AUTHENTIC WOMEN, MENACING AUTHORITIES: THE RHETORIC OF LESBIAN

POLITICS OF FEMINISM'S SECOND WAVE, 1966-1975

by

KRISTAN POIROT

(Under the Direction of Bonnie J. Dow)

ABSTRACT

Growing from an interest in the various conflicts centered on the relationship between lesbian and second wave feminist politics, I explore the ways that rhetorical processes of authority and authenticity functioned in discourse from and about the women's movement from 1966 to 1975. Identified as "menaces" by liberal feminists and truly "liberated" women by radical feminists, lesbians occupied a unique rhetorical place in feminism's second wave. The dialectical tensions between being at once feminism's "nightmare" and movement women's "fantasy" exacerbated considerable conflicts within the movement, and such conflicts are emblematic of the second wave's broader concerns over identity—both public and personal. In this project, I argue, what was at stake for both liberal and radical feminists was a political identification of "woman" that would remain consistent with the movement's commitments. As radical feminism theorized the *liberated woman* and liberal feminism strategized a *credible woman*, lesbian sexuality threatened and promised the sustainability of feminism's identity commitment. Although the political nature or "woman" was questioned, the ontological was not. As such, this project seeks to historicize a poststructural critique of the subject through three analyses, which point to humanism's constraining and dangerous influence on feminism's sexual politics.

INDEX WORDS: Feminism, Second Wave, Lesbian, Sexuality, Identity Politics, Media, Poststructuralism

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KRISTAN POIROT

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KRISTAN POIROT

Major Professor: Bonnie J. Dow

Committee: Celeste Condit
Kevin DeLuca
Michelle Ballif
John Murphy

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

"In particular, I opposed those regimes of truth that stipulated that certain kinds of gendered expressions were found to be false or derivative, and others, true and original."

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble,* p, viii

In memory of Alma Poirot, Jeanne Jupe, and Mae Permenter who, throughout their lives, defined "woman" in various ways.

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PREFACE

In the early 1990s Anglo-American feminism began to become keenly aware of the crippling influence that feminism's commitment to "women" had had on the movement. Although the critique of feminism's myopia concerning a particular conceptualization of "woman"—namely middle class, white, and oftentimes heterosexual—was assuredly "present" in the 1980s with the explosion of black and third world feminist critiques, Judith Butler's 1990 introduction of a sustained poststructural theory of "gender" into American feminist theory compelled both unrelenting support for the political necessity of "woman" as well as interrogations of feminism's identity commitment—intersectional or otherwise. The popular version of these academic feminist conflicts occurred through the "generational" divide between bra-burning, hairy legged, frigid second wave feminists and their hip, feminine, and sexually promiscuous third wave daughters (see Hogeland, 2001; Strauss, 2001). Of course, these descriptions are wrought with popularized stereotypes of both the activists of the 1960s and 1970s and the "new faces" of individual "feminist" celebrities. Nonetheless, these conflicts over identity—whether it be in terms of *who* represents feminism, or in terms of the *who* feminism *should* represent—exemplify a recent trend in feminist theory to explicate the dangers and promises of *identity politics*.

By *identity politics*, I mean both the politics within the feminist movement which assumed that the political necessity of a commitment to (a particular) *identity* was also an ontological given, and the politics surrounding the inclusion and exclusion of particular identities within the purview of feminism's concerns. I highlight these conflicts in this project's prefacing remarks to reveal what I consider to be both the historical and theoretical exigencies of this analysis' focus on the conflicts over lesbian sexuality and identities of feminism's second wave. More specifically, as some second wave supporters battle with third wave theorists over the fundamental principles of a feminist movement and activism, academic feminists have sought to counter feminism's poststructural critique with re-inscriptions of the importance of materiality for feminist theory. In the former, feminists battle over the importance of collective action versus individualized feminism; in the latter, they situate their concerns in terms of a relationship between theoretical abstractions and the efficacy of political programs for the improvement of the material lives of women. Taken together, these conflicts point to the ways that a critical interrogation of the second wave's collective approach to social change (in the name of women's rights and liberation), as that approach exemplified feminism's identity commitment and the material consequences thereof, is not only needed but is also especially timely in light of contemporary feminist concerns and scholarship.

Despite the description above, which separates "popular" feminism from "academic" feminism and theoretical inquiry from movement politics, this project seeks to question such binaries if those binaries remain in service to a fundamental division between feminist "theory" and "practice." The theory-practice divide often surfaces in the specific critiques of the poststructural turn in feminist theory. Well-known critic of Judith Butler, Martha Nussbaum (1999), for example, argues that "Butlerian [read: poststructural] feminism" is "hip quietism," exclaiming:

> Butlerian feminism is in many ways easier than the old feminism. It tells scores of talented young women that they need not work on changing the law, or feeding the hungry, or assailing power through theory harnessed to material politics. They can do

> politics in the safety of their campuses, remaining on the symbolic level, making subversive gestures at power through speech and gesture. This, the theory says, is pretty much all that is available to us anyway, by way of political action, and isn't it exciting and sexy? (n. pag.)

Assuredly, Nussbaum is not alone in her critique, as others have sought to question the political applicability of the poststructural theoretical critique to the pragmatic concern of practical movement politics (see e.g., Benhabib,1995; Ebert, 1996; Modelski,1991; Rothenberg & Valente, 1997). While these critiques are understandable to the extent that their concern seems to lay in their desire to aid in the advancement of "women," these critiques risk further securing a theory-practice split, on which the authority of a male-dominated episteme was predicated.

In her recent book, *Skeptical Feminism*, Carolyn Dever (2004) argues that feminists have often been wary of theoretical abstractions as the markers of "high-culture privilege" and the "perpetuation of an elitist, exclusionary mode of description, or the failure to engage fully the matter of social justice" (p. xi). While the critique of the elitism and power tied to "theorists" in particular and theory in general is well supported, one should consider that this critique in feminist circles is most powerful when it is situated in terms of the privileging of the mind, i.e., the masculine, over the body, i.e., the feminine. Since this trope has often justified the exclusion of "women" from the public realm, feminist critiques of the privileging of the mind over the body certainly warrant careful consideration of the ways *theory* in and of itself reinforces modes of feminine exclusion. Yet, when the body becomes the new site of privilege (especially manifested in the pointed question, "What about the *body*, Judy?") and the grounds through which theoretical abstraction can be dismissed, the original bifurcation between masculine intellect and the feminine body is preserved.

Dever (2004) points out that the mind-body binary translated into the theory-practice split has generated a double-bind for the process of feminist theory building and its legitimation, both among feminists and feminism's critics. Arguing that, "theoretical logic in general and theorists in particular as figures of authority have been perceived as hierarchical and detached in a social movement dedicated to the critique of hierarchy" (p.xii), Dever (2004) describes an inherent tension within feminist theory as the "conflict between the *need* for authoritative paradigms in a political tradition mobilized *against* authoritative paradigms" (emphasis hers, p. 15). And as Dever (2004) insists that this metatheoretical conflict comments on the ways that feminist theory itself serves as a metalanguage for theory in general—"a means of understanding the relations of theory and practice in any context, critical and/or political" (p. 9-10). Inasmuch as this project can be described as a feminist *critical* examination, situating theoretical abstractions of identity politics' critique within the actual practice of identity politics in feminism's second wave, my effort to historicize the poststructural critique of feminism is consistent with feminism's drive toward the importance of materiality as it also questions the material-discursive and/or theory-practice split.

The problem of "authority" in general also served as an impetus for this project's focus on lesbian identities as those identities were constructed in terms of the second wave's media-movement interaction. In some ways, the conflicts over lesbian sexuality within the movement, compounded by their various approaches to mass mediated discourse, literalized the profound drive toward "authority" and the double-bind that such a drive creates. On the one hand, lesbians threatened the movement's political authority if their "presence" was announced in the popular press. Yet, alternately, lesbian identifications were theorized as an *identity response* to male-domination and male-authority in general within the feminist alternative press. And as "authority" seems to be particularly relevant to both the practice of "theory" and the politics of sexual identities in feminism's second wave, it is a useful abstraction for my rhetorical approach to this critical examination of the movement's identity politics.

For rhetorical scholars, discussions of authority and credibility are often centered on a particular view of *ethos*. In his introduction to an edited collection of essays on *ethos*, James S. Baumlin (1994) reviews its varying conceptualizations from Plato to the work of Michel Foucault. Baumlin (1994) tentatively defines *ethos* as concerning "the problematic relation between human character and discourse; more specifically, it raises questions concerning the inclusion of the speaker's character *as an aspect of discourse*, the representation of that character in discourse, and the role of that character in persuasion" (p. xvii). Baumlin's (1994) view of *ethos*, admittedly remains within the vestiges of Aristotelian notions that *ethos* is an artistic appeal that seeks to confirm a rhetor's credibility to speak on any given subject. When one questions these Aristotelian notions of *ethos*, Baumlin (1994) argues, that the "nature of the self" becomes of fundamental importance. Central to the critical examination of *ethos* by way of critiques of the "self" are questions of the foundations of that "self:" is it a rhetorically constructed self that can "exist" at the level of discourse through stylistic and linguistic manipulation, or is such "self" grounded within the transcendent and essential aspects of the subject and the way he/she lives his/her life?[1] By positioning theoretical examinations of *ethos* in terms of the "self," Baumlin and the articles that follow, situate the relationship between *ethos* and questions of the subject in terms of a rhetor's sources of invention in the construction of his/her *self* within discourse. While such questions are important, I want to move from a rhetor/agent centered question of *ethos* to one that examines the ways that these notions of stable subjectivity, which in turn ground and justify identity politics, are bound to the ontological assumptions of an originary self.

The move away from a rhetor/agent-centered discussion of authority may seem one that moves away from a *rhetorical understanding* of the concepts *qua ethos*. I suggest, however, that rather than a move away from a rhetorical understanding of authority, the critical separation of authority from *ethos* (and the focus on the rhetor that *ethos* implies) is one that emphasizes the *rhetoricity of credibility and authority* without remaining trapped in the vestiges of the stable subject as the agent of discourse. Michel Foucault (1972) argues, for example, against a foundation of the "author" as the binding principle for any text or body of work (*oeuvre).* Arguing instead that the "authority of knowledge" and the speaking subject are themselves subject to the rules of the formation of discourse, (Foucault, 1972, p.79), the "author function" for Foucault (1984) does not refer to any specific individual or agent (p.113). When considering that the presumed originator of a text is itself subjected to discursive formations, Foucault's understanding of "authorship" (read: rhetor or agent) reveals the ways discourse *creates/marks* various positions of authority, which are not founded by or within any agent. By placing the inventive capacities of actual authors of texts on the backburner, so to speak, this analysis is open to uncover the role of authority in feminism's sexual politics. Such a move is an important one, as this analysis seeks to describe some of the dangerous problematics of humanist foundations and identity politics; moreover what interests me are the representations of and ontological presumptions underlying "lesbian" and "woman" within the mainstream and alternative press, not the ability of those media, lesbians, or women to construct their own credibility in any given text.

To almost ignore the media's substantiation of their own credibility and authority does not need to be justified to media critics concerned with media representations. The need for justification is warranted however, because this analysis' discussion of authority and credibility is not one that abandons *ethos* and its rhetorical conceptualization altogether. As *ethos* also has an often ignored ethical component (see, Jarratt & Reynolds, 1994; Vitanza, 1994), the relationship between ethics and politics within the recognition of the Other in identity political movements, such as feminism's second wave, will become an important relationship in this project's concluding remarks. Additionally, and of more importance to these prefacing remarks is the way *ethos* is considered as a rhetorical appeal. Hannah Arendt (1968), for example, notes that "authority . . . is incompatible with persuasion" because when one looks at various historical manifestations of the role of authority (as she does) one finds that authority in various political regimes was granted to individuals on the basis of some transcendent force (god-ordained) that was external to the self (p. 93). Such a view of authority may seem to move it beyond the purview of rhetorical appeals and processes. However, as Thomas B. Farrell (1993) points out, Arendt ignores that "authority as itself is a form of argument. It must derive grounds for its pronouncements. . . It may always be challenged, disputed, and disobeyed" (p. 291). To take Farrell further, one can read Arendt's view of authority as an explicit challenge to an authentic and even transcendent foundation of "authority" conceptually (p.91). Rather than asserting authority itself as exterior to rhetorical processes, one might better describe political beliefs in authorities' transcendence and authenticity as an effect of discourse, not its founding principle. Again, such a move resonates with Foucault's and others' efforts to remove an essential and stable subject as a foundation that secures a text, while it also takes seriously a rhetorical understanding of authority as it intersected with various authentic appeals.

In my introductory chapter, “Intersections of Feminism’s Sexual and Media Politics,” I provide a historical narrative of second wave feminism, its relationship to lesbians and to the media. Since the radical/liberal divide within the movement produced not only differing movement goals, but also varying positions on sexuality, I introduce a discussion of the ways that these differences translated into their approaches to mainstream and alternative media. Similarly, I argue that these varying approaches to media politics also structured liberal and radical feminists’ disparate confrontations with lesbians and the political signification of “lesbian” in movement discourse. Finally, this introductory chapter also outlines the importance of the subsequent chapters’ focus on rhetorical processes of authority and authenticity.

Chapter two, “Lavender Menaces and Herrings,” is the first case study of the project, which examines representations of lesbians within mainstream print press discourse about the women’s movement, between 1968 and 1975. By 1970, Betty Friedan had announced that lesbians were the movement’s “lavender menaces,” and Susan Brownmiller had asserted that they could be more accurately described as “lavender herrings.” These constructions remained consistent in the mainstream press’ constructions of the relationship between lesbian and feminist politics. More important than the actual representations, however, by focusing primarily on the ways mainstream media conventions sustained a commitment to authority and deviance to secure news appeal, I explore the ways that lesbian representations challenge conventional wisdom concerning feminism’s media-movement interaction. Since feminist discourse itself announced lesbian’s presence within the movement, this case study examines the ways liberal feminism’s identity commitment to *credible womanhood* may have participated in a game of authority which ultimately undermined its own efforts.

The second case study, Chapter three's focus on "When the Personal is Political . . .," takes a closer look into the radical feminists' use of the alternative press to theorize "lesbian" as both an identity for and a signifier of women's liberation. Like liberal feminism's efforts to limit the identificatory possibilities for feminists, radical feminist efforts (beginning in 1970) to liberate women demanded disciplinary moves. As radical feminists insisted on both authentic identities and an authentic press, they re-inscribed a faith in a politically pure outside to patriarchical systems. This faith in authentic politics, however, was localized in the very personal identities and lives of those who wished to claim and fight for liberation. Rather than expanding the political realm to include the personal sphere, I argue, radical lesbian feminists between 1970 and 1975 continually contracted the realm of public politics to the realm of personal lifestyles and identities in a way that arguably put into question their methods of *liberation.*

The case studies which precede Chapter four, "Authority & Authenticity's Mediations," ultimately build a critical historical narrative of the politics which came to bear on the mainstream media's canonization of Kate Millett as feminism's new "high priestess" in 1970 and the subsequent dismissal of such status through her outing as bisexual. Through an analysis of both the mainstream media's and the movement's reception of Millett and her book, *Sexual Politics*, I consider the ways that rhetorical processes of authorization and authentication mediated a contentious terrain for Millett's inauguration. Ultimately, Millett becomes the poster-girl for my concern with the dangerous consequences of identity politics and the disciplinary processes necessitated by feminism's identity commitment.

In this project's final chapter, "Contaminating Conclusions," I discuss the ways that the preceding chapters reveal second wave feminist tendencies to purify the sites of "woman" identifications from both contestation and contamination. Returning to the problematic assumptions identity commitments and politics entail, I explore the ways that discursive purification can not only be considered theoretically unsustainable but politically naïve. Although I explicitly resist a formulation of a feminist political program that would avoid the pitfalls of identity politics, I do so in a way that returns to this preface's discussion of the theoretical-practical split.

One final note. It is the theoretically "abstract" questioning of essential and stable subjectivity, although oftentimes unannounced, which drives this project. Although I think it is safe to say that I am compelled to respond to poststructuralism's critics by offering a historically grounded critique of feminist movement politics, I am only so compelled because I am highly persuaded by Butler's (1991/1995) suggestion that:

> If there is a fear that, by no longer being able to take for granted the subject, its gender, its sex, or its materiality, feminism will [flounder], it might be wise to consider the political consequences of keeping in their place the very premises that have tried to secure our subordination from the start. (p.54)

What follows then is what Foucault might term a "history of the present." By historicizing the poststructural critique of the subject as that critique relates to identity politics, I see this project as not only a response to the critics of the poststructural turn within feminist theory, but also as a critical analysis of the foundational principles of second wave discourse. These foundations continue to structure contemporary feminist conflicts over feminism's telos, the critique of that telos, and the theoretical and practical sustainability of "woman" as feminism's central commitment. Echoing Jacques Derrida's response to those who called attention to the ways he sought to critique Paul de Man after de Man's death, I would like to close with:

> In a certain way, I betrayed feminism, but out of fidelity. [2]

Notes

[1] Baumlin (1994) argues that within the tradition of Plato, Isocrates, Kant, Augustine, and Descartes the self is a moral and metaphysical category. Such a conceptualization resists a "rhetorical model" of selfhood since the self is conceived of as a metaphysical certainty (p. xviii). Baumlin (1994) continues by arguing that theories espoused by everyone from Aristotle to Nietzsche suggest a "social self," which does not assume that the inherent aspects of selfhood determine his/her own character or credibility within discourse (p.xviii).

[2] Derrida (2003) specifically says, "In a certain way, I betrayed him, but out of fidelity" (p. 29).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS....................v

PREFACE....................viii

CHAPTER

1 INTERSECTIONS OF FEMINISM'S SEXUAL & MEDIA POLITICS....................1

2 LAVENDER HERRINGS & MENACES....................31

3 WHEN THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL....................59

4 AUTHORITY & AUTHENTICITY'S MEDIATIONS....................89

5 CONTAMINATING CONCLUSIONS....................123

REFERENCES....................134

APPENDICES

A REVIEWED RADICAL FEMINIST PUBLICATIONS....................154

B SECOND WAVE CHRONOLOGY: MEDIA & LESBIAN SEXUAL POLITICS 1968-..1975....................155

CHAPTER ONE

INTERSECTIONS OF FEMINISM'S SEXUAL & MEDIA POLITICS

In 1970, Betty Friedan reportedly identified lesbians as the "lavender menace" to the second wave Women's Movement. Although few details are known about Friedan's proclamation, Flora Davis (1999) explains that "word got around" (p.263) within NOW's membership, and some lesbians in NOW's New York chapter began to pressure the organization to take a stand on lesbian rights. As hostilities between Friedan and lesbians within the movement surfaced, NOW's New York chapter underwent what would be labeled as the "first lesbian purge" in 1970 with the resignation of out lesbian Rita Mae Brown and the firing of the then-Executive Secretary Dolores Alexander because of the fear that she might be a lesbian infiltrator (Cohen, 1988; Davis, 1999). By May 1, 1970, at the Second Congress to Unite Women, a group of women self-labeled the "lavender menaces" took the stage and confronted feminists like Friedan by offering a counter-identification of lesbians as not the feminist fear, but the feminist ideal—a woman-identified-woman (Abbott & Love, 1972; Davis, 1999; Echols, 1989; Faderman, 1991; Jay, 1999; Rosen, 2000). Later that year, Kate Millett, author of *Sexual Politics*, was outed in *Time* magazine where it was claimed that such a disclosure was "bound to discredit her" and the movement ("Women's Lib: A Second Look," p.50). Soon after, Friedan, outraged by Millett's supporters, stepped down as the leader of the Women's Strike Coalition (which she founded) on the basis that "the woman's movement . . . had nothing whatsoever to do with lesbianism" (Friedan, 1976, p.158). Indeed, 1970 marked a time when divisive issues such as lesbianism threatened to fracture an already fragmented movement.

1970, however, did not mark the beginning nor the ending of the “lesbian issue” in second wave politics. Issues over sexuality and its role in emancipatory gender politics were a central concern for second wave feminists. Although the fragmentation within feminism’s second wave cannot be attributed to the divisive issue of lesbian politics alone, it seems to be the case that sexuality, in general, served an important inventive function for second wave feminist discourse. Jane Gerhard (2001) argues that “conflicts over sexuality for many women . . . [laid] the groundwork for what would become their feminism” (p.3). Germinal critiques like Anne Koedt’s “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm,” position papers like Radicalesbians’ “The Woman-Identified-Woman,” and lesbian separatist publications such as *The Furies*, are just a few representative examples of second wave feminist discourse that lend credence to Gerhard’s claim. Furthermore, the outing of Kate Millett, juxtaposed with Betty Friedan’s fear of how a public identification of lesbianism within the movement might further tarnish its image, indicates that the lesbian issue was not confined to internal movement struggles but also played a role in external movement representations.

In this project, I argue that the second wave’s struggles over lesbian identity were bound to and/or consistent with their media politics. As liberal feminists worried about the attention that lesbians would receive in the mainstream press, radical feminists’ eventual canonization of “lesbian” as the quintessential signifier of women’s liberation mimicked their concerns over authenticity that founded their own alternative press. The preceding case studies will examine the specific manifestations of the intersection between the movement’s various approaches to mainstream and alternative media and its sexual politics. In this chapter, I will discuss the historical development of feminism’s second wave, paying particular attention to the conflicts over lesbian sexuality as those conflicts surfaced in relation to the movement's media concerns (see Appendix B for chronology).

Moreover, while I find my primary focus in the discourse within and about the second wave between the 1966 and 1975, this focus is situated within a larger exploration of feminism's poststructural critique. Specifically, I argue that Friedan's fear was emblematic of questions over authority, and Radicalesbians' insistence of lesbianism as the feminist ideal was emblematic of issues over feminist authenticity. I wish to examine the rhetorical processes of authorization and authentication in feminism's second wave in ways that do not take such processes as necessary, nor their foundations within conceptualizations of the stable subject as beneficial. The focus on internal and external movement discourse combined with larger theoretical questions of the subject will function to historicize feminism's poststructural critique and provide insight into the study of second wave discourse specifically.

Feminism's Second Wave

The beginning of feminism's second wave is dated variously between 1963 and 1968. Depending on scholars' research interests, the second wave begins with the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, the break away from New Left groups in 1965, the founding of NOW in 1966, the formation of radical women's groups in 1967, or the media targeted Miss America Pageant Protest in 1968 (Dow, 1999). The discrepancies in dating the second wave are not due to a failure on the part of historical scholars, but are more accurately attributed to the fragmented nature of the movement. In some ways, there were two movements in the second wave that, while intertwined and not clearly discrete, had different approaches to social change and different goals. Sara Evans (2003) explains:

> "Equality" and "Liberation" were the demands that launched the second wave of women's rights activism. Both slogans challenged the ways women had been differentiated from, and subordinated to, men, but the first drew from liberal discourse of equal rights and the second proposed a cultural and ideological transformation in which sex roles would be eliminated. "Equality" made a reasonable, *liberal* request for legal and economic equity; "liberation" raised a set of *radical* demands about culture and subjective identity. (emphasis mine, p.24)

Evans points to the fundamental differences between the liberal women's movement and the radical women's liberation movement. Although I will discuss the different developments of these two branches of second wave feminist activism in the next section, for my purposes here I will provide a brief historical narrative of the second wave's general development.

In the early years of the second wave liberal feminism dominated the movement. Betty Friedan's publication of *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 and the founding of NOW in 1966 began to set the defining goals for liberal feminism: to achieve legal and economic equality for women. Simultaneously, however, a younger generation of women in the New Left and civil rights movements had also started to notice sexual inequalities. In 1965, activists Casey Hayden and Mary King sent out their essay, "A Kind of Memo to the Women in the Peace and Freedom Movements," to other women in the New Left describing these inequalities. By 1967, women began to break away from the New Left through the formation of their own groups. Although there were many differences between these radical women's groups, they were generally united in their focus on various critiques of the root of women's oppression as they worked to achieve women's liberation (Evans, 1979).

From 1968 to the early 1970s, radical feminist groups proliferated. Friedan and NOW headed many media targeted protests and actions, and New York Radical Women's 1968 Miss American Pageant protest was the first media-targeted protest by a radical group. Although NOW and women's liberation groups had differing agendas, they nonetheless did work together in some aspects. The clearest example was the Friedan organized Women's Strike for Equality on August 26, 1970, which was a first of its kind in terms of widespread unity between radical and liberal groups, and in terms of the attention paid to it by the media (Dow, 1999). However, it was also in 1970 that the "gay-straight" split began to emerge within radical feminism. The conflicts generated by the split crippled radical feminism, and by 1972, when Congress put the Equal Rights Amendment up for state ratification, liberal feminism became, once again, the dominant force in the women's rights movement.

In early 1973, the movement achieved a major victory for women's reproductive rights with the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, and the ERA seemed well on its way toward ratification. By the end of 1973, however, the drive toward ratification began to lose steam and the STOP ERA campaign had successfully made the ERA a controversial issue. By 1975, many radical feminists turned toward cultural feminism and little attention was paid to legal and political changes by these feminists (Echols, 1989). The ERA was decisively defeated in 1982. Thus, the decline of radical feminism in 1975 and the final defeat of the ERA in 1982 mark the clearest endings to feminism's second wave.

Lesbian & Media Politics

The truncated historical account above highlights some of the germinal events of the second wave's development. However, the narrative above neglects to account for the ways lesbian sexuality surfaced in major conflicts of feminism's second wave. As the following sections will detail, lesbian sexuality proved to be a divisive issue for both liberal and radical groups. Specifically, a lesbian identification with the movement was believed to both threaten the movement's public identity and to promise an identity consistent with the ideal liberated woman. The double bind that lesbian subjects faced in feminism's second wave is evidenced in the specific ideological development of liberal and radical feminism.

Liberal Feminism of the Second Wave

While the ideological underpinnings of liberal feminism date back to Enlightenment liberal philosophers such as John Locke and John Stuart Mills (Donovan, 1985), for the second wave specifically, the groundwork was laid in 1963 with the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (Davis, 1999). *The Feminine Mystique* reached a considerable number of both men and women, as it was excerpted in many mainstream magazines, debated in *The Boston Globe*, and reviewed by mainstream magazines and journals alike (Rosen, 2000). To understand the importance of *The Feminine Mystique* to second wave liberal feminism, one must consider the democratic political climate in which it arose. It was also in 1963 that the Equal Pay Act was passed and President John F. Kennedy's commission on the status of women released their report, *The Presidential Report on American Women*. While the Equal Pay Act legislated equal pay for equal work (although not necessarily comparable work, see Rosen, 2000), and *The Presidential Report* described the problems women faced as workers, the report also reaffirmed women's roles as caregivers and their place in the home (Rosen, 2000). *The Feminine Mystique*, on the other hand, argued that the private sphere trapped women, and that women's equality could only be found once they entered the paid work-force (Horowitz, 1998). These events (The Equal Pay Act, the release of The *Presidential Report on American Women,* and *The Feminine*

Mystique), according to Ruth Rosen (2000), "helped publicize a growing sense of gender consciousness" (p.71).

In light of this sense of "gender consciousness" and almost despite the reaffirmations of traditional womanhood inherent in *The Presidential Report on American Women*, the national commission (The President's Commission on the Status of Women) spawned state commissions to study the inequalities faced by women. These state commissions held annual conferences (Conference of State Commissions on the Status of Women) to compare what they had found, and it was at the state commissions' conference in 1966 that The National Organization of Women (NOW) was born. By 1966, The Civil Rights Act of 1964, including Title VII that established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), had passed. Although Title VII legislated sex discrimination to be within the purview of the EEOC's duties, the director considered sex discrimination a joke (Rosen, 2000). It was the EEOC's unwillingness to address sex discrimination that led women to form NOW (Davis, 1999; Rosen, 2000). [1] Flora Davis (1999) explains that with the 1966 founding of NOW by Betty Friedan and fifteen other women, "the second wave—which had been gathering energy for several years—achieved lift-off" (p.55).

Originally conceived of as a sort of "NAACP for women" (Bradley, 2003, p. 34; Schneir, 1994, p.95), NOW's primary focus, like its other liberal counterparts, was "political action in the public domain" (Barker-Plummer, 1995, p.311). [2] Reflecting its exigence within a democratic governmental commission, NOW's rhetoric was also the rhetoric of liberalism and natural rights. As NOW's first actions were aimed at ensuring the federal enforcement of Title VII, at passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), and at securing a woman's right to an abortion (Davis, 1999; Evans, 2003; Rosen, 2000), the importance of mainstream public support to achieve such political goals can hardly be denied. More fundamentally, however, the importance of mainstream public support secured by NOW's liberal political focus generated considerable concerns over the use of the mainstream media and the impact of lesbian members on the movement's image.

