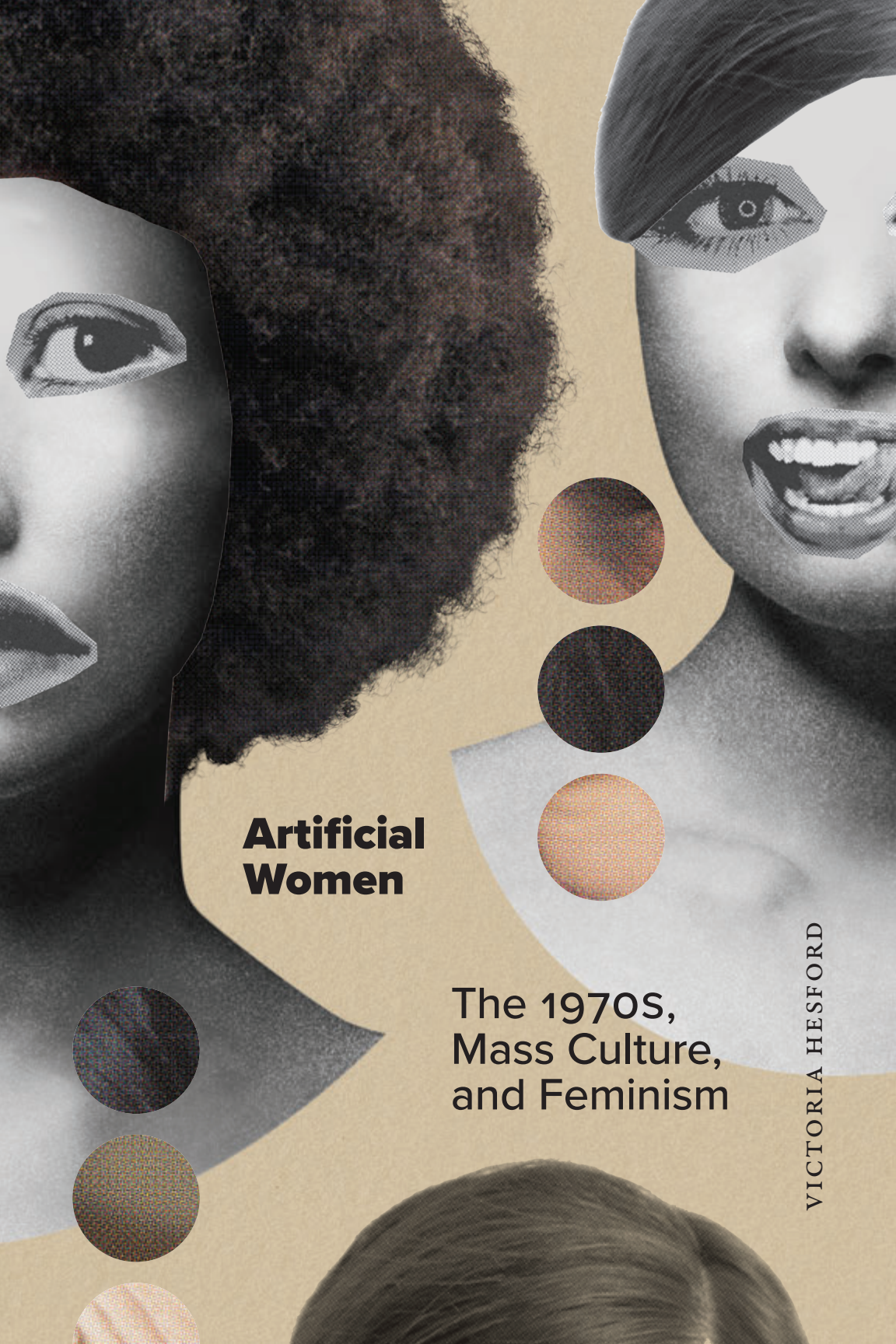


Artificial Women

The 1970s, Mass Culture, and Feminism

VICTORIA HESFORD

Artificial Women



A *CAMERA OBSCURA* BOOK

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Contents

Acknowledgments vii

Introduction. Making Women: The Cinematic Feminist 1970s 1

1. The Political Is Not Personal: The Sitcom and Women's Liberation 29

2. Gesture, Play, and Revolt: The New Women's Cinema 63

3. Sex and the End of Man: Andy Warhol's *Women in Revolt* 103

4. Racialization and the Ends of Woman: From *Foxy Brown* to *The Stepford Wives* 141

Epilogue. A Whole Lot of Woman 181

Notes 195
Bibliography 221
Index 233

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Introduction

Making Women

The Cinematic Feminist 1970s

Women are made, not born. This paraphrase of Simone de Beauvoir's famous sentence—"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman"—refers, on one hand, to the idea that "women" operates as a social destiny "imposed on, and taken up or lived out by, a certain group of human beings."[1] This idea was certainly one feminists in the 1960s and 1970s took up as their battle cry: For women to be free and autonomous human beings required the rejection of "sex roles" and the transformation, even destruction, of the social relations and institutions that made them. On the other hand, that women are made, not born also refers to the generative possibilities of *making*—to the idea that, by the late twentieth century, becoming a woman also entailed the cultural and technological manufacturing of "women." As a key mechanism of capital, manufacturing refers to the transformation of raw materials into finished goods on a mass scale. To manufacture is also to construct, to assemble, to form, to fashion; and it is to invoke the idea of the false, the made-up, the fabricated. To think of women

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as manufactured is to draw on all these scales of meaning. By the early 1970s, that women are made, not born, was a contested idea *and* a pervasive reality. The evidence for both was everywhere—in the media, medicine, law, on the streets, and in political discourse. "Women" operated formally as a product of, and as a generative mode of becoming within, the artificiality and contingency of a technologically enabled and mediated world.

Artificiality is a key concept for this book. Understood as creative and generative of new collations or mixtures of technology, social codes, and cultural genres, artificiality underscored 1970s culture and provided the means for the transformation or realignment of people's material existence. As Shelton Waldrep argues, the reconstitution of the self "as something to be performed—in all the vicissitudes of gender, sexuality, race, region, and ethnicity this would involve—is a paradigmatic aspect of understanding how the seventies functioned."[2] The performative aspect of 1970s culture was also explicitly understood in denaturalized terms, leading to a knowing and self-reflexive mixing of genres and forms in different expressions of subcultural and mainstream styles of collectivity. From fashion to music to film, 1970s culture exhibited a showy ostentatiousness that reveled in its artificiality. The extravagance of a feminized masculinity in glam rock, for example, invited its fans to take a knowing pleasure in the performer's code-switching while never asking them to believe in its realness. Blaxploitation and sexploitation films similarly trafficked in racial and gender stereotypes as hypervisual and mediated forms of identity, while simultaneously relying on their audience's intertextual knowledge of mass culture for their carnivalesque fantasies of gender and race relations in the United States to be read as such.

Artificiality as a generative means of transformation or realignment was also integral to the politics of the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, despite their valorization of authenticity as the counter-ideal to the powerful bureaucracies of state and corporate power. While a directness of address and a desire to transform "modern complexity" into "issues that can be understood and felt close up by every human being" were common to all the protest movements of the era, these movements also practiced a prefigurative, experimental politics that drew on imagined scenarios of revolt and liberation often taken from or made possible by mass culture.[3] Women's liberation's most famous protest was in and against the televised scenes of competitive femininity in the 1968 Miss America Pageant. Other women's liberation protest actions, like the sit-in at the *Ladies Home Journal* offices in 1970, also targeted mass cultural sites as venues for the production and dissemination of normative ideas of women, while the imagined scenes and figures of rebellion and liberation in the manifestos and position papers of the movement were often shaped by the generic

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conventions of mass culture. In the 1970 position paper "Woman-Identified-Woman," for example, the Radicalesbians imagined the liberation of all women from the constraints of male-identified sexuality in quite explicitly melodramatic terms—more particularly in the terms of lesbian pulp fiction, albeit this time with a happy ending. In the story of liberation told by the Radicalesbians, the lesbian's psychic pain and social abjection do not end in death and defeat but in the opening up—on the "other side of her journey through the night"—of a future full of "the real love of self and of all women."[4] Here, the discovery of the lesbian's true, authentic identity depends on an active transformation of self—one imagined through the conventions of mass-marketed melodrama and dependent on a belief that one could perform into being a new way of living and a new self.

Artificial Women starts from the premise that women are made, not born. It investigates the making—and unmaking—of women in the mass cultural response to the feminisms of the 1970s, and asks how did the contestation of women as social destiny by 1970s feminism reappear in the generic mutations and formal and performative experiments of 1970s mass culture; and what new assemblages or fabrications of women were formed—and to what ends? To answer these questions, I focus on three domains of interaction between 1970s feminism and mass culture: media (television and film), performance, and genre. More specifically, I examine how television, as a highly self-referential medium in the 1970s, produced new scenarios and figurations of "women" as a direct response to the political challenges of 1970s feminism. I also look at how nonrealist performance in film, especially parody and hyperbole, became a dominant mode of troubling and remaking "women" as social destiny in the 1970s; and finally, I explore how the "generic instability" of 1970s popular and mainstream culture, in response to the protest movements of the era, can be read as evidence of the contamination and destabilization of the gender binary more generally in 1970s culture.[5] More broadly, my aim is to demonstrate how the complex interaction between mass culture and feminism in the 1970s contributed to a generative reordering and remaking of women while also highlighting the complex imbrication of gender and race in technology, capital, social codes, and cultural forms. Gender as something you do, that is enabled and transformed by technology and integrated into transnational processes of capital and cultural exchange, was inherent to the politics and culture of the 1970s. The feminisms of the era were forged in this crucible, and it is my hope that *Artificial Women* will add another historical frame for the pluralization of the history of 1970s feminism within the context of a vibrant and wide-ranging feminist, trans, and queer "return" to the culture and politics of the feminist 1970s.

