

INTRODUCTION: RIGHTING FEMINISM

Sara Farris and Catherine Rottenberg

In the last few years, we have witnessed a perplexing new trend. Following an extended period in which few high-profile women were willing to identify publicly with feminism, all of a sudden - or so it appeared - many well-known women were loudly declaring themselves feminists, one after the other: from the former president of Barnard College, Debora Spar and the current UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, through internationally popular music celebrities Miley Cyrus and Beyoncé to right-wing populists like Marine Le Pen in France.¹ Indeed, Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign was strongly endorsed by liberal feminist organisations, and marked one of the high points of a resurgent feminist agenda in the United States with resonances across the western world. Despite her ultimate defeat, Clinton was nevertheless the first woman in US history to be nominated as a presidential candidate by a major national party. Feminism, it seemed, had finally become legitimate in the popular imagination in ways that it simply never had been before.

These public feminist declarations were not the only ways in which a revived feminist discourse began circulating, however. Rather, since 2012 - in both the anglophone world as well as in the west more generally - there has been a virtual explosion of feminist discussion in both popular and mainstream media: from internationally bestselling books, through widely read articles in the mainstream print media to popular television shows. These discussions, framed *as inspired by feminism*, have been diverse and occasionally contentious, including, for example, how egg-freezing technologies could potentially render talk of women's biological clock anachronistic and whether the casual 'hook-up' culture among women undergraduates on university and college campuses should be considered part of feminism's emancipatory legacy.²

One particularly influential site for the dissemination of this popular feminism has been a new form of feminist manifesto. Two of these - former Princeton University professor Anne-Marie Slaughter's 'Why Women Still Can't Have It All', and Facebook's chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg's best-selling *Lean in: Women, Work and the Will to Lead* (2013) - might well be said to have initiated the trend of high-power women publicly 'coming out' as feminists, while serving as a springboard for reenergised feminist debates in the Anglo-American world, mostly around the question of why well-educated middle-class women are still struggling to cultivate careers and raise children at the same time. The success of these manifestos has, in turn, more recently stimulated a publication boom of advice-oriented memoirs and 'having it all' self-help guides for women. In the last two years alone, former Fox anchorwoman Megyn Kelly's *Settle for More*, Ivanka Trump's *Women Who Work*, and

1. Asked if she identifies herself as a feminist, Le Pen said that she could consider herself as such to the extent that she defends women's rights, which are threatened by Islam. F. Scrinzi, 'A new French National Front?', forthcoming.

2. See Angela McRobbie, 'Notes on the Perfect', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 30.83, 2015, pp3-20; Catherine Rottenberg, 'Neoliberal Feminism and the Future of Human Capital' *Signs* 42.2, 2017, pp329-348; Rosalind Gill and Shani Orgad 'The Confidence Cult[ure]', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 30.86, 2015, pp324-344.

Anne-Marie Slaughters' book *Unfinished Business* have appeared on the literary scene in the US and have quickly become bestsellers, selling millions of copies.

There are two particularly striking aspects of this slew of feminist-inspired books and articles, which, we suggest, require some conceptual unpacking. First, the vast majority of these texts, in one way or another, hold up the notion of work-family balance as a progressive feminist goal. Indeed, 'balance' has been incorporated into the social imagination as a cultural good, helping to engender a new model of emancipated womanhood: a professional woman able to balance a successful career with a satisfying family life.³ Second, the widespread invocation of balance has gone hand in hand with the disappearance of key terms that had traditionally been inseparable from public feminist discussions, namely, equal rights, liberation, and social justice. In their stead, a new feminist vocabulary, one that includes notions such as happiness, responsibility, and lean in, have appeared with increasing frequency.

