GENERATIONAL FEMINISM AND ACTIVISM: USING BGSU AS A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

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This study seeks to understand how the institutionalization of feminism through Women's Studies programs has affected the education and development of new feminists. It is my assertion that this generational debate must be understood when forming/revising a curriculum in Women's Studies programs in order to promote feminist activism in the third wave. This project focuses solely on the aspect of activism as a means of understanding generational conflict between second and third wave feminisms and the ways in which this conflict affects the education of young feminists in the Women's Studies classroom. The first section focuses on how definitions of activism and perceptions of what counts as activism differ at both a generational and local level. The second section of this project looks at how Women's Studies students are educated to be activists. It focuses specifically on service learning as the primary method of engaging students in activist projects. The third and final section of this project seeks to move beyond service learning as our primary method of educating young feminists to become activists. Through further developing existing activities already put into place by many Women's Studies instructors, I have created an alternative to service learning that I call "solution-based reading." The process of solution-based reading involves examining the current needs of the culture and enabling students to envision creative solutions to problems.

I dedicate this to Jennifer Dawson, Michelle DeRose, and Rebecca Coogan, who taught me that I was, in fact, a feminist, and inspired me to commit myself to improving the education of future feminists. Thank you for your work both in and outside of the classroom and for your dedication.

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CHAPTER ONE

It happened almost by accident, the journey that would later change my life. I was a sophomore in college studying English literature. I was enrolled in a British literature course in addition to a course specializing in the development of the novel. Because there was a great deal of overlap in material between these two courses, I decided to enroll instead in a course entitled Women Writers. Prior to my experience in this class the label "feminist," particularly when applied in reference to myself, made me uncomfortable. I knew I was most certainly against the oppression of women, I could recognize and speak out against unfair treatment when I saw it, and believed that my gender would never keep me from achieving my goals in life. However, I definitely did not consider myself a feminist; feminists did not date men, did not wear cosmetics, and did not seem to be very much fun in general. Plus, feminists were women from the 1960s and '70s, and here I was, nineteen years old in the year 2001. I did not recognize feminism as belonging to my generation. When I entered my Women Writers classroom on that day, I could best be described as a woman who says, "I'm not a feminist, but…" Sixteen weeks later, I had learned to identify myself as a feminist and to realize the power in claiming such a label. There was no need to be ashamed; oppression was shameful and I was working to help overcome it. From then on, the rest of my academic work focused on understanding literature and women's experiences through a feminist lens. I added a minor in Women's Studies to my degree and found many feminist role models who helped me through a very trying and turbulent undergraduate experience. It was because of these women that I am in graduate school today.

I am eternally grateful to those feminists who educated me, a small-town girl who had never heard the word 'patriarchy' before, into the way of thinking that would later become my passion and lens through which I would view the rest of the world. However, my education as a

young feminist in Women's Studies courses was rooted deeply in second wave projects. In retrospect, my education as a Women's Studies minor reflected the critiques of exclusion in feminism brought forth by women of color, lesbians, and transgendered individuals. It was overwhelmingly whitewashed, heterosexist, and gender normative; yet, it was the only feminist education I knew and I relished every moment. I hardly became aware that there was such a thing as a third wave of feminism, or that I was "doing feminism my own way" until I started reading texts by young feminists following my graduation. It was then that I realized that my feminist identity, though critically located within the projects of the second wave, no longer fit the parameters of these projects. I had grown up always taking advantage of the benefits of feminism, and so it was difficult for me to conceive of a blatantly sexist world. Since childhood, I have loved playing with cosmetics, but did it more out of a love for theatricality and trying in different personas, rather than falling prey to oppressive gender roles. As an undergraduate studying literary theory, I was exposed to both feminist theory and postmodernism, and as I gained knowledge of each theory, the two theories began to shape how I understood the other, making feminism and postmodernism inextricably linked. I came of age in the "Spice Girl" generation, where sexiness was sold to girls as liberation, and the boundary between objectifying oneself and empowering oneself was often blurry. It was not until I discovered the growing body of literature on third wave feminism that I became cognizant that other women felt the same as I did. I was a "third waver;" I needed a feminism that was more geared to my generational experiences of taking feminism for granted, a postmodern identity, and playing with gender identity markers and sex roles. As many young feminists do, I felt trapped: how could I reconcile my emotional connection to the feminism upon which I was raised with my desire to

move forward to a model I knew to be more closely aligned with my identity and goals as a young feminist?

In order to understand how Women's Studies students of today come to identify themselves as feminists, it is first necessary to be aware of the development of Women's Studies and how the discipline came to be what it is currently. According to the historical analysis provided by Marilyn J. Boxer in "For and About Women: The Theory and Practice of Women's Studies in the United States," Women's Studies:

> first appeared in the last half of the 1960s when women faculty in higher education, stronger in number than ever before, began to create new courses that would facilitate more reflection on female experience and feminist aspiration. Supported and sometimes led by feminist students, staff, or community women, these innovators were often political activists who sought to understand and to confront the sexism they had experienced in movements for the liberation of other oppressed groups. (662-3)

Women's Studies has been described as the theoretical and academic arm of the feminist movement of the 1960's (Grahl et. al 112). These women faculty sought to include in the academic canon the contributions women have made to society. Wishing to avoid the hierarchical structure of academia based on educational privilege, the originators of Women's Studies made the creation and sharing of knowledge open to all women who wished to be involved, regardless of status. "Circular arrangement of chairs, periodic small-group sessions, use of first names for instructors as well as students, cooperative projects, and collective modes of teaching with student participation all sought to transfer to women's studies the contemporary feminist criticism of authority and the validation of every woman's experience" (Boxer 667). This decentralization of power and expansion of what constituted knowledge is the basis of

feminist pedagogy. Just as private consciousness raising groups were a crucial part of the women's movement, so too was consciousness raising a central aspect of Women's Studies as it transferred to the classroom.

However, feminist pedagogy was sometimes criticized by both feminists and the academic institution. The free-form arrangement of feminist pedagogy was easily construed as "structurelessness" and as having too much emphasis on the experiential. The institution of higher education questioned the ways in which Women's Studies created and transferred knowledge based on women's experiences that may or may not have been formally tested or documented, while some feminists worried that the casual arrangement of leadership was developed based on "informal networks where power flowed through underground channels based on friendship, thus creating the very evil it sought to suppress: control by elites" (Boxer 668). The danger of falling into potential forms of patriarchy where power flowed hierarchically was imminent. Feminists had to be constantly aware of this danger, being sure not to let the "good old boy's" network recreate itself amongst women. Another criticism of feminist pedagogy and Women's Studies was that it was becoming too far removed from the women's movement, becoming more institutionalized and less radical as it grew. According to Boxer, at the 1973 conference focusing on the survival of Women's Studies, there was a faction of feminists who "attacked 'white, middle-class, heterosexual' feminists for attempting to separate women's studies from the radical women's movement. In the face of physical as well as verbal confrontation some of the 700 participants withdrew" (668-9). One of the fears of institutionalization was that, as Women's Studies grew, a few female faculty members might rise to power, particularly in a male-defined setting. One way of combating this recreation of hierarchy was through the ideal of a woman-centered university (Boxer 670).

An important element of the woman-centered university was the connection between the institution of learning and the community. Born out of this relationship was the inclusion of activism as part of the curriculum of Women's Studies. Women's Studies faculty were adamant that the feminist educational experience must include the goal of improving the state of women's existence through continued political activism. According to Boxer, Women's Studies, "unlike other academic pursuits, … must not separate theory from practice" (676). Because Women's Studies grew out of the women's movement, the discipline had and continues to have a responsibility to keep feminism alive and active within society. Activism was incorporated into Women's Studies through actively connecting classroom curriculum with a focus on alleviating the oppression of community as well as the formation of Women's Centers on university campuses. From the beginning of Women's Studies, students and faculty were active in "nursing homes and prisons, bringing together mothers and daughters, and transforming academic feminism into grassroots theater" (Boxer 676).

As Women's Studies programs grew throughout the nation, becoming more and more institutionalized and accepted by academia, a new kind of student entered the classroom; these students were "less likely to identify themselves as feminists, or sometimes even able to understand such basic concepts as sexism and feminism" (Boxer 672). Because consciousness raising took place differently for these students than for the pioneers of Women's Studies, instructors worried about the possibility of the co-optation of Women's Studies. Feminists expressed the fear that Women's Studies could be consumed by the academy, losing its political core, and becoming a "female ghetto with minimal impact on mainstream education and society" (Boxer 675). Though feminist studies was alive and well within academia, the danger of co-optation was high. Because these students were less radical and experienced feminism more

indirectly than their predecessors, the risk of turn feminist activism into women's service to the community ran high. Seemingly, as a result, Women's Studies has become less focused on radically changing the structure of the university and more directly linked to the promotion of equality and the ending of sexism in research and education (Boxer 676). This does not mean that this shift is a result of co-optation, but instead a desire to maintain autonomy over that which faculty could have control.

Because the goals of Women's Studies changed in the mid-1970's from structural overhaul of academia to more of a critical analysis of women's lives and women's scholarship, "ties to community women's liberation weakened and the practitioners of women's studies on campus began to seek the security of stable course offerings for students, tenure-track appointments for faculty, and continuing and adequate funding for programs" (Boxer 691). As Women's Studies programs grew in popularity and acceptance, they found a home within academic institutions. However, once something is accepted as an institution, it thus becomes part of societal structure. The very nature of being considered radical includes the act of dismantling structures and de-centering power. Thus, after having found an institutional haven, Women's Studies became less radical and more like other academic disciplines. Women's Studies programs are seen as the academic arm of the feminist movement, while service learning programs are seen as the new way of tying students to the community, thereby creating engaged citizens as a result of experiential education. On one hand, the institutionalization of Women's Studies and activism through service learning is and has been a positive thing for the feminist community. Once something has been accepted as part of an institution, it is less likely to be under threat and more likely to be considered a valuable addition (or at least one that is not likely to be silenced any time soon). Women's Studies has spread from a few universities across the

nation and the world. Academic feminists have created a wealth of scholarship in nearly every discipline, ranging from literature to economics to biology to sociology and beyond. Through these contributions to academia, Women's Studies and academic feminism have helped to create a "renaissance in the liberal arts [that] seems to have encouraged an ethos that emphasizes obtaining and maintaining resources for the long haul" (Boxer 691). One way of obtaining and maintaining resources has been through building effective partnerships with other academic disciplines through cross-listing courses. One of the strengths of Women's Studies is its interdisciplinary nature. Interdisciplinarity has been valuable in teaching students to engage with the theories and methods of a variety of academic departments and programs in a way that enables more well-rounded scholarship.

On the other hand, for a social movement whose roots lie in radicalism, the institutionalization of feminism through Women's Studies is highly problematic in nature. As previously detailed, many feminists were worried that the institutionalization of Women's Studies would lead to the de-radicalization of the women's movement. Women's Studies, as the theoretical arm of the women's movement, had worked very hard to revolutionize education so as not to mirror traditional male-centered academic disciplines. Feminist pedagogy centered on nonhierarchical teaching and using women's experiences as a way of creating a knowledge base. To become institutionalized was to run the risk of losing all that hard work.

Though feminism has found an increasingly validated home in academia, it may have come at the expense of giving up the radically transformative goals of the women's movement. It seems as though the arguments both for and against institutionalization of Women's Studies reflect larger debates between generations of feminists as a whole. The generational debate between second and third wave feminists has been characterized in many different ways.

Initially, there seems to have been a great deal of finger-pointing on both sides – second wave feminists worried about the new generation taking their history for granted and third wave feminists felt as though their ideas had been silenced and discredited by feminist foremothers who disregarded this new kind of feminism because it was not their own. In her 2002 anthology entitled *Women's Studies on Its Own*, editor Robyn Wiegman introduces the reader to the critiques of academic feminism through a series of questions. She writes,

> Has academic feminism betrayed its radical political roots, substituting abstraction for action, legitimacy for risk? Have the emergent generations of professionally trained feminists abandoned their foremothers' tradition by making feminism an academic career? Has our success, in short, engendered failure, transforming grassroots social movement and anti-institutional ethics into prototypically liberal and hence reformist, not revolutionary, ideals? To answer these questions affirmatively is to cast contemporary academic feminism in general, and Women's Studies in particular, as monstrous creations, undone in present time by their own inability to remain on progressive historical time. To answer them negatively is to commit ourselves to a constant demonstration of continuity within academic feminism's inaugurating ideals, which may not offer us adequate understanding of the present contexts of academics, public culture, capital formation, and feminist subjectivities within which we must negotiate the field's future. (3)

In sum, *Women's Studies on Its Own* explores the effects of and role that institutionalization has played in creating contemporary Women's Studies. Wiegman wishes to move beyond the binary of looking at academic feminism as either betrayer of the women's movement from which it arose or as so wedded to the founding ideals of Women's Studies that contributors are unable to

move forward with cultural change and needs. Instead, Wiegman's ultimate goal in *Women's Studies on Its Own* is to recognize that today's cultural moment is unlike that in which the original Women's Studies programs originated. She writes, "*Women's Studies on Its Own* thus works to trace, in a positive political grammar, the difference that the present makes for thinking about Women's Studies as a knowledge formation, academic institution, agency of the state, and pedagogical insurgency" (4). Simply stated, it seems as though Wiegman seeks to neither exalt contemporary (or third wave) feminism as better than the second wave women's movement nor condemn it as politically apathetic; instead she explores how changing social and cultural factors have created and informed academic feminists in ways that make their theory and practice different from their generational predecessors. In addition, thinking not only in terms of generational moments, but also in historical terms, Wiegman asks the reader to consider how today's cultural climate shapes contemporary feminism.

As a self-identified third wave feminist, I have sometimes felt as though my own way of practicing feminism has not been widely rewarded by my feminist foremothers. My activism was more personal, less public, more academic, and less radical in nature. Impressions of what counts as activism vary widely depending on the generation with which a feminist identifies. This project was born out of a need to locate how definitions of activism have changed over time. Building on the assumption that Women's Studies classrooms have become today's location for feminist consciousness raising and one of the primary ways in which young people come to identify themselves as feminists, I chose to do an analysis of my own institutional location, the Women's Studies program at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio.

Though I am focusing only on the Women's Studies program at Bowling Green State University, I feel that my findings are not solely applicable to this particular institution. The Women's Studies program at BGSU has developed in conjunction with academic feminism as a whole. According to the "Academic Program Review Self-Study Report" produced in September 2005 by the Women's Studies program at Bowling Green State University, our Women's Studies program is one of the oldest in the state of Ohio. It was "established in 1978 with an initial budget of $1500. Like many small interdisciplinary programs, it has, variously, flourished and languished during these 25 years depending on the degree of institutional support and amount of resources devoted to it" (BGSU Women's Studies Program 10). During its tenure at BGSU, the Women's Studies program has been sited in various places across campus, but was initially located in a hotel suite in the student union, the only academic program on campus to be housed in such a way. At its outset, the program had a "part time administrator, no full-time faculty, and no secretarial support. What it did have was a vibrant group of faculty, staff, administrators, and students dedicated to the program… The annual Program budget was $7,491 in 1980 and $13,030 in 1985" (BGSU Women's Studies Program 10).

I was fortunate enough to be able to interview some of the faculty who were involved with the Women's Studies program at its inception. Ellen Berry, who first became associated with the program in 1986, vividly illustrates the marginalization that the Women's Studies program faced. When asked how she thought the program was situated within a larger university context, Berry responded:

> It's really interesting because I've not only been a Women's Studies faculty member here, I've also directed the program for five years. And boy, I tell you, even extremely well meaning male administrators, unless one is always in their face, reminding them of

> what Women's Studies is and does and that it's not just reading about women, it's also feminist studies at the same time. It's a constant struggle … just to gain legitimacy. I don't know if you knew this, but when I first came here, the WS program was located at the end of the hotel corridor at the top floor of the Union. I mean that says it all – it was the only academic program. I've gotten some really … pretty marked responses from male faculty members who are not necessarily feminists or feminist sympathizers. [*laughter*] Yeah, I feel like I've been marginalized to some extent, especially in the English department when I first came here.