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DEBATES ABOUT WHO are the real women and what makes a woman a woman have underscored the history of feminism since its emergence as a distinct form of political rhetoric and protest in the first decades of the twentieth century.[6] More recently these debates have found public expression in the fraught and at times vitriolic confrontations between trans and transphobic feminists. Questions about the role of biology, morality, and maturity circulate through these confrontations, as does anxiety about the role of artifice and technology in the making of gender.[7] *Artificial Women* does not directly engage with these confrontations; instead, it offers an alternative framework for thinking historically about their continuing relevance to discussions about what and who feminism is for. To that end, a key focus of my return to the culture and politics of the feminist 1970s entails an exploration of the reverberations between 1970s feminism, and its formation in and through mass culture, with contemporary confrontations between transfeminist and transphobic feminisms around the role of artifice and technology in the production of "women."[8] One of the claims I make in the book is that the making of women in 1970s culture and feminism entailed a transitional logic. To follow Andrea Long Chu and Hil Malatino, transition is not about confirming an innate gender identity but about the desire for something that is at once both social and aesthetic, subjective and general.[9] In other words, what we find in the filmic and televisual responses to 1970s feminism is the aesthetic and formal evidence of a desire for new and transformative enactments of "women" as well as a fear of that desire.

As I argue throughout, "women" was a more capacious and generative mode of subjectification and collectivization in the 1970s than is generally assumed by both pro- and anti-trans feminists in the present. Through a series of case studies focused on mainstream and popular US television shows and film, I explore how the mass cultural response to the public presence of feminism in the early to mid-1970s demonstrated a widespread concern with the artificiality and unpredictability of women as social destiny and as a mode of becoming, a concern, I argue, that provides evidence of the larger—technological and political—historical processes through which 1970s feminism was formed, both as a historically locatable phenomenon and as a politics of desire.

Periodizing the Feminist 1970s

The 1970s was not a discrete era of feminism but coterminous with what came after. That is, the feminisms of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s belong to the same *mass-mediated event*. In contrast to this historiographical claim, many of the historical studies and field accounts of late twentieth-century feminism tend to

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assume that the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s belong to different eras. Most accounts of 1970s feminism have tended to locate its beginnings first through organized politics—primarily as a challenge to the misogyny of the new social movements and as part of a widespread challenge to the neocolonial politics of Western liberalism—and only secondarily as a movement interested in contesting cultural norms. Based on one's point of view, by the late 1980s the so-called second wave of feminism had either disintegrated or dispersed into multiple identity and issue-based projects once the organized Left could no longer maintain a coherent challenge to the economic and cultural imperialism of the United States and its European allies. In this historiographical frame, feminism either collapsed as a coherent political movement as it moved from a concern with the redistribution of resources to one interested in the differences between women, or it fragmented into a diverse array of political projects once the challenge of Black, women of color, Indigenous, lesbian, and Third World feminists punctured the illusion of commonality through which the "second wave" made claims on behalf of all women. The underlying assumptions in these historiographical frames are that there is a progressive arc to the development of feminism in the post-1945 era, that its history can be told as a coherent or "plausible" story, and that there is a necessary distinction between politics and culture in which the breakdown or dispersal of 1970s feminism can be located.

As a number of feminist scholars have shown, it was in and around 1990 that a series of breaks—from essentialism to poststructuralism, the separation of socialist from cultural feminism, from second wave to postcolonial / women of color feminism, national to transnational, feminist to queer, and so on—were located as narrative devices in telling a story of late twentieth-century feminism as a process of dispersal and depoliticization when culture rather than political economy, or theory rather than practice, became the primary arenas of feminist struggle.[10] This moment—in and around 1990—was signaled in the US feminist academic context by a cluster of highly influential texts that were identified by some feminist critics as fatally contributing to a weakening of feminism as an emancipatory project by bringing into question the referential status of "women" as its foundational category. These texts included Hortense Spillers's "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," Joan Wallach Scott's *Gender and the Politics of History* as well as her essay "The Evidence of Experience," Donna Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, and most (in)famously, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*. Although within US academic feminist theory Spillers, Scott, Haraway, and Butler are now regarded as grandees rather than controversial outsiders, the so-called crisis within feminism that their work signaled in the early 1990s still tends to be misrecognized as a disagreement over theoretical approach—poststructuralism

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versus Marxism, or the turn to deconstruction and away from materialism—rather than one that was fundamentally historical. As the political theorist Linda Zerilli writes, the "situation that Butler and others critically described is not one that they created but one that they found."[11] "Women," in other words, was already an unreliable referent for feminist politics and theory in the early 1990s, and the challenge "outsiders" like Spillers and Butler posed to feminist thought was evidence of that unreliability, not the cause of it. Rather than understand 1970s feminism as something that happened *before* Black, queer, poststructuralist, or transfeminism, then, I understand it as a key contributor to the crisis of "women" their work theorized and confronted.

To that end, in *Artificial Women* I draw on the work of Black, queer of color, and women of color theorists such as Hortense Spillers, Roderick Ferguson, Chela Sandoval, and Rey Chow to situate 1970s feminism as a transnational event that resists narrative coherency. That is, I approach 1970s feminism as a heterogenous plurality imagined and enacted through contradiction and negation. Sandoval's theorization of "U.S. Third World Feminism" as a "differential consciousness," for example, presents us with a model for conceptualizing the transnational scale of 1970s feminism as a discordant mix of the hegemonic and the minoritarian. As a differential consciousness, US Third World feminism emerged contrary to mainstream or "hegemonic feminism" and cut across nominally discrete categories of political action and intellectual thought (poststructuralism vs. feminism) as well as national borders ("Third World" liberation struggles vs. the new social movements of "the West"). In Sandoval's terms, US Third World feminism, in operating kaleidoscopically, or *cinematographically*, was a form of thinking and acting within and against the economic and cultural conditions of a globalized 1970s.[12]

I take Sandoval's conceptualization of US Third World feminism as a differential consciousness as a direct historiographical challenge to the "supersessionary narrative" that dominates most accounts of post-1945 feminism.[13] Similarly, Chow's theorization of the mass-mediated transmission of culture in the post-1945 era as enabling a destabilization of "woman" as a foundational category of Western modernity must also be read as a direct challenge to the logics of liberalism inherent to the stories of political and cultural progress that hegemonic feminism tells itself. What Chow calls the "supplementary logic of 'woman'"—by which she means its inherent instability as both an effect of and a response to "man" as the universalizing referent for modernity—in the post-1945 era was an effect of widespread and often contradictory challenges to the politics and grammar of Western colonialism, liberalism, and the process of "European domination" it enabled.[14] Or, to put it somewhat differently: While the actions and ideas

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of the various groups and movements of the feminist 1970s cannot be collapsed into their representation in mass culture, the films and TV shows of the early 1970s nevertheless offer evidentiary remainders of a shift in the visual—in Gilles Deleuze's sense—appeal of "women" as a political and cultural performative.[15] Following Chow and Sandoval, we might say that by the early 1970s "women" tended to operate in mainstream culture as a chimeric multiplicity rather than a universalizing sign of modernity. Rather than a new woman for a new phase in the history of feminism, the function of "women" had shifted from symbolizing the capitalist and colonial projects of modernity—woman as the boundary marker between producer and consumer, civilized and uncivilized, atavistic and modern—to signifying the problematic and relative effects of modernity: Now (in the 1970s) "women" operated as a sign of modernity's racism, its liberalism—now understood as a contested set of political and social discourses rather than the ground of political thought—and its commoditization of the world. The feminisms of the era emerge within the context of this referential reorientation of "women" and as an effect of the unmooring of the category from its identification with social progress and the universality of a racially unmarked gender equality. The "women" of 1970s feminism were always already racially marked through their conflicted and contradictory resistance to liberal forms of political representation and power. There was never a moment when any of the feminisms of this period, including women's liberation, was able to invoke a universality. From the very beginning, women's liberation was one contested presentation of feminism—and making of "women"—among others.

The Cinematic Feminist 1970s

In one very important sense, then, the argument I make in *Artificial Women* is a historical one: I approach mainstream and popular films and television shows from the early to mid-1970s as historicizing modes of cultural expression that mediate a feminist present and reveal what was emergent to it. Stanley Cavell, in his influential study of the Hollywood remarriage comedies of the 1930s, provides us with an example of how to make an argument about cinema that connects a specific historical moment with a technological innovation and the emergence of new kinds of women:

> The opening years of the Depression were also the opening years of a new phase in the history of cinema, the years of the advent of sound. The year of the earliest member of our genre, 1934, is early enough for that film to have had a decisive say in determining the creation of Hollywood sound

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> in film. The genre it projected, on my interpretation, can be said to require the creation of a new woman, or the new creation of a woman, something I describe as a new creation of the human.[16]

In Cavell's reading, the remarriage comedies are not only a new genre of cinema for a new phase in the history of cinema but a set of films that both produce and reflect on the creation of a new woman, which is also, at the same time, a "new creation of the human." Each, as Cavell writes, is bound to the other: The advent of sound in cinema cannot be extracted from a coterminous new phase in "the history of the consciousness of women."[17] Cavell makes explicit the implications of this new genre of films for the history of feminism as it had "been presented more than once" in his "hearing": Rather than advocating for the "waves theory" of feminist activism in which a substantial gap—approximately 1920–1968—becomes a historical vacuum where nothing of interest apparently happened, Cavell identifies the remarriage comedies as evidence of the ongoing cultural and social activity of feminism in this period. They become the expression of the "inner agenda of a culture" in which both men and women were busy "'consolidating feminist ideas into the private stuff of their lives.'"[18] In this reading, the remarriage comedies not only participate in the production of a new social and cultural appearance of "woman," which is also at the same time an expression of feminist ideas, but contribute to a rewriting of the history of feminism.

