

In her book *Some Reflections on Marriage*, Englishwoman Mary Astell argues that God created men and women with **equally intelligent souls**.



1700

In Britain, the Bluestockings Society, an informal **discussion group**, is formed for intellectual women and invited men.



1750s

1734



The Swedish Civil Code grants certain rights to women, notably forbidding men to sell their **wife's property** without her consent.

1765



The **Daughters of Liberty** form in the US to protest against import duties and support American independence from Britain.

American women's rights activist Judith Sargent Murray asserts that women are **as intelligent as men** in her essay "On the Equality of the Sexes."



1790

In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, British writer Mary Wollstonecraft argues that women should be **entitled to an education**.



1792

In France, Suzanne Voilquin becomes editor of the first known **feminist working-class periodical**, *Tribune des femmes*.



1832

1791



In the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*, French political activist Olympe de Gouges argues that women should be given the **same citizenship rights as men**.

1830



In what is now northern Nigeria, Nana Asma'u trains a group of women, called *jajis*, to travel around the Sokoto Caliphate and **educate other women**.

The word "feminism" did not gain currency until the 1890s, but individual women were expressing feminist views long before. By the early 1700s, women in different parts of the world were defining and examining the unequal status of women and beginning to question whether this was natural and inevitable. Exploring their situation through writing and discussion, women, individually or collectively, began to voice their objection to women's subservient position and to express their wish for greater rights and equality with men.

From weakness to strength

In the early 18th century, women were largely regarded as naturally inferior to men on an intellectual, social, and cultural level. This was a

deep, long-held belief, reinforced by the teachings of the Christian Church, which defined women as the "weaker vessel." They were subject to their father's and, if married, their husband's control.

As the century wore on, social and technological changes began to have further profound influences on the lives of women. The growth of trade and industry created a burgeoning, aspirational middle class in which social roles were sharply defined by gender. The public sphere of work and politics was seen as uniquely male, while women were expected to remain in the private sphere of "home," a distinction that was to become increasingly entrenched.

Technology also transformed the printing industry, leading to an outpouring of journals, pamphlets,

novels, and poetry, all spreading information and new ideas. These were absorbed by privileged, educated women, some of whom, despite social restrictions, turned to writing, expressing feminist views through the printed word.

Some of the earliest feminist writings came out of Sweden in the mid-18th century. There, a relatively liberal approach to women's legal rights enabled intellectuals such as the publisher and journalist Margareta Momma and the poet Hedvig Nordenflycht to develop feminist themes in print.

Britain, though less liberal than Sweden, had seen the expression of recognizably feminist theories by the start of the 1700s, notably through the work of Mary Astell. Arguing that God had made women just as rational as men,

she daringly stated that women's socially inferior role was neither God-given nor inevitable.

By around 1750, in Britain and other European countries, groups of intellectual women were coming together in literary "salons." In these forums, women discussed literature and shared ideas, carving out a space for female experience, the sharing of ideas, and the fostering of women writers and thinkers.

New ideas and revolution

Two particular intellectual, cultural, and political developments in Europe and America in the 18th century helped to galvanize the growth and spread of feminism: the Enlightenment and revolutions in America and France. Philosophers of the Enlightenment, such as the Frenchmen Jean-Jacques Rousseau

and Denis Diderot, challenged the tyranny of societies based on inherited privileges of kings, nobles, and churches. They argued for liberty, equality, and the "rights of man," which, particularly for Rousseau, excluded women.

Women were, however, actively involved in the revolutions that won America its independence from Britain in 1783 and convulsed France from 1789. Amid the rallying cries of liberty and citizens' rights, women also began to demand their own rights. In America, Abigail Adams, the wife of the second US president, called for the founding fathers to "remember the ladies" in the revolutionary changes, while in France playwright and activist Olympe de Gouges published *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*, calling for

equal legal rights for women and men. Influenced by the French Revolution, the British writer Mary Wollstonecraft published *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, a landmark feminist treatise that identified domestic tyranny as the chief barrier preventing women from living independent lives and called for women to have access to education and work.

Although many of the most visible advocates of women's rights were from the privileged classes, by the early 19th century, working-class women in the US and the UK were becoming politically active, often within the newly forming labor movements. Feminist opinions were also being raised in parts of the Islamic world. Those voices would become much louder as the 19th century progressed. ■

In the UK, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels publish *The Communist Manifesto*, a political pamphlet that calls for the **liberation of men and women from capitalism**



1848

In the US, activist and abolitionist Sojourner Truth delivers a speech at the Women's Rights Convention in Ohio, demanding that the fight for equal rights includes **black women**



1851

In the UK, the Married Women's Property Act allows women to **own and control property**



1882

1849



Elizabeth Blackwell becomes the **first female doctor** to graduate from a medical school in the US.

