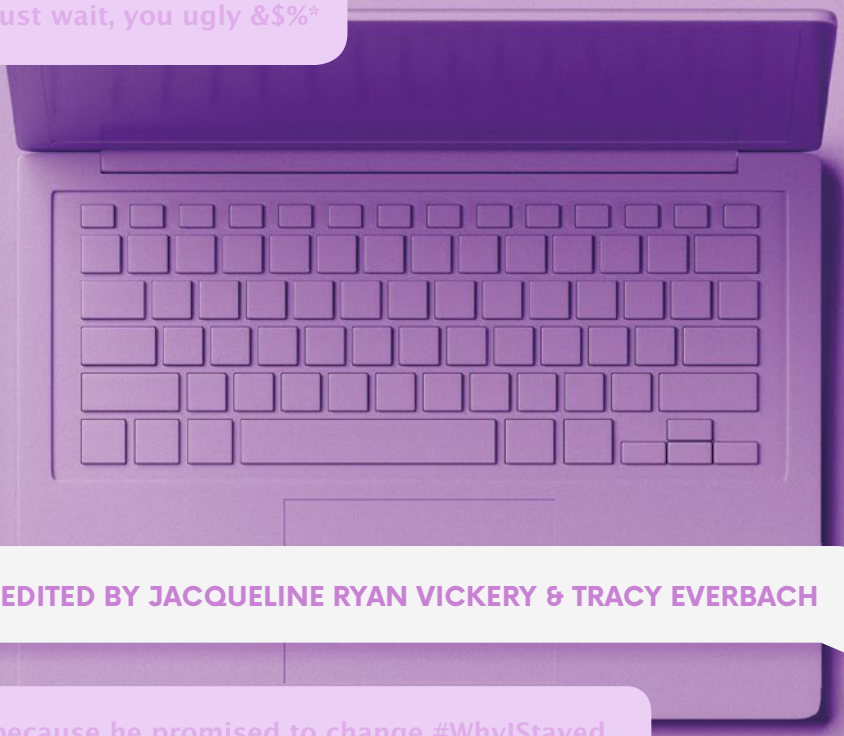
#@$%& FEMINIST!!! >:(

#YesAllWomen live with the threat of violence

MEDIATING MISOGYNY

GENDER, TECHNOLOGY & HARASSMENT

just wait, you ugly &$%*



EDITED BY JACQUELINE RYAN VICKERY & TRACY EVERBACH

because he promised to change #WhyIStayed

Mediating Misogyny

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Editors

Mediating Misogyny

Gender, Technology, and Harassment

palgrave
macmillan

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We dedicate this book to all the Nasty Women
who bravely fight for a safe and equitable world

"*She was warned.*
She was given an explanation.
Nevertheless, she persisted."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's
response to Sen. Elizabeth Warren when she refused
to stop addressing the Senate on February 7, 2017

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the generations of feminists who came before us, setting the stage for today's activism and resistance to misogyny. We encourage our feminist peers and the feminists who follow to continue this work until we finally achieve an equitable society. Women are strong, talented, and powerful and their contributions to society must be acknowledged, cultivated, and supported. We hope our successors will someday live in a world without fear, discrimination, abuse, and harassment.

Jacqueline Ryan Vickery would like to thank her powerful feminist mentors and friends who continue to shape her scholarship, activism, and pedagogy. You provide the much-needed friendship, strength, righteous anger, wisdom, and laughter that we all need to continue the fight for equality: Megan Janicke, Jen Millspaugh Gray, Shaylynn Lynch Lesinski, Hilary Hawkins Clay, Candice Haddad, Samantha Langsdale, Jessalynn Keller, Mary Celeste Kearney, Shani Barrax Moore, Ricky Hill, Meredith Hinton, Joy Denman Baldwin, and many more. She would also like thank her parents, Michael and Deb Vickery, for enabling her to always stand up for what is right. And to her husband, Joshua Vickery, for his continued support of her goals, strength, and convictions.

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industries – journalism and academia. And for his patience, kindness, and love, she thanks her spouse, Jake Batsell, a man who proudly embraces his own feminism.