From the beginning of NOW, Betty Friedan was concerned with the organization's (and the movement's) public image and the importance of mainstream mass media for the construction of that image (Bradley, 1998, 2003). Patricia Bradley (1998) argues that media attention to the movement, "was the penultimate political tactic" for NOW (p.164), and most NOW goals had a media component (see also, Barker-Plummer, 1995, 2002). As a political tactic, the use of mass media was based in an idea that media, and news media specifically, could be used as a political resource to garner support for the organization's goals and to build membership (Barker-Plummer, 1995; Bradley, 1998). Such a view was somewhat successful as the NOW led picketing of newspapers that published sex-segregated-help-wanted-ads drew attention from local press. This coverage, combined with a press conference where Friedan suggested that NOW might pursue a lawsuit against the government, worked to achieve a government ban on segregated help-wanted advertisements (Bradley, 1998, 2003). Furthermore, evidence of NOW's predisposition to organize actions so as to garner the most publicity can be found in the February 12, 1969 protest of New York Plaza Hotel's Oak Room prohibition of women. The site was selected because of its popular visibility, and the action was scheduled to meet news deadlines (Bradley, 1998).[3] Friedan, however, achieved the ultimate media success with the Woman's Strike for Equality on August 26, 1970, which placed the movement on the front page of *The New York Times* and resulted in coverage of the movement by all three national television news networks for the first time (Dow, 1999)

Although the profoundly influential role of the mass media in the construction of the movement's public identity can hardly be denied (see, Dow, 1999; Van Zoonen, 1992), the "media pragmatism" approach of NOW, according to Bernadette Barker-Plummer (1995) bore with it negative consequences. Barker-Plummer argues that NOW sought to preempt journalists and to control the issues that the press would report (p.315). In other words, NOW sought to control the construction of the movement's public identity; thus it is not surprising that fears of an identification of lesbianism with the movement surfaced. Barker-Plummer (1995) ties NOW's media pragmatism with its anti-lesbian reputation and argues that Friedan and her supporters' fear that lesbians within the movement would cause "image problems" ignored the importance of "personal politics that [had] been the hallmark of the feminist movement" (p.315).

Indeed, a closer look at events surrounding lesbian politics in the history of NOW reveals a severe tension between its media pragmatism and its devotion to the advancement of women. In 1968, the San Francisco chapter of NOW accepted lesbian couple Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon at the reduced couple rate. Such a move appeared to be consistent with a critique against the heterosexist bias of legitimate partnerships and supportive of lesbian membership (Davis, 1999). Many events that followed, however, provided substantial evidence of NOW's anti-lesbian position. In 1969, the Daughters of Bilitis (founded by Martin and Lyon as the first lesbian organization) was omitted from the press release of sponsors of the First Congress to Unite Women (Abbot & Love, 1972; Jay, 1999). Following the First Congress to Unite Women, Rita Mae Brown, who more than anyone had been bringing the lesbian issue to NOW's attention, was "inexplicably relieved of her duties as the editor of New York NOW's newsletter" (Echols, 1989). Late in 1969, Friedan spoke against the dangers of lesbianism to the movement at a meeting of NOW's executive board—a statement that would only foreshadow what was soon to follow (Abbot & Love, 1972; Davis, 1999).

By 1970, Friedan led efforts to defeat a NOW resolution supporting lesbian rights and argued that the lesbians were a "lavender menace" for the movement (Davis, 1999; Rosen, 2000). Friedan's fear resulted in NOW's "first lesbian purge." NOW's purge consisted of the three following events. Rita Mae Brown left NOW and joined the radical feminist group the Redstockings (Abbot & Love, 1972; Echols, 1989). Ivy Bottini proposed a "sexual privacy" amendment to NOW's bill of rights at an executive board meeting, but was forced to withdraw it because the board did not want to go on record either for or against it (Davis, 1999). Finally, Dolores Alexander was fired from NOW's executive board on the basis of Friedan's fear that she might be a lesbian infiltrator, despite the fact that Alexander then self-identified as heterosexual (Cohen, 1988; Davis, 1999). As a result of NOW's purge and Friedan's identification, a group of women (later to be known as Radicalesbians) "zapped" the Second Congress to Unite Women and forced the assembly to hear resolutions concerning lesbians and the movement (Abbot & Love, 1972; Brownmiller, 1999; Davis, 1999; Echols, 1989; Faderman, 1991; Jay, 1999; Rosen, 2000). By the end of 1970, Kate Millett had been outed by *Time* magazine in an effort to discredit the movement ("Women's Lib: A Second Look," 1970). *Time's* disclosure came after it had proclaimed her the "Mao Tse-Tung of Women's Liberation" earlier that year (Who's Come a Long Way, Baby," 1970, p.16) making Millett's anointment as a "leader" and her subsequent outing a confirmation of Friedan's fear of a lesbian menace.

Davis (1999) explains that the Kate Millett controversy spurred outrage among liberal and radical groups alike. NOW's then-president Aileen Hernandez was among Millett's public supporters, but Friedan was noticeably missing. Although NOW's position on lesbians in the movement began to change in 1971, it was only after Friedan headed NOW's second lesbian purge, again in the New York chapter, in which she led a successful effort to vote all lesbians and their heterosexual supporters out of office (Davis, 1999). Despite Friedan's efforts to silence the lesbian issue, NOW passed a resolution supporting lesbianism both legally and morally in 1971, recognized its own culpability, and by 1973 had formed a task force on sexuality and lesbianism (Abbot & Love, 1972; Davis, 1999; Echols, 1989; Faderman, 1998).

In sum, the narrative of liberal feminism's development in the second wave through the story of NOW begins to reveal the ideological underpinnings and their possible effects on liberal feminism's media and lesbian politics. Of course, the history of NOW did not end in 1973, nor was its significance relegated to its media targeted actions and position on lesbian sexuality. What the above narrative does begin to reveal are the ways that goals of reformation within liberal feminism demanded public and policy makers' support of the movement's commitments. Consequently, since the movement's public support seemed dependent on its public identity constructed through the mainstream media, the lesbian politics of the liberal branch of the movement were inextricably intertwined with its media politics.

Radical Feminism of the Second Wave

If liberal feminism's goal was one of women's *equality*, radical feminism's goal can be described as achieving women's *liberation* (Evans, 2003). Seeking to overthrow gender hierarchies, radical feminism focused not on reform, but on the roots of women's oppression. Arguing that "women constituted a sex-class" (Echols, 1989, p.3), radical feminism sought to politicize the category of woman and their perceived "natural" relationship with men (Echols, 1989; Gerhard, 2001). Rather than focusing all of their energy on legislative reform, radical feminists engaged in critiques of the family, marriage, love, and heteronormativity as they believed that such critiques were necessary for women's liberation (Echols, 1989). Despite some of the groups' common ideological foundations, radical feminism was much more diffuse and fragmented than its liberal counterpart, making its historical narrative a bit more difficult to tell. Since no one radical group surfaced to dominate "radical feminism" (as NOW dominated liberal feminism), the discussion that follows will not give a detailed history of any one group, nor will it summarize the development of all the groups (for such an effort deserves a book in and of itself, see Echols, 1989). However, I will highlight key commonalities between multiple groups and some of their fundamental conflicts.

Radical feminism, or the Women's Liberation Movement/Front (WLM or WLF), was largely borne out of a larger radical movement consisting of New Left, anti-war, and civil rights movements (Echols, 1989; Evans, 1979; Rosen, 2000). [4] Alice Echols (1989) describes the relationship between radical feminism and New Left and civil rights movements as both "complicated and paradoxical" (p.25). Founded and dominated by men who, at the very least, were less than interested in sexual inequalities, New Left and civil rights groups precipitated the women's liberation movement in at least two ways: (1) the movements indirectly revealed to many women the theoretical foundations for critique of the roots of women's oppression, and (2) the movements allowed women to gain experience and to develop skills in social movement organization and administration (Echols, 1989). If there is a germinal text for radical feminism that is comparable to Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* for liberal feminism it would assuredly be Casey Hayden and Mary King's 1965 "A Kind of Memo to Women in the Peace and Freedom Movements," which described the gap that existed in these radical movements "between the ideal of equality and sex caste system that kept women in subordinate positions" (Davis, 1999, p. 77). Mailed to forty women activists in the Students for Democratic Society (SDS) and published in 1966 in *Liberation* magazine, “A Kind of Memo” was a response by women within the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to the sexual exploitation of white women within the movement, and the male domination of SNCC and SDS, which refused to take sex discrimination seriously (Echols, 1989; Davis, 1999; Echols, 1989; Schneir, 1994).

In the fall of 1967, groups of women from the larger radical movements of the 1960s began to meet to “discuss the problem of male supremacy” (Echols, 1989, p.3). The first radical group met in Chicago, IL and within six months had spawned four other groups in the Chicago area (Davis, 1999). Shulamith Firestone and Pam Allen formed New York Radical Women (NYRW), in 1967, and by 1968 women’s liberation groups had formed independently in at least four major cities (Davis, 1999). Evans (2003) explains that unlike liberal feminist groups such as NOW, radical feminism “had little use for formal politics or detailed policy discussions in the first year or two [as] its founders saw themselves as revolutionaries” (p. 27). Reflecting the New Left which precipitated radical feminism, some radical feminist groups grounded their theories in the rhetoric of Marxism and sought to discuss women’s oppression in terms of a “sex class” through various position papers and manifestoes. And just as their rhetoric echoed the New Left groups that they broke away from, their main movement strategy of consciousness-raising was also roughly modeled after what they had learned from working in these radical movements (Evans, 1979).

Echols (1989) argues that while radical women agreed that they needed to organize separately from the men of the New Left, “they disagreed over the nature and purpose of the separation” (p.51). Echols (1989) describes the disagreement as the “politico-feminist schism” (see also, Willis, 1992). “Politicos” argued that the women’s groups should remain faithful to the larger radical movement’s commitment against capitalism, since it was capitalism that lay at the root of all oppression. “Feminists,” on the other hand, argued for a divorce from the larger radical movement, blaming both capitalism and male supremacy for women’s oppression (Echols, 1989). The “politicos” clearly dominated women’s liberation between 1967 and 1969, but by late 1969 the “feminists” dominated the liberation movement (Echols, 1989). And, although the politico-feminist divide marks one of the first points of differences between radical groups, it was not the last.

As the politico-feminist divide haunted the early formation of radical groups, conflicts over sexuality proved to be even more divisive as radical feminism continued to develop. Gerhard (2001) argues that since radical women sought to politicize the category of “woman” they “placed the politics of sexual practice front and center in their brand of feminism” (p. 91). From the beginning, radical women critiqued the ways that the sexual politics of heterosexual relationships led to the sexual exploitation of women. After “Freedom Summer of 1964,” where a number of white women engaged in sexual relationships with black male activists of SNCC, women within SNCC became outraged as SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael commented that “ ‘The only position for women in SNCC is prone’” (qtd. in Rosen, 2000, p.108). Carmichael’s comment coupled with women’s sexual experiences of the 1960’s compelled early radical feminists to argue “that the sexual revolution of the 60s was in many respects more exploitive than liberating” (Echols, 1989, p.211; see also, Gerhard, 2001). Furthermore, as radical feminism continued to develop and grow in the late 60s and early 70s, critiques of women’s sexual oppression flourished.

Despite radical critiques like Anne Koedt’s 1968 essay, “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm,” Kate Millett’s 1970 book *Sexual Politics*, and Shulamith Firestone’s 1970 book, *The Dialectic of Sex*, which outlined theories that dismantled a heterosexual presumption, “many radical feminists . . . were often skittish if not hostile toward lesbianism" (Echols, 1989, p.211). The hostility toward lesbians within radical feminism manifested itself in several different ways. For example, in 1970, Susan Brownmiller of New York Radical Feminists refused an invitation to speak to the lesbian group, Daughters of Bilitis, and labeled lesbians as "the lavender herring" to the women's liberation movement in *New York Times Magazine*. Roxanne Dunbar of Cell 16 argued that "the task of feminism was to get women out of bed rather than change the gender of their partners" (Echols, 1989, p. 211). By 1970, after Rita Mae Brown questioned her at a panel in Boston, Dunbar claimed that lesbianism was a chosen oppression and, as such, not a concern for the women's liberation movement (Brown, 1970b; Echols, 1989).

While Brownmiller's and Dunbar's remarks are representative of various tensions between lesbian and straight women in radical groups, Echols (1989) notes that, until 1970, such tensions were relegated to isolated skirmishes between and within radical groups. The presentation of Radicalesbians' "The Woman-Identified-Woman" at the Second Congress to Unite Women on May 1, 1970, precipitated what would soon become a crippling divide among radical feminist groups, "the gay-straight split" (Echols, 1989, p.214). In this position paper, Radicalesbians argued that lesbianism was a political choice that should be adopted by feminists as it was the only identity choice that allowed women to self-define—to be a woman-identified-woman, as opposed to a man-identified-woman. While "The Woman-Identified-Woman" was not antagonistic toward heterosexual woman (Echols, 1989), its thesis toward "political lesbianism" generated debates between an older generation of lesbians, who identified as "real" lesbians, and a younger generation who wanted to adopt the identity of "political lesbian" (Davis, 1999). Such conflicts were further fueled by Radicalesbians' later claim that "bisexuality was a cop out" (see, Millett. 1990, p. 15), and the internal movement outing of Kate Millett by

Radicalesbian Teresa Juarez, which resulted in Millett's public outing by *Time* (Echols, 1989; Davis, 1999).

Between 1970 and 1972 the various questions over a "true" *lesbian* identification surfaced alongside questions that centered on lesbianism's relationship with a "true" *feminist* identification. Such questions generated conflicts that ultimately crippled the radical feminist branch of the movement (Echols, 1989). By 1972, the conflicts resulted in the formation of lesbian separatist collectives, such as The Furies, and by 1974, the first wave of lesbian separatism had reached its peak (Davis, 1999). Ultimately, by 1975, many radical groups had moved toward cultural feminism, and most heterosexual feminists had left the radical wing of the movement with a concomitant swelling in the ranks of NOW (Echols, 1989).

Unlike the liberal branch of the movement, conflicts centered on the lesbian issue had little to do with radical feminists' concerns over its public identity. The 180-degree turn around of radical feminism, from being hostile toward lesbians to being dominated by lesbian separatist groups, indicates debates over lesbian sexuality lay at the heart of radical feminism's goal toward women's *liberation*. While radical feminism's lesbian politics were not grounded in efforts to produce an acceptable representation of "woman" for the mainstream media's construction of feminism's public identity, radical feminists concern over lesbian identity was consistent with their media politics. Since radical feminism was devoted to the deconstruction of patriarchal systems, the mainstream media, as an institution, did not escape their critique (Barker-Plummer, 1995). Yet, because of their critique they were also very reluctant to passively accept mainstream media conventions, which would potentially stifle any woman's authority, especially lesbians'. As such, many radical groups were less than cooperative with reporters, and, in contrast to liberal groups, were considered “media subversives” rather than “media pragmatists” (Barker-Plummer, 1995).

Radical feminism did have some legitimate concerns. Not only did their focus on the institutional nature of women’s oppression necessitate a critique of mainstream media, but the mainstream media was more likely to construct radical feminisms’ public identity in negative ways that often undermined their commitments. Susan Douglas (1994) argues that “possibly the most important legacy of . . . media coverage was its carving up of the women’s movement into legitimate feminism and illegitimate feminism” (p.186)—radical feminism being liberal feminism’s illegitimate counterpart made up of a few extreme individuals. Furthermore, as media conventions demanded newsworthy events and movement spokespeople, radical feminists’ commitment to leaderlessness and consciousness-raising did not allow journalists to cover radical feminism in a way that was consistent with these commitments (Tuchman, 1978; see also, Byerly, 1999).

Clearly, however, radical feminism did not ignore the importance of mass mediated communication for the distribution of movement critiques. While they did critique the mainstream media, radical women developed their own communication networks through underground newspapers and newsletters (Douglas, 1994). For example, radical feminist publications such as Chicago women’s liberation group’s *Voice of the Women’s Liberation Movement*, Cell 16’s *No More Fun and Games*, and The Furies’ *The Furies* were generated by specific radical groups, while others, like *off our backs*, *Notes from the First Year*, and *Women: A Journal of Liberation*, were generated by a combination of people from different radical groups (Hole & Levine, 1971). By the early 1970s, according to Judith Hole and Ellen Levine (1971), there were over one-hundred journals and newspapers published by feminists, and while most were published by radical feminists, a number of them came from the liberal branch of the movement as well (see also Pearson, 1999). Eschewing hierarchical structures, designed to create a more authentic media alternative, radical feminism's alternative press, at the very least, was consistent with their eventual sexual politics. Furthermore, many of the germinal position papers and essays were published in these publications (e.g., "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," "The Woman-Identified-Woman," etc.). And, as these publications flourished in the 1970s, radical feminists were also highly concerned with aligning their own alternative media practices with their political agenda towards women's liberation. As such, these publications provide further insight into the ways sexuality served an inventive function for radical second wave discourse, both in form and content.

In sum, as both menaces and revolutionaries, lesbian subjects occupied a unique rhetorical place in feminism's second wave. Radicalesbians put it best when they claimed, "We are your worst nightmare. Your best fantasy" (qtd. in Jay, 1999, p, 143). The dialectical tension between being at once a "nightmare" and a "fantasy" exacerbated considerable conflicts within the movement, and such conflicts are emblematic of the second wave's broader concerns over identity—both public and personal. What was at stake, for both liberal and radical feminists, was a political identification of "womanhood" that would remain consistent with the movement's commitments. As radical feminism theorized the *liberated woman* and liberal feminism strategized a *credible woman*, lesbian sexuality both threatened and promised the sustainability of such categories. Fundamentally, the movement's commitment to "women"—both liberated and credible—neglected to question the necessity of the category in the first place. In other words, while the political nature of *womanhood* was in question, as the next section will argue, the ontological nature of "*woman*" was not.

Furthermore, despite the importance of sexuality in second wave rhetoric, rhetorical scholars have neglected to devote serious attention to both liberal and radical feminism's rhetoric of lesbian sexuality. Generally, scholars interested in the rhetoric of the second wave specifically, can generally be placed in three groups. Some have tended to focus on specific case studies on important events like the Miss America Pageant Protest or the Women's Strike for Equality (Dow, 1999, 2002, 2003), the ERA and STOP ERA campaigns (Foss, 1979; Solomon, 1978,1979,1983), and feminist publications ranging from *The Feminine Mystique* to the "SCUM Manifesto" (Deem, 1996; Pearson, 1999; Perkins, 1989), while others have looked at various relationships between the movement and mainstream media (Dow, 1996, 1999; Hogeland, 1998; Silver, 2002). Finally, some rhetorical scholars specifically have examined the rhetorical strategies and their implications to the movement more generally (Campbell, 1973,1999; Hancock, 1972; Hope, 1975; Kroll, 1983; Lyon, 1991; Pearce, 1999; Rosenwasser, 1972). While these critiques have gone a long way in describing and criticizing various moments in the second wave, by neglecting to examine lesbian sexuality specifically, rhetorical scholars have also neglected to examine the interplay of the second wave's ontological presumptions and the discourse about them. It is to the ontological presumptions of "woman" and its relationship to sexuality and second wave discourse that I now turn.

Theorizing the Second Wave

In her comparison of cultural feminism to post-structuralism, Linda Alcoff (1988/1997) describes one of the more central concerns for contemporary feminist theorists. She argues:

> For many contemporary feminist theorists, the concept of woman is a problem . . . In attempting to speak for women, feminism often seems to presuppose that it knows what women truly are . . . [but] no matter where we turn . . . the mediation of female bodies

> into constructions of woman is dominated by misogynist discourse. . . . Thus the dilemma facing feminist theorists today is that our very self-definition is grounded in a concept that we must deconstruct and de-essentialize in all of its aspects. (pp.331-331)

The “deconstructive” project of feminist essentialism has occurred in varying ways in recent years. General trends in feminist theory reveal at least two approaches to critiquing essentialist notions of womanhood within feminist theory. One trend suggests that other identity categories, such as race, class, and sexuality destabilize any unified conceptualization of womanhood, and another seeks to challenge the ontological necessity of identity categories. Primarily surfacing in the early 1980s and 1990s, these critiques implicated second wave’s identity politics directly and indirectly, as these feminists challenged the political practicality and necessity and the theoretical sustainability of any unified category of “woman”—liberated or otherwise. This project’s theoretical impetus draws from a larger critique of the second wave’s assumptions behind the concept of “woman.”

Proliferating “Women”

Some characterize the deconstructive shift in feminist theory as a shift that marks the beginning of feminism’s “third wave.” Specifically, as feminism entered its “third wave” critiques of the second wave flourished, as women of the third wave began to challenge the rigidity of the second wave’s prescriptions of liberated “womanhood.” Tamara Strauss (2000) argues that feminism has mutated and transformed, and as a new generation of women look for equality, the methods and the limitations of the second wave become the forefront of new third wave feminist activism. As Strauss (2000) notes,

> Third Wavers who, perhaps dismissive of the battles fought and often won by their mothers, aspire to be Madonna, the woman who rose to fame as the ultimate virgin

> whore. Third Wavers, say Baumgardner and Richards [authors of *Manifesta*], want to continue the fight for equal rights, but not to the detriment of their sexuality. They want to be both subject and object, when it comes to their sexual roles, their political power and their place in American culture. (n. pag.)

Furthermore, books such as *Listen Up* and *To Be Real* reveal third wave's questioning of a collectivity known as "women." Jennifer Drake (1997), in her review of *Listen Up* and *To Be Real*, suggests that the (re)turn to personal narratives within third wave feminism builds upon the work of women of color and their response to the heterosexual, white, and often middle class bias of the second wave (see also Garrison, 2000). Similarly, Flora Davis (1999) argues that until the early 1980s, when black women demanded that white feminists pay attention to issues of racism and sexism, the movement was largely a white woman's movement. Books such as Patricia Hills Collins's 1990 *Black Feminist Thought*, bell hooks's 1981 *Ain't I a Woman*, and Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa's 1981 *This Bridge Called My Back* both directly and indirectly critiqued the white bias of second wave feminist articulations of "womanhood." However, while the critiques of movement's white, heterosexual, middle-class myopia challenged "woman" as a unified political category, they did not necessarily challenge the category on a more fundamental level.

Arguably, the critiques of feminism's third wave do not necessarily mark a significant break from their second wave predecessors. Rather than marking the beginning of a more multi-cultural feminism, it might be more accurate to characterize the 1980s and early 1990s as a time when challenges of a notion of unified "womanhood" became more prevalent in feminist discourse. As these feminists theorized the importance of women of color's double oppression, such discussions compelled many women of color to organize in women's only groups as early as 1968 (Thompson, 2002). Becky Thompson (2002), for example, argues that the predominant narrative of the development of feminism's second wave often ignores the groups of Asian American, Native American, African American, and Latina women that emerged in the late 1960s early 1970s (see also, Baxandall, 2001). Although many of these groups did not self-identify as feminist groups, the 1973 founding of the National Black Feminist Organization was the first of its kind as it launched the clearest assault on both racism and sexism (Rosen, 2000; Taylor, 1998; Thompson, 1992). Similarly, separatist groups such as the The Furies, were founded in large part on the ways that women felt the movement had damned homosexuality and ignored the different struggles that lower-class women faced (Echols, 1989). In other words, the constraints placed on women by second wave feminist politics did not escape second wave theorists. Although the third wave's new sensitivity to women's differences appears to be a break away from second wave's identity problematics, simply multiplying the number of "woman" identifications might miss a more fundamental problem of the second wave's identity politics. This more fundamental problem is revealed in a more detailed look into the critique of lesbian separatist politics.

Lesbian-separatists founded their separatism on theories of sexuality that were grounded in essentialist notions of sexual difference. Gerhard (2001) argues, for example, that feminist discourse saturated sexuality with the values of "autonomy, authenticity, and liberation" (Gerhard, 2001, p.7). "Such insights," according to Gerhard (2001), "led radical feminists to reinvent heterosexuality and lesbianism as more woman-centered and less dictated by the categories of men and experts" (p.7). Although feminists sought to break away from the dominating discourses of sexology and psychoanalysis, Gerhard (2001) concludes that as radical feminists moved toward cultural feminism, they replicated these discourses' assumptions that "sexuality [was] the most salient component of women's identity" (p. 195). [5]

Gerhard's critique, however, neglects to account for a metaphysical and fundamental aspect of suturing women's sexuality to their identity. In her critique of lesbian feminism and separatist communities, Shane Phelan (1989) notes:

> The problem is not the act of separation, the moment of separatism. . . . The problem lies in the grounds and terms of this separation. A separatism grounded on the metaphysical difference between male and female essence, and that characterizes those essences as radical lesbian feminists have done, leaves little or no room for the development of diverse, individual patterns of relationship with the larger society. The legitimate drive for community degenerates into unmediated unity, a unity that carries as its twin an excessive fear of difference. It is this moment, this metaphysical turn in lesbian feminism, that is its central weakness. (p. 57)

Phelan's critique of lesbian feminism of the early 1970s takes place through her larger critique of the ways radical feminism remained faithful to liberalism's demand for identity politics. However far Phelan's critique goes in terms of recognizing the metaphysical foundations of lesbian feminism, I argue that Phelan neglects to undermine these metaphysical foundations all together. As her arguments revolve around the ways separatism ignores difference, she ultimately answers the perils of identity politics by calling for a non-separatist identity politics that works in "porous" coalitions to fight against homophobia, classism, racism, and sexism. The problem with answering identity politics with identity politics is that such an answer undermines the ontological critique of the metaphysical distinctions between women and men. Put another way, while critiques that demand white feminists pay attention to the ways the category of woman can never be unified because of race, class, sexuality, etc. go far in the way of recognizing the differences in women's subjectivities, it neglects to undermine the metaphysical possibility of "woman" as a stable subject.

Deconstructing "Woman"

Rather than adding new oppressed identifiable identities that would only proliferate identity political claims, poststructural feminists challenged identity politics on a more fundamental level by challenging its foundations in the humanist subject. The poststructural critique of the subject offers a departure from a humanist conceptualization that plagued western political philosophy. Chris Weedon (1997) argues that humanist political theory assumes that each individual subject possesses a unique essence. Specifically, Weedon continues, "In feminist forms of humanism, [both liberal and radical,] the central concern is with women's nature and its identity with or difference from the nature of man" (p.77). Rather than a humanist subject, whose identity is secured in an originary soul, the subject, according to poststructural theorists, is a productive effect of discursive processes. In short, poststructural feminist critics argue, political philosophies that take the ontological stability of identity as necessary ignore the ways that such identity was always already an effect of political (read: not ontological) articulation. In Weedon's (1997) terms,

> a poststructuralist position on subjectivity and consciousness relativizes the individual's sense of herself by making it an effect of discourse which is open to continuous redefinition and which is constantly slipping. The reassurance and certainty of humanism, with its essence of subjectivity, disappears, but so does the inevitability of particular forms of subjectivity. (p.102)

Linda Nicholson (1997) discusses the shift from *recognizing difference* to *deconstructing identity* and subjectivity as a response to generalizations about "woman" and "patriarchy" that seemed to pervade feminist theory. Nicholson argues that "differences among women were acknowledged, but minimally incorporated into the basic threads of theory" (p.261) As a result, feminists working from the critique of the humanist subject, as described above, discussed the implications of that critique to the central concern for feminist theory and activism—the identity category of "woman." Monique Wittig's early 1981 essay, for example, "One is Not Born a Woman" argued against the category of "woman" as a natural category and argues that the "myth of woman" presumed heterosexuality and is more adequately described as a "political constraint" rather than a liberatory ideal (1981/1997, p.267). Other feminist theorists, like Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous used "woman" as a signifying category to mark a departure from phallologocentric language and western philosophy (see, e.g., Irigaray, 1977/1997; Cixous, 1975/1976). Finally, Judith Butler, who articulated the most sustained poststructural feminist critique, argued that "woman" was a regulatory ideal maintained not through a commitment to difference, but to a commitment to a binary conceptualization of sexual difference that ultimately serviced the very system feminists wished to challenge (see, e.g. Butler, 1990). The critique of a binary conceptualization of sexual difference, when theorized in terms of the critique of a humanist subject, necessitated further rearticulations of the relationship, among other things, between sexual identity and materiality. And, the questions surrounding this relationship ultimately commented on feminism's telos and the importance of teleological goals for feminist politics.

In the case of sexual identity's relationship with materiality the question surrounds whether or not "gender" as a social construct in and of itself obfuscates the material [read:

bodily] evidence of sex difference. Feminists have long considered the ways that “gender” is a socially constructed notion of the ways sex difference translates into socially sanctioned norms of gendered behavior (i.e., dress, communication differences, occupation choices, etc.). The separation of gender (as socially constructed) and sex (as materially evident), according to Butler (1990a, 1990b, 1993), begins to reinscribe the materiality of sexual difference as a *necessary* and *natural* blank slate, on which gender expression can be performed. Rather than assuming the necessity of sex difference as a materially warranted difference, Butler (1993) begins to conceptualize “sex” in a way that other feminists discussed “gender”—“sex” is a regulatory ideal, not as much materially evident, but used as material evidence for the ontologizing of “gender” as a fixed and stable identity. What is at stake for Butler (1993) is that materiality never appears without a schema of intelligibility, and this schema of intelligibility is the presumed facticity and necessity of sexual difference. Since specific manifestations of sex difference are only understood through “gender,” not only was “sex” “gender” all along, but the social construction of gender was the “process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the *effect* of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter” (emphasis mine, Butler, 1993, p. 9). In short, the question of materiality and sexual difference uproots materiality as both a foundation and as evidence of sexual difference. And, inasmuch as Butler’s critique theorizes material sexual difference in terms of an effect of discourses, which in and of themselves function to stabilize sexual difference as natural and necessary, Butler also critiques the faith in sexual difference as feminism’s necessary commitment—“woman.”