1869



The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) in the US **condemns the 15th Amendment** granting African American men the right to vote **for not including women**.

Feminist history often describes the period from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century as that of "first-wave" feminism. During this time, a definite women's movement emerged as feminists worldwide analyzed aspects of their lives and aimed to change the institutions that oppressed them. Gradually women began to get together to demand equal rights—in law, education, employment, and politics. From about the 1840s in the US, and then in Britain, women's demands for rights were channeled into what became a broad-based and sometimes divided campaign to win the vote. However, feminism was never one unified movement. Different political approaches caused the emergence of a variety of often conflicting strands.

First-wave feminists campaigned on many fronts. In Britain, activists Caroline Norton and Barbara Bodichon orchestrated attacks on laws that kept women, particularly married women, in a subordinate role. Their efforts resulted in the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857—which forced men to prove a wife's adultery in court and allowed women to cite a husband's cruelty or desertion—followed by two married women's property acts, the second of which, in 1882, enabled married women to own property.

Breaking out of the home
Women also challenged the social restrictions that kept them in the domestic sphere of home and family. English feminists Harriet Taylor Mill and Elizabeth Blackwell argued that women should have

the same access as men to university training, the professions, and paid employment, and threw their energies into opening up greater opportunities for women.

The writings of the German political theorists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were an influence on socialist feminists, such as Clara Zetkin in Germany and Alexandra Kollontai in Russia. They viewed women's oppression as a class issue, arguing that the development of the family as an economic unit fundamental to capitalism forced women into a subordinate role and that only a socialist revolution would free them.

While middle-class women in Western countries protested against lives of enforced idleness, working-class women in mills and factories had different concerns.

Women are **granted the vote** in New Zealand, the first time that this right is won by women anywhere in the world.



1893

Inspired by the women's suffrage movement in the US, **Japanese feminist** Fusae Ichikawa forms the Women's Suffrage League.



1924

In Spain, Lucía Sánchez Saornil cofounds the anarchist organization **Mujeres Libres**, which aims to **empower and liberate** working-class women.



1936

1888



At a match factory in the UK, 1,400 **women go on strike** to protest against low pay and poor working conditions.

1903



British activist Emmeline Pankhurst forms the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), which militantly campaigns for **women's suffrage**

1929



In "A Room of One's Own", British writer Virginia Woolf attributes women's **underrepresentation in literature** to their lack of intellectual, social, and financial freedom.

They had always contributed to the family income, but industrialization had pulled them out of home-based activities into outside work with no protection from exploitation. Facing opposition from male trade unions, who saw women's work as a threat to their livelihoods, working-class women in the US and Britain took action, going on strike and forming women-only trade unions.

Race, sex, and the vote

Issues of race permeated first-wave feminism from the 19th century onward. Black feminists, such as the activist and former slave Sojourner Truth, experienced a double oppression on both gender and ethnic grounds. The abolitionist cause brought white and black women together, but divisions emerged during the latter part of the

century, particularly during the fight for the vote, when, in the US, women's suffrage was postponed in favor of votes for black men.

Despite the social taboos against women talking about sex, some pioneering feminists in Britain, Sweden, and elsewhere highlighted sex and reproduction as key areas in which women had little control. In Britain and the US, feminist campaigners argued against male control of women's reproductive rights and fought for access to birth control. Even more radical were those, such as the English social reformer Josephine Butler, who identified a sexual double standard within society, whereby sexual activity was condoned in men but not in women, highlighted by society's ambiguous attitude to prostitution.

From around the middle of the first-wave period, feminists in Britain and the US came together in a mass movement to achieve suffrage, or the right to vote. Strategies for achieving this right varied enormously, and in Britain the struggle became increasingly bitter and violent. Despite divisions among feminists, the campaign for suffrage dominated much of their activity up to World War I (1914–1918) and in its immediate aftermath.

By the 1920s, feminist ideas and campaigns had emerged in many countries across the world, including Japan, where feminists such as Fusae Ichikawa argued for a woman's right to be involved in politics. In the Arab world, too, particularly Egypt, Huda Sharaawi and other feminists had set up the first feminist organizations. ■

In France, Simone de Beauvoir publishes *The Second Sex*, which studies the **treatment of women** throughout history and how they are defined.