For Cavell, looking back from the vantage point of yet another phase in the history of women (he wrote *Pursuits of Happiness* at the end of the 1970s), the remarriage comedies are "parables"—texts that have digested and translated into a new genre of cinema the social and cultural changes to the situation of women in the post-1920 era. In Cavell's terms, the remarriage comedies are of a historical "magnitude" because they are "primary data" for the changing conditions and perceptions of who and what women are. Importantly for Cavell, the films offer the appearance or *visualization* of a "new woman" in conjunction with a *thinking* about women's nominal if not actual equality with men. This thinking, along with the newness of the genre and the newness of the "new woman," turns on the comedies' use of what was then a new technology for cinema: sound. The new women of the remarriage comedies are women who not only talk but talk with men as if they were their equals, and in that dialogue the films also reveal a thinking about women and their relationship to men. Or, to put it in more didactic terms, and for Cavell, the remarriage comedies have at their heart a pedagogic impulse; their stylized dialogue becomes a means to express and reflect on what had become an increasingly obvious and socially disruptive reality by the

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1930s: that women have minds, desires, and thoughts of their own. The utopianism of the films, for Cavell, lies in the promise of the genre's central couple: that a woman's equality will be realized through a "refinding" of her relationship to a man. The "pursuits of happiness," in other words, will be found through a precarious yet necessary heterosexuality, a relation predicated on verbal jousting and double entendres rather than the formal relations of the marriage contract. Domesticity and children are absented from the scene of the "new woman" of the remarriage comedies, her social success no longer dependent on her marriageable status or reproductive capacities but on her wits and her ability to improvise in communication with another.

In binding a specific "phase" in the history of cinema to a specific phase in the history of feminism, Cavell presents us with an admission of their inextricable relation to each other. The new women of the remarriage comedies are a product of this inextricable relation; they are the monster created from the genre's "shared conditions of inheritance," or to echo Susan Stryker here, they are the product of the "incongruous [technological, social, and aesthetic] parts" of their inaugural moment.[19] Although, as Cavell argues, he is not writing a history of the genre but rather "proposing its logic," it is in the logic that we find the history: the "conditions, procedures and subjects and goals of composition" that made the new women the films are also simultaneously investigating.[20]

In *Artificial Women* I also propose "a logic" produced by the shared conditions of inheritance through which popular and mass cultural responses to the feminisms of the early 1970s can be read as contemporary to their historical moment. Rather than a new genre, however, the logic at work in the early 1970s, I argue, traverses genre and medium—it is a logic of moving across and a mixing up of boundaries and categories. We could call this logic transitional, but we might also follow Sandoval and the women of color feminisms of the era and call it differential—at once both a moving and changing from one state, condition, or place to another *and* an engendering of degrees of distinction, divergence, and oscillation through which, rather than a new woman, an incongruous, manufactured multiplicity of "women" is made.

Or, to put it more prosaically, the 1970s are not the 1930s. The cinema Cavell addresses was a product of the homogenizing economic and aesthetic tendencies of the Hollywood studio system. And while it is true that the inventiveness of the remarriage comedies operates through their transformational use of sound, they are also films that work within a narrowly conceived (white, cisgender, bourgeois) formula of presentable bodies and genders. At the same time, as parables about an achieved equality between men and women, the remarriage comedies convey a thinking about the newness of their women that is a rumination on,

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rather than simply a reaction to, their appearance in the world. In other words, for the remarriage comedies to be a new genre of cinema, they had to be born within the context of a relatively contained and settled set of "conditions, procedures and subjects and goals of composition." In contrast, by the early 1970s, cinema had effectively dispersed into a multitude of independent, national, and international cinemas. The end of Hollywood's Motion Picture Production Code and the expansion and circulation of non-Western, auteur, pornographic, and activist cinemas in the 1960s created an economically and aesthetically unsettled cinematic terrain for thinking and visualizing 1970s feminism. The early 1970s also saw a significant shift in US TV networks toward independently produced television shows that were more "relevant" to a society immersed in national and global social and political upheaval. As media industries undergoing radical reorganization of their commercial and social appeal in the 1970s, television and film's responsiveness to the emergent political movements of the era, including a transnational constellation of feminist movements, was relatively open to formal and aesthetic innovation.

The economically and aesthetically unsettled televisual and cinematic terrain of 1960s and 1970s mass culture also brought the world into an often discomforting contact with itself. From the filming of the civil rights protests in the American South in the early to mid-1960s, to the relatively open access of international news media to the battlegrounds of the Vietnam War from the mid-1960s to early 1970s, to the TV coverage of student protests in Mexico City and Paris in 1968 and the making of the widely acclaimed anti-colonial film *The Battle of Algiers* in 1966, moving images of different kinds of political subjects were, for the first time, made available to various kinds of publics—both national and international. The breakdown of the Hollywood studio system and corresponding rise to international prominence of non-Western national cinemas in the 1960s also brought the world closer together—not as a reality shared by all but through a "co-temporal exchange and contention" between different groups "deploying different sign systems" that were not necessarily "synthesizable to one particular language or representation."[21]

Rey Chow's postcolonial approach to mass culture provides us with a helpful framework for situating 1970s feminism in a global context. Her designation of the mass media as a primary "loci for cultural translation" in the post-1945 era also makes clear that the translation it enabled was not, simply, that of a dominant culture imposed upon and absorbed by another but a more volatile and fluid presentation of different kinds of visualities, Western and non-Western, that brought into question, if not crisis, the "deadlock of the more or less complete Europeanization of the world."[22] For Chow, moreover, it is precisely the fact that

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cultural translation happens primarily through radio, film, and television in the post-1945 era that a weakening of the "literary, philosophical, and epistemological foundations of Western domination" becomes possible:

> Critiquing the great disparity between Europe and the rest of the world means not simply a deconstruction of Europe as origin or simply a restitution of the origin that is Europe's others but a thorough dismantling of both the notion of origin and the notion of alterity as we know them today. This dismantling would be possible only if we acknowledge what Johannes Fabian speaks of as the *coevalness* of cultures and consider the intersemiotic transformations that have happened as much to non-Western societies as to Western ones. The mass culture of our media, into which even the most "primitive" societies have been thrown, makes this coevalness ineluctable.[23]

The transmission and translation of culture through the mass media produce a weakening not only of the idea of origins but also of a foundational reality. What becomes manifest through the coevalness of cultures is, for Chow, their artifice—their "fabulous constructedness."[24] By the 1970s we might say, following Chow, that the West had been forced, through the increasing visuality of its "others"—a multiplicity of visualizations produced by a multitude of others in the form of national and subcultural cinemas and media—to become aware of its "fabulous constructedness" as a modernizing force in the world.[25]

Chow's Deleuzian conception of visuality as the illumination of an unrepresentable reality that is both historical and absolute places her theorization of mass culture as a "loci of cultural translation" in conversation with the work of the trans cinema studies scholar Eliza Steinbock. For both Chow and Steinbock, visuality itself becomes "the primary object of study" in that it is through the "commodified, technologized image" that the post-1945 world comes to see/know gendered and raced bodies and peoples. By investigating "the material, the affective *and* the epistemological conditions of vision," in Steinbock's terms, or the "co-presence of cultures" in a mass-mediated world in Chow's, visuality becomes the primary arena of a struggle or contestation of appearance in which there is both a weakening of the epistemological and philosophical foundations of the (modern colonial) gender and race binary *and* a proliferating, rearranging, and fragmenting of genders and races.[26]

Chow and Steinbock situate their arguments about non-Western and trans cinema within a similar historicizing framework, one in which the 1970s feature as an inaugural moment for feminist and philosophical thinking of postcolonial and trans cinema alike. Indeed, Steinbock explicitly presents *Shimmering Images*

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as a "polemical intervention in the rich history of feminist film theory" and posits Laura Mulvey's iconic 1975 essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," as the ur-text from which feminist and trans cinema studies mark their divergent if related paths. And by drawing on thinkers such as Roland Barthes, Gilles Deleuze, and Michel Foucault to theorize the "aesthetics of change" through which cinema offers a transitioning rather than a positioning of gender, Steinbock also, if only implicitly, locates the beginnings of a *thinking* of trans cinema in French poststructuralist thought of the 1970s and 1980s. Chow similarly locates the transcriptional and translational possibilities of a post-1945 global cinema in the primacy of a "to-be-looked-at-ness" first theorized by Mulvey in her 1975 essay. In Chow's reading, Mulvey's articulation of the distinction between the look and the "to-be-looked-at" as the "origins of gender inequality" can be extended to the radical destabilization of the subject/object relation in non-Western national cinemas of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In making films that are "autoethnographic," non-Western filmmakers look at their to-be-looked-at-ness and make the spectacle of their objecthood the "primary event in cross-cultural representation."[27] For both Chow and Steinbock, then, the 1970s mark a watershed moment for thinking the relationship between what the philosopher Maria Lugones called the "colonial/modern gender system" and the cinematic.[28] Through the translational and transcriptive capacities of a global cinema on one hand, and the practices and techniques of filmmaking on the other, gender becomes cinematic in its capacity for play, disorientation, and oscillation. In other words, there is a "cinematic logic" to gender by the 1970s that not only renders "man" and "woman" as the thoroughly denaturalized effects of a primary "to-be-looked-at-ness" but also provides the "emergent flickering forms" of a gendering that evades binary categorization altogether.[29]

It is in relation to the emerging visualities of the world's "others" in the post-1945 era, in conjunction with the cinematic logic of gender and the corresponding possibilities of mass culture's capacity to weaken the philosophical and epistemological foundations of Western domination, that I situate the historical eventfulness of "1970s feminism." Or, to put it more succinctly, if gender was cinematic in its effects and possibilities by the 1970s, so, too, was feminism. Although they ask different questions of cinema, what Cavell, Chow, and Steinbock demonstrate in their thinking about film is an understanding of the cinematic not simply as representing a reality but as producing it. Rather than frame the emergence of "1970s feminism" through a theory of historical progress (the second wave) or as an organic development from the experiences of a generation of women (women's liberation), I instead foreground its "rise to the condition of visuality" through the translational and transcriptive capacities of the mass media.