Simultaneously, in Europe, right-wing nationalist parties, such as the French National Front, the Dutch Party for Freedom and the Italian Northern League, have embraced and utilised gender parity to further a racist, anti-immigrant agenda. Furthermore, throughout the 2000s, internationally renowned feminists as well as women in gender equality state agencies (or femocrats) have given rise to a heterogeneous anti-Islam feminist front, which presents sexism and patriarchy as the nearly exclusive domains of the Muslim Other. One has only to think of French feminist philosopher Élisabeth Badinter and ministry for gender parity Najat Vallaud Belkacem, Dutch feminist politician Ayan Hirsi Ali and second wave feminist icon Cisca Dresselhuys, or the famous Italian 'occasional feminist' Oriana Fallaci,⁴ all of whom have denounced Muslim communities as exceptionally sexist, contrasting them to western countries, which are presented as sites of 'superior' gender relations.⁵

It is precisely in the context of this contemporary landscape that this themed issue intervenes and queries what appears to be the 'righting of feminism'. A complex new constellation has emerged in which not only is being a feminist a mark of pride and source of cultural capital, but the feminist project has also increasingly been linked with non-emancipatory agendas, such as neoliberalism and right-wing xenophobic politics. Yet, for us, 'righting feminism' connotes a profound over-determination, since it refers not only to feminism's rightward turn, but also to the way in which rights language, namely, women's rights, have been mobilised to advance non-emancipatory goals. However, the notion of righting feminism also - and crucially - connotes a political desire and aspiration to make feminism 'right' again by reclaiming its emancipatory potential.

THE RIGHTING OF FEMINISM: THE DEBATE

How did we arrive at this point? How can we account for the convergence

3. Catherine Rottenberg, 'Happiness and the liberal imagination: How superwoman became balanced', *Feminist Studies*, 40.1, 2014, pp144-169.

4. Oriana Fallaci did not define herself a feminist, although she was associated with liberal feminism due to her endorsement of battles for abortion and divorce in the 1970s.

5. Sara R. Farris, *In the Name of Women's Rights. The Rise of Femonationalism*, Durham, Duke University Press 2017. Hereafter *In the Name of Women's Rights*.

between feminism and neoliberalism or right-wing politics? A little over a decade ago, feminist scholars began to identify and interrogate the puzzling entanglement between feminist, neoliberal and neo-conservative and even right-wing issues. In her 2005 germinal article, Hester Eisenstein, for instance, asked the provocative question of whether feminism has entered into a dangerous liaison with capitalism. More specifically, she queried whether the contemporary women's movement has actually facilitated the growth and spread of corporate globalisation.⁶ Eisenstein analysed three particular developments that she regarded as pivotal to the 'righting' of feminism: the incorporation of women into waged work which vindicated second-wave feminism's focus upon work as the ultimate goal for women's emancipation; international corporations' and development agencies' increasing concentration on women in developing countries as the key to exit poverty; and the instrumentalisation of feminist ideas by conservative US governments in their war on terror, which initiated the subsequent trend of right-wing parties mobilising 'gender equality' against Muslims and immigrants across the West. In light of all of these developments, Eisenstein concluded that feminism in its twenty-first century incarnation has become a handmaiden of capitalism.

This argument was then taken up and rearticulated by Nancy Fraser in her well-known 2009 intervention in *New Left Review*. Partly building on Eisenstein, Fraser's article reconstructs the history of second-wave feminism, positing that feminism has not simply been coopted by neoliberalism but that there is some 'subterranean elective affinity between feminism and neoliberalism'.⁷ Fraser maintains that second-wave feminism's ultimate privileging of recognition (i.e identity claims) over redistribution (i.e economic justice) is responsible for the convergence of contemporary feminism with neoliberal capitalism. The foregoing of economic analyses, particularly by poststructuralist feminists, in other words, has strengthened the spirit of the neoliberal stage of capitalism. The current merging of feminism with neoliberalism is consequently understood as the legacy of second-wave feminism's myopic refusal to sustain a materialist critique. Not surprisingly, Fraser's provocative intervention spurred numerous responses, many of which were critical of Fraser's ascription of culpability.⁸ At the same time, many feminists understood that the invocation of feminism was no longer enough to qualify a movement or position as emancipatory or progressive.

Feminist scholars have continued to debate these issues, more recently turning their attention to the question of what neoliberal rationality - in Wendy Brown's words - might gain by invoking feminist themes. Angela McRobbie suggests that in the UK new neoliberal norms of middle-class aspirational life are currently being directed at women because women are ultimately seen as responsible for holding together family life.⁹ As a result of the entrenchment of neoliberalism in Britain alongside the steady divestment in social programs, the family, according to McRobbie, is currently being cast as a small business

6. Hester Eisenstein, 'A Dangerous Liaison? Feminism and Corporate Globalization', *Science and Society*, 69(3), pp487-518, p488.

