, the overturning of Roe v. Wade). There is a dire need to re-engineer feminism to avoid harmful shortcomings such as exclusionary practices, an inability to account for the various ways in which women are harmed, and pernicious negative stereotypes that are shaping and informing daily life and important political

decisions. Regardless if there may be a more fruitful understanding, there still remains a need to rethink current conceptions of feminism which have harmful consequences on many women's lives. My project presents an ameliorative concept of feminism which actively seeks to avoid the aforementioned shortcomings and uses Díaz-León's framework to then prop up the favourable moral and political outcomes of adopting the conceptually reengineered notion of feminism.

4.6 OBJECTIONS

A conceptually re-engineered feminism is far from perfect. An objector might question or challenge an ameliorative concept of feminism. I advocate for an ameliorative concept of feminism which is non-exclusionary in its consideration of the category of woman. An objector, such as a gender-critical feminist, might raise the concern that the conceptually re-engineered feminism I present is *too inclusive.* For instance, feminism has historically been exclusive of trans-woman but the ameliorative concept of feminism aims to extend feminism to trans-women. In this sense, a gender-critical feminist will challenge an ameliorative concept of feminism; they may argue that the inclusion of trans-women threatens the structural integrity of the movement by introducing who they perceive to be 'biological males' into a concept designed to address harms done unto 'biological females'. On this objection, an ameliorative concept of feminism is in contradiction with the undercarriage of the movement.

To respond to the gender-critical feminist who believes that an ameliorative concept of feminism is too inclusive, I return to the four fundamentals of feminism discussed throughout chapter four: (1) feminism recognizes women are discriminated against in a way that men are not and provides an account for addressing these harms; (2) feminism cannot be rooted in exclusionary practices; (3)

feminism must be able to account for the various ways in which women are harmed; and (4) feminism must foster intra-community resistance. With these in mind, consider the following scenario:

> Imagine a trans-woman named Maya in her early 30s. She lives in a city, works a full-time job, and transitioned several years ago. Maya presents confidently as a woman through her mannerisms, her dress, and her voice; they all align with who she is. At the bus stop on her way home from work, Maya waits by herself when a group of three men approaches and one of them comments loudly about her appearance, and another starts to mock her voice. When they realize Maya is trans, their mockery turns aggressive. One shouts, "You're not a real woman!" and another pushes her. They call her slurs meanwhile no one intervenes. The violence stops only when the bus arrives and they scatter.

This scenario illustrates a deeply intersectional form of violence which is recognizably feminist in nature. Maya is targeted because she is both a woman and trans, and the two dimensions of harm are inseparable; she is harmed for taking up space as a *trans-woman*. An ameliorative concept of feminism which recognizes the experiences of trans-women is not *too inclusive;* rather it meets its own conceptual commitments made through the aforementioned fundamentals of feminism, and provides an account for women, like Maya, to address their harms.

A second objection might arise if an objector sees the social aims of feminism as *too inclusive*. The concern here is that feminism stretches itself too far by incorporating a number of social justice concerns such as queer rights, disability rights, or combatting homelessness. An objector might raise the concern that an ameliorative concept of feminism loses the concept's coherence; by addressing a wealth of issues, feminism will eventually lose its meaning.

In responding to the objection, I want to draw a distinction between feminism as a concept and feminists who organize. Feminism, by my definition, remains committed to the four fundamentals mentioned above. Feminists, however, are able to organize in solidarity around a

number of issues, some of which may not be inherently feminist. For example, consider the Greenham Peace Camps. The Greenham Peace Camp was a protest during the Cold War to campaign against missile disarmament when NATO had decided to house Cruise missiles at the Greenham Common Air Force Base. A few hundred women, together with a few men and kids, learned about the plan, and in September 1981, they gathered at the Greenham to protest the missiles' arrival. The protesters eventually decided to set up a peace camp to stay in, which eventually adopted a women-only policy. The camp remained in place for 19 years and finally closed down in 2000.[258] While Greenham was not markedly feminist, feminist women were responsible for the vast majority of the organization. The example of the Greenham Peace Camp demonstrates the distinction between an issue that is inherently feminist, and an issue that feminists organize themselves around. I use the Greenham Peace Camp example to call on the objector to stop and question whether or not something is feminist or if something is, instead, feminists who are organizing. To do so, however, requires a clear concept of what feminism is.