Although Butler’s (and other’s) poststructural critique of feminism was not confined to a critique of second wave politics directly, it does indirectly implicate the second wave’s conceptualizations and deployment of “woman,” as it also urges second wave rhetorical critics to examine seriously the ontological and material assumptions underpinning its discourse. Specifically, I argue in this project that when sexuality served an inventive function for the second wave's challenge to political identification of womanhood, the identity politics of sexual subjects grounded the second wave in the ontological necessity of a unified subject. Foundational questions of identity politics' secured moorings in theories of the stable subject provide insight into the conflicts over lesbian sexuality in feminism's second wave in two central ways.

First, when conflicts over "woman" ensued over what is best for "women," such discourses ignored the ways "woman" and "women"—liberated and credible—are "produced by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought" (Butler, 1990, p.5). Rather than seeing "woman" as an ontological necessity, Judith Butler (1990) maintains that the category itself is a normative and illusory fiction:

> There is no ontology of gender on which we might construct a politics, for gender ontologies always operate within established political contexts as normative injunctions, determining what qualifies as intelligible sex, invoking and consolidating the reproductive constraints on sexuality, setting the prescriptive requirements whereby sexed or gendered bodies come into cultural intelligibility. Ontology is, thus, not a foundation, but a normative injunction that operates insidiously by installing itself into political discourse as its necessary ground. (p. 189)

When the ontological necessity of identity and the subject is questioned as little more than a "normative injunction," identities can no longer be held to a standard of an authentic ontology. In Chantal Mouffe's (1992) terms, "[t]he history of the subject is the history of his/her identifications and there is no concealed identity to be rescued from the latter" (p.371). As such, by undermining the ideal of authentic and foundational identity, the poststructural critique of the subject necessitates a critical examination of the second wave's deployment of "woman" in a way that takes seriously the rhetoricity of normative claims of "women's" authenticity. In this way, the rhetorical process of authentication may be of concern for those interested in second wave discourse.

Additionally, since the subject does not ground an identity's political articulation according to the poststructural critique, a second concern for critics of the second wave emerges over issues of any identity's authority in the public sphere. If an ideal of an authentic woman is better understood as a normative ideal, rather than a necessary one, questions that surface as to who *should* represent the movement (questions of credibility), can be read as questions that invoke rhetorical processes of authorization. In Michel Foucault's critique of the subject, the "author function" is just one illustrative concept of the ways relations of power implicate a subject's political articulation. Specifically, Foucault (1972) argues that there are a number of rules imposed on individuals who wish to "employ" discourse (p.224). "This amounts to a rarefaction of speaking subjects," according to Foucault (1972),

> none may enter into discourse on a specific subject unless he[/she] satisfied certain conditions or if he[/she] is not, from the outset qualified to do so. More exactly, not all areas of discourse are equally open and penetrable; some are forbidden territory. (pp.224-225)

Thus, Foucault (1984) suggests that critical attempts to secure a text (or representation) to its stable point of origin in the subject, are efforts that mistakenly focus on questions like: "who spoke/wrote and with what authenticity and originality?" (p.120), rather than an examination of the ways processes of authorization always already predicate the speaking subject's supposed authenticity. Put another way, when an authentic identity no longer secures a subject's political identification, a subject's authority within political discourse is secured through an on-going processes of authorization, not a pre-determined authenticity. As such, the ways discourses of authenticity intersect with discourses of authority provide at least one avenue to discuss the problems of identity politics without hailing back to identity politics' metaphysical foundations.

It is the problem of identity politics' metaphysical foundations coupled with its assumed necessity in feminist politics which compels the following analyses. The intersections of the movement's sexual and media politics, in general, point to both mainstream and alternative media texts as rich sites for critical analyses; insofar, however, that such intersection is arguably underpinned by ontological assumptions concerning identity, authority, and authenticity, the following analyses become not only case studies of second wave rhetoric, but become case studies of the dangers identity politics. The critique of identity politics has occurred in many different forms, but has often been itself scrutinized for its lack of pragmatic political applicability (Mouffe, 1992). Yet, if one considers that the concept of "woman" as a socially or ontologically unified category has already been held to irrecoverable scrutiny, the question of identity politics is not one of "woman's" political necessity and sustainability, but a question of whether "woman" can serve as a foundation, or "whether ["woman's"] continuing volatility is a sure sign that [it has] lost [its] ground, but retained [its] force with ambivalent consequences" (Butler, 1995, p.132). Thus, it is the conflicts over lesbian identity as structured through a commitment to "woman" and the consequences thereof that this project now turns.

Notes

[1] One of the important precipitating events to women's complaints against the EEOC was its 1965 decision that sex-segregated help-wanted ads were legal (Friedan, 1976; Rosen, 2000).

[2] Although I have chosen to discuss the history of liberal feminism through the history of NOW specifically, I want to emphasize that NOW was not the only liberal feminist organization of its time. Other organizations included the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) and National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). While there were some differences between these groups, NOW seemed to be the most prominent force of the liberal branch of the woman's movement.

[3] For a fuller description of the protest, see Cohen, 1988, pp.3-22.

[4] Kyra Pearson (1999) argues that while some radical groups can find their origins in the New Left, this is not necessarily the case for all groups. Pearson argues that the predominant historical narrative of feminism's second wave, which emphasizes the break away from the New Left and its development in larger urban communities, leaves out important and vocal groups like Iowa City's Women's Liberation Front.

[5] Gerhard (2001) examines "feminist" discourses of sexuality from the years 1920 to 1982.

CHAPTER TWO

LAVENDER HERRINGS & MENACES

Beginning in 1971, Betty Friedan made a call to the public to "make love, not war" (qtd. in Tornabene, 1971, p.84; see also Friedan, 1973b, p. 37). While clearly resonating with anti-war slogans of the time, Friedan's call to "make love" was not one that suggested sexual and political indiscretion, for she issued this call amidst her own very public outcries that feminism needed to get out of the business of sexual politics. Indeed, by the 1970s, Friedan's belief that lesbians were the "lavender menace" of the women's movement had received attention in the mainstream press (e.g., Brownmiller, 1970; Carmody, 1972a, 1972b; Tornabene, 1971). And by 1973, during her proclamation to "make love, not war," Friedan (1973b) published the following comments in *New York Times Magazine*:

> The *disrupters* of the women's movement were the ones continually trying to push lesbianism or hatred of men, even though many weren't lesbians themselves and didn't act privately as if they hated men. . . . [The lesbian takeover] was both hurting and exploiting the women's movement to try to use it to proselytize for lesbianism because of the sexual preferences of a few. This could only subordinate the great issue of equality for women, the opportunity and institutional changes that all women so desperately need. . . . [T]hey were creating a *sexual red herring* that would divide the movement and lead ultimately to sexual McCarthyism. *It seemed to me that the women's movement had to get out of sexual politics*. (emphasis mine, p. 33-34).

As her article also called attention to movement radicals such as Kate Millett, Ti-Grace Atkinson, and Robin Morgan, Friedan's fear of sexual McCarthyism came to fruition in her own rhetoric. Jill Johnston (1973), in her response to Friedan, put it best with: "Friedan's prediction . . . of sexual McCarthysm. . . has come true: and in fact she has fulfilled her prophecy by becoming the prime reactionary voice" (p.22). It seems to be the case that the labeled "mother" of feminism's second wave had disowned her gay "children." [1]

In this chapter, I argue that feminist rhetoric played a central role in the sexual McCarthyism of the mainstream press. Conflicts over sexuality not only served an important inventive function for internal movement discourse, but also proved to generate conflicts over authority within media coverage of the movement. Liberal feminism's attempts to articulate a *credible woman* to represent the movement's goals often ran counter to the mainstream media attention to deviance within the movement. As common understandings of the second wave's media-movement interactions dictate, the media often focused on radical elements within the movement in ways that worked to discredit feminist's goals. It may seem that lesbian identities within the second wave provided good fodder for the movement's dismissal by the public. Yet closer analysis reveals that lesbians were not a central "presence" within journalists' accounts of the movement. It was feminists themselves, principally Friedan, who wittingly or unwittingly brought lesbianism and its relationship to the movement into the media arena by consistently raising the issue in their public discourse. In this chapter, in order to examine the ways that the emergence of a lesbian presence within media coverage of the second wave challenges conventional wisdom concerning movement-media interaction, I analyze the lesbian representations in mainstream print discourse about the women's movement between 1966 and 1975. [2] More specifically, I examine feminist conflicts over lesbianism, played out in dominant media coverage, as symptomatic of the embattled relationships between authority, deviance, and sexuality as constituents of the movement's public identity. I conclude with a discussion of the ways that a nuanced understanding of a media-movement interaction reveals the dangers of feminism's various identity commitments.

Mainstream Media, Authority, Deviance, & Sexuality

A consideration of the mainstream press' representations of feminism's second wave involves an understanding of the various ways feminist groups interacted with mainstream media conventions. Stressing the importance of the second wave's media politics, Bernadette Barker Plummer (1995) argues that "the perception of a movement that most individuals are likely to hold is the movement's 'public identity,' and this is itself the direct outcome of media-movement interaction" (p. 307). Although, generally, the relationship between the mainstream press and the women's movement was a tenuous one, the relationship did structure the ways feminists and eventually lesbians were represented in mainstream coverage. Specifically, the press played a central role in feminism's vilification in the public arena by propagating negative stereotypes of feminists and their concerns (Davis, 1999; Douglas, 1994; Dow, 1999; Rosen, 2000). Yet, as Susan Douglas (1994) notes, "despite [the press] coverage—and perhaps even because of it—increasing numbers of women, and men, came to support varying versions of feminist ideology, and to change their aspirations and live their lives accordingly" (p.165; see also, Barker-Plummer, 2002; Davis, 1999; Douglas, 1994).

More than just tenuous, however, the media-movement interaction of feminism's second wave can also be described as somewhat fragmented. Specifically, the second wave did not have any monolithic approach or relationship with the media because the second wave's media-movement interaction varied among liberal and radical groups. Since media conventions demanded newsworthy events, (i.e., public protests and press conferences) recognizable leaders and organizations, (i.e., Betty Friedan and NOW) and accessible events (i.e., not consciousness-raising groups), the ways liberal feminism strategized their interactions with media differed considerably from certain radical groups' willingness and ability to construct a tenable relationship with the press (Barker-Plummer, 1995; Tuchman, 1978).

Liberal feminists, for example, considered the media to be a useful political resource and sought to use it to mobilize movement support (Barker-Plummer, 1995, 2002). As "media pragmatists," NOW's leadership used financial resources to target the media, to instigate its own coverage, and to identify sympathetic women reporters (Barker-Plummer,1995; 2002). Because of NOW's devotion to establishing a complementary interaction with the mainstream press, Barker-Plummer (2002) insists that NOW quite successfully allowed movement leaders to be the "primary definers" of the movement's goals. As an explicit refutation of other media/movement critics, who suggest that the mainstream press always undermines challenges to the status quo (see, e.g., Gitlin, 1980), Barker-Plummer insists that NOW's successful attempts to self-define the movement within the mainstream press reveals that media movement interactions are both complex and contingent. While Barker-Plummer does point to the importance of understanding media-movement relationships as contingent on certain movements' media strategies, she fails to consider that such contingencies also demand a closer look into the ways a fragmented movement, such as feminism's second wave, structured a media-movement interaction that was not the direct result of NOW's media strategies alone.

Radical feminists, for instance, had an entirely different relationship with media which also influenced representations of the movement in press coverage. Radical feminists viewed the mainstream media as a patriarchical institution (Freeman, 1975), and since radical groups were also devoted to leaderless consciousness-raising groups, these groups did not lend themselves well to media conventions that demanded spokespeople and newsworthy events (Tuchman, 1978). Although radical feminism attempted to *limit* media coverage and liberal feminism attempted to *control* media coverage, the press tended to emphasize radical elements of the movement, and to describe feminists as militant and different from ordinary women, thus undercutting the legitimacy of the movement's goals and ideologies (Byerly, 1999; Davis, 1999; Douglas, 1994; Dow, 1999; Rosen, 2000).

Moreover Todd Gitlin's (1980) analysis of the ways the New Left was undermined by the mainstream press, however pessimistic, cannot be wholly dismissed. Gitlin's (1980) discussion of the ways "leaders" and "authorities" surfaced in mainstream press coverage of the New Left serves as a reminder of the consequences that media appointed representatives of a movement can have on a movement's public identity. Gitlin (1980) argues that media conventions demand spokespeople who are of "news value." Newsworthiness, according to Gitlin, consists of either "legitimate authorities" or deviants (see also, Tuchman, 1978). Although Gitlin's analysis focuses on the New Left specifically, evidence of this trend for feminist representations can be found in the consistent citing of Betty Friedan within the press as a result of her perceived legitimate authoritative status as the founder of NOW. Similarly, the press' citing of Ti-Grace Atkinson's "radical" support for prostitutes and her belief that marriage was slavery, [3] as well as the outing of Kate Millett as bisexual, supports his thesis that deviance made for "good copy." Contrary to Barker-Plummer, Gitlin's analysis of media discourse suggests that articulations of *identities within the movement* and the movement's *public identity* were not in the hands of the movement, but were subjected to mainstream media conventions.

These varying factors involved in the media-movement interaction created somewhat of an authority crisis for the second wave because movement media strategies, media conventions, and radical movement commitments often functioned against one another. This confluence of interrelated factors contributed to a construction of feminism that was antithetical to the movement's commitments. As Douglas (1994) explains, some reporters were "ambivalent and confused, taking feminism seriously one minute, and mocking it the next" (p. 165). More specifically, if one considers, as Thomas B. Farrell (1993) does, that claims to authority are "grounded entitlement[s] to offer a perspective on appearances based on some claim to a constituency" (p.290), the interaction among liberal media "pragmatists," radical media "subversives" (Barker-Plummer, 1995), and mainstream media conventions generated a struggle for *who* could represent the movement and its assumed constituency—women and feminists.

A good case in point is the ousting of radical feminist Ti-Grace Atkinson by The Feminists. Atkinson, Betty Friedan's early prodigy, broke away from NOW on October 17, 1968 and founded the radical group later to be known as The Feminists. The Feminists considered themselves to be a vanguard group. Like most vanguard feminist groups of the time, to be a member of The Feminists entailed compliance with certain rules. The Feminists secured their place in feminist history as being "true" to their own "leaderless" standards with the 1970 ousting of Atkinson, who had been receiving a lot of attention from the media and had been criticized for her participation in her own fame. The Feminists felt that the media, with her permission, was constructing Atkinson as some sort of leader. Since leadership was banned from The Feminists, Atkinson was forced to leave to clarify their uncompromising beliefs (Echols 1989). In other words, by the very act of representing The Feminists, Atkinson was no longer representative of her radical constituency. While The Feminists were displeased with Atkinson's media-derived authority, Friedan was not happy with the attention that radical women and ideas were receiving in the press either. In *New York Times Magazine*, for example, Friedan (1973b) told of her disappointment that Atkinson, who Friedan "originally pushed forward in NOW because of her ladylike blond image [that] would counteract the man-eating specter" (p.32), had received attention because of her controversial support for prostitutes (see, Fosburgh, 1970). Charging that "the media began to publicize, in more and more sensational terms, the more exhibitionist, down-with-men, down-with-marriage, down-with-childbearing rhetoric and actions," Friedan (1973b) accused radical feminists of disrupting the movement and driving out "women who wanted equality" (p.32).

Rather than taking either Barker-Plummer's optimistic view or Gitlin's pessimistic one, I think both begin to highlight a more complex dialectic at work within the media-movement interaction, especially as that interaction functioned in lesbian representations. In short, the media strategies of NOW to gain support for the movement, and the mainstream press' focus on deviance, seemed to work contrary to conventional wisdom in the case of the representations of lesbian politics and feminism's second wave. Take for instance, that while lesbians within the movement should have made for good deviant fodder for the press to use to discredit the movement, generally speaking, lesbian politics were not afforded that much attention. In the early coverage of the movement (1966-1969), lesbianism was rarely mentioned. For example, Sara Davidson's 1969 article on the movement in *Life* magazine does cite a young feminist as being concerned that the public often "attacked" feminists as being lesbians (p. 71). Yet, Martha Weinman Lear's (1968) germinal article in *New York Times Magazine*, which marks the first mainstream identification of the movement as "The Second Feminist Wave," fails to mention lesbians even once despite its attempt to provide a comprehensive answer to the question, "What do these women *want*?" (emphasis hers, p.24).

What seems to be most striking about the lack of identification of lesbians in the movement is the simultaneous inclusion of radical feminist views. Lear's (1968) article, for example, cites the public perception that to be feminist is to not be feminine (p.50), points to Ti-Grace Atkinson's potentially communist view that marriage was an institution of slavery (p.60), and even suggests that radical groups may be trying to "infiltrate" the less controversial NOW (p.53). Despite Lear's attempts to highlight a radical feminist (and even communist) threat, she neglects to mention the role that lesbian politics may have in these radical views.[4] In other words, while deviance caught the attention of the press, lesbian deviance seemed to escape journalists' attention in the early coverage of the movement.

The coverage of lesbians within the movement, however, did change and increase by 1970. Since significant conflicts over lesbian politics did not surface within the movement until 1970, which was also the beginning of the movement's "media blitz" (Freeman, 1975), the omission of lesbian politics within the early coverage seems reflective of the situation within the movement. Despite the increase in coverage, however, lesbians continued to be relegated to the periphery of the feminist movement. Generally, the press did link women's liberation and lesbian politics, but not in a way that suggested that lesbian politics were a significant concern for movement activists. In coverage of the gay liberation movement, for example, writers would, in passing, mention the fact that some feminists were participating in the Gay Liberation Front's protests. As one report indicated, "The protesters, members of the Gay Liberation Front and a number of women's liberation organizations, protested the arrest of 167 people in a predawn raid on a bar that the police said was frequented by homosexuals" ("Homosexuals hold," 1970, p.29).

While other reports would link lesbians' specific concerns with women's liberation, such remarks, again, can be best described as tangential. For example, Ti-Grace Atkinson is briefly mentioned as being a part of a lesbian protest at St. Patrick's Cathedral ("Lesbian-sponsored," 1971, p. 46), and Judy Klemesrud (1973) credits the "new openness and willingness [of lesbians] to talk about themselves and in some cases, live and work openly" as being attributed to both women's and gay liberation groups (p.46). However much these remarks began to associate women's liberation with lesbian politics, they do not do so in a way that would suggest that lesbian politics were at the forefront of feminist concerns. [5]

Assuredly, the reports above are "accurate" to the extent that lesbian politics were, at best, of tangential concern for liberal feminist groups. Considering Barker-Plummer's (2002) analysis that NOW was somewhat successful in defining the issues of the women's movement, and Gitlin's (1980) remarks that the mainstream press often turned to "legitimate authorities" as spokespeople, it is not surprising that Friedan and others were able to subvert lesbian politics' claim to any authoritative or well-received presence within the movement. If there is a predominant trend in the mainstream print press' attention to lesbians within the movement, it is one that reveals a paucity of coverage which, more often than not, represented lesbians as a peripheral concern.

Furthermore, although Barker-Plummer (2002) praises NOW's media success, she does admit that NOW's attempts to control its own identity were not successful in the controversy over lesbians as representatives and members of the movement. She argues that while Friedan and NOW believed that silencing and ignoring a lesbian "presence" within the organization would protect a public identification of lesbian politics with feminist politics, this tactic was unsuccessful, and may have even allowed for associations between lesbians and the movement to circulate more freely. As I am sympathetic to Barker-Plummer's suggestion that the issue of lesbians within the movement proved to be an example of NOW's failure, her suggestion that NOW's silence *passively* allowed for lesbians to discredit the movement may miss an important trend in the media coverage of lesbian politics—NOW leaders, like Friedan, did not remain silent on the issue. Rather than surreptitiously subverting lesbian politics, liberal feminism's attempts to silence the lesbian issue served as an exigence for lesbian feminist responses. Such lesbian responses worked within a system of media conventions, which ultimately secured the solidification of liberal feminism's fear. Indeed, if there was passivity in the mainstream press coverage, it was on the part of the press which allowed the voices of feminists themselves to announce a lesbian presence.

Just as a faith in NOW's passive failure may oversimplify media-movement dynamics, a statement of media passivity, however, is also somewhat misleading in that the media did have control over what to print. Rather than attributing either passivity or blame to the media or the movement, I think it is more instructive to consider the ways that any attention paid to lesbians within the mainstream press functioned as a *paralepsis*—the "drawing [of] attention to something in the very act of pretending to pass it over" (*Silva Rhetoricae*, n.pag.). In what follows, I argue that press coverage of lesbians within the movement reveals two interrelated trends—a consistent construction of lesbians as both lavender herrings and menaces, and a tendency within the coverage to allow feminists themselves to announce a lesbian "presence." These trends evidence a mainstream press propensity to focus on deviance, but not in a way that would risk a media appointment of a sexual deviant as any kind of authority. Upon closer examination of the ways the mainstream press relied on feminist commentary to construct lesbians' influence on the movement, it becomes clear that the movement-media interaction over the relationship between lesbian and feminist politics produced a treacherous terrain for feminist authority which not only stripped lesbians' claims to a broadly defined constituency (of *both* feminists and women), but the entitlement of that constituency and its leaders to political equality.

Lavender Herrings/Menaces & Lesbians' Lack of Authority

Susan Brownmiller's (1970) infamous description of the relationship between lesbian and feminist politics in *New York Times Magazine* characteristically describes the predominant ways lesbians were constructed in the mainstream press' coverage of the movement as both lavender herrings and menaces. Brownmiller (1970) wrote:

> Each time a man sloughs off the women's movement with the comment, "They're nothing but a bunch of lesbians and frustrated bitches," we quiver with collective rage. How can such a charge be answered in rational terms? It cannot be. (The supersensitivity of the movement to the lesbian issue, and the existence of a few militant lesbians within the movement once prompted Friedan herself to grouse about "the lavender menace" that was threatening to warp the image of women's rights. A lavender *herring*, perhaps, but surely no clear and present danger). (emphasis hers, p.140)

Although Brownmiller's identification of lesbians as the movement's "lavender herrings" was explicitly an attempt to discredit Friedan's articulation of a "lavender menace," such an identification proved to be an enduring one which did not discount lesbians' menacing status within the public consciousness.

Specifically, lesbian politics were mentioned in some cases in terms of a "plot" ("It was a great day," 1970, p.4), or a "disruption" to the movement (Friedan, 1973a; Nemy, 1972). And, although Brownmiller (1970) exclaims that lesbians are "no clear and present danger" (p. 140), others told of their overwhelmingly threatening influence. Just one year later, Judy Klemesrud's (1971) article, also in *New York Times Magazine*, quoted Betty Friedan as saying that the movement did not need a "sexual *red herring*" as a diversion, and that " [t]rying to equate lesbianism with the women's liberation movement is playing into the hands of the enemy" (emphasis mine, p.50). Although Friedan used lesbians-as-red/lavender-herrings towards her denouncement of lesbians within the movement, initial responses by feminists maligned Brownmiller's identification. Lois Hart (1970), for example, in a letter to the editor in which she was commenting on Brownmiller's article, exclaimed:

> Just as women have fled the male-dominated left to form their own movement to end their oppression, homosexual women are organizing to combat oppression at the hands of their straight sisters. . . .Women may get equal pay, day-care centers, the right to abort, equal education—but as long as woman's essential definition remains tied to whom she is permitted to have genital relations with, there will be no revolution—only privileges gained within an oppressive psycho-social system. The last revolution will have to be for us all. (p. 135-136) [6]

While Klemesrud's (1971) citation of Friedan, Brownmiller's original lavender herring comment, and the various allusions to a lesbian "plot" are emblematic of the consistent lesbian identifications in the mainstream press, they are also emblematic of the predominant trope within media's constructions—*paralepsis*. The lesbian-feminist response combined with the use of Betty Friedan's words (which were only given further credibility by Brownmiller's previous comments in the same magazine), remarks on the ways that the mainstream press used the authority of feminists to announce a lesbian presence, while simultaneously denouncing lesbians' ability to be anything but on the periphery (i.e., lavender herrings) of the feminist movement.

Thus, I will discuss the constructions of lesbians as lavender herrings and menaces through a closer look into the role that feminist-authored articles and reactions, as well as journalists' citing of feminists, played within the mainstream coverage.

The simultaneous construction of lesbians as both "red herrings" and "menaces" to the women's movement occurred through *coverage of the conflicts* between lesbians and those who sought to stifle their influence. I have chosen to describe these constructions as a result of the coverage because, more often that not, the mainstream press seemed to be hesitant to use commentators who were outside of the movement to announce a lesbian political influence. Midge Decter (1970), an infamous critic of the women's movement proclaimed that "some few, but by no means all of the new [women's] liberators [are] lesbians" (p.40), just as other commentators sarcastically remarked, "Some enlightened people attack man-hating lesbians as if they represented the movement" (Rollin, 1971, p.16). The explicit denial that not all feminists were lesbians seems to indicate that commentators within the mainstream media dismissed claims that lesbians were representative of the movement's constituency. These denials, however, function in a way that calls attention to lesbians, while also explicitly undercutting any authorial responsibility for an identification of feminists as lesbians.

Although commentators explicitly "disclaimed" their own belief in a lesbian-feminist articulation, consistent trends within the coverage reveal, however, a much more implicit *paraleptic* trope. The more implicit trend centered on "objective" coverage of the movement's conflicts and the publication of Friedan's denouncements, followed by feminist reactions. In an account of the Women's Strike for Equality, the *New York Times*, for example, cites:

> The "Lesbian plot" notion appeared to have been refuted when a member of Radical Lesbians made a plaintive plea at the Bryant Park rally for support from her "straight"

> sisters in the movement. The speaker charged that the police were harassing Lesbians, and that other women in the movement were ignoring their plight. “We’re your sisters, and we need your help!” the speaker cried. (“It was a great day,” 1970, p.4; also reported in Klemesrud, 1971, p.50).

And, while the above report indicates that lesbians were not the concern of many of their straight sisters, the press’ “objective” coverage of the movement two years later reveals the impact of the lesbian dismissal:

> Is the issue of lesbianism splitting the women’s movement in New York? Thousands of women who last month watched the Women’s March for Equality down Fifth Avenue were concerned that the highly visible and highly audible lesbian groups that appeared to dominate the parade were also achieving undue prominence in the movement as a whole. Many feminists who had marched in the previous two years withheld their support this year in silent protest against what they considered a takeover by radical elements. (Nemy, 1972, p.46; see also, “Women’s liberation revisited,” 1972, p. 30)

Similarly, *Time* magazine noted, “The issue of lesbianism has hurt the movement. Says one N.O.W. official: ‘I have heard a woman called Communist, radical, bitchy, everything—and she can take it. But if anyone so much as breathes the word lesbian at her, she goes to pieces’” (“Women’s liberation revisited,” 1972, p.30). Such commentary and coverage revealed lesbians’ strained support from the movement, their constrained ability to act as representatives for the movement’s concerns, and their potentially threatening influence. More importantly, however, this coverage in the *New York Times* reveals the ways that the press could rely on “objective” coverage of movement conflicts to assert a lesbian presence.

Considered as a "pillar of modern American journalism," the standard of "objectivity" within news reporting of feminism's second wave evidences a consideration of coverage trends as employing a *paraleptic* trope (Alwood, 1996, p.9). Edward Alwood (1996) argues that the standard of objectivity necessitates "procedures for gathering and reporting news [that] separate journalists' opinions and attitudes from news [coverage]" (p.9). In order to present "straight" news, according to Alwood, "stories are based on verifiable statements from recognized experts, public documents, and official sources" (p.10). Although *paralepsis* is often described in terms of a speaker's explicit statements which pretend to pass over an issue while simultaneously calling attention to it (e.g., "I am going to ignore the ways that people will assert that all feminists are lesbians and instead argue that feminism has other deep-seated beliefs concerning sexual politics"), the importance of "objective" mainstream news coverage points to a nuanced understanding of *paralepsis* as a trope in news coverage. Although not explicit, the use of internal movement sources to announce lesbians' presence and influence functioned in a way that allowed the press to assume a neutral position on lesbian identities while also calling attention to their ostensibly profound and dangerous influence.