7. Nancy Fraser, 'Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History', *New Left Review*, 56, 2009, pp97-117.

8. See Nanette Funk, 'Contra Fraser on Feminism and Neoliberalism', *Hypatia*, 28(1), 2013, pp179-196; Brenna Bhandar and Denise Ferreira Da Silva, 'White Feminist Fatigue Syndrome', *Critical Legal Thinking*, 2013 (available at: <http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/10/21/white-feminist-fatigue-syndrome/>); Özlem Aslan and Zeynep Gambetti, 'Provincializing Fraser's History: Feminism and Neoliberalism Revisited', *History of the Present*, 1(1), 2011, pp130-147.

9. See Angela McRobbie, 'Feminism, the Family and the New 'Mediated' Maternalism', *New Formations*, 80-81, 2013, pp119-137

in need of management while children are considered to be human capital. This, in turn, has the effect of responsabilising and entrepreneurialising domestic life and thus giving a more professional status to full-time mothers. Other authors have proposed that we are currently witnessing the rise of a neoliberal feminism,¹⁰ or the neoliberalisation of feminism,¹¹ which is exemplified in the way international corporations have embraced feminist themes, investing in women in order to colonise new markets in the Global South.

From a slightly different perspective, scholars have queried what right-wing, neo-conservative or anti-immigration political forces in Europe and in the US might have to gain from invoking feminism. Farris has coined the term 'femonationalism' to describe both the attempts of western European right-wing parties and neoliberals to advance xenophobic and racist politics through the touting of gender equality as well as the involvement of various well-known feminists and femocrats in the current framing of Islam as a quintessentially misogynistic religion and culture (*In the Name of Women's Rights*). Thus, for Farris, the entanglement of feminism with reactionary policies needs to be understood both as symptomatic of a certain western supremacist mind-set that foregrounds the non-Western subject as inherently inferior, and as the expression of specific political economic arrangements. In the US, Elizabeth Bernstein has described the emergence of 'carceral feminism' as the convergence of anti-sex-trafficking feminists' transmutation of gender justice into criminal justice and conservative Christians' deployment of a feminist-friendly rhetoric against sex work.¹² According to Bernstein, the compatibility of feminism with conservative religious groups on the theme of sex work as 'modern day slavery' has been possible as the result of two shifts taking place in each camp: 'the feminist shift from a focus on bad men inside the home to bad men outside the home, and the shift of a new generation of evangelical Christians from a focus on sexually improper women (as prior concerns with abortion suggest) to a focus on sexually dangerous men'.

These various analyses underscore that the righting of feminism has become a global phenomenon, even as they insist on the particularity and contingency of the context in which this righting occurs. Indeed, the increasingly widespread entanglement of feminist themes with profoundly anti-emancipatory narratives has become a cause of alarm for a growing number of scholars - feminists in particular - and this concern has, in turn, motivated us to interrogate the root causes while mapping out the contours and implications of these major developments. Some feminists have been so dismayed by the way in which the word feminism has been compromised that they have even questioned whether we need to give up the term altogether.¹³ Other feminists insist, instead, on the urgency of reclaiming the emancipatory roots of the feminist project while exposing faux-feminism for what it is.¹⁴ Scholars such as Elisabeth Prügl and Lynne Segal underscore the need to confront the inherent plurality of feminism and its inevitable imbrication with other political paradigms, such as socialism and liberalism.¹⁵ Angela

10. Catherine Rottenberg, 'The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism', *Cultural Studies* 28, 2014, pp418-437.

11. Elizabeth Prügl, 'Neoliberalising feminism', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 20, 4, (2015), 614-631, pp622.

12. Elizabeth Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007.

13. Nina Power, *One Dimensional Woman*, Ropley, Zero Books 2009.

14. Angela McRobbie, *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*, London, Sage 2009.

15. 'Neoliberalising Feminism'. Lynne Segal, *Making Trouble*, London, Verso 2017.

