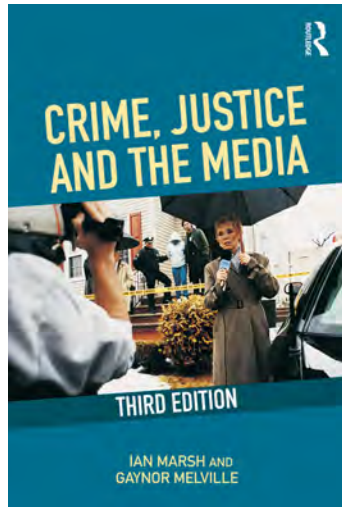
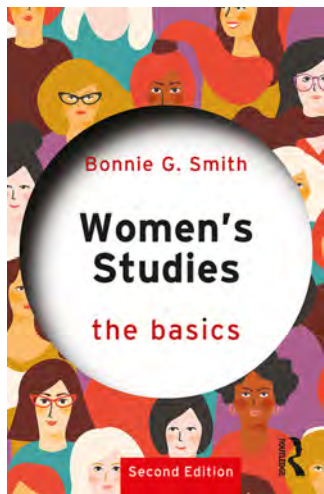
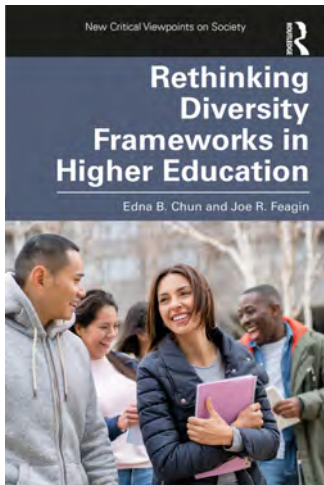


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1

CAMPUS TURMOIL

THE “NEW NORMAL” OF RACIST SPEECH AND ACTIONS

... the spark in Charlottesville—taking down a statue of Robert E. Lee—doesn’t have to do with civil war. People are not debating the Civil War. They’re debating American society and race today.¹

On August 12, 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, angry crowds of neo-Nazis and other white nationalists wielded Tiki torches, and chanted the Nazi slogan, “Blood and Soil,” as well as “White Lives Matter,” and “You will not replace us” as they marched on and near the University of Virginia campus. The group was part of a “Unite the Right Rally” led by numerous prominent white nationalists. The nationalist groups’ leaders and members, mostly white men, protested the city of Charlottesville’s plan to remove a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Their “Blood and Soil” chant invoked the old German Nazi philosophy of “Blut und Boden” that emphasized the blood lines of racial identity and national pride arising from the connection with the land that was supposedly not true for the merchants and workers in the German Jewish population.²

Just as deeply disturbing as this overt racial hostility in Charlottesville were the reactions of President Donald Trump and his then Chief of Staff, former general John Kelly. Both created a moral equivalency between the white neo-Nazis and other white nationalists and their

anti-racist counter-protesters. Trump insisted that there were “very fine people” in the white nationalist group, stating, “You had a group on one side that was bad. You had a group on the other side that was also very violent.” He further claimed that a (largely fictional) “alt-left” was also responsible and “very, very violent” and accused them of “charging at the alt-right” and operating without a permit.³ John Kelly, then widely expected to be a moderating force in the Trump White House, instead deepened the controversy by arguing that “the lack of an ability to compromise led to the Civil War” and by dubbing the slaveholding Confederate general Robert E. Lee “an honorable man who gave up his country to fight for his state.”⁴ The reaction to Kelly’s comments was swift in terms of his suggesting that black slavery was a matter for national compromise. Kelly’s views are clearly ahistorical white fictions.

In response to the Charlottesville incident, Marcia Chatelain, a professor of history at Georgetown University, recalled how she grew up as the lone black girl in her integrated classes from first to eighth grades and as one of the few young black women in an integrated high school. In both settings racially discriminatory behavior by whites was then attributed to mere ignorance. Even when she was called by the viciously racist term “Aunt Jemima,” whites in charge of her educational institutions assumed that it was sheer white student ignorance. Yet in response to the “Unite the Right Rally” at the University of Virginia, Chatelain acutely observes, “over the years, I’ve found that the *learned* racist can be the most dangerous one.”⁵ She refers to the reality of numerous white nationalists being college graduates, indeed some in their leadership with graduate degrees from prominent universities.

