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When The Mainstream Met The Second Wave: Media Representations of Women & Feminism in 1970s America

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Annie Anderson
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When The Mainstream Met The Second Wave:
Media Representations of Women & Feminism in
1970s America

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But there are no new ideas still waiting in the wings to save us as women, as human. There are only old and forgotten ones, new combinations, extrapolations and recognitions from within ourselves- along with the renewed courage to try them out.

-Audre Lorde, Poetry is not a Luxury, Sister/ Outsider YEAR

It isn't until you begin to fight in your own cause that you become really committed to winning and become a genuine ally of other people struggling for their freedom.

-Robin Morgan

Introduction

Women's Liberation is very much a minority movement. It's evangelical. It's a movement that makes people feel good, and there will be a lot of people reading these books who won't do a thing to change the conditions of their lives; still, they like reading about revolution. In one sense it constitutes a kind of pornography; it's a fantasy about the different ordering of things without individuals really doing anything about the ordering.

- *Time Magazine*, August, 31, 1970¹

Media representations of second wave feminism were anything but courteous when coverage of the movement picked up in 1970. From the language used, to the images printed, to the stereotypes created, the mainstream media painted a gruesome picture of the movement, marginalizing its efforts and vilifying its women. The above quote, taken from an article by social anthropologist Lionel Tiger for *Time* magazine, provides a clear example not only of how the movement was received by men at the time, but also how that reception was regurgitated to the American public, clouding their vision and framing their opinions of the movement. The article, “An Unchauvinist Male Replies,” captures the tone of antifeminist rhetoric that would continue into the seventies and beyond, tainting the memory of second wave feminism.

While the movement erupted in the mid-1960s,² and media coverage had catalogued some of its major happenings in the early years,³ 1970 marked a particularly

¹ Tiger, Lionel. “An Unchauvinist Male Replies.” *Time* 31 August 1970. Online Archive.

² “The term ‘second wave’ was coined by Marsha Lear, and refers to the increase in feminist activity which occurred in America, Britain and Europe from the late sixties onward. In America, second wave feminism rose out of the civil rights and anti-war movements in which women... began to band together.” *Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*

important moment in the way that print media covered the movement. In the last week of August and the first week of September that year, *Time* and *Life* magazines released issues dedicated to women's liberation (the Lionel Tiger article appeared in that issue of *Time*). These issues were crucial in shaping mainstream America's understanding of the movement and of feminism, informing common conceptions of feminism, labeling the movement as militant and oversimplifying what was an inherently complex and dynamic development.

Time's coverage was particularly important in the attention it gave to Kate Millett, an activist, artist and writer who was pictured on the cover of the issue as "Kate Millett of Women's Lib."⁴ The magazine put Millett as the face of the movement, an assignment she was neither comfortable with nor felt appropriate. As a woman of the movement, Millett represented one set of ideals associated with feminism and liberation, but by no means spoke for the movement as a whole. Yet by aligning the movement with Millett, *Time* made a distinct connection between her work and personal life and development of the movement. This connection became increasingly complicated when *Time* outed Millett as bisexual in December 1970, less than three months after she had appeared on the magazine's cover. *Time* took it as an opportunity to discredit both Millett and the movement, generating false stereotypes of feminism and bringing questions of sexuality to the forefront of the movement. Kate Millett remains an important focus of this paper as an example of the way that feminists were negatively stereotyped and consistently

³ While women's liberation had been written about in *Time* and *Life* prior to 1970, the movement did not garner significant attention from the magazines until August/September of 1970 when each magazine printed issues dedicated to the cause

⁴ Text taken from *Time* cover August 31, 1970.

marginalized. Her story speaks to a greater controversy happening throughout the movement's history that influenced its legacy, and brings light to the ways in which the media manipulated, distorted and dehumanized the movement.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the presentation of second wave feminism in the mainstream media, focusing specifically on coverage done by *Time* and *Life* magazines. It begins by taking a close examination of the issues released in 1970, paying special attention to the story of Kate Millett, and continues by analyzing coverage of the movement and feminism through the end of the seventies to determine how the feminist movement came to be remembered as it is today. These magazines were selected based on their circulation and target audiences, which were representative of mainstream, middle-class America. The interdisciplinary approach of this project lies in its attention to media studies and gender and women's studies, specifically in how these different disciplines inform each other to create a comprehensive history of America's past. It is further exemplified by the deconstruction of both visual imagery and texts of different publications, and examines mainstream interpretation of a largely grassroots movement, addressing a cultural gap in American society and looking at the politics of memory, gender, equality, democracy and freedom in the United States.

Chapter 1

Historicizing the Movement, Historicizing the Media

I revisit this past because it can tell us a lot about where we are today and why we are there.

-Edward P. Morgan, *What Really Happened to the 1960s*, 2010

In order to gain an understanding of how the media's representation of second wave feminism was skewed, it is essential to know both the state of the feminist movement as it entered the 1970s, and the role that the media played in shaping public opinion of social movements at the time. This chapter aims to contextualize both the movement and the media of the 1970s, with initial focus on the story of second wave feminism and how that story has been interpreted by scholars, then shifting attention to the role that the media played in shaping public interpretation of feminism. The chapter will conclude by providing background information on *Time* and *Life* magazines, two constructs of media mogul Henry Luce's empire that played integral roles in presenting mainstream America with the story of women's liberation. The main objective of this chapter is to clarify the story of second wave feminism, both as it happened in the 1960s and 1970s and how that narrative is retold to contrast the conclusions that were made by *Time* and *Life* in the seventies. The reader should also have an understanding that contemporary ideas of feminism continue to be shaped by judgments propelled by the mainstream media of 1970s America.

A Brief History of the Second Wave

The techniques that women used to shape the feminist movement in the late 1960s into the 1970s were strongly influenced by the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left as they unfolded in the years leading up to second wave feminism. The strengths, as well as the imperfections of these social developments shaped the ideologies and strategies of many grass roots feminist organizations.

In the summer of 1964, college students gathered in Southern rural communities to promote the efforts of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a grassroots organization of the Civil Rights Movement. Four hundred northern white female students unexpectedly flocked to the south as volunteers that summer, helping to organize and register African American voters. The organization, which was founded in 1960, had already become tangled in racial tensions, and the appearance of these white female volunteers only further complicated the dynamics of the SNCC.

Sexual tensions were extremely apparent between the northern female volunteers and their male counterparts, particularly between the white women the African American men of the organization. Wanting to prove that they were not racist, many of these northern women were eager to engage in affairs with the black men of the organization, turning themselves into easy sexual targets.⁵ However, this eagerness led to their sexual

⁵ Rosen, Ruth. *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*. (New York: Penguin, 2006) 103.

exploitation as, “Every black SNCC worker with perhaps a few exceptions counted a notch on his gun to have slept with a white woman- as many as possible.”⁶ Additionally, many of the women were confined to clerical jobs and kept away from the dangerous task of going into the rural communities of the Deep South and convincing African Americans to register.

Tensions also arose between the white and black women of the SNCC. Black women were allowed to fill more hands on positions during the day and were not restricted to the “safety” of offices as white women were. However, they noticed that their black male counterparts, who they worked closely with during the days, would flock to the young white volunteers at night. They were allowed the opportunity to be more heavily involved in the recruiting process but were neglected

Over the course of Freedom Summer, the complicated nature of the female role in SNCC became increasingly apparent. exploitation and subordination of the female volunteers became increasingly apparent. While many women had migrated to the South to contribute to an important cause, they found themselves stuck in housekeeping positions that were no different from the roles they filled in the North. The differences in the treatment of black and white female volunteers created tensions between the women that were essentially out of their control; SNCC was proving itself to be a male-dominated organization, impervious to the requests of its female volunteers as it reinforced stereotypes of the woman’s role in the private sphere, reduced women to

⁶ Ibid. 104.

objects of sexual desire and highlighted racial tensions between the black and white women of the organization.

While these problems were extremely disheartening for women of the SNCC, they also brought awareness to the stereotyping of women and exposed these women to what would become the structural and ideological foundation of the seventies feminist movement.⁷ The stereotyping of white women as weak and in need of protection and black women as capable of fending for themselves highlighted the difference in perception of black and white female activists. The disparity between black and white women in the sixties and seventies left them all oppressed but made it difficult for them to work together on women's issues. The feminist movement that would begin just a few years later would form around the importance of community and the need of the emancipation of an identifiable and oppressed group that became evident to female volunteers during Freedom Summer. The consciousness of the role of women that started in 1964 would eventually grow and become the catapult for second wave feminism.

The fate of SNCC would result in black separatism; in 1965 they would ask white members to leave the group. The idea of a separatist movement foreshadowed how women would soon separate themselves from their fellow male activists to achieve their own liberation.

When the SNCC was restructured, many activists turned to the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) to continue to fight for a more equal social structure. Many of the volunteers aimed to “convey a powerful statement of revulsion with American

⁷ Ibid. 106.

materialism,”⁸ and with that objective moved to poor urban areas to organize the poor white communities. These efforts became crucial to the development of a women’s movement in America. It was through living and working in these poor urban environments that Casey Hayden, a prominent activist first recognized the strength in solidarity that came from the women of these communities. Hayden recognized the “women welfare recipients (as) the glue that held together the poor white community.”⁹ This idea of solidarity as something that could strengthen and unify women was essential to feminism as it developed in the seventies.

In December of 1965, SDS met for a “rethinking” campaign of the organization. At this conference, intense debates over the construction of sex roles ensued, and the issue of “identity” became a significant problem for male and female members. There was a huge disparity in what resulted from this conference as some attribute it to the beginning of the New Left while others recognize it as the beginning of the women’s movement.¹⁰ Despite the different interpretations that came of this event, feminist ideologies were becoming recognizable.