Consider, for example, that supporting evidence of the movement's sexual conflicts was offered by Friedan and other movement activists. The importance of Friedan's own rhetoric cannot be overstated as it was the most inflammatory and persistent articulation of lesbians' influence within the movement. Following an August 1972 article in *McCall's*, Friedan (1973c), again in *McCall's*, argued that "We don't have to be that independent," attributing external movement backlash to the inclusion of sexual politics in radical feminist published critiques (such as Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*) (p.21). The focus on sexual politics had taken away from the movement's "*real* goals" (emphasis hers, p.50), according to Friedan (1973c), and feminists needed to "join with the men we can now know and love as friends as well as lovers" (p.147).

As if that was not enough, Friedan published an even more lengthy attack in the *New York Times Magazine* on March 4, 1973. This attack, definitively more scathing than her previous remarks, attributes the Lavender Menace zap of the Second Congress to Unite Women to the "man-hating faction" of the movement (p.33), and she suggests disbelief and disdain that "lesbians were *organizing* to take over NOW" (p.34). Consistently referring to lesbians as "man-haters" and "disrupters" of the feminist movement (p. 33, 34), Friedan charges:

> The man-haters are given publicity far out of proportion to their numbers in the movement because of the media's hunger for sensationalism. . . .Many women in the movement go through a temporary period of great hostility to men when they first become conscious of their situation, but when they start acting to change their situation, they outgrow what I call the pseudoradical infantilism. But that man-hating rhetoric increasingly disturbs most women in the movement, in addition to the women it keeps out of the movement. (p.34)

Although Friedan's remarks accuse the mainstream press of capitalizing on the "sensationalism" provided by lesbians within the movement, her own comments are much more insidious than any reports in the print press. As Robin Morgan (1973b) put it in her response to Friedan, "[Friedan's comments] makes one wonder who indeed is behind this manufactured news event, first attempted when Friedan attacked Abzug and Steinem in (fittingly) McCall's [sic.]; *in whose interest is it to set well-known figures of the Movement at one another's public throats*" (emphasis hers, p.16).

The brief account of Robin Morgan's response begins to point to the ways that the threat of the lesbian takeover seems to be a result of both the paranoid rhetoric of some feminists and of Friedan's efforts to purge the movement of a lesbian influence. Take for example that the efforts by lesbians and their supporters to announce a lesbian presence to the mainstream press are often couched within a concern of the movement's dismissal of lesbian politics. The most salient example of this trend occurs in an article by Judy Klemesrud in *New York Times Magazine.* Klemesrud's (1971) article explicitly focused on lesbian groups, such as the Daughters of Bilitis, and tied the concerns of lesbians to the concerns of some feminists. In her report, Klemesrud cites Friedan's fear that the lesbian presence within the feminist movement may be a C.I.A. Conspiracy—as Friedan put it "The C.I.A. couldn't have thought of anything worse" than to announce publicly lesbian influence on the movement (qtd. in Klemesrud, 1971, p.50). Similarly, the lesbian threat to the movement was constructed as much more personal when "one movement leader" was quoted as saying, "Some lesbians actually prey on lonely and confused women who are new to the movement . . . I'm not saying that a lot of women have been seduced but some lesbians are looking for partners" (qtd. in Klemesrud, 1971, p.50).

> In a way that seemingly confirmed the threatening influence of lesbians to the movement, Klemesrud "counters" Friedan's and others' dismissal by quoting lesbians and their supporters of the movement. As one activist was noted as saying: "They have to include us . . .because lesbianism is the vanguard of the feminist movement. A woman who says she is a lesbian is saying, in effect, that she's a woman who's going to make it as woman without a man" (qtd in. Klemesrud, 1971, p.48). And, although Ti-Grace Atkinson had once been dismissive of lesbian politics, Klemesrud includes her remarks that: "Lesbianism contains the key principle to a successful feminist movement; guilt by

association" (qtd. in Klemesrud, 1971, p.46). Assuredly, these remarks, couched within a pronounced fear of a lesbian influence and takeover, worked not to counter Friedan's fear, but to assure the public that lesbians had a very pronounced and threatening presence within the movement.

Furthermore, the construction of the lesbians as a "threat" to the movement worked consistently with the paranoia within liberal feminism of a C.I.A. or F.B.I. conspiracy to discredit the movement (Rosen, 2000, p.227-260). In her *New York Times Magazine* article, Friedan indirectly accuses the C.I.A. of using radical and lesbian women to infiltrate the movement. After labeling Ti-Grace Atkinson as one of the radical disrupters of the movement, Friedan (1973a) "confesses":

> I never told anyone, but very early, Ti-Grace Atkinson took me to lunch in Philadelphia with the wife of a top C.I.A. official, who offered to help us. I told Ti-Grace we didn't want the help from the C.I.A. Sometime in 1968, we heard that 200 women had been trained by the F.B.I. or the C.I.A. to infiltrate the women's movement—as is known was done by the F.B.I. in the student and radical movements. (p.33)

Friedan also pushes readers to consider the zap at the Second Congress to Unite Women as a conspiracy when she writes, "But after the man-hating faction broke up the second Congress to Unite Women with hate talk, and even violence, I hear a young radical say, 'If I were an agent of the C.I.A. and wanted to disrupt this movement, that's just what I would do'" (p. 33). And even years later Friedan's fear had not dissipated as the *New York Times* reported:

> [Friedan] warned feminists from becoming anti-male and said they must move away from negative thinking to a "new yes" spirit. "With the Watergate revelations—how the C.I.A. has manipulated and infiltrated, and usually under the guise of pushing, like an agent

provocateur, a radical or pseudoradical in every other movement to render it ineffective—one can assume that the same thing has been happening in the women's movement." ("Betty Friedan fears," 1975, p.23)

The construction of lesbian politics as a menace to the movement is taken to a new level in these remarks. Not only were lesbians a growing menace to the movement's public identity, but they were also, according to these depictions, a conspiratorial damaging influence, *intentionally* designed to discredit the movement.

The mainstream press did not need to rely on reporting of the movement, sound-bite feminist remarks within that reporting, or Friedan's own rhetoric. Not surprisingly, feminists responded to Friedan's *New York Times Magazine* article through a series of letters to the editor. Although one letter from Pauli Murray (1973) of the A.C.L.U. supported Friedan claiming that "[h]er fear [that lesbians have infiltrated the movement] is realistic. Women, being one half of the human race, are a broad spectrum of humanity of which those who have preference for one's own sex are only a minority" (p. 109), the rest of the letters responding to Friedan showed no support. Robin Morgan (1973b), argued:

[I]t is, after all *women* that the Feminist movement is all about: lesbians *and* heterosexuals *and* celibate women, mothers and nuns, welfare clients, housewives, students, factory workers, secretaries, women of all races and classes. . . We will not be divided by irrelevancies, nor exploited or defamed by any individual woman's pitiable obsession for male acceptance in the U.S. Senate. . . If the eminent sister would remain at all relevant she should recall these words of Gandhi: "There go my people: I must hurry and catch up with them, for I am their leader." (p.16)

Morgan's comments were further supported by Ginny Vida & Jean O'Leary's (1973) cry that "as lesbians and feminists, we deplore Betty Friedan's article.. . .[Lesbian] voices will not be stilled by the fearful words of a sister whom the 'sex role revolution' has left behind" (p. 16, 20), and Mimi Kelber's (1973) call that "[feminists,] must dissociate ourselves from [Friedan's] 'leadership'" (p.20).

More prominent and visible feminists like Jill Johnston (1973) accused Friedan of "woman-hating," (p.22) and "dyke-baiting" (p.29). Similarly, Ti-Grace Atkinson (1973) expressed that she was "stunned and outraged by Betty Friedan's smear article" (p.108), just as Toni Carabillo (1973) of NOW clarifies that "no group or agency has 'taken over' NOW" and that her version of the history of NOW and the movement is inaccurate" (p.108).

Friedan's response to these attacks?

I do not find truth in the man-hating rhetoric of sex-class warfare which Ti-Grace Atkinson and Jill Johnston and Robin Morgan continue to promulgate and which I will continue to fight. I believe this anti-man note is a sexual red herring and basically irrelevant and even inimical to our movement . . .. I respect the rights and sexual differences of my lesbian sisters even if their way is not mine and I will fight anyone who attempts to persecute them, but black women and housewives as well as men have been unnecessarily alienated by the man-hating rhetoric. (Friedan, 1973a, p.108-109)

However deplorable Friedan's article was, she remained consistently fearful of her own usurpation by radical and lesbian feminists.

This significant exchange in *New York Times Magazine* warrants a careful examination. First, its significance cannot be underestimated as Betty Friedan had already secured her place as an authoritative figure for the movement in the mainstream press. Susan Douglas notes that before the media elevated Gloria Steinem in 1971, Betty Friedan received most of the media's attention. As the author of the germinal *The Feminine Mystique*, the founder and once-president of NOW, Friedan's "legitimate authority" was hardly denied by the press as evidenced in her labeled status as the "mother," "high priestess" (Klemesrud, 1970b, p.47) "spiritual leader" (Tornabene, 1971, p.136), and "founder" ("Feminist Marchers," 1970, p.66) of the women's movement. Since Friedan's prominent place as the leader of the women's movement was rarely questioned in the mainstream press, her ability to define her constituency rhetorically and to deny lesbian feminists any claim to be representatives of "*real*" feminist goals, assuredly worked with a substantial rhetorical force.

Additionally, Morgan's and Johnston's responses, which questioned Friedan's motives and her role in substantiating her own fear, cannot be described as entirely reactionary. It seems too coincidental, for instance, that the lesbian presence within the movement was only significantly noticed by the mainstream press after Friedan labeled lesbians as the "lavender menace," after NOW's first lesbian purge, and following the lesbian feminist response that such actions seemed to demand (including the 1970 founding of Radicalesbians and their subsequent outing of Kate Millett, the Lavender Menace zap, and Jill Johnston's self-outing in *Village Voice*). Similarly, the response by many feminists to Friedan's article in *New York Times* magazine, which called further attention to lesbians' role in the movement, suggests that, in many ways, Friedan's fear of an identification of lesbians with the movement was a self-fulfilling prophecy. It seems to be the case that since Friedan goaded a lesbian reaction with her explicit denigration of lesbians in the movement, lesbian feminists and their supporters made the importance of lesbian politics to the women's movement even more visible than it was before. Liberal feminism may have strategized to promote a political articulation of the *credible woman*, but such efforts were, at the very least, mitigated by their own fear that lesbians were incommensurate with this articulation.

In sum, the "lesbian threat" was articulated in various ways. In some ways the lesbian menace threatened the ability of the movement to recruit and retain would-be supporters. In another way, these menaces threatened "straight" feminists with their sexual advances and desperate search for partners. Finally, however, the lesbians threatened to intentionally disrupt the movement in ways that resulted not from their legitimate concerns of dismissal, but as a result of their insidious C.I.A. plot to discredit the movement. Clearly, the credibility of lesbians as legitimate movement leaders, constituents, and supporters were undermined through these representations. Although Gitlin (1980) points out that movement "deviants" were often focused on as movement leaders and representatives, in the case of lesbians and the second wave, articulations of the lesbian influence did not confirm any position of authority or leadership. Rather, the identifications of lesbians and the movement solidified their peripheral but dangerous status.

Explicit constructions of lesbians as menaces and authorities, however, only begin to comment on the relationships between media conventions, feminist legitimate authority, and the lack of authoritative possibilities available for sexual "deviants." When one considers the ways that the press relied on the movement itself to announce and construct lesbians' presence, the mainstream media could simultaneously discredit the movement while preserving their own authority to inaugurate feminist leaders and authorities in an "objective" way. I have described this strategy as a *paraleptic* trope, because the almost exclusive use of feminist's own rhetoric combined with the explicit denials by outside movement commentators, allows the mainstream press to reasonably assert that neither they themselves nor outside movement commentators were responsible for any assertion of lesbians' influence. In short, through the very act of pretending to dismiss the equation of lesbian and feminist politics, the published feminist reactions and reports of the conflicts drew more attention to the issue than outside commentary could have.

The impact of *paralepsis*, arguably, had implications for the movement's public identity that go beyond the denial of authority to lesbians in the mainstream press. Since lesbianism surfaces most obviously within Friedan's own rhetoric, and others' dismissal of lesbian politics as a central concern of the movement, the further articulation of lesbians as a "threat" to the movement clearly indicated, to the public, that the movement was suffering from crippling constituency issues. Such articulations not only threatened lesbians' ability to occupy a role of authority, but also worked against the movement's ability in general to occupy such a role. As Douglas (1994) notes:

> Even if most women *did* want a liberation movement, its success was doomed, according to news accounts, because women were constitutionally incapable of cooperating with one another. Certainly there were real divisions within what was broadly termed the media reinforced stereotype that women were completely incompetent as politicians, tacticians, and organizers and had proved, once again, that they didn't deserve to be active anywhere but in the kitchen, the bedroom, and the nursery. . . . The media representation of feminism reinforced the division between the acceptable and the deviant, refined and the grotesque, between deserving ladies and disorderly dogs. (pp.186, 191)

In this way, Friedan was right. Lesbian politics threatened a political identification of the *credible woman*. If Douglas's remarks are correct, what Friedan and others did not foresee, however, is that their own attempts to silence and dismiss lesbians within the movement compelled a construction of the movement's public identity in a way that denied the credibility of any woman. In other words, when one considers that the mainstream press' representations of the relationship between lesbian and feminist politics were couched within liberal feminism's public constructions of lesbians as lavender menaces and herrings, what becomes evident is that lesbians themselves did not prove to be the "disruptors" of an articulation of the *credible woman*. The fear of their influence, however, did.

Identity Politics & Authority

One of the more interesting aspects of lesbian representations in mainstream print discourse is the fact that such representations begin to question the previously described relationship between deviance, authority, and feminism's second wave. It is the case that lesbian deviance received attention from the mainstream press, and such deviance was articulated in a way that prevented any claim of a lesbian leader of the movement. Although the lack of lesbian media-derived authority may point to NOW's successful attempts to contain the issue, the method of this containment also points to how media conventions, which focused on deviance and disagreement, functioned to discredit serious challenges to the status quo. Remarking on the ways that deviance and disorder carried news appeal, this analysis suggests that in terms of lesbian representations within the movement, both liberal feminists' attempts to "self-define" the movement and the press' attempts to discredit the movement did not work against each other. Rather, these once-assumed oppositional tendencies functioned consistently with one another to deny lesbians the ability to be positioned as authorities while damaging the movement's attempts to articulate the political necessity and viability of a credible womanhood. By calling attention to the divisive issue of lesbianism within the movement, liberal feminist media strategies worked within already established media conventions to discredit not only lesbians', but also women's ability to be politically credible.

The ways that lesbians, and consequently feminists, were constitutively constrained from occupying positions of authority within the mainstream press points to the limitations of identity politics. As an identity-based movement, feminism's second wave fell prey to the problems inherent with commitments to identity politics. Since its goal was centered on legal reformation for *women*, liberal feminism needed a political articulation of *woman* that would work with rhetorical force to secure the acceptability of its demands. Lesbians threatened the sustainability of an articulation of *woman* that was *credible* because of their inherent and assumed deviance within the public consciousness. More importantly, however, lesbians were ultimately denied positions of authority because they were consistently identified as lavender herrings and menaces, and such identifications placed them in the movement's periphery and denied their capacity to be representative of *women*. Indeed, while the *credible woman* grounded liberal feminism's movement strategies, such strategies were important because of liberal feminism's commitment to *women*. And, it is this commitment to *women* that reveals the fundamental violence to lesbians within the mainstream press' construction of lesbian and feminist politics.

Jeffrey T. Nealon (1998), following the work of Judith Butler, argues that "feminism, like any other identity-based movement, cannot protect its identificatory sites from being inhabited by drag queens, Phyllis Schlafly, James Joyce, or whomever" (p.83). In the case of feminism's second wave, lesbian subjects threatened to inhabit the identificatory site of *women*—both credible and otherwise. Although the implications of this threat seem to be a result of the fear of the threat itself, liberal feminism's refusal to question feminism's seemingly transcendent foundation of "woman," begins to comment on the political efficacy and sustainability of their identity commitment. Nealon (1998) asks political theorists to consider “what it costs us to protect such seemingly sites of contestation [like “woman”] from contestation itself” (p.83). In this case, the cost was quite simple. Lesbians were denied a broadly defined constituency that moved beyond their own sexual identification—they were denied the ability, in other words, to *be* authorities for the movement. And, although liberal feminism may have accepted this exclusion, their own ability to secure positions of authority for their assumed constituency—*women*—may have also been severely curtailed.

Pointing to the political ramifications of liberal feminism’s fear of a lesbian threat, this analysis also illustrates a need to conceptualize rhetorical processes of authority and their relationship to identity movements, such as the second wave. As this case study has demonstrated, rather than a willed manifestation of a rhetor’s rhetorical strategy, the *interaction* between media conventions and movement strategies constituted the terrain of authority in the mainstream press. The failure to secure a place of authority for *women* and feminists was not a failure of an intended strategy to secure an articulation of the *credible woman*, but a failure to consider the stakes in the “game” of authority.

The “game” of authority as played out in the mainstream press was one that limited positions of authority to particular subjectivities. Alwood (1996), for example, argues that in terms of the relationship between feminist and lesbian representations in the mainstream press, “[f]eminists may have been considered trouble makers, but lesbians were downright evil” (p.14). The almost ontological “deviance” within lesbian subjectivities seems to have made them particularly incapable of representing any constituency which did not assume such ontological shortcomings. That is to say, lesbian subjects presented a sort of deviance that was qualitatively different than the deviant ideologies and personalities which, according to the mainstream press, pervaded the New Left and feminist movements. Since their deviance was much less mutable, much more inherent within their own subjectivity, lesbians were fundamentally constrained from occupying positions of authority—legitimate or deviant.

Taking into consideration that authority and credibility are themselves manifestations of rhetorical processes, what becomes central to these concluding remarks are the ways that these rhetorical processes contain rhetorical subjects to an assumed stability. To argue, as I and others have, that authority is not an outgrowth of a transcendent quality inherent within any given individual, is not to say that discourses of authority do not function to ground any individual or group of individuals to essential characteristics of their subjectivity. To take the claim that authority is itself the result of rhetorical processes entails a consideration of constitutive effects of those rhetorical processes. What is important, in other words, is not an evaluation of feminism's rhetorical failures, but the ways the rhetoricity of these failures worked to further constrain a construction of *woman* that remained consistent with the movement's commitments.

Notes

[1] For examples of identifications of Friedan as the “mother” of feminism’s second wave see, Carmody, 1972a, p.29; Corry, 1974, p.32; Klemesrud, 1970a, p.50; 1972, p.34; Wilkes, 1970, p.27.

[2] Specifically, I examined the coverage within mainstream magazines and the *New York Times*.

[3] See e.g., Clark, 1969; Fosburgh, 1970.

[4] For other examples of movement coverage during this time period that discussed radical views but did not mention lesbianism, see, Babcox, 1969;Clark, 1969; Curtis, 1968a, 1968b.

[5] For other instances of simple associations of lesbian politics with the movement (made in passing) see, Bender, 1970, p.10; “Feminists march,” 1970, p.66; Johnston, L. 1973, p.10; Klemesrud, 1970a, p.14, 1972, p. 34; 1974, p.38; Shenker, 1971, p.19; “Women’s liberation unit,” 1971, p.26.

[6]In her memoir, *Tales of the Lavender Menace*, Karla Jay (1999) attributes the impetus of the Lavender Menace zap of the Second Congress to Unite Women to Friedan’s and Brownmiller’s public equation of lesbians as either the “lavender menaces” or “red/lavender herrings” of the movement (p. 145).

CHAPTER THREE

WHEN THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

While Friedan demanded that the movement move away from sexual politics, radical feminists, by the early 1970s, began to locate feminist concerns precisely within the politics of sexual identities and identifications. Since radical feminist efforts were designed to articulate a political notion of a *liberated woman*, which would counter notions of woman's male-defined status, radical feminists' theories also had to be liberated from the structures which they sought to undermine. One such structure was the very forum that liberal feminists seemed so devoted to—the mainstream media. Arguing that the "women's movement can no longer afford to be naïve about the nature and function of the mass media in this society" (Ferro, 1970, n. pag.), radical feminists maintained that:

> The mass media is our enemy: no matter how seriously they may approach, no matter how enlightened they may seem, women's liberation threatens the power base of the mass media. Each time we respond to them we legitimize them and the reality they are defending, and we risk sacrificing all that we are working for.. . . It is time to call a halt to all dealings with the mass media... . . Our energies now must turn to the strengthening and expansion of our own media. (Ferro, 1970, n. pag.)

And that is just what they did. Focusing their energies to their own alternative media outlets, radical feminists turned the debate over lesbian politics away from concerns over credibility and mainstream media strategy and toward the importance of liberation. Liberated from the mainstream media, the feminist alternative press re-inscribed a devotion to radical social change.

And just as the medium of their theories presupposed an authentic “outside” to the patriarchal system under critique, so to did their identification of “lesbian” as the quintessential *liberated woman*.

Although most research concerning the relationship between the media and the second wave focuses on the mainstream media-movement interaction, surprisingly little critical work has been published which seeks to uncover the alternative media-movement interaction within the movement. Research centered on feminist alternative media has done useful work in describing the historical development of the feminist alternative press (Armstrong, 1981; Hole & Levine, 1971; Mather, 1975; Steiner, 1992; Streitmatter, 2001), the ideological commitments of particular feminist publications (Berson, 1993; Pearson, 1999; Webb, 1993), and the characteristics of the alternative press’ internal structures (Armstrong, 1981; Hole & Levine, 1971). However informative this work has been in terms of understanding the feminist alternative press, it has neglected to consider, like those who examine the mainstream press, the ways that radical feminist approaches to the press also structured their relationship with “lesbian” as representative of the movement’s concerns. The consideration of alternative media approaches is particularly important for this chapter’s examination of lesbian and radical feminist politics as, I argue, both radical feminists’ sexual and media politics were governed by a faith in and devotion to a discourse of authenticity.

Of course, radical feminist groups, like the movement as whole, were somewhat divided, and it would be a mistake to consider them as a monolithic whole. Nonetheless, subsequent to Radicalesbians’ presentation of “The Woman-Identified-Woman” in 1970, radical feminists, generally speaking, further theorized not only the stakes of woman-identification, but also the identity boundaries contained therein. Moreover, just as liberal feminism’s devotion to the *credible woman* arguably undermined their own efforts toward women's political authority, radical feminism's efforts to liberate women, in their turn towards lesbian feminism, may have equally participated in the very disciplining structures which made the *liberated woman* anything but. Since the liberated woman was constructed through a faith in authenticity, this chapter moves away from *authority* to discuss the political dynamics of authenticating both women and feminism's radical second wave.

In the discussion that follows I will look closely at the lesbian feminist alternative press between 1970 and 1975 to reveal the importance of authenticity for radical feminism's political goals.[1] Focusing specifically on the debates over lesbian identities, I will discuss the ways woman-identification grounded radical lesbian feminist political prescriptions for the liberated woman. Because the alternative press itself was also embedded in efforts to achieve women's liberation, my analysis of the radical lesbian feminist politics will be prefaced by a closer look into the radical second wave's media critique.

The Feminist Alternative Press & the *Liberated Woman*

As "media subversives," radical feminists maintained a long-standing critique against the mainstream press. This critique, which had at least three interrelated components, focused on the various ways that the mass media undermined movement efforts to create alternative structures for women's liberation, to "self-define" the movement's goals, and to articulate a conceptualization of the liberated woman. Beginning with a critique of the ways that the mainstream press relegated women to sexual functions, treating them as mere objects of desire or housewives (Hole & Levine, 1971; see also, Armstrong, 1981; "Start now," 1970), radical feminists rebelled against NOW's strategy of using the media as a political resource for the movement and sought to form their own alternative media outlets (Barker-Plummer, 1995).

Between 1968 and 1973, more than 560 feminist publications were circulating in the United States (Armstrong, 1981), and such publications were instrumental in establishing “crucial communication link[s for a part of the movement which] eschew[ed] any national organizational structure” (Hole & Levine, 1971, p.272).

The importance of establishing an alternative press was a lesson well learned by feminists through their involvement in the radical groups of the New Left. Judith Hole and Ellen Levine (1971) note that through their experiences working in previous radical movements, feminists gained the necessary skills to quickly develop and distribute their own publications. Like the New Left’s underground media, feminist publications were often explicitly founded on principles that demanded separation from the mainstream media (Bradley, 2003). In the first edition of a relatively long-standing publication, *Ain’t I a Woman?*, for example, the publishing collective published an editorial which stated:

> There are special reasons . . . why we needed a paper for and by women. . . We want new structures that do not allow people to fall into leader/follower, boss/worker, powerful/powerless roles. We don’t want to work in any situation in which we are oppressed or in any situation in which we do oppress. (“Editorial,” 1970, p.2)

Ain’t I a Woman?’s stated need for a paper *for* and *by* women was not wholly a replication of the practices of the New Left, however, since it, like other feminist periodicals of the time, was developed in response to radical feminists’ critiques of New Left publication practices (Pearson, 1999; see also, Streitmatter, 2001). Developed through their 1970 take-over of the New Left’s *RAT*, radical feminists charged the New Left with not only ignoring sex-based oppression, but also with participating in it. Specifically, the women who took-over *RAT* published, in their first issue, Robin Morgan’s (1970) statement, “Good-bye to all that.” In “Goodbye to all that,” Morgan (1970) consistently rearticulated King and Hayden's 1965 "A Kind of Memo" as it bid farewell to the " 'straight' male dominated Left" in an effort to "give birth to a genderless society" (p.6).

The identification of the movement's goal as creating a "genderless society" can be read as a response to what radical feminists feared as a male-defined and dominated notion and standard of gender and sex difference. Morgan (1970), for example, describes this "genderless society" as going

> [b]eyond what is male or female. Beyond standards we all adhere to now without daring to examine them as male-created, male-dominated, male-fucked-up, and in male self-interest. Beyond all known standards, especially those easily articulated revolutionary ones we all rhetorically invoke. Beyond, to a species with a new name, that would not dare define itself as Man. (p.6)

Since liberal feminism was also devoted to dismantling certain male-dominated conceptualizations of "women," radical feminism's critique of the male-standardization of gender was assuredly not theirs alone. However, what is unique to radical feminism's critique is the way that such a critique demanded alternative structures, both within the movement itself and in its relationship with the mainstream and New Left press. Just as Morgan's critique of male-domination is embedded within her announcement of *RAT*'s take-over, other feminists made a similar connection between the need for feminist media and male definition as they argued that "working conditions in the pig media demand that any woman who works there must accept a male definition of what women are and should be" ("Alternative media," 1970, p.80). It is not surprising then, that once radical feminists began to publish their own periodicals, such periodicals, as David Armstrong (1981) argues, “were often collectively edited and produced, bringing their internal structures into line with their democratic vision” (p.231).

Armstrong’s commentary on the intersection of radical feminism’s media politics with their “democratic vision” points to the ways that radical feminists’ connection between the already-established media outlets and the male-domination of “women” required new approaches for the mass mediated distribution of feminist discourse. As I have already discussed, the radical second wave remained suspicious of hierarchical structures and such suspicions demanded a set of movement commitments that ran counter to mainstream media conventions (Tuchman, 1978). Pointing to the ways that the media’s need for a “leader” only hurt the movement, for example, radical feminists articulated this danger, again, in terms of definitional politics, as Nancy Ferro (1970) noted in *off our backs*,

> Creating leaders . . . increases the power of the mass media to define our movement for us. What the media-created leader says becomes a standard, usually very restrictive, for the whole movement. Then the press discredits the entire movement by discrediting the leader through attacking her personal life rather than her politics. (n. pag.)

Since Ferro’s concern that a definition of the movement that is out of the hands of feminists themselves was situated within her call for feminists to expand their own media outlets, her critique of media-created leaders begins to reveal the ways radical feminists sought to resituate their own media strategies away from those governed by newsworthiness to ones structured by self-definition.

I highlight the importance of “self-definition” for radical feminists not to make a direct comparison to liberal feminism’s attempts to self-define the movement in the mainstream press. Rather, the importance of self-definition for radical feminists uncovers a founding principle of ideologies that undergirded their publications—authenticity. Consider, for example, that in "The Woman-Identified-Woman" Radicalesbians (1970/2000) explicitly linked authenticity with self-definition when they argued:

> By virtue of having been brought up in a male society, we have internalized the male culture's definition of ourselves. That definition views us as relative beings who exist nor for ourselves, but for the servicing, maintenance, and comfort of men. . . . As the source of self-hate and the lack of real self are rooted in our male-given identity, we must create a new sense of self. . . . It is the primacy of women relating to women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other which is at the heart of women's liberation, and the basis for cultural revolution. Together we must find, reinforce and validate our authentic selves. . . . With that real self, with that consciousness, we begin a revolution to end the imposition of all coercive identifications and to achieve maximum autonomy in human expression. (p.235-237)

While the next section will further establish the ways woman-identification governed radical feminist discussions of sexual politics, I think it is important to note here that radical feminism's devotion to women's *liberation* as opposed to women's *rights* necessitated theories and practices which would secure women's autonomy and independence (Echols, 1989, p.139). With liberation on the horizon, women's autonomy and lack thereof was inextricably bound to the varying ways male-domination—in the construction of "woman" and as embedded in multiple structures—denied the movement and "women" an authentic sense of self. Indeed, while current understanding of the feminist alternative press reveals its characteristics, a closer look into those characteristics reveals the ways that they are more than symptomatic of radical feminism's movement politics. Specifically, these characteristics begin to identify a founding principle of the feminist alternative press and radical feminist discourse—*authenticity*.