Contents

1 The Persistence of Misogyny: From the Streets, to Our Screens, to the White House 1
Jacqueline Ryan Vickery and Tracy Everbach

Part I Feminist Discourses 29

2 This Isn't New: Gender, Publics, and the Internet 31
Jacqueline Ryan Vickery

3 Limitations of "Just Gender": The Need for an Intersectional Reframing of Online Harassment Discourse and Research 51
Lucy Hackworth

4 Mediated Misogynoir: Intersecting Race and Gender in Online Harassment 71
Stephanie Madden, Melissa Janoske, Rowena Briones Winkler, and Amanda Nell Edgar

5 bell hooks and Consciousness-Raising: Argument for a Fourth Wave of Feminism 91
Katie Blevins

Part II Research and Case Studies 109

6 Mainstreaming Misogyny: The Beginning of the End and the End of the Beginning in Gamergate Coverage 111
David Nieborg and Maxwell Foxman

7 "I Realized It Was About Them … Not Me": Women Sports Journalists and Harassment 131
Tracy Everbach

8 Misogyny for Male Solidarity: Online Hate Discourse Against Women in South Korea 151
Jinsook Kim

9 Don't Mess with My Happy Place: Understanding Misogyny in Fandom Communities 171
Gwendelyn S. Nisbett

10 Misogyny in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election 189
Dustin Harp

11 Technology-Based Abuse: Intimate Partner Violence and the Use of Information Communication Technologies 209
Megan Lindsay Brown, Lauren A. Reed, and Jill Theresa Messing

12 Leave a Comment: Consumer Responses to Advertising Featuring "Real" Women 229
Amanda Mabry-Flynn and Sara Champlin

13 A Space for Women: Online Commenting Forums as Indicators of Civility and Feminist Community-Building 247
Joy Jenkins and J. David Wolfgang

Part III Feminist Resistance 269

14 Combating the Digital Spiral of Silence: Academic Activists Versus Social Media Trolls 271
Candi Carter Olson and Victoria LaPoe

15 The Varieties of Feminist Counterspeech in the Misogynistic Online World 293
Scott R. Stroud and William Cox

16 TrollBusters: Fighting Online Harassment of Women Journalists 311
Michelle Ferrier and Nisha Garud-Patkar

17 The Global Anti-Street Harassment Movement: Digitally-Enabled Feminist Activism 333
Karen Desborough

18 Celebrity Victims and Wimpy Snowflakes: Using Personal Narratives to Challenge Digitally Mediated Rape Culture 353
Kaitlyn Regehr and Jessica Ringrose

19 #NastyWomen: Reclaiming the Twitterverse from Misogyny 371
Gina Masullo Chen, Paromita Pain, and Jinglun Zhang

20 Conclusion: What Can We Do About Mediated Misogyny? 389
Jacqueline Ryan Vickery, Tracy Everbach, Lindsay Blackwell, Mary Anne Franks, Barbara Friedman, Sheila Gibbons, Tarleton Gillespie, and Adrienne Massanari

Appendix 413

Index 421

Notes on Contributors

Lindsay Blackwell is a PhD candidate at the University of Michigan's School of Information and a former fellow of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. Blackwell is a member of the university's Social Media Research Lab, where she researches the motivations of users who engage in online harassment. In particular, Blackwell is interested in the use of online harassment to sanction or punish behavior perceived as inappropriate, such as the public shaming of public relations executive Justine Sacco in 2013 or the 2016 doxxing of Roosh V., a notorious men's rights activist. Blackwell draws from theories of social deviance and criminal justice to better understand why every day people participate in harassing behaviors online, and she plays an active role in supporting people who are experiencing online harassment.

Katie Blevins received her PhD from the Pennsylvania State University. Prior to arriving at the University of Idaho, she spent four years as a visiting assistant professor of communications at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Her teaching focuses on media law, issues of gender and representation, and other critical/cultural areas of interest. Her research looks at news coverage of legal issues that impact women, freedom of information, and social media.