In January of 1969, female separatism finally became apparent. A group called the National Mobilization Committee, organized a rally against the Vietnam War in Washington D.C. the night before Richard Nixon’s inauguration. At the conference, gender divisions became stifling. The men were unwilling to view their female counterparts as equals and refused to treat them with the respect they gave their male co-

⁸ Ibid. 111.

⁹ Ibid. 112.

¹⁰ Ibid. 121.

workers. Sexism was permeating all of the issues at hand and women started openly declaring that they could not fight against any cause if they did not have a voice for themselves. This recognition raised female consciousness about their role as activists and about the limitations that sexism continued to hold over their efforts.

Female separatism became apparent in the mainstream media as well. In a February 1969 article for the *Guardian*, feminist activist Ellen Willis declared that women's liberation was now recognized as "an independent revolutionary movement, potentially representing half the population."¹¹ Willis also proclaimed that women would be putting their own interests first with no regard for the convenience of the men of the New Left. This formal declaration was important not only because it established a female separatist movement, but also because it demonstrated the level of consciousness that was permeating female understanding of themselves and their role in American society on a big level. This formal declaration sets the stage for the publication of Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* in 1970, and gives momentum to the women that begin standing up for themselves collectively and as individuals.

A Look at Literature on the Second Wave

Historians began locating the history of second wave feminism in its social and political context before the 1970s even ended. With the publication of her book *Personal Politics* in 1979, Sara Evans recorded a narrative that would establish a standard

¹¹ Cite Guardian article

interpretation of the roots of women's liberation. These roots would trace the development of second wave feminism to the happenings of the civil rights movement and the development of the New Left. As a young scholar and active participant in the movement, Evans named these major markers of social, cultural and political change as providing the context for active women to learn "to respect themselves and know their own strength."¹²

An important record at the time, and the first of many similar accounts, *Personal Politics* names the development of "feminist consciousness," a result of preconditions established "as young women participated in the southern civil rights movement, particularly SNCC, and in the northern new left, particularly ERAP."¹³ Evans also notes the shift in America's social and political mood that came with JFK's 1960 presidential election, when "Change became a positive rather than a negative value."¹⁴ Additionally, JFK's Presidency marked the establishment of the President's Commission on the Status of Women on December 14, 1961, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt.¹⁵

Over twenty years later, in 2000, Ruth Rosen published her chronicle of second wave feminism, which more or less retold and elaborated on Evans' account of the movement's roots. *The World Split Open* traced the development of sixties and seventies feminism to the Civil Rights movement and the efforts of the New Left, just as *Personal Politics* had in 1979, this time remembering a movement long past in an attempt to

¹² Evans, 213

¹³ ERAP- Students for a Democratic Society. Ibid. 219-220.

¹⁴ Ibid. 15.

¹⁵ Ibid. 16-17.

contextualize the “changes that these young people now took for granted.”¹⁶ Rosen’s book differs from Evans’ in prose and detail, but the sweeping outline of second wave feminism remains the same: the tumultuous changes of the sixties established an era of change and mobility. Marginalized, objectified and disrespected both intellectually and physically during the inner workings of other movements of the time (Civil Rights, New Left), women broke from their constraints to begin their own movement. Thus women’s liberation, in what is now recognized as its second wave, was born.

Despite the similarities of Rosen’s and Evans’ books, they differ greatly in the years they were published, which is particularly important when considering the immediacy of Evans’ book from the end of the movement with Rosen’s more distant reflection. While Rosen’s hindsight does not distinguish her big picture narrative of sixties and seventies feminism from Evans’, it does change the perspective of her conclusions. Rosen’s account is much more informed of the long-term impacts of the movement, and is able to locate them in American society at the beginning of the 21st century. She concludes, “As each generation shares its secrets, women learn to see the world through their own eyes, and discover, much to their surprise, that they are not the first, and that they are not alone... A revolution is under way, and there is not end in sight.”¹⁷

In *The Feminist Memoir Project*, published in 1998, Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Ann Snitow take a different approach in recounting second wave feminism. By collecting and compiling memoirs and responses from women in the movement, their

¹⁶ Rosen. Xiii.

¹⁷ Rosen. 344.

book “explores how it felt to live through and contribute to massive social change.”¹⁸ Rather than outlining a master narrative of the movement, this collection offers a deeper look into some of the nuances of feminist activism in the sixties and seventies, and relies heavily on the personal memories of the 32 female contributors. In her concluding contribution, activist Kate Millett acknowledges, “for every woman who tells her story in feminism in this ground-breaking collection, there are a thousand others, ten thousand others.” She also recognizes that despite the changes of the second wave, American culture has not changed enough, “nor have we,” pointing out that “the divisions of class and race beset us still. This being America, the role of black feminism must become pivotal, crucial, the linchpin securing the wheel itself, if U.S. feminism would be liberatory to feminism worldwide.”¹⁹

In her dissertation, *Becoming feminism: The emergence of the feminist-as-lesbian figure and the forgetting of the women’s movement*, Victoria J. Hesford gives these three texts the same criticism; that they “mistake the representation of the early second wave women’s movement as a white middle-class movement with the historical reality of it being so,” ignoring “the very real presence of racism, heterosexism, and classism in the movement,” and leading to “a unified representation of the movement which excludes the presence of other voices, groups, and political identifications at the beginnings of the movement, and leads to historical oversights, (producing) major shifts in the perceptions

¹⁸DuPleiss, Rachel and Ann Snitow. *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women’s Liberation*. (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998) 3.

¹⁹ Ibid. 494.

and memories of historical reality.”²⁰ Hesford makes a valuable point, one that also speaks to the inherent racism and white exclusivity that characterized the movement. Even with the distance from the movement that *The World Split Open* and *The Feminist Memoir Project* boast, they still do not get past the basic narrative that Evans set up in 1979. Yet, all three books acknowledge the racism of the movement. This racism becomes part of the narrative, but not one that changes the way these women write about and interpret feminism of the sixties and seventies.

Anne Enke takes a different approach with her book *Finding The Movement*, focusing on physical locations where feminism lived during the sixties and seventies. Hers is an interesting means of understanding second wave feminism because it assigns physical space to lifestyles and ideologies associated with the movement, grounding them in real and specific sites. Enke’s analysis also makes a more interesting case for understanding the actuality of the movement, giving new life to a narrative that can be dry and repetitive through other literature.

In her intro, Enke states her intentions to “look to space and place for new ways to apprehend the emergence, proliferation, and on-the-ground manifestations of feminist activism during the 1960s and 1970s”²¹ as a means to “confirm that the movement was widespread in ways that historians have not yet explained- operated through grassroots

²⁰ Hesford, Victoria J. “Becoming feminism: the emergence of the feminist-as-lesbian figure and the forgetting of the women’s movement.” (PhD diss., Emory University, 2001) 16-17.

²¹ enke, p. 3

and legislative channels.”²² Enke’s investigation provides a more widespread overview of what second wave feminism looked like to women of the movement. Rather than making generalizations under a sweeping narrative, Enke highlights nuances of the movement by looking at bars, recreation sites, and clinical sites to avoid glorifying one history of second wave feminism. In this way her intentions are similar to those of *The Feminist Memoir Project*. However, because of the nature of her work, Enke’s focus remains more clear. Contributors to The Feminist Memoir Project even criticize it for the predictability of women that were involved, and the lack of African American women given voice on its pages. Enke also argues that “a spatial lens affords a more compelling understanding of sexual emergence and the role that lesbians played in the movement.”²³

The most consistent message found in the literature on second wave feminism is that while the movement made identifiable changes for American women, it did not eliminate discrimination against them. The end of the movement did not mark the end of feminism; it only changed the way that feminism would manifest itself in society.

A Look at Literature on the Media

The media’s impact on social movements was recognized as early as 1980 with the publishing of Todd Gitlin’s book, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*. While his focus stays on the media’s impact over the development of the New Left in the 1960s, Gitlin takes an important look at the

²² Ibid. 5.

²³ Ibid. 11.

relationship between mass media and social movements, and acknowledges that the relationship is not unique to the movement surrounding the New Left. In an effort to tease out the power dynamics between media and its audience, Gitlin begins by recognizing that “people are pressed to rely on mass media for bearings in an obscure and shifting world.”²⁴

This suggests that the public instills a certain amount of trust in the mass media to keep them informed so that they are aware of what’s happening in the world. Such awareness provides them with a sense of control over a chaotic and changing environment, and so the public becomes dependent on the information provided by the media. At the same time, the media is reliant on its audience to consume content, and needs to provide them with information in a way that keeps them coming back for more. The media is also held to political and corporate ties, complicating the way they deliver their message. Gitlin speaks to this power dynamic later in the book when he acknowledges, ““journalists are susceptible to pressure from groups and individuals,” because their work must be suitable for their specific audience. He concludes, “the production of news is a system of power.”²⁵

The way this power system informs the presentation of social movements distorts them from their original form. Gitlin says, “the media divide movements into legitimate main acts and illegitimate sideshows, so that these distinctions appear

²⁴ Gitlin, Todd. *The Whole World Is Watching* p. 1 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980) 1.

²⁵ Ibid. 251.

“natural,” matters of “common sense.”²⁶ Here he is talking about the way in which the media throws the spotlight onto certain aspects of a movement while marginalizing others. This connects very closely with the way that Time magazine highlighted Kate Millett as the face of women’s liberation, overemphasizing her influence as one woman of a diverse group of liberationists. As soon as Time had the right information on Millett, they used it to marginalize her individually, and pushed the movement along with her.