Berry points to the blatant marginalization of Women's Studies by the university at the program's outset. Not only was the program not provided with an adequate physical space in which to house faculty and advise students, the faculty of the program faced an uphill battle simply to gain legitimacy by other academicians. Jeannie Ludlow, a graduate student in American Culture Studies at BGSU during the earliest years of the Women's Studies program here, echoes Berry's sentiments. When asked about how the Women's Studies program was situated within a larger university context, Ludlow responded:

> We've come a long way. When I was a grad student, the Women's Studies office was in the hotel on the 4th floor of the union. And when people would vandalize our door, administrators would never hear about it. The police would come and take pictures and say, 'Yeah, sorry about that.' and that would be it. … the person who was director of the program – didn't have an academic appointment in Women's Studies. The person who really ran the program – who was her administrative assistant – she had no clout, she had no help with anything; she was overworked and underpaid and underappreciated and all that stuff. And we had no Women's Center. So she was also the Women's Center. She

> *personally* was the Women's Center. … She would know how to get you help if someone was being sexually harassed on the job or if a student was being stalked or whatever – everyone called her. Everyone. And that was what Women's Studies was, and that was very exciting. But it also didn't allow us to be very effective academically, which is supposed to be what we are, is an academic unit. So it was an exciting time to be there but it was also really stressful – it made it hard to do your scholarly work.

Ludlow points to both the benefits and disadvantages of the institutionalization of Women's Studies. On one hand, being involved personally at a grassroots level with improving women's lives and creating knowledge based on women's experiences was very exciting. The pioneers of Bowling Green State University's Women's Studies program were radically challenging the system and seeing clear repercussions of their actions and presence on campus – whether those actions were positive. On the other hand, however, the primary purposes of creating a Women's Studies program was to reform collegiate curriculum and challenge the exclusion of women from traditional academic disciplines. When all of one's energy is focused on survival of the program and meeting the needs of women on campus, it becomes very difficult to focus on being a student or a scholar.

One way of relieving the pressure of being both an academic unit and a resource center was the creation of a Women's Center on campus. According to the "Academic Program Review Self-Study Report" created by the Women's Studies faculty,

> the formation of a Women's Center in 1998 with a full-time director and staff, allowed the Women's Studies Program to focus more directly on its status as an academic unit, although it continues to work closely with the Center on activities such as the annual month-long Women's History Month programming. (11)

In more recent years (2005-2006), the Women's Center on campus has faced many budget cuts which lessened its ability to offer events sponsored in conjunction with Women's Studies (BGSU Women's Studies Faculty 11). In addition to a decrease in programming, the Women's Center lost the funding for the Victim's Advocate on campus. These losses have created a burden amongst Women's Studies faculty because the need for the services has not diminished; faculty have had to find alternative ways to meet students' demands.

The Women's Studies program at Bowling Green State University is currently housed in East Hall, a building dominated by the English department and shared with American Culture Studies. It is maintained by a full-time director and a full-time lecturer/undergraduate coordinator, shares secretarial support and office resources with the Creative Writing program, and includes two jointly appointed faculty members and several graduate student assistants. The program offers a major and minor in Women's Studies, as well as a graduate certificate in Women's Studies. WS200, or Introduction to Women's Studies, serves as one of the university's general education requirements for cultural diversity (BGSU Women's Studies Program 10-11).

This study seeks to understand how the institutionalization of feminism through Women's Studies programs has affected the education and development of new feminists. It is my assertion that this generational debate must be understood when forming/revising a curriculum in Women's Studies programs in order to promote feminist activism in the third wave. Many of the faculty members teaching in Women's Studies programs were educated during second wave feminism; however, the majority of women and men they educate today are members of what is termed the third wave by many feminist scholars. Academic feminists in both second and third waves seem to be trapped in a cycle of looking not at what these different

generations of feminism have in common and how they might work together to promote social justice, but instead focusing internally on how each generation seems to take the other for granted and each falls short of an arbitrary "ideal."

Expanding the notion of activism is one absolutely vital way of healing the generational divide. All feminists seek to transform the oppressive nature of women's experiences; it is in their method of operation where they may differ. Academic activism must be included in the feminist definition of true activism; this is particularly true in the case of the Women's Studies classroom as a site for conversion. Just as societal and cultural circumstances have evolved since the origin of second wave feminism, so must our ways of ending oppression. When understanding Women's Studies courses as the new location of feminist consciousness-raising, the importance of an institutional history becomes apparent. Actively learning from the triumphs and mistakes of previous generations is central to moving forward with the projects of the future. Young feminists cannot create their own way of "doing feminism" without first understanding the varieties of ways feminism has been practiced. However, it is important for young feminists to be educated in such a way that they are aware their voices and suggestions will be heard and validated.

Seeking to understand the education of young feminists, I designed a project that is ethnographic in nature. Throughout the course of several months I interviewed faculty of the Women's Studies program as well as students majoring or minoring Women's Studies at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). In sum, I conducted thirteen interviews; seven of my subjects were faculty affiliated with the Women's Studies program, one was a graduate instructor in Women's Studies, and five were undergraduate students in Women's Studies. In

interviews ranging from half an hour to two hours in length, I asked them the following questions:

1. How and when are/were you associated with the Women's Studies program at Bowling Green State University (BGSU)?
2. Describe the kinds of classes you taught/took during your time at BGSU in the Women's Studies program. What did you feel were the strengths and weaknesses of these courses? What were the dynamics around race/class/sexuality in your Women's Studies courses? Did your coursework reflect a unified message, or were messages between courses conflicting? Why or why not?
3. For those associated with the program in the past, what was your personal definition of feminism as it existed during your affiliation with Women's Studies? How has that definition evolved since your involvement? For current faculty/students, what is your personal definition of feminism? How has the Women's Studies program at BGSU influenced your definition?
4. Describe your experience of being a feminist on the campus of BGSU. How was/is the Women's Studies program situated within the larger university context? For faculty members, what were the most rewarding and most difficult aspects of teaching in Women's Studies? What, if any, teaching challenges did you encounter that were specific to your role as an on-campus feminist? For Women's Studies students, what were the best and most difficult aspects of being in the program? Do you feel your peers treated you differently because of your involvement in Women's Studies? If so, why? If not, why not?

5. During your involvement with Women's Studies at BGSU, how was activism defined by the program? How did you personally define activism? What counts as activism? How do you see activism happening amongst young feminists today?
6. Do you believe that young women outside of a university setting "come to feminism" in the same ways as women in the 1960's and 70's did? Why or why not? Do you believe that Women's Studies programs have changed feminist activism?
7. Do you feel that young women today are less willing to define themselves as feminists? If so, what might be the reasons for this change? Does it matter if individuals openly define themselves as feminist if they are living an inherently feminist life; that is, does the label "feminist" need to exist if the intent is underlying?
8. Many academics agree that there current activism done by young women today may be defined as the "third wave" of feminism. Do you agree with this notion? Why or why not? Within the context of BGSU, what do young feminists have in common with feminists of earlier years? What is different? How does this relate to the larger ongoing debates in academic feminism surrounding the conflict between second and third wave feminists?
9. Many feminist scholars criticize young women as politically apathetic. Do you agree with this? Why or why not? If yes, how can Women's Studies programs help overcome this apathy? If not, why do you believe this has been a common complaint and how can Women's Studies programs help change this perception?
10. How do you see feminism developing in the future?

Through the course of transcribing these interviews, I realized that there was a wealth of information that I most likely would not be able to discuss due to the confines of my project.

Because of this, I have chosen to focus solely on the aspect of activism as a means of understanding generational conflict between second and third wave feminisms and the ways in which this conflict affects the education of young feminists in the Women's Studies classroom.

The first section of this project focuses on how definitions of activism and perceptions of what counts as activism differ at both a generational and local level. It looks at how activism was defined by second wave feminists: what the major issues at stake were and the ways in which those needs were met. Through gaining an understanding of how activism has developed over time, the project then looks at how third wave feminists define activism in comparison to their predecessors and how definitions of activist endeavors differ at a generational level. I then move from a broad conceptualization of activism to a local level, seeking to answer how the definition of activism in the Bowling Green State University Women's Studies program has developed in conjunction with academic feminism as a whole. In asking both students and faculty of the program what counts as activism, I hope to draw connections to broader generalizations of generational conflict in terms of various characterizations of both second and third wave feminist activism. Definitions of activist work differ according to cultural needs; how has the activism of third wave feminists been devalued because it happens differently now than it has historically? Does feminist activism by nature of its existence have to be radical, or are there alternative ways of understanding who and what counts as feminist? What is the most effective way to move toward ending oppression based on gender in today's political and cultural climate?

The second section of this project looks at how Women's Studies students are educated to be activists. It focuses specifically on service learning as the primary method of engaging students in activist projects. Service learning, different from volunteerism or community service, combines the curriculum of the Women's Studies classroom with activities and projects outside

the classroom that allow students to connect the theories learned inside the classroom with feminist practices. In exploring how Women's Studies educators were among the first to introduce components of community involvement in their classroom, this project seeks to understand how activism is different from service learning. It answers the question: what are the dangers feminist educators might encounter in using service learning as our primary method of training activists? In recent years, Bowling Green State University has introduced an element of what the university administrators call service and engagement as part of teaching students to be active and involved citizens. However, the kind of service learning the university promotes can be very different from the kind of activism Women's Studies educators seek in their classroom. Service learning is not necessarily always political in nature, while activism has at its core a very politicized existence. The danger of appropriating women's labor for the sake of making the university look involved in the community is high, particularly in an academic environment that does not actively seek to reward Women's Studies and feminist scholarship as a whole.

The third and final section of this project seeks to move beyond service learning as our primary method of educating young feminists to become activists. The first step involved in this process is educating students on the generational conflict amongst feminists and the different ways this divide has been characterized in academic discourse. In gaining an understanding of the similarities and differences between the theories and practices of generations of feminists, students will be able to recognize the successes and failures of past activist work, understanding their history but not being limited to it. It also teaches them to be self-reflexive in how their own generation of feminism is understood by others, thereby becoming more conscious of the ways in which they affect the world around them. Through further developing existing activities already put into place by many Women's Studies instructors, I have created an alternative to service

learning that I call “solution-based reading.” The process of solution-based reading involves examining the current needs of the culture and enabling students to envision creative solutions to problems. In addition to an awareness of one’s place within the generational dialogue and an awareness of culture, I feel that teaching students how to assess their own unique talents, skills, and communication and learning styles is absolutely necessary. If we are to move forward with an expanded definition of activism, we need to help students pinpoint the kind of activist work to which they are most suited. One way of doing this is through the use of Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator testing. Though there are certainly problems associated with personality testing, such tests are one way of teaching students to communicate effectively with others, particularly in a field like Women’s Studies where many students are planning on going into nonprofit work after graduation. Along those lines, I believe it is necessary to educate students about the practical skills associated with effective activism. Included in that is teaching them how to build partnerships with other social justice groups, navigating and utilizing both material and nonmaterial resources, problem solving, and getting their message out to the public. It is my assertion that including in the curriculum the logistical elements of activist work will not only give Women’s Studies students the ability to be more successful in their activist work, but also give those students who plan on going into the nonprofit field skills that are vital in the workplace. Through the combination of these tools, students may learn how to incorporate activism in their daily lives, thereby encouraging them to be life-long activists.

CHAPTER TWO

Feminist projects in the 1960s and ‘70s focused on issues of equal rights and equal opportunities for women. Just as the suffragists of the first wave of feminism realized they did not possess the rights they were working to grant others through the abolitionist movement, the feminists of the second wave were often involved in the civil rights movement or the anti-war student movement who were frustrated at not being treated fairly and not having an equal voice within these social justice groups. As previously mentioned, the methodology of second wave feminists was overwhelmingly more radical than reformatory, as women strove to eradicate patriarchy from within our social structures. Activism during this time period tended to take place publicly through demonstrations, marches, protests, and sit-ins. While there were certainly other forms of activism going on during this time period that were quieter and perhaps less radical in nature, feminists of this era are remembered today for their dedication to radical change and their brave ‘in-your-face’ boldness.

Feminists of today’s generation are often labeled “third wave.” The term third wave was coined by Rebecca Walker in a *Ms.* magazine article in 1992. Walker wrote the article in an attempt to distinguish her type of feminism from postfeminism, a movement more closely aligned with “young, conservative feminists who explicitly define themselves against and criticize feminists of the second wave” (Heywood and Drake 1). In their anthology, *Third Wave Agenda,* editors Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake seek to make a distinction between third wave feminists and postfeminists. They define the third wave of feminism as “a movement that contains elements of second wave critique of beauty culture, sexual abuse, and power structures while it also acknowledges and makes use of the pleasure, danger, and defining power of those structures” (3). That is, many of the goals of third wave feminists are in alignment with

feminists of the second wave but are more heavily influenced by theories of postmodernism and are informed by the successes and failures of the second wave. In many academic texts, the second wave is thought to have ended in 1982 when the Equal Rights Amendment failed to pass. The generation of feminists who might be considered 'third wave' feminists came of age during the late 1980s and early 1990s and continues through present time. Self-identified third wave feminists Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, authors of both *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* and *Grassroots: A Field Guild for Feminist Activism*, discuss in the opening of *Manifesta* that third wave feminism focuses on the issues that affect young women today. Though young feminists continue to work on issues like reproductive rights, domestic violence, equal pay, and sexual harassment like their feminist predecessors, they identify some important issues specific to today's young feminists. These include:

> equal access to the Internet and technology, HIV/AIDS awareness, child sexual abuse, self-mutilation, globalization, eating disorders, and body image … Sexual health is of special concern to young women, because [they] tend to have more partners and to be more sexually active at a younger age (and are more likely than not to have a sexually transmitted disease). (Baumgardner and Richards 21)

Other issues associated with the third wave feminist movement include identity politics and using the postmodern to play with identity markers. Heywood and Drake include as third wave issues the production of culture and how notions of gratification and sexual desire, as well as more second-wave rooted practices like frustration and outrage, inform the activism of the third wave. While this kind of activism does not necessarily look like the same kind of activism as the past, thereby seeming lesser than the activism of the second wave, the authors maintain that

focusing on production of culture and issues of sexual identity and representation do indeed "count" as activism (4).

Feminists of different generations critique one another primarily on how one defines oneself as a feminist and how one puts into practice that feminism. When listening to academic discourse on generational conflict, it becomes apparent that when each generation refuses to attempt to understand the feelings, different experiences, and varying definitions of the other, they are closing themselves off to the opportunity to build coalitions based on similar goals. In "Feminist Family Values; or, Growing Old – and Growing Up – with the Women's Movement," Judith Newton recalls an academic conference in which second wave feminists discussed the current state of third wave feminism, consistently placing the theme of wound and loss at the forefront of the conversation. She writes, "one speaker after another touched on the current lapse of historical memory, feminist careerism and competitiveness, and the ingratitude of the young" (328). If the second wave's critique is that the third wave does not appreciate the groundwork that was laid before them, the third wave's frustration is that their feminist foremothers do not take seriously their opinions and actions.

In her article, "An Open Letter to Institutional Mothers," third waver Rebecca Dakin Quinn begins by expressing her gratitude to previous generations of feminists. She writes, "Your labors gave me life, made it easier for me to claim a voice than it was for you. … We should not forget that these crucial supports did not exist for you, that you literally had to forge them from the void amid the forces of a powerful and intransigent opposition" (174). After calling that indebtedness to the forefront, however, Quinn chastises her feminist foremothers for "… not listening to me, to us, your daughters" (175). Quinn goes on to describe several painful experiences wherein the voices of third wave feminists were silenced by second wave feminists.

Ultimately, Rebecca Dakin Quinn gestures towards a mutual responsibility of second and third wave feminists to listen to one another. She writes,

> In our awe of your brilliance and power, we often suffer from the same kind of silencing you probably endured when you were expected to be the (lesser) disciples of … male professors during graduate school. Related to this … is the responsibility of the younger generation to find our voices, to take the risks involved in standing up to be heard, and to help to redefine our critical activities so that we are no longer simply killing our mothers and committing violence against our sisters in the name of institutional recognition, advancement, and power. (177)

Quinn draws upon the fears mentioned earlier by Judith Newton that the accomplishments and histories of the second wave are being forgotten. She asserts that this is not at all true, that younger women are often overcome with wonder and fear, desiring to impress their feminist foremothers. Often, any voicing of ideas is a risk, a bold step forward to join the great movement before them. Such a bold move must be rewarded with respectful listening and receptive dialogue if young women are to continue to advance in feminist goals and projects. Regardless of age and professional status, we all have something to learn from one another. If feminists hierarchize ideas and theories based on hegemonic power structures, we are no better than the misogyny we seek to overcome. Further, if we do not change our method of communication with one another, feminists will be much more susceptible to being subjugated by patriarchy.