Armstrong (1981) recognizes the importance of *authenticity* for the radical feminist press when he argues that the most "authentically alternative media efforts [were] those that attempt[ed] to reassess basic ideas about human beings" (p.226). By seeking to answer complex questions like, "what is a woman?" and "what is man?", the most common trope among all feminist media was "the quest for authentic identity and the overriding goal of empowerment" (Armstrong, 1981, p. 226). The difference between the following analysis and Armstrong's observations is that I consider the ways authenticity, achieved through self-definition, functioned as a founding principle for the radical feminist press—in both form and content. As a founding principle, authenticity necessitated similar disciplinary processes as those developed within the mainstream press. That is, if one considers the importance of "authority" and "newsworthiness" for the *craft* of news coverage, one should equally consider the importance of "authenticity" and "liberation" for the *craft* of feminist discourse via their alternative press. Just as the mainstream press held leaders, events, and deviance to standards of authority and news appeal, the radical feminist press held their publication practices and feminist identities to standards of authenticity. Because, by 1970, lesbian sexuality was the marker of authenticity for many radical feminists, the discourse of lesbian identity highlights clearly the stakes of such rhetorical processes of authentication. Specifically, these radical lesbian-feminist positions will provide insight into the ways that founding processes of authentication in the alternative press localized sexual and feminist identifications to the personal realm of revolutionary politics.

Lesbian Identity& Political Signification

Radicalesbians' presentation of "The Woman-Identified-Woman"(hereafter, "W-I-W") was a central moment in radical feminists' quest for women's liberation should. Presented at the Second Congress to Unite Women on May 1, 1970, "W-I-W" was re-printed in many feminist journals, including *RAT*, *Ain't I a Woman*?, *Killer Dyke*, and *Notes from the Third Year*. Beyond the actual printing of "W-I-W," *RAT* and *Ain't I a Woman?* also published descriptions of the zap and personal testaments to the profound effects of conceptualizing woman-identification for the movement. [2] While "W-I-W" was strategized as a specific response to Betty Friedan's identification of lesbians as the "lavender menace" and Susan Brownmiller's "lavender herring" comment in *New York Times Magazine* (Jay, 1999), it can also be read as a more general response to the ways lesbians were treated in the movement and the movement's search for an identity which was not "male-identified."

Specifically, prior to "W-I-W's" public presentation radical feminists had already articulated their concerns over male-defined identities. In *It Ain't Me Babe*, Barbara Burris (1970) argued:

> There can be no sexual revolution until there is *first* of all a successful woman's revolution in which women free themselves from male definitions and domination in *all* areas of society . . . [W]omen's liberation can *not* be defined by men. Women have been defined and dehumanized by men for thousands of years. The women's liberation movement is a movement in which *women define themselves*." (emphasis hers, p.2; see also Brown, 1970a)

Burris's comments further articulated the need for women "to create and re-define an identity of [their] own" ("Toward the liberation for women," 1970, p.2). Furthermore, some feminists critiqued “lesbian-baiting” within the movement (e.g., Oleson, 1970), and others had left NOW because of their stance on lesbian rights. As Christine Mimichild (1972) would express later: “Women’s Liberation was publicly determined to prove that they weren’t a bunch of dykes and privately unable to deal with such a threatening topic. As a woman who loved women, I remained isolated even in the movement” (p.23).

It is not surprising, then, that by March of 1970 Rita Mae Brown, an outspoken proponent for lesbians within the movement, had articulated the connection between lesbians’ mistreatment in the movement and male-identification. After describing historian Marlene Dixon as “male identified” (p.18), and Cell 16 founder Roxanne Dunbar as “demoralizing” (p.18), Brown (1970b) quotes Cynthia Sunn’s response to Dunbar’s and Dixon’s panel discussion sponsored by Female Liberation in Boston:

> I’m tired of hearing about the oppression of women. I’m tired of hearing a slick, public relations rap that doesn’t come from the gut. Let’s look at the oppression right here in this room. You women on the panel have used heterosexual privilege to silence the topic of love—especially since that topic was love between women, which seem [sic.] to me to be critical to the movement. (qtd in Brown, 1970b, p.18)

In response to Dunbar’s retort that “sexuality is not the key issue.. . . Women can love each other but they don’t have to sleep together” (qtd in Brown, 1970b, p.18), Brown (1970b) argued: “To ignore the issue of women loving other women, to lable [sic.] it lesbianism and divisive, is to turn around and define me and all my sisters in the same manner in which women are defined by men, by my sexual activity and function” (p.18). Brown’s comments combined with previous concerns over lesbians’ treatment within the movement and the importance of countering male-identification evidence the various internal movement conflicts and radical feminist concerns that paved the way for the presentation of "W-I-W" and the subsequent policing of woman-identification's boundaries.

Indeed, "W-I-W" consolidated radical feminists concerns over male-identification and lesbianism by opening with,

> What is a lesbian? A lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion. She is the woman who, often beginning at an extremely early age, acts in accordance with her inner compulsion to be a more complete and freer human being than her society . . . cares to allow her. . . . It should be first understood that lesbianism . . . is a category of behavior possible only in a sexist society characterized by rigid sex roles and dominated by male supremacy. These roles dehumanize women by defining us as a supportive/serving caste *in relation to* the master caste of men. (emphasis theirs, Radicalesbians, 1970/2000, p.233).

By defining "lesbian" as an identity which *is* the "rage of all women," alongside the argument that "lesbianism" is a product of male supremacy, "W-I-W" posits the political nature of lesbian's signification. Radicalesbians continued by arguing that rather than turning away from the fact that "lesbian is a label invested by the Man to throw at any woman who dares to be his equal," feminists should seriously consider what's at stake in notions that "a lesbian is not considered a 'real woman'" (p.234):

In positing that "lesbian" is a political signifier, which represents those women who want to escape male-identification, "W-I-W" critiques the replication of the derogatory signification of "lesbian" by the movement itself:

> Are we going to continue the male classification system of defining all females in *sexual relation* to some *other* category of people? Affixing the situation of real love, real

solidarity, real primacy among women is a primary form of divisiveness among women: it is the condition which keeps women within the confines of the feminine role, and it is the debunking/scare term that keeps women from forming primary attachments, groups, or associations among ourselves. (p.235)

Through the implicit description of lesbianism as *real* love, *real* solidarity, Radicalesbians begin to set up their final conclusion that it "is the primacy of women relating to women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other which is at the heart of women's liberation and basis for the cultural revolution" (p.236). Ultimately, although "W-I-W" never explicitly states that lesbianism marks the political identification of "woman" which escapes male-definition and supremacy, the paper worked implicitly to that end through the juxtapositioning of lesbian's *real* solidarity with the "basic heterosexual structure that binds us in one-to-one relationships with our oppressors?" (p.236). In the end, it is no surprise that "only women can give each other a new sense of self" (p.236) and "with that real self . . . we [read: feminists] can begin a revolution to end the imposition of all coercive identifications and to achieve maximum autonomy in human expression" (p.237).

In the years that would follow, lesbian feminists began to reiterate this theme by suggesting that male-identified-women were the product of a heterosexual "standard" with dangerous consequences. Cathy Nelson (1971), in *The Lavender Woman*, argued that "straight society sees a woman as a mere extention [sic.] of the male ego" (p.6; see also, Bunch, 1973; "So we put it on," 1971), and Charlotte Bunch (1972), in *The Furies*, warned that by making "women define themselves through men," (p.9) "heterosexuality separates women from each other" (p.9). The danger of male-identification, in other words, was that women could not give all of their commitment to one another. As Jill Johnston put it,

> Living with men is an act of collaboration and women must withdraw their energies from men and give all their commitment to women. . . . You can't fight the revolution from nine to five and then go home to a man. Political philosophy means total commitment, you can't split yourself. (qtd. in Dulaney, 1973, n. pag.) [3]

And, if heterosexuality threatened women's commitment, lesbian feminists charged that lesbian identity was the best way to confront male domination. Making explicit "W-I-W's" implicit articulation of the lesbian as the "true" woman-identified woman, Rita Mae Brown (1972b) argued, "To be a *political* Lesbian means to be a woman-identified-woman" (p.17). Since "[l]esbianism threatens male supremacy at its core" (Bunch, 1972a, p.8), according to lesbian feminists, "[t]o be gay implies imminent defeat of the heterosexual standard controlled by men for their self interest" ("This is for straight," 1973, p.4).

"W-I-W," according to Shane Phelan (1989), had "announced that lesbians were the resisters of the patriarchy" (p.45). When lesbianism and woman-identification came to represent the vanguard of the radical second wave, "a base for truly feminist politics and consciousness" (Phelan, 1989, p.45), it replaced the heterosexual standard with one that insisted that woman-identification was the new standard against which any liberatory efforts could be judged:

> If Women's Liberation is to gain meaningful advances for women, it must become woman identified and that means that women in it must become woman identified. I think that women in Women's Liberation who profess to believe in what Women's Liberation stands for . . . and who have also come to appreciate the company of women over the oppressive company of males, that these women are hypocrites if they are not gay or are not at least in the process of dealing with their straightness. ("The lavender t-shirt fit," 1971, p.3; see also, "So we put it on," 1971, p.3)

The move from marking a particular identity as woman-identified to a call for the movement and all those within it to be woman-identified necessitated disciplinary actions for those who failed to meet such a standard. Consider, for example, that people were dismissed as being too "man-identified" ("Our response," 1970, p.14) and bisexual women specifically were critiqued through questions like, "how does [a bisexual] become woman-identified?" (Ulmschneider, 1973, p.2; see also, "C.L.I.T. statement #2," 1974). Certain feminists like Rita Mae Brown, on the other hand, were praised as being "woman-identified" ("Washington to whatcheer one way," 1971, p.11), and *Ain't I a Woman?* was commended as being "more woman-identified than any other" publication (Brown, 1971b, p.2). The use of "woman-identification" as a signifier of liberation, I argue, functioned as the new *standard* for the radical lesbian-feminist part of the movement, its press, and, most importantly, the feminist identities articulated therein.

As a new *standard*, woman-identification demanded disciplinary moves by feminists in order to ensure the viability of woman-identification for revolutionary social change. Pitting woman-identification against male-identification worked rhetorically to demarcate the boundaries of what was acceptable for radical feminists. Yet, to be woman-identified did not just work through negation, but also through an affirmation of a particular identity and orientation toward social change. In some instances, this identity was simply described as lesbian and those who did not self-identify as lesbian were continually marked as suspect. "It is not good enough for straight women to say they do love women" one feminist wrote, "and then turn to give their ultimate love to their oppressor" ("Out of the closets," 1970, p.11). To be lesbian, however, was not good enough either since "not all lesbians are consciously woman-identified" (Goldberger, 1972, p.7; see also, Bunch, 1972a). What resulted then was further articulation of the importance of not just a woman-identified woman, but a woman-identified lesbian.

More specifically, woman-identification entailed varying degrees of commitment to a lesbian identity and/or a lesbian-feminist political program. Consider for instance that while “W-I-W” never explicitly equates “lesbian” with the real, authentic self, it does suggest that with that real self, achieved through woman-identification, women would have a new consciousness to bring to the revolution (p.237). Moreover, according to many, women-identification entailed both a political consciousness and a practicing lesbian sexual identity, as Francis Chapman (1972) wrote in *off our backs:*

> Radicalesbian demands are: leave men, including your male children, become a lesbian, live with women, preferably in a women’s commune, understand that sexism is the root cause of all the world’s ills and that the hope of the planet is a woman’s revolution, and devote all your energies to women, in an extreme form, to lesbians alone. Radicalesbians hope to persuade “straight” women to become lesbians and lesbians to a radical political position. (n. pag.) [4]

The importance of a “radical political position” resonated nicely with radical feminists long-term concern of developing a particular political consciousness (e.g., consciousness-raising groups). Yet this slippage, between woman-identification as a new political consciousness and woman-identification as lesbian, opened the door for some feminists to describe themselves as woman-identified and even lesbian, despite the fact that they had not had sexual relationships with other women, or continued to have sexual relationships with both men and women.

There was some concern among radical lesbian feminists, however, that these women who were bisexual (or heterosexual lesbians) could not be truly woman-identified. The group C.L.I.T. argued that the “bi-sexual woman is still functioning under her oppressor’s definition of herself” (“C.L.I.T. statement #2, 1974, n. pag.; see also, Ulmschneider,1973). Furthermore, when

Robin Morgan (1973a) claimed that she could live with a man and still be a lesbian in her keynote address at the Lesbian Feminist Conference in Los Angeles, Pat Buchanan (1973) insisted that "Morgan [was] not a lesbian" (p.6). Buchanan continued by arguing that since "lesbians *are* the feminist movement" Morgan only describes herself as such because she is trying to prevent her ousting as one of the movement's leaders (p.6). The claim that "lesbians *are* the feminist movement," points to the ways that lesbian feminists began to rhetorically compensate for the slippage between political consciousness and personal identification. As political consciousness was theorized to be inextricably bound to the "personal" realm of identities, a feminist political orientation was directly tied to personal identifications and the daily practices of "private" life.

Localizing & Internalizing the Political

In her discussion of "W-I-W," Phelan (1989) argues that "lesbian feminism rests on the radical feminist collapse of the political realm" (p.47). As radical feminists announced that the "personal is political," they theorized the private sphere—the sphere "left untouched by liberal political theory"—as in fact political, public, and "riddled with power relations" (Phelan, 1989, p.47). Exemplified clearly through consciousness raising groups, the belief that the "personal is political," allowed radical feminists to suggest that women as a group shared experiences which were, in turn, indicative of a patriarchal system. This *expansion* of the political realm into the personal would presumably allow the collective sharing of women's personal experiences to render directions for political action (see Arnold, 1970/2000; Hanisch, 1970/2000; Sarachild, 1968/2000). Judith Butler (1990b) notes that although the "personal is political" suggested that "subjective experience is . . . structured by existing political arrangements" it also posited that subjective experiences could effect and structure those arrangements in turn (p. 273).

Lesbian feminists, in particular, gained rhetorical efficacy by invoking the theoretical collapse between the personal and the political to suggest that political commitment to the movement involved changes in one's personal life. In other words, if the personal is political then personal commitments were political commitments, and the politics of women's liberation were located precisely in the politicized personal lives of women. Although Bonnie J. Dow (1996) is correct that generally speaking, feminism's adage of the personal is political "was meant to describe *patriarchy*, not *feminism*," her critique of popular television's tendency to transform "a set of political ideas and practices . . . into a set of attitudes and lifestyle choices" is also applicable to radical lesbian feminism (emphasis hers, p.207). Indeed, for radical lesbian feminists, like popular television, "feminist politics [became] feminist *identity*" (emphasis hers, Dow, 1996, p.207). And while, Jo Freeman (1975) amiably argues that lesbian feminism was particularly attractive to some feminists because it "offered a definitive means of demonstrating one's political commitment," while avoiding the "onus of traditional institutions"(p.139), I want to suggest that the various ways lesbian feminists rhetorically cited the political necessity of personal identifications had many more dangerous results. Specifically, further examination of the importance of woman-identification and lesbian feminism will reveal two themes in the rhetorical invocation of the personal-political collapse: the importance of the home for political enactment, and the presupposition of a shared lesbian (read: woman-identified) consciousness necessary for women's liberation.

Liberation Begins at Home

The importance of the "home" for lesbian feminist discourse was two-fold. First, the home symbolized the physical space where women were confronted with the constraints and privileges of male-identification, and thus a space where feminists could construct a place for an escape from male-domination. Specifying further "W-I-W's" claim that "heterosexual structures" bind women to male-domination, radical lesbian feminists argued that women should consider the ways living with men affected their personal lives. Martha Shelley (1970), for example, argued that:

> The lesbian, through her ability to obtain love and sexual satisfaction from other women, is freed of dependence on men for love, sex, and money. She does not have to do menial chores for them (at least at home), nor cater to their egos, nor submit to hasty and inept sexual encounters.(p.2)

Similarly, others argued that a "woman who continues to relate to men has men in her home whom she may have to fear" ("This is for straight," 1973, p.4), and "although the lesbian like other women is oppressed by America's political structures . . . she does not have an individual 'oppressor' in her home" (Brown, 1972c, p.14). While some simply asked women to consider the dangers of men in their homes, others charged that heterosexual women who refused to leave men were taking advantage of the heterosexual privileges granted to them through male-identification (see, e.g. C.L.I.T. statement #2," 1974; "Out of the closets," 1970; Radicalesbians, 1970/2000; Ulmschneider, 1973).

Rhetorically, however, the "home" functioned to localize both oppression and politics in particular ways. While some feminists described the home as a place for oppression, others stressed the importance of fighting the political battle in very localized ways. Mongoose (1970), in her article, "Liberation begins at home," expressed her concern that feminists "can sit at a meeting and then go somewhere and allow ourselves to be oppressed by a male, we are living examples of liberation that has not yet begun at home" (p.6). As such, I argue that the second and more important function of "home" for lesbian feminist discourse was to reinforce the political/personal collapse, symbolically conjuring a personal place for political action. And while the explicit use of “home” was somewhat prevalent, the way it functioned to localize politics was reiterated in various ways.

Consider how easily the use of “home” is similar to the use of “house.” Judy (1970) claimed, for example, that since she was a lesbian she did not have to “deal with male chauvinism in [her] house” (p.2). Additionally, in *The Purple Star*, feminists argued that “Since we are in an SDS collective and believed our personal and political lives should come together, we thought of living in a house with people we were working with would be important” (“Up from SDS,” 1971). By positing that living in the same house represents the union of the personal with political, feminists in *The Purple Star* commented on the need to ground political action in personal living arrangements. Although in both of these instances the house is a literal and physical structure, Brown’s (1971) use of “house” is used more symbolically to describe the movement itself: “Lesbianism will provide us with the individual and group skills for constructive confrontation for struggle, for progress. In words, we need a foundation to build our house upon and this issue gives us our ideological and technical foundation” (p.11). Assuredly, Brown’s (1971) description of lesbianism as the foundation to build the movement’s “house” upon, works consistently with others who argued that joining the group Radicalesbians meant not that they could finally come out in the movement, but that they could “come home” (“Radicalesbians,” 1971, p.4).

Thus, while I think that the use of “home” and “house” within the radical press was a crucial symbolic tool, I think it is more important to consider them in terms of a reiteration of a consistent theme—that the movement and feminist politics needed to be localized in various ways. For lesbian feminists, woman-identified politics needed to not only be localized in identifiably political groups like NOW, [5] but also needed to be embedded in personal identities and lifestyles. Not surprisingly, the need for women to escape the physical and symbolic "home" of male domination to create a new foundation upon which to build a revolutionary feminist movement eventually led to separatist practices. If the women's movement itself could not fully break away from male-identification, then some lesbian-feminists felt that they had no other choice but to form their own movement. An editorial in *The Furies* explains:

> Separatism is a necessary strategy if women wish to become a political force with a power base strong enough to challenge male power. Women must stop nurturing individual men and feeding the institution of heterosexuality. That energy must be given to other women in order that we stop identifying with a male identity and become that political force with a female identity. To implement these women-identified politics we have, as Lesbian/Feminists, found it necessary to build our own movement and to develop a Lesbian/Feminist ideology. We have separated from the Women's Liberation movement which lacked a comprehensive analysis of sexism. It failed to create that analysis because it could not identify heterosexuality as one of the keys to male supremacy. ("Editorial," 1973, p.5; see also, Brown, 1972b; Chapman, 1972; Richter, 1973).

Eventually, lesbian-feminists began to publish their own reflections on the limitations of separatist practice (see, Bunch, 1972b; "Painful times,"1971) as many separatist collectives only lasted for a number of months (Echols, 1989). Although other feminists continued to warn that "to consider alliances without a clear basis for allying and to consider alliances with men before separatism has even been made a strong political force is crazy" (Richter, 1973, p.5), Charlotte

Bunch (1972b), in particular, sought to point out the dangers of the "purity" associated with separatism:

> [R]easons for separatism are still valid. Increased consciousness about oppression through separatism developed strength and clarity among women in many ways. It has freed us from much dependence on men and helped us to start breaking the hierarchies of oppression and privilege that keep people in their place. . . .But we [have often slipped] into the purist assumption that if you aren't x, you can't be in our revolution rather than stressing the development of x-consciousness whether you are x or not.. . . To avoid the dead ends of separatist purity, we must act on our belief that revolutionary consciousness is possible among all people. (p.3)

Despite Bunch's attempts to articulate the dangers of separatist purity, by founding her critique on notions of a shared revolutionary consciousness, Bunch grounds her critique in the very foundation which necessitated separatism in the first place—the faith in an authentic *being* located outside of male-identification and domination. By reiterating the premise of "W-I-W" once again, Bunch, in other words, rearticulates the theme of localization to one of internalization. And, it is this theme of internalization which further collapsed the political into the personal.

Although Bunch suggests a danger of assuming that one must have a particular identity to assume a revolutionary consciousness, by 1973 she continued to posit lesbianism as necessary for the feminist movement:

> Lesbian Feminist politics is an awkward phrase, but the most important thing we've tried to define is a politics that combines the sexual aspect of lesbianism with a feminist

> perspective. It defines a certain direction for the future, for the kind of society we want to build. (Bunch, 1973, n. pag.)

As Bunch describes lesbian feminist politics as one that incorporates both a feminist perspective with a lesbian sexuality, Bunch's remarks in *off our backs* clearly identify the importance of a lesbian identity for the women's liberation movement. While it is the case that the further articulations of "W-I-W" prescribed a notion of woman-identification that demanded both a lesbian sexuality and an authentic consciousness, such articulations were situated in a discourse that suggested that lesbian sexuality, in and of itself, was the necessary beginning of forming such consciousness.

The Necessary Lesbian Within

When Brown (1972b) claimed that, "before there was WLM there were always a number of women who questioned the system and found it destructive to themselves. Those women became women-identified. I am one of those women. The male culture's world for this kind of woman is Lesbian," (p.17) she began to situate the locus of a revolutionary consciousness within a particular identity. Similarly, a lesbian within the movement wrote about her inherent woman-identification in *Ain't I a Woman?*:

> [E]very time someone asks me to explain what a woman identified woman is, I can't. And yet it is very clear to me what it means in personal actions and political ones. About this time I realized that I have been woman identified for just about all of my life and so I guess it's not so strange that it would be something that I would know inside and find it hard to explain. ("The lavender t-shirt fit," 1971, p.3)

Embedded in personal experiences, which are necessarily woman-identified, lesbian feminists wed a lesbian identity with political consciousness. Such a formulation is somewhat limiting in that it seems to suggest that the only women who were authentically true to themselves and other women were lesbians. For lesbian feminists, however, sexuality was not a personal choice nor was it biologically determined—it was a necessary political choice:

> Roxeanne [Dunbar] attempts to smash lesbianism by treating it as a personal luxary [sic.] rather than dealing with it as a political ideology. This sweeping us under the rug as some great apolitical, individualistic freedom is classic heterosexual blindness. Her thesis that Lesbianism is a simple personal choice is a cover to avoid recognizing the political implications of Lesbianism. Lesbianism is the greatest threat to male supremacy that exists. (Brown, 1972a, p.5; see also Bunch, 1973)

The importance of identifying lesbianism as a necessary political choice begins to illustrate the contraction of the public politics to the personal realm, and lesbian feminists' thesis of political sexual identification reveals underlying assumptions of the relationship between authenticity, ontology, and social change.

In "W-I-W," Radicalesbians argued that women could never *be* for themselves, *be* woman-identified, if they did not escape male-identifications. The importance of *being* for one's self was rooted in values of autonomy by way of authenticity:

> To be a woman who belongs to no man is to be invisible, pathetic, inauthentic, unreal. . . . As long as we are dependent on male culture for this definition, for this approval, we cannot be free. The consequence of internalizing this role is an enormous reservoir of self-hate. . . . As the source of self-hate and the lack of real self are rooted in our male-given identity, we must create a new sense of self. As long as we cling to the idea of "being a woman," we will sense some conflict with that incipient self, that sense of I, that sense of a whole person. (Radicalesbians, 1970/2000, p.236)

Since inauthenticity was a direct result of male-identifications, the potential of the real self could only be developed through woman-identification. By positing woman-identification as a *real, authentic* self, "W-I-W" presumably suggests that authenticity is possible when "freed" from male-domination. And, when woman-identification became interchangeable with "lesbian," lesbian feminists explicitly theorized the possibility of any woman as lesbian.

Martha Shelley (1970), for example, argued that "[s]traight women fear lesbians because of the lesbian inside of them, because we represent the alternative" (p.10). Similarly, Brown (1971a) claimed that any "woman can confront the issue of Lesbianism because she has the potential to be a Lesbian" (p.11), and Loretta Ulmschneider (1973) argued, "lesbians represent that part of every woman that male supremacy has destroyed and suppressed" (p.2; see also, Bunch, 1973). [6] When coupled with arguments that suggested that lesbianism was a political necessity, the conceptualization of all women's inherent lesbianism reveals a clear link between authenticity, ontology, and social change. In short, women's real self was rooted in their inherent lesbianism, and since that real self was the basis for revolutionary social change, women should identify as lesbians—both in practice and in their consciousness—to secure a revolutionary force. In this way, political consciousness, undoubtedly tied to a lesbian identity, structured the collapse of the political into the very *being* of the personal. And, it is the ontological presumption of authenticity bound to the political telos of autonomy that allowed lesbian feminists to justify their disciplinary moves.

These disciplinary moves entailed the privileging of not only authenticity and autonomy, but, ironically, of pragmatic solidarity. In the article "Lesbian demands" (1970), one feminist argued that the "entire success of the revolution does not depend on whether or not the male will 'allow' the woman her liberation, but rather on woman freeing herself of all crippling male identities and realizing the strength that is found in solidarity with her sisters" (p. 5). By attributing the success of the movement to solidarity, autonomy, and authenticity, lesbian feminists could reasonably re-assert their prescriptive notion of the *liberated woman* as lesbian and demand conformity. After all, lesbian identity was imbued with an inherent political nature, "a notion of a consciousness and community which [was] political, not just personal" (Bunch, 1973). As such, the ironic twist of the personal-political collapse as the foundation for the movement, exemplified in woman-identified politics, is that *pre-approved* personal identities are representative of and necessary to the women's *liberation* movement.

In sum, synchronically developing through the localization and internalization of feminist politics, lesbian feminists chipped away at the realm of public politics. The politics of women's liberation was transformed into the politics of personal identifications, and those personal identities became the feminist movement. Claiming that "lesbianism is as personally healthy as it is politically necessary" (Smith, 1973), Ti-Grace Atkinson's phrase that "feminism is the theory, and lesbianism is the practice" (qtd. in Echols, 1989, p.238; see also, "Jill Johnston comes out," 1971, p.7), popularized the importance of binding feminist perspectives with a sexual identity. Since being "gay [was] twice as good as straight [because] heterosexuality is a bastion of male supremacy" (Brooke, 1972), lesbians were not only "an intrinsic *part* of the women's liberation movement" (emphasis mine, Shelley, 1971, p.28) but as Buchanan (1973) put it, "lesbians [were] the feminist movement (Buchanan, 1973, p.6).

The notion that lesbians were the movement was embedded in arguments which posited that "lesbianism threatens male supremacy at its core. When politically conscious and organized, it is central to destroying our sexist, racist, capitalist, imperialist system" (Bunch, 1972a, p.8).[7] While some claimed that lesbianism would provide the pragmatic and theoretical skills to build the feminist movement (Brown, 1971a), others used “lesbian” as a signifier for pure woman-identification—of the “true” feminist: as C.L.I.T. put it, “Bi-sexuality maintains the patriarchy. Lesbianism understood is a revolt against the patriarchy” (“C.L.I.T. statement #2,” 1974, n. pag.). By identifying lesbianism as the quintessential identity for feminists and the movement, lesbian feminists like Brown (1972b) could justify separatism by blaming heterosexual “sisters:”

> [B]ecause until heterosexual women treat Lesbians as full human beings and fight the enormity of male supremacy with us, I have no option but to separate from them just as they have no option but to be separate from men until men begin to change their own sexism. Separatism is the heterosexual woman’s choice by default, not mine. (p.23)

Similarly, other feminists like Ulmschneider (1973) could express doubt that any bisexual or straight woman could be trusted in consciousness-raising groups, and Jennifer Woodul (1972) could pointedly claim that, “if you reach the point where you think you should be a lesbian-feminist, you will not continue to get support from straight women. And until you come out and identify as a lesbian, you will not get the kind of gut support that you’re looking for from lesbians either” (p.3).