Gitlin mentions the difficulties felt by the women’s movement noting, “Since the sixties, opposition movements have become still more sensitive to the impact of the media on their messages and their identities.”²⁷ He uses the women’s liberation movement as an example that of one that learned from the way the New Left was distorted by mass media, stating that the movement “worked with some success to decentralize leadership and “spokespersonship,” avoiding some (not all) of the agonies of the single-focused spotlight.”²⁸

In a more recent investigation of the media’s impact on social movements of the 20th century, Edward P. Morgan’s *What Really Happened to the 1960s: How Mass Media Culture Failed American Democracy* (2010) is concerned with the disconnect between social activists and the media that results in stereotypes and misrepresentations of activist culture. He looks for the media’s influence on our current understanding of the tumultuous decade to trace the lasting impacts of the mass media’s ability to shape public

²⁶ Ibid. 6.

²⁷ Ibid. 283.

²⁸ Ibid. 283. The idea of spotlighting an individual and naming them spokesperson of a movement becomes a crucial point later in this paper when examining *Time* magazine’s use of Kate Millett.

opinion of the social movements of the sixties. Morgan points to the decade as “a pivotal period within the historical span from the Second World War to the present,” which, under the reflections of “commercial imperatives of corporate institutions, the media played- and continue to play- a major role in these negotiations between the challenges to and the restoration of hegemony.”²⁹

Morgan remains critical of the media lens, constantly enforcing the perspective of media outlets “as corporate institutions that seek mass markets in order to remain economically viable,” emphasizing their subjectivity to economic and political dynamics that inevitably shape their content and maintain their role as “the locus for our common political discourse.”³⁰ He acknowledges that an independent media discourse exists to counterbalance the conventional media, but notes that such publications are widely “marginalized by the mass media culture,”³¹ just as much of their content becomes secondary to the mainstream. Morgan’s perspective is particularly relevant to this paper and its investigation of the power of the mainstream media to marginalize the second wave and generate stereotypes around feminism that would permeate American culture for years to come.

²⁹ “the concept of hegemony is appropriate to this analysis since it refers to elite domination of the mass of people... through the people’s consent. Hegemony occurs via the penetration throughout the culture of an ideology, a belief system that “this is the way things are.”... Hegemony is maintained through a never-ending process of “negotiation” in which elites anticipate and seek to incorporate the very forces that rise up to challenge them, or potentially might do so... so it is hardly surprising that much of this negotiation occurs in the realm of culture, increasingly via the media.”

Morgan, Edward P. *What Really Happened to the 1960s: How Mass Media Culture Failed American Democracy*. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2010) 10.

³⁰ Ibid. x.

³¹ Ibid. xi.

While Morgan and Gitlin differ in the focus and specificity of their work, both books contribute to an understanding of the mass media's relationship with social movements in American culture. Their perspectives on the power dynamics involved in American media are crucial to the argument of this thesis, evidencing the outside influences that inform mass media and illuminating the public's reliance on such sources.

Understanding the relationship between women, feminism and the mass media is also essential to interpreting the way that second wave feminism was portrayed in the 1970s. The study of women in the media began in 1980 with the publication of the book aptly titled *Women and Media*, edited by Helen Baehr.³² In the introduction to *Women, Media and Feminism*, Sue Thornham credits the book with beginning the formal investigation of women's representation in the media, while making the point that that it “emerged from a quite specific political and intellectual moment... carrying certain assumptions, many of which now seem outdated.”³³ Writing in 2007, Thornham acknowledges the “substantial body of feminist theory and feminist media scholarship”³⁴ informing her work, forcing her to examine the “increasingly problematised” relationship between women and the media, while considering “the issues and debates thrown up when ‘feminist’ is inserted into this pairing.”³⁵

Thornham also makes the sharp observation that while the study of women and media was an investigation largely rooted in the women's movement of the 1970s,

³² Thornham, Sue. *Women, Feminism and Media*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd) 2.

³³ *Ibid.* 2.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 5.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 5.

‘feminism’ was a revived concept at that point, one that “already had a meaning and a history.”³⁶ This is important in reminding her audience that women’s history influenced the way they were perceived in the seventies, and that it continues to impact the way that women are represented in the present. The history of the mass media is rooted in a male-dominated business model, one that contributed to the distortion of coverage on second wave feminism.

A Brief History of *Time* and *Life*

Time and *Life* magazines were both products of the Time Inc., a media empire founded and run by Henry R. Luce until his death in 1967. The objectives of these magazine differed greatly, as did the presentation of their content and their intended audiences. These differences were apparent in, but not specific to the issues the each presented on women’s liberation. *Time* was more news heavy; it was intended to tell readers the hard facts of the week, to disclose political happenings and provide more hard-hitting journalism. In 1970 it was released every Monday, allowing readers to begin their week with *Time*. In a way the magazine set the stage for what would be topics of conversation at the start of each new week. *Life* was more saturated with visual aids, focusing heavily on photojournalism as a means of conveying information and stories to the public. The reporting was also softer, the messages less severe, and the magazine a more leisurely read. In 1970 *Life* was released every Friday, marking it as a weekend indulgence; a respectable publication that gave important news, but maybe provided a

³⁶ Ibid. 5.

little more fluff in its pages. Yet despite the differences of these magazines they were both very standard household items. They provided a balance of information, of news with pleasure reading, and were considered incredibly mainstream publications catering to the typical American family. While this idea of the perfect American family had been substantially challenged by 1970, *Time* and *Life* continued to write to those standards, those ideals.

On May 3, 1970, less than 3 months before both *Time* and *Life* published issues on women's liberation, 107 Time Inc. editorial workers announced their decision to file a complaint of employment discrimination with the New York State Human Rights Division.³⁷ Time Inc. had already been marked as discriminatory because of a policy that only allowed women to be hired as researchers. The company was known for "its role as an opinion magazine," that "gave to its newsroom culture an unmistakable sense of self-satisfaction."³⁸ The lawsuit was settled under the agreement that Time Inc. would "promise to promote women and recruit women of talent,"³⁹ and these issues were a visible manifestation of that promise. *Time* began to promote female researchers, and hired the magazine's first woman reporter, B.J. Phillips, who had previously worked at the Washington Post. In their issue on women's liberation, Time would use these women as the main correspondents for the stories, and invoke the work of only one male staffer, Bob McCade, who would work side by side with Phillips on the feature article.

³⁷ Bradley, Patricia. *Mass Media and the Shaping of American Feminism 1963- 1975*. (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press) 132.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 132.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 132.

The lawsuit is evidence that both *Time* and *Life*'s motivations were manipulated from the get-go. These issues were conceptualized not as a way of paying tribute to the movement, but as a way of saving face for Time Inc. They are prime examples of the politics that drive media, underscoring the important notion that the media's objectives are never entirely transparent, nor are they ever without an angle. The content of both issues shows that a specific story of women's liberation is being told, and the way that the coverage of the movement unfolded before the end of the year show, specifically for Time, how the biases of a past issue of the magazine can be used to inform later coverage of a story.

The story of second wave feminism as it unfolds in this investigation is very much connected to the story told by *Time* and *Life*. Consequently, it is one that centers around white, middle class America, one that reflects the audience of the magazines enough for them to be interested in reading about it, but one that also distinguishes feminists from the average American woman of the 1970s, in their desires, behaviors, demands and

Chapter 2

Women's Liberation and the Media Blitz

THESE are the times that try men's souls, and they are likely to get much worse before they get better. It was not so long ago that the battle of the sexes was fought in gentle, rolling Thurber country. Now the din is in earnest, echoing from the streets where pickets gather, the bars where women once were barred, and even connubial beds, where ideology can intrude at the unconscious drop of a male chauvinist epithet.

-*Time Magazine*, August 31, 1970

Media coverage was important in garnering attention for the movement and helping feminism gain an active voice in the press. However, movement women had little control over the way they were represented, and instances of mass media's manipulation of women's liberation were damaging and widespread. When *Time* and *Life* published (within a week of each other) issues dedicated by cover and content to women's liberation in 1970, mainstream attention was focused on the movement. It is important to understand that the movement was introduced through the specific lenses of these publications, lenses that were not organic with the internal motivations of the cause. *Time* followed its initial issue on women's lib with several other articles in the months that followed, and by the end of 1970 had effectively questioned the movement's motivations and denounced its credibility. While *Life*'s presentation of the movement was less damaging, the magazine's coverage was not entirely consistent with the motivations driving the movement, and positive commentary was printed alongside sexist and discriminatory content.

This chapter will investigate how women's liberation was reported in the issues of *Time* and *Life* dedicated to the movement, exploring the motivations behind the coverage

and the ways that these magazines illustrated women's liberation. This chapter intends to discern how the movement looked to a distanced and mainstream audience at the beginning of "the great media blitz,"⁴⁰ to understand how the media lens colored the movement. Understanding this initial media coverage will provide the backdrop for the third chapter of this thesis, which will investigate coverage of the movement and of feminism into the later years of the seventies.

Time Magazine, Monday, August 31 1970

Deporting on the activities of militant groups is never an easy task...

Nevertheless, in the hope that they could gain an understanding of their subjects that no man could, TIME drew widely on its large group of women staffers to gather material for this week's cover story... In most instances it turned out to be a rewarding assignment.

- "A Letter from the Publisher," Hedley Donovan. *Time* Aug. 31, 1970.

Time released its women's liberation issue on Monday, August 31, 1970 with extensive coverage of the movement. Articles ranged from outlining the movement, to discussing the work of its women to sharing criticisms of women's liberation. Despite the seemingly widespread coverage, the issue was of course skewed, and the motivations behind this coverage were tainted.

⁴⁰ Rosen.