In another example of the difficulties between second and third wave feminisms, mother-daughter team Roxanne and Erin Harde discuss how perceptions of generational difficulties operate in their daily lives through their relationship not only as mother and daughter, but also as feminists. Their dialogue, published in the anthology *Catching a Wave*, is entitled “Voices and

Visions: A Mother and Daughter Discuss Coming to Feminism and Being Feminist." Interestingly, each woman is able to look critically at their respective wave of feminism, seeing its strengths as well as its weaknesses. For example, while Roxanne defends second wave feminism as more closely aligned with political activism than her daughter's generation, she also worries that her version is too dogmatic and rigid (118-22). On the other hand, Erin appreciates the ways in which third wave feminists refuse to be contained by boundaries or to further dictate them, yet wonders if a lack of borders creates situations that are both empowering and oppressive for women (i.e. a musician achieving success in a male-dominated industry but doing so only by objectifying her body) (119, 129). The authors model the type of dialogue that Rebecca Dakin Quinn points to: one based on mutual respect and the ability to learn from one another. Their conversation ends with the ultimate realization that feminism must be about praxis; through adopting a feminist identity, we are afforded an opportunity to create change in the world around us. This must be done not by separating the agendas of the second and third waves, but instead incorporating values of both movements that lead to the overall elimination of inequality.

In *Manifesta*, Baumgardner and Richards address the myths of what constitutes activist work from a third wave perspective. They believe that we need to expand our parameters of what counts as activism, moving beyond more narrowly defined versions of activism as they existed in second wave feminism to encompass and allow for changing cultural conditions. The myths they posit include: the idea that the results of activism are immediate and permanent, that activism has to be an endeavor that is grand in nature, and that effective activism needs one omnipotent and powerful leader (283-5). Baumgarder and Richards, though they do not say so outright, seem to suggest that one of the reasons that young feminists are criticized as being

apathetic is because they are relying on outmoded methodologies and on romanticized and idealized versions of a feminist history.

By expecting that their experiences will be the same as their feminist foremothers, young feminists are setting themselves up for disappointment as well as failure if they do not envision and create an activism that is relevant to their world. In my interviews, nearly every student I interviewed expressed frustration at a lack of clarity regarding what needed to be done to revolutionize the world. At the same time, students also put forth an image of second wave feminism as the "real" way of being a feminist, while also agreeing that such behavior was difficult to achieve in today's cultural climate. Though many of them are certainly hopeful about their futures as feminists, they also seem to feel the need to apologize because their feminism does not look like the feminism of the past. Women's Studies major Jenna Lake, when asked about the difference between her generation's activism and the second wave's vision, joked in her response:

> Sometimes I wish I were in the second wave, because then I could live in … an all women's commune and – you know, not wear shoes and no bra and stink if I wanted to. [*laughter*] Third wavers are trying to … live in this world, like – you know, make a living … Be successful. I don't know, maybe it's kind of like a sold out second wave feminism, a little bit. Kind of like betrayers, third wavers.

Similarly, when asked the same question, Torriana Williams, a Women's Studies major, answered:

> You know, [in the] second wave you had the radical feminism of the '60s and '70s. There's – that seems much more out there, so much more in your face. And we're kind

> of – we're not complacent, but it's a lot less in your face activism. So … I would say that there's a lack of selflessness for a cause in our generation that wasn't there before.

Women's Studies student Jo Anna Briner brings up a position echoed by several faculty members I interviewed. She made the point, "Everything in our lives is so much more complicated. We're doing so much more, it keeps us busy. I know girls with three jobs who go to school full time. And they *still* manage to do their part!" Today's college students have much more on their plates than the college students of previous generations. In addition to attending school full time, many students have obligations to employers and family. Jeannie Ludlow put it best when she explained, "More of our students have jobs now; some of them have families. It's very different from the way it was, even when I was in college. But a lot of my teachers had no idea what it meant to work and go to school at the same time." For many, school is not seen as an opportunity to begin the revolution, but instead viewed as the place where they will prepare themselves to go out and change the world.

Across the board, almost all the students I interviewed expressed nostalgia for a feminism they never lived. Alternately, the professors I interviewed, many of whom were educated under second wave feminism, seemed to have a perception of the students' feminism that varied widely in its definition. Everyone seemed to agree that many of the core issues feminists face today are the same as they were in the second wave, but responses varied widely in terms of how third wave feminism is perceived as a culturally relevant movement. For example, when asked if she agreed that there was in fact a third wave of feminism, Leigh Ann Wheeler, a professor in the History department, responded:

> It's almost like the women who are trying to claim there's a third wave of feminism are so deliberate and institutional about it. I don't get the sense that there's … this

> groundswell of support for a third wave. I get the sense that some women are trying to create magazines and write books – almost institutionalize it before there's been a groundswell for it. It seems to be that the second wave, there was a groundswell that then got institutionalized. This one seems like an institutionalization of something that's not really there yet.

Wheeler suggests that third wave feminists are forcing a new kind of feminism for which society is not necessarily yet interested or ready. However, she also admitted earlier to not being particularly well versed in third wave feminism or its goals and methodologies. I found that stereotypes of third wave feminists exist, even amongst professors affiliated with Women's Studies. When I pointed this out to Jeannie Ludlow during her interview, she agreed that it was important for feminist faculty to keep current with changing ideas of feminism and activism. She responded, "That's a really good point. … We used to have on campus every summer a Women's Studies Institute. … And they don't do things like that any more … Educating faculty is really important." While second wave feminists are stereotyped as man-hating, hairy, radical, or lesbian, third wave feminists are often seen as co-opting feminism to include "any woman who does what she wants to do as [believing she is a] feminist" (Krueger) or as just being "into dying their hair and getting implants" (Wheeler). Truth be told, the third wave's sense of danger and play when viewed in conjunction with sexuality and reclaiming identity markers runs a fine line between making a feminist statement and making feminism meaningless. Part of the problem with postmodernism's allowance of self-interpretation of signifiers is that, culturally, it does not matter if a feminist wears a baby doll dress to redefine feminine identity markers if the culture reads her as being accepting of traditional oppressive gender roles. However, just as it is unfair to reduce second wave feminists to 'hairy man-hating lesbians,' it is also unfair to dismiss

third wave feminists without understanding the nuances and complexities of their feminism. As Baumgardner and Richards explain in *Manifesta,*

> The point is that the cultural and social weapons that had been identified (rightly so) in the Second Wave as instruments of oppression – women as sex objects, fascist fashion, pornographic materials – are no longer being exclusively wielded against women and are sometimes wielded by women. Girlie [which is one particular branch of third wave feminism that focuses on redefining feminine identity markers] presumes that women can handle the tools of patriarchy and don't need to be shielded from them. (141)

The misconception or oversimplification of the third wave by the second wave is a problem of wondering whether or not the younger generation is taking for granted or not protecting rights that were earned through a great fight. As Mary Krueger, director of the Bowling Green State University Women's Center humorously explained:

> Make up and baby doll fashions and the clearly mandatory federal law that all females between the age of twelve and 35 must expose their navels at all times [*laughter*] … pushes buttons [for second wavers], as you can tell by my smartass remarks. … third wavers are like, 'Get over it, we're just playing around. … we're just trying to figure things out; we're just experimenting. This is a way of … disrupting those ideas … or redefining things.' And really, it's all about … generational context.

When we rely only on the stereotypes of the ideas rather than striving to understand the ideas themselves, we shut down discourse and the opportunity to work together for a common goal. Interestingly, when I explained to Wheeler the third wave of feminism as I understood it, she found that she shared a great deal in common with third wave feminists. Wheeler came to call herself a feminist in the mid 1980's, and so was seemingly in between waves. Many of the

complaints she had of second wave feminism, including the idea of "sisterhood requir[ing] uniformity" and the devaluation of the feminine, if we consider feminism to be about women having options, are addressed in academic literature written by third wave feminists.

Women's Studies instructor Jeannie Ludlow also entered academic feminism in the 1980s. Ludlow "positions herself between the third wave and the second wave". She explains why she believes that many young feminists are perceived as taking feminism for granted:

> They grew up under Reaganomics, in a time when you were taught to behave as if you had something even if you didn't. It was shameful to admit that you were poor; it was shameful to admit that you were oppressed in some way. Whereas in the second wave, by god, if you figured out that you were oppressed, you stood up and you told everybody that it was not fair. Well, in the '80s, you were supposed to sound excited but also kind of pass at the same time. … that's what I see as the difference with third wave feminism, [a] sense of needing to 'pass' in order to get a job, in order to be respected, in order to fit in … in order to get a boyfriend – at the same time you're critiquing the problem. … in second wave, I see them not doing that as much … I would call one resistance, and I would call the other negotiation. But those terms are really not accurate, because negotiation sounds weaker than resistance, and I don't mean it to be.

Ludlow points to two things: a difference in cultural context and a difference in the way third wave feminists define and employ activism. As simply stated by Vikki Krane, director of the Women's Studies program, "if you were growing up in the … 1960s and '70s, you couldn't have been apathetic. … because of life circumstances, the current generation of feminists … hasn't really had to stand up." Third wave feminists, because they did not grow up during the revolutionary years of the 1960s and '70s that included the civil rights movement, the women's

movement, and the student movement, do not approach activism in the same ways that second wave feminists did. They use different tools that are more geared towards their cultural moment. However, it is absolutely necessary to be mindful of the fact that many of the same issues remain and that third wave feminists need not reinvent completely what has already been successful. As Ellen Berry cautions, "there need to be waves, but [maybe we need] little boats to get to each other, or islands [*laughter*]." Feminists of all generations need to be cognizant of the fact that both feminism and activism are defined generationally, and that we must also validate the definitions of both if we are to continue to work together effectively towards the ending of oppression.

The majority of Women's Studies students I interviewed, many of whom label themselves as third wave feminists, define activism in a way that definitely follows academic discourse surrounding third wave feminism. When Torianna Williams, a Women's Studies major who often discusses feelings of frustration at being one of the few women of color in the program, was asked to describe how the Women's Studies program defined activism, she responded, "[…] community involvement is a big part of it, being out there, letting people know what issues are out there, and just making people more aware, educating people". Similarly, Jenna Lake, a Women's Studies major who created her own minor in political activism, discusses how many of the classes had "community action projects at the end, or […] some kind of feminist activity for the class. The way I came to understand it was […] feminist theory in action, like you're actually applying some kind of feminist theory and trying to achieve some result". It seems as though the students of the Women's Studies programs receive a definition of activism that is nuanced with notions of visibility, public involvement, and external change. On the other hand, however, when the same two students were asked how they *personally* define

activism, their responses were quite different. Williams included the program's definition in her personal definition of activism but moved to expand it when she said:

> I think activism can be on a large scale where you have visual stuff and protests and educational booths and stuff like that. But activism is also an individual thing … Whereas if I can change the way I think about something, to me that's an activist type of situation. If I can change the way one other person thinks about something, that's activism to me.

For Williams, activism is something that takes place both at a public and a private level. The act of consciousness raising is, in Williams' opinion, activist. It is not necessary for activism to be something involved or really even very radical in nature; Williams suggests that activism begins first at a personal level and then spreads from individual to individual until a larger social activist network forms.

Similarly, Lake has a less public definition of activism. She personally defined activism as "any act that doesn't go along with the status quo; any act that doesn't reinforce the status quo. [For example,] I still shave my legs but I recycle and I – you know, use a canvas bag instead of plastic bags … So, I don't know." Lake's definition of activism is very broad in nature; she later explained that what makes something count as activism is the "spirit in which it's done, [though] my parents recycle and I don't think they would call that activism … maybe it's just the effect that it has regardless of how you mean it to be." If Lake's conceptualization of activism seems confused or contradictory, I believe this is due in part to an understanding of oneself as a feminist that is underdeveloped and not fully solidified. Though Lake is not the only student to express anxiety over whether or not she is a 'good' feminist, she explains her feelings of contradiction well. I interviewed many students who seemed to see their feminism as fraught

with tension, particularly in situations where it might be considered unpopular or even dangerous to identify oneself as a feminist.

Many students see their personal definition of what counts as activist work as separate or different from the ways in which their feminist educators or the Women's Studies program at BGSU define it. Interestingly, when asked how the Women's Studies program at BGSU defined activism, many of the faculty members affiliated with the program were unaware of a single programmatic definition. Several faculty members talked about a lack of sitting down as a group and coming up with one cohesive definition of activism, leaving faculty members to define it individually. There seemed to be, among many faculty members, an interest in at least sitting down and discussing these topics collectively. Leigh Ann Wheeler explained this sentiment well when she said, "That's one of the disappointing things about an academic career, … when you're a graduate student, if you enter academia you think you're going to have all this time to have these great intellectual conversations about all the stuff you care about. But it doesn't happen. You talk about nuts and bolts in your meetings." It seems as though many academic departments and programs are under so much pressure and financial burden that they simply focus on survival skills and covering all their bases that they do not have time to talk about whether or not they are projecting to the students an image of cohesiveness and a model of respect for one another. Vikki Krane, current director of the program, stated, "I think we have a single … programmatic definition. I think most of us would agree it's something where there is some sort of outreach, where students or others are trying to help other people, trying to take what we learned in the classroom and put it to good use in real life." When asked their personal definition of activism, the Women's Studies faculty I interviewed seemed to fall into a wide spectrum between a very traditional second-wave definition and a very broad third wave one.

When asked her personal definition of activism, Jeannie Ludlow said that she saw activism as "putting theory into practice in such a way that it is public and … challenges people to think about what you're doing … I don't see activism as things that you do in the bedroom by yourself". Based on that definition, Ludlow continued, stating:

> I don't see academic writing as activism … a lot of people will probably be surprised to hear me say that, but I really don't. I frankly don't see teaching as activism, either. I think you can *be* an activist while you're a teacher, but I don't see them as the same thing [because …] people have to be there, have to spit knowledge back out at you, and whether or not they choose to think about it … you have no control over that; you have no influence over that. Writing a check is not activism either – but I sure don't want people to quit writing them, because we couldn't do activism if people didn't give us money … I'm glad for people who give money, but it's not activism. I really think that activist work is something you have to spend time and energy and heart on, and that's a bottom line for me … It doesn't have to be going out there and marching, [but it must include…] actually working with the problems you're examining.

Ludlow's definition of activism and what constitutes activist work is more rooted in that of the second wave of feminism. For her, activism needs to be public and involve some sort of direct action in order to count as true activism. Interestingly, Ludlow is often singled out by both students and other faculty members as the most "activist" of the Women's Studies staff; however, she does not see her work as an academic as activist in nature. In addition to being a professor, Ludlow also works at the Toledo Center for Choice. Perhaps because she does not see her work as an academic as activist, she makes a concentrated effort to find other outlets for her feminist activism.

The issue of academic work counting as activism is one that came up repeatedly throughout my interviews with the Women's Studies faculty members. Both Vikki Krane and Leigh Ann Wheeler expressed positions that suggested feelings of tension surrounding the issue of academic work counting as activism. Both professors seem to view their work as teachers as one that potentially inhabits activism, yet they seem to be bound by more traditional definitions of activism as something public and concrete. For instance, Krane stated,

> There's this differential weight that as an academic, and some level, I've always struggled with, because I don't do a lot of hands-on grassroots activism, and I sometimes feel guilty about that. You notice it, you write about it, and students read it and it's important. Well, I can sit in my office by myself but who am I really helping? … we were trained and rewarded to be scholarly, to write papers for journals, and that's what's expected of us. It's really hard to find balance and find time to do some of these other things … People are able to do it; there's no doubt about that. There are a lot of difficult choices to make … it's really hard to do everything we think is important and everything that we'd like to do on top of what we're expected to do. So I really think in terms of activism, it's a hard thing for a lot of faculty to come to terms with.

Krane's work is as an academic in both sports psychology and Women's Studies. As she suggests, she chose these areas of study not only because they were subjects in which she had interest, but also those in which she is particularly gifted or skilled. What Krane alludes to is a sense of guilt over being drawn to work as an academic instead of that of an activist. She implies that in order to be able to participate in both, a re-prioritization must occur and often huge sacrifices must be made in terms of time for self and/or time for family in order to participate in traditionally based activism. Similarly, Leigh Ann Wheeler discusses the difficulty of

understanding her work as an academic as activist. When asked what counts as activism, Wheeler responded,

> [In graduate school] we'd talk a lot about this, about the fact that we wanted to be activists but we felt like teaching and scholarship were not going to make us feel like we were being activists ... So I would not define or describe myself as an activist, yet … I feel very passionate about feminism and women's issues. What I'm doing here – teaching and research – those are the small ways I go about trying to change the world. So in a way, that's an activist thing to do. But I would never describe myself that way because I feel like everyone else out there thinks of an activist as someone who's polemical, agenda-driven, and wearing a banner … And it's also hard because so much of what I do … is what I get paid for. Since that's part of my career, it's hard to know if I'm doing that for my paycheck or for career advancement, or for activist reasons. They all get kind of confused. And I find myself really pulling back on some of the things I really believe in sometimes because I think that if I push this, my career's going to suffer. And I think a true activist is someone who doesn't let their career get in the way of what they think is right.