There are a number of ways to conceptualize feminism, but harmful shortcomings motivate rethinking how feminism is understood. Much like David Chalmers suggests, the foundation for the conceptual 'bridge' that is feminism is cracked, but that does not mean the bridge is worth dismantling entirely. Indeed, feminism has made a number of significant gains for women, and it is not worthwhile to abandon the concept entirely. Instead, a conceptual re-engineering of feminism is an avenue to

[258] Cited in Sarah Turnbull, "Reframing the Oral Contraception Debate: A Subversion of Feminism?" BA Hons. Thesis, St. Francis Xavier University, 2023, 8; Cami Rowe, “Camp Performances in Political Protest Encampments: A Comparison of the Bonus Expeditionary Forces and the Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp," 7 cited in Sarah Turnbull BA Thesis

rescue the concept. An ameliorative concept of feminism works to avoid previous conceptions' harmful shortcomings. In doing so, an ameliorative concept of feminism recognizes that women are disproportionately harmed in a way that men are not and provides an account for how to address these harms, is non-exclusionary, is able to account for the various ways in which women are harmed, and fosters intracommunity resistance. So, which concept of feminism *should* be used? As Díaz-León suggests, when there are multiple ways of conceptualizing something, the concept which carves out moral and political gains should be favoured. Given the political and moral benefits of a conceptually re-engineered feminism, it should be adopted as the referent given that it is a meaningful, and useful way of conceptualizing feminism.

CONCLUSION

At the heart of this project is a conceptual re-engineering of a powerful, effective concept with a substantially cracked foundation. As explained by Chalmers, conceptual re-engineering involves "...fixing the old concept expressed by the word."[259] A conceptual re-engineering project is needed when a concept has an unstable foundation but is worthy of rescue. This project exposed the ways in which feminism has an unstable foundation but is worthy of rescue. Indeed, feminism is a remarkably powerful movement; it has been the driving force between social and political gains for women such as suffrage, education, and reproductive autonomy. Feminism has been the conceptual motivation behind movements such as the suffrage movement, Women2Drive #MeToo, the 4B movement, Take Back the Night, the women's liberation movement, SlutWalk, and MosqueMeToo. Feminism has been the movement to place autonomy back in the hands of women when they needed it the most.

While feminism has accomplished remarkable victories for women on an international scale, a closer examination reveals its conceptual shortcomings. In three major ways, the structural foundation of feminism is cracked which motivates rethinking our concepts of feminism. First, historical conceptions of feminism help carve out current conceptions of feminism. Indeed, a historical analysis of feminism examines multiple iterations of feminism such as access to education, suffrage, and reproductive autonomy. While each iteration sets out to liberate women, they are tainted by exclusionary practices: suffragists advocated for white women to vote and positioned their arguments as a juxtaposition against Black people's lack of vote. They suggested that Black people should not get

[259] Chalmers, 7.

the right to vote before white women. Advocates for access to women's education argued that only certain women should be able to access education, namely, upper-class women; their arguments did not extend to lower-class women. Advocates for reproductive autonomy, especially through birth control, excluded Black and Indigenous women from attaining reproductive autonomy. They communicated that birth control was a tool in their hands to positively control their reproduction when in reality birth control was a eugenics facade to control their reproduction. Given that historical manifestations shape current conceptions of feminism, and historical manifestations are rooted in exclusionary practices, there is concern that current conceptions of feminism still retain exclusionary practices.

Moreover, feminism has become an exceptionally factionalized movement. There are a variety of ways in which women are harmed, and this cannot be captured under one heading especially when exclusionary practices are rampant. As a result, feminism has factionalized to account for the unique ways women are harmed. Some factions include liberal feminism, radical feminism, lesbian feminism, gender-critical feminism, Marxist feminism, Black feminism, and Indigenous feminism. Each iteration of feminism communicates its own meaningful, and true, way to conceptualize feminism. While factionalization has been necessary to address the unique needs of women, it has led to serious conceptual confusion; there are markedly different ways to conceptualize feminism, each of which are true in their own respect, which leads to an unclear explanation as to what feminism is.