In Chatelain’s view, when senior university officials respond in carefully written statements to incidents such as in Charlottesville, their silence about white nationalism can embolden white student nationalists elsewhere. She faults (mostly white) faculty, advisers, and mentors who are often complicit in white supremacist events when they discount African American and other student voices and encourage “both sides” arguments that create false moral equivalency. In her words, “I hope we can reflect on how some of our practices—subtle

and overt—may be perceived by students who are vulnerable to racist and destructive ideologies.”⁶

The muted, cautious statements of the president of the University of Virginia (UVA), the prominent social scientist Teresa Sullivan, reflected the reluctance of college administrators to immediately call out sensitive, racial issues. At UVA, despite the campus encroachment of hundreds of neo-Nazis and other white nationalists bearing white supremacist banners and symbolic Tiki torches, in her initial responses given by the morning of August 13, 2017, Sullivan said she was “disturbed” about “the hateful behavior displayed by torch-bearing protesters.” The words “white supremacist” and “racism” were notably missing from this official statement. Later that day, as criticism of her inadequate response mounted, President Sullivan did add references to the racist, anti-immigrant, homophobic, and misogynistic chants of the white nationalists, yet for some reason she still omitted mention of their aggressively anti-Semitic chants.⁷ Just a few months later, Sullivan announced her retirement from the university after seven years of otherwise successful service.

The University of Virginia administration subsequently indicated it would invest \$20 million in matching funds to establish endowed faculty chairs in academic areas that will help respond to such racist incidents, including the areas of racial justice, emergency medicine, and early childhood education. They also signaled that several million dollars would be provided for bridging projects that bring together individuals from different racial groups and backgrounds and \$5 million in scholarships for first-generation students and those in need of financial aid.⁸ UVA’s reactive investment only after pressures from protesting students and explicit racialized incidents on campuses is typical. For example, a similar reaction can be seen in Brown University’s commitment of \$100 million to diversity issues in November 2015, just three days after the presentation of a list of unmet demands by Concerned Graduate Students of Color—an investment that was amplified months later to \$165 million. Or consider Yale University’s belated investment of \$50 million for faculty diversity and development in the midst of growing campus racial tensions in fall 2015.⁹

We also need to set these events at elite universities in their larger higher education context, past and present. *Racial issues have always been central on U.S. college campuses, in one form or another.* Thus, racial violence, hate speech, and racist hate crimes have long been found on our college campuses, and they have increased in recent years. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, some 1094 incidents of hate or bias occurred just in the first month after the 2016 election of Donald Trump. Altogether, some 1863 incidents—including 330 on college campuses—occurred between November 9, 2016 and March 31, 2017.¹⁰ By May 2017 more than 140 instances of racist posters and fliers had been reported on campuses in 33 states.¹¹ A growing epidemic of incidents involving whites' racist framing spread across a broad swath of institutions of higher education. The latter included, to mention just a few, American University, Boston College, Cornell University, Cabrini University, Drake University, Hebrew Union College, Texas A&M University, Spring Arbor University, Old Dominion University, Oklahoma State University, Purdue University, St. Cloud State University, St. Olaf's College, Southern Illinois University, Stockton University, the University of Florida, the University of Louisville, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, the University of Texas (Austin), and Westfield State University.¹²

In a single week in fall 2017, a rash of racist incidents broke out on college campuses—at Drake University, Duke University, Purdue University, Southern Illinois University, the University of Michigan, the University of Louisville, among others.¹³ Nooses have frequently been discovered at a number of college campuses, including American University, Amherst College, Duke University, Kansas State University, the University of Denver, and the University of Maryland. In May 2017 on the same day that a black woman became the first African American student body president, bananas were found hanging from nooses at American University in Washington, DC. The bananas were carved with “AKA FREE” referencing Alpha Kappa Alpha, the predominantly African American sorority to which the new student body president belonged, and also with

“HARAMBE BAIT” referring to the gorilla killed at the Cincinnati Zoo after a child fell into the gorilla’s enclosure.¹⁴ Student protests and demands for change in the campus climate immediately ensued, in this case in a city where African Americans are a very large percentage of the population.