Davis, Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya and the other feminists behind the Women's Strike on March 8, 2017 have urged women to reject 'lean in feminism' as the feminism for the one percent and to work instead for a truly internationalist feminism that represents the 99 per cent and its struggles for social justice.¹⁶ Judith Butler offers yet another alternative, drawing as she does on the notion of precariousness, which describes a social and economic condition that cuts across identity claims. Precarity for Butler enables us to think about a coalitional politics that attempts to challenge the economic, social, political and cultural apparatuses through which the differential distribution of precarity is produced in the first place.¹⁷

This overview, brief and partial as it necessarily is, helps nevertheless to demonstrate the vibrancy of the debate that the imbrication of feminism with non-emancipatory projects has generated in recent years. In effect, the righting of feminism has helped to engender a reinvigorated feminist conversation, reviving or perhaps impassioning attempts by feminists from different currents to reclaim and reorient feminism towards a newly articulated vision of social justice, one that holds out the promise of the 'longest revolution'. The 'righting of feminism' thus also connotes potential ways of writing or rewriting feminism in this neoliberal and authoritarian age.

CO-OPTATIONS, CONVERGENCES AND INSTRUMENTALISATIONS?

As the previous section suggests, the last decade has witnessed a wealth of interventions, articles and discussions that attempt to account for the strange liaison between feminism and right-wing politics as well as neoliberalism. But while several scholars have written of 'co-optation' or the 'instrumentalisation' of feminism by neoliberal capitalism and nationalist right-wing agendas, we suggest that these concepts alone fail to capture the intricate and complex interactions between neoliberalism, right-wing politics and feminism, or the ways in which some women themselves are producing a new lexicon and imagery that can best be described as a new variant of feminism, either in terms of 'western-supremacist feminism' or 'neoliberal feminism'.¹⁸ In order to more fully understand these intersections, we believe that we need a more differentiated set of conceptual frameworks.

On the one hand, concerning the convergence between feminism and right-wing xenophobic politics, those feminists and femocrats - such as Badinter in France or Hirsi Ali in the Netherlands, or the various femocrats in several European countries who supported veil-bans and other 'pro-emancipation' measure for Muslim women - whose arguments *converge* with right-wing nationalist parties in anti-Islam campaigns cannot be understood as simply being 'instrumentalised' by these parties. In other words, while feminism - as the general notion of women's liberation from patriarchy - has certainly been opportunistically appropriated by right-wing political formations in their struggle against the non-western and Muslim male Other,

16. See article at: <https://www.viewpointmag.com/2017/02/03/beyond-lean-in-for-a-feminism-of-the-99-and-a-militant-international-strike-on-march-8/>

17. Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press 2015.

18. See for instance, Liz Fekete, 'Enlightened Fundamentalism? Immigration, Feminism and the Right'. *Race & Class*, 48, 2006, pp1-22.

19. See also Katherine M. Kirk and Semin Suvarieriol, 'Emancipating Migrant Women? Gendered Civic Integration in The Netherlands', *Social Politics*, 21(2), pp241-260.

those feminists and femocrats who have openly supported policies repressive of Muslim religious and social practices in the name of gender justice should not be considered as naïve political actors. Rather, they should be regarded as political subjects whose anti-Islam concerns are informed by specific theoretical paradigms and animated by determined motivations and goals. Indeed, we have shown elsewhere how some feminists and gender equality state agencies have supported and been actively involved in implementing programs that claim to help emancipate migrant and Muslim women, while confining them to work in the care and domestic sector for very low-wages.¹⁹ Thus, we witness a profound contradiction as feminists and femocrats urge Muslim and non-western migrant women to liberate themselves while channelling them towards the very sphere (domestic, low paying, and precarious jobs) from which the feminist movement had historically tried to liberate women. Such a contradiction is the result not of feminists and femocrats being 'used' by discriminatory, xenophobic politics but of a more complex history in which these feminists and femocrats themselves have been shaped by a western supremacist perspective, which intersects with the historical misrecognition and stigmatisation of social reproduction under capitalism. In other words, the (often unconscious) adoption by a range of European feminists of a westcentric attitude towards women from the Global South has resulted in them not only asserting non-western women's alleged backwardness and un-emancipated status. It also has also led them to overlook (when not to silence) the fact that these same non-western women end up doing all those jobs in the so-called social reproductive economy which neoliberalism has commodified and contributed to transform into highly racialised (and feminised) activities.