Finally, feminism is troubled by a number of negative stereotypes. When feminists challenge patriarchal norms, they are threatened with labels such as 'man-hater', 'feminazi', 'bra-burner' and 'monster'. Kate Manne's explanation of the function of misogyny as controlling and punishing

clarifies that negative stereotypes work in a similar manner – they are deployed to control and punish feminists and the narrative around feminism to prevent feminists from collectively organizing.[260] Indeed, as negative stereotypes come to be accepted as true, concepts of feminism are associated with 'man-hater', 'feminazi', 'bra-burner' and 'monster'. These conceptions of feminism lead to a hesitancy to self identify as feminists and subsequently reduces collective action.

Our current conception of feminism has a critically unstable foundation. Indeed, current conceptions of feminism are obscured by exclusionary practices, factionalization, and negative stereotypes. Given the shortcomings, we could abandon feminism. In doing so, however, this risks women losing the spirit of feminism, namely, the ability to conceptualize the harm they face and ways to address the harm. Instead, a conceptual re-engineering project which produces an ameliorative concept of feminism repairs the cracks in feminism's foundations to develop a more meaningful, useful account of feminism. Indeed, an ameliorative project retains the spirit of feminism while addressing the harmful shortcomings in a contrary manner – feminism will be non-exclusionary, able to account for the various ways in which women are harmed, and will foster intracommunity resistance against negative stereotypes.

Despite conceptually re-engineering feminism, there remain two ways to conceptualize feminism: current conceptualizations or the ameliorative concept. Díaz-León's framework for adopting one as the unique referent is helpful in deciding which conception *should* serve as the referent. Díaz-León suggests favouring one referent over another if one has significant political and

[260] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 20.

moral motivation to do so.[261] By ameliorating harms of current conceptions, a conceptually re-engineered feminism promises favourable moral and political outcomes for feminists. On Díaz-León's account, the ameliorative concept of feminism should be adopted as the unique conceptual referent for feminism.

So, the unstable conceptual foundation of feminism has been revealed and an ameliorative concept has been offered in its place. To my classmate who suggested abandoning feminism: I sympathize with your frustration. In many ways, feminism has failed. The three shortcomings I present convey this point quite clearly. But, please do not be so quick to forget that these shortcomings are merely cracks in feminism's conceptual foundation. The cracks are part of the larger conceptual structure where the spirit of feminism lives – the very spirit that allows women to conceptualize the harms they face. A crack invites reflection, not abandonment. I hope I can encourage you to reflect on the ways women can more effectively ameliorate their harms rather than abandoning the concept of feminism entirely.

[261] Díaz-León, "Descriptive vs. Ameliorative Projects," in *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics,* 184.

Bibliography

CHAPTER 1: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF FEMINISM

Astell, Mary. *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest*. London: Printed for R. Wilkin, 1695.

Broad, Jacqueline. "Mary Astell (1666-1731)." In *The Routledge Handbook of Women and Early Modern Philosophy,* edited by Karen Detlefsen and Lisa Shapiro, 493-505. Routledge: New York, 2023.

Broad, Jacqueline. "Conclusion." In *The Philosophy of Mary Astell: An Early Modern Theory of Virtue*, edited by Jacqueline Broad, 168-184. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Bunkle, Phillida. "Calling the Shots? The International Politics of Depo-Provera." In *Test-Tube Woman: What Future for Motherhood?* edited by Rita Arditti, Renate Duelli, and Shelly Minden. 1st edition. 165-187. Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 1984.

Curtain, Emma Jane. "Daughters of Empire: British Gentlewomen in Alberta 1880-1914." PhD Dissertation, University of Calgary, 1990. National Library of Canada (0-315-61726-8).