The movement was painted in an unfavorable light from the beginning, with the Publisher's letter consistently referring to the women as a "militant group,"⁴¹ and criticisms being rooted in sexist, uninformed jargon against the women. Yet perhaps the biggest flaw in *Time*'s presentation of the movement was the magazine's cover choice for this issue; it featured a painting of Kate Millett, a feminist scholar, artist and activist whose recently published book, *Sexual Politics*⁴², exposed and challenged the injustices of patriarchy in American society. The magazine highlighted her as an embodiment of the movement's ideologies, a strategic move that placed focus on Millett's individual character and drew attention away from the movement as a whole.

In his weekly "Letter from the Publisher," PUBLISHER explained the reporting process behind the issue on women's liberation with a tone of extreme condescension. He noted that the reporting team enjoyed their research, which involved interviewing "women representing every shade of militancy" and that "the cover story and accompanying features, we believe, are a happy example of male-female collaboration, having been written by Bob McCabe and B.J. Phillips, who despite the initials is very much a lady."⁴³

The Cover

The cover was based on a photograph of Millett, but was painted by American artist Alice Neel, and commissioned by the magazine without Kate's knowledge or

⁴¹ cite letter from publisher

⁴² *Sexual Politics* grew out of Millett's Doctoral dissertation in the English department at Columbia University. The text analyzed the role of patriarchy in contemporary literature; was named 1 of the top 100 most important books published by DoubleDay Publishers in the 20th century.

⁴³ CITE LETTER from PUBLisher

consent. When TIME asked her whose picture to use she advised them, “no one woman but crowds of them” and later complained of the “idiots” sending their copies to her for autographs after the issue’s release: “just what the movement hates.”⁴⁴ Millett’s disdain for the cover came from deep-rooted fears that turned into realities when the issue hit newsstands. The cover not only brought unwanted attention to her personal life that would lead to questions of her sexuality, her credibility, and of the validity of the movement, but elevated her to a position as leader that she neither wanted nor found appropriate.

One major problem with the cover was that it was not only seen by people who read the magazine, but by anyone who saw it for sale in a store or on the street. As the most visible element of the issue’s depiction of women’s liberation, it gave readers and passersby the wrong impression of the movement. The cover was not even consistent with the content of the issue; the article on Millett was a short piece that accompanied a longer narrative of the intentions, complications, and ideologies of feminists. It acknowledged many nuances of the movement, and gave a clear picture of what it meant to be involved in second wave feminism. Yet by putting Millett on the cover, TIME distracted from the more comprehensive picture of women’s liberation. The magazine exaggerated the clout of one woman in a movement of widespread and dynamic qualities, and used Millett’s story to overshadow the bigger picture of women’s liberation.

⁴⁴ Millett, Kate. *Flying*.

Millett was shown as a tough and masculine woman.⁴⁵ She wore a loose oxford shirt, a style reminiscent not of women, but of middle class American men, and was leaning forward looking bold, confrontational and ready for a fight. Her hair hung carelessly in long, haphazard strands around her face, which appeared to be untouched by make up. The portrait was accompanied by very little text; across her shirt read “Kate Millett of Women’s Lib,” naming her as a speaker of the movement. “The Politics of Sex” was plastered against a yellow strip on the upper left corner of the page.



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⁴⁵ The portrait, which went on to become one of Neel’s most famous works, now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C.

⁴⁶ *Time Magazine* Cover, August 31, 1970.

This critique of Millett's portrait is not to diminish her influence and contributions to the movement or to say that the image was not an accurate representation of the way she presented herself. She was extremely important to the movement, and the publication of *Sexual Politics* drew attention to the cause and raised important conversations about feminism. While the portrait is an accurate representation of Millett, it does not provide any insight into the movement, and spotlighted her in a way that confused the intentions of women's liberation.

On Kate Millett and *Sexual Politics*

While the book produced provocative ideas and exposed many of the often-overlooked injustices women faced, the article in *Time* magazine gave no attention to its subject matter. Instead, the story gave a concise outline of Millett's life. The author mentioned her Minnesota upbringing, her parents' separation, her father's abusive behavior towards her and her sisters, her mother's struggle to find a job to adequately support the girls as they grew up. It traced her impressive education, which took her from the University of Minnesota to Oxford, to teaching positions at Hunter College and Barnard College, and culminated with her enrollment in the PhD program at Columbia.

Millett's work as a sculptor was mentioned, as well as the two years she spent as an artist in Japan where she met her then-husband, Fumio Yoshimura. The article quotes Yoshimura exactly once, "She was a very ordinary American liberal when I met her."⁴⁷ This quote was followed by the story of how Millett discovered Women's Liberation at a lecture series, explaining that her personal ideals fit into the already developing

⁴⁷ "The Liberation of Kate Millett." *Time* 31 August 1970. Online Archive

movement she encountered in the winter of 1964-65. The article even mentioned the origins of Millett's idea for *Sexual Politics*, which she presented at Cornell University in November 1968. "I wrote a paper called 'Sexual Politics,'" Millett said, "which was the germ of this whole book."⁴⁸ The article quotes her explaining her reason for writing a thesis based on the paper, "I was trying to trace the reasons why the first phase of the sexual revolution started, and how it changed, through the currents of literature... showing how literature reflects certain sides of our life..."⁴⁹

The article points out that, despite having finished the book, Millett was still incredibly busy after its publication, now with interviews and appearances rather than late nights of writing and editing. She had somewhat inadvertently and unwillingly been thrown into the spotlight as the physical representation of the women's movement. The article ends with a quote by Millett that, rather correctly, implied the movement was just getting started. It concluded with Millett's words: "We've come a long way from the picket line protesting in front of the New York Times, baby. Now we've got to keep it up and not get corrupted and not get smug."

The cover story on Millett is important in understanding the tone of American culture in 1970 and how second wave feminism fit into its social context. Millett became a commodity of the mainstream media with the publication of *Sexual Politics*, and her appearance on the cover of *Time* was a testament to that. Millett was young, attractive, articulate and married, but also edgy; the *Time* article states that the "telephone calls and personal appearances" that bombarded her life in the immediate aftermath of *Sexual*

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Politics, “intrude on her casual dashiki-workpants-sandals lifestyle.”⁵⁰ The idea of Millett as a Midwestern-girl-turned-scholar who promoted “radical” political ideas (i.e. the liberation of women from inherently oppressive social and political spheres) boasted a balance of reputable intellect and harmless spunk. In other words, at the time of the cover story, Millett was deemed “media friendly,” even to her biggest critics.

Opposition to Millett was not directed at her specific ideas as much as what she represented to the public. This is evidenced through the lack of discussion about the contents of *Sexual Politics* in the article and the emphasis on Millett’s personal trajectory. Aside from the obvious notion that the book was connected to Women’s Liberation, the article told very little about the ideas behind *Sexual Politics*. There was a brief mention of the book’s examination of literature, but this was only done by quoting Millett herself. The reporter did not go into further detail about how literature was used to support feminist ideals and the term patriarchy (a central aspect of Millett’s work) did not appear in the article once. By taking the focus of this article off of the book and onto Millett as a person, *Time* reduced her to the face of the movement rather than the face of her ideas.

By assigning Millett as “Kate Millett of Women’s Lib,” (as the cover text described her), the magazine overlooked the reality that the movement was not being carried out by one over-arching force, but rather many small groups of women, who fought along their personal beliefs and wishes while hoping to gain greater opportunity for women. This perpetuated the false understanding that “women’s lib” was a mass of

⁵⁰ Ibid.

angry women looking for someone to argue with, and neglected the nuances of the movement, as well as the variety in the women who identified with it.

The one quote from Millett's husband also helps to place Millett in the context of her political and social environment. To quote him saying "She was a very ordinary American liberal when I met her" implied that her work was out of the ordinary. This further contextualizes feminism in 1970 America by showing how the simple idea that women were oppressed and inhibited was considered extraordinary and how the identification of women as a collective group of subjugated people seemed odd to many people in 1970.

On the Movement

The longest and most comprehensive article on women's liberation, *Who's Come a Long Way, Baby?*, written by B.J. Phillips and Tom McCabe, focuses but on the movement as a whole. The article, which provides an extensive look at women's liberation, makes several gross generalizations to tell a story that reads much neater than the one that women liberationists were living. This version of women's liberation makes the movement more accessible; it breaks the movement into a simple progression, categorizing its development with headings throughout the article, "The emergence of an ideologue/ Revolution in the Revolution/ Fifty Ways Men Can Help/ Liberation and Language/ Legacy of Revolution/ The Delectable Whistle."⁵¹ The writers seem to be not

⁵¹ McCabe, Tom and B.J. Phillips. "Who's Come A Long Way, Baby." Time 31 August 1970. Online Archive.

so much trying to paint the movement in a negative light, but trying to make sense of it in a way that does not fit with its reality. By writing about the movement, they are claiming a certain authority over it, and the tone of the article insists that the writers have a concrete understanding of the topic. This journalistic approach leaves readers trusting the writer rather than what is being written about, consequently giving them a false impression of what the movement looked like and what it was trying to accomplish.

The article begins by explaining that women liberationists were out to “confront the unfinished business of equality,” which included, “a list of goals that nearly all women liberationists agree on.”⁵² The only women distinguished from the liberationists label were those deemed “most radical.” These were the feminists who “want far more. Their eschatological aim is to topple the patriarchal system in which men by birthright control all of society’s levers of power- in government, industry, education, science, and the arts.”⁵³ These “most radical” feminists are framed as being even more of a threat than ordinary women of the movement.

The Opposition

While social anthropologist Lionel Tiger’s article was written in response to both Millett’s work and the feminist movement, Tiger finds his biggest problem in women’s analysis of their inequality. He begins by stating that “virtually all the goals that women have are perfectly justified, legitimate and desirable,”⁵⁴ it is simply their understanding of why things need to be changed that is wrong. This immediately implies that he has some

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Tiger.

greater comprehension of their situation than they do. Correspondent Ruth Mehrrens Galvin spoke to Lionel Tiger this same issue of the magazine, writer Lionel Tiger directly opposed Millett's theses in *Sexual Politics*. The decision to separate this critique from the cover story distanced Millett from the work, and attached her more to "Women's Lib" (as the cover suggested) than to the book itself. Tiger's critique is condescending and disrespectful; his counter to the book does not create a conversation with *Sexual Politics* so much as it denounces it for being wrong and proclaims his own viewpoint as correct.