Megan Lindsay Brown is currently a postdoctoral fellow advised by Jill Messing at Arizona State University. During her doctoral studies, Brown's research focused on the use of information communication technologies (ICT) and the impact of mediated spaces on human development, specifically young women. Her work has examined young adult dating relationships,

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Amanda Nell Edgar is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Memphis. Edgar's research explores the entanglement of sound and identity in popular culture. Specifically, she is interested in how sonic texts meet their audiences to shape both listener identity and the political culture surrounding issues of race and gender. Her work has appeared in *Women's Studies in Communication, Critical Studies in Media Communication, Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, and other journals, and has been featured on the National Communication Association's *Communication Currents*.

Tracy Everbach is an associate professor of journalism in the Mayborn School of Journalism at the University of North Texas. She teaches undergraduate and graduate classes on race, gender and media, news reporting, mass communication theories, and qualitative research methods. Her research focuses on women's work and leadership in journalism, and on representations of race and gender in media. Her work has been published in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Newspaper Research Journal*, *Journal of Sports Media*, *Media Report to Women, Columbia Journalism Review,* and *American Journalism.* She received her PhD in journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She worked as a newspaper reporter for 14 years, including 12 years at *The Dallas Morning News*.

Michelle Ferrier is the founder of Troll-Busters.com: Online Pest Control for Women Writers. She is an entrepreneur, professor, and speaker around media innovation and digital culture. As an associate professor at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University, Ferrier directs the Media Deserts Project that uses geographic information systems to map the media ecosystem in the United States. With a research focus on media entrepreneurship, digital identity, social media, and online communities, Ferrier has developed experiential learning and curriculum for higher education around media innovation and entrepreneurship.

Maxwell Foxman is a PhD candidate in communications at Columbia University, where he studies the playful experience of early adopters of digital communications technology with a focus on virtual reality developers. Foxman's previous work primarily surrounded the use of games and play in non-game environments, including politics, social media, and, most recently, the news. Before beginning his PhD, Foxman spent five years in secondary school education, where he founded an independent study program.

Mary Anne Franks is a professor of law at the University of Miami School of Law, where she teaches First Amendment law, criminal law and procedure, family law, and a course on law and technology. She is also the vice-president and legislative & tech policy director of the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to combating online abuse. She is an expert on the intersection between privacy, civil rights, technology, and constitutional law and frequently advises legislators and technology industry leaders on these issues. She is the author of the forthcoming book *The Constitutional Cult: Extremism in American Law and Politics* (2018), in addition to numerous scholarly and popular press articles. Professor Franks holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School and doctorate and master's degrees from Oxford University, where she studied as a Rhodes Scholar.

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List of Figures

Fig. 1.1 1913 Women's Suffrage March, Washington, D.C. (Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-B2-2513-6) 2
Fig. 1.2 Ida B. Wells-Barnett and other suffragists march in D.C., 1913 (*Chicago Daily Tribune* photograph, March 5, 1913) 3
Fig. 1.3 Women's March on Washington, D.C., January 21, 2017 (Photo credit: Jacqueline Ryan Vickery) 5
Fig. 1.4 Women's March on Washington, D.C., January 21, 2017 (Photo credit: Tracy Everbach) 6
Fig. 1.5 Online Abuse Wheel (Credit: Soraya Chemaly, Debjani Roy & Women's Media Center) 12
Fig. 2.1 Example of the Feel Fearless campaign; the website has been blacked out for privacy concerns (Author photo) 32
Fig. 6.1 Percentage of individual author contributions at the *Los Angeles Times* 119
Fig. 6.2 Percentage of individual author contributions at *The Washington Post* 119
Fig. 6.3 Percentage of individual author contributions at *Vice* (Not all single contribution authors are represented in figure for the sake of ease of viewing.) 120
Fig. 6.4 Timeline of mainstream articles featuring Gamergate published from June 2014 to May of 2016 122

List of Tables

Table 11.1	Summary of studies focusing on technology-based abuse among women with severe IPV histories	214
Table 17.1	Anti-street harassment initiatives	334

1

The Persistence of Misogyny: From the Streets, to Our Screens, to the White House