Wheeler's understanding of herself as an activist seems almost contradictory. She sees an activist as someone who is passionately dedicated to her or his principles and goals and works to change the world. Alternately, she sees herself as someone who is very passionate and dedicated to the goals of feminism and improving women's lives and someone who uses her talents to bring forth social justice. It seems that her understanding of herself as an academic should henceforth fit into her understanding of who constitutes an activist, yet she does not consider herself to be an activist because her way of improving the world is through her work as an

academic and is sometimes limited by her need and desire for career security and advancement. It is not necessarily public or particularly radical, and therefore, does not seem to matter equally.

Ellen Berry points to the act of teaching as activist when she discusses supporting female faculty members through the tenure process as a way of advocating Women's Studies as an academic discipline and therefore continuing the efforts of academic feminism. However, she is also sure to point out that "being an activist means standing up, making your voice heard, not just writing about it, but also enacting it." Berry also suggests that, for affiliated faculty members, the act of teaching Women's Studies is activist in nature, stating:

> There is a lot of bad feminist faith out there [when it is] convenient to be a feminist or a Women's Studies person until it becomes uncomfortable. And then it's, 'Oh, I'll teach in Women's Studies after I get tenure' … I understand that. But things don't change that way … and so, my career be damned, I'm going to stand up and say, 'That's not right!'

Berry recognizes that hers is a position of privilege – not having financial obligations beyond herself – but maintains that in order to call oneself a feminist, one has to be willing to speak out against injustice regardless of the consequences.

Similarly, Mary Krueger suggests a broadening of traditional definitions to include academic work in the definition of activism. When asked what counts as activism, Krueger suggested that academia and formally defined activism go hand in hand when she responded:

> Theory and praxis … we need people – activists – who do the grassroots fundraising and the grant writing to enable things to happen. And those might not be the same people who actually make it happen. You need another set of skills … to take the idea [and] turn it into something pragmatically real … social scientists, and academics can be activists as well in terms of theory creation and giving people conceptual frameworks for

> understanding oppression and injustice. And so, I think it all works together – and is most effective – when … it has all of those things. Frankly, I think people associate activism with marching in the streets. We need people to do that too!

Krueger, a self-defined second wave feminist, responded to the question in a way that is in line with third wave feminism without even being aware she was doing so. Similarly, Julie Haught describes her definition of activism as one that "teeter[s] between … second and third wave." Because she believes that activism takes form in both academic and action projects, she seeks to expand what constitutes activist work.

In their book *Grassroots*, third wave feminists Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards define an activist as "anyone who accesses the resources that he or she has as an individual for the benefit of the common good. With that definition, activism is made available to anyone" (xix). *Grassroots* is an attempt to expand perspectives on who is an activist and what counts as activism. Instead of maintaining narrowly drawn parameters of feminist activism, they advocate a kind of activism that might not be grand, but one that uses an individual's skills and talents to improve the world around them every day. Teaching would certainly fall under that definition, particularly when looking at Women's Studies as a discipline that seeks to expose students to a new way of understanding the world while alleviating women's experiences of oppression. While the majority of professors I interviewed were adamant that their goal was *not* to get students to claim the label 'feminist' for themselves, they do speak of their students' growing to understand things from a feminist perspective, which can lead to students' going forth to claim the label or continue working towards social justice without necessarily calling themselves feminist activists. Thus, it becomes necessary to understand the politics of calling oneself a

feminist and one's work feminist activism. Must an individual identify and use the label 'feminist' if the goals and critical positions they espouse are inherently feminist?

The notion of growing up with "feminism in the water" as presented by Baumgardner and Richards in *Manifesta* is one with which many third wave feminists are familiar (17). It is this notion that often leads to the perception that young feminists take the achievements and work of second wavers for granted, and this perception is true on some level. Young women today have never had to experience a world in which sexism was legal or abortion was criminalized. They have always been granted those rights; it is this experience of safety that leads many young people to the phrase, "I'm not a feminist, but …" This phrase is often a way of making explicit the fear of being identified as a feminist and taking on the demonized image of feminism perpetuated by the media. It says, "I'm not an angry, man-hating, hairy, lesbian, but I think it is unfair that women are not taken seriously in the workplace or that my male classmates get more attention than I do." As educators and students, my interviewees were well aware of the stigmas associated with calling oneself a feminist. Similarly, because of the history associated with exclusion based on axes of difference, other marginalized groups may not be eager to claim the label feminist because it minimalizes and trivializes their experiences of oppression. Women's Studies major Jeanette Beal, a self-identified radical lesbian feminist who is also engaged in activism for the disabled because of her blindness, knows all too well the stereotypes attached to the label. During her interview, she made explicit the need to examine how prejudice against other marginalized groups keeps individuals from claiming that label. She said,

> I hear feminists – feminists who call themselves feminists – [say] 'Well, I'm not going to be a hairy, man-hating lesbian.' Well, wait a minute. Let's talk about all the things that you just said. What's wrong with being hairy? What's wrong with being a lesbian?

> What's wrong about hating male privilege? Don't use the term 'man-hating' because that was coined by antifeminists, anti-women folk. But the hating male privilege – what's wrong with those things? And when you say that, you're excluding me from the movement. So lesbians are more apt to not call themselves feminists. The disabled are excluded because we're not even part of the equation … People who aren't from America don't use the term feminist because it's not even part of their language … all of these different subcategories … are looking for a word that defines them that does not wipe out their own identity. You know, I'm not white, middle class, heterosexual … so I don't want to use this term … Which is sad, because that term is powerful.

Beal, as one who inhabits a very specific position of marginality, posits many reasons why people might be reluctant to call themselves feminists. In her opinion, this prejudice not only keeps people from claiming the label feminist, but also pushes feminists towards the exclusion of these groups because of the desire to disassociate themselves from the stereotypes. Despite the issues she takes with the words, Beal still identifies herself as a feminist and believes in the importance of doing so. She explained,

> I think that it's really important that if you're a feminist, you say you are – because otherwise somebody's going to have some idea of what you are and tell you that's what you are, and then negate any power that you possibly have. Definitions – if we choose them first, they're part of our empowerment. They're part of our powerful identity. Just living the life and not claiming that word lets the mainstream, lets the oppressor know that that word really *is* bad and that I really can use it to hurt you. And then they've taken away part of our history, and feminism has a strong history.

Similarly, for recent American Culture Studies doctoral graduate Meredith Guthrie, currently teaching online courses in Women's Studies, feminism is a label that is useful in identifying individuals who have a common vision for the future. She said, "[the label] helps people band together. It helps to say in a quick, easy way this is what I believe." Guthrie is also quick to point out, however, that the way in which people live their lives is more important than the way in which they label themselves. She explained, "If [the label 'feminist'] is going to be the breaking point between someone living a feminist lifestyle or not … maybe you have to say 'all right.'" Like Guthrie, Chadwick Roberts, an American Culture Studies doctoral candidate and graduate student instructor in Women's Studies, points to the power of labels while also recognizing their limitations. When asked if the label 'feminist' was necessary in culture, he explained:

> Are labels important? In society they are; in culture they are. But I mean… if the intent is there and people are going to have the same engagement, maybe labels aren't so important. It's not the kind of thing that I force on my students, you know, like, "How many of you have converted to feminism?" [*laughter*] That's not the measure I use in my class … but labels are important in the culture we live in, in the society we live in.

Roberts goes on to explain the limitations of labels. He uses the example of a writer like Barbara Ehrenreich, whose work encompasses a feminist critique but also addresses issues like Marxism and anti-capitalist values. Likewise, it is like labeling a lesbian writer or filmmaker as a "lesbian writer" or a "lesbian filmmaker"; in some cases, the lens of one's sexual identity is the primary lens through which her work might be viewed, but in others, that identity might not be the only way to understand her work. For instance, she may just be a lesbian who also happens to write

or create films, but may find the label “lesbian writer” or “lesbian filmmaker” confining her work to one particular interpretation.

Both Guthrie and Roberts are Women’s Studies instructors who identify themselves as third wave feminists. Many individuals who see themselves as part of the third wave do not hold on as tightly to the signifier of “feminist,” while the majority of the second wave-identified instructors I interviewed responded that it was necessary to identify one’s activism as feminist and claim that label for oneself. For instance, Julie Haught responded, “I do think that names matter, but then again, I’m in language studies, so I naturally do”. Equally, Vikki Krane addresses the idea of labels being important if only to find role models in the surrounding world with whom a student can identify. Alternately, however, many third wave-affiliated students in Women’s Studies did not necessarily see the label ‘feminist’ as needing to be associated with an individual’s identity or activist work. Lucé Tomlin-Brenner, a Women’s Studies major, when asked if she thought the label feminist was necessary, responded:

> I like it, as a label, and I feel proud to call myself a feminist. But I think if someone doesn’t like it, or they don’t want to be labeled and they’re still doing all that work – I mean, I myself would consider them a feminist, but if they don’t want to be called that, I would totally understand … I think that, of course, everything they’re doing is just as equal and as good as what I’m doing.

Interestingly, like Roberts, Tomlin-Brenner sees as the difference between her second wave identified instructors and herself as a third wave feminist the ability to see things from a perspective outside of feminism. She explained,

> The older you get the less willing you are able to look at things from another’s perspective or to … care, I guess, about what other people think about something,

> because you're like, 'Well … I've had this much experience, and that's just the way … I feel that way about certain things … this is right and this is wrong… I'm willing to look at things a certain way.' So I think that … separates us. And Women's Studies teachers are definitely more apt to call students on things that they think are wrong.

Tomlin-Brenner sees the third wave as encompassing a multitude of perspectives and as being informed by a variety of social movements and theories in addition to feminism. She suggests that the second wave was much more polarized in their viewpoints, while the third wave exists in a grey area. Nearly everyone I interviewed spoke about a lack of clarity surrounding third wave issues. Politically, the environment is more conservative and therefore it becomes more difficult and dangerous to label oneself a feminist, as pointed out by Mary Krueger. Discussing the feminism of young people, she explained,

> They've grown up in a … conservative and getting more and more conservative all the time, evangelicals getting more and more conservative environment all the time where it's harder – it's harder to be an activist, you know? And the social message – the message of the social conservative movement is 'Everything is fine.'

Jo Anna Briner, Women's Studies student, points out another issue of complexity when she discusses the variety of factors informing the feminism of today's world. When asked how she believes that Women's Studies programs have changed feminist activism, she replied,

> I think it's made us more aware of the things we need to fight for. There's so much more now. It's not just equal rights, it's not just the right to vote … Now it's sexuality, it's transgendered [issues], it's race. Now it's class. I think there's a lot more that we do. Rape, violence, abortion, you know? It's quadrupled in my mind … although it was

> complicated then, but they kind of had a bottom line, and ours just [wavers back and forth].

Because many individuals felt excluded from previous generations of feminism, many third wave feminists feel the need to address issues of racial, sexual, and gender identity in their critique. While theirs might be a more inclusive feminism, it is also a more complicated feminism because it is informed by postmodernism and involves understanding oppression through a multidimensional approach. In addition to being more complex, many students felt as though there were many smaller, less obvious grievances which needed to be tackled. Being less obvious, these issues are harder to find an obvious solution to and therefore can lead to young students being overwhelmed or jaded by slow change.

When asked the question, "Are young feminists apathetic?" very few of my respondents answered in the affirmative. Instead, individuals saw young feminists as overwhelmed, more cautious, or cynical. Lucé Tomlin-Brenner pointed to the conservative cultural climate in her response: "I'm just jaded, that's all. Yeah, I don't think young feminists are apathetic. I think that we're just overwhelmed … We don't have a lot of support … And no one is willing to do anything crazy". When Tomlin-Brenner uses the word 'crazy,' what she really means is that activists today are less willing to do anything radical or dangerous. Similarly, Jo Anna Briner spoke of how she was disappointed after John Kerry lost the 2004 presidential election and how it affected her activism. She replied, "I registered 1,400 people, you know? But apparently it wasn't enough. It wasn't enough. That was really the … nail in my coffin, especially with feminist views." Julie Haught explained that she believes that young feminists are:

> politically cynical … it's a disbelief that your vote actually makes a difference. So I don't think that's apathy; I think that's cynicism. And I think that's dangerous because

> even though I may be skeptical about the power of my vote, and I become more and more skeptical with each passing election [*laughter*] day, I still think that we can make the rules of democracy matter. Maybe. I might be joining people in their cynicism, eventually.

When asked how cynicism could be remedied amongst young feminists, Haught responded that she believes that students must be taught that no one benefits from cynicism. She said, "You should embrace skepticism and abandon cynicism; skepticism keeps us all honest. Cynicism allows injustices to continue because we don't think we can make a difference." One of the reasons young feminists might be jaded is because, unlike the cultural environment of the 1960s and '70s, theirs is not one in which radicalism happens on a regular basis and fewer people are willing to believe that their active participation in democracy matters. Young adults today have experienced two presidential elections in a row that have been fraught with tension and problems. In the 2000 presidential race, Al Gore won the popular vote, but George W. Bush won the election because he won the electoral college. In 2004, masses of young people hit the streets in an attempt to bolster voter registration and support Democratic candidate John Kerry, but, as Briner pointed out, it did not prove successful because Bush still won the election.

In pointing to the cautiousness of the third wave, Jo Anna Briner responded, "I think we're educating ourselves more before running out. So, I think it's taking a little longer for that momentum. I just know that someday soon, it's going to explode. I can feel it." Briner points to desire of third wave feminists to avoid the mistakes of the past by being fully informed before acting. Jeannie Ludlow explained how this need for education first and action second affects activism. When asked how Women's Studies programs have changed feminist activism, Ludlow responded:

> Feminist activism is a little more awkward than it used to be. We used to jump right in to do something and if we had to fight our way around it, we would, and then we would carry on, right? Now there's sort of this theoretical concern up front with how the practice is going to work … It's become more institutionalized, more commodified, and more disciplined in a particular way.

On the one hand, young feminists are doing a good thing by waiting until they are fully educated about an issue before running out and acting. They are less likely to offend a particular group and more apt to figure out the most logical and practical solution to a problem. On the other hand, however, it is quite easy to become bogged down by the need for education and never trust oneself to actually put into action a project for fear of stepping on someone's toes or making a mistake.

Just as authors Jennifer Baumgardner and Any Richards described one of the myths of activism as needing a central leader, Ludlow discussed the third wave as having what she described as a 'leaderless activism.' She explained,

> I think that we used to think that activism had to have a leader, and I think that what we're seeing now is that there's a kind of leaderless activism where things happen more spontaneously, groups coalesce together for short periods of time and then they go back apart again. People get involved for a short period of time, and they pull back out – it doesn't mean that they don't care anymore; it just means that for that moment, their energy went into that effort. And I think that's activism.

What Ludlow describes fits the model of third wave feminism in that it encompasses individuals who might not necessarily identify explicitly as feminists, but whose goals of social justice also

espouse feminist goals. In *Manifesta*, Baumgardner and Richards dispute the myth of needing a centralized leader. They write,

> In addition to history and political consciousness, the Third wave reputedly lacks a leader. It seems that everyone in this generation is looking for those very visible doyennes – as if we don't have feminism if we can't point to the 'next' Gloria, Angela, Betty, or Alice (none of whom, incidentally, were famous in their twenties, either) … Therefore, perhaps we should be looking for our feminist leaders in less famous packages. There are countless young women who fit this profile. (84)

Baumgarder and Richards address the criticism of the third wave as leaderless when they describe it as a young movement whose potential leaders have not yet had time to develop themselves politically, academically, or professionally. While no single person may yet stand out as the "Gloria Steinem" of our generation, if the leadership of the third wave is nurtured and cultivated, there is no doubt that these young feminists have the capacity to continue to develop their feminism into an important, viable cultural movement. Similarly, as Ludlow expressed, perhaps it is unnecessary to have a central leader in the third wave. Young feminists partake in activism differently than previous generations of feminists and perhaps a 'leaderless kind of activism' is one that is more aligned with the nonhierarchical goals of feminism in the first place.

As previously noted, because the activism of young feminists is seen as inherently less radical than that of the second wave, it is also characterized by some as occurring only through institutions, or as being corporatized. Just as Women's Studies institutionalized feminism within academia, thereby protecting and valorizing it, feminist institutions like NOW or *Ms.* magazine or the Feminist Majority Foundation created by second wave feminists provided stable and proven havens for feminists of the future. But just as Women's Studies was criticized by the

women's movements for deradicalizing feminism, so too now are young feminists criticized for working through these feminist institutions as a sort of "corporate activism." Jeannie Ludlow explains,

> We critique them for that, but we set up all those foundations … That was sort of our idea. Like *Ms.* magazine started it all in '72 by being incorporated as a magazine, and then we had all these groups that we started and we set up so that they could be clearing houses for certain kinds of things … And we created this system, this network of organizations, and this network of organizations gets stronger and stronger and stronger, and then we say to the young women working at them that, 'Yeah, they're not really doing activism. They're working with these groups.'