Rather than expanding the political to include the personal, lesbian feminist continually contracted the political realm until feminist politics were synonymous with particular personal identities. Woman-identification then, quickly became *women-identification* where the self should always be in service to the collective and paradoxically that collective is only as such—only authentic—to the degree that the women within it achieve autonomy, escaping male-identification. Through the use of woman-identification as a standard and the eventual presupposition that lesbian identities were the movement, feminists were, quite literally, *women-identified*. Women then were *identified*, that is, by the very ones who fought for their liberation.

The Paradox of Authenticity & Autonomy

As lesbian feminists discussed the importance of a lesbian identity for feminist politics, they often called attention to the ways that lesbians had been mistreated by the movement. The incongruity of the movement's early lesbian politics lay in the fact that, for many, the movement itself exposed women to the benefits of lesbian sexuality. In a popular letter, published in many radical journals, Mary (1970) claimed that "the irony of [the movement's dismissal] is that I probably never would have discovered my homosexuality without women's liberation" (p.4; see also, Goldberger, 1972, A Redstockings sister, 1970). While these feminists pointed to an unexpected twist of the movement's struggle over sexual politics, I argue that the ways sexuality conflicts in the movement gave way to theories of woman-identification remarks on a fundamental similarity between liberal and radical feminist politics.

In this project's introductory chapter, I argued that liberal feminisms' *credible* woman and radical feminisms' *liberated* woman remained trapped in an assumption of the ontological necessity of "woman" as a category of difference. Extending this argument, Chris Weedon (1987) argues that while liberal forms of humanism were founded on the need for the subject to reach self-determination, radical forms sought to question the ways that the subject's sense of self was alienated from its *true* being. It would seem then that although both liberal and radical feminist forms of humanism sustained a faith in an essential self, each projected a different teleological project for feminism—liberal feminism's demand for autonomy and radical feminism's search for authenticity. Rather, this analysis suggests that when lesbian feminists grounded their goals in authenticity, they were only so grounded because authentic subjectivity was a way of attaining a subject's autonomy.

Thus, the actual rhetoric of lesbian feminism reveals a theoretical problematic of distinguishing liberal and radical feminism in terms of their varying goals. While this project itself has used the distinction between liberal and radical feminism to highlight the varying trajectories of their positions on the importance of lesbian sexuality, such a distinction is unwarranted if it seeks to separate radical feminism from a liberal political agenda. Inasmuch as radical feminism participated in processes of disciplining women to conform to a politically prescribed notion of womanhood, they replicated liberal feminisms' disciplinary process of prescribing a conceptualization of woman which would secure political goals. As two sides of the same coin, liberal and radical feminism not only maintained a faith in women's essential subjectivity—although variously defined—but also rhetorically manufactured whose subjectivities were essentially "woman."

Moreover, liberal and radical feminism's teleological project of achieving women's political and ontological autonomy brings us back to problematic features of feminisms' adage, "the personal is political." The theoretical and pragmatic sustainability of the personal is political has been questioned by many contemporary feminist theorists. In critiques of the second wave in particular, Phelan (1989) argues that the collapse of the personal and the political "removes any ground for a critical examination between public and private structures and action, of the gaps and spaces as well as the connections" (p.49). Similarly, Anne Koedt notes that oftentimes the personal is political formulation was abused to assume that a woman's life was "the political property of the women's movement" (qtd. in Phelan, 1989, p.48). And, while Echols (1989) discusses the problems of the personal is political as it was actualized in consciousness raising groups by erasing differences within the movement in the name of solidarity, Butler (1990b) offers an even broader critique, suggesting:

> One ought to consider the futility of a political program which seeks radically to transform the social situation of women without first determining whether the category of woman is socially constructed in such a way that to be a woman is, by definition, to be in an oppressed situation. In an understandable desire to forge bonds of solidarity, feminist discourse has often relied upon the category of woman as a universal presupposition of cultural experience which, in its universal status, provides a false ontological promise of eventual political solidarity.

In the case of lesbian feminism specifically, the political solidarity entailed a political authentication of women's and feminists' identities. This authentication functioned rhetorically to subject feminists to particular standards, which were at once premised on women's status as historically oppressed and on women's inherent capacity to transcend such oppression.

The paradox of such formulation lies in the fact that while women's inauthenticity was premised on a lack of self-definition, women's authenticity and autonomy *qua* woman-identification, as it played out in lesbian-feminist discourse, was not founded on self-definition, but once again in terms of a grand telos. Just as male-identifications were theorized as determining women's subjectivity in the interest of male-domination, so too woman-identification sought to determine and prescribe feminists' subjectivity in the interest of escape from that domination. With autonomy and liberation on the horizon, lesbian feminists, ironically, policed the boundaries of what was considered as *true* liberation. Thus, liberation itself had its own borders, contained this time in the confines of women-identification.

Notes

[1] I focused specifically on radical lesbian feminist publications. The sample of publications I examined, the years and the location of their publishing collective are listed in Appendix A.

[2] For published description of the zap see, “Women’s liberation is a lesbian plot!”, 1970. For personal testaments, see, “Rambling on Woman-Identified Women” 1971“Sisters,” 1970; “So we put it on,” 1971; “The lavender t-shirt fit,” 1971.

[3] See also, Bunch, 1973;Chapman, 1972; “Editorial,” 1973; “Rambling on Women-Identified Women,” 1971; Ulmschneider, 1973.

[4] See also, Brown, 1972a, 1972b; Bunch, 1973; Goldberger, 1972;Marychild, 1974.

[5] Radical journals reported on the various ways NOW was attempting to adopt a more lesbian friendly political position. See, e.g., Leonard, 1974; “NOW,”: 1974; “N.O.W. what?”, 1975; Pollner, 1973; “The NOW of the future,” 1972; “The revolution is now?”, 1973; “Victory at Los Angeles,” 1971/1972; Zecha, 1971.

[6] The idea that any woman had some degree of lesbian identity was further articulated in Adrienne Rich’s (1978/1993) “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence.” Rich’s analysis has, in turn, popularized the notion of a “lesbian continuum,” appropriately defined as “a range of . . . woman-identified experience” (p.239).

[7] See also, Bunch, 1973; C.L.I.T. statement #2,” 1974; “Out of the closets,” 1970; Shelley, 1970.

CHAPTER FOUR

AUTHORITY & AUTHENTICITY'S MEDIATIONS

Throughout this discussion, 1970 has marked a pivotal point in the development of second wave feminism's sexual and media politics. Recalling that 1970 witnessed feminism's mainstream "media blitz," Friedan's announcement of lesbians as the movement's "lavender menace," and Radicalesbians' public presentation of "The Woman-Identified-Woman," it is not surprising that 1970 also presents a case where varying feminist concerns over the media and sexuality converge—the release of Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics,* the media's designation of her as a feminist leader, and her subsequent outing.

On the shelves by August of 1970, *Sexual Politics* was considered to be the first book-length exposition of second wave radical feminist theory, and as such it received substantial attention within the mainstream press. On August 5th and 6th New *York Times* reviewer Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, for example, in a "most unusual move" (Cohen,1988, p. 235) devoted two separate columns to the *Sexual Politics* review. Millett's place in feminist media history was secured by the *Times* subsequent series of articles on August 27th surrounding the Women's Strike for Equality where Millett was mentioned right after Betty Friedan on the front page, and more notably was anointed as the new "high priestess" of feminism (Prial, 1970). The only article to focus on Betty Friedan, on the other hand, was a brief four paragraph remark on her "emergency" hair appointment before the march ("Leading Feminist," 1970). By August 31, 1970, Millett was on the cover of *Time* magazine, again anointed as the new high priestess or the "Mao Tse-tung of Women's Liberation" ("Who's come a long way, Baby?" 1970, p.16).

Although *Sexual Politics* propelled Millett into a media maelstrom, her “15 minutes of fame” was short lived. In December of 1970, *Time,* in “Women’s Lib: A Second Look,” publicly outed Millett as bisexual, and claimed that “[t]he 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 which routinely dismiss all liberationists as lesbians” (p.50). In four short months feminism was forced to almost sit back and witness the media anointing of their new “priestess,”—an inauguration that no doubt radical feminists, with their standing critique against media and leadership, feared. And as radical feminists debated the media’s involvement in Millett’s *Sexual Politics*, liberal feminists faced one of their biggest fears—a more solidified identification of feminism with lesbianism within the public consciousness.

The case of Millett’s media inauguration and outing provides insight into a unique moment in the history of the second wave of feminism. As 1970 witnessed the emergence of the media’s role in the construction of feminism’s public identity, as well as lesbian-feminist conflicts, the case of Millett specifically remarks on the collision of the *liberated woman* with the *credible woman* in mainstream media representations. This case, in other words, serves as a capstone to this project’s discussion of media and the sexual politics of feminism’s second wave. As this chapter seeks to further supplement our current understanding of the second wave’s media-movement interaction, it does so through a closer examination of the ways rhetorical processes of authority and authenticity governed Millett’s reception both inside the movement and within the mainstream press. Taking into account media’s need for a leader and radical feminism’s devotion to a vanguard, this analysis reveals the ways Millett is applauded and articulated as a quasi-figure-head for women’s liberation, while she is simultaneously stripped of authority to occupy such role. Indeed, a closer look at Millet’s case reveals how the conflicts that emerged over her authority to speak for the movement were intertwined with her ability to *be* an authentic representative of feminism's assumed constituency.

To reveal the ways processes of authority and authenticity collided, I will offer a more detailed account of the release of and media attention paid to *Sexual Politics*. I will then discuss the relationship between Millett's mainstream press reception and her internal movement reception. Finally, after discussing the external and internal politics separately, I will discuss the ways their imbrications highlight an understanding of the relationship between the media and feminism's second wave. Such considerations provide insight into the complexity of Millett's case specifically, as well as the intersection of the second wave's internal sexual politics and external movement media politics.

The Story of *Sexual Politics*

"It happened because I got fired," writes Kate Millett in the 1990 introduction to the re-released *Sexual Politics* (Millett, 1969/2000, p.xv). In 1968, Kate Millett taught English at Barnard College while also working on her PhD in English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and had written the first chapter of her PhD thesis, the precursor to *Sexual Politics*. In May of that year, Millett participated in a faculty and student strike at Columbia that focused on secret government research at the university. Although few faculty members stayed when the strike was met with police violence, Millett did, insisting that she needed to "witness whatever harm might come to [the students]." (Millett, 1969/2000, p.xvi). In December of 1968 Millett was fired from Barnard, yet her desire to finish the PhD had not dissipated. Millett accounts that she "toiled" over what would become chapter two, "Theory of Sexual Politics," and presented its early version as a lecture at Cornell University. [1] By 1969 she had given her editor, Betty Prashker at Doubleday, a copy of the first chapter. Prashker liked the first chapter and gave Millett a four thousand dollar advance for the book's publication. Millett's PhD thesis had become *Sexual Politics* and was put on the shelves in the summer of 1970.

In *Sexual Politics*, Millett dared to offer a radical theory about relationships between the sexes, arguing that the book "might be described as 'notes toward a theory of patriarchy' [that] will attempt to prove that sex is a status category with political implications" (Millett, 1969/2000, p.24). *Sexual Politics* begins with "Instances of Sexual Politics" where Millett provides brief excerpts from sexually provocative books by Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, and Jean Genet. Following this introductory chapter of sorts, Millett explains her theory of sexual politics through literary criticism, and a critical analysis of anthropology, the sexual revolution (1830-1930) and its subsequent counterrevolution, psychology (namely Freud), and biology. Although such critiques and analyses may seem more than commonplace in current feminist scholarship, Millett's book was considered to be one of the first (if not the first) book length exposition of radical feminist theory. Prashker, at the time, exclaimed that it "was the most exciting stuff she had seen in years" (Cohen, 1988, p.233).

Despite Prashker's insistence that *Sexual Politics* was remarkable, no one really could have anticipated what would occur in the following months. Although the brief account of the *New York Times* reception is one of the most noteworthy media events concerning *Sexual Politics*, it truncates a discussion of pivotal moments occurring both inside and outside the movement. Lehmann-Haupt's (1970a, 1970b) review in the *Times,* although remarkable, was not the first mainstream press review of the book. The book had been circulating in book review circles prior to the August emergence of Millett. Early reviews of the book included *Newsweek*'s July 27th review (Gross, 1970), as well as *Time*'s initial review published on August 3rd (Sheppard, 1970). Karla Jay (1999) recounts that the *New York Times* announced the forthcoming publication of *Sexual Politics* on July 10, 1970, which caused many activists to "[hail] it as the first mainstream feminist analysis of literature" (p. 232). However, not all feminists in the movement were as excited with Millett's mainstream accolades. Because radical feminists, were "media subversives," they believed that the press "is basically the voice of the ruling class," and certain "rules" for working with the media should be followed (McEldowney & Poole, 1970, p.40), Millett's media emergence raised considerable suspicions over her devotion to radical feminist politics.

Specifically, the explosion of book reviews and special features on Millett and *Sexual Politics* that occurred subsequent to the focus on her in *Time* and the *New York Times* in August only heightened fears concerning the media, and reserved hostility toward Millett began to surface. Most notably, a subsequent article in *Life* that quoted Millett as saying that lesbianism was not "her thing," juxtaposed to a huge picture of her kissing Fumio (her then husband), (Wrench, 1970, pp. 22-23), raised the suspicions within the movement that Millett had sold out. Specifically, Radicalesbians began placing pressure on Millett to "clear things up, [to] contradict [her] press image [as a] nice married lady" (Millett, 1990, p.15). The tension between Radicalesbians and Millett over her media persona surfaced clearly in a meeting of the group in the fall of 1970. At this meeting Millett was met with an "anonymous" pamphlet that was placed on attendees chairs charging her with crimes of fraudulence and greed, proclaiming that the Radicalesbians did not need her to be the "bridge" between liberal and radical groups and that, since she was a married woman, she could not truly be a spokeswoman for Lesbian Liberation (Jay, 1999, p.232). [2] Though accounts of this meeting suggest that Millett became like a "'whipped puppy'" as arguments concerning her ensued, this was insignificant in comparison to the "outing" that would occur in November of 1970 (qtd. in Brownmiller, 1999, p. 50).

The now infamous meeting occurred on November 12, 1970 at Columbia University where Millett was asked to address "in academic and descriptive terms, the subject of bisexuality" (Cohen, 1988, p. 241). During the question and answer period following the panelists' lectures, Radicalesbians member Teresa Juarez confronted Millett. Juarez exclaimed that bisexuality was a cop out, and pointedly asked Millett, "Are you a lesbian?" Millett (1990) painfully recounts the incident in *Flying*:

> Time Stops: the felt pen recording, the magazine, the tape recorders, my terrified mind stops remembering it, while Teresa Juarez's voice loud butches me from the floor mike center of the room, a bully for all the correct political reasons. Five hundred people looking at me. Are you a Lesbian? Everything pauses, faces look up in terrible silence. I hear them not breathe. That word in public, the word I waited half a lifetime to hear. Finally, I am accused. "Say it! Say you are a Lesbian." Yes I said. Yes. Because I know what she means. The line goes, inflexible as a fascist edict, that bisexuality is a cop-out. Yes I said yes I am a Lesbian. It was the last strength that I had. (p. 15)

Probably unbeknownst to most attending, a reporter from *Time* magazine had attended that meeting. By the next morning the reporter was at Millett's door asking her to confirm or deny the fact that she was a lesbian.[3] As Millett did not deny anything, *Time* published their article "Women's Lib: A Second Look," which publicly outed Millett as bisexual, quoted negative reviews of *Sexual Politics*, and questioned Millett's ability to be a legitimate spokesperson, woman, and academic. [4]

While the Columbia meeting was the culmination of hostility and fears within the radical wings of the movement, it was not until the *Time* outing that liberal branches of the movement were forced to face their fears. Since liberal feminists, as "media pragmatists," embraced the media as a useful political resource, liberal feminists were not necessarily concerned with the fact that the media was paying attention to Millett, because in some ways *Sexual Politics* worked to legitimate many feminist claims. However, Millett as a spokesperson for the movement could only be acceptable if her personal identity did not further tarnish feminism's public identity. As Betty Friedan had already marked lesbians as the "lavender menaces," and people like her feared that the identification of feminism with lesbianism would only work against movement goals, their fears were seemingly solidified as *Time* claimed that Millett's bisexuality was bound to discredit not only Millett herself, but the movement as a whole. Millett, in other words, had become the lavender menace.

Despite these fears, two remarkable events occurred subsequent to the release of *Time*. The first occurred on December 12, 1970 during a Women's Strike Coalition march to Gracie Mansion to support abortion and child-care access. At this march, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, Flo Kennedy, and Kate Millett were all scheduled to speak. Just as these women began to rise to their speaking positions, "a speckling of pale purple . . . began to glow . . . in the crowd" (Cohen, 1988, p. 249). Cohen (1988) explains the incident:

> Some women—no one was sure how many—were wearing and distributing lavender armbands to the entire crowd. They were also handing out leaflets explaining why "we're ALL wearing lavender armbands today." "It's not one woman's sexual experience that is under attack," the leaflet said. "It is the freedom *of all women* to openly state values that fundamentally challenge the basic structure of patriarchy. If they succeed in scaring us with the words like 'dyke' or 'lesbian' or 'bisexual,' they'll have won. AGAIN. They'll have divided us. AGAIN. Sexism will have triumphed. AGAIN. . . . They can call us all

lesbians until such time as there is no stigma attached to women loving women. SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL!!!". (p. 249)

Allegedly Friedan, the organizer of the coalition, was less than amused. When handed the purple cloth she simply let it drop to the ground, resigned as the leader of the coalition, and pulled Millett aside and said, "You blew it!" (Cohen, 1988, p. 249-250).

The second event following the *Time* outing article occurred on December 17, 1970 at the Washington Square Methodist Church. Soon after notice of the *Time* article and prior to the march at Gracie Mansion, members of NOW and other organizations decided to schedule a press conference exclaiming "Kate is Great." Attendees at the December 17th press conference included Gloria Steinem (just then beginning to emerge as a feminist figure), Ti-Grace Atkinson, Ruth Simpson (president of the New York chapter of Daughters of Bilitis), Flo Kennedy, Susan Brownmiller, Ivy Bottini and Dolores Alexander (both of NOW). Then-president of NOW, Aileen Hernandez, was not able to attend but issued a statement of support for Millett. Betty Friedan, however, was reportedly "out of town" (Klemesrud, 1970b, p.47) On December 18, 1970, the *New York Times* ran an article covering the press conference, which contained a picture of Steinem and Millett. Most noteworthy, however, is the final paragraph of the article, where reporter Judy Klemesrud, almost in passing, marked Betty Friedan as the "high priestess of the women's liberation movement" (Klemesrud, 1970, p.47). In four months, the two media outlets (*New York Times*, and *Time*) which had swiftly proclaimed Millett as the "new high priestess" (Prial, 1970, p.30) and the "Mao Tse-tung" (Who's come a long way," 1970, p. 16) of women's liberation had just as quickly denounced, discredited, and replaced her.

Media Conventions and Millett's Reception

Feminism has had a long-standing history of recognizing the risks of mass mediated representations, and in the case of the second wave specifically, problematic media representations provided a rallying point for many feminists. Kathleen Turner (1980) suggests the one of the more important relationships to be revealed in second wave feminism is between the movement and its efforts to (re)present images that did not run contrary to the movement's goals. Perceiving the media's relationship in constructing a tenable reality, feminists needed to supplant an "ego-defensive" rhetoric, using Turner's parlance, to (re)construct images of women propagated in the mainstream press. Feminism's attempts to supplant stereotypical images of "woman" within the mainstream press further remark on a media-movement interaction as that interaction relates to inaugurated leaders. Symptomatic of media conventions is the almost predictable August 1971 anointing of Gloria Steinem as the new "priestess" of the movement (who appears on the cover of *Newsweek* on August 12, 1971). After all Steinem, was the "beautiful, single, childless career woman in a miniskirt" who talked of women's liberation without shocking the public's aesthetic sensibilities (Douglas, 1994, p.221). And, although the media were more likely to cling to reform-minded advocacies as legitimate feminisms, scholars such as Sonya Foss (1979) and Martha Solomon (1978, 1979, 1983) revealed how the ERA (a reform strategy) ultimately failed. They argue that Phyllis Schlafly's media savvy, with her construction of the "positive woman" who enjoyed her position in the patriarchy, successfully opposed the fatalistic views presented by ERA supporters. In the end, a certain kind of "woman" with particular ideas about "women" won out in media representations.

Millett's case, however, complicates descriptions of media representations of feminism. Tuchman (1978) correctly notes that the media's focus on reformist spokespersons is evident through the favoring and eventual abandonment of Millett (see also, Dow, 1999). Nonetheless, passing commentary on this case does little to illuminate the sexual politics of media representation of the radical second wave. It seems obvious, for instance, that Steinem was much more palatable for the press and the public than Millett, and as Douglas (1994) notes, the Steinem anointing article of 1971 was quick to point out that Steinem was indeed no Millett. But if the media preferred to anoint leaders such as Steinem, to focus merely on events such as the Strike for Equality or the 1968 Miss America protest, to look to heads of established organizations to discuss the goals of the movement, and to redeem more liberal/reform elements of the movement over radical ones, how then did Millett ever get anointed in the first place?

Take, for instance, that a number of the book reviews acclaimed Millett to be “brilliant” (Kolmer, 1970, p.100) and “impressive” (McWilliams, 1970, p.25) and *Sexual Politics* was a “sharply written” book (Gross, 1970, p.72) exercising a “devastating siege” (Lehmann-Haupt 1970a, p.33) “several cuts above the feminist’s movement’s screechers” (Yardley, 1970, p.30). However, as Millett was commonly hailed within the press coverage as the “prominent theoretician” of feminism’s second wave (Gross, 1970, p.72), and *Sexual Politics* was acclaimed as the “first scholarly justification for women’s liberation” (Loercher, 1970, p.15), the coverage characteristically asserts that Millett was a “militant radical feminist” (Walker, 1970, p.21). Thus, the radical ideological stance of *Sexual Politics* did not escape critics’ eyes. Despite its author’s radicalism, the book “command[ed] serious attention” (Yardley, 1970, p.30). These accolades mixed with the naming of Millet as radical calls for a reconsideration of how media conventions worked both predictably and uncharacteristically in Millett’s case. In other words, in light of what we understand about the relationship between media conventions and feminism’s second wave, how did this radical feminist emerge initially as an authority of sorts, not just a radical deviant fringe?

Gitlin's (1980) analysis might suggest that Millett, like some radicals within the New Left, fell prey to the mainstream press' tendency to inaugurate deviant members of the movement as leaders so as to discredit the movement. However, since the shortcomings of Gitlin's (1980) analysis for feminism's media-movement interaction have already been noted, and because Millett's initial receptions in *Time* and the *New York Times* were reasonably amiable, I remain suspicious of his analysis' applicability for Millett's case. Although Patricia Bradley (2003) attributes Millett's cover appearance on *Time* to *Time's* efforts to dodge a pending sexual discrimination lawsuit, Bradley's analysis does not illuminate why *Time* chose radical Millett as opposed to her much more appealing liberal counterpart, Betty Friedan. As such, I am inclined to side with Tuchman (1978) who argues that Millett's designation as a "leader" can be attributed to the fact that, like some feminists who preceded and would follow her, she wrote a book that was nationally recognized. However, more important than this national recognition (since the recognition itself was a product of the media) is that *Sexual Politics*, despite its radical and revolutionary formulations, presented its arguments in a recognizable form. Like protests, as opposed to consciousness raising groups, the book as form remained consonant with media conventions of newsworthiness and seemed to secure a media appointment of a leader. More specifically, the book articulated feminist claims through academic conventions, elevating it to "real theory." Whatever the optimistic potentials of recognition and achievement may be, this form-based recognition opened Millett to a form-based criticism—criticism that works under assumptions of delineating "good" books from bad ones and "acceptable" theories from not. As Carolyn Dever (2004) argues:

> The *Time* story [covering Millett] vests feminist theory with symbolic authority within the women's movement. . . . Millett embodies a paradox that circulates again and again feminist discourses: feminist theory is a form of authoritative discourse whose own authoritative implications must be undone as a function of its political critique. (p.3)

When one considers that the exigence for Millett's media attention resided within the publication of a book, an important facet of "authority" surfaces—the "author function." Foucault (1984) argues that an "author function" pervades discursive practices through critical attempts to secure a text to its generative point of origin—the stable subject/author. Commenting on the ways that discourse, and those who speak and write it are intertwined with power, Foucault (1972) argues processes of authorization, secured through an ideal of a speaking subject that always precedes his/her text, serve a disciplinary function. Taking into account both Foucault's conceptualization of authority and authorization and Farrell's description of authority as a grounded entitlement and claim to a constituency, it is not surprising that Millett's (in)ability to be an authority via the publication of *Sexual Politics* revolved around her *self* and that self's relationship to both women and feminists. Specifically, the analysis below reveals that the mainstream press critiqued *Sexual Politics* and by censuring Millett's radicalism and femininity. Additionally (and paradoxically), Millett's apparent radicalism along with her recognized scholarly status functioned to mark her as different than ordinary women. These reviews, then, say more about Millett and her politics—her position as an authority, and her ability to represent women and feminists—than of the theories and/or knowledge presented in her book.

Although the articles suggested that Millett was an intelligent woman offering a profound theory of sex-based oppression, such accolades were couched in aggressive critiques of the book's content, of Millett's political bias, and of her radicalism. R.Z. Sheppard's (1970) early review in *Time* suggested that "Millett the scholar and Millett the revolutionary cannot be separated" (p.71) and in an almost foreboding tone, issued the following warning:

> For if it has not already happened in your house, braless converts to the Women's Liberation Movement are poised to leap right off the panels of the TV talk shows and play hell with your pipe and slippers. Sooner or later they will probably come armed with a copy of Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*. Despite placards and slogans, revolutions need theoretical touchstones, dialectics to subdue the opposition. In this regard, *Sexual Politics* will have its uses. (p. 70)

Sheppard's claim that *Sexual Politics* is useful as theoretical touchstone for the movement is a far cry from acclaiming Millett as brilliant. Yet, this brief excerpt reveals the forced balance between acclamation and dismissal that seems prevalent throughout the mainstream reviews.

This balance between acclamation and censure was a common theme within the reviews, as *Sexual Politics'* reviewers set up not only the book's reception, but also Millett's (lack of) authority. Acclamation, for instance, often came with gentle reminders of Millett's political bias. Usually hailed as intelligent, more importantly, Millett is deemed more intelligent than most feminists. Critic Ernest Van Den Haag's (1970) review suggested that "This book is better—the research thorough . . ., the thinking intelligible, the writing smooth—than the usual female liberation tome" (p.1004). Moreover, Elizabeth Kolmer (1970) argued that, "If the first feminist movement failed for lack of brilliant women who could articulate their message with a high degree of intelligence and directedness of approach, the second feminist movement will not be doomed for the same reason, *as long as Kate Millett is around*" (emphasis mine, p.100). Thus, both evidence a clear marking of Millett as feminist *but better*. [5]

The identification of Millett as a spokesperson and/or principle theoretician of the movement, the most prominent mode of commendation, more clearly reveals the ways that the accolades functioned to justify subsequent dismissals of the book's theory. Jonathon Yardley (1970), for instance, in his review in *The New Republic*, labeled Millett as a "seminal figure of sorts in Women's Lib" (p.26), suggested that *Sexual Politics* is better than most feminist rhetoric, and later argued that the theory can be better considered as a "conspiracy theory" (p.30). As Yardley continued his critique he argued, "If Millett had been willing to be less ambitious and more flexible, *Sexual Politics* would be a better book. . . . Like Women's Lib it is most useful when it explores the daily forms of sexual discrimination, least when it wanders into biological theorizing" (p.32). He then relabeled Millett as refreshingly arrogant yet failing to "bear the seed of a final answer" (p.32). Yardley's critique is characteristic of the reviews in that it began with limited praise for Millett even as it critiqued Millett's ambition to articulate a full-fledged theory of sexual difference and politics as arrogant.

Thus, what emerges in the reviews is a theme of assessing Millett more than assessing the credentials of the book itself. In other words, such euphemistically labeled "balance" between accolades and censure suggests that Millett was named as an authority while simultaneously questioned as authorized to make radical political claims. Yardley's (1970) review specifically argued that while it was "seminal," the book failed to consider the complexities of biological and anthropological insights although Millett excelled at literary analysis. Indeed, many reviews did critique Millett's incapacity to adequately address established biological and anthropological scholarship (Howe, 1970; Kolmer, 1970; McWilliams, 1970; Sheppard, 1970; Yardley, 1970) as some reluctantly praised her capacity to engage in insightful literary analysis (Bralove ,1970; McWilliams, 1970; O'Neill, 1970; "Sexual Politics," 1970; Yardley,1970).