Contemporary white college students also engage frequently in racist partying, often targeting black, Latino/a, or Asian Americans. For example, white law students at the University of Connecticut had a Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday “Bullets and Bubbly” party at which they wore baggy clothes and had fake gold teeth and guns. Clemson students held a “ghetto-fabulous” party where white students there dressed up “in blackface, drank 40s, wore fake teeth grills, and flashed gang signs.” And white students at Santa Clara University had a “Latino-themed party” where “women feigned pregnancy, the young men played at being cholo and everyone reveled in the symbols and spectacle they associate with Latinos.”¹⁵

Some members of white Greek and other campus organizations have also engaged in racialized violence. In one incident at Cornell University, a black student was assaulted and punched in the face by white men, some of whom were thought to be connected with a white fraternity there. The black student was called racial slurs when he tried to intervene in an altercation near his driveway. A white student was later charged with attempted assault as a hate crime.¹⁶ In response to the assault, hundreds of students from Black Students United were joined by other students in a march to the Cornell Student Union. The student occupation was reminiscent of protests and occupation there decades earlier in 1969. The students presented a list of demands to the college president, which included increasing the enrollment of black students, establishing an antiracism institute on campus, and providing mandatory coursework on antiracism for all students and substantial diversity training for employees.¹⁷ Other incidents on campus included a report from a resident of the Latino Living Center who reported hearing white chants of “Build a Wall.” The university president responded by creating a taskforce on bigotry and intolerance, directing the development of diversity training by Greek fraternity councils, and not reinstating the offending white fraternity.¹⁸

The “Coming White Minority”: Backdrop of Campus Change

Racial turmoil on college and university campuses has not occurred in a social vacuum. It is often directly or indirectly connected to underlying demographic changes that have been taking place for decades on and off our campuses, and to negative reactions of many whites to those changes. These changes are sometimes labelled “the browning of America” or the “coming white minority.” Whether whites like it or not, significantly increasing racial diversity will be this country’s reality for the foreseeable future. According to recent (2018) survey data, the post-millennial generation (Generation Z), young people now 6 to 21 years of age, is by far the most racially diverse generation. About half are white, with the other half being African, Latino/a, Asian-Pacific Islander, Native, and multiracial Americans. The implications for higher education are certainly clear, especially since a larger percentage of the older youth in Generation Z is already going to college than for the previous millennial generation.¹⁹

Unfortunately, most white Americans, and many others, have little accurate knowledge or understanding of this extraordinarily important societal change and its likely consequences, now and in the future. These uninformed Americans include, as suggested above, college and university faculty, administrators, regents and trustees, and students, principally those at historically white institutions. Even those who are somewhat informed about the “browning of America” trends, in our view, frequently underestimate the current and future impact of these trends on our educational institutions, including higher education, with too many pushing a frank discussion and substantial dealing with relevant educational issues into the distant future. Nonetheless, these demographic changes are already happening, often on a dramatic scale, in many areas of our educational system.

According to recent U.S. Census Bureau projections, the U.S. is a rapidly changing country in terms of its population makeup. It is not only aging as the white birthrate and population percentage drops, but also seeing a very significant growth in the nonwhite population. Most of the country’s 3100 counties and hundreds of big cities have, over the last few decades, become less white, many much less

so. This trend has expanded in the last decade or two to most areas of the country, and almost certainly will be continuing over coming decades. In 2011, for the first time in U.S. history, more babies of color than white babies were born, and by 2018 there were more whites 65 and older than white children under 18. A Census Bureau report notes that in 2020 a little more than half of U.S. children will be nonwhite—50.2 percent of an estimated 74 million children 17 years old and younger. Thus, the racial composition of younger birth cohorts will increase faster than that of older cohorts. By 2060 only a third of U.S. children under 18 are projected to be white, compared to about half of older adults.²⁰