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As the producer of public fantasies of belonging to and exclusion from social, national, and transnational imagined communities, mass culture shaped the conditions of possibility for late twentieth-century feminism—in all its multivalency. In addition, as a technology that is simultaneously an ideological apparatus and a means for transmitting images and affects that exceed ideological intent, the mass media allows us to encounter the polytemporal heterogeneity of 1970s feminism precisely because its modes of transmission and translation can reveal what remained unrepresentable and immanent to its political and social protests. Throughout *Artificial Women*, I use the term *1970s feminism* to signal this complex heterogeneity and to indicate its cinematic presence in the world as something both historical and absolute—as a phenomenon locatable in time and space that nevertheless exceeds the representable and the particular.

Women as Performative

In situating the historical significance of "1970s feminism" within the translational and transcriptive capacities of the mass media, I aim to foreground, rather than solve, the problem of thinking the formal and the political together in the making of "women." While the various feminist and women's rights movements of the era—from the women's liberation movements of, for example, the United States, Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and West Germany, to the Chicana, Black, and Indigenous feminist movements of the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United Kingdom—were situated nationally or in relation to a larger nationalist or anti-colonial political movement, they were also, at the same time, largely if not wholly enacted through the technologies of a global capitalist commodity culture.

The ability of TV, film, and independent and corporate news media to distribute images and text across continents created the conditions of possibility for a feminism that was generalizable for diverse constituencies of women who could then articulate their own cultural and political practices and ideas in a negative, positive, or ambivalent relation to it. For this reason, mass culture offers us a way of thinking the problem of nomenclature and collectivity in relation to 1970s feminism without foreclosing its multivalency or inventiveness. That is, to think about 1970s feminism as a cinematic "linking and delinking" of images, words, actions, and ideas necessitates a method of encounter that can address it at the level of its formal instantiation rather than its representation.[30] By focusing on the transcriptive and translational capacities of the mass media, a transmissible feminism becomes apprehensible as a transnational contestation of appearance between different forms or formations of "women."

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In locating the cultural *and* political legibility of 1970s feminism in the forms and aesthetics of mass cultural production and consumption, *Artificial Women* acknowledges its debt to recent work in queer and trans media and film studies on the feminist 1970s.[31] Like Jed Samer, I take the "cultural work of cultural feminism seriously" and I understand this work, as Samer does, as "enabling a reimagination of gender and sexual existence" that extends 1970s feminism into its many potential futures. Whereas Samer tracks the "lesbian potentiality" of this work through the "imaginative archives of experimental filmmakers, documentary video activists, feminist science fiction authors, and the media cultures through which their media circulated," I track the potentiality of 1970s feminism through its manifestation in mass culture.[32] In this respect, Ramzi Fawaz's *Queer Forms* provides a model for reading the cultural products of 1970s mass and minor culture as giving formal shape to the political imaginaries of women's and gay liberation. In Fawaz's terms, forms not only give "concrete shape to abstract identities, desires, and experiences"; they also provide the means to think critically and speculatively as they take shape, again and again, in our readings of them.[33] The point of our relating to the cultural forms of the queer and feminist past, in other words, is not to read them for what they lack—from a position of *care*, which Fawaz is rightly skeptical of precisely because it assumes a logic of redress—but from the position of their plenitude and fecundity. At the same time, Fawaz's queer forms tend toward the pedagogical and the didactic. In Fawaz's reading, the figures of the newly thinkable, what he identifies as the queer forms of popular and mass culture through which queer and feminist worlds and ways of being were imagined and crafted in the 1970s, often appear as a fully formed thought rather than the disruptive, disorganizing appearance of a thought in process.[34]

In contrast, in *Artificial Women* I offer a reading of mass cultural forms as historicizing modes of cultural expression and thinking that are in process—that are actively and reactively redrawing the line between the legible and illegible in the production of "women" and of gender more broadly. I am interested in how genres, forms, and performances "become contemporary"; how they mediate a present and reveal what was emergent to it.[35] In my readings of 1970s mass culture's formal responsiveness to the feminisms of the era, I pay attention to what risks incomprehensibility or incoherence, or what seems meaningless or excessive. If, as Ellen Rooney (appreciatively cited by Fawaz) argues, forms can "bite back" on our readings of them, then this is so because they are both historical and absolute: They exist simultaneously as the product of a particular time and place *and* as generalities.[36] As contemporary responses to the emergence of 1970s feminism, the texts I read in *Artificial Women* offer forms, genres,

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and performances that can be read as being in transition, or at a breaking point. They produced, in Aarthi Vadde's terms, "not form but chimeras of form" in which "the range of the possible comes into view as a matter of enunciation."[37] Chimeras of form are where the aesthetic and the political come together as an opening up or reorientation of the possible or the sayable. Reading forms for their historical contingency, therefore, demands an attentiveness to what remains "in process" or, counterintuitively, unformed about them. In other words, they need to be read as performatives rather than concepts: as enunciations that create the possibility of new meaning, new associations, new images, but that also, at the same time, demand our ongoing reading or interpretation.

To locate the cultural *and* political legibility of 1970s feminism in the forms and aesthetics of mass cultural production and consumption is to also make the claim that the feminisms of the post-1945 era cannot be understood outside the vexed and contested relationship between modernity and postmodernity. As feminist historians and political theorists have long argued, feminism is a modern phenomenon, one that is inextricably tied to the rise of commodity capitalism, liberalism, colonialism, scientific racism, and the formation of nation-states.[38] From the invention of the word *feminisme* in the late nineteenth century in France, to the emergence of the modern girl figure in commercial advertising across emerging global commodity markets in the 1910s, to the ongoing colonization and exploitation of Black and brown bodies and land in the name of "civilization," all of which co-implicate each other, "women" was, as the historian Tani Barlow perhaps most emphatically puts it, "a constitutive element of modernity per se."[39] What marks "women" as a historical event and not simply a category, for Barlow, is its constitutive imbrication in the production and selling of commodities: "Globally, commodity culture and commercial capital set out the conditions for the birth of the historical catachresis *women*."[40] A term like "women," in other words, is always an inadequate referent for the accumulation of a variety of ways of life, forms of embodiment, and the sign systems it names or participates in. "Women" is catachrestic, which is to say it is performative, because it refers to the historicity of a social and somatic experience that it can never fully index nor accurately invoke.[41]

Writing on the rise of British and French women's movements in the era after the French Revolution, Denise Riley and Joan Scott also link the formation of "women" to the advent of modernity. In Riley's wonderfully evocative prose, "to understand all the resonances of 'women'" requires "an awareness of the long shapings of sexed classifications in their post-1790s upheavals."[42] Included in those long shapings are the histories of concepts like "society" that, as the seventeenth century progressed, established the emergence and spread of attendant

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concepts like "the social" and "community," concepts that, in turn, narrowed the field of the political and exiled women from its power plays. Part of the imbrication of women with modernity, then, also lies in the naturalization of the social as women's field of action: Social problems define women's interests. As Riley asserts, "women" is a "troubling category" and a "volatile collectivity" precisely because its historicity is caught up with that of other categories and forms of collectivity.[43] The feminisms of the early twentieth century emerge out of these "long shapings" as a response to the modern consolidations of "men" and "women" as dichotomous and often antagonistic forms of social distinction and collectivity. While "separate spheres" and "public and private" have tended to organize the way in which these sexed consolidations have been historicized as part of modernity, for historians like Barlow, Riley, and Scott, these analytic frames also tend to flatten out the volatility and "impossibly complex social referent" to which they inadequately refer.[44]

As "women" emerged, in Barlow's terms, as an "event of colonial modernity," new subjects and new collectivities began to speak in its name: "a historical catachresis of *women* indicated novelty (that is, historicity) because it supplied a name for the excessive evidence of a new, previously indiscernible historical presence of sexed subjects who nominated themselves."[45] The volatility and complexity inherent to this naming lie in the necessity of its continuing practice across time and space. As Jonathan Elmer writes: "The event is always subject to misprision, always in need of renewed interpretive intervention and creative nomination and is the point of leverage in the struggle between a universalism of differences and that of truth."[46] An event creates something newly present in the world that is not determined by what went before it and which, as a result, cannot be known by the regimes of knowledge through which the world was previously presented. It is neither an effect of historical conditions—its situation—nor an empirically verifiable set of actions (the achievement of suffrage for mostly white, bourgeois women in the United States in 1920, or the opening of institutions of higher education to women and changes to property and divorce laws in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example) but "a rupture of the order that supports it."[47]

At once universalizing and always contestable for precisely that reason, the event is also the "point of leverage" for thinking the inaugural and transformative in the world. For Barlow, "women" operates on such a scale: The term is indicative of "the newly present"—a generalizing, fabricated presence in the world that cannot be reduced to the local and the particular even if, at the same time, the local and the particular are sites of contestation and resistance to its referential ambitions. The event of women, therefore, creates the situation of feminism

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as a universalizing and therefore contestable self-nomination in the world: It is a product of the modernity it simultaneously and inadequately references. For historians such as Barlow (and Riley and Scott), feminism cannot be understood outside its historicity—this is what makes feminism, as an invention of the self-nomination of "women," always in need of renewed interpretive intervention.