Detlefsen, Karen. "Custom, Freedom, and Equality: Mary Astell on Marriage and Women's Education." In *Feminist Interpretations of Mary Astell*, edited by Alice Sowaal and Penny A. Weiss, 74–92. University Park, USA: Penn State University Press, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780271077604-007.

Forbes, Allauren Samantha. "Mary Astell on Bad Custom and Epistemic Injustice." *Hypatia* 34, no. 4 (2019): 777–801. https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12495.

Gray, Madeline. *Margaret Sanger: A Biography of the Champion of Birth Control.* New York: Richard Mark Publishers, 1979.

Halldenius, Lena. "Liberation: Economic Independence and Civil Existence." In *Mary Wollstonecraft and Feminist Republicanism,* edited by Lena Halldenius, 109-127. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2015.

Hannam, June. *Feminism*. 1st ed. Oxon England: Routledge, 2013. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315836089.

Hock, Heinrich. "The Pill and the College Attainment of American Women and Men." *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc* (2007).

LeGates, Marlene. *In Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001. Accessed May 28, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central.

Leslie, John F. "Indigenous Suffrage." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, March 31, 2016.

Mill, John Stuart. *The Subjection of Women*. London: 1869.

Morgan, Jeannie. "Depo-Provera and the Regulation of Indigenous Women's Health." *Simon Fraser University*, Simon Fraser University, 2007, pp. 1–100.

Poblome, Sophia et al., "The Pill Exhibition." *Europeana*, 2021. https://www.europeana.eu/en/exhibitions/the-pill

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Emile.* Boston, 1889.

Sacks, Tina K. "The Mississippi Appendectomy." In *Invisible Visits*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Sanger, Margaret. *Margaret Sanger: An Autobiography.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1938.

Sanger, Margaret. *Woman and the New Race*. Fifth printing. New York: Brentano's, 1922.

Schuller, Kyla. *The Trouble With White Women: A Counterhistory of Feminism.* New York: Hachette Book Group, Inc, 2021.

Smith Andrea. "Not an Indian Tradition: The Sexual Colonization of Native Peoples." *Hypatia* 18, no. 2 (2003): 70–85. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2003.tb00802.x.

Smith, Bonnie G, and Nova Robinson. *The Routledge Global History of Feminism*. Oxon, UK: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.

Springborg, Patricia. *Mary Astell: A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, Parts I and II*. Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2002.

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. *Address to the Legislature of New-York: Adopted by the State Woman's Rights Convention, Held at Albany, Tuesday and Wednesday, February 14 and 15, 1854.* Edited by Rebecca Jo Plant, Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Thomas Dublin. Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1854.

Turnbull, Sarah. "Reframing the Oral Contraception Debate: A Subversion of Feminism?" BA Hons thesis. St. Francis Xavier University, 2023, p. 6.

Wolfson, Susan J. "Revolution in Female Manners: *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects (1792)*." In *On Mary Wollstonecraft: A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, edited by Susan J. Wolfson, 79-136. New York: Columbia University Press, 2023.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: With Strictures of Political and Moral Subjects*. Boston: Printed for Thomas and Andrews, 1792.

Wollstonecraft, Mary and William Godwin. *Maria: or The Wrongs of Women.* Philadelphia: James Carey, 1799.

CHAPTER 2: THE FACTIONALIZATION OF FEMINISM

Armstrong, Elisabeth. "Marxist and Socialist Feminism." *Study of Women and Gender: Faculty Publications* (2020): 1-24.

Baehr, Amy R. "Liberal Feminism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, March 21 2021, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-liberal/.

Balbus, Isaac D. *Marxism and Domination : A Neo-Hegelian, Feminist, Psychoanalytic Theory of Sexual, Political, and Technological Liberation*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1982.

Combahee River Collective. "The Combahee River Collective Statement." In *Encyclopedia of African-American Writing, Third Edition,* edited by Bryan Conn and Tara Bynum, 971-976. Amenia, NY: Grey House Publishing, 2018.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. *Blackness at the Intersection: Intersectionality and the Black Diaspora*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.

Daly, Mary. *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.

Delmar, Rosalind. "What is Feminism?" In *Theorizing Feminism*, edited by Anne Herrmann & Abigail Stewart, 8-33. Routledge, 2001.