Especially important for the education-related arguments in this book is who these children are now and who they will likely be in the future. Currently, the white percentage among those Americans under 18 is about half, and this is estimated to continue to decline in the future. The estimated 2020 percentage for Latino/as among children under 18 is about 26 percent; and for black children, about 14 percent. Our rough 2020 estimate for Asian American children is about 6 percent; and for mixed-race children, nearly 5 percent.²¹ Indeed, already by 2014, for the first time in U.S. history, the white percentage of children in public elementary and secondary schools was slightly less than half, a significant decrease over previous decades. Latino/a children made up about half of the children of color there. By the year 2026, according to Census Bureau estimates, white students are expected to drop further, to about 45 percent. Latino/a and Asian/Pacific islander students are projected then to be about 35 percent of total public school enrollment, with African American students at 15 percent and American Indian/Alaska Native children at one percent. Multiracial children will make up the rest. Additionally, some states have already seen more dramatic changes in public school enrollments—and will soon see yet more major changes over the next decade or so.²²

We should note too that even many contemporary analysts who recognize the significance of these demographic changes neglect certain foundational and institutional realities that shape how demographic trends develop now and how they will likely play out in U.S. society's

future decades. For example, in an otherwise perceptive book, *Diversity Explosion*, the demographer William Frey offers a somewhat uncritical view of the larger racial context of these population trends. He speaks vaguely of whites now being “considered the nation’s mainstream . . . who fare better on economic measures than most minorities” and whites as becoming a “declining presence as their slow growth turns to population loss and accelerated aging.”²³ While this is accurate as far as it goes, such an analysis also needs to recognize and factor in the foundational and systemic reality of this country’s racist patterns, and to assess how they relate to the way that these demographic trends play out in the present and future. That is, whites today are more than just “considered” as mainstream; they, especially the white elite, *are* mostly in control of the country’s still-racist institutions and of the possibilities for meaningful racial change.

Too seldom do population analysts deal insightfully with the persisting reality of the major economic, legal, political, and educational institutions in all U.S. states still being largely white-shaped and white-controlled, no matter what the changing population mix is. This substantial white control—and white resistance to significant changes in it—has profound implications for continuing societal sluggishness, or backtracking, on meaningful societal desegregation along racial lines, including in secondary education and higher education.

Demographic Change: Contexts and Consequences

Unfortunately, many whites have responded to their current or coming white minority status with fearful framing and resistance strategies that enhance and perpetuate systemic racism. We have noted the growth in white supremacist and nationalist protests and other events on and around our campuses. But these obvious expressions of white anger at demographic changes and their institutional impacts are just one small part of the relevant white reactions to these changes. Let us briefly consider a few other examples of how these and other racial diversity issues are very central to the present and future of U.S. society.

Politicizing Racial Change: Contemporary Realities

One major consequence of the so-called “browning of America” is continuing political debate, reconfiguration, and turmoil. We can note briefly some of this political reality in recent years, as it too affects higher education. Clearly, as the aforementioned college campus turmoil suggests, many whites have come to fear such societal change. National opinion surveys signal this; one survey found that nearly half of white respondents were fearful and believed that whites “are currently under attack in this country.”²⁴ Other surveys indicate significant white concerns over losing their dominant power and privilege. Contemporary political divisions reflect these concerns. This is vividly seen in the great demographic differences in current Republican and Democratic political parties. This division has accelerated since the 1960s civil rights movements, in large part because whites have moved into the Republican Party as it became the party of resistance to substantial racial integration in society. Since the time of the famous (white) “southern strategy” of the Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon political campaigns of the 1960s and early 1970s, major Republican leaders have viewed their party as one that will be, as one leader put it, “primarily white and that is fiscally and morally conservative,” with only modest or superficial attempts “at an image of racial tolerance and moderation.”²⁵ Indeed, since the 1960s many working-class and middle-class whites have become regular Republican voters. By the time of the 2016 election polling data showed that 89 percent of Republicans identified as white, far higher than for Democrats.²⁶ In the face of the whitening of the Republican Party, the Democratic Party has significantly increased the percentage of its voters, leaders, and congressional members who are people of color, especially black, Latino/a, and Asian Americans.