Within a context of assessing Millett, it is not surprising that a disciplinary critique of Millett as a person, as an author, surfaces. The first strategy of debasing Millett occurred through an array of articulations of Millett as militant and/or radical. Characteristic of such identifications is Joan Walker's (1970) review in the *National Observer* which opened with: "To put it gently, the author of *Sexual Politics* is a militant radical feminist" (p.21; see also, Bralove, 1970; Howe, 1970; Lehmann-Haupt, 1970b; Yardley, 1970). However, the articulation of Millett as radical also was revealed through marking her as different from other women. Although Irving Howe (1970) went so far as to label Millett as a "female impersonator" (p. 124), more common strategies of such demarcation occurred a bit more implicitly.

Such implicit renderings of Millett as a "female impersonator" occur most frequently through various modes of marking her as different from ordinary women. Many articles, for example, contained a picture of Millett. Such pictures ranged from a seemingly generous (when compared to her other portraits) "school-girl" photograph in Lehmann-Haupt's review, to pictures of an open-mouthed-tightened-hair-Millett-with-dark-rim-glasses (Gross, 1970), bohemian-dressed-laughing-Millett (Walker, 1970) or a-casually-smoking –pursed-lips-Millett-standing-by-a-tree (Sheppard, 1970). To be clear, these brief descriptions do not give the pictures justice—they are quite unflattering. More important than Millett's portrayed unattractiveness however, is that these pictures focused on Millett, not the book. And, as these pictures arguably provided an image of a non-typical 1970 American woman, they marked Millett as different from most ordinary women. As such these pictures begin to reveal the ways she was implicitly undermined to represent women.

Further bolstering Millett's lack of common womanhood can be found in Joan Walker's (1970) review, which revealed Millett's preference against the use of the common title "Miss."

Beneath Millett's picture is the caption: "(Miss) Millett: A debatable sense of priorities" (p.21). The parenthetical "Miss" is particularly interesting since in the review Walker (1970) remarked that, "The book that Millett has written (she abjures the title 'Miss') details how women through the ages . . . have been mistreated . . ." (p.21). Even more clearly evidenced by Yardley's (1970) review, provided additional evidence; after identifying "Millett" (with no title) as radical, he parenthetically remarked, "I eliminate 'Miss' in deference to her sexual egalitarianism, although the omission certainly comes hard" (p.30). Although most of the reviews and articles used the title "Miss" without any explanation, Yardley's and Walker's elimination of title supplemented with comments, and Mary Bralove's use of "Ms." with an explanation of what "Ms." represents, does, because of the parenthetical commentary, mark Millett as different from most women. Thus, the first strategy of focusing on Millett revolves around various modes of marking her as too radical to represent her constituency.

The second strategy deployed to undermine Millett's authority was *ad feminem* attacks. Such ad feminem attacks were particularly prevalent in Howe's (1970) fourteen-page critique of the book. Howe began such attacks early in the review with:

> Miss Millett is a writer entirely of our moment, a figment of the *Zeitgeist*, bearing the rough and careless marks of what is called higher education and exhibiting a talent for the delivery of gross simplicities in tones of leaden complexity. Brilliant in an unserious way, she has learned from Columbia University how to 'work up; a pastiche of scholarship that will impress those unable or disinclined to read with care. . . . She is the ideal highbrow popularizer for the politics and culture of the New Left, at least some of whose followers like to back up mindless slogans with recondite volumes. (p.110)

While this excerpt reveals a general disdain for Millett as characteristically New Left and academic, later remarks are directed pointedly to Millett herself. Howe, claimed that “Miss Millett is at heart an old-fashioned bourgeois feminist” and, “Only a Columbia PhD who has never had to learn the difference between scrubbing the family laundry on a washboard and putting it into an electric washing machine can write such nonsense” (p.114). It is not surprising, then, that Howe dismissed Millett as “[having] no theory,” (p.112) as being a “female impersonator,” (p.124) whose book reveals little more than “phrases of a little girl who knows nothing about life” (p.129).

It is hard to imagine a more caustic critique than Howe’s. And, it is the case that his critique, although predictably dismissive, was unusually insidious. However, it would be a mistake to dismiss Howe’s criticism as atypical. The December 14th *Time* article, which outs and discredits Millett, drew most of its arguments from Howe specifically. Not surprisingly then, the same *Time* article also cited Midge Decter as commenting that Millett’s “problem is her refusal to grow up” and Helen Lawerence’s claim that all feminists are “sick and silly creatures” (“Women’s lib: A second look,” 1970, p.50). Furthermore, ad feminem attacks, although most pronounced in the *Time* outing article and Howe review, also made an appearance in other reviews. Comparably amiable reviews, such as Mary Bralove’s (1970) in the *Wall Street Journal*, simply argued, “Often where Ms. Millett fails to convince, she tries to overpower through empathetic statements” (p.8). Whereas more ambivalent critiques like the one presented by Van Den Haag (1970) sarcastically remarked, “At any rate, [Millett’s] logic is odd, one is tempted to say feminine—but the sexist temptation must be resisted” (p.1005). Without a doubt, Van Den Haag’s suggestion of a “feminine” logic points to an underlying theme within the ad feminem attacks against Millett. Whether it be her shameful attempt to use emotion, her little girl like behavior, or just a more general silliness, Millett's book is critiqued through suggestions of Millett's immature and thus characteristically feminine behavior.

Although such attacks posed against Millett as being feminine, and in some cases as simultaneously being a "girl" and a "female impersonator," (Howe, 1970; "Women's lib: A second look," 1970), remarkably evidenced her claims of sexual politics, they functioned more clearly to dismiss her theory based on her lack of authority. Her femininity, it seems, raised serious suspicion about her capacity as serious author, and her lack of femininity questioned her ability to represent feminism's constituency. This feminine erasure of authority, in other words, functioned paradoxically through a construction of Millett as both woman and not. The marking of Millett as something different than ordinary women and as too much of a woman to engage any subject with scholarly sophistication reveals the double-bind of Millett's (stripped) authority status. This authorization "trap"—Millett's ability to escape her limiting femininity only in ways that seem to discredit her—reveals the larger media mediation of her emergence.

Thus, the relationship between media conventions and the media's reception of Millett and *Sexual Politics* can be summarized as follows. Although media conventions often excluded consistent coverage of radical components of the second wave, Millett's case reveals a more complex relationship. As critics and writers quickly inaugurated Millett despite her radicalism, they just as quickly dismissed her authority by attacking her adequacy to occupy a position that would authorize her to make sweeping theoretical claims. According to accounts within the popular press, Millett, due to her incapacity to deal with particular disciplines' theories, her obvious difference from ordinary women, her political and radical nature, and finally her immature girlish qualities, was indeed not *author*ized as a *seminal* figure of women's liberation. And, if one considers the feminization of Millett, combined with the initial media recognition's reliance on the form of Millett's argument, the disciplining function of the review's critiques of Millett's authority become clear. *Her* emergence, then, made possible through her book, was constrained more by the *her* behind the book than by the book itself. In other words, the explosion of "book" reviews subsequent to Millett's anointment served to assess the articulation of Millett as a "prominent theoretician" for women's lib, not just merely assess the qualities of the book. Moreover, through sexist politics and a critique of a theory through a critique of its author, Millett and her book were relegated back to their proper place. Sheppard (1970) might have made the most accurate statement of all the reviewers: "There will always be a few, however, who may want to invite Millett outside to settle the question of Women's Liberation in a manly manner" (p.71).

Yet, despite these dismissals, it is important to consider that it was not until the final *Time* outing that Millett's authority was ultimately stripped. Although questions emerged over her abilities to be a serious theorist or representative of "real" women's needs, the mainstream press continually paid attention to Millett until she was outed as bisexual by *Time*. Like the case of lesbian representations within the press, Millett's sexual deviance proved to supply the final blow to her authority. Such deviance, presumably, not only marked her as inadequate to represent "women," but also dismissed her as a legitimate cultural theorist.

Millett's Timely Moment

In light of previous scholarship concerning the contentious relationship between feminism and the media, the above conclusions may not be surprising. However, possibly more surprising, is the role of authority and authenticity not in the media's reaction to Millett, but the feminist reaction to Millett's accolades. Like her reception within the mainstream press, Millett's reception by some feminists focused on her ability to legitimately represent feminists and their concerns. When placed in the context of the movement's internal sexual and media politics (as discussed in the previous chapter), Millett's outing can be considered particularly timely. As such, I will focus this discussion around the two important political dilemmas faced by the movement in 1970—lesbianism, and the relationship between the mainstream press and radical feminism's devotion to revolutionary/radical politics.

As I discussed in the previous two chapters, 1970 was a crucial year in terms of the growing internal pressure to resolve issues concerning sexuality (see Appendix B). More specifically, as the previous chapter has indicated, "woman-identified-woman" signified varying degrees of separatism from "male-defined" culture. With the essay's suggestion that being woman-identified, i.e. being a lesbian, could and should be a political choice adopted by feminists, many women labeled themselves as "political lesbians." Although the idea of "political lesbians" may have seemed like a good choice at the time, within a few months battles erupted between so-called "real" lesbians, political lesbians, and bisexual women. With its ideology closely related to radical groups of the time, "W-I-W" compelled radical lesbian feminists to question whether women who continued to live with men, but claimed that they loved women, could really be "woman-identified." Teresa Juarez's claim that "bisexuality was a cop out" in her remarks to Millett at the Columbia meeting forecasted subsequent published critiques, which argued that "bisexuality maintains the patriarchy" by keeping "women in economic, emotional intellectual and consciousness bondage to men while sexually [they] are allowed to play" ("C.L.I.T. statement #2," 1973, n. pag.).

When considering the various factions and divides on the lesbian issue in radical feminist politics, specifically as they pertained to Millett's case, *The Ladder*'s review is instructive. *The Ladder,* a somewhat conservative (when compared to Radicalesbians) lesbian feminist publication provides evidence of how the importance of woman-identification as well as the tensions emerging over the extent which woman-identification can be achieved. *Ladder* critic Hope Thompson (1970), in line with 1970 lesbian politics of the radical second wave, suggested that Millett "with great subtly of wit and without distortion of meaning [has] quietly allowed the enormous subterranean humor of the whole patriarchal system, its essential ridiculousness, to rise up before the reader" (p. 13). However reluctant she was to criticize Millett, Thompson (1970) continued her review by arguing that:

> [*Sexual Politics*] is an enormous improvement, but hardly enough for the Lesbian reader. Ms. Millett's cultural milieu is still limited, limited this time by a larger circle labeled 'heterosexual.' A truly human view is not possible without incorporating the corrections afforded by the insights of the Lesbian. . . . [However,] the excellence of SEXUAL POLITICS is not betrayed by . . . the weaknesses of its presentation of female sexuality. . . . Even the omission of Lesbianism, the total acceptance of which is fundamental to a radical and successful women's movement, is not a fault for by its very omission it becomes glaringly present. (p.14)

In contrast to Radicalesbians' reaction to Millett, Thompson's review reveals a more subdued critique of Millett's sexual politics. This review is symptomatic not only of a publication which eventually died because of its lack of radicalism concerning lesbian feminist politics (see Faderman 1991), but also of the various positions on the lesbian issue in radical feminist politics.

Beyond mere symptoms of the movement, *The Ladder* and Radicalesbians' response also began to reveal, in a similar way as the popular press reviews, the role of authority, or rather the role of feminist authorization in the movement's internal politics. Can a bisexual, or in Thompson's terms, a woman running in "heterosexual circles" offer an adequate radical theory for the movement and/or be an acclaimed leader? Although in a less mordant tone, such questions begin to comment on the possibility of particular personal identifications as capable of making certain kinds of arguments, and the stakes of becoming “truly” woman-identified. Although in the popular press questions centered around Millett-as-girl/woman, here Millett-as-[insert sexuality] remains paramount. Either way, Millett’s personage-as-authority is what is of issue—her innate capacity, or lack there of, to authentically represent feminists and women.

Although second wave feminists were united in their critiques of mainstream representations of women, they remained divided in terms of the efficacy of using mainstream media to advance movement goals. In the case of Millett, this divide between “media-pragmatists” and “media subversives” becomes clear. An amiable radical feminist discussion of Kate Millett, for example, highlighted the fear of mainstream media cooptation by arguing that “The media has done its best to weaken the impact of [Kate Millett’s] ideas by glamorizing and over-exposing, but while some people may have come to see Kate Millett the star, it was still a great night for the Women’s Movement” (“Kate Millett,” 1970, p.6). However supportive some radical feminists were, other radical groups were angry that Millett as a member (specifically of Radicalesbians) was positioned as a leader/spokesperson, and allowed herself, or more importantly her lesbian identity, to be compromised so as to not hurt public sensibilities. To be clear, for them the issue was that she had not come out. They maintained she had sold out, playing the “man’s” media game and becoming a handmaiden of the patriarchal institution that she was supposed to be fighting against. Liberal groups, like NOW, of which Millett was also a member, feared Millett’s outing would only tarnish the movement’s public identity.

Radical feminism’s critique of the media involvement of members did not rest with critiques of media as an institution. A more fundamental problem for radical feminism was the media inauguration of a *leader*. Although the emergence of radical feminism in 1967, spawned initially by a break away from New Left movements, resulted in many different groups with varying ideologies, one of the central tenets of all radical feminist groups was that groups should be leaderless. Alice Echols (1989) notes that radical feminists were disinterested in electoral politics and sought to "maximize individual participation and equalize power" (p.16; see also Freeman, 1975, p. 104-106). The editorial position of radical feminism's *Notes from the Third Year* bears out such themes:

> In moving from the small amorphous rap group toward a more outward-directed group, the problem of 'structure' arises. The women's movement will need to work out for itself a satisfactory form which can avoid the typical pitfalls of authoritarian leadership or inflexible ideology which so many other movements have experienced. With so many women's present dislike for authoritarianism, perhaps one of the most major achievements of feminism will be to work out new ways to organize ourselves that will encourage responsibility in all members, discouraging elitism—a form which can encourage strength in all women rather than create followers. (In Koedt, Levin, & Rapone 1973, p.300-301)

Although radical feminists clearly established the theme of leaderlessness, the method of such organization was more clearly formulated in consciousness-raising practice.

Consciousness-raising groups, considered by radical feminists as the movement's most effective organizing tool (Echols, 1989, p.4) were to be leaderless group discussions where theorizing the political emerged from narratives and reflections of personal experiences (see, Campbell, 1973; Freeman, 1975; Hogeland, 1998). The importance of leaderless groups is illustrated in June Arnold's (1970/2000) treatise on consciousness-raising where she argues:

> When we were engaged in projects with other women, it was immediately clear which ones had been through a consciousness-raising group and which had not; those who had not were still behaving according to male patterns. We saw it because we were doing it ourselves a short six months before—ordering people around, trying to control, arguing, interrupting, [etc.]. Consciousness-raising is essential to the movement for that reason: to avoid cooperation being infiltrated by aggression. (p. 286)

Moreover, consciousness-raising groups were meant to be collaborative activities that would allow women to theorize their experience, to see how the personal was political. Such collaboration was an essential component of radical feminism ideology. The media, however, radical groups feared, would focus more on a personality than the message of feminism. Thus their critique of the media was well in line with some of their more fundamental assumptions concerning social change.

Indeed, the rules of leadership did function as uncompromising beliefs, which in order to mark radical feminists as the vanguard of the movement, required disciplinary actions of authorization. Joreen (1973) described the idea of leaderless groups as the "tyranny of structurelessness" in her essay bearing that title (p. 285-299). Joreen argued that "[t]he idea of structurelessness . . . has moved from a healthy counter to these tendencies becoming a goddess in its own right" (p. 285). Insisting that structure in a group was inevitable and that leaders would emerge in different areas, Joreen urged radical feminists to reconsider their strict imposition of structurelessness. Joreen's attack on the limits of leaderlessness reveals the ways that such ideas functioned in radical feminism as standardizing beliefs. To suggest that structurelessness had become tyrannical connects radical feminism's doctrines with a more insidious politics of exclusion and power.

Thus, ironically, Radicalesbians, although committed to a structure based on lack of authority, seemed to replicate this struggle over authority in the case of Millett. [6] To be clear, I have read nothing from Radicalesbians or from feminists that suggested major disagreements with the argument in *Sexual Politics*. Indeed, the argument of a systematic oppression in need of cultural transformation, not just reform, seems consonant with radical feminist beliefs. However, the articulation of Millett as a leader stirred much controversy, not just because the groups should be leaderless, but also because Millett was called a bridge between radical and liberal feminism. Leaders within the movement suggested that she was not a unique bridge, and they became resentful of the media articulation of such authority. Karla Jay (1999) reveals these themes with her account of the pamphlet placed at the Radicalesbians meeting in November of 1970:

> The leaflet accused Kate of several "crimes." First, the book was too expensive (as if she could price her own work). Second, Kate had "described herself as trying to bridge Women's Liberation, N.O.W., and our group." The mimeo pointed out that since members of Radicalesbians were also members of feminist groups, we didn't need her as a "bridge." Moreover, the unnamed woman who had authored the leaflet asked, "Who has decided that we want to work with these other groups?" Kate was dismissed as a married woman (that is, a fraud) who hadn't even sat through an entire meeting. The leaflet warned members that 'if we do not establish a policy on these questions [the media and our relationship to other movements] it means that any woman (or man in drag for all we know) can represent herself to the media as being a full fledged member of Lesbian Liberation and then go on to make statements that are tantamount to policy. (p.232)

The pamphlet attributed agency to Millett. Millett was the center of critique—her participation in the media, her pricing of the book, her fraudulent self-representations—not the media.

Not surprisingly then, other radical groups like The Feminists sought to persuade Millett to take control of her media representations. In a letter circulated throughout radical groups and then later published in *It Ain't Me Babe*, The Feminists (1970) addressed Millett directly with:

> Despite your efforts to disclaim leadership of the movement and prevent your deification, the media persist in acclaiming *Sexual Politics* as the first "coherent theory to buttress its (the Movement's) intuitive passions." . . . However, we feel a more emphatic repudiation on your part as the supreme ideologue of the Movement is essential. In order to assert our principles and prevent cooptation by the male power structure, we must, within the movement, fight the development of a class system based on skills which are not available to everyone." (p.8)

The Radicalesbians' attribution of agency to Millett and The Feminists' faith in her ability to "emphatically" prevent her own media inauguration provides insight into radical feminists' challenge to Millett's *author*ity. Although radical feminism was leaderless *de jure*, radical feminists challenged Millett by questioning her feminist resolve. Like those who insisted that her sexual identity was not woman-identified, some feminists questioned Millett's woman-identification by revealing her supposed participation in male-defined hierarchical structures. Though this participation, Millett was marked as suspect, as a possible inauthentic representative of the woman-identified woman or, in other words, as a feminist.

In addition to the mainstream press' authority trap, the disciplinary actions taken against Millett by radical feminists begin to highlight a similar "double-bind." Through their critique of leaders and hierarchical structures, some radical feminists also challenged notions of authorship.

As many radical feminist position papers, manifestos, and alternative press articles were published either without a by-line or under the auspices of a collective (e.g., The Feminists), they remained suspicious of any one feminist's claim to ownership of ideas. These suspicions functioned characteristically do dismiss Millett further:

> We must assert that the Movement has consistently been publishing its ideas and theories over the years, though widespread publicity is relatively recent. The notion that women have been floundering in their own directionlessness and incoherency until the publication of [*Sexual Politics*] is altogether misleading and harmful. We urge you [Kate Millett] to write a letter on behalf of all women, denying a monopoly of ideas, denying the existence of a hierarchy within the movement, and censuring the distortions to which the media have submitted Women's Liberation in its misrepresentation of your position in the Movement. (The Feminists, 1970, p.8)

Despite the feelings of some radical feminists that authorship is less individual-centered, other radical groups criticized Millet for not rivaling grand theorists, in particular Marx. The review in *off our backs,* for example, replicated the mainstream reviews by challenging Millett's title as a prominent theorist:

> The mass media has heralded Kate Millett as the "Marx of the Movement" and *Sexual Politics* as its bible. At worst then the mass media has succeeded in trivializing the book by sensationalizing it. And at best they have created an inaccurate image of it. Unfortunately for us and *Sexual Politics* many women have read it with expectations born of that image and have been disappointed. Sexual Politics does not attempt to present a systematic theoretical analysis of women's oppression rivaling that of Marx nor

> does it attempt to chart directions for or give programmatic advice to the women's movement. But what it does do, it does well. (“*oob reads*,” n. pag.)

The review continued by summarizing Millett’s various arguments, praising Millett’s literary criticism and suggesting that “Her rendering of three novels by Hardy, Meredith and Charlotte Bronte; and a prose by Oscar Wilde are in themselves worth the price of the book” (p.5). Nonetheless, Millett’s “theory” is again criticized for not being “true” theory despite its illustration of careful critical analysis; and apparently such an omission, or overstatement of the book comes as a disappointment to some feminists. More importantly, in light of the conventions of the media anointment and the explicit reference to such accolades made within the review, *oob*’s critique works enthymematically to discredit Millett’s authority as a “principle theoretician” for the women’s movement. In line with its “politico” assumptions, Millett failed not only because she could not rival Marx, but because she was not Marxist. Again, she is not authorized to speak as a prominent authority of women’s liberation. She, in other words, is not a prominent *theoretician* of the movement.

Moreover, the differences amongst radical feminists concerning Millett’s various and paradoxical shortcomings is more than just symptomatic of the fragmentation of feminism’s second wave. The varying ways that Millett was criticized within the movement—at once mimicking the mainstream press and in a seeming denial of such replication—become indicative of a disciplining inherent within efforts to secure an authentic woman-identification for feminist political action. Whether they be critiques of her sexuality, her leadership status, her lack of theoretical sophistication and uniqueness, or her participation in the media, Millett’s authority was constrained not only by the self which secured and discredited the media inauguration, but also by a more fundamental faith in the *necessity* of any woman to authentically represent feminism's constituency. In other words, as the various movement internal politics of 1970 and the reaction to both the text and to Millett herself represent the role of authority and authorization in feminism's response to Millett's emergence, they also reveal the ways authenticity and authority are inextricably bound. And, it is this seemingly natural relationship between authenticity and authority which further remarks on the "trap" created by identity political movements and their interaction with the mainstream media.

Imbrication of External and Internal Politics

Gitlin (1980) reminds us that the mass media treatment of New Left movements in the 1960s and 1970s had a profound impact on both the movement's public identity and the internal political dynamics. As the New Left struggled to change fundamental ideological assumptions of the American public and of the government's foreign policy, according to Gitlin (1980), they also struggled with issues of leadership, elitism, and media's framing of the movement. Gitlin's (1980) account is somewhat limiting in its only passing remarks about feminism's second wave, and more specifically in the ways that Millett's somewhat unique media inauguration demands more attention. In the case of Millett, the media's relationship to issues of leadership and authority become particularly relevant as further examination of the imbrication of external and internal politics is brought forth.

Gitlin (1980) devotes a whole chapter to the explication of the leadership and celebrity in New Left movements. Gitlin's suggestion that the New Left lost control of its "ability to certify and control its own leaders" (p.146) because of various media inductions seems readily applicable and provides insight into second wave feminism. Gitlin attributes this loss of control, however, to the making of leader celebrities, and the lure of such star status to those likely to be inaugurated. As celebrities usually represented a pseudo-authority in Gitlin's terms, petty jealousies ensued within the New Left as these oftentimes unfounded leaders began to shape movement politics both in the public's eye and internally. Indeed, Gitlin's suggestion that certain types of personalities and maybe even bodies led to celebrity status can provide insight into feminism's witnessing of the 1971 emergence of Gloria Steinem. Steinem, who had never belonged to any feminist organization, and she only became involved with the movement rather late during the 1970 Women's Strike for Equality (Dow, 1996, p.56), reveals how qualifications of celebrity, demanded by media conventions, trumped internal movement politics for asserting their own *bona fide* leaders.

The case of Millett complicates notions of media inaugurated leaders seduced by fame, and the media conventions which demanded these stars. It can be easily argued that the media did turn Millett into a celebrity of sorts (not everyone makes the cover of *Time* magazine). And, their eventual dismissal might reveal Millett's less than star-like qualities. However, explaining Millett's case in such terms fails to account for two unique qualities. First, Millett, by all accounts, was anything but comfortable being in the lime light, as she is often reported vomiting before interviews, and she details the pain of it all in *Flying.* Thus, she seems to be an unlikely candidate to be seduced by fame. Second, and more fundamentally, such an explanation fails to account for the specific feminist reactions to Millett and *Sexual Politics* as anything but parallel to what was going on in the media. This analysis, in other words, proposes a much more complex relationship between external and internal politics, a relationship structured by processes of *authority* and their relationship to conflicts surrounding *authenticity*.

The process of authority, so awkwardly labeled, can be described through the media conventions that demanded a spokesperson for a radical sect of the movement whose forms and rules often defied journalistic practice. The media, probably in part due to the publication of a recognizable form such as a scholarly book, found such a spokesperson in Millett. But, as *Sexual Politics* warranted media attention, and as this initial media attention-turned-inauguration propelled further reviews and articles, the role of authority began to govern the discursive terrain. In part, my analysis has already shown how the popular book reviews revealed the ways that authority played an explicit role in assessing the book's achievements (or lack thereof). However, as media conventions also demanded a legitimate authority, the focus on Millett in these reviews further suggests that the articles, and more surprisingly the *book* reviews, also set out to assess more than just the book, but Millett's own authority. That is, the reviews and articles served a more insidious purpose of *authorization* despite their own reluctant admittance of Millett's foregone "priestess" (read: authority) status.

This process of authorization was more than just replicated in radical feminist politics and its reception of Millett. As media conventions began to govern the very terrain of their own continual coverage of Millett, these same conventions established the terrain for feminist's reception. As ironic as it may appear that radical feminism, despite its views of leadership and authority, began to engage in processes of authorization concerning Millett, such authorization should not come as too much of a surprise since their critique itself with its naturally following prescriptions necessitated disciplinary actions. In their utopian critique of power, radical feminists neglected to take into account how their own restrictions couldn't eschew power. Replicating the form of critique in the popular press reveals the way that both internal and external politics intersected in Millett's reception within and outside the movement. The censures of Millett rest on assumptions of who Millett speaks for—women, feminists, lesbians, radical groups—and while the personal may be political, in this case Millett's personal governed the authorization of her position. As radical feminists critiqued hierarchies and leaders, they themselves remained trapped in authority power dynamics; and as the popular press anointed a leader, they wielded that same power to discredit their own articulation. In the end, Millett had too much authority (radical feminists), and not enough authority (popular press). She was too much of a lesbian (popular press, liberal feminism), and not lesbian enough (Radicalesbians). And thus, she was unauthorized to speak for feminism and women because she was not an *authentic* representative of her assumed constituency.

It becomes clear then that Millett's induction and subsequent dismissal cannot be easily explained by an evil media plot against feminism, a personal egotistical search for fame, or internal politics which simply dismiss, so as to not replicate, hierarchal institutions. Indeed, the case of Millett reveals the ways media conventions demanding leaders and "good copy," combined with leaderless groups implicitly demanding disciplinary structures, reinforced a mode of authorization that was a productive force in Millett's destruction. It is the imbricated force of a paradoxical authorization process that secured the removal of this apparent "priestess" from her throne. In other words, it is the disciplinary function inherent within authorization, secured through media conventions in search of leaders/authority figures, which governed the terrain for Millett's reception, both inside and outside of the movement. Such a terrain reveals an intersection of external and internal movement politics, a media mediation and discourse authorization that provide insight into ways that feminism's second wave identity commitment may have participated in the very game of identifying a politically sustainable "woman" that the movement sought to fight against.

Notes

[1] This lecture/article was entitled "Sexual Politics: A Manifesto for Revolution," see Millett, 1970.

[2] Although the pamphlet was anonymous, many believed it was written by Rita Mae Brown (Jay, 1999, p.232). Susan Brownmiller (1999) notes that Martha Shelley saw Brown place the pamphlet on people's chairs, and Shelley also accounts for her regret for not stopping the whole thing (p.149). However, Brownmiller (1999) also notes that Brown denies the Shelley's charges and stated that she thought Millett's work was "critically important" (p. 149).

[3] I mainly pull this description of these events from Cohen, 1988, p. 242. However, for other and similar accounts of the Columbia "outing" see, Jay, 1999, p. 232-233; Brownmiller, 1990, p. 150; and Tobias, 1997, p.158.

[4] The article mainly quotes Irving Howe's lengthy and scathing review published in the December, 1970 edition of *Harper's*. In a strange ironic twist in the story, *Time*, immediately following the statement that many may discredit her as a spokesperson for the movement because of her bisexuality, quotes Howe as describing her as a "female impersonator" who "shows very little warmth toward women" ("Women's lib: A second look," 1970, p.50).

[5] For similar remarks that articulate Millett as different from most feminists see, Bralove 1970, p.8; Yardley, 1970 30).