Barlow's thinking on the event of women shares an investment in the historical contingency of gender with the work of the Black studies scholar Hortense Spillers. A contemporary of Barlow, Riley, and Scott (and Chow), Spillers was also, in the late 1980s, attempting to think through the problem of modernity for a feminism that had recently announced itself as a project of liberation from the "old" divisions of race and class. As she reflects some twenty years later in a conversation on her now seminal 1987 essay, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," Spillers wanted to bring Black women back into a conversation about feminism that they had, "in some ways, historically initiated." She was, she explains, "trying to find a vocabulary" for a feminism that would not simply include Black women but would theorize its project as and from the position of Black women.[48] In response, Saidiya Hartman, reflecting on the significance of "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," noted that the essay was less about confirming the gender of Black women than about "questioning the purchase of gender as an analytic category" through an "interrogation of the writing of the human."[49] For Hartman and the field of Black studies more generally, the importance of Spillers's essay lies in its "disentangling" of gender from the human and from the Black feminist project. Rather than through the frame of gender and the organizing distinctions of public and private, Spillers relocates the source of the cultural and social "grammar" of modern subjectivity in another arena of commodification, the slave trade. That is, for Black studies scholars like Spillers, the modern colonial "event of women" cannot be understood outside the violent cleavages between "bodies and flesh" wrought by the Middle Passage, for it is in relation to the ungendering of a body renamed as cargo that the "self-nomination" of women in modernity is also revealed to be an act of division and elision. As a consequence, a Black feminist project would, as Spillers writes, "be less interested in joining the ranks of gendered femaleness than gaining the insurgent ground as female social subject."[50] From the body made into flesh the possibility of a different naming of the human arises: "We might say that the slave ship, its crew, and its human-as-cargo stand for a wild and unclaimed richness of possibility that is not interrupted, not 'counted'/'accounted,' or differentiated, until its movement gains the land thousands of miles away from the point of departure."[51] Outside gender, outside man and his necessary supplement, woman, lies the "wild and unclaimed richness of possibility" of the human made

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flesh. From the violence of objectification arises the potential for another kind of human, one not contained by the deadening, and deadly to those it excludes, referent for modernity: "man."

In her recent work on performativity, the political theorist Bonnie Honig reads Spillers's essay, and the work of other Black studies scholars from the late 1980s and early 1990s, as offering "a rival theorization of performativity's promise and limits."[52] For Honig, Spillers, along with scholars such as Paul Gilroy, Kobena Mercer, Patricia J. Williams, and later, Saidiya Hartman and Christina Sharpe, offers a counterhistory to the theoretical travails of performativity when seen in the context of the shift from the linguistic and the deconstructive (Derrida and early Butler) to the affective and the phenomenological (later Butler and Eve Sedgwick). Rather than understand the utility of performativity as either a linguistic *or* materialist concept, Honig reads Spillers and her fellow Black studies scholars as refusing such a distinction. In recentering the situation of modern subjectivity in the "hierarchy between the full human, the not-quite-human and the nonhuman" created by the "civilizing" discourses of colonial modernity, Spillers theorizes the "symbolic order" or "grammar" of the United States as a violence *to* bodies.[53] That is, for Spillers and her fellow Black studies scholars, the performative is, in Honig's terms, both performative and *deformative*: It produces bodies *and* flesh.[54] Or to cite Spillers once more, "sticks and bricks might break our bones, but words will most certainly *kill* us."[55]

Reading Spillers as a theorist of performativity accentuates the resonances between her work and that of poststructuralist feminists such as Butler and postcolonial theorists and historians such as Rey Chow, Tani Barlow, and Joan Scott. As a feminist theoretical engagement with the present, Honig's work reanimates the circuits of intellectual influence and citation through which Black studies and feminism, queer theory, and poststructuralism and postcolonialism were enacted in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In *Artificial Women* I also engage in a reanimation of the theories of Black and women of color feminism, postcolonial, poststructuralist, film, and queer theorists of the late 1980s and early 1990s. And like Honig, I also seek to draw out the still underdeveloped implications of their work for understanding a present in which "gender" is increasingly deemed a threat—by transphobic feminists, right-wing ideologues, and "neutral" commentators and journalists alike—to the supposedly natural ontological status of "real women." What draws these theorists together, I argue, is their attentiveness to what Honig calls the "phantasmatic" status of the referent, or what Barlow theorizes as the catachrestic disjuncture between noun and referent. That is, they pay attention to the inventiveness and artifice of the world, or in Honig's terms, they read the world *literarily* as an impossibly complex accumulation

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of performatives transformed into constatives. More particularly, in reading "women" as a performative that is also a deformative, they foreground gender's historicity and politicality.

It is a working hypothesis of *Artificial Women* that the Black/feminist/queer/postcolonial/poststructuralist thought of the late 1980s and early 1990s both reflected on and participated in the "performative/deformative declarations" of women in 1970s feminism. My method is to read the theories of the late 1980s and early 1990s as another means for thinking the contested appearance of "women" as well as the "emergent flickering forms" of the new, insurgent subjects of 1970s feminism. On one hand, I approach mainstream and popular film and television from the early 1970s as a venue for a contemporaneous thinking of the feminisms of the era, and on the other, I approach the theories of the late 1980s and early 1990s as an extension of and reflection on the thinking of 1970s feminism in and through the mass media. Each—the cinematic feminist 1970s and the Black, feminist, postcolonial, and queer theories of the late 1980s and early 1990s—are made possible through the intertwining of visuality, the literary, and the political, and it is this intertwining, or interdisciplinarity, that makes the performative/deformative declarations of "women" of 1970s feminism coextensive with the mass media *and* the Black/feminist/postcolonial/poststructuralist/queer theories of the late 1980s/early 1990s.

The Monster Is You (Circa 1973)

To manufacture is to form, to assemble, to fashion, but it is also, as I noted at the beginning of this introduction, to raise the specter of the false, the made-up, the fabricated. By the early 1970s, a common accusation made against women's liberationists by mainstream cultural commentators was that they were not real women but "female impersonators" unable to assume their natural roles as wives and mothers because of psychic or moral damage.[56] These accusations were replicated, with a difference, by some feminists in response to the participation of trans women in the women's liberation movement. In her now infamous plenary speech at the 1973 West Coast Lesbian Conference (WCLC), Robin Morgan decried the presence of trans women in women's liberation as a "male supremacist obscenity of . . . male transvestitism" who "deliberately re-emphasize gender roles, and who parody female oppression and suffering as 'camp.'"[57] On one hand, feminists are accused of being female impersonators, while on the other, male transvestitism is viewed as an insulting parody of the suffering of women. Common to mainstream cultural commentator and feminist plenary speaker alike was a fear or suspicion that there was a disconnect between the appearance

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of "women" and the reality—that one could *fake* being a woman, and that the pretense was a threat to what was supposedly *real* about them. Interestingly, for Morgan that realness was located not in biology, sex, or an eternal feminine essence but in experience over time: "No, I will not call a male 'she'; thirty-two years of suffering in this androcentric society, and of surviving, have earned me the title 'woman'; one walk down the street by a male transvestite, five minutes of his being hassled (which he may enjoy), and then he dares, he dares to think he understands our pain? No, in our mothers' names and in our own, we must not call him sister."[58] By declaring that she had earned the right to the "title 'woman'" through years of suffering and surviving, Morgan in effect de-essentializes the notion of womanhood in the moment she attempts to shore up its boundaries. In positioning womanhood as an attainment, as something to be earned rather than a natural state of being, Morgan's defense of woman becomes an opening toward the possibility of what she wants to deny: that "men" can become "women."

The 1973 WCLC and Morgan's plenary speech form part of what is now a well-known series of events through which the transphobia of 1970s feminism has since been narrated. Beth Elliott, a white transsexual lesbian feminist folksinger and one of the organizers of the WCLC, was forced from the stage on the conference's opening night and accused of "raping" women by her mere presence in a feminist space. In the same year, Sylvia Rivera, a Puerto Rican street queen and cofounder of STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries), was silenced by lesbian feminists as she was demanding solidarity for *all* gays, including poor and incarcerated street queens, at the Christopher Street Gay Liberation Day rally. And in 1977, Sandy Stone, a white transsexual, decided to leave Olivia Records, the feminist recording company and collective for which she had served as chief sound engineer, after years of threats by transphobic feminists against her and the company. As the trans studies scholar and historian Finn Enke writes, these events have become "well-worn narratives" that repeat a story of trans exclusion from feminism and reproduce a "static opposition" between "feminist and trans histories" that on one hand reinforce the "racist, ablest, and classist hierarchies" that "perpetuate the abjection of trans people" and on the other reproduce feminism as a "coherent subject." As Enke asks, "What in these narratives are Sylvia Rivera, Beth Elliott, and Sandy Stone other than abjected objects of hate?" And what, we may ask, does 1970s feminism become as a consequence of this abjecting?[59]

In response to this question, Enke argues for an approach to 1970s feminism that refutes the assertion of a "plausible [feminist] history" in favor of one that stays attentive to what was "all mixed up" about it: "We do need to correct the

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contemporary transphobic discourses that frame trans women as intruders into women's spaces; we do also need to continually correct the historical record by showing that it was separatists attacking trans women, not trans people, who caused the violences. We can do this without simultaneously eliding the complexities of activisms in that era and without effacing trans women as subjects. Doing so requires that we resist binary opposition and characterization."[60] For Enke, paying attention to the complexities of activisms and the presence of trans women in 1970s feminism means "invit[ing] a transfeminist history that, to paraphrase Beth Elliott, 'bothers to ask' those who were there what happened."[61] To this end, Enke situates Morgan's plenary speech at the WCLC within the context of the published and recorded reactions of the conference participants and organizers. As Enke notes, other conference participants acted in support of Elliott and criticized both the attack on Elliott and Morgan's plenary speech. These participants felt conference discussions "had been 'shut down' and 'bombarded by Robin Morgan' and were 'bewildered' by the scuffling and blaming and wondered if they had missed the memo that would have explained what the problem was."[62] Following Enke, we might say that the bewildered responses to the attacks on Elliott are the trace of a less plausible 1970s feminism, one that in the heady, inventive confusion of its becoming did not deny the "mixture" of experience, technology, and history in the making of a multitude of women.