Echols, Alice. *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*. Thirtieth Anniversary Edition. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019.

Elliot, Patricia, and Nancy Mandell. "Feminist Theories." In *Feminism: Race, Class, and Sexuality 1st Edition,* edited by Nancy Mandell, 3-31. Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall, 1995.

Elliot, Patricia, and Nancy Mandell. "Liberal, Socialist, and Radical Feminism: An Introduction to Three Theories about Women's Oppression and Social Change." In *Feminism: Race, Class, and Sexuality 5th Edition,* edited by Nancy Mandell, 1-39. Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall, 2010.

Elshtain, Jean Bethke. *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought - Second Edition*. Second edition. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Elson, Diane, and Ruth Pearson. "'Nimble Fingers Make Cheap Workers': An Analysis of Women's Employment in Third World Export Manufacturing." *Feminist Review* 7, no. 1 (1981): 87–107.

Firestone, Shulamith. *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. New York: Morrow, 1974.

Griffin, Gabriele. "Political Lesbianism." In *A Dictionary of Gender Studies*: Oxford University Press, https://www-oxfordreference-com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/view/10.1093/acref/9780191834837.001.0001/acref-9780191834837-e-299.

Jeffreys, Sheila. *The Lesbian Revolution: Lesbian Feminism in the UK 1970-1990*. First edition. Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018.

Hampton, Mary, and Barb McWatters. "A Process Model of Depo-Provera Use in Canadian Women." *Health Care for Women International* 24, no. 3 (2003): 193–208. https://doi.org/10.1080/07399330390178477.

Hill Collins, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd ed. Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 1990.

Hock, Heinrich. "The Pill and College Attainment of American Women and Men." *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc* (2007): 1-34.

hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Idle No More. "Visual Herstory of the Movement." *Idle No More,* November 10, 2012, https://idlenomore.ca/about-the-movement/.

Jefferson, Thomas. *The Declaration of Independence.* New York: Seaver & Co., 1860.

Kelm, Mary-Ellen. *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 1998.

Kemp, Sandra, and Judith Squires. *Feminisms*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Kollontaĭ, Alexandra. *Women Workers Struggle for Their Rights*. Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1971.

Lawford-Smith, Holly. *Gender-Critical Feminism*. First edition. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2022.

Lomire, Patricia. "Marxist Feminist Theory: A Review, A Critique, and an Offering." *Great Plains Sociologist,* vol. 2, article 5 (1989): 57-74.

Marilley, Suzanne M. "'Liberal Feminisms' and Political Autonomy." In *Woman Suffrage and the Origins of Liberal Feminism in the United States, 1820-1920.* Germany: Harvard University Press, 1997.

McDougall, Robert L. "Duncan Campbell Scott." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Historica Canada. August 11, 2008. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/duncan-campbell-scott.

Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. *Talkin' up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism.* First edition. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021.

Morgan, Jeannie. "Depo-Provera and the Regulation of Indigenous Women's Health." Simon Fraser University, Dissertation, 2007, pp. 1–100.

Mosher, Donald L, and Mark Sirkin. "Measuring a Macho Personality Constellation." *Journal of Research in Personality* 18, no. 2 (1984): 150–63. https://doi.org/10.1016/0092-6566(84)90026-6.

Nash, Jennifer C. *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.

Neal, Mark Anthony. *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture*. 1st ed. Oxford: Routledge, 1999.

Pateman, Carole. *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988.

Rabaka, Reiland. *Black Women's Liberation Movement Music: Soul Sisters, Black Feminist Funksters, and Afro-Disco Divas*. 1st ed. Vol. 1. Oxford: Routledge, 2023.

Radicalesbians. "The Woman-Identified Woman." In *Feminist Manifestos*, edited by Penny A. Weiss, 221-225. New York: New York University Press, 2018.

Raymond, Janice G. *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1994.

Seneca Falls Convention. "Declaration of Sentiments." In *Feminist Manifestos*, edited by Penny A. Weiss, 75-81. New York: New York University Press, 2020.