[6] Feminism's inability to escape the burden of power hierarchies and/or processes of authorization is not a novel claim. Specifically, theorists have discussed the role of power as it relates to "who" could speak for feminism and the dangerous essentialism inherent within those prescriptions (e.g. see Biesecker, 1992; Butler, 1990a, 1990b; Condit, 1997, Grosz, 1995). As such, this analysis builds off the critical insight of such theorists by examining the processes of

authorization inherent within the case of Millett, and thus highlighting a specific strategy of the second wave's disciplinary moves.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTAMINATING CONCLUSIONS

Critiquing the second wave's identity commitment to "woman" may seem to be, at the very least, politically and pragmatically naïve. Consider, however, that although Millett was displaced as the second wave's prominent theorist and leader, her story continued to signify various tensions within the movement, as well as the media's reluctance to inaugurate such an unqualified authority. Just as some feminists, for example, used Millett as representative of the problems with the mainstream press' standards for stardom, arguing, "'If you are gay you deserve just as much recognition and status as Kate Millett even though you haven't written a book'" (qtd. in Whan, 1973, p.8), other feminists like Robin Morgan used Millett as a signifier of the possibility of heterosexual lesbian identification. In her address to the 1973 Lesbian-Feminist Conference in Los Angeles, Morgan (1973) maintained:

> I am a woman. I am a Feminist, a radical feminist, yea a militant feminist. I am a Witch. I identify as a Lesbian because I love the People of Women and certain individual women with my life's blood. Yes, I live with a man—as does my sister Kate Millett.. . . The man is a Faggot Effeminist, and we are together the biological as well as the nurturant parents of our child. . . . [T]here it is. . . I am a monster—and I am proud. (p.30)

However subversive Morgan's heterosexual-lesbian identification might seem, the previous chapters' analyses reveal that lesbian-feminists were reluctant to accept such identifications.

Furthermore, while feminists introduce "Millett" as a powerful signifier of the movement's various tensions, the mainstream press used "Millett" to mark the dangers of sexual deviants-as-authorities. In the press' reception of Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, for example, Greer is described as a "rare feminist who likes men," which makes her more "like a Helen Gurley Brown than a Kate Millett" ("Sex and super-groupie," 1971, p. 75). Similarly, another review of Greer's book indicated that "it was unfortunate that Millett's book had hit the presses first: Greer's [is] much more entertaining and most marvelous of all she *liked* men" (Elshtain, 1972, p.192). As the press used "Millett" to comparably assess other feminists, they sustained "Millett" as a signifier of authority-gone-awry through continued comments on *Sexual Politics*' deficiencies. Described in book reviews of Millett's critics as an "ugly monster" (Brophy, 1971, p. 1) and a "vulgarity almost not to be credited" (Maddocks, 1972, p.88), *Sexual Politics* was again dismissed. However, these dismissals of *Sexual Politics* make clear that such dismissals were designed to further discredit Millett as an authority for *women* and their liberation. As Pat Kennedy (1972) put it in her review of Midge Decter's *The New Chastity and Other Arguments Against Women's Liberation*, "No one will find in Decter's words any Millettish apology for cowardice, nor, I think, should any woman who is genuinely liberated accept such" (p.1417).

These later moves by the popular press and movement activists begin to not only further substantiate the importance of Millett's case, but also represent her final effacement. No longer a leader, no longer a *liberated* nor a *credible woman*, "Millett" as a signifier displaces her short-lived "priestess" status since she was purged from the realm of public authority and the movement's seemingly authentic alternative. For this discussion, "Millett" also functions as a powerful signifier of the material consequences of identity politics, and, as I will argue here, representative of the crippling influence of "woman" as feminism's fundamental commitment. It is the importance of holding the "practice" of feminist political action to theoretical scrutiny that

I will now turn to in this project's concluding remarks. More specifically, I think it is important to consider that the various ways in which identities were disciplined in the second wave point to a discursive demand for purification in the wake of contamination by lesbians, men, bisexuals, and heterosexuals. It is through this consideration that one can begin to see the practical and theoretical consequences of what "feminism demands" and "women deserve" (Nussbaum, 1999, n.pag.).

For liberal and radical feminism, "woman" became not only the site of emancipation and liberation, but it also became the site of contestation. While liberal feminism sought to *dismiss* a lesbian-feminist identification in the public sphere, radical feminism *demanded* such an identification within the movement. As one side seemed to oppress lesbian subjects, and the other canonize them, both did so in the name of "woman." It is the relationship that "lesbian" had to "woman" within feminist politics that reveals the ways that issues over lesbian sexuality had just as much to do with specific women who self-identified as lesbians as it did with feminism's foundational devotion to women in general. Indeed, what was at stake, according to second wave feminists, was woman's autonomy—political and ontological. And, it is this horizon of autonomy, especially as it was conceived in the movement's discourse, which I argue undermined the movement's efforts.

More specifically, for liberal feminists, "woman" needed to be protected from any identifications which would threaten women's political efficacy. As their media pragmatism reveals, liberal feminists were highly concerned about the ways the movement could gain or diminish popular support for their goals toward women's legally sanctioned political equality. To secure a politically efficacious or *credible woman* articulation, liberal feminism sought to protect the site of woman from lesbian contestation. Moreover, this protection quickly translated into an articulation of lesbians as the disrupters, potential CIA infiltrators, the *contaminators* of not only "woman" but of NOW. In short, NOW's rhetorical construction of lesbians as lavender menaces positioned lesbians as potential threats to the movement's most recognizable organization as well as that organization's attempts to construct a *credible woman*. The perceived threat of lesbian-feminist identifications as well as the assumed threat of lesbians themselves to the movement's most recognized organization resulted in persistent efforts by liberal feminists, principally Friedan, to purge the movement's public identity from lesbian influence. And, while these efforts worked rhetorically with mainstream press conventions to dismiss lesbians as an authoritative presence within the movement, they also risked diminishing any woman's political authority. The fear of lesbians' contamination of the *credible woman* not only affected lesbian's political credibility, but also, through the explicit admission of movement dissent and conflict, the fear risked further undermining women's place in democratic politics.

Radical feminists, on the other hand, needed to secure an ontologically pure or *liberated woman* to mark their own part of the movement as a vanguard—an authentic alternative to patriarchal structure under critique. As radical feminists sought to construct a politically pure movement, which in and of itself stood outside patriarchal influence, the subjects within it also had to be so pure. Quite literally, men—as spouses, romantic interests, co-workers, and even sometimes as children—were theorized as women's contaminants. And, in order to purge the movement of such contaminants, radical feminists propelled "lesbian" identities and practice as the signifier of women's liberation. As liberal feminism sought to purge the movement of lesbian identities, and radical feminism of male-defined and/or heterosexual identities, Kate Millett's emergence in the mainstream press coupled with her seemingly indistinct sexual identity ran counter to both liberal and radical feminism's identity commitments. Not surprisingly, she was expelled.

As Millett's case acutely identifies, whether they are in terms of policing "woman" against impurities or against contestation, these disciplinary moves reveal a desire to protect "woman" from contamination. Ironically, this fear of contamination from politically disastrous lesbians, from oppressive heterosexuals, or from men began to interpellate "woman" through the very mode of discipline that the movement found problematic. Feminisms' propensity to contain "woman" to a pre-determined set of movement goals, in other words, only re-articulated a demand for any feminist or woman to adhere to a new set of identity confines. And, if one considers purity to be an unattainable ideal, then the question becomes: how does a discourse imbued with a fear of contamination, paradoxically, undermine the goal of political liberation and equality?

Negatively construed, contamination suggests filth, impurities, and other undesirables. Radical feminism theorized heterosexual women's subjectivity as being contaminated by male-domination and male-definition, making these women as inauthentic and lacking autonomy. At points any male influence was conceptualized as having a negative effect, thus the justification for not only denying membership to men but also for separating lesbian feminists from their male children and heterosexual women. Similarly, liberal feminism viewed any lesbian influence as a tarnishing of a credible woman, which in turn justified the early expulsion of lesbians from NOW. In both instances, contaminating influences are only so construed because a faith in political purity is assumed. I argue, however, if the contamination of "woman" promises to open up the possibilities for woman's rearticulations and future interpellations, then the overt expulsion of “woman’s” contaminants may render “woman” itself in terms of a stabilization of the very *play* and radical contingency which makes change possible.

The consideration of identity play suggests that feminism’s disciplinary moves not only failed to eschew the very power dynamics of feminism’s critique, but also situated feminist efforts in terms of the perils and promises of identity politics. Since identity politics assumes to promise a political *inclusion* of oppressed groups, the dark side of identity politics, as revealed in this analysis, is the political *exclusion* of identities which at the outset do not meet the presumed necessary ideal of the “original” identity commitment. Yet, an examination of the fear of contamination *qua* play does not suggest that the answer to this identity politics lies in a goal of total political inclusion. To argue that identity is not a sufficient foundation for feminist politics is, in this case, bound to a conceptualization of the subject and identity which uproots their ontological and transcendent status. As such, rather than an immutable surface to inscribe with meaning, identity, and the “subject” so identified can be better described in terms of their performative constituents.

In Butler’s terms (1990b), “performativity” suggests that an identity is “tenuously constituted in time . . . through a *stylized repitition of acts*” (p.270). As constituted in time, any identity has a particular historicity, but since its historical enactments are contingent upon its discursive performative (re)inscription, *identity* itself and particular *identities* are bound to the exclusions of these performatives. Insofar as there is no transcendent subject which grounds these performances, then there is no necessary escape from modes of exclusion. “Within a performative theory of subjectivity,” according to Nealon (1998),

> the norms of interpellative subjectivity *produce* certain subjects and thereby *exclude* others. . . . Due to this double movement of producing/excluding, norms work *both* to

> uphold normative subject positions *and* offer possibilities for subverting the very categories of normativity itself. (p. 138-139)

Indeed, the promise of identity politics' poststructural critique is not found in a reinscription of any emancipatory and inclusionary agenda. As Nealon (1998) notes, "Identity, when all is said and done, is not something that the subject *has*; identity is, rather, the 'event of identification' that I *am*, and this 'originary' hypostatic 'event' is (re)enacted or traced in the subject's continuing performative responses to the call of alterity" (emphasis his, p.59). Thus, the goal is not to liberate the subject from its hegemonic identity, nor is it to theorize the possibility of identity to fully encapsulate all possible subjects. Rather, it is the valuation of a failure to encapsulate and liberate which becomes of central concern for a perfomativity-based critique of identity politics.

Assuredly, the valuation of structural failure is discussed in varying ways among poststructural political theorists. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985), for example, offer "antagonism" as a critical concept for political theorists to consider as a productive force for radical democratic politics. Put simply, an antagonism is that which disrupts a hegemonic identification as necessary, shows any articulation (or linkage of signifying elements) as contingent, and witnesses the "impossibility of a final suture" (p.125). In so doing, antagonisms, when articulated as such, "subvert or disarticulate the hegemonic discourse" (DeLuca, 1999, p.337). Similarly, Butler (1990b) argues that it is the character of identity as performative which opens possibilities for contesting identity's reified status. Rather than "antagonism," Butler argues that "parody" offers hope for the (re)deployment of gender identity to question the originality of any "gender" expression. And whether one theorizes the possibilities of change within parody, antagonism, or whatever, Nealon (1998) insists that as these directions for political theory assume the impossibility of pre-determined structural certainty, these structural failures or certain (im)possibilities need not be theorized in terms of a mournful lack of any given identity, but of a joyful affirmation of play and alterity. Thus, it is Nealon's (1998) move to discuss poststructuralism's critique of identity politics "other than a mourning for an absence or lack" which I think points to reconsideration of the second wave's fear of contamination.

For the critics of feminism's poststructural critique, the above summary and Nealon's affirmation reeks of Butler's standard line that feminism ought to reconsider the ways that feminism's failure to take into account "woman" as itself a contingent, not an ontological category, results in a failure to undermine the very foundations upon which "women's" oppression is grounded. These critics might side with Nussbaum (1999) that poststructural feminism requires a politically nihilistic and ineffective feminist movement, and/or ask, in Modelski's (1991) terms, what is feminism without women? Whereas the critique of identity politics is oftentimes (but assuredly not exclusively) articulated within treatises deemed "academic," "abstract," or "theoretical," this critical exercise undermines a presumption that the problem of identity politics is an entirely abstract matter. Specifically, this project has developed a *historical* picture of the dangers of identity politics as ones of political and sometimes ontological exclusion. Furthermore, this analysis, which suggests that identity is not a sufficient foundation for feminist politics, does not side step the critiques of poststructuralism's *material* and *practical* applications. If this analysis reveals anything, it highlights the ways that *historically* feminism's devotion to identity politics, while gaining meaningful advances for "women," did (re)produce particular power dynamics which undermined women's ultimate liberation. In a certain way, the poststructural critique is not just "legitimate" in entirely abstract terms, because for lesbians, bisexuals, and in some case heterosexual women the failure to question the ontological necessity of sexual difference had very material consequences.

Moreover, an assertion that feminist theory should itself be bound to entirely pragmatic concerns of *women* not only presumes that woman is a *necessary* foundation for feminist politics, but also imports an inversion of a theory-practice hierarchy. As Dever (2004) has argued, feminism has been long concerned with the ways that practice-as-bound to the body has historically placed second to mind-bounded-theory. Such a consideration by feminists presumed to demand that feminism require “a constant translation, [an] engineering of balance between theory and practice, abstraction and materiality” (p.25). Yet, when the slippage between theory and practice is engineered in terms of inverting the mind-body or theory-practice hierarchy, the originary binary split between the two is preserved. And if one were to insert “theory” for men, lesbians, bisexuals, etc. and “practice” for *credible* or *liberated woman* in this critique, the dismissal of the poststructural turn in feminist theory may reveal the ways that the privileging of practice over theory seeks to protect the movement from theoretical contaminants. Like its second wave sister then, the critique of feminism’s poststructural turn as “politically nihilistic” risks policing feminist theory in a way that mimics feminist efforts to police identity. If one is to consider the possibilities of *play* in both of these instances, the question becomes: how do feminist critical exercises negotiate this theory-practice problematic?

In her response to what she perceived as an embattled relationship between her own work and critics of poststructuralism, Butler (1995) argues that, “For the question of whether or not a position is right, coherent, or interesting is . . . less informative than why it is we come to occupy and defend the territory that we do, what it promises us, from what it promises to protect us” (p.127-128). Butler’s response, I argue, offers new directions for the aforementioned negotiation.

Rather than formulating an "answer" to the practical concerns presented by identity politics, I think it is more important to consider the ways that the possibilities opened up by way of contamination, by theory in general, and by "women" who do not meet feminism's pre-determined identifications, are productive in and of themselves. This critical/historical account of feminism's identity politics reveals the concrete dangers of what a fear of contamination promises: the denial of "authority" to lesbians, the expulsion of lesbians from NOW and heterosexual and bisexual women from radical groups, as well as the denouncement and effacement of a particular feminist/woman. It is the ways that theoretical foundations in the humanist subject hindered the second wave *in material ways* that this analysis points to the discursive and material possibilities of feminism's poststructural critique.

I think it is important, however, to admit that the territory which this project defends does not necessarily promise a set of programmatic political prescriptions for the feminist movement. Inasmuch as immanent critique is itself a political action this project proposes a feminist normative political framework, but assuredly these analyses offer little solutions or finality. Although I offer no certain solutions, I can reasonably assert that the fear of contamination produces an irreconcilable set of demands which no feminist effort could meet. In this way these analyses point to the benefits of situating feminisms' poststructural critique in historical movement politics. Such historization can begin to construct a ground for feminist theory which avoids the pitfalls of "abstract" considerations by translating abstract theoretical concepts in terms of their historical, material, and practical manifestations. This is not to say that "theory" itself is a useless endeavor, but quite the opposite, as poststructural theorists may find critical/historical analyses to be crucial opportunities for feminist theory and the movement. Moreover, future critical analyses might not only find the second wave itself a useful site, but also conflicts over sexuality within the feminist movement throughout its various manifestations, I think, provide critical opportunities for discussions of identity politics. A more comprehensive genealogy of feminism’s sexual politics might provide a more nuanced understanding of not only this project’s conclusions, but would begin to offer a movement-specific understanding of poststructural feminist theories.

Finally, it is my hope that this project affirms the possibilities of both critical and practical play. Admittedly, this analysis falls into a trap of highlighting failures more than possibilities, and feminist and rhetorical theory would benefit from future efforts to affirm subversive possibilities in movement discourse and in approaches to critical analyses. It is in the affirmation of play, according to Nealon (1998), that poststructural and political theory can begin to compel a politics which is based on an ethics of alterity. Such an ethics demands an affirmation of the unpredictable, the as-yet-to-be-seen, the as-of-today unidentifiable, and most importantly the monstrous possibilities of the future. To affirm these possibilities may be a strategic denial of movement politics as a *certain* endeavor, but in this affirmation feminists might find the hope of social change in seemingly overdetermined “gender” relations—“a kind of political contestation that is not a ‘pure’ opposition, a ‘transcendence’ of contemporary relations of power, but a difficult labor of forging a future from resources inevitably *impure*” (emphasis mine, Butler, 1993, p.241).

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APPENDIX A:

REVIEWED RADICAL FEMINIST PUBLICATIONS

Ain't I a Woman?	1970-1974	Iowa City, Iowa
And Ain't I a Woman?	1970-1971	Seattle, Washington
Awake & Move	1971	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
The Furies	1972-1973	Washington, D.C.
Goodbye to All That	1970-1972	San Diego, California
Hysteria	1970-1971	Boston, Massachusetts
It Ain't Me Babe	1970-1971	Berkeley, California
Killer Dyke	1971-1972	Chicago, Illinois
The Ladder	1956-1972*	Kansas City, Missouri
Lavender Vision	1971	Cambridge, Massachusetts
The Lavender Woman	1971-1974	Chicago, Illinois
The Lesbian Tide	1971-1974	Los Angeles, California
No More Fun & Games	1969-1973*	Cambridge, Massachusetts
off our backs	1970-	Washington, D.C.
The Purple Star	1971	Ann Arbor, Michigan
Lesbians Fight Back	1972	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
RAT (post-take-over)	1970-1971	New York City, New York
The Second Wave: A Magazine of New Feminism	1971	Ann Arbor, Michigan
Sisterhood	1971	New York City, New York
Women: A Journal of Liberation	1969-1974*	Baltimore, Maryland

* My review is limited to the issues from 1970 to 1975 (when applicable)

APPENDIX B:

SECOND WAVE CHRONOLOGY: MEDIA & LESBIAN SEXUAL POLITICS, 1968-1975

1968:

The clearest emergence of Women's Liberation groups. Although some groups began to emerge in the fall of 1967, by 1968 these groups had proliferated and had clearly started to articulate their purpose in terms of "consciousness raising."

Based in Chicago, Jo Freeman begins publishing the first Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) newsletter—*Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement.* (March)

The mainstream press reveals their own recognition of the onset of feminist activism with the publication of Martha Lear's article, "The Second Feminist Wave" in *New York Times Magazine*. (March 18)

New York Radical Feminists, Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt, publish *Notes from the First Year*, which was an edited compilation of radical feminist position papers (including, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm"). (June)

New York NOW pickets the *New York Times* to end sex-segregated classified advertisements. (July 22-26)

Miss America Pageant Protest, initiated by New York Radical Women, held in Atlantic City. The protest was the first radical feminist action to receive mainstream media attention. As a result of this coverage, the "bra-burner" trope emerges in popular descriptions of feminists (despite the fact that no bras were burned). (September 7)

1969:

Accuracy in the Media (AIM) was founded as a Right Wing watch dog on "liberal bias" in the media

The modern gay and lesbian rights movement begins when gay patrons meet the New York City police raid of the Stonewall Inn with resistance. (June 28)

The First Congress to Unite Women was held in New York City. This NOW initiated event was closed both to the media and to men. NOW omitted the lesbian group Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) from the press release that listed the participating sponsors of the congress. (November).

Betty Friedan speaks out about the dangers of lesbians in the movement at a NOW National Executive Board meeting.

1970:

The second wave's "media blitz" begins.

The Feminist Press is started.

Koedt and Firestone publish *Notes from the Second Year*.

Women in the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) begin to break away to eventually form the Gay Women's Liberation Front.

Radical feminists take-over New Left paper, *RAT*. (January 24)

Rita Mae Brown publicly resigns as New York NOW's newsletter editor on the basis of Friedan's denigration of the lesbian issue in the movement. Eventually, Brown leaves NOW altogether and joins Redstockings only to leave that group because of their position on lesbians in the movement. Brown's resignation marks the beginning of NOW's first lesbian purge. (January)

After Brown's resignation, NOW's first lesbian purge is secured through the withdrawal of a "sexual privacy" amendment by the executive board and the firing of Dolores Alexander (then-executive secretary) on the basis that she may be a lesbian. Alexander self-identified as heterosexual at the time.

At a panel discussion sponsored by Boston Female Liberation, Roxeanne Dunbar (of Cell 16) claims that homosexuality is a chosen oppression, unlike the root oppression felt by women. Shortly thereafter, Brown publishes an account of the meeting in *RAT*. Dunbar's remarks were consistent with other radical feminist groups' positions on lesbianism at the time, which further warned that lesbian sexuality only mimicked oppressive heterosexual social scripts. (February)

The first issue of *off our backs* is published. (February 27)

Friedan labels lesbians as "lavender menaces." Friedan's remarks are cited in Susan Brownmiller's, "Sisterhood is Powerful" in *New York Times Magazine*, where Brownmiller counters Friedan's identification with her own labeling of lesbians as "lavender herrings." Later, Brownmiller refuses an invitation to speak at a DOB meeting. (March 15)

Radical and liberal feminists stage an eleven-hour sit-in at the offices of the *Ladies Home Journal*. Feminists listed fourteen demands which included the replacement of editor John Mack Carter with a woman, the elimination of all degrading advertising, the establishment of day-care center of the women employees, and a special issue devoted to the women's liberation movement, written by members of the movement. Only one of the demands was secured—the August publication of an eight-page supplement about the movement written by the protesters. (March 18)

In line with other anti-discrimination lawsuits filed by feminists against *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, and *Sports Illustrated*, forty-six editorial staff members file formal charges of sex discrimination against *Newsweek* and win. (March 16)

After a March 1970 article in *Newsweek,* The Feminists pass a resolution criticizing Ti-Grace Atkinson for allowing the media to present her as the leader of the group. Atkinson is eventually ousted from The Feminists. (March-April)

Feminist invaded a CBS stockholder meeting in San Francisco, protesting representations of women in commercials and programming. (April 15)

At the Second Congress to Unite Women, the Lavender Menaces (later to be known as Radicalesbians) present "The Woman-Identified-Woman." This zap marks the clearest beginning of radical feminist positions concerning the necessity of lesbian identification for feminists, as it also compelled the emergence of "political" lesbianism. Furthermore, "The Woman-Identified-Woman" is published in feminist publications throughout 1970 and following years. (May 1)

Washington Post editor issues a memo on guidelines for the coverage about women and women's issues. The memo stipulated that journalists avoid using terms such as "cute" and "divorcee," etc. unless the same kinds of words were used to describe men. (June 3)

Jill Johnston comes out as a lesbian in her column in the *Village Voice*. (July 2)

The unprecedented success of the Women's Strike for Equality, headed by NOW, places the movement on the front page of the *New York Times* for the first time. The strike was also covered by all three national television news networks, forty-two states participated, and in New York City alone, more than fifty-thousand women participated in the march. (August 26-27)

Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* is released. Millett appears on the cover of *Time* and is anointed as feminism's new "high priestess." (August)

Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood is Powerful*, Shulamith Firestone's *A Dialectic of Sex* and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* are published (some of these books, however, were published late in 1970 and did not get reviewed by the mainstream press until 1971). The publication of Firestone's, Greer's Millett's and Morgan's books represent the proliferation of radical feminist book-length publications.

In Philadelphia at the Black Panthers-sponsored Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention (RPCC), feminists, including Brown and Martha Shelley, leave the convention due to their anger with Panthers' attitude toward women's liberation and lesbians. They charged that the convention did not meet the demands for more "woman-identified" politics.

Millett comes out as a lesbian after a panel discussion on bisexuality at Columbia University. Millett states that she is a lesbian only after the pointed questioning of Radicalesbian Teresa Juarez. (November 12)

Time outs Millett as bisexual in their article “Women’s Lib: A Second Look.” (December 8)

At the Women’s Strike Coalition’s protest at Gracie Mansion, feminists show support for Millett and other lesbians by passing out lavender arm-bands for participants. Friedan, outraged by the wave of purple support, resigns from the coalition which she founded. (December 12)

The National Press Club, after pressure from women, voted to admit women as members. (December 14)

Supporters of Millett, including Gloria Steinem, Susan Brownmiller, Ivy Bottini, Dolores Alexander, and Flo Kennedy hold a “Kate is Great” press conference. Judy Klemesrud’s coverage of the press conference is published the following day in the *New York Times*, containing a picture of Millett next to the soon-to-be-canonized Gloria Steinem. (December 17-18)

1971:

Koedt and Firestone publish *Notes from the Third Year.*

Norman Mailer publishes his critique of the movement, *The Prisoner of Sex*, which receives substantial mainstream press attention.

Friedan successfully leads efforts to purge NOW’s New York Chapter of lesbians and their supporters (known as NOW’s second lesbian purge). (January)

The first all-lesbian house in Washington D.C. is established. Named “Amazing Grace,” the house consisted of five women and abruptly disbanded in one-week. Annoyed that they had not been included in “Amazing Grace,” Rita Mae Brown and Charlotte Bunch start a lesbian CR group in DC in February. By April they had invited the founders of Amazing Grace, and in May the CR group had formed a separatist-based living collective. Initially self-identified as “Those Women,” the collective became known as The Furies in 1972. Although The Furies were not the only lesbian collective, nor were they necessarily representative of other lesbian-feminist collectives, they are widely considered to be the most influential. Furthermore, 1971, in general, lesbians in several cities began to form their own groups and identified themselves as lesbian separatists. (February-May)

Just a year after Millett’s appearance on the cover of *Time*, Gloria Steinem is touted as the “new woman” with her cover photo in *Newsweek*. *Newsweek* emphasizes that Steinem is no Millett and begins the inauguration of the movement’s new high priestess. (August 16)

At its annual convention, NOW admits to their own role in lesbians’ oppression and passes a resolution. The resolution also stated that the oppression of lesbians was a legitimate concern for feminists. (September 3-6)

1972:

Outspoken critic of the movement, Midge Decter, publishes her book, *The New Chastity and Other Arguments Against Women's Liberation*.

Sidney Abbot and Barbara Love publish *Sappho was a Right-On Woman*.

The canonization of Gloria Steinem was completed with her appearance on the cover of *McCall's* under the banner, "The Year of the Woman." (January)

The Furies begin publishing their newspaper, *The Furies* in January. Despite the fact that the newspaper was published until 1973, the living collective began to split much earlier. Rita Mae Brown was "purged" from the collective in March, and by April the collectivity had completely disbanded. (January-April)

After a preview of *Ms. Magazine* in *New York*, editor Gloria Steinem releases first full issue of *Ms.*, which included articles from Kate Millett, Del Martin, and Angela Davis. (July)

Friedan makes her first public denouncement of the sexual politics which, she argued, were plaguing the movement. Although this article, printed in *McCall's*, did not point to lesbians specifically, it does begin to articulate the foundational arguments that Friedan would use in her subsequent pointed attacks. (August)

1973:

Jill Johnston's *Lesbian Nation* is released.

NOW establishes task force on sexuality and lesbianism.

Friedan's previous remarks in *McCall's* (1972) become much more pointed with her subsequent sustained assault on lesbians and the movement's turn to sexual politics, and she authors a scathing critique of the movement in *New York Times Magazine*. Friedan's attacks are criticized through letters to the editor in *New York Times Magazine*, and Friedan replies to such criticism with a re-statement of her original critique. (January-March)

The First West Coast Lesbian-Feminist Conference is held in Los Angeles. (April 14)

NOW's five year campaign against sex-segregated employment advertisements ends with a victorious U.S. Supreme Court ruling banning such advertisements. (June 21)

1974:

Lesbian separatism peaks.

Ti-Grace Atkinson publishes a collection of her essays, *Amazon Odyssey*. Among other things the book keenly reveals Atkinsons' changing position on lesbian sexuality.

Lenore Hershey becomes the editor of *Ladies Home Journal*. She was only the second woman to reach such a position in the magazine ninety-year history. (January)

1975:

Time breaks with its traditional “Man of the Year” coverage by designating ten women for cover honors.

NOW testifies against a five year funding of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to the Communications Subcommittee of the House. NOW testified against the funding because of the CPB’s poor record on women.

Alice Echols argues that by 1975 most radical feminists were lesbians, and cultural feminism had ironically emerged as an answer to the gay-straight split.

Redstockings issues a press release accusing Gloria Steinem of being a CIA operative, while also arguing that *Ms.* was a CIA strategy to replace radical feminism with a more liberal alternative. (May 9)