Jacqueline Ryan Vickery and Tracy Everbach

In 1913, the day before U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration, thousands of long-skirted women ascended upon Washington, D.C. to fight for their right to vote. As organizers Alice Paul, Lucy Burns, Marcy Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and other members of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the Delta Sigma Theta sorority demonstrated, male onlookers harassed, jeered, and attacked them physically. Throughout Wilson's presidency, suffragists picketed in front of the White House, where they endured more physical assaults and arrests. It was the women, and not their attackers, who ended up in prison. Alice Paul eventually staged a hunger strike and was sent to an asylum, where she was force-fed (Cott 1987; "Suffragist Alice Paul clashed with Woodrow Wilson" n.d.; "Women of protest" n.d.; Zahniser and Fry 2014). Eventually the women's bravery, perseverance, and activism paid

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off: The Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving women the right to vote, finally passed in 1920. However, the suffragist movement still had a problem: it strategically marginalized women of color in many ways; for example, by privileging white women's rights at the expense of black men's rights. The only African American organization to participate in the march—Delta Sigma Theta—was forced to stand in the back of the demonstration. Up until the 1960s many people of color, particularly in the South, still faced barriers to voting such as paying poll taxes, passing literacy tests, or facing jail time for violating absurd laws intended to keep blacks from voting (Bernard 2013; Fields-White 2011; "Race and Voting in the Segregated South" n.d.) (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2).

A little more than a century later, on November 8, 2016, enthusiastic feminists gathered to watch the U.S. presidential election results. Earlier in the day, some had gone to the polls wearing pantsuits, the signature clothing of Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton. Most polls had shown

Fig. 1.1 1913 Women's Suffrage March, Washington, D.C. (Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-B2-2513-6)

Fig. 1.2 Ida B. Wells-Barnett and other suffragists march in D.C., 1913 (*Chicago Daily Tribune* photograph, March 5, 1913)

Clinton in the lead over Republican candidate Donald J. Trump, who had run a blatantly sexist campaign highlighted by an *Access Hollywood* tape that featured him bragging about grabbing a woman's genitals. Finally, many women thought, the glass ceiling would be broken and the first woman president would be elected. Clinton even booked the Jacob K. Javits Center in Manhattan, a building with a huge glass ceiling, to make her victory speech (Flegenheimer 2016).

As the election results began to roll in, it slowly became clear that the election was not going to turn out as Clinton supporters expected. Nor did the outcome reflect what most news media outlets, polling organizations, and major newspaper endorsements had predicted. Although Clinton won the U.S. popular vote, the majority of white women helped Trump win the electoral votes to become the 45th president of the United States.

Trump's long history of misogynistic and racist behaviors, which can be documented for at least four decades (Cohen 2017), is undeniably disturbing. But what is perhaps equally concerning is the extent to which he deliberately used media interviews and his personal Twitter account to

unapologetically broadcast and draw attention to his atrocious views and behavior. He boasted of entering beauty contest dressing rooms to gaze at partially dressed women and young girls. He told his friend Philip Johnson that, "you have to treat 'em [women] like shit" (Suebsaeng 2015). After Marie Brenner wrote an article about Trump for *Vanity Fair* that he did not like, he boasted of pouring a bottle of wine down her back, then accused her of lying and attempted to discredit her claim by stating she is "extremely unattractive" (Rosenberg 2016). In a 2013 tweet, he blamed female soldiers for their own sexual assaults because the military allows men and women to serve together (Mehta 2016). In 2015, a college student, Lauren Batchelder, asked Trump at a political forum how his policies would affect women and commented that she didn't think he was "a friend to women." The next day Trump tweeted that Batchelder was an "arrogant young woman" who questioned him "in such a nasty fashion." Men then sent her online death and rape threats and sexually harassed her via phone calls; this continued for more than a year. Trump used Twitter to incite attacks against a private citizen, yet he never apologized nor denounced the harassment his supporters propagated (Johnson 2016).

Trump's misogyny was blatant. His comments were highly publicized and could not be written off as occasional remarks that were taken out of context. His election win felt like a slap in the face to feminists who fought for equality and women's rights. The longstanding battle to create and accept women's roles in public places and as figures of authority was reinforced once again. Sexism was out in the open and undeniable, and, appallingly, many white women were embracing it. The struggle for equality seemed to fail once again. Misogyny was alive and well and moving into the White House.