In this passage, Ludlow describes the frustrations of many third wavers. They are criticized for engaging in activism that does not look like the activism of their feminist foremothers, and yet when they become involved with the organizations set up by previous generations, they are chastised for not being radical enough. Ludlow recognizes the unfairness of the second wave to dismiss the activism of the third wave as being less valuable because it often happens through feminist organizations and institutions. Because our cultural environment is less conducive to radicalism, feminist activists of this generation must find a way to continue to change the world in ways that are most effective. While this point is a fairly obvious one, as it is one that is brought up by several faculty members throughout their interviews, Women's Studies students still seem to feel badly about the fact that their activism does not look like the second wave's activism. When asked how she saw activism happening amongst young feminists today, student Jeanette Beal responded:

> I think that activism changes every ten years or so, and I think that we're kind of in a place culturally where activism has turned into mass email, and … been put into the hands of somebody bigger than me. So, as a feminist … I can just sign a petition and I've done my bit of activism. And somebody else will deal with whatever needs to be dealt with. You know, I no longer have to get out in the streets, get messy, risk getting arrested, to spread a message. I can just sign a piece of paper! It's really interesting backseat activism, and I think that's kind of where we are as a culture. These *big* organizations start us, do all the dirty work for us, so we can sit back in middle America and watch more reality TV … I think there is merit in all forms of activism. I think it's definitely backseat; I wouldn't use the term lazy because that would imply apathy … I think the *radical* move is to get out there and get dirty … You are an activist when you're doing all sorts of things, but … since this nuked [*laughter*] activism isn't really doing much, obviously, because bad stuff keeps happening. I think it's time that people do get out there and get dirty because that's when change is going to happen.

Beal describes the activism of her generation as "backseat," meaning less involved, more detached, and though she is careful not to describe it as lazy, she does insinuate that young feminists are letting feminist institutions do the leg work for them instead of them going out and making change happen themselves. In addition, she also implies a sort of selfishness on behalf of this generation, a selfishness that results from feeling cynical about one's ability to actually change the world and being overwhelmed about how one must start to address injustices in the world. Though Beal validates all forms of activism, regardless of their "backseat" nature, she is quick to point out that perhaps we are moving towards a cultural moment where young feminists

have allowed others to take the lead for too long. It is time for this generation to take control and figure out the most effective means towards ending oppression.

When asked how they saw feminism developing in the future, my respondents seemed to believe that we are moving into a historical climate wherein radical endeavors are going to become increasingly necessary. The socially conservative religious right has been gaining more and more momentum and control. At the time of my interviews, President George W. Bush was into his second term, and the seats of Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and William H. Rehnquist had just been vacated, leaving the lifelong appointed positions to be filled by an anti-choice government. Through pressure from the religious right, the FDA decided to disallow the "morning after pill" to be sold over-the-counter. In the state of Ohio, as with many other states across the nation, we were nearly a year into the state constitutional amendment defining marriage as specifically between a man and a woman, thereby banning marriage between gays and lesbians and negating domestic partnerships. Though Bush declared an end to combat in Iraq in May 2003, soldiers continued to lose their lives on a daily basis and it was revealed that there never were any weapons of mass destruction, leaving many citizens to question the reason we went to war in Iraq in the first place. For the first time in their lives, young feminists are at a crucial crossroads: they are in danger of losing the rights they have known all their lives. *Roe v. Wade* and the Vietnam War were two important issues faced by the second wave. When looking at the attacks on reproductive freedom made by the religious right and the Iraq War as issues faced by the third wave, the circumstances have reached an almost eerily parallel to the cultural circumstances surrounding the second wave feminist movement.

Many of my interviewees believe that we are reaching a pinnacle moment where social conditions and the rights of women are so under danger of erosion that it is necessary to return to the more radical tactics of the second wave. Vikki Krane responded,

> I hear the young women in my classes believing that … my role is to take care of my husband, and honor him, do what he says. I cringe when I hear that, but that's what they truly have been taught, and you know, we're going backwards in places … that's going to cause a rise of second wave strategies. And the need to get much more vocal, more much more out there as we start losing ground. It's a scary world out there.

Similarly, Jeannie Ludlow answered:

> We're going to have to go back to some of the strategies and approaches of the late '60s and early '70s … I don't think the older women are going to come back and lead this … it's important that they don't. I think the young women will take over – not even take over, that's a silly phrasing – the young women will rise up in activism and will figure out that the same methods that worked in the '60s and '70s will still work well for getting attention and getting voice … I think there are going to be some big changes in our culture in the next two years. And I think that feminists will rise up. And I think it will be the young women who everybody's been calling apathetic all this time who will be the leaders and who will be the really fabulous people who run it.

Both Krane and Ludlow foresee third wave feminists returning to the more radical tactics of the second wave. Krane takes the approach that the world will simply get so far removed from a world of social justice and equality, moving backward until young women finally realize that they are not second class citizens and deserve the same rights as men. She sees young women taking to the streets, demanding that their voices be heard. Ludlow, in a similar fashion, believes

that young feminists will come to understand that in creating a kind of feminism that is their own, they do not completely have to divorce themselves from previous generations of feminism. Though their more institutionalized, leaderless activism has been effective to a point, cultural circumstances have reached a point at which more radical measures must be taken to demand equality for all people. Young feminists, it seems, will come to acknowledge that they are capable of knowing what kinds of activism are appropriate in individualized situations, thereby combining more "second wave" strategies with "third wave" strategies.

One crucial element that emerged from the conversation regarding the need to incite strategies that are more radical in nature is the deemphasizing of the importance of the label feminist. It seems that what materializes from this is the importance of protecting the rights and civil liberties of all people, regardless of how an individual may or may not identify his or her self. For example, Women's Studies student Jenna Lake, when asked how she saw feminism developing in the future, responded, "I'm hopeful in that I think the worse things get, with the legislation and everything, the way things are going, I think more and more people are going to engage in feminist activism. Whether or not they call it feminism, I don't care. The important part is just doing it." For Lake, the important thing is not the label, but the goals of social justice. Julie Haught responded correspondingly to the same question:

> I think that the current Bush administration is wreaking such damage and havoc at fundamental levels in this country in terms of economics, in terms of politics, in terms of other social justice issues, that as we start to see the effects of that, that could politicize a lot of people. And feminism could easily be there as one of the philosophies and one of the tools through which we can figure out ways to recover as a nation … As homelessness increases, if *Roe v. Wade* gets overturned, all of those things I think could

> potentially really empower feminism where a lot more people will take that term on. Even if they don't take that term on, [they] will take on the principles of it.

While it is important to understand one's own social position and political stance, such an understanding may not be the ultimate way of reaching the overarching goal of justice and equality for all people that feminism embodies. It seems as though one of the most important understandings that has emerged from the third wave feminist movement is that feminism means many things to many different people and that many feminists do not define themselves solely as feminists. Because third wave feminists also take on issues of race, class, gender identity, disability, and sexuality, theirs is a social movement that demands coalition building with other social justice groups in order to protect the rights of all people. Feminism is not about privileging women over men; feminism seeks a world where all people are treated and valued equally. It is absolutely necessary to have an understanding of one's own culture and government in order to put forth an activism that is effective and relevant. While both the radical protests of the second wave and the leaderless, backseat activism of the third wave have proven to be successful at various times throughout history, the crucial elements of feminist activism lie in finding merit in all forms of activism and in knowing when best to employ them.

CHAPTER THREE

During the second wave of feminism, activist training took place primarily through consciousness raising which later expanded to include an element of action. Consciousness raising, when a group of women came together to talk about their experiences, often resulted in "click" moments of realization that incidents of oppression were not isolated but instead systemic examples of issues plaguing women that needed to be addressed through activism. Because Women's Studies programs were not yet institutionalized during the second wave, consciousness raising took place predominantly outside of the classroom amongst groups of women meeting in their homes, workplaces, and in reading groups. However, after the institutionalization of feminism through Women's Studies as an academic discipline, consciousness raising became forever changed.

Third wave feminists experience consciousness raising in two ways different from the second wave. First, because young feminists have grown up always feeling the effects of the activism of second wavers and seemingly taking those effects for granted because they have never experienced a world otherwise, consciousness raising is less concrete and does not seem to incite such a radical kind of response. Second, because feminism has been institutionalized, students learn about feminism as a serious academic discipline, instead of necessarily understanding the role of academic feminism on greater cultural activism. They seem to have two images of who a feminist is in their minds: the demonized "man-hating, bra-burning, austere" woman from the 1960s and their Women's Studies educators as academic feminists. There is often a lack of conceptualizing anything else beyond those two categories. It is often the responsibility of a Women's Studies instructor to lead students into consciousness raising, using their own experiences to illuminate a work of theory or literature and understand their own

experiences of oppression. Because of the institutionalization of Women's Studies, formal consciousness raising takes place primarily in Women's Studies classroom. This is not to say that women outside of an academic setting do not discuss with one another the injustices they face in their daily lives. However, because the institutionalization of Women's Studies has led to the privileging of college educated individuals, the perception is that one must have the proper "language" to understand experiences of oppression through a theoretical framework in order to proceed with culturally recognized activism.

For instance, when I asked the Women's Studies students the question, "do you think young feminists outside of a university setting come to feminism in the same way that women did in the 1960s and '70s," few of them responded in the affirmative. The assessment is that women outside of academia do not really view their lives and experiences through a feminist lens, predominantly because they do not know the appropriate jargon to do so. Lucé Tomlin-Brenner, Women's Studies student, explained it best when she responded to my asking her how her definition of feminism and understanding of herself as a feminist would be different if she had never attended college. She replied,

> It would [exist]; it just would be more … ridiculous and unformed … I wouldn't have a lot of things to back it up with … But I'm sure I would feel very … towards women's rights. And I wouldn't just be like – like I was saying … 'I like girls and we're really cool' … I'm sure I'd still be – I'd work up to it, but it's the kind of thing [where] you have to be the kind of person who wants to read things on your own … I've always liked to read things on my own; I did a lot of activist things in high school. But it's the kind of thing I came into slowly because I did it on my own … That's really sad when you [ask me] that, because I think about like how now unlike the '60s and '70s, how there aren't

> really a lot of issues for people to grab onto, unless they're put into it [in a classroom setting] … A lot of people are against a lot of things, or for a lot of things, but they don't really have a lot to back it up with. I have a lot of friends who didn't go to college … They definitely have beliefs about things, but they're very ungoverned by any substantial amount of facts.

Tomlin-Brenner suggests that while she still believes that she would be in favor of women's rights had she not attended college and been enrolled in Women's Studies classes, she might not necessarily call herself a feminist. Furthermore, Women's Studies classes gave her a language with which to frame her understanding of the world, thereby increasing the likelihood that her actions will be informed and perhaps taken more seriously. Tomlin-Brenner's experience in feminist education has taught her to think critically about the world and back up her opinions with substantiated evidence. Classes expose students to concepts and texts they might not have otherwise encountered on their own. It also forces them (if they desire to pass the class) to grapple with difficult material. In my own experience as an educator, I talk to my students a great deal about the role of the university as an institution and the way it relates to self-education. One must not attend a university in order to be well educated; however, one must posses a great deal of self-determination in order to study something for which no grade is being given. Like Tomlin-Brenner, Women's Studies major Jeanette Beal explained how Women's Studies helps people who share values with feminism to identify and label those values as feminist in nature. She responded:

> I think [about] how I was before I came to school and how I am now and I think there are a lot of feminists in this world who don't know they're feminists. They don't have a language for what they are or the language they've been given has been so tainted by the

> media. And the media is maybe the only outlet they have because they haven't been told to go anywhere else … So, I think we have a lot of feminists running around, doing a lot of hardcore activism, doing amazing things, you know, that don't have the language to describe who they are, what they are. Or the language they have is not – has not been defined to empower them. It's been defined to disempower them. I think the university can be helpful in empowering women, in giving … that language to women, but it can also make the separation; you know, 'I'm the feminist intellectual theorist and you're the piddly, stupid, barely have your high school GED, so *I'm* doing real feminism [*laughter*] and you just need to get a real job.' So there's that kind of rift that's been made … Women's Studies has changed feminist activism for people who can be [in college]. Because that's definitely – feminism was something that happened in the streets; it happened in people's living rooms, on the couches and carpets in America and all over the world in consciousness raising groups. [They were] using language that wasn't from Foucault or Kristeva. Now feminism has kind of become up here in academia where we just talk about it and theorize it and read all the right stuff and know the right slang, and sometimes we feel really good about ourselves and sign some papers or we read something and say, 'That really sucks.' But there are women who are affected – poor women, uneducated women, what have you – who are out there in the streets with no language and no connections and no real power to do anything.

While Beal explains that a formal education in Women's Studies grants individuals an opportunity to better understand their belief system as fitting within a feminist framework and thereby allows them to identify as feminists, she also brings forth the point that it is far too easy now to limit who society thinks of as a "real" feminist to someone who has a college education.

Because a college education is accessible only to those with privilege, making the ability to comprehend jargon-laden theoretical works has closed academic feminism to women who do not have the opportunity to attend college but who most certainly understand oppression based on gender and other axes of difference. Beal also suggests, and I agree with her, that formal consciousness raising now happens for the third wave in the Women's Studies classroom. While the institutionalization of Women's Studies has been a powerful and good thing for validating women and the study of women's experiences as academic in nature, it has created a separation based on theory, practice, and theory-informed practice. A woman working in a factory may not necessarily possess the ability to comprehend the work of Judith Butler, for example, but she certainly knows she has been wronged when she realizes she makes less than her male colleagues and takes action.

One of the primary ways Women's Studies faculty attempt to reverse the perceived disconnect of Women's Studies as being solely an academic discipline and revive the goal of Women's Studies, centering on alleviating oppression based on gender, is through service learning projects in the classroom. Service learning, as defined by Cathryn Berger Kaye in the *Complete Guide to Service Learning*, is a "teaching method where guided or classroom learning is deepened through service to others in a process that provides structured time for reflection on the service experience and demonstration of the skills and knowledge acquired" (7). Simply stated, service learning involves taking the curriculum of a course and implementing a hands-on project within the community to illuminate the concepts learned in class. Integral in Berger Kaye's definition is the process of reflection, wherein students have the opportunity to discuss through written and/or oral communication the process of providing the service and how it affected both their learning and themselves individually. According to Berger Kaye, "service

learning differs from other forms of community service or volunteer work because the education of students and young people is always at its core. Students are actively participating in the process of understanding, integrating, and applying knowledge from various subject areas as they work to improve their communities" (7). Unlike community service or volunteerism, both of which involve an element of actively seeking to improve one's surroundings, putting into action the curriculum of one's classroom in order to fully illuminate a concept is the goal of service learning.

When relating service learning to teaching feminist activism, editors Nancy Naples and Karen Bojar, in their book *Teaching Feminist Activism: Strategies from the Field* choose to use the term activism instead of service learning. They define service learning differently than Berger Kaye does, explaining why many feminists take issue with the phrase. They write:

> *Service learning* tends to be used for experiential education projects that are short-term and not necessarily connected to a career area. Service learning has proven for some to be a politically useful term since there are now national organizations … dedicated to its promotion and funding. Some teachers who use the term focus on traditional service projects such as tutoring and working in homeless shelters, whereas others use the term to include projects that might be characterized as social change or advocacy work. The term *service learning*, with its connotations of traditional charitable work, has long made many feminists uneasy [… as] charitable work has been regarded with suspicion by feminists who have seen such work as reflective of female subordination or as an attempt to prop up an unjust status quo. (3) (emphasis in original)

On one hand, service learning can be a useful term for feminist educators when incorporating activism into their classroom curriculum, because it has been rendered a "safe" term, a way of

making activism palatable in an institutional setting. It makes the university look good to be involved in serving the community and creating engaged, active citizens. On the other hand, Naples and Bojar point to the danger in using that term because it may lead to the commodification of women's work for the sake of making the university look engaged within the community.