He very quickly drifts from talking about the book to talking about the feminist movement as a whole, saying,

Women's Liberation is very much a minority movement... In one sense it constitutes a kind of pornography; it's a fantasy about the different ordering of things without individuals really doing anything about the ordering.⁵⁵

By suggesting Women's Liberation as a "minority movement," Tiger implied that the movement did not speak to all women, but rather to a select group who "won't do a thing to change the conditions of their lives."⁵⁶ The female population certainly did not constitute a minority in 1970 America and by dismissing the movement this way, Tiger only exemplified his lack of respect for Millett and the women she had come to represent. Tiger's dismissal of the movement and Millett's work also enforced the idea that she was a harmless figure; that her ideas were provocative and exciting but represented a fantasy that would not amount to any widespread change in American ideology or lifestyle.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

***Life* Magazine, Friday, September 4, 1970**

Life's issue dedicated to Women's Lib hit stands just 5 days after *Time*'s, and gave readers a slightly different interpretation of the movement. The issue did not only discuss Women's Lib, but connected it to the past, giving voice to women's political and activist history by commemorating the 50-year anniversary of women's suffrage. This commemoration was incredibly evident; *Life*'s cover for this issue pictured a cover that the magazine used in October 1920 when women had first gained the right to vote.

The Cover

The magazine immediately put the subject in a different light, instilling a sense of nostalgia for the past by using an image from an issue 50 years earlier, and by using the text that did not directly mention women's liberation: the top read, "Women Arise: The Revolution that will affect everybody," and along the side, "Fifty years ago women got the vote." While the cover mentioned "revolution" the issue seemed to be more of a nostalgic wave at women's past than a tracking of a radical phenomenon among modern American women. Even the main text, "Women Arise," gives an uplifting but light and airy feeling to the cover, and combined with the image of the Statue of Liberty issuing a voting ballot to a 1920s American woman, the cover exudes elements of nationalism and pride.



The biggest similarity between this cover and the cover of Time was that neither accurately represented the main content of the issue. While Time focused attention on one woman that skewed perception of the movement, Life took attention away from the immediacy of the movement by using this image of the past. The Life cover was appropriate in that it did commemorate the 50 year anniversary of the success of women's suffrage, but was misleading in that most of the content of the issue focused on women's issues in the present, not those remedied in the past.

Life's portrayal of the movement began with an Editor's Note that mentioned coverage of women's liberation, providing readers with the first clear signal that the issue is about the movement more than women's history. Contention between the magazine staff and women's liberation is evident immediately upon reading the note, which stated that correspondent Marie-Claude Wrenn found her interview experience with Kate

⁵⁷ *Life* Magazine cover, September 4, 1970.

Millett, “the most grueling, tiring and difficult assignment,” but that in the end “they parted friends, Marie-Claude with the story on pages 22-23 and Kate convinced we weren’t *all* bad.”⁵⁸ Life tries to paint a pretty picture of the relationship between the magazine and the movement, one that was not necessarily reflective of the truth. Millett later recounted her experience with Wrenn, who was pregnant at the time of the interview, “The pregnant lady reporter... didn’t like me. Said I swore, printed fifteen curse words in two columns. Misquoted me saying Lesbianism was ‘not my bag.’ Printed a picture of me kissing Fumio.”⁵⁹

Whether or not Millett’s recollection of the experience is skewed, there is a definite discrepancy between the account give in the Editor’s Note of that issue and the reality of the interview experience. This only enforces the fact that the note, as well as everything else reported in the issue, was printed through the biased lens of Life magazine. Life wanted to appear to present an accurate account of the movement to maintain the trust of its readers, and it wanted to present the articles in a way that painted the magazine in a favorable light (i.e. even though women’s liberationists were “grueling, tiring” women, Life reporters are fair and friendly enough to tolerate interviewing them, and turn the experience into a positive one). It is also interesting that both Life and time highlighted Kate Millett, keeping her image consistently attached to women’s liberation. Life’s manipulates the presentation of Millett, but in a different way than Time, a comparison that will be drawn out further in this chapter.

⁵⁸ “A Letter From the Publisher.” *Life* 4 September 1970. Online Archive.

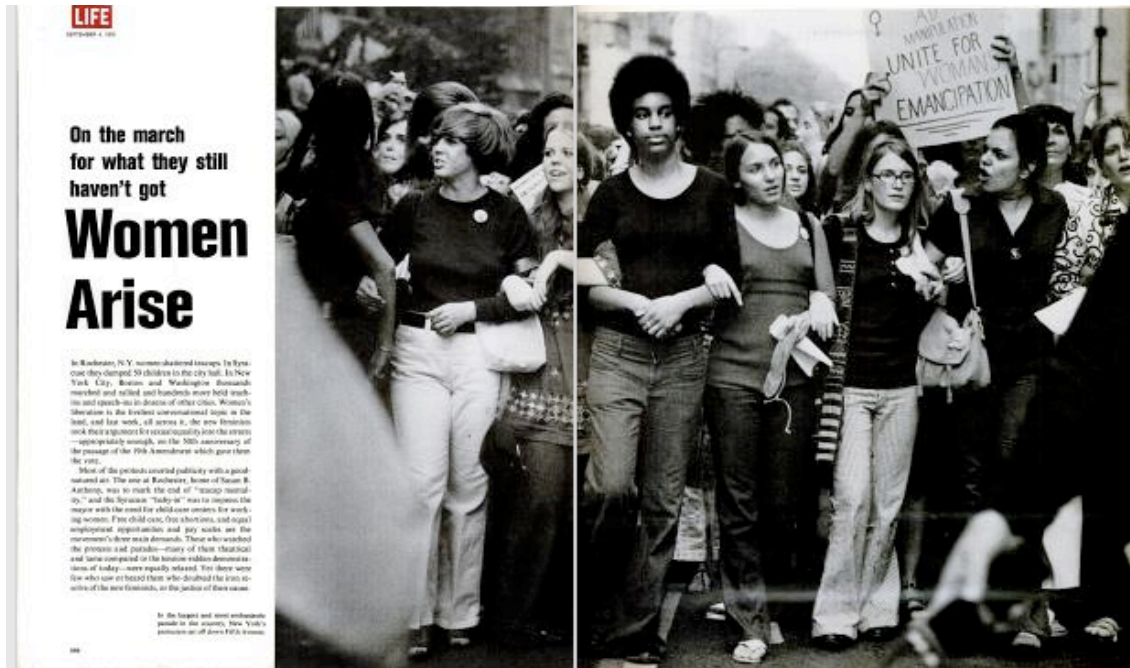
⁵⁹ Millett. 15.

While the Editor's Note seems fair enough, it ends on a sour note, comparing coverage of the movement to coverage of a prestigious yachting event, noting that "Other, quieter ladies appear in this week's issue, too: the sleek, and lovely yachts which are contending for the America's Cup."⁶⁰ In case readers were unsure of what women's liberation was all about, the end of this note did an excellent job of embodying the kind of objectification that feminism hoped to end. And they weren't going about it in a quiet way.

While *Life* did focus on Kate Millett for one portion of their coverage, the images and story portrayed gave a much more big picture perspective of the movement than Time. The opening story that shared a title with the caption on the magazine's cover, captured a group of women linking arms, protesting, "On the march for what they still haven't got."⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ibid. 15.

⁶¹ "Women Arise." *Life* 4 September 1970. Online Archive.



The image was successful in conveying the grassroots experience of being a woman of the movement, and overpowered any of the text on the page. *Life* was serving as a visual aid to the stories of Time, putting pictures and imagery to a movement that for many, readers, had previously only lived in words. The specific image chosen is also interesting for the diversity of women pictured. An African American woman stands at the center of the image, arm in arm with white women on either side of her. In a movement that was inherently divided along race, *Life* was able to capture an image that made it seem more inclusive than exclusive, more equitable than it really was. Yet, it is difficult to know if this image was chosen as a way of demonstrating how welcoming women's liberation could be, or as a way of shocking more conservative readers. In an America that was less than ten years out of what had been a deeply segregated society, this image could have been off-putting to the unfortunate racism that still penetrated much of American society in 1970.

Life began the coverage by chronicling women's "long and painful record of little progress in a man's world,"⁶² connecting the historical image of the cover to the mission of movement women of 1970, and justifying women's struggle by locating it in its historical past. "Awareness of the movement for women's liberation has burst upon most Americans with jarring suddenness, yet the present drive for women's equal rights has rich historical precedents: the basic roots of the struggle... stretch back more than 100 years."⁶³

The article goes on to praise Millett's "extraordinary book *Sexual Politics*," to note the "appalling" reality that great inequities existed between men and women in 1970, to discuss the unequal job opportunities that exist between men and women, and to acknowledge that "the law itself often discriminates against women."⁶⁴ The entire article speaks in the favor of feminism and of the discriminatory circumstances under which American women live, defending the cause against male and female critics alike and attempting to clarify the intentions of women's liberation. It explains that women "are seeking reasonable parity as humans, and least possible that their accomplishment of this could lead to a much-enriched appreciation of the differences between men and women."⁶⁵

This coverage was followed with the chronicles of the lives of eight women who "succeeded" in a man's world. In this excerpt of the coverage, Life shows that breaking free of America's inherent patriarchic system not only enhances individual success across

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

gender, but also shows that the success of women should not threaten the success of men. Each woman is depicted as a driven, intelligent individual looking to succeed professionally. The professional success of Americans should not have been dependent on their gender, but on their ability to work diligently and tirelessly in a way that benefited America as a whole. In a way, this is the same kind of dedication exhibited by women of the movement. Their determination and willingness to stick to a cause should have signaled strength and hard work, rather than be interpreted as a threat to American society.