Smith, Bonnie G, and Nova Robinson. *The Routledge Global History of Feminism*. Oxon, UK: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.

Stuhr-Rommereim, Hellen, and Mari Jarris. "Nikolai Chernyshevsky's What Is to Be Done? And the Prehistory of International Marxist Feminism." *Feminist German Studies* 36, no. 1 (2020): 166-192.

Suzack, Cheryl. *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010.

Thompson, Denise. *Reading Between the Lines: A Lesbian Feminist Critique of Feminist Accounts of Sexuality*. Sydney, Australia: Lesbian Studies and Research Group, Gorgon's Head Press, 1991.

Tong, Rosemarie, and Tina Fernandes Botts. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. Fifth edition. Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018.

Tucker, Jasmine. "The Wage Gap for Black Women: Working Longer and Making Less." *National Women's Law Centre,* August 2019. https://nwlc.org/resource/the-wage-gap-for-black-women-working-longer-and-making-less/#.

Turnbull, Sarah. "Reframing the Oral Contraception Debate: A Subversion of Feminism?" BA Hons. Thesis, St. Francis Xavier University, 2023.

Valk, Anne M. "Living a Feminist Lifestyle: The Intersection of Theory and Action in a Lesbian Feminist Collective." *Feminist Studies* 28, no. 2 (2002): 303–32.

Waldron, Ingrid. *Environmental Racism in Canada.* Ottawa: UNESCO, 2020.

Waldron, Ingrid. "Women on the Frontlines: Grassroots Movements Against Environmental Violence in Indigenous and Black Communities in Canada." *Kalfou* vol. 5 issue 2 (2018): 251-268.

Williams, Nicola. "It's Now or Never." *Fair Play for Women,* 2018. Podcast, https://fairplayforwomen.com/backgrd/

Zitkala-Sa, and Tadeusz Lewandowski. *Zitkala-Sa : Letters, Speeches, and Unpublished Writings, 1898-1929*. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

CHAPTER 3: NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES AS A BARRIER TO SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Armstrong, Elizabeth. "Marxist and Socialist Feminism." *Study of Women and Gender: Faculty Publications* (2020): 1-24.

Asma, Stephen T. *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears*. 1st ed. Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2009.

Bashir, Nadia Y, Penelope Lockwood, Alison L Chasteen, Daniel Nadolny, and Indra Noyes. "The Ironic Impact of Activists: Negative Stereotypes Reduce Social Change Influence." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 43, no. 7 (2013): 614–26. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.1983.

BBC. "Trump's 'Make America Great Again' Hats Burned Over Daca Deal." *BBC News.* September 15 2017. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41279520

Bearman, C. J. "An Examination of Suffragette Violence." *The English Historical Review* 120, no. 486 (2005): 365–97. https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/cei119.

Bennice, Jennifer A, and Patricia A. Resick. "Marital Rape: History, Research, and Practice." *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse* vol. 4, issue 3 (2003): 228-246.

Bradley, Patricia. *Mass Media and the Shaping of American Feminism, 1963-1975*. 1st ed. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004.

Burrows, Brooke, Hema Preya Selvanathan, and Brian Lickel. "My Fight or Yours: Stereotypes of Activists From Advantaged and Disadvantaged Groups." *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 49, no. 1 (2023): 110–24.

Chiang, Chuck. "Leaders Condemn B.C Rally Where 'Death to Canada' Cry Went Up." *CBC,* October 8th 2024. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/death-to-canada-vancouver-rally-1.7346760

Daly, Martin, Margo Wilson, and John Archer. "Evolutionary Psychology of Male Violence." In *Male Violence*, 1st ed., (1994): 253–88.

Feinberg, Matthew, Robb Willer, Chloe Kovacheff, Kerry Kawakami, and Colin Wayne Leach. "The Activist's Dilemma: Extreme Protest Actions Reduce Popular Support for Social Movements." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 119, no. 5 (2020): 1086–1111.

Frye, Marilyn. "Do You Have to Be a Lesbian to Be a Feminist?" *Off Our Backs* 20, no. 8, (1990): 21-23.