In her interview, Ellen Berry echoed the sentiments present in *Teaching Feminist Activism* when she said, "feminism has invented Women's Studies and done so many things for interdisciplinarity. Service learning – are you kidding me? We were doing service learning from the get-go, because every Women's Studies course was service learning. You know? [*laughter*]." Berry makes an excellent point when she explains that the earliest Women's Studies programs had at their core a commitment to improving the lives of women both through academic study and action. The founders of Women's Studies undertook a huge project when they created an entirely new discipline. According to the National Service Learning Clearinghouse, an online resource for service learning, the term "service learning" was first coined in 1967 by educators Robert Sigmon and William Ramsey and the term had as its goal the "combination of conscious educational growth with the accomplishment of certain tasks that meet genuine educational needs" (Titlebaum 5). It was not until 1971 that there was a concentrated national effort to establish service learning as an important part of education and not until 1990 when the National and Community Service Act was put into place, which authorized several national programs to involve citizens in projects that worked to combat poverty, illiteracy, increase employability, and serve the environment (Titlebaum 9). Thus, service learning is a fairly new phenomenon, at least in terms of societal recognition and

governmental acknowledgement. Feminism, on the other hand, has been an established movement, culturally recognized in the United States since the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention.

In 2002, Bowling Green State University President Dr. Sidney Ribeau made a statement on the importance of civic engagement, and therefore the importance of service learning. He stated, as quoted on the Office of Service Learning Initiative's website:

> Learning through activities that contribute to meeting others' needs also helps students gain a greater awareness and a deeper sense of appreciation of how academic disciplines can contribute to solving real human problems. They not only learn the abstract theories on which those disciplines are based, but they also realize how that theory can be applied to improve the human condition. (Office of Service Learning Initiative Homepage)

Since 2002, the university has placed a great deal of emphasis on service learning and the public image of the university. Service learning is a very tangible way to create student involvement in the community. Similarly, there has been a recent push for what is termed "the Scholarship of Engagement." A 2005 report called "Report of the Task Force on Scholarship of Engagement," details the university's initiatives to include and promote a "Scholarship of Engagement," defined by BGSU as:

> A collaborative endeavor of faculty members working with public and private communities to identify relevant problems related to economic development, educational reform, and quality of life issues. Engaged scholarship projects integrate the traditional divisions of teaching, research/creative work and service. Faculty members work together with the external communities to develop the project goals, methods, and outcomes. These projects, being interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary, should be appropriate to the academic area and mission of the faculty member's unit. (6)

Simply stated, Scholarship of Engagement is a push for university professors and faculty members to integrate the economic, social, and cultural issues of a community in their scholarly work. The traditional career objectives for university faculty include publication, service, and teaching; scholarship of engagement asks them to incorporate community involvement into those tasks as relevant to one's academic home. According to the report provided by the task force, the need to emphasize Scholarship of Engagement during this cultural moment is due to the role that public institutions of higher education have played in "solving economic and social problems through community engagement and applied scholarship. Some scholars have argued that … the balance of scholarship shifted in the direction of basic research, driv[en] by the disciplinary focus of developing academic specialties and professional recognition provided by the academy" (4). Because Ohio's economy has been suffering since the events of September 11, 2001, there has been pressure placed on state universities to produce scholarship that will promote public well-being. This pressure, according to the report, has come from both business people and from government officials (4). Scholarship of Engagement asks that academics focus not only on the promotion of their own discipline and individual career goals (such as tenure) but on how that discipline can serve the immediate needs of the community.

Interestingly, Women's Studies faculty members have employed both service learning and the Scholarship of Engagement since the outset of Women's Studies as a discipline. It has been only recently that it was conceivable that community involvement would be a factor in granting tenure to a professor. The subject of responding to community needs or potentially being seen as an "activist" and how that affects one's professional stature came up frequently in my interviews. Leigh Ann Wheeler best summed it up when we discussed academic work as activism and she surmised, "And if [academic work] does count, is that going to compromise

your colleagues' estimation of your scholarly credentials? Because if my colleagues thought of me as an activist, that would reduce my stature to them." Though the Scholarship of Engagement is intended to reduce the tension between choosing community involvement over scholarship and promotion, the University's goals for Scholarship of Engagement and service learning do not always seem to match up when in comes to rewarding the academic disciplines most associated with these concepts. For instance, many Women's Studies classes involve an element of what would be deemed service learning, whether or not an individual instructor decides to define that project as such. However, when looking at the list of affiliated courses on the Bowling Green State University's Office of Service Learning Initiatives website, no Women's Studies courses are listed.

Similarly, if the Scholarship of Engagement asks faculty members to include in their research service that is both trans- and interdisciplinary in nature, why have Women's Studies instructors not been rewarded for instituting projects that involve members of the community both on an educational and a service level? Women's Studies has had at its onset the erasure of hierarchizing individual knowledge based on formal education and therefore the inclusion of community women in the creation of knowledge and, in keeping with the university's goals, related to the community's needs. Despite the fact that the BGSU Women's Studies program has been doing for decades what the university recently has been promoting, it remains low in the institutional hierarchy. Mary Krueger explained this when she discussed how she saw the Women's Studies program to be perceived in a larger university context. She replied:

> I think the perception … really depends *totally* on how married the perceiver is to the idea of an academic structure. That there's a university, and there's a college, and there's a school, and there's a program, and there's a department, and different things are called

> different things for different reasons, and they're very clearly defined, and god forbid anyone should step out of line. So, for folks who are really all about the hierarchy, being a program has less strength to it, less legitimacy than being a department or school, or whatever … We're not a tenure granting department. So when the director's tenured in another department, and we have one full time instructor who will never be anything other than an instructor and will never be a tenure track kind of deal, that's it. And everyone else is graduate assistants or affiliated faculty whose academic home is elsewhere. So that's not a position of power in the … formal administrative structure of the university. I think – I don't think that Women's Studies is looked down upon, necessarily; I just think Women's Studies is mostly just not thought about too much.

Women's Studies, being a program, receives less funding and support than a department. Though the program keeps growing in the number of students interested in the major, minor, and graduate certificate, institutional support and growth does not coincide with student demand. Several students I interviewed expressed frustration at the limited number of classes offered in the discipline, but they understood that it was difficult to offer more options as a discipline that relies on cross-listing courses to maintain its livelihood. Perhaps as the university begins to recognize Women's Studies as a field that wholeheartedly contributes to the goals of service to the community, the Scholarship of Engagement, and interdisciplinarity, the program will gain both institutional and financial support. The university must stop seeking only *service* that makes the institution look good and appreciate that the *activism* done by Women's Studies programs is beneficial to the community, too. This will only begin to change once our culture ceases to demonize feminists and understand that feminism is about promoting and achieving equality for *all* people.

One of the reasons that Women's Studies as a discipline might not be recognized as a primary contributor to the goals of service learning and the Scholarship of Engagement is the difference between *activism* and service learning. Activism differs from service learning because feminist activism is always political in nature, whereas service learning does not necessarily have to include a political agenda. To paraphrase Naples and Bojar as they describe the goal of feminist activism in *Teaching Feminist Activism,* instructors must focus on increasing awareness regarding the oppression of women and on putting into action strategies to relieve this oppression (3). The danger, as noted previously, of co-opting the work of Women's Studies faculty and students into service to the community with the goal of improving the public image of the university instead of seeking to eradicate injustice runs high. One of the reasons the work of feminist educators and students may not be recognized as fulfilling the goals of service learning and the Scholarship of Engagement is because of the highly conservative social, cultural, and political climate of Ohio. In an environment that is not necessarily conducive to promoting a feminist agenda, it becomes clear that Women's Studies faculty and students might be considered rabble rousers more than exemplary scholars.

However, service learning, often called "action projects" in Women's Studies classrooms, is, on many levels an example of commendable scholarship and pedagogy. The educational benefits of service learning are numerous for all parties involved, including the student, the community, and the sponsoring institution. According to the *Learn and Serve Ohio Training Manual,* written by Dr. L. Richard Bradley, service learning can help students grow developmentally, increasing their self-awareness, confidence level, and active citizenship. For the community, engaging the youth of the campus can bring new life and ideas to waning institutions and encourage future generations of activists and advocates. Service learning

provides the cooperating nonprofit or business with an opportunity to gain volunteers interested in furthering the mission while meeting a real need in the community (Module 2 p.3). In addition, research on service learning has indicated its effect on increasing levels of sensitivity and tolerance for multiculturalism and promotion of diversity, which are also goals of Women's Studies programs. Bradley explains that "service learning provides structured opportunities for students to reflect on and discuss their concerns, questions and confusions regarding the challenges that relate to race, culture, and other differences. Such reflection and dialogue are keys to actually changing long-term attitudes and behaviors" (Module 2 p. 7). Service learning also aids in helping students to identify potential career opportunities, understand themselves in terms of talents, interests, and skills, build team work, and become more involved in the community around them (Bradley Module 2 p. 9).

While the benefits of service learning are obvious, where the difficulty arises is in using service learning as a primary means of educating students to become feminist activists. While the faculty members I interviewed rarely described the activist projects they used in their classroom as "service learning," instead choosing to label them most frequently as "action projects," ultimately I feel as though the two are very similar in their intent. Service learning takes the curriculum goals of the classroom into the community to acquire a real-life application of learning; feminist action projects employ feminist theory as a means of challenging and changing the status quo for women. While service learning or action projects are an effective means of teaching students about engaging in feminist activism, there are many problems associated with service learning.

Service learning is often extremely difficult for an instructor to manage because projects are time consuming, labor intensive, require a great deal of resources, and hard to oversee. For

many students and instructors alike, a vital part of an activist endeavor is passion. When a student is practicing service learning and she or he is doing so for a grade, one may question the level of passion involved. In general, out of the persons interviewed for this project, the essence of activism was an ardent zeal for the issue at hand. As Chadwick Roberts, who is both an instructor in Women's Studies and a doctoral candidate in American Culture Studies, observed:

> Part of the problem of making activism part of your curriculum is that you don't want to force students into doing actions without having the proper motivation … to force students, you know, "You're going to do this activist project!" Activism should kind of come from an awareness and a kind of a fire that burns inside of you because of an awareness that you've come to that something's wrong with the world …while that may seem like an excuse for making students aware of activism rather than making them go out and do activism on their own … that's legitimate.

For some students, being assigned an action project is a welcome opportunity to receive a grade for activist work that they would normally do during their own time. However, other students may resent being forced to participate in a service learning project for which they have little passion or interest. They might also not express their activism through direct physical involvement, and might instead choose to be involved in a project intellectually or behind the scenes. How might an instructor grade based on degree of passion? What happens if the project is not successful in its outcome, but the students were passionate about their work? As noted in previous chapters, feminist activism has been co-opted by the institution of higher learning under the term "service learning," leaving it without a feminist agenda and instead open to the prospect of women's labor being appropriated for the sake of making the university look good in the eyes of the community. In a university environment made tense by groups like Students for

Academic Freedom who rally against what they feel is indoctrination into liberal thinking, educators can feel pressured to allow action projects that may even be anti-feminist in nature. I was discussing students who wished to picket an abortion clinic as an action project with Julie Haught. Regarding this matter, she noted, "There are certain activist actions that might be ruder than the political position that I disagree with, but quite frankly, I couldn't disallow it." In today's academic climate, it is the instructor's responsibility to remain unbiased; however, in remaining neutral, must that instructor allow Women's Studies students (particularly at the introductory level when the students may or may not identify as feminists) to organize a project that is anti-feminist in nature?

While service learning has the potential to benefit students in learning to become feminist activists, including the opportunity to better understand their own goals, skills, passions, and talents, the potential to help them gravitate toward a particular career in social justice, and increased awareness in issues of multiculturalism and tolerance, there are also disadvantages of using service learning as the primary way to educate students to become activists. The drawbacks to service learning include the possibility of activism being co-opted by the university as a way of improving its public image under the Scholarship of Engagement. Just as there were disadvantages involved in the institutionalization of feminism through Women's Studies programs, so too are there risks involved in institutionalizing activism under the label of service learning. These risks include the depoliticiation of feminist activism and the re-inscription of traditional gender roles through women's service. In addition, service learning projects are time consuming, labor intensive, and difficult to grade based on the passion and interest level of the student and the success of the project as a whole. Because of the delicate nature of the current political climate, the professor may run the risk of agreeing to a service project that may be

antifeminist in nature. Though action projects provide ample opportunity for student development and growth, they can also be highly problematic in nature. Alternatives need to be developed in order to fully realize the goal of advancing feminist activism in the third wave for the future. The next chapter will detail alternative possibilities beyond service learning that allow for changing definitions of activism and assess the best way in which we as feminist educators must move forward.

CHAPTER FOUR

Contemporary Women's Studies students have traditionally been introduced to activist work through action projects that are similar to service learning initiatives incorporated into the curriculum. Feminist instructors and Women's Studies classrooms in particular are well-known for their use of hands-on learning and incorporation of political activism in the classroom. Because feminist pedagogy invites self-directed, nonhierarchical learning, students are often required to be involved in both the design and implementation of these projects. Similarly, by permitting students to choose the nature of the action project, the instructor hopes that it will be an opportunity for students to steer the endeavor towards an area of feminist activism about which they are most passionate, thereby increasing their emotional and intellectual investment in the venture. Hypothetically, one of the primary goals of this emotional and intellectual attachment to a project is to create students who will be involved in activist work at a local, national, or global level long after their college graduations. But what happens when service learning as it has been used in the Women's Studies classroom fails to have that effect? For all the benefits associated with service learning in the classroom, there are also many problems. Service learning, particularly in a limited resource environment like Women's Studies, can be difficult to manage because it is labor intensive, time consuming, and requires a great deal of commitment on behalf of both students and instructors. If the purpose of service learning projects in the Women's Studies classroom is so problematic in nature, why do we continue to use it as one of our primary methods of operation? What are some alternative ways by which we can educate students in the theories and methods of activism that move beyond the limitations of service learning?

In order to teach young feminists how to move forward with their activism, we must first ensure that they have a better understanding of how things have been done in the past. A solid grasp of feminist history enables students to understand where previous generations were successful in their activist endeavors and where they failed. In particular, I feel it is absolutely necessary to understand the different ways in which generations of feminists have been characterized and how the generational conflict has played out in academic feminism. An understanding of the generational conflict helps students to understand how their own generation of feminism is perceived and constructed within an academic discourse, thereby granting them the ability to effectively navigate relationships with feminists who may have different ways of conceiving the development of feminism as it exists today. For instance, students need to be made aware of the varying models of generational feminism, including the mother/daughter metaphor, the wave analogy, and those models which do not advocate either the familial or wave metaphors, but instead favor a more continuous image of feminism in which generations have had similarities and differences. The generational debate between what has predominantly been written about in academia as second and third wave feminism has been distinguished in many different ways. Initially, there has been a great deal of finger-pointing on both sides – second wave feminists worried about the new generation taking their history for granted and third wave feminists feeling as though their ideas have been silenced and discredited by feminist foremothers who disregarded this new kind of feminism because it was not their own. Through a thorough review of the ongoing debates surrounding this generational divide, it becomes clear that both sides of the argument appear to agree that this split serves only to cause a rift among women who should otherwise be united. It is easy to become bogged down in the specific ways we understand and label ourselves as feminists, thus forgetting that as feminists we often have

very similar goals and values at heart. The current scholarship points to a model that views feminism as continuous, rather than as segregated movements; this is done through various methodologies, and several solutions are offered to move forward with this model. After all, patriarchy never ceased to exist and women never abandoned their fight against oppressive structures; their voices were simply quieter at times due to social and cultural circumstances. An example of such social and cultural circumstances is found in the more traditionalist eras of the 1980s and '90s, wherein the political environment was highly conservative. If one relies solely on the wave metaphor, the feminists during this time period are lacking a "wave" to which they could belong. Feminism did not go away during this time; feminists simply had to fight with all their strength to keep alive women's newly gained rights, as the cultural atmosphere was not conducive to granting more rights. In looking at the literature surrounding the notion of generational feminism within the academy, we gain more of an insight as to how we might solve this division, moving forward to present a united political front for the sake of activism, both political and academic. It becomes apparent that the Women's Studies classroom is the new possible site for healing this generational rift, a location for understanding the feminisms of the past while surging ahead to do the activist work of the present and the future.