In *The Experience of Childbirth*, British activist Sheila Kitzinger argues that **childbirth should be an empowering experience** and not an over-medicalized process dictated by male doctors.

In New York, a radical feminist group called **Redstockings** disrupts a legislative **hearing on abortion** comprised of 14 men and one Catholic nun.

The US Supreme Court passes the **Roe v. Wade** ruling that deems abortion a fundamental constitutional right.

In her essay "The Laugh of Medusa," French author Hélène Cixous **identifies and champions an écriture féminine** (feminine writing) that is free from male constraints.

Inspired by the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi, scholars Madhu Kishwar and Ruth Vanita found the **Indian feminist magazine Manushi**.

1949

1962

1969

1973

1975

1978

1960

1963

1970

1971

1975

The **oral contraceptive pill** becomes available for purchase in the US.

The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan details the dissatisfaction among **American housewives** in the 1950s.

Artist Judy Chicago cofounds the **first feminist art program** in the US to showcase women's art and challenge gender inequalities in art.

In the UK, family care activist Erin Pizzey establishes the first **domestic violence shelter** for women.

British filmmaker Laura Mulvey develops the **"male gaze" theory**, stating that the visual arts and media depict women from a masculine perspective to please the male viewer.

A second, more radical wave of feminism flourished between the 1960s and the early '80s, influenced by ideas that had begun to develop after 1945. Seeing women's position as both different from and unequal to men, second-wave feminists analyzed every aspect of society, including sexuality, religion, and power, redefining them in relation to the oppression of women. Feminists developed ideas about how culture and society could be changed to liberate women. As new ideas formed, feminist political activism and campaigns intensified.

A key concept within second-wave feminism was the idea that women are not born but created—the product of social conditioning. First expressed by Simone de Beauvoir in 1949, this distinction

between biological sex and gender as a social construct had a huge impact on second-wave feminist thinking. Arguing that a woman's biology should not determine her life, feminist writers such as Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer described and challenged the image of idealized femininity imposed on women by upbringing, education, and psychology, urging them to challenge the stereotype.

Liberating personal politics

Second-wave feminism, often known as the Women's Liberation Movement (Women's Lib or WLM), developed in the context of the political activism of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements of the period. Its proponents saw feminism as a cause for liberation rather than simply a struggle for

equal rights. For them, women's personal experiences were political and reflected the power structures that kept women oppressed.

Radical feminists of this period, such as American writer and activist Kate Millett, defined patriarchy—the universal social and political system of male power over women—as the main source of women's oppression. Some feminists focused on the nuclear family as a key mechanism in preserving the hold of patriarchy, while others attacked the patriarchy and misogyny of the Christian Church, calling for a feminized form of religion.

Sex and violence

Second-wave feminists explored issues of sexuality more deeply than any feminists before. The American feminist Anne Koedt

argued in her essay "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" that it was men who had shaped attitudes toward and opinions about female sexuality because men defined women's sexual activity only in terms of their own desires. Her work, and the publication in 1976 of *The Hite Report*, a study of female sexuality, shattered received notions about women's sexuality by presenting a realistic picture of women's sexual behavior.

Reproductive rights and the ability of women to control their own fertility continued as feminist issues. The new contraceptive pill provided one answer, enabling women to enjoy sex without the fear of pregnancy. Acquiring it, though, was difficult, and feminists campaigned intensively for access to free, safe contraception and a

woman's right to legal abortion. Linked to these demands was the emergence of a women's health movement in the US and elsewhere, which called for women to gain control of their own health care.

Second-wave feminists also raised the political profile of rape and domestic violence, which men used, they argued, to control and intimidate women. From the late 1970s the American feminist Andrea Dworkin spearheaded an attack on pornography, arguing that it not only oppressed women but also incited violence toward them.

Battles old and new

Equal rights feminists continued the work of their first-wave sisters, focusing in particular on achieving equal pay for women. In Britain and Iceland, equal pay legislation,

in 1970 and 1976 respectively, followed working-class women's strike action. Closely linked to this was a global Wages for Housework Campaign, which began in Italy in 1972 and drew attention to women's unpaid labor as mothers and homemakers. Feminists argued that women's work for the home and family should be paid.

By the late 1970s, feminists were applying their ideas to many areas of society, arguing that all issues, even overeating, were feminist issues. Historians such as British-born Sheila Rowbotham highlighted the exclusion of women from history; artists such as the American Judy Chicago worked to create specifically feminist art, while British academic Laura Mulvey and others explored misogyny within film. ■

The American feminist poet Adrienne Rich argues in her essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" that **heterosexuality is imposed on women** by men.