Emma Heaney, in her account of the same events, similarly calls for the "urgent retrieval" of the more "perishable archive" of "trans-feminist resistance and solidarity"—the multiple if momentary insurgent acts of protest and alliance—through which transfeminism enacted itself in the 1970s.[63] To that end, she quotes from the 1973 *Lesbian Tide* article "Diary of a Mad Organizer," by one of the WCLC organizers, Barbara McLean:

> While the Gutter Dykes were berating Beth Elliott, a blind woman fought her way onto the stage: "She is furious . . . pounds on the podium, insists on speaking." . . . She identifies to the audience as a transwoman and is "so emotional, trembling so bad she can hardly stand up, clutching the mike she cried out 'These women are crucifying Beth and all transsexuals. Why do they torment her? You are more oppressive than our oppressors.'" She then sits down defiantly in front of the stage and continues shouting over the din of the crowd. . . . This glorious direct action defeats the Gutter Dykes, and they relinquish the microphone.[64]

As a "scrap" left in the margins of the recorded history of 1970s feminism, this "brief mention" of an "insurgent action" of transfeminist solidarity and protest forms part of an assemblage if not of "incongruous anatomical parts," then

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incongruous enactments of "women" within the myriad discursive and material spaces of 1970s feminism.[65]

That incongruous enactment of women, however, must also include Morgan's now notorious WCLC speech. As Enke notes, Morgan rewrote her keynote in the immediate aftermath of the attack on Beth Elliott and revised later versions of the speech to emphasize her attack on transsexuality and on Elliott in particular. Enke reads Morgan's rewriting of her speech not simply as the presentation of an already established phobic response to transsexuality but as a contingent eruption of anxiety about her own right to speak at a lesbian conference when not identifying as a lesbian herself. As Enke writes, Morgan began her speech "with a remarkable defense of her credentials in lesbian space: after trashing women who worked with men, she explained that her husband was a feminist, a feminine man, and a founder of the faggot effeminist movement."[66] In denouncing Elliott as a "male transvestite gate crasher," Enke writes, Morgan refused to acknowledge "the porousness and violence of the boundaries that constituted 'woman.'"[67] Instead, she attempted to resolve her anxiety by writing a more "plausible history" of women that would effectively foreclose what Sandy Stone calls "the *intertextual* possibilities" of the sexed body through an externalization, or throwing out, of the transexual.[68] Yet, at the same time, Morgan's speech can also be said to have spectacularly failed to externalize transsexuality. In emphasizing experience and history in the making of women, and in her admittance of a proximity to lesbianism *and* faggot effeminism, Morgan reveals complex relations to maleness and femaleness that "confuses a lot of people" and "not infrequently" herself—a confusion that leads her to a claiming of the monstrous: "I am a Monster—and I am proud."[69] That Morgan could not see in Elliott a mirroring of her own monstrousness is a failure of her political imagination. We can also read it as evidence of her felt sense of the porousness of the boundaries between "male" and "female" in the early 1970s—and of her own implication in that porousness—and of the "intertextual possibilities" of "women" in 1970s feminism, despite her increasingly vicious and paranoid attempts to deny it.

I attend to these scraps of history, and Enke's and Heaney's retelling of them within a transfeminist return to the 1970s, to foreground the monstrousness, or *incongruousness*, of "women" as a social destiny and as a cultural and political mode of becoming for 1970s feminism. I use *becoming* as a way to echo without replicating Stryker's characterization of transgender as "the movement across a socially imposed boundary from an unchosen starting place."[70] Rather than replication, my intention in *Artificial Women* is to pose the unsettled convergence of feminism and trans in the 1970s not simply in movement but in the *transition* from an unchosen place or situation to one of self and collective reinvention. The

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word *transition*, of course, has multiple valences within the field of transgender studies. On one hand, as Jay Prosser notes, transition most explicitly refers to the "correlated set of corporeal, psychic, and social changes" a person undergoes as they shift from one gender to another; as "the insider joke goes, transitioning is what transsexuals *do* (our occupation, as consuming as a career)."[71] On the other hand, it has been used, notably by Prosser himself, to create a "theoretical scaffold" for studying the "conceptual, somatic, narrative, historico-discursive, and political" significance of transsexuality in general.[72] In other words, transition operates in minoritarian and majoritarian registers: It is a term that links the subjective with the social and the historical; it emphasizes change over time and space as well as in relation; and in signaling a "passageway" from one "condition, action or (rarely) place to another" it also invokes the idea of translation as the "liberation" of something else that is already put together "but imprisoned—symbolized—in the original."[73] In all these gradations of meaning, transition is suggestive not simply of a becoming but of a *making* of something through a process of mediation and translation that is at once material, social, and cultural. In *Artificial Women* I take up this majoritarian conception of transition in order to expand the frame of analysis by which we might see the convergences between trans and feminism in the 1970s. More particularly, I deploy the concept of transition to signal the generalizing historical significance of mass cultural mediation and translation in the making of new subjects and new collations of "women" in the post-1945 era.

By way of example, take the claiming of Frankenstein's monster and Charlie Chaplin as two figures for and of trans-ness. What connects Mary Shelley's 1818 novel about a monster made from old body parts through the technological skill of his creator, Victor Frankenstein, to the silent film actor Charlie Chaplin, a cinematic figure who, as Samer writes, "could do or become anything in the flicker of a few frames"? As two iconic figures for thinking the somatic and affective transformations of the modern human through technology, Frankenstein's monster and Charlie Chaplin make the "largely invisible but nevertheless sensuous process of transitioning perceptible" but in ways that proliferate rather than secure the meaning of transition.[74] As Stryker writes of Frankenstein's monster, it has "a life and a will of its own" that leads to a "something more, and something other" than what its maker intended.[75] Or, as Samer writes, Chaplin's "bodily transformations exceed both gender and human categorization" and create "a subjunctive mode of embodiment for character and spectator alike, engendering a sensation of 'couldness' or possibility."[76] In each, the mediating capacities of writing and film, in conjunction with the figuring of somatic becoming and transformation, elicit a sensing and an envisioning of the body not only

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as changeable but as manufacturable beyond or in excess of the gender/sex binary.

For Eliza Steinbock, this sensing and envisioning of the changeable body is inherent to the mediating capacities of cinema. With its "cuts and sutures between the visual and the spoken, between frames, and between genres," film in effect "constitutes a medium for transitioning."[77] More specifically, for Steinbock, it is in the "technological principle of disjunction" that we might locate the operation of "transgender and cinematic aesthetics alike." What if, Steinbock asks, "trans embodiment is not primarily about sex or gender, but about experimenting with the aesthetics of corporeality in terms of efficacy and political purchase?"[78] To extrapolate further from Steinbock's provocative argument, what if the point of transition is not to produce another *plausible* sexed or gendered body but rather to engender "degrees of difference, incoherence, and oscillation" that extend the aesthetics of corporeality and, I would add, the categories of "woman" and "women," beyond the sexed and gendered body?[79] In my return to the cinematic and televisual responses to the volatile public presence of feminism in the early to mid-1970s, I take up the insights of trans cinema studies scholars such as Steinbock and Samer to ask what new, monstrous collations of "women" are made possible through the gestic innovations of cinematic performance, the "pictorial bricolage" of film, and in the time and spaces of television.[80]

The Chapters

My archive consists of popular or mainstream TV shows and films that first aired or were released between 1970 and 1975—the period in which 1970s feminism rose to national and international visibility. All the films and TV shows I examine offered direct and explicit responses to the feminisms of that time or were interpreted by their audiences and critics as doing so; and each revealed, through their generic adaptations or formal and performative experiments, strategies of mediation through which the contestation of women as a political and social category was negotiated. I begin with television. Chapter 1, "The Political Is Not Personal: The Sitcom and Women's Liberation," focuses on the situation comedies of the early to mid-1970s, specifically *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (1970–77) and *Maude* (1972–78), and explores how the time and spaces of television became a means—a technics—for the invention and contestation of 1970s feminism. In their responsiveness to the actions and speech of feminists, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Maude* did not simply represent contemporary feminism; they let feminism into their "mechanisms of adoption," or "processes of recognition, expectation, remembrance, anticipation, repetition, assimilation"

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through which television takes our time and makes our world.[81] Through close readings of key episodes and scenes from each sitcom, in relation to a reading of the 2020 Fox miniseries *Mrs. America*, I explore how television provides a way of accessing the inventiveness of 1970s feminism, its creativity and artfulness, precisely because in its responsiveness to the feminisms of the era, television, like feminism, demonstrated a concern with the artificiality and unpredictability of "women." In the early 1970s, feminism and television were coconspirators in the making and unmaking of "women" as a category of social and political belonging.

With chapter 2, I turn to the new women's cinema of the 1970s to consider the nonrealist performances of Ellen Burstyn and Gena Rowlands in, respectively, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974) and *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974). Through a reading of Burstyn's and Rowlands's exaggerated gestural performances and pantomimic use of their bodies and voice, I attend to how each film creates a portrait of "a woman" attentive to its construction—as cinematic convention and as social destiny. My interest in this chapter is in thinking historiographically about how, in making the production of "woman" part of their performance, Burstyn and Rowlands reveal the category's ambiguity and fictiveness. To that end, I approach the pantomimic, overdone performances of Burstyn and Rowlands as a revolt against coherence or legibility, or against the expectation that they perform the semblance of "woman." Rather than semblance, Burstyn and Rowlands offer us a gestic undoing of woman's symbolic and categorical coherence. It is this instability of meaning generated by their performances that I read as signaling a wider historical troubling of the appeal and coherence of white middle-class womanhood as a category of collectivity and belonging in the 1970s.