However, feminists continued to fight back. The day after the election they used Facebook to organize the Women's March on Washington. As history could predict, this was an organization initially headed solely by white women; after warranted criticism, however, the planning committee expanded to include several women of color (Bates 2017). The day after Trump's inauguration, half a million people marched in Washington, D.C. The march became a worldwide phenomenon, with 2.6 million people marching against misogyny, racism, and other injustices in all 50 U.S. states and on all 7 continents (Pictures from Women's Marches…

2017; Przybyla and Schouten 2017). Demonstrators held signs endorsing various humanitarian and equal rights causes: "Marching for Rights! Equality! The Planet! The Future!" "All of Us Together. Women Men Black White Gay Straight Disabled Young Old Native Come Here <3." "They Tried to Bury Us. But They Didn't Know We Were Seeds" ("Why we march" 2017). Still, we cannot overlook the ways the movement marginalized women of color, some of whom blamed organizational racism for their decision not to participate; to be intersectional and inclusive Western feminism has to center the voices, experiences, and bodies of women of color (Bates 2017; Mosthof 2017) (Figs. 1.3 and 1.4).

After the march feminists continued to organize further. Concerted efforts to elect women candidates in local, state, and federal elections

Fig. 1.3 Women's March on Washington, D.C., January 21, 2017 (Photo credit: Jacqueline Ryan Vickery)

Fig. 1.4 Women's March on Washington, D.C., January 21, 2017 (Photo credit: Tracy Everbach)

cropped up across the United States. Emily's List, a group that supports and promotes progressive women candidates, reported that after Trump's election the number of women expressing interest in running for office increased more than 1,000%—from about 900 in 2016 to 11,000 from January to April 2017 (O'Keefe and DeBonis 2017).

We want to emphasize that this book is not about Trump. But the election of Trump—and the ways he unapologetically continues to use digital media to humiliate, shame, and mobilize people to harass women—provides an apropos jumping-off point for thinking about and contextualizing contemporary media culture at the intersection of gender, power, and technology. Likewise, the opening examples of feminist activism highlight the ways in which feminism continues to ignore racism in problematic and oppressing ways. Our purpose is to critically analyze the ways media and digital technologies mediate misogyny, gender-based harassment, racism, and violence against women. We also aim to uncover some of the ways feminists are using digital media technologies to fight back against harassment, sexism, and assault. Finally, we posit what we can do to work toward a solution for this pervasive inequality. We look at these problems with an interdisciplinary, intersectional, and

multimethod approach rooted in feminist and media theories. It is our intent that this collection of essays expands our theoretical thinking and practical approaches to creating more inclusive and equitable spaces—both online and offline—not just for women, but for all marginalized and targeted communities.

Before the Internet There Was Mediated Misogyny… Or… Why We Can't Just Blame the Internet

Women have long been subjected to and battled misogyny, including problematic sexist and racist media portrayals. Building on the work of communication scholars George Gerbner and Larry Gross (1976), Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benet (1978) have referred to mass media's marginalization of women as "symbolic annihilation." Despite being more than half the population, women are trivialized, stereotyped, and condemned in mass media portrayals, which contributes to their continued marginalization in society. In a 2013 update to her research, Tuchman noted that the Internet's prevalence has contributed further to women's exclusion, through audience fragmentation and the echo chambers caused by politically polarizing social media. Simply, if women are underrepresented and minimized, then they are accepted as less powerful than men; their status as second-class members of society persists.

Mass media perpetuate these social constructions on a daily basis. Feminist film scholar Laura Mulvey (1975) argues that visual media position spectators from a masculine perspective and frame images of women through a lens of the "male gaze." Women and the world are viewed from a male perspective in which women are presented as objects of heterosexual male pleasure. Consequently, women also learn to view themselves from a heteronormative masculine perspective. The stereotypical, mediated portrayals of women as sexual objects, judged by their appearance, and as passive members of society who lack power, contributes to the normalization of violence, shaming, and abuse against women, including online abuse (Wood 2015).