1980

Sex-positive feminists Ellen Willis and Gayle Rubin organize the Barnard Conference on Sexuality in New York City, angering antipornography feminists.



1982

American writer Alice Walker develops the term "womanist" to describe a **black feminist** or feminist of color.



1983

1981



African American feminist and activist Angela Davis publishes *Women, Race, & Class*, in which she argues that **feminism has always been afflicted by racism**.

1982



In the UK, 30,000 **women join hands** around the Greenham Common airbase to protest against nuclear weapons at the site.

In the 1980s, mainstream politics in both the US and the UK shifted to the right, as the governments of US president Ronald Reagan and British prime minister Margaret Thatcher embraced free-market capitalism, an ideology less conducive to radical activism than the thinking that was prevalent in the 1960s and '70s. Some feminists challenged this, including thousands of women who protested against the installation of nuclear weapons at Greenham Common, a military airbase in the UK. However, others started to re-examine feminism itself, especially in the context of sexuality, race, and gender. Women of color analyzed how white-dominated feminism had ignored the realities of racial difference. At the same time,

women's voices from around the world began to be incorporated into the body of feminist ideas.

At the beginning of the 1980s, American feminist Adrienne Rich challenged what she defined as "compulsory heterosexuality," which, she asserted, was a powerful tool used by patriarchy and capitalism to control women. She urged all feminists to reject men and heterosexual sexuality as a political statement.

By the end of the decade, another key feminist idea, queer theory, was emerging. Continuing into the 1990s and beyond, queer theory questioned the ideology that viewed heterosexuality as the norm and superior to same-sex sexuality. Building on feminist theories about gender, queer theorists suggested that sexuality

is also socially constructed and they encouraged the exploration of sexual identity.

Race and imperialism

For feminists of color, the subject of race, especially racism within feminism, had become a major concern. In her book *Women, Race, & Class*, the activist and academic Angela Davis highlighted the racism and classism within the women's suffrage movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and suggested that early feminism reflected the interests of white middle-class women. Her work stimulated a discussion within feminism about the needs and concerns of women of color and how their history and culture should be represented and voiced, with feminists such as bell

Guerrilla Girls, an anonymous group of feminist artists, forms in New York City to fight **sexism and racism in the art world**.



1985

Sisters in Islam (SIS) is formed in Malaysia, committed to promoting the **rights of Muslim women** based on the principles of equality and freedom.



1988

1984



Feminist Susie Bright cofounds *On Our Backs*, the first **lesbian erotica magazine** in the US.

1986



"Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," an essay by Indian-born writer Chandra Talpade Mohanty, **challenges Western feminist views** on women in the developing world.

1989



US civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw coins the term "**intersectionality**" to describe how different types of discrimination are interconnected and interact.

hooks putting forward strategies to make feminism accessible to women of all classes and ethnicities.

Some black feminists, such as the writers Alice Walker and Maya Angelou, suggested that black women should use the word "womanism" as an alternative to "feminism," which to them reflected the culture of privileged white women. Other feminists, such as the cultural scholar Gloria Anzaldúa, who grew up on the Texas-Mexico border, addressed the situation of women in anticolonial movements, arguing that they were ignored by mainstream feminism.

From these perspectives emerged a specifically anticolonial strand of feminism, which analyzed indigenous women's experiences in liberation movements and drew

attention to cultural patriarchal practices forced on women, such as female genital cutting (FGC) and polygamy. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, an Indian academic, took this further by advocating a "postcolonial" feminism that found Western feminists' image of "third-world women" as poorly educated victims stereotypical and over simplistic.

Joined-up oppression

At the end of the 1980s, African American feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the idea of "intersectionality," or intersectional thinking. This analytical tool identified the ways in which class, race, and gender interact and create multiple oppressions, particularly for the most marginalized women in society, such as indigenous women

and women of color. Developed from the exploration of black women's experiences of domestic violence, intersectionality provided a new theoretical dimension to feminist thought.

Feminist perspectives were applied to an increasing number of issues. The American activist Barbara Ehrenreich highlighted the low pay and the lack of job opportunities (the "pink-collar ghetto") for women, while the Guerilla Girls, an all-woman collective, burst onto the New York art scene, using dramatic tactics to protest the under-representation of women artists in the art world. Feminist ideas also continued to spread worldwide, with Muslim women opposing forced marriage and women in China campaigning for women's studies programs. ■

250 INTRODUCTION

In her book, *Gender Trouble*, American gender theorist Judith Butler asserts that gender is **culturally and socially constructed**

1990



British feminist writer Naomi Wolf argues in her book *The Beauty Myth* that standardized **ideals of beauty are used to oppress women**

1990



In the US, feminist writer Rebecca Walker **uses the term "third wave"** in an article for *Ms.* magazine, heralding a new era for feminism.