In chapter 3, I extend my examination of cinematic performance to a close reading of Andy Warhol's 1971 film, *Women in Revolt*. The film was one of a number Warhol made in collaboration with Paul Morrissey in the early to mid-1970s, and like the other films the two men made together, and unlike Warhol's earlier films, it was aimed at a mainstream audience. I approach *Women in Revolt* as a contemporary response to women's liberation and to Valerie Solanas as the most incendiary, and personally devasting for Warhol, manifestation of its political rejection of masculine domination. I explore how, through the genre of parody, the film engages in a direct mimicry of Solanas's *SCUM Manifesto* and of the movement more generally—both in terms of their rhetorical style and in their stated political intent to liberate women from their sexual and social dependency on men. More specifically, I read the hyperbolic performances of the film's three trans actresses—Jackie Curtis, Holly Woodlawn, and Candy

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Darling—as a mimicry of the parodic and melodramatic excess of women's liberation's protest against the sexual and social objectification of women. My interest in this chapter is in exploring how the film's parodic literalization of women's liberation's protest allows us to "see" the politics of women's liberation *as* exaggeration and hyperbole. As a film that dramatizes its present as a *transitional* moment between old and new ways of becoming women, *Women in Revolt* signals, through its parodic reiteration of women's liberationists as fake women, the creative and transformative work of making women.

Chapter 4, "Racialization and the Ends of Woman: From *Foxy Brown* to *The Stepford Wives*," builds on my analyses of performative excess and generic instability in 1970s television and film to examine how racialization, as performance and as scene setting, enacts a multiplication of "woman" in 1970s popular culture. By bringing together the blaxploitation films *Foxy Brown* (1974) and *Cleopatra Jones and the Casino of Gold* (1975) with the gothic horror film *The Stepford Wives* (1975), I explore how each film draws on the artifice of racialization to spoil and degrade the iconicity of woman. If, as I discuss in chapter 2, the new women's cinema had brought into question the normative ideals of cinematic womanhood through a performative exposition of her construction, the films I read in this chapter rearrange the possibilities of woman through their staging of racialization as a technology of differentiation *and* homogenization. When thought of in relation to the emergence of women of color feminism in general, and Black feminism in particular, as political formations operating in negation of normative ideals of national, gendered, and racial identities, these films become evidentiary remainders of a cultural encounter with the heterogeneity and referential instability of women, an instability made manifest through an intensification and expansion of the visibility of racial difference in the mass-mediated 1970s. More particularly, as "low-brow" mass-marketed genre films oriented toward distinct "surplus" populations—"young, Black, and urban" in the case of blaxploitation, and "young, white, female, and sub/urban" in the case of *The Stepford Wives*—I explore how the commodification of racial difference in each film participates in the degradation of woman, a degradation that is both a denaturalization and a multiplication of her potentiality within the post-1970 context of feminism's enactment within and across global capitalist expansion and accumulation.

I end with a short epilogue, in which I reflect on what a deconstructive method of reading the visual texts of early 1970s mainstream television and film can teach us in a violently hostile, misogynistic, and transphobic present. Through short readings of Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman* (1975) and Coralie Fargeat's *The Substance* (2024) in relation to Jules Gill-Peterson's *A Short History*

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of Trans Misogyny (2024), I aim to demonstrate that reading for the edge, for the in-distinction between the real and the artificial, enables a historical linking of the generative making and unmaking of women from the 1970s to the present. Ultimately, the epilogue—and this book—argues that rather than biological or ontological purity, or the end of woman, what we find in the filmic and televisual responses to 1970s feminism is a too-muchness, or im-possibility of women.

MY EMPHASIS THROUGHOUT the book is on reading film and television not for what they say about 1970s feminism but for how they *think with* 1970s feminism. As contemporaneous responses to "a thing that is happening," the films and TV shows I read in *Artificial Women* participate in making the feminisms of the era visible and thinkable.[82] Through their generic adaptations and formal experiments, they reveal what was incipient to those feminisms and what was unformed or "im-possible" about them.[83] Reading for genre, for performance, or for form is to read for how *a thing that is happening* becomes part of the artifice of the world and integral to its historicity. It is to read for how the thing—1970s feminism—is made into an object, or a multiplicity of objects, that resist our comprehension while demanding our ongoing interpretation. The work of 1970s feminism, and the work of gendering it enacted, is both particular to its time and place and absolute in what it fabricates. This book, as a reading of the artifice of 1970s feminism, is both a reflection on, and a participant in, the making of 1970s feminism and the making of women it engendered.

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Notes

INTRODUCTION. MAKING WOMEN: THE CINEMATIC FEMINIST 1970S

1. Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, quoted in Burke, *Becoming a Woman*, 5, 7.

2. Waldrep, *The Seventies*, 2.

3. "Port Huron Statement," quoted in J. Miller, *Democracy Is in the Streets*, 374.

4. Radicalesbians, "Woman-Identified-Woman," in *Notes from the Third Year: Women's Liberation* (1971), edited by Anne Koedt and Shulamith Firestone, p. 83, Women's Liberation Movement Print Culture Collection, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University.

5. Brundson, "A Subject for the Seventies," 27.

6. See, for example, Barlow, *The Question of Women*; Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*; Riley, *Am I That Name?*; Rosen, *The World Split Open*; and Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*.

7. See Enke, "Collective Memory and the Transfeminist 1970s"; Heaney, "Women-Identified Women"; Pearce et al., "TERF Wars"; and Stryker and Aizura, *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*.

8. For example, in *The Transsexual Empire*, Janice Raymond rails against the technological appropriation of women's bodies by an "evil phallocratic empire" intent on manufacturing a mass army of "she-males." More recently, gender-critical feminists such as the British journalist Mary Harrington have argued that technological progress has become a trap for women, taking them away from their natural and material existence as females. See Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire*, 223; and Harrington, *Feminism Against Progress*. See also Sophie Lewis's discussion of gender-critical feminism's technophobia and fascistic association of artifice with trickery and falseness, and Serena Bassi and Greta LaFleur's careful delineation of the postfascist feminisms of our present moment and their promotion of "the renaturalization of the heteronormative sexual order." Lewis, *Enemy Feminisms*, 252–53; Bassi and LaFleur, "Terfs," 315–16.

9. Chu, "On Liking Women"; Malatino, *Trans Care*.

10. See Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter*, for an account of how feminist theory in the 1990s and 2000s told stories about 1970s feminism as a way to orient its present

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theoretical concerns. Hemmings organizes these stories into three distinct patterns—progress, loss, and return—all of which locate the 1970s as the originating point for the historical unfolding of feminism since that time. These stories are also, as Jennifer Nash notes, historiographical "strategies" through which feminists mark the "past and future" of feminism in order to generate "collective ideas of what feminism values (and devalues)"—or what it wants to forget or remember. Nash, "Feminist Originalism," 4.

11. Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*, 89.

12. Ferguson takes his cue from Sandoval when he historicizes women of color and Black feminism as emergent within the "commodification of third world and immigrant labor" in the 1960s and 1970s and as a response to "the limitations of national liberation movements" to that commodification. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 111.

13. Roth, *Separate Roads*, 8.

14. Chow, *The Rey Chow Reader*, 81, 165.

15. Visuality, for Deleuze, was not as a representation, image, or object that is seen but "complexes of actions and passions, actions and reactions" that allow something to come to light as in a "flash, sparkle, or shimmer." Deleuze, quoted in Chow, *The Rey Chow Reader*, 190. See also Deleuze, *Foucault*, 52.

16. Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 16.

17. Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 16.

18. Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 17.

19. Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein," 247.

20. Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 28.

21. Chow, *The Rey Chow Reader*, 167.

22. Chow, *The Rey Chow Reader*, 164.

23. Chow, *The Rey Chow Reader*, 166, 164.

24. Chow is drawing upon the Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo's interpretation of the movement into postmodernity as a Nietzschean "weakening of Western metaphysics." For Vattimo, the "advent of the media" helps create this weakening through its capacity to transmit and communicate cultural difference. The domination of the image in twentieth-century mass culture does not simply produce "a society of appearance manipulated by power" but also "enhances the inconstancy and superficiality of experience" by making reality less stable as a foundation for thinking its opposite. Chow, *The Rey Chow Reader*, 165–66. See also Vattimo, *The Transparent Society*, 59.

25. Following Deleuze, Chow argues that a "group's rise to the condition of visibility" is more complicated than achieving "the empirical status of being represented or seen" and would have to include the "less immediately or sensorially detectable elements helping to propel, enhance, or obstruct such visibility in the first place." Becoming visible, then, involves the historical problematic of a complex set of economic, social, and cultural forces enabling an illumination of something new or different to come into view. For Chow, this more complicated understanding of visuality helps explain the presence of the assemblage "Asianness" in a global economic and media context in the 1980s and 1990s. But this idea of visuality would also help explain the emergence, in the 1960s and 1970s, of other kinds of "women," women who did not simply signify the ongoing historical project of colonial modernity but offered an alternative illumination of its meanings and effects. Here we might recall the widely circulated images of the female liberation fighter with a

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gun in her hand and a baby on her back in both leftist and mainstream media outlets in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Or we might think of the circulation of images of Angela Davis—with a raised fist and Afro—that operated, if only for a moment, as a threatening interruption of the symbiotic relation between femininity, whiteness, and capitalist imperialism in the United States. While the images of Davis from this era have become, to Davis's own frustration, advertising tools for fashion and technology, the circulation of those images in the early 1970s, along with those of female national liberation fighters in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, participated in a mass-mediated admission by the US mainstream press (and federal organizations such as the FBI) of the West's *involvement* in the fate of the world's "others." These images also contributed to an emerging visibility of different kinds of women—women who could not be so easily incorporated into the liberal representational schemas of nation-states and the private domestic sphere. Chow, *The Rey Chow Reader*, 190.