Generations of feminism have been characterized in familial language, wherein second wave feminists are the "mothers" and the third wave "daughters," as well as in terms of waves, which signifies the gradual rising, cresting, and falling of waves with the tide. In the article "Feminism's Family Problem," Astrid Henry contends that by associating feminist movements with the language of generations and families, we further perpetuate the binary systems of patriarchy, therefore closing the door to relationships and movements that are outside of those dichotomies. She explains that: "Describing second wave feminists – and second wave feminism

– as a ‘mother’ to the third wave may have been inevitable, given the age difference between each wave’s representatives is roughly the equivalent of one familial generation” (212). As a unit of society, the family is connected to systems of power wherein the father has ultimate control. Simply replacing the father/son binary with that of mother/daughter does not erase the oppressive elements of that structure. Henry explicates the problematic nature of thinking of feminism as something each generation inherits, rather than something we continuously create based on cultural needs. She writes,

> Conceiving of feminism as a birthright passed on from mother to daughter undoubtedly influences the third wave’s understanding of, and relationship to, feminism. For some women, it may be that something inherited from one’s mother is likely to be rejected, no matter what it is. For these women, it may be that a birthright (bound up as it is with one’s mother) is something that can interfere with one’s efforts to develop an individual’s sense of identity. (220)

Essentially, Henry brings to light within familial discussions of feminism the old adage that a woman’s worst fear is becoming her mother. Third wave projects tend to focus on individuality, while the second wave was built upon the notion that “sisterhood is powerful.” The individualized nature of the third wave stems, in part, from the problems the second wave faced with their ideology of sisterhood as it excluded women of color, third world women, lesbians, and transgendered people. This rebellion, or push away from the projects of previous generations, is in part an attempt to not recreate this exclusion. Individualism may be seen as a response to the fear of exclusion because it is the opposite of sisterhood. Sisterhood suggests a sameness amongst women, while individuality puts the specialized interests of each specific kind of feminism at the center of its activism. The danger of individuality, however, is that feminists

may begin to believe that there is no universality amongst feminists and avoid coalition building. It is also difficult to accomplish much change culturally when individuals focus on their individual needs. The other way this scenario might play out is to be too tightly bound to that history and not make concessions for changing times. Feminism must be continuously redefined to incorporate evolving cultural and social circumstances. Therefore, as Henry ultimately posits, third wave feminists must carve out a space that is uniquely their own while also maintaining a relationship with the feminists whose work came before them.

In her article "Generational Difficulties; Or, The Fear of a Barren History" Judith Roof offers an understanding of Betty Friedan's version of feminist history: generational legacy can be seen as each generation building upon the work of those before them, while spontaneous generation is understood as consciously ignoring the projects of the past to instigate their own agenda. The latter of these options may have an Oedipal effect, wherein the mother's model is completely rejected in order to take on their own projects (Roof 69-70). Roof argues that, while the generational legacy model may seem to be the better of the two on the surface, at its core, this model serves to further divide women and relies on misogynist versions of linear history to promote the idea of "progress." She writes,

> Conceived as unidirectional, the linear logic of a temporally bound cause-and-effect narrative creates a perpetual debt to the past. While this seems logical and obliged by the physics of human existence, it also prevents us from understanding the movement of cause in any other direction (the present or future producing the past, for example, or multidirectional causality), sustaining the supply of debt as well as the illusion of a progress ever dependent on the past's temporal preeminence. (71)

Though an alternative way of constructing history as being informed by the present seems to be counterintuitive, Roof suggests that such an alternative allows feminists to escape the problematic patriarchal methods associated with traditional historiography. She explains that though the term "wave" has been offered as a substitute for the more troublesome generational metaphor, this model is still loaded with the same difficulties of cause-and-effect narratives (77). Roof's inherent problem with both the generational and wave models is that they do not allow for a new type of feminism to emerge. The third wave is supposed to be a perfect blend of the first and second generations of feminism; therefore, young feminists find difficulty taking pride in their own successes because they are bound to the past (Roof 85). Writes Roof, "if we challenge the very notions of time and history that ground these ideas, *generation* becomes an insignificant term in the creation, re-creation, sharing, and proliferation of feminist knowledges" (86). She concludes her essay with the suggestion that we revise our notion of history and the ways in which it is governed by patriarchal mandates; in so doing, we render the problems associated with generational legacy inconsequential. Roof ultimately asks the question, "Is it possible for me to be neither daughter nor one who spontaneously generates?" – to which she overwhelmingly seems to answer in hopeful affirmation: yes, not only is it possible, it is absolutely vital to feminism's survival (86).

By looking at the ways in which different generations of feminists critique one another, one can see that, in allowing themselves to be divided by petty notions of shared chronological history rather than in shared goals, feminists are behaving in ways that are more often associated with patriarchy. In "Feminist Family Values; or, Growing Old – and Growing Up – with the Women's Movement," Judith Newton recalls an academic conference in which second wave feminists discussed the current state of third wave feminism, consistently placing the theme of

wound and loss at the forefront of the conversation. She writes, "one speaker after another touched on the current lapse of historical memory, feminist careerism and competitiveness, and the ingratitude of the young" (328). Interestingly, however, Newton notes that these frustrations were largely voiced by second wave white feminists who were once at the center of the movement and found it unnerving to be ousted from that position of power. "The experience of being *de*centered, perhaps, belongs most characteristically to those who have been securely *at* the center and is felt most profoundly in relation to those – young white feminists in this case – who have come to occupy [that center]" (328-9). Thus, women of color, from their perpetual place on the margins, seemed to speak of the need to nurture upcoming generations (Newton 329). Newton devotes a majority of her article to discussing the politics of the academy and the ways in which academic feminist are under threat. Though historically feminists have not trusted male-dominated academic disciplines, Newton finally comes to the conclusion that we must construct a coalitional model of oppositional consciousness, in which all people who work to end oppression will feel welcome (335-340). As a white, middle-class, second wave feminist, Newton recognizes the rationale behind her generation's political strategies, yet she ultimately understands the need to revise those strategies to keep up with changing times.

Understanding generational difference and how the generational debate between second and third wave feminisms has played out is central to moving forward as a coalition for the future. When seeking a way to reconcile a feminist education deeply rooted in the history and practices of second wave feminism with a feminist identity more closely aligned in practice and experience with the third wave, it seems that both second and third wave feminists agree that the generational divide serves no purpose other than to drive a wedge between feminists who would otherwise be united. Through various methodologies and solutions, current scholars reject the

familial and generational models in favor of one that views feminisms as recurring rather than as having separate and unrelated goals. Some scholars believe that we can achieve this model through changing our definition of history from cause-and-effect to a more mutually informative, continually evolving method. Others believe that we may interpret the work of feminist theorists differently to allow for a more coalitional model. Still others focus on the ways in which we must pay homage to the past while creating new versions of feminisms. Feminists of either generation must not allow their identities as "second" or "third" wave to confine them, thereby shutting down a dialogue based on respect and learning opportunities all around. True to the core values of feminism, every person must have a chance to be heard. Though we may not necessarily agree with one another's viewpoints, we have a responsibility to one another to listen with an open mind and an open heart.

Despite the general agreement that feminists of different generations need to be united in their efforts, there remains a lack of knowledge and understanding about Third Wave feminism in the Women's Studies classroom. Much of what young feminists learn is rooted in Second Wave ideology and identity simply because their professors were often educated during that time period with those sources. Therefore, young feminists are often unaware of the formal procedures and theories of their own type of feminism; that is, they are unable to concretely express how and why they experience and pratice feminism in both unique and shared ways. It is my belief that a knowledge base of Third Wave feminism in the Women's Studies classroom, in addition to an understanding of Second Wave feminism, will equip young feminists to put into action the theories they learn in the classroom. Instructors have an obligation to incorporate texts that are representative of the varying ideologies and pratices of generations of feminism. If students are predominantly given materials written during the Second Wave of feminism by

instructors who identify with that period, they may be unable to recognize the praxis of their own generation. By helping students to recognize the history of previous generations and how current feminism has developed as a result of the successes and failures of past activist work, they will be more equipped to find the most appropriate response and action depending on the cultural climate.

Awareness of cultural needs and attitudes towards social change is absolutely vital to teach students to be successful activists. What was considered an effective means of activism in the 1960's and 70's would not necessarily have the same outcome in the cultural climate of 2006. Today's young women are taught from birth by well-meaning parents that girls can do anything boys can do; therefore, it is difficult at times to understand the complex ways power and oppression operate in our society. In her article "The Past in Our Present: Theorizing the Activist Project of Women's Studies," Bonnie Zimmerman writes, "We must first acknowledge that we cannot go back to the model of activism and academia that existed in 1972. Society has changed, the women's movement has changed, the universities have changed, and Women's Studies have changed" (186). Further, she argues that the oppressive nature of women's existence today completely differs from the early part of the second wave (187). One may argue that the more covert nature of oppression as it exists today reinforces the need for a connection between theories of feminism and women's lived experience. It is through learning feminist theories in the Women's Studies classroom that young feminists are able to build a connection between their lived realities and injustice. Thus, it is imperative to understand how the Women's Studies classroom has become the central consciousness-raising location for young women today. From this location, young women may be propelled out of their assumption that feminist activism is no longer necessary today, towards a more politically-rooted activism as it existed in

the second wave despite the fact that the actions of the second wave were expressed politically in myriad ways. In terms of distinct activities that can be done in the classroom, I have developed three ideas as alternatives or compliments to service learning: solution based reading, taking students through the logistics of activist planning, and teaching them important communication skills for better interactions with others. These strategies can be used individually, as explained here, or together, as I explain them towards the end of the chapter.

The first way to help students become aware of the social, political, and cultural environments of their world is through an activity I have adapted from a colleague. This colleague, Chadwick Roberts, is a graduate student in American Culture Studies and an instructor in Women's Studies. Roberts has his students do an activity that he calls the *New York Times* article review. Explaining this activity, Roberts says:

> One of the things I have them do -- the *New York Times* article review --involves digesting a news article that you might see every day, but asking from that story a different set of questions, and a set of questions that hopefully comes from a feminist understanding of the world and maybe a different perspective.

The goal of this activity is to get students to start thinking critically about the world around them. Further, Roberts pushes his students to start asking questions from a feminist perspective which range from the portrayal of women in a certain situation, to what is left unsaid in an article, and what kind of assumptions is the author making. He goes on to explicate:

> You need to be aware of the problems and kind of have a history of that problem in order to be involved. So to force people into that, without that history is false. To make it a requirement for a course when people don't understand what they're doing or don't have a passion for what they're doing is a wrong way to go. Part of what I try to do with the

> *New York Times* articles is… sometimes we'll get into groups and we'll take some articles…They're starting to think of these articles in terms of what could be done to sort of remedy the situation … part of being an activist is creating a critical eye and asking the right sorts of questions from the world. And maybe that's where the article reviews come in. It forces you to ask different questions of this article. But also to kind of ask questions outside the article, you know… What's missing? … Even the *New York Times* maybe leave out opportunities where they could ask more critical questions of a topic? And in some cases, we've found that to be true. You know? That even the most liberal paper may […lack] a feminist perspective … They may not be entertaining all the solutions that you could think of.

One of the primary goals of educators in Women's Studies is to train students to look at the world through a feminist lens. In his *New York Times* article review activity, not only does Roberts explore issues using a feminist critique, he also gets students to ask critical questions, even of sources that are notoriously considered to be both liberal and pro-feminist. It teaches students that they must always be conscious of what is happening in the world and how it affects women at both a national and global level. As previously noted, awareness and passion are central in creating effective activists. One of the risks of using service learning in the classroom is involving students in issues about which they are uninformed or only moderately informed. The purpose of the article review is twofold: it requires that students gain knowledge of current events in relation to the material they are studying in class, thereby helping them to maintain an active citizenship; it teaches students to ask questions and look for solutions from a feminist perspective.

Building on the idea of being conversant in the current political and cultural climates and looking at the ways those issues are reported through mass media using a feminist lens, I have developed an alternative to service learning that I call "solution-based reading." Students should not experience activism at a hands-on level without first learning how to think like activists. The key element in solution-based reading is the combination of thinking through a feminist perspective while also looking for creative solutions to problems. As noted in previous chapters, many of the Women's Studies majors or minors I interviewed expressed frustration at not feeling as though they were as "activist" as their feminist foremothers, but it made me wonder whether or not they were relying on the tried and true methods of the 1960s and '70s when said methods were not necessarily effective in present society. This activity also helps students to envision a kind of activism that is not passive, is relevant to their lives, and works with their own unique interests and skills.

According to *Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism*, written by Third Wave feminists Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, a very common question asked by budding feminists is "How can I get involved?" They write,

> Too often the response is what we've labeled The Generic Three: 'call your politician,' 'donate money,' and 'volunteer.' *Grassroots* is our attempt to move beyond these knee-jerk, minimally effective answers. We must believe that in order to maximize this passion [of young people], we must have better, more specific and *active* answers to the question, 'What can I do?' … Don't get us wrong: participation via contacting politicians, making donations, and doing volunteer work is all very crucial to the live of social justice organizations … But it is also a one-sided relationship that encourages passivity in the would-be activists. The act is isolated from the larger world of direct

> action and solutions, which makes the individual often doubt whether his or her check or letter was effective. (13-14)

As Baumgardner and Richards write, students can become disillusioned with activism if what they are doing produces no noticeable results. The ways in which we encourage young people today to get "involved" with their community promotes what many Second Wave-identified faculty members feel is a more removed, lazy kind of activism. Thus, young feminists get a reputation for being apathetic. Generally, the third wave has been more of an individualized movement, focused on personal issues. However, many third wave scholars seem to believe this is a weakness that has the potential to be transformed into large-scale activism with some tweaking. As Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards discuss in their first book *Manifesta,* feminists of this generation have been criticized for not being a cohesive political unit and being too focused on individualized oppression (222-4). Despite this critique, Baumgardner and Richards use *Manifesta* as an opportunity to give validation to current third wave activism while showing how the second wave's frustrations are valid at times (286). They show that young feminists are not apathetic; they are simply performing activism in a different way. Similarly, many of the students I interviewed seemed to express frustration because they felt as though previous generations of feminism had clear-cut issues solved in radical ways. They feel bad about themselves because theirs is a culture where the issues do not seem solvable in the same ways that Second Wave issues were; that is, staging sit-ins and protests do not necessarily seem to be the most effective ways of producing change but at the same time, because this is the way that activism has been carried out in the past, it seems like the only thing that really "counts" as activism. By expanding the definition of activism and by teaching students to think outside of the traditional boundaries of activist actions, we are essentially helping them rise above the

characterization of apathy and enabling them to change the world around them. What I call solution-based reading is only the first step in fully preparing students to enter the activist world.

It is not enough to think about problem solving in creative ways; we must also educate students regarding the logistical elements of doing activist work. While the first steps to ending social injustice may be to raise awareness and come up with ideas about how to alleviate the problem, those things do not necessarily matter if students are powerless and ignorant of the elements necessary to put that plan into action. Leading students through the process of planning activist activities, which they may or may not ever follow through with, allows them to envision all the obstacles they might encounter, the resources they might need, and the partnerships they might have to build. It is my contention that the focus and goal of an education in Women's Studies is the teaching of critical thinking skills through the analysis of theory, literature, and culture. These are incredibly important skills and tools, and I find them to be among the most impressive and strongest aspects of an education in Women's Studies. It speaks volumes about Women's Studies students that they are able to conceptualize the world in a completely different way. As Vikki Krane, director of the Women's Studies program who also has a joint appointment with the department of Human Movement, Sport, and Leisure, put it:

> I love listening to the -- watching the interactions between the Women's Studies students who bring in this totally different critical perspective and the sport human movement students that it takes them a little while to catch up. They haven't had that kind of background in a lot of their classes yet.

On one hand, Women's Studies students are starting from an advantage because they possess the ability to perform critical analysis and ask a different set of questions. On the other hand,

Women's Studies students do not necessarily learn practical skills in the way that students who major in Business or Biology might. As one student, Lucé Tomlin-Brenner, described it,

> The majority of [college students] don't really care about education or learning anything … outside of a skill. I guess that's the problem, is so many majors are skills and not actually like … like, 'I'm learning how to be a teacher, I'm learning how to run a business, I'm learning how to work at a radio station or TV station.' And I'm like, 'Oh man, I guess I'm not really learning how to do anything, but I'm learning how to think critically and like to analyze things and like understand our society, which it's just hard because a lot of people don't feel like that's important and I feel like that's the most important thing in life, is to be able to understand the society that you live in and why things work the way they do, because that's the only way that you can change anything at all.

As a former Women's Studies undergraduate and a graduate student in the field, I also relished that I had the ability to think about the world through a different lens and ask a different set of critical questions. However, facing graduation and leaving academia to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector, I must be honest and say that I experience trepidation over the fact that I may not necessarily have the practical skills necessary to succeed outside of academia. Similarly, in my research, I found that many Women's Studies students have one of two plans after graduation: graduate studies or pursuing a career in the amorphous and vague field of "nonprofit work." Are we setting those students seeking a career outside of academia up for failure if we do not teach them the practical skills necessary to carry out their work? The effect of walking students through the logistical side of activist endeavors is twofold: it allows them to be well-

prepared and successful for in their work while also training them in ways that will help them become more viable in the nonprofit world after graduation.