On the other hand, with respect to the convergence between feminism and neoliberalism, it is not merely that neoliberal capitalism has incorporated feminist language in order to further intensify capital accumulation - and that this incorporation was facilitated by feminists' abandonment of a materialist critique - but rather that neoliberalism as a political rationality has colonised more and more domains of our lives, shaping the way we think, behave, and desire. As a dominant regime of truth and value, neoliberal rationality construes and recasts every element of society on a contemporary business model with financialisation at its heart, and thus produces a new variant of feminism.

Yet, while neoliberal feminism can certainly be understood as simply another domain neoliberalism has colonised, we suggest that it simultaneously serves *particular* cultural purposes. First, through its concurrent mobilisation and evisceration of liberal discourse, neoliberal feminism hollows out the potential of mainstream liberal feminism to underscore the structural contradictions within liberal democracy (with its proclamation of universal rights and equality), and in this way further entrenches neoliberal rationality as well as a western imperialist logic. More frighteningly, however, this variant of feminism is helping to produce a particular kind of feminist subject.

Using key liberal terms, such as equality, opportunity, and free choice, while displacing and replacing their content, neoliberal feminism forges a feminist subject who is not only individualised but entrepreneurial in the sense that she is oriented towards optimising her resources through incessant calculation, personal initiative and innovation. Creative individual solutions are thus presented as feminist and progressive, while calibrating a felicitous work-family balance becomes her main task. Inequality between men and women is thus paradoxically acknowledged only to be disavowed, while the question of social justice is recast in personal, atomised terms.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, we suggest that neoliberalism may 'need' feminism to resolve - at least temporarily - one of its internal tensions in relation to gender. As an economic order, neoliberalism relies on reproduction and care work in order to reproduce and maintain human capital. On the other hand, as a political rationality - and in contrast to liberalism - neoliberalism has no lexicon that can recognise let alone value reproduction and care work. Everything is reduced to a cost-benefit metrics, even our political imagination. This is not only because human subjects are increasingly being converted into generic human capital (where gender is at least ostensibly disavowed) but also because the division of the public-private spheres - informing liberal thought and the traditional sexual division of labour - is being eroded through the conversion of everything into capital and the infiltration of a market rationality into all spheres of life, including the most private ones.

Neoliberal feminism thus operates, at least at the moment, as a kind of pushback to the total conversion of educated and upwardly mobile women into generic human capital. By paradoxically and counterintuitively maintaining reproduction as part of aspirational women's normative trajectory and positing *balance* as its normative frame and ultimate ideal, neoliberal feminism helps to ensure that all responsibility for reproduction falls squarely on the shoulder of individual women. Given the reality that, most often, women of colour, poor and immigrant women serve as the unacknowledged care-workers who enable professional women to strive towards 'balance' in their lives, neoliberal feminism is helping to produce and legitimise the exploitation of these 'other' female subjects while simultaneously disarticulating the very vocabulary with which to address these vast structural inequalities. Neoliberal feminism thus not only forsakes the majority of women by splitting female subjecthood, but it also facilitates the creation of new and intensified forms of racialised and class-stratified gender exploitation, which increasingly constitutes the invisible yet necessary infrastructure of our neoliberal order.

Finally, even though the rise of western supremacist feminism and neoliberal feminism are diverse phenomena, which must be analysed in the particular contexts in which they occur, we argue that by paying attention to the specific subjects they involve and the lexicon informing them, we can gain key insight into the ways in which feminism, as an emancipatory

promise, has come to converge with its 'inimical' Others in so many different forms. We believe that it is imperative to analyse these alignments not only in their concrete manifestations but also to understand the longer histories, trajectories and rationalities that have facilitated their occurrence.

INTRODUCING THE THEMED ISSUE

It is precisely the increasingly multifarious and complex processes by which the current feminist discourse is forsaking the vast majority of women across the globe, particularly through its disavowal of structural inequalities, that this themed issue attempts to identify and address. The 'Righting of Feminism,' whether understood as the emergence of a neoliberal feminism, femonationalism or as the endorsement of gender-equality by right-wing movements or multi-national corporations is a phenomenon about which the contributors are all deeply and profoundly concerned. While their theoretical commitments and conceptual perspective may differ, each article adds key insights and thus another piece of the larger puzzle of the how's and why's we are currently witnessing an enfolding of feminist themes into movements and rationalities that appear antithetical to such themes.