1992



The **Riot Grrrl movement** emerges in Washington state to tackle sexism in the punk music scene.

1991



The United Nations declares FGC to be a **form of violence against women**.

1993



At the end of the 1980s, some feminists, such as Susan Faludi in the US, began to notice a powerful backlash against feminism. Antifeminists argued that women had gained equal opportunities in education and employment and were starting to emasculate men. There was much media talk of a postfeminist era, in which women no longer needed to strive for equality.

Many American feminists disagreed with this view, among them Rebecca Walker, Jennifer Baumgardner, and Amy Richards. They did not believe equality for women had been achieved, or that it was feminism's only goal. They recognized the achievements of second-wave feminism, and wished to build upon them, but argued that feminism also needed to adapt to

changing circumstances, in particular the rise of the right-wing philosophy of neoliberalism. A key catalyst in the development of this new phase of feminism was the appointment of Judge Clarence Thomas to the US Supreme Court despite the fact that the attorney Anita Hill had accused him of sexual harassment—claims that he denied. In response to what she saw as blatant misogyny, the feminist writer Rebecca Walker declared her support for a new kind of feminism in "Becoming the third wave," an article she wrote for *Ms.* magazine.

A punk wave

For many young feminists born in the late 1960s and '70s, the Riot Grrrl movement of the early 1990s marked the start of the third wave. Combining feminist consciousness

and punk music, "riot grrrls" stressed personal empowerment. They projected a powerful image, dressed as they pleased, reclaimed words such as "slut" and "bitch," and explored issues such as rape, domestic abuse, sexuality, and patriarchy through music and zines (handmade magazines). They celebrated female culture and friendships.

How women presented themselves was a matter of fierce debate among feminists during this period, especially between second-wave feminists and members of the new third wave. American feminist Ariel Levy coined the phrase "raunch culture" to describe the overtly sexual behavior adopted by some young women as a protest against what they saw as the prudishness of

A NEW WAVE EMERGES 251

American playwright Eve Ensler writes *The vagina Monologues*, exploring **sexual experiences, body image, and violence against women**.

1994



Japanese activist Emi Koyama **popularizes the term trans feminism** in her essay "The Transfeminist Manifesto."

2000



African American feminist Loretta Ross **cofounds Sister Song** to help women of color claim equal rights to sexual autonomy and reproductive justice.

1997



Critical of the way some young feminists **embrace sexual objectification**, Ariel Levy publishes *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture*.

2005



women were being forced to direct their energies toward an impossible ideal by commercial forces imposed by men.

Issues and campaigns

Third-wave feminism was also characterized by new and sometimes conflicting theories about sex, gender, and identity. In 1990, American feminist philosopher Judith Butler published *Gender Trouble*, in which she put forward the theory that gender is continually acted out according to cultural expectations, creating the illusion of stable gender identities. She saw gender as fluid, not binary. At the same time, the issue of bisexuality claimed attention, as bisexuals complained of being treated with hostility by both heterosexual and lesbian women.

second-wave feminism exemplified by anti-pornography campaigners such as Andrea Dworkin. Levy believed that this played directly into the hands of misogynist culture and reinforced women's subordination. Other feminists disagreed with such views and called for a more sex-positive approach, arguing that women had a right to sexual freedom and pleasure. From this came a movement in support of feminist-created pornography.

Building on well-established feminist ideas about idealized femininity, American writer Naomi Wolf put forward her theory of the "beauty myth." She argued that women were being seriously harmed by images of idealized beauty peddled by marketing and modeling agencies. In her view,

While many Western feminists debated issues of gender, others continued to campaign against actions that oppressed women, drawing attention to issues that had been sidelined or covered up, such as the inferior provision of health care to poor women, especially women of color and indigenous women, in the US. Elsewhere in the world, the Ghanaian-British activist Etha Dorkenoo campaigned against female genital cutting (FGC), which was widely carried out on young women in Africa, and Iraqi-born Zainab Salbi exposed the existence of "rape camps," established by the Serbian regime in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Bosnian war. Salbi went on to found Women International to support rape survivors in war zones. ■

Canadian students **initiate SlutWalk**, a protest march in which women dress in sexually provocative clothing in order to protest against victim blaming.