26. Steinbock, *Shimmering Images*, 18–19; Chow, *The Rey Chow Reader*, 166.

27. Chow, *The Rey Chow Reader*, 152–53.

28. Lugones, "Heterosexualism."

29. Steinbock, *Shimmering Images*, 8. By asserting the primacy of a "cinematic logic" to gender, I am drawing directly from Steinbock's argument in which they reference the "cinematic logic of transsexual embodiment" in relation to Stryker's experimental documentary on the first "mediatized transsexual icon," Christine Jorgenson (Steinbock, *Shimmering Images*, 17). To extend this argument further, we can look to the work of one of Steinbock's and Chow's key theoretical interlocuters, Gilles Deleuze. For Deleuze, the transition from the first phase of cinema to the second is both a historical and an aesthetic one located in the post-1945 era, namely with the postwar films of Alfred Hitchcock. In Deleuze's framing, the shift from the "movement-image" of the first phase of cinema to the "time-image" of the second phase entailed the transition from a cinema that had exhausted its explorations of all the permutations of movement in affect, action, and milieu to a cinema that thematized that exhaustion by creating "images of the image." This second phase of cinema, marked for Deleuze by the "new wave" national cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s, gave us a cinema wedded to the "power of the false," or a cinema committed to "creation, invention, novelty" in which the image became thinkable and readable as artifice—as the making of new bodies, times, and spaces. The "exhaustion" of the movement-image and subsequent turn to the time-image was also, at the same time, a response to the social and economic transformations of the post-1945 era more generally. In this sense, the second phase of cinema was an attempt to renew belief in the world by creating new images and ways of seeing. For a mapping of Deleuze's historicization of cinema, see Mullarkey, "Gilles Deleuze," 185–86. See also Deleuze, *Cinema 1*; and Deleuze, *Cinema 2*. For a reading of Deleuze in relation to queer cinema in the 1990s and the production of new images of desire, see Nick Davis, *The Desiring-Image*. Davis's and Steinbock's approach to cinema is similar in the sense that they both draw on a Deleuzian approach to cinema to foreground its "shimmering" or transitional logic—its capacity to make gender waver.

30. Steinbock, *Shimmering Images*, 15.

31. See Samer, *Lesbian Potentiality*; Fawaz, *Queer Forms*; McKinney, *Information Activism*; Hogan, *The Feminist Bookstore Movement*; and Hobson, *Lavender and Red*.

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32. Samer, *Lesbian Potentiality*, 3, 9.

33. Fawaz, *Queer Forms*, 6.

34. I take the distinction between a thought in solution and one in process from Raymond Williams. Williams is interested in theorizing the present as thought actively lived and felt, as in process. Williams calls the experience of the present "thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind" ("Structures of Feeling," 132).

35. Martin, *Contemporary Drift*, 13.

36. Fawaz, *Queer Forms*, 46. See also Rooney, "Form and Contentment," 37; and Levine, *Forms*.

37. Vadde, *Chimeras of Form*, 1.

38. See, for example, Barlow, *The Question of Women*; Lugones, "Heterosexualism"; and Weinbaum et al., *The Modern Girl*.

39. Barlow, "Event, Abyss, Excess," 53. See also Weinbaum et al., *The Modern Girl*.

40. Barlow, "Event, Abyss, Excess," 52.

41. Barlow, "Event, Abyss, Excess," 51. As a historian of modern China, Barlow calls "women" a neologism because, within the context of modern Chinese history, the word was literally invented to denote a form of femininity independent of familial or kinship relations. She extends the idea of women as novelty to modernity in general to account for a category of people who were defined through processes of social organization and capital that simultaneously allowed them to name themselves as a social or political collectivity. For Barlow, the modern woman was a new form of the human and became imaginable at the turn of the twentieth century across the Western world and its colonies—including China—through her attachment to consumerism and as the effect of a social world organized through work and leisure rather than hereditary ties. See also Barlow, *The Question of Women*.

42. Riley, *Am I That Name?*, 4. See also Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*.

43. Riley, *Am I That Name?*, 2.

44. Barlow, "Event, Abyss, Excess," 61.

45. Barlow, "Event, Abyss, Excess," 52.

46. Elmer, "Babo's Razor," 59. See also Badiou, *Being and Event*. Barlow and Elmer both draw on the philosopher Alain Badiou's theory of the event. For both, Badiou's theory is useful for thinking historically because it refuses a totalizing account of historical change, whether dialectical or systematic. Instead, the event operates as a concept indicative of the purely historical—it denotes something that cannot be explained outside its production.

47. Badiou, *Being and Event*, xii.

48. Spillers et al., "'Watcha Gonna Do?,'" 300–301.

49. Spillers et al., "'Watcha Gonna Do?,'" 303.

50. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 80.

51. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 72.

52. Honig, "Performativity."

53. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 4. Along with Honig, my discussion of Spillers is also indebted to Alexander Weheliye's reading of Spillers's work within the larger context of Black studies' theoretical and conceptual challenge to Western humanism.

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54. Honig takes the term *deformative* from Sedgwick's critique of Judith Butler's use of performativity in *Gender Trouble* as well as from the work of Butler's assumed source for the concept, the language philosopher J. L. Austin. Unlike Sedgwick, however, Honig does not read *deformative* as a necessary addition to Austin's theory of performativity but as inherent to it. That is, in Honig's reading of Austin, a performative is always at the same time a deformative. As Honig also notes, Butler's work on performativity from this period resonates strongly with Spillers's work, something Butler acknowledged at the time. For a more expansive discussion of the permutations of Austin's theory in early 1990s queer theory and its relationship to Black studies, see Honig, "Performativity." See also Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity"; and Butler's response, "Critically Queer."

55. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 68.

56. Irving Howe, "The Middle-Class Mind of Kate Millett," *Harper's Magazine*, December 1970, 110–29.

57. Robin Morgan, "Lesbianism and Feminism: Synonyms or Contradictions?," keynote address, West Coast Lesbian Conference (WCLC), April 1973, original draft, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, University of Southern California Libraries, Los Angeles.

58. Morgan, "Lesbianism and Feminism."

59. Enke, "Collective Memory," 12.

60. Enke, "Collective Memory," 11.

61. Enke, "Collective Memory," 10.

62. Enke, "Collective Memory," 17.

63. Heaney, "Women-Identified Women," 139.

64. Heaney, "Women-Identified Women," 139. See also McLean, "Diary of a Mad Organizer," 38.

65. Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein," 247.

66. Enke, "Collective Memory," 19.

67. Enke, "Collective Memory," 20.

68. Stone, "The *Empire* Strikes Back," 231. Enke takes the idea of a less plausible history from Stone, who writes in the context of the transsexual's transition from one gender to another, that "passing" is an "effacement" of the past through the "construction of a plausible history" and a foreclosure of "the possibility of a life grounded in the *intertextual* possibilities of the transsexual body" (Stone, "The *Empire* Strikes Back," 231). A less plausible history refuses the act of passing as the effacement of the mixture of history—its polytemporal heterogenity. Extending Stone's use of the term, Enke invokes the idea of feminist history as pluralistic and contradictory—as all "mixed up."

69. Morgan, "Lesbianism and Feminism: Synonyms or Contradictions?," keynote address, West Coast Lesbian Conference, Los Angeles, April 14, 1973, published in *Lesbian Tide 2*, nos. 10–11 (1973): 30–34, and reprinted in Morgan, *Going Too Far*, 170–88. For a discussion of the changes Morgan made to the speech to make it more viciously anti-trans, see Enke, "Collective Memory," 18.

70. Stryker, *Transgender History*, 1.

71. Prosser, *Second Skins*, 4.

72. Prosser, *Second Skins*, 4–5.

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73. See *The Oxford English Dictionary* definition of transition: "as a passage or passing from one condition, action, or (rarely) place to another; change"; and "a passage in thought, speech, or writing from one subject to another." Here, I am also drawing on Chow's reading of Walter Benjamin's notion of translation as an arcade or passageway through which mass culture "passes on" an otherwise unseeable reality as transmissible and commodified images and narratives. Similarly, Benjamin's articulation of translation as the "liberation" of the intention of the original text to "[stand]-for-something-else that is already put together but "imprisoned—symbolized—in the original" is also suggestive of transition as the liberation of an (originary) intention toward another gender/sex through a mediated social process of interpretation and articulation. See Chow, *The Rey Chow Reader*, 168, 156.

74. Samer, "Trans Chaplin," 179.

75. Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein," 247–48.

76. Samer, "Trans Chaplin," 178–79. In addition to Samer, recent texts in transgender media studies on formal, phenomenological, and aesthetic explorations of the trans potentiality of cinematic and televisual media include Keegan, *Lana and Lilly Wachowski*; Q. Miller, *Camp TV*; and Steinbock, *Shimmering Images*.

77. Steinbock, *Shimmering Images*, 2.

78. Steinbock, *Shimmering Images*, 6.

79. Steinbock, *Shimmering Images*, 6.

80. I take "pictorial bricolage" from David Panagia's discussion of Benjamin's writings on cinema. Panagia, "'That Dangerous Contention,'" 164.

81. Villarejo, *Ethereal Queer*, 80.

82. Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 16.

83. *Im-possible* comes from Derrida. It is a term through which he explains the essential principle of deconstruction as a method of reading for the unstable relation between presence and absence, meaning and nonmeaning. He writes, "Each time that I say 'deconstruction and X (regardless of the concept or the theme),' this is the prelude to a very singular division that turns this X into, or rather makes appear in this X, *an impossibility* that becomes its proper and sole possibility, with the result that between the X as possible and the 'same' X as impossible, there is nothing but a relation of homonymy, a relation for which we have to provide an account. . . . For example, here referring myself to demonstrations I have already attempted . . . , gift, hospitality, death itself (and therefore so many other things) can be possible only *as impossible*, as the im-possible, that is, unconditionally." See Derrida, "Et cetera," 300.

CHAPTER 1. THE POLITICAL IS NOT PERSONAL: THE SITCOM AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION

1. Doreen St. Félix, "Reviving Phyllis Schlafly in 'Mrs. America,'" *New Yorker*, April 20, 2020.

2. St. Félix, "Reviving Phyllis Schlafly in 'Mrs. America.'"

3. Dow, *Watching Women's Liberation*, 2.

4. Dow, *Prime-Time Feminism*, 24.

5. Lentz, "Quality Versus Relevance," 46.

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