Life's Representation of Kate Millett

Millett is pictured smiling in *Life*, her face warm and friendly on the pages of the magazine. Above her photograph a title marks her as a “furious young philosopher who got it down on paper.” While the image and title do not demonize Millett in the way that the *Time* coverage did, the article devoted to her does present her as intimidating, and could easily have been interpreted as a threatening individual by any conservative reader. The article begins. “Kate Millett is 35, very angry, and the author of a scholarly polemic which is to Women’s Lib roughly what *Das Kapital* was to Marxism,” and describes Kate as an assertive woman, who speaks her mind, does not apologize for her sense of self, and who is generally “unperturbed” by the chaos around her.

However, there is a juxtaposition in the way that she comes across in the photographs that are shown and the way she is written about. In the photographs she looks friendly, entirely unthreatening. She is even pictured kissing Fumio, her husband at the time, which gives the impression that she is just like any other American woman,

smile on her face, happy to kiss her husband. The only image that seems to align with the way Millett is written about in the article is one that captures her on a midnight phone call for the movement. In that photo she looks exhausted, disgruntled; she does not appear soft as she does in the other pictures, and she looks very concerned with whatever business she is occupied with, but even then her exhaustion could be mistaken for that of a disgruntled housewife. Yet when looking at the article, the photographs and title are more captivating than the article itself. It is very possible that the images were used to dominate the story, to show Millett in a friendly light than she came across in through the interview-based article.



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⁶⁶ Kate Millett in *Life*, September 4, 1970

Who Needs Liberating?

The final portion of the feature on women's liberation featured a piece by Mary Calderone,⁶⁷ "It's Really the Men Who Need Liberating."⁶⁸ In this piece, Calderone asserts our growing awareness of our dependence on others for "life in every sense of the word- physical, emotional, spiritual,"⁶⁹ and shows concern about the growing hostility and declining trust between men and women. She attributes this partially to the quick increase in freedoms that women had experienced in her lifetime compared to the less notable growth of male freedoms during this same period of time. She goes on to tell about a meeting a few years earlier of professionals in counseling and family life where men admitted that there were qualities that women sought from them that they were "not permitted"⁷⁰ to carry. From this, Calderone concludes that it "is not only unwise and counterproductive, but inhumane and therefore self-defeating," for women to "choose to strike out at men at this moment."⁷¹

After spending pages of the magazine praising women's liberation and noting its historically and socially justified place in the cultural and political climate of 1970 America, *Life* ended the coverage of women's liberation with a piece denouncing the movement and defending the role of the male in American society. The decision was abrupt, and no doubt an intentional one. Had the pages that came before been a humoring of women's liberationists? Was there any authenticity in the reporting?

⁶⁸ Calderone, Mary. "It's Really the Men Who Need Liberating." *Life* 4 September 1970. 24.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 24.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 24.

⁷¹ Ibid. 24.

Conclusions drawn from these magazine issues

These issues of Time and Life effectively set the stage for how the magazines would interpret feminism throughout the 1970s. The use of imagery, of personal politics and of opposing opinions about women's liberation were present in both issues, and would continue to develop in the magazines as the seventies progressed. Coverage of Kate Millett, specifically, would soon raise controversies about the role of sexuality in the movement as well as in the greater scheme of American culture, and would create ripples in the way that these mainstream publications presented feminism to the American public.

Chapter 3

Into the Seventies: Laying the Framework for Modern Feminism

The Bisexual Blitz:

Time Magazine, Kate Millett and the Sexual Politics of Feminism

Can the feminists think clearly? Do they know anything about biology? What about their maturity, their morality, their sexuality? Ironically, Kate Millett herself contributed to the growing skepticism about the movement by acknowledging at a recent meeting that she is bisexual. The disclosure is bound to discredit her as a spokeswoman for her cause, cast further doubt on her theories, and reinforce the views of those skeptics who routinely dismiss all liberationists as lesbians.⁷²

-*Time Magazine*, December 14, 1970

Just after naming *Sexual Politics* “the bible” and Kate Millett “the high priestess of the Women’s Liberations movement,”⁷³ *Time* raised this series of questions, ending with the assertion that Millett’s bisexuality put her credibility into question. It was no coincidence that Millett, who had appeared on *Time*’s cover only four months earlier, and who the magazine had labeled as an important leader of the movement, was personally targeted and made an example of based on her sexuality. “The disclosure,” as *Time* named it, had not in fact been stated with the intention of a *Time* reporter copying it down. In her memoir *Flying*, which was published in 1974, Millett recounts how she had announced herself as a lesbian at a conference at Columbia University, when a colleague stood in the audience questioning her, “‘Are you a Lesbian?’ ... Yes I said. Yes. Because I know what she means. The line goes, inflexible as a fascist cop-out. Yes I said yes I

⁷² “Women’s Lib: A Second Look.” *Time* 14 December 1970. Online Archive.

⁷³ Ibid.

am a Lesbian.”⁷⁴

She continues the story a few pages later, remembering, “A reporter rang the doorbell after Columbia. *Time* lady wants to know if I really said that. They have bugged the university debate. The *Time* people feel a wonderful solicitude that my statement “will hurt the women’s movement.” Are they protecting themselves from libel- or are they offering me a chance to lie my way out of it? I won’t budge. I said it... Hell with it. It’s the truth. That will have to do. I cannot, must not hurt the movement. But the movement cannot sell out on gays, cringe before the dyke-baiting, shuffle into respectability.”⁷⁵

While *Time* had confirmed the story with Millett before reporting it, their means of acquiring it was underhanded. Someone had been at the Columbia debate, was ready to problematize Millett’s public image at the drop of a hat. *Time* took this information and treated it as gossip. The magazine knew that Millett’s statement would shake not only those opposed to the movement, but those attached to it as well. Women who associated themselves with the movement but not with lesbianism or bisexuality would be thrown off by this situation, would question their role in the movement and reexamine what it meant to be part of women’s liberation. As Kate recalls her sister’s reaction:

“‘There it goes down the tube for the rest of us. I warned you. It’s too hot to confuse with the women’s movement.’

‘I’m not Women’s Lib, Sally, just one woman in it who happens also to be a queer.’

‘I’ve got every sympathy for homosexuals, but middle America simply can’t take this sort of thing.’

⁷⁴ Millett. 15.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 17.

‘Sally, I did what I thought was right.’ Guilty stomach. ‘Will you talk to Mother first?’

‘They set you up for this, *Time* Magazine, that cover job.’

‘Yeah, I know.’

But I didn’t know. Never knew until it was out. My face on the cover.”⁷⁶

Time’s choice to put Kate Millett on the cover of the August 31, 1970 issue, and to feature her in *Life*’s September 4, 1970 issue was linked to an effort to make her into a celebrity of the movement, a face to be associated with it, to embody its mission. Despite the reality that Millett was not in any way a holistic representation of the movement, that she was just one woman among thousands, her “outing” was turned into a spectacle in the media. This new story electrified criticisms of Millett both in *Time* and in other mainstream publications, who used her personal life as ammunition against women’s liberation. The outing also had destructive effects on Millett’s personal life. *Flying* is mostly dedicated to sorting out the impacts of *Time*’s reporting about her life, and how that impacted the movement. She was forced to face the difficulties of coming out to her peers, to the public, but also forced to handle the blame that was placed on her, including *Time*’s assertion that her coming out would undoubtedly harm the movement. *How does one get out of the movement? Where is the exit?*⁷⁷ She asks at one point in *Flying*. Her constant references to the *Time* article, to feeling like she was set up by the magazine are evidence of the power of the magazine to influence public opinion and to shape personal lives.

Time’s criticisms of the movement and of bisexuality did not end with the outing of Kate Millett. The magazine continued to investigate the movement and its impact on

⁷⁶ Ibid. 17.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 14.

American life in the 1970s, sometimes bring Millett back in to serve as the poster child of the “social and psychological phenomenon” of the “New Feminism.”⁷⁸

**Women’s Lib:
Beyond Sexual Politics⁷⁹**

The idea of “revisiting” women’s liberation became a popular concept for Time magazine throughout the seventies. The August 31, 1970 issue was seen as having laid the groundwork for the magazine’s interpretation of the movement, and all reporting that came after came as a “second look,” as a building from or a comparison with the evaluations that had come before.

In July of 1971, Time’s article looking at Women’s Liberation “Beyond Sexual Politics” asserted that “having achieved some success, the movement might be expected to show greater responsibility,” and criticized the movement for “the occasionally exaggerated rhetoric of feminists.”⁸⁰ This criticism is evidence of the media’s willingness to criticize feminism in ways that they would not criticize other political movements, ones that the magazine endorsed. *(expand on this- did Time criticize political rhetoric the same way it criticized feminist rhetoric?)*. The negative connotations associated with feminism were reinforced by Time reporting, and any criticism of the movement endured the bias of Time magazine. While the article aimed to look beyond Sexual Politics, it did not disregard Millett altogether; Kate Millett was cited as “the draconian arbiter of Sexual Politics,” an example of a woman who uses extreme

⁷⁸ “Women’s Liberation Revisited” *Time* 20 March 1972. Online Archive.

⁷⁹ Phrase taken from the title of an essay in *Time* 26 July 1971. Online Archive.