Many elements are involved in teaching students about the practical side of activism. Part of instituting creative activism involves accessing material and nonmaterial resources in both traditional and new ways. According to *Grassroots* authors Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, "many feminist and activist types have a hard time seeing their mainstream job prospects as anything other than a giant detour from their values" (123). Along similar lines, students often feel bogged down by bureaucracy when attempting to use university resources for activist purposes. There is a process involved in everything when utilizing university resources. For instance, it is not as simple as posting a flyer to make others aware of a meeting or protest; one must gain permission to post fliers and either pay out of their own pockets to copy the fliers or be granted permission from an academic department to use their copy machine. However, Baumgardner and Richards advocate an assessment of the resources available in one's own immediate world. There are often more than we realize. In the area of nonmaterial resources, the authors consider individual talents such as painting, networking, and ability to navigate technology to be assets that can contribute to activist endeavors (109). In addition, they recommend a "rigorous accounting of one's own community, Palm Pilot, or phone book. This is so obvious, yet so easy to overlook" (109). At the university level, we often have material resources which we overlook as well: computer equipment and copy machines for creating and distributing 'zines, a wealth of research material at our fingertips, and power in numbers to get individuals involved. In teaching students to locate the resources they have at their disposal and in educating them on how to navigate their personal contacts within the community and beyond

to get those resources not at their disposal, we are essentially teaching them the ability to be not only creative but also flexible in their activism and to build effective partnerships.

Another essential element in practical education for future activists is to help make them aware of their own personality traits, talents, and activist styles. This is perhaps one of the biggest shortcomings of using service learning as activist education: students are typically required to participate in class projects in homogenous ways. Alternately, if the instructor allows students to choose individual projects that help them put to use personal talents and skills, the projects are often difficult to manage. By simply making students aware of the ways they interact with others, the styles in which they tend to work best, and their skills and weaknesses, we can help them to be more effective in their work as activists. One of the ways in which we may be able to help students to understand themselves better is through the use of Myers-Briggs personality testing. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a personality assessment test based on Jung's theory of psychological types (Pittenger 467). Isabel Briggs Myers and Katherine Cook Briggs, her mother, developed the test in the early 1940s following the "belief that different vocations favored different personality orientations and that Jung's theory provided the theoretical structure to link personality and job performance" (Pittenger 468). The MBTI is used in professional, academic, and counseling settings. The test,

> in its basic form … consists of forced-choice questions that represent behavioral preferences (e.g., At a party I like to: [A] tell jokes to others, or [B] listen to others) and preferred self-descriptive adjectives (e.g. [A] daring, or [B] cautious). The results are then tabulated to indicate preferences for each of the four scales, Extroversion-Introversion (EI), Sensing-Intuition (SN), Thinking-Feeling (TF), and Judgement-Perception (JP). (Pittenger 470)

An individual's personality type is made up of one letter from each of the four categories. The personality type is further determined by the two categories in which they are dominant, thereby leaving a potential for sixteen possible personality types (Pittenger 470).

The first element of the MBTI, Extroversion-Introversion, is an indication of a person's overall communication style. According to George H. Jensen and John K. DiTiberio, authors of "Personality and Individual Writing Processes," extroverts tend to be more outgoing and prefer to explain their thoughts and feelings through verbal communication and actions (288). On the other hand, introverts tend to "focus their energy inward through consideration and contemplation" (Jensen and DiTiberio 288). The second aspect of the MBTI is Sensing-Intuition. Jensen and DiTiberio describe individuals who rank high on the sensing scale as employing "the direct and conscious use of [the five senses] to record carefully the particulars of one's environment," while those who rank higher in intuition make use of "impressions, hunches, and the imagination to perceive patterns, relationships, and configurations" (290). Thinking-Feeling is the third element of the MBTI. This aspect of the test describes:

> how one makes evaluations, judgments, and decisions. Thinking types prefer to make decisions on the basis of objective criteria. They do what is right, even if feelings are hurt or group harmony is disrupted … Feeling types prefer to make decisions on the basis of subjective factors, such as their personal values, the values of others involved, and the effect of the decision on group harmony. They excel at the process of facilitating interpersonal relationships. (Jensen and DiTiberio 292-3)

The final aspect of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is Judging-Perceiving. According to Jensen and DiTiberio, this element of the test describes how different personality types set about duties and responsibilities in their public lives. Judging types are more apt to be very task-oriented,

have strong opinions, and solve problems in a linear fashion (294). Alternately, perceptive types are less structured, and are often willing to leave "tasks unfinished, so that they might better understand those tasks and the world around them. They are more inquisitive than decisive" (Jensen and DiTiberio 295).

The utility of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is somewhat controversial. Though Jensen and DiTiberio are specifically talking about the use of MBTI in conjunction with the teaching of writing, their description of why the test is a useful teaching tool applies in a broader context to Women's Studies. They write,

> Writers can perform better and with less anxiety when they employ primarily their preferred processes in early stages while still generating ideas, and then use their unpreferred processes in later stages to round out their wring. Writers become anxious or emotionally blocked when they overuse one process to the neglect of its opposite (e.g., use feeling to the neglect of thinking) or when they fail to use the strengths of their preferences, which Myers would call their individual gifts. If teachers deliver the same advice to all students, they may, despite good intentions, render more harm than good. Then students will begin to write as the teachers wish, not necessarily as they write best. (287)

This advice may be applied to the Women's Studies classroom in the teaching of activism. When looking at the different personality types of students, it is important to have them first develop their dominant traits and then push them to develop their recessive traits for growth. According to the *Ohio Learn and Serve Manual* written by educator Richard Bradley, when going through the reflection process that allows students the opportunity to make connections between the act of service and the classroom material, students should partake *first* in learning

objectives most closely aligned with their personality type followed by those that do not. For instance, an extrovert could deliver a speech to the class, and then for growth, that student should be asked to deliver her or his experiences in written format. Similarly, a student whose dominant trait is Sensing should first analyze the hard facts of the service requirement, and then later be asked to describe their emotional experience.

One way that the MBTI could be useful in activist projects would be in teaching students how to interact with different personality types when going through both the planning and implementation processes. It is my assertion that understanding one's personality type and the different personality types of others most closely simulates a real world experience. Often, conflict arises because of misunderstanding and miscommunication between people who are simply experiencing the world on different terms. If we teach students to be aware of the different ways in which people go about organizing, planning, and executing their ideas, they may become more sensitive and adaptable and therefore perhaps less apt to allow conflict to bring their work to a halt. It also teaches them to be more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of themselves and of others, and therefore able to make use of their nonmaterial resources. It is also a way to make service learning more of a tool for students who are hoping to find careers in the nonprofit world. For instance, if personality testing is employed prior to the implementation of an action project, the professor could organize the students into groups according to diverse personality types. Those students whose dominant traits are Thinking/Sensing as opposed to Feeling/Intuition may be able to keep the group on-task and goal-oriented, while the Feeling/Intuition types may bring more of a personal and emotional element to the project that is so necessary to activist work. Students who are in different personality groups would, through the process of personal and group reflection, be able to help each other learn to develop their

recessive traits. Such a horizontal distribution of learning power is more closely aligned with feminist pedagogy.

The controversy of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator arises primarily in its unreliability. According to David J. Pittenger, author of "The Utility of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator," when Briggs and Myers developed the test, they:

> conceived of personality as an invariant. It is expected that by adulthood the personality preference of a nonpathological individual will be stabilized and that test-retest reliabilities should be high. Although a person may develop the ability to use other functions, he or she will still have an unambiguous preference for the dominant function (471).

Pittenger refutes the reliability of the MBTI because many studies have concluded that personalities have the potential to change upon retesting (472). Another qualm that may arise when using personality testing in the classroom at an undergraduate level is that the personalities of traditionally-aged students may not be fully formed. Students will often accept what the instructor tells them, particularly in the case of a standardized test like the MBTI, as ultimate truth. If we tell them they are particularly skilled in one area and not as strong in another, it may lead to what Pittenger deems a self-fulfilling prophecy. One of the primary purposes of the MBTI is that it allows individuals to make sense of the behaviors of both themselves and others. The danger, explains Pittenger, is "the degree to which this system predisposes individuals to make misattributions about their own and others' behavior while ignoring other conditions, such as the environmental context, that contribute to a person's behavior" (482) Therefore, it may lead students to falsely believe a characteristic is true about themselves when in reality, it may be a

situational circumstance. For instance, if I believe that I am not a detail-oriented person, I may not try to force myself to be more organized.

Even Jensen and DiTiberio, who we may assume are proponents of the MBTI, advise educators to exercise caution in relying on the test. They write,

> [The MBTI] is not, however, a performance test and does not measure how well people use their preferred processes. […] results from the MBTI can be misused if those administering and interpreting them attach primarily negative connotations to certain types. It is difficult for some to accept that all types have different but equally valid ways of dealing with the world. (297)

Jensen and DiTiberio recommend that teachers, researchers and clinicians be trained in the uses of psychological testing to minimize the risks of misinterpretation and abuse (298). The authors stress repeatedly throughout the article that each type present in the MBTI has individual strengths and weaknesses. The beauty of the MBTI is that it does not hierarchize personalities according to dominant and recessive traits. In a patriarchal society that values assertiveness at the expense of introspection, the MBTI allows individuals to validate their unique gifts. The danger, Jensen and DiTiberio seem to imply, is in educators who may not be sensitive to the fact that each type possesses positive qualities and instead judge students based on how well their students' personality types match up to hegemonic constructions of how a "good" student behaves. They also seem to caution against complete and total reliance on the test. It is, after all, only a tool to help illuminate and interpret our behaviors. The test is not meant to determine the fate of an individual within the constraints of society.

Ultimately, I believe that the efficacy of the MBTI is not necessarily in assigning personality types to individuals. Rather, its worth lies in helping both students and teachers alike

to be aware of the different ways in which people communicate, relate to one another, and perform their work. Being aware of different personality types is quite simply good pedagogy. It explains why some students do well on papers but fail to shine when required to do an oral report. Expanding one's learning objectives and assignments to incorporate multiple personality types will allow students to both develop their dominant skills as well as their weaker skills. Similarly, I believe it is important for students to reflect on themselves, particularly when they are going into activist fields. Knowing where their values and talents lie may help steer student activism and help guide them towards a career that will help them actualize their goals of social justice. Learning how specific communication and work styles relate to one another is a skill that is useful to the potential feminist activist. The MBTI is only one method of gaining entrance to this skill.

Along the lines of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator testing is the notion of teaching students to help locate their own kind of feminism within larger movements within academic feminism. For instance, radical feminists tend to accomplish their activism in opposition to cultural structures and institutions and seek to abolish current structures. On the other hand, liberal feminists tend to work within current structures through reformation. Ecofeminists practice their feminism through an environmental lens, while global feminists take on the issues of the world instead of at a localized level. Lesbian feminists seek to eradicate oppression based on gender and sexuality, and women of color feminists seek to end oppression based on race and gender. These are just a few examples of the different ways in which feminists categorize themselves. However, just as the MBTI can be limiting in that it may lead students to explore and develop only their more dominant traits, so can labeling oneself as a specific kind of feminism. It is important to remember that all types of feminism have at their core the eradication of inequality

and the promotion of social justice. Understanding where one's own values lie and how one relates to power structures within society is crucial to practicing effective activism and creating important social networks. However, just as the personalities of individuals are not stagnant throughout their lifetime, neither are one's goals and skills. Although one may identify as a radical feminist at some point, one is not locked into that role for the remainder of one's life. Similarly, while labeling oneself as a specific type of feminist may be helpful, it is important to recognize the limitations of labels. For instance, identifying one's own practices as "second wave" or "third wave" in nature may help pinpoint the style of the activism, but it is vital that we always be mindful that ultimately, feminists have the same goals in mind.

Though I have explained all of these strategies individually, there is a way to put them together as an overall classroom tactic. In an ideal setting, I would start off the semester by administering the MBTI to the students in my classroom. After teaching them about their various personality types, they would be arranged into groups according to different personality types. This is important, I believe, because it gives them the opportunity to work in a situation that reflects real life; rather than choosing groups based on friends in the classroom, students would work in groups chosen by an executive director (the instructor) according to the different skills they offered. As an additional assessment, the students would be required to make an inventory of their individual talents and interests. The purpose of doing this is to make them consciously aware of the nonmaterial resources they bring as individuals to an action project. Self awareness is a necessary first step before diving into activism.

After students have a strong handle on their unique personality and communication styles and individual talents and gifts, they are more equipped to move on to the process of "solution-based reading." What this process involves is finding an article, preferably for students in a

collegiate setting, which engages students at a local level, whether it is from the university's student-led paper or from the city press. For instance, over the past year, the university ran an article about students being required to have mandatory health insurance. Part of the debate was whether or not to include birth control and abortion in the university sponsored insurance. Using this article as a focus for starting solution-based reading, students would first read the article through a feminist lens, asking critical questions about who this issue affects and the possible consequences of failing to include an element of reproductive choice and freedom in the university sponsored insurance. Once students are able to locate the target audience and articulate clearly the needs of that audience, the next step is to think creatively about how to make other students aware of the need for choice on a public campus and how to alleviate the problem of denying reproductive freedom to female students. It is my assertion that the kind of solutions students develop should and would be based on their individual personality and communication styles and their unique talents and goals.

Students should be taken through the brainstorming process, wherein the issue at hand (in this case, the exclusion of reproductive freedom in the university mandated health insurance) is placed at the center of a web diagram, and the eight dimensions measured by the MBTI are branches that lead from the center of the web. For instance, what solutions arise from individuals who rank higher in the categories of extroversion and intuition, and how do they differ from employing strategies from students who are high on the judging/thinking scales? A person who is a dominant type EI would, for example, most likely be better at going out and talking to women regarding their feelings about having their reproductive choices limited and produce some kind of report or article, while an individual who is a high JT would be more likely to desire to look at the policy produced by the university and go through in a linear fashion

to locate flaws in the argument that deny students' basic rights. Thus, instead of forcing students who are, for example, introverted to go out and engage in a situation that would make them uncomfortable to the point of possible withdrawal from the project, students are thus able to tailor activism to their individual working styles. A similar process should be employed for students' talents and skills. Then, after choosing a particular project, students should be led through the progression of finding a community partner to help them sponsor their work, what necessary bureaucratic steps might they have to pass through, what kinds of material resources they will have to locate, etc. before starting their project.

Another way that this process might play out is as an initial step proceeding service learning as a group activity. The students would be in groups according to different personality types, and after reaching the point in solution based reading where the problem is located, the instructor would give assign each group an action project. For instance, I, as an instructor, would give the project of partnering with Planned Parenthood to do a demonstration outside of the student union to protest the discriminatory policy. They would then decide what steps and resources are involved in putting together such a project. Using the strengths of their personality types and their individual talents, the students would then come up with a report on how the project was to be accomplished, how the tasks were to be divided, etc., thereby producing a logical plan of action before going out and engaging in a service learning activity or action project.

Through an increased awareness of one's own personality type and one's identity and location as a feminist, students are better able to understand their own role within the larger world of activism. Often, when considering activism, students are incapable of seeing beyond what may be construed as traditional feminist projects: working at a battered women's shelter,

volunteering at a rape crisis center, and supporting reproductive rights at one's local abortion clinic. While these projects (unfortunately) remain necessary in today's society, feminism's borders are so much broader than that. It would be a great misfortune for a student who is truly interested in social justice to feel as though feminist activist work was not for them because it did not include these three projects. One way instructors may help eradicate the notion that these projects are the only ones that matter would be to bring in a variety of guest speakers who do activist work in both traditional and nontraditional ways. Doing so would broaden students' misconception that an activist is a certain "kind" of person doing a specific "type" of work. As Baumgardner and Richards define it in *Grassroots*, an activist is:

> anyone who accesses the resources that he or she has for the benefit of the common good. With that definition, activism is available to anyone. By asserting that anyone can be an activist, we aren't trying to weaken or water down its power. We believe that activism is by definition profound, a big deal, revolutionary. However, we are challenging the notion that there is one type of person who is an activist – someone serious, rebellious, privileged, and unrealistically heroic. (xix)

Through teaching students to be aware of their feminist history but not limited by it, to think creatively when imagining solutions to issues in contemporary society, to build innovative partnerships, to access available resources, and to understand themselves as both individuals and feminists, we are providing them with the tools be effective activists. They become conscious of the world around them and how they might help make it a more just place to live using their own unique talents and skills. Gone are the perceptions that an activist is only someone who marches in the streets or stages sit-ins. While that is one way of performing activism and being an

activist, it is not the only way. By providing students with the tools to incorporate activism in their daily lives, we are encouraging them to be life-long activists.

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