The issue, therefore, begins with Rosalind Gill and Shani Orgad's analysis of the new confidence cult(ure) - particularly in the US and the UK - which operates across diverse social domains and endlessly exhorts women work on themselves in order to cultivate self-confidence. Focusing specifically on the ways in which women are incited to build confidence as a path to success in the workplace, as mothers, and in sexual partnerships, the essay demonstrates how confidence operates as an individualising technology inculcating a self-regulating spirit, which locates both the source of problems and their solutions within women's own psyches and bodies. The cult of confidence must therefore be understood as integral to the emergence of a new form of feminist sensibility, which avows female injuries and insists on certain feminist ideals, such as the importance of self-care and empowerment as necessary to female success and empowerment. Yet, confidence culture's exhortations are simultaneously articulated in highly standardised terms, eliding differences between and among women, while rendering insecurity and lack of confidence as abject and abhorrent. In other words, by offering affective solutions to structural inequalities, confidence culture conjures up a subject who is neoliberal through and through and who paradoxically avows gender inequality only to disavow male domination.

While Gill and Orgad's article sheds new light on the ways in which the market rationality is engendering a new feminist subjectivity - or what some authors have called 'neoliberal feminism' the three articles that follow in this themed issue discuss the way in which feminism has become interwoven with development strategies in the Global South, revealing not only the global reach of neoliberalism but its 'termite-like' nature.²⁰ As the authors in this

20. Wendy Brown, *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, Cambridge, MIT Press 2015, p36.

issue show, many global initiatives are informed by the notion that women's empowerment brings about crucial progress and economic growth.

The first article in this series of three is by Hester Eisenstein, who builds upon her previous ground-breaking book *Feminism Seduced* and continues to investigate the mobilisation of feminism by corporate capitalism as well as the 'seductions' certain feminists have experienced vis-à-vis neoliberal policymakers' 'interest' in women.²¹ In her contribution here, Eisenstein reflects upon recent developments in the ways in which corporate capitalism deploys feminism to further its agenda. In particular, Eisenstein charts the growth of 'womenomics' and the rise of 'transnational business feminism' to examine initiatives such as the 10,000 Women Global Initiative by Goldman Sachs and the network of 'empowered mothers' set up by Unilever in the Global South. These programs all endorse the idea that women in business will be the key to end poverty. For Eisenstein, neoliberal capitalism's rhetoric of women's empowerment in the Global South is matched by an equally vicious but less rhetorically branded phenomenon in the Global North in which women's social reproductive work is increasingly overlooked, while the remnants of the welfare state that could help women to participate in production are further eroded.

The second article to reflect on feminism, neoliberalism and development is by Kalpana Wilson. Focusing particularly on India and the resurgence of population control, Wilson charts the disturbing ways in which racialised and poor women have been 'encouraged' to lower their fertility rates by offering them injectable and implantable contraceptives, which have detrimental consequences on women's health. Wilson demonstrates how interventions to control the birthrate in recent years have been effectively reframed in feminist terms of reproductive rights and choice for women, while effectively functioning as mechanisms to intensify women's labour and exploitation and their mobilisation for global capital. Wilson further reflects upon corporate capital's recent focus on the adolescent girl *qua* agent of development in the Global South as the final stage in the transition from liberal to neoliberal feminism. The article further connects these processes to the hegemony of the Hindu right and its incitement to gendered violence against minorities, while inviting us to reflect upon the concept of 'reproductive justice' and the multifarious ways in which it is resignified under neoliberal capitalism in the Global South.