⁸⁰ “Women’s Lib: Beyond Sexual Politics.” *Time* 26 July 1971. Online Archive.

rhetoric in her fight for women's liberation. By associating this technique with Millett, who was at this point an openly admitted bisexual, who the magazine had painted as someone to distrust, the article was trying to show what "kind" of feminist that would use extreme language to prove a point. Time continues to use the technique of associating controversial feminist practices to being connected to Millett just as the magazine had done by outing Millett a few months earlier. The article was written by a female correspondent, Ruth Brine, emphasizing some interesting things about the way Time was covering feminism: by assigning a woman to cover the movement, Time was not only.

This article goes on to note that the "social shifts" that brought more women into the workplace ("43% of American women today are in the labor force and 75% of these work full time, most of them because they have to support themselves or their families. Others work because they want a vocation with utility and meaning that their homes do not always provide- especially for a lifetime."⁸¹), do not indicate a fundamental change in women, but rather an alteration of American home and family life. Assigning home and family life as the thing that has changed and dismissing any "fundamental" changes in women seems arbitrary. Time makes this claim in an effort to dismiss the effects of women's liberation, the effects that are spreading not only to radical women of the movement, but to all American women who were being made aware of their constraints and seizing opportunities to abolish them. Who would have changed the home and family, if not women?

The article ends on a somewhat confusing note, claiming that "It is time for the movement to abandon sexual politics for real politics. U.S. women have less political

⁸¹ *ibid.*

representation than their counterparts in many other Western democracies, and indeed less than they used to have.” This implies that women should be fighting for liberation, but by focusing any attention on sexual and cultural roles of women they are fighting for the wrong things. This justifies women’s liberation, but only when women’s liberation is defined by political achievement and disregards the personal and cultural aspects of being a woman in American society.

In a March 20, 1972 review of feminism, *Time* breaks down the movement in a way similar to the feature article in the August 31, 1970 issue. It divides coverage of women’s liberation into identifiable categories, “ORGANIZATIONS/ AIMS/ DIFFICULTIES/ VIEWS”⁸² in an effort to make the movement understandable and accessible to readers. However, the article does not provide any more information than the 1970 article. While the article does not shed any particularly stark light on the subject of feminism, the repetitive reporting seen here is in some ways reflective of what was happening in the movement. The article quotes Ti-Grace Atkinson, a notable advocate of the movement who had been actively participating since the sixties, on her withdrawal from the movement: “There is no movement. Movement means going some place, and the movement is not going anywhere. It hasn’t accomplished anything.”⁸³ While *Time* was not the most reliable source for gaining information on the internal workings of women’s liberation, this repetition between this article and the August 1970 one insists that *Time* either did not acknowledge new developments in the movement, or the movement was beginning to get stuck in a bit of a stalemate.

In that same issue of *Time* an article examined the American woman, looking at

⁸² headings for the *Time*’s article Women’s Liberation Revisited March 20, 1972

⁸³ *Time* Women’s Liberation Revisited March 20, 1972

“Where She Is and Where She’s Going” that started by stating, “BY all rights, the American woman today should be the happiest in history. She is healthier than U.S. women have ever been, better educated, more affluent, better dressed, more comfortable, wooed by advertisers, pampered by gadgets. But there is a worm in the apple... The vast majority of American women stop far short of activist roles in the feminist movement, but they are affected by it.”⁸⁴ The article goes on to detail how feminism was impacting women who did not necessarily align themselves with the movement, and the impacts seemed to be felt ideologically as well as structurally. The article looks at how closely women associated with the movement thought like women who did associate with feminism, comparing statistics of the two groups: 63% of nongroup women who were polled believed that “U.S. society exploits women as much as blacks,” in comparison to group women’s 78%, noting that consciousness had been raised among women of all backgrounds.⁸⁵ While the other article from this issue did not offer too many new ideas insights on the inner workings of feminism, this shed light on how impacts of the movement were being felt beyond its conventional borders. Perhaps as the movement began to unravel internally, the ramifications of its success were being felt externally. This would mean that the height of second wave feminism as it was felt inside of the movement did not coincide with the time when American women began feeling liberated, empowered and in control of their own lives.

“Where She Is and Where She’s Going” ends on a sentiment reminiscent of the one that concludes the article “Women’s Liberation Revisited” by asserting that “Sexual

⁸⁴ title article Time, March 20, 1972- Where She Is and Where She’s Going

⁸⁵ Where She Is and Where She’s Going

freedom is not enough.”⁸⁶ This says something similar to the other article, but articulates it in a much different way. While the other article denounces sexual freedom by insinuating that it is not something to be focused on at all, this article acknowledges that sexual freedom is important, but on its own it is not enough. The goal is presented as one difficult to achieve, and the article points out that “The demand for equality, not domination, is immensely complicated.”⁸⁷ This quote says a lot about the struggle of women’s liberation in the sixties and seventies: first about the difficulty in communicating and making the public aware that women’s liberation was not an attempt to overtake society and rule in a matriarchal way, and second, it pays tribute to how incredibly intricate the movement was.

In, “How Women’s Lib Looks to the Not-So-Mad Housewife,” an essay published in the March 20, 1972 issue, Sue Kaufman tells a fictional but sad tale of a hypothetical woman, “a wife, a mother, a housewife,”⁸⁸ the kind that was “Not-So-Mad,” as to be directly involved in the movement, but not so happy as to avoid it altogether. This woman finds fleeting happiness away from home when one of the liberation women comes to town and she goes to hear her speak, to “‘liberate’ her for a few hours. (This is the context in which that word is mainly used in her life.)”⁸⁹ When she returns home “she is overwhelmed by a sense of wrongness, of jarring inconsistency... stranded on the linoleum under the battery of fluorescent kitchen lights, there is this terrible sense of isolation, of walls closing in, of being trapped... In spite of the desolation she feels, she knows that she is not alone; she has company and they are in legion... And knowing that

⁸⁶ Where She Is and Where She’s Going

⁸⁷ Where She Is and Where She’s Going

⁸⁸ How Women’s Lib Looks to the Not-So-Mad Housewife, March 20, 1972

⁸⁹ *ibid*

is one of the big changes in her life.”⁹⁰

This story echoes some of the ideas found in “Where She Is and Where She’s Going,” in that it shows how consciousness was being spread at that point in the movement. Scrutiny of the movement, which had peaked in 1970 with the outing of Kate Millett, had faded to a point where even women who did not exactly associate with the movement were impacted and comforted by its mission. The importance of the movement to the hypothetical woman of this essay is not that it has totally liberated her or freed her from the isolation of her life at home, but that she now puts that isolation into question, something that she would never have done before.

The diversity of the impacts of feminism was becoming apparent in 1972, and is evidenced through the different articles of this March issue of *Time* magazine. While the articles presented many biases and were always tainted by the *Time* lens, they offered a variety of important points: the questioning of freedom, (how to define it, what kind of freedom was important to women), the questioning of the strength of the movement (had it passed its peak?), how to measure the impacts of women’s liberation both in and outside the movement and what they meant to American society as a whole. Women had escaped the Doll’s House and could not be “forced back.”⁹¹

What Came Next:

How The Framework of Feminism Was Solidified in the Seventies

As the seventies progressed, *Time* began to look at second wave feminism as something that had influenced the way American women were “profoundly changing,”

⁹⁰ *ibid*

⁹¹ Where She Is and Where She’s Going

without giving the movement full credit for changes that were happening. In January of 1976, *Time* dedicated a cover to “Women of the Year,” noting that “1975 was not so much the Year of the Woman as the Year of Women—an immense variety of women altering their lives, entering new fields, functioning with a new sense of identity, integrity and confidence.”⁹² While naming a group of women with this title could have marked a huge stride for American women (to highlight a collection of “Women of the Year” was a strange endeavor for the magazine, which annually featured a “Man of the Year”- a tradition that had been disturbed only three times before 1976 when the magazine had granted the position to women⁹³) the justification for this cover choice made the decision oddly patronizing.

Women were being congratulated for their apparently new ability to “function” as confident and successful individuals, and changes that were happening for women were not attributed to the efforts of women’s liberationists so much as they were seen as a shocking and unexpected phenomenon in American culture. “They have arrived like a new immigrant wave in male America,”⁹⁴ the article began, targeting women as intruders of an inherently patriarchal society and insinuating that their social, economic, and professional successes were so out of the ordinary that it was as if an entirely new culture of people had been implanted on American soil. In an attempt to historicize this occurrence, the article went on to describe it: “A cumulative process, it owes much to the formal feminist movement—the Friedans and Steinems and Abzugs. Yet feminism has transcended the feminist movement. In 1975 the women's drive penetrated every layer of

⁹² Women of the year

⁹³ Wallis Simpson- 1936; Soong May-lin- 1937; Queen Elizabeth II- 1952- Time Website- accessed April 28, 2012

⁹⁴ women of the year

society, matured beyond ideology to a new status of general—and sometimes unconscious—acceptance.”⁹⁵

By saying that women’s drive “matured” beyond ideology was to suggest that the movement was no more than rhetoric and theory, that it did not and could not render action on its own. This apparent disregard for what the movement hoped to achieve perpetuated negative ideas about second wave feminism as it came to a conclusion.⁹⁶ The article went on to emphasize women’s efforts to gain social and political equality saying that evidence of those desires had spread so far that the idea could “be seen in the many women who denigrate the militant feminists' style ("too shrill, unfeminine") and then proceed to conduct their own newly independent lives.” This continued the degradation of the women’s movement, and acknowledged that women who did not associate with it did associate themselves with independence. Such assertions are evidence of the way that the movement was misunderstood while it was happening, a misunderstanding fueled by coverage of the movement like the coverage found in *Time* that marginalized and oversimplified women’s liberation.