British feminist Laura Bates founds the **Everyday Sexism Project**, an online forum where women and girls report their experiences of harassment.

In her book *Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?* American anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod challenges the view that **Islam is inherently anti-women**.

American disability feminist Rosemarie Garland-Thomson publishes "Building a World with Disability in It," an article in which she identifies the **double discrimination** faced by disabled women.

Why I am Not a Feminist: A Feminist Manifesto, a **critique of fourth-wave feminism**, is published by American writer and activist, Jessa Crispin.

Women are granted the **right to drive** in Saudi Arabia, the last country in the world to allow them to do so.

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2017

2018

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2017

2018

British journalist Laune Penny **denounces career feminism** as a false route to women's liberation in her book *Meat Market: Female Flesh Under Capitalism*.

In an online talk in London, Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie advises "**We should all be feminists**."

Chief operating officer of Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg publishes *Lean In*, in which she urges women to **take control of their careers**.

#BringBackOurGirls is set up to campaign for the release of schoolgirls kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria.

American actor Alyssa Milano **posts #MeToo** on **Twitter**, encouraging women to post their experiences of sexual abuse and harassment.

Feminism was re-energized in the second decade of the 21st century. Powerful debates around the gender pay gap, and protest marches following the election of US president Donald Trump in 2016 proved that feminism was alive and kicking. Women, many of them millennials, threw themselves into the struggle once more, making full use of social media for publicity and networking.

The fourth wave

By 2012, a fourth wave of feminism was underway. The young women driving it were living in societies where the language of feminism was already well established, but the gender equality they expected did not match their experience and they took to social media and

blogging to say so. The proliferation of feminist websites and blogs enabled ideas to spread rapidly. In 2012, British feminist Laura Bates set up the Everyday Sexism Project, an online forum where women could share their daily experiences of sexism. Feminists also turned to "hashtag activism" via Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites to disseminate information and raise awareness of campaigns such as #BringBackOurGirls, demanding the release of schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria. In 2017 and 2018, the #MeToo and Time's Up movements named and shamed perpetrators of sexual abuse in Hollywood and many other areas of culture, business, and industry. While younger feminists focused on exposing instances of sexism and sexual abuse on social media,

some older women began to question what feminism should mean in the modern age. The British writer and commentator Caitlin Moran and the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie argued that in the 21st century feminism is simply common sense. All women and all men should be feminists, they said.

Old issues and inequalities

While some women were proposing a new kind of feminism that favored cooperation between the sexes, it was apparent that age-old problems of double standards and victim blaming were still flourishing. In 2011, when a police officer in Canada advised female students to avoid dressing and behaving like "sluts" if they did not want to be raped, Canadian feminists staged the first

SlutWalk, dressing in sexually provocative outfits to protest against the tendency of courts, police, and others to blame rape on the appearance or behavior of the victims. Similar SlutWalks sprang up in cities across the world. Feminists in Latin America and Canada campaigned against the murder of indigenous women, introducing the term "femicide" to describe these murders of women by men. They argued that such murders are not isolated incidents as previously maintained, but an expression of patriarchal aggression. The battle for gender equality continued, particularly in areas of the world where women's rights are still limited. The dangers many women still face for campaigning for equal rights were highlighted in 2012 when Pakistani activist Malala

Yousafzai, then aged 15, was shot in the head on her school bus by a Taliban gunman after writing an anti-Taliban blog. Yousafzai survived the shooting and went on to fight for girls' education worldwide. In 2018, after nearly 30 years of campaigning, women in Saudi Arabia—the only country where women were still banned from driving—won the right to drive. Meanwhile, in the West, feminists engaged in renewed protest against the continuing gender pay gap, challenging the prevailing view that women had already achieved equal pay. Feminists highlighted not just pay inequalities between men and women, but also among white women and women of color. Other women, such as Facebook's chief operating officer

Sheryl Sandberg urged women in the workplace to "lean in" and seize control if they want to get to the top.

New voices

The inclusiveness of feminism also came under the spotlight. Building on ideas first put forward in the late 1980s, American writer Rosemarie Garland-Thomson argued that disabled women had been excluded from feminist discourse. At the same time, in the ongoing struggle for trans women's rights, trans feminists such as American activist Julia Serano lobbied for trans women to become an integral part of the women's movement. Such initiatives from a variety of social groups have the potential to broaden the scope of the next wave of feminism into a movement for much wider social change. ■