Finally, Sydney Calkin examines the resurgence of feminist discourse from a development perspective and describes three new trends that have transformed the field of gender and development in recent years. The first is the increasing presence of corporations in global development initiatives, particularly as the private sector has become an increasingly important source of development funding. The second is the gendering of development governance, where gender now functions as a buzzword and working towards gender equality is conceived of as eminently 'good for business'. The third involves the resurgence of feminism at the level of popular culture, politics

21. Hester Eisenstein, *Feminism Seduced. How Global Elites Use Women's Labor and Ideas to Exploit the World*, New York, Paradigm Publications 2010.

and media. The end result of these concurrent transformations, the essay shows, has been the proliferation of public-private partnerships for women's empowerment and gender equality. Taking one concrete manifestation of the feminism-neoliberalism relationship, namely, the Girl Effect Accelerator initiative as her case study, Calkin revisits the co-option debate within feminist scholarship, arguing that co-option narratives tend to rely on nostalgic notions of feminism's past purity without taking into account the complexity of both neoliberalism as well as feminism as a movement. Drawing on Wendy Brown's notion of neoliberal rationality, Calkin then suggests that we must understand neoliberalism's concern with gender inequality as part of the conversion of more and more aspects of life into business enterprises, where neoliberalism thus re-writes gendered poverty as a failure of state-led development that can best (or only) be solved through the power of the private sector and profit motive. Indeed, neoliberalism, as a dominant regime of truth, imagines and construes poverty eradication as contiguous with innovation and entrepreneurship, and female consumers as untapped markets in which innovative technologies can flourish.

The last two articles in the themed issue reflect upon the way in which feminist themes have been taken up by right-wing and conservative political formations. Focusing upon new developments within the French far-right National Front, Francesca Scrinzi's contribution examines one of the most puzzling phenomena of the 'righting of feminism': namely, the new 'feminist' outlook of traditionally anti-feminist parties such as nationalist far-right parties across Europe. More specifically, she looks at the French National Front and the ways in which its new female president, Marine Le Pen, has resorted to themes of gender justice in order to mainstream her political formation. The article charts the history of the National Front, from Jean Marie Le Pen's harsh traditionalist gender ideology to Marine Le Pen's tactical opening the party up to issues such as abortion and women's waged work. Scrinzi's article analyses in depth the contradictions and ambivalences between Marine Le Pen's claims on gender parity and the reality of her political programme, which is still marked by rather traditionalist views on women's role. For instance, Le Pen does not oppose abortion and professional work, but at the same time she has made clear that real choice for women would be not to have an abortion and not to work if they so wish. Scrinzi also points to the classical nationalist roots of Le Pen's politics by demonstrating how the National Front advocates for higher (French) women's fertility rates while being silent on the sexual division of labour in households. In Scrinzi's analysis, the ambivalences that traverse the party's politics are the expression of the struggles between the most conservative Catholic fringes who support the party and those who want to take the party out of its historical isolation and into the mainstream.

Shifting to the US, Kimberly Pendleton examines the incorporation of feminist-inspired language into evangelical Christian anti-sex trafficking discourse. Pendleton discloses the particular ways in which anti-pornography

and abolitionist feminist perceptions of male and female sexuality have infiltrated religious campaigns against the sex industry. Focusing on John Eldridge's influential writing, the Seattle megachurch Mars Hill's colourful pastor Mark Driscoll as well as Mars Hill's anti-sex trafficking ministry and Unearthed, an evangelical production company, the essay tracks how certain influential evangelical men have decried sex work, conflating it with abuse, while invoking a reading of gendered dynamics power that draws on anti-porn feminists, such as Catharine MacKinnon. However, despite the ostensible concern with women who are often racialised and who are understood to be coerced into sex work, the true victims as well as perpetrators are men themselves. Thus, the concern of these evangelicals is ultimately with masculinity, which is conceived to be in crisis and in need of rehabilitation. Pendleton's essay not only reminds us that the feminist movement and feminist debates have never been monolithic but also underscores that the alignment between feminist themes and conservative movements has a long and particular history in the US.

These interventions are not meant to be comprehensive, but rather to offer new perspectives, frameworks and strategies for understanding at least some of the new manifestations of feminism in the contemporary cultural and political landscape. There is, of course, still enormous work to be done - not only in charting and analysing the various ways in which feminist themes have been enfolded into and have even been shaped by non-emancipatory political agendas across the globe, but also, and perhaps most importantly, to reflect upon and work to foster concrete political alternatives that frame feminism, once again, as a progressive, anti-neoliberal, anti-capitalist and anti-racist project. Ultimately, then, this is precisely our hope for and our reading of 'righting feminism'.

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