As the article continued it focused on bigger issues of the role of women in the U.S., discussing how women were not paid equally to men, how women were discriminated in the workplace, and the military, and chronicling the successes and failures of gender in other countries to contextualize the role of American women among

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

⁹⁶ These kinds of assertions would continue to happen in the coming years, and would eventually contribute to the misremembering of the movement.

the role of women globally.⁹⁷

The cover story briefly highlighted the accomplishments of the 12 women pictured on the front of the magazine, and went on to discuss women's position in politics, in the military, in the workplace, as members of the American family, and even of the role of women abroad.



Unlike the August 1970 issue that highlighted Kate Millett as the face of women's liberation, this issue did not single out one woman and triumph her for her individual successes or blame her for her personal decisions. There was a much greater focus on women as a collective, and no special attention was given to one woman over all the others. This sense of highlighting women collectively is clear when looking at the cover. The cover features a collage-like presentation of 12 women with carefully placed photos

⁹⁷ The article talked about progress being made for women in Sweden, Italy, Japan, France, England and made the generalization that women "in the less developed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America" were "much further behind"

of each woman. The photos showed only the woman's face and were neatly arranged in rows of 4, columns of 3.

It is particularly interesting to consider this decision against the one that put Kate Millett on the cover in 1970. When writing about "women's liberation," *Time* felt it necessary to single out one woman and focus on her. This disregarded the principles of the movement, overlooked its ideologies and perpetuated inaccurate ideas of what the women's movement looked like. In contrast, when writing about liberated women, the magazine could not pick just one. They needed a collection of women, they needed to present their readers with different examples of successful women, as if providing different options for the audience to connect with. Naming one woman could have been too risky, too politicized. By honoring 12 women in such a diplomatic presentation, *Time* was able to champion women for their accomplishments without putting too much emphasis on one woman or one set of accomplishments. This suggests that this was in order to prove the point that women were successful in their respective fields.

It is important to note that this was not coverage of the women's movement, but rather of women in general, making the claim, "feminism has transcended the feminist movement. In 1975 the women's drive penetrated every layer of society, matured beyond ideology to a new status of general—and sometimes unconscious—acceptance."⁹⁸

The article acknowledged the continued struggle of women in America, "The drama of the sexes remains—the Old Adam and the New Eve." As 1976 begins, the plot

⁹⁸ Women of the Year Issue; January 5, 1976

and characters are changing—for the better of both.”⁹⁹

Legacy of the Second Wave:

The Roots of the Backlash in *Time, Life* and 70s Media

*I'm sorry, sisters, this is not the revolution. What's striking, from an old-fashioned (ca. 1970) feminist perspective, is just how little has changed... I fear, too, that women may be losing the idealistic vision that helped inspire feminism in the first place.*¹⁰⁰

-*Time* magazine, November 8, 1990

In the 1980s and 1990s, *Time*'s coverage of feminism focused on assessing its role in the last decades of the 20th century: Was feminism dead? What was the role of the American woman? What happened to the movement? These questions drifted in and out of the magazine, reevaluating the impacts of seventies feminism and determining what the movement meant a new and distanced generation of women. In this article written in 1990 by Barbara Ehrenreich,¹⁰¹ the author expressed fear that women had lost perspective not only on what it meant to be a woman in the United States, but also what it meant to be a proponent of feminism in a modern world. Her worry that feminism had turned into a scramble of women “to do the same foolish and benighted things that have traditionally occupied men,”¹⁰² and had put too much emphasis on a rush for equality and ignored that when the movement began in the late sixties, “the goal was not just to join 'em -- and certainly not just to beat 'em -- but to improve an imperfect world.”¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Women of the Year Jan 5, 1976

¹⁰⁰ *Time* magazine, The Road To Equality: Sorry, Sisters, This Is Not the Revolution

¹⁰¹ *Time* defined her as “a feminist and a writer”

¹⁰² *Time* magazine, sorry sisters

¹⁰³ *ibid*

Trying to determine what happened to feminism after the seventies became a difficult task. When the movement faded, feminist ideals seemed to disappear with it. It was as if the end of the movement marked the end of feminism, and there was nothing left for women to fight for. Women who had missed out on experiencing the second wave grew up to reap its benefits without appreciating or understanding the changes that it made. They felt a distance from feminism, a disconnect that made the movement and feminism something they couldn't relate to. In an article published on December 4, 1989, *Time* described them as the "'No, but . . ." generation. No, they are not feminists, or so they say, but they do take certain rights for granted." An interview included in the article pointed to the distance women felt from feminism, "'I'm feminine, not a feminist," insists Linn Thomas, an Auburn University senior, in another variation on the theme. Adds Thomas: "I picture a feminist as someone who is masculine and who doesn't shave her legs and is doing everything she can to deny that she is feminine."'"¹⁰⁴

This idea of feminists as unfeminine, man-hating women was becoming increasingly widespread, and characterized many of the feelings of what the media deemed a post-feminist generation.¹⁰⁵ In her book *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, published in 1992, Susan Faludi addressed the issue of a "backlash" against feminism, attributing much of the negative attention garnered by feminism to print media, movies and television shows. The media had a key role in both creating and perpetuating negative stereotypes of feminism, and *Time's* coverage of Kate

¹⁰⁴ "Onward, Women!" *Time*

¹⁰⁵ About post-feminism-The term post-feminism was first used in a 1982 *New York Times* article titled "Voices of the Post-Feminist Generation" by Susan Bolotin and facilitated the idea that American women had moved past feminism, that feminism was over and done and was no longer a relevant concept to women

Millett in the seventies was a big contributor to that typecast. Faludi also credited *Time* as a contributor to negative media conversations about feminism after the movement, including it in a list of publications that held “the campaign for women’s equality responsible for nearly every woe besetting women, from mental depression to meager savings accounts, from teenage suicides to eating disorders to bad complexions.”¹⁰⁶

Faludi draws attention to the

Ironically enough, *Time* covered the backlash and Faludi’s book in an article in March of 1992, defining the backlash as an “attack against feminism intended to roll back the gains of the women's movement and convince women that their newfound liberation is the source of all their unhappiness.”¹⁰⁷ While the magazine hit the definition of the backlash spot on, it failed to acknowledge any participation in it, and criticized Faludi’s thesis for placing all the responsibility of the backlash on the media, concluding that “the signs that women are having second thoughts are not purely an invention of the media.”¹⁰⁸

Ideological backlash

The importance of Hesford’s dissertation and critique of *Time*’s use of Kate Millett traces this backlash directly to the August 31, 1970 issue of the magazine, insisting that *Time* played a pivotal role in starting the backlash and creating negative stereotypes of feminists. Once again, Kate Millett is at the center of the controversy, exploited as the guinea pig of a movement that fell far beyond her ideologies and control.

¹⁰⁶ Faludi, Susan. xi

¹⁰⁷ March 9, 1992- “The War Against Feminism.” *Time* 9 March 1992. Online Archive.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Conclusion

Isn't the fight for women's rights over? Didn't we win?

That idea is out there as a way of stopping progress. We hear words like postracist and postfeminist when people would not say postdemocratic. I think people would concede that we haven't reached democracy yet, and we certainly haven't reached equality for women or for all races.

-Time magazine interview with Gloria Steinem, August 15, 2011¹⁰⁹

Scholars on media and social movements have concluded that “it is a common experience of movement activists to complain that something has been lost in translation”¹¹⁰ when a story of activism is portrayed through a media lens. While this loss distorts the immediate ways in which social movements are interpreted, the ramifications of such loss can also have lasting effects, causing permanent damage to the way that the past is remembered. In the case of second wave feminism, so much of the message was lost through the media’s skewed portrayal of liberationists that the impacts of the second wave and the goals of feminist activists remain clouded and contrived in the 21st century.

In 2007, *Time* magazine began printing a segment called “10 Questions,” in which “candid interviews with newsmakers, leaders, celebrities and public figures”¹¹¹ are conducted with little to no framing of the individual, putting emphasis on the ten questions being asked and the ten answers being given. Gloria Steinem was the selected

¹⁰⁹ Steinem, Gloria. “10 questions with Gloria Steinem.” *Time* 15 August 2011. Online Archive.

¹¹⁰ Woldsfeld and gamson, “Movements and Media as Interacting Systems,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 528, July 1993, 119. Morgan also borrows this phrase in his

¹¹¹ <http://www.time.com/time/10questions>

interviewee for *Time*'s August 15, 2011 issue, an indication that feminists, specifically seventies feminists, remain an integral part of American cultural and political climate, and that feminist activism continues to be something that people engage in on a personal level and are interested in reading about on a national scale. The interview, which could have asked provocative questions about the state of feminism in American society, the importance of women's rights on a global scale, on Steinem's legacy in the feminist movement and in the media, or any number of things related to feminism and American culture, raised no insightful points about what it meant to be a woman and a feminist in 2011.

Instead, tired questions were recycled as they have been for over twenty years (most notably the first question, quoted above), while others centered much of the focus around Steinem's appearance asking, "How much did your good looks help you in your activism," "Have you had cosmetic surgery?" and one even indirectly reinforced the stereotype of feminists as bra-burning and man-hating, asserting, "But some young women feel a disconnect. Their feminism is more pliant. They enjoy clothes and the male gaze ..."¹¹²

While Steinem's answers were positive and defended feminism, (to the last question she responded, "Nobody can say I didn't enjoy the male gaze!"¹¹³) the more striking element of this interview is the way that feminism continues to be marginalized and misunderstood, and the way that *Time* magazine continues to orient conversations about women on appearance rather than substance.

As we move further into the 21st century, and further away from the movement

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

that characterized American feminism of the 1960s and 1970s, it is essential to reorganize ideas about women's liberation of the past and the present in order to secure a more progressive path for the future. We need to start asking new questions, to redefine feminism in a way that dispels negative and nonsensical connotations around the term, and to reclaim all that has been lost in translation over the past forty years.

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Movements and media as interacting systems