Katz, D, K Braly, and Henry T Moore. "Racial Stereotypes of One Hundred College Students." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 28, no. 3 (1933): 280–90.

Kraterou, Aliki. "Hundreds of BLM Rioters, Looters, and Vandals Have Charges Dropped Despite Destruction from Violent Protests." *The U.S Sun*, June 20, 2021. https://www.the-sun.com/news/3123181/hundreds-blm-rioters-looters-vandals-charges-dropped/

Limbaugh, Rush H. "The Rush Limbaugh Show." Radio Show, Premier Radio Network, September 11, 2015.

Limbaugh, Rush H. *The Way Things Ought to Be*. New York; Pocket Books, 1992.

Manne, Kate. *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. 1st ed. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Moore, Anna, and Sofia Stathi. "The Impact of Feminist Stereotypes and Sexual Identity on Feminist Self-Identification and Collective Action." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 160, no. 3 (2020): 267–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2019.1644280.

New York Times. "Robertson Letter Attacks Feminists." 1992.

Parkin, Andrew. *Women's Equality and the Women's Movement: An Update*. Toronto: Environics Institute, January 4, 2022.

Perry, Ruth. *The Celebrated Astell: An Early English Feminist.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Roy, Robin E, Kristin S Weibust, and Carol T Miller. "Effects of Stereotypes About Feminists on Feminist Self-Identification." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2007): 146–56. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00348.x.

Schmidt, Linda, and Kayla Mamelak. "BLM Threatens 'Riots, Bloodshed' in NYC if Adams Brings Back Police Unit, Mayor Elect Responds." *Fox News,* November 12, 2021. https://www.fox5ny.com/news/black-lives-matter-threaten-riots-fire-bloodshed-in-nyc-if-adams-brings-back-police-unit

Skelley, Geoffrey. "How Americans Feel About George Floyd's Death And The Protests." *ABC News FiveThirtyEight,* June 5, 2020. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-americans-feel-about-george-floyds-death-and-the-protests/

van Zomeren, Martijn, Maja Kutlaca, and Felicity Turner-Zwinkels. "Integrating Who 'We' Are with What 'We' (Will Not) Stand for: A Further Extension of the Social Identity Model of Collective Action." *European Review of Social Psychology* 29, no. 1 (2018): 122–60.

van Zomeren, Martijn, Tom Postmes, and Russell Spears. "Toward an Integrative Social Identity Model of Collective Action: A Quantitative Research Synthesis of Three Socio-Psychological Perspectives." *Psychological Bulletin* 134, no. 4 (2008): 504–35.

Women's Museum of Ireland. "'Monsters of Creation': Snapshots of Women in Higher Education." *Women's Museum of Ireland,* March 2, 2024.

CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUALLY RE-ENGINEERING FEMINISM

Burgess, Alexis, and David Plunkett. "Conceptual Ethics I." *Philosophy Compass* 8, no. 12 (2013): 1091-1101.

Chalmers, David. "What is Conceptual Engineering and What Should It Be?" *Inquiry*, (2020): 1-17.

Crenshaw Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." In *Feminist Legal Theories*, edited by Karen J Machke, 23-51. United Kingdom: Routledge, 1997.

Díaz-León, Esa. "Descriptive vs. Ameliorative Projects." In *Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics,* edited by Alexis Burgess, Herman Cappelen, and David Plunkett, 170-186. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Address to the Legislature of New York," *Archives of Women's Political Communication,* February 14, 1854.

Fricker, Miranda. "Hermeneutical Injustice." In *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, 147-175. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Haslanger, Sally. "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" *Noûs (Bloomington, Indiana)* 34, no. 1 (2000): 31–55.

Jenkins, Katharine. "Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of Woman." *Ethics* 126, no. 2 (2016): 394–421.

Manne, Kate. *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. 1st ed. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Rowe, Cami Renee. "Camp Performances in Political Protest Encampments: A Comparison of the Bonus Expeditionary Forces and the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp," 2013.

Turnbull, Sarah. "Reframing the Oral Contraception Debate: A Subversion of Feminism?" BA Hons. Thesis, St. Francis Xavier University, 2023.