An aggressive white-voter strategy has been essential in the election efforts of Republican presidents from Nixon to Donald Trump. For example, in the 2016 election the Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton won large majorities of *all* major groups of voters of color, and thus the majority of the popular vote, even as a majority of white male and female voters selected the electoral college winner Donald J. Trump.²⁷ Much social science and other evidence indicates that Trump’s victory

was significantly affected by the white majority's fear of the increasingly diverse and multiracial character of the United States. For example, one national poll found that more than three quarters of Trump's (overwhelmingly white) supporters publicly said they were concerned about the country's growing racial diversity.²⁸ Disturbingly, in another recent survey a significant majority of whites even indicated they would support a new political party strongly committed to "stopping mass immigration, providing American jobs to American workers, preserving America's Christian heritage, and stopping the threat of Islam."²⁹ Unfortunately, the future of U.S. political parties may involve more of this process of white racial fear, nativism, and nationalism. However, recent U.S. elections also suggest that, as Americans of color become more powerful politically, they may well counter this white political trend by helping to create strong interracial coalitions that accent more fairness, social justice, and democracy for the United States.

White racial anger over and fears of the aforementioned population changes have been politically manipulated, including in major speeches and commentaries by an array of white Republican and other conservative commentators and politicians. For example, in his articles and books, Patrick Buchanan, a leading conservative commentator, a speaker on college campuses, and one-time candidate for the Republican Party's presidential nomination, has frequently argued that, in the face of these demographic and related social changes, "our Judeo-Christian values are going to be preserved and our Western heritage is going to be handed down to future generations and not dumped on some landfill called multiculturalism."³⁰

Moreover, following the 2016 primary and main election campaigns, President Donald Trump's recurring rants, his racially provocative and stereotyped comments, and his periodic equivocation regarding overt white supremacy and Klan-type groups have energized his mostly white political base and normalized racist, nativistic, anti-Semitic, and anti-Muslim perspectives—thereby making it more socially acceptable for whites to bring such comments and actions once largely reserved for all-white backstage settings to mixed-race frontstage settings on and off our college campuses. The curtain hiding or disguising many

acts of racist commentary and covert discrimination has been lifted. Implicit and explicit permission by Trump and other top white officials to express animosity towards racialized and other nondominant groups has led to increased numbers of speeches by an array of white supremacists and nationalists on colleges and university campuses. It has also encouraged overt acts of racial hostility on and around college campuses, including organized protests by groups of white supremacists there and at other sites. The coded language of “dog whistles,” a term used prior to the Trump era by scholars and mainstream commentators, has been demonstrated to be an often inappropriate term now, as we have observed the overtness of racist, religious, and homophobic hostility that was previously kept mostly in background discussions among dominant group members.

The increasingly overt white nationalism and nativism in the U.S., including on our college campuses, has exposed what sociologists Leslie Houts Picca and Joe Feagin call “two-faced racism.” They contrast the backstage settings where whites openly engage in white-racist conversations and actions with the mixed-race frontstage settings where greater white circumspection has until recently been more typical. They had 626 white students from numerous colleges and universities keep diaries of racial events seen in their everyday lives. In relatively brief (6–12 week) diaries these students provided more than 7500 accounts of overtly racist events involving whites of various ages, many of them in and around their college campuses. Some were performed in diverse frontstage settings, but in such mixed-race settings whites frequently restrained themselves or presented themselves as unprejudiced. However, in backstage settings of all-white audiences of friends or relatives, they often more freely made blatantly racist comments, did racist actions, and expressed racist emotions. Such behavior was regularly “tolerated, if not encouraged—and sometimes even expected.” Racist joking and other comments often seemed a bonding ritual linking the whites there together.³¹

Moreover, in a study of mostly white Trump and Clinton supporters before and after the 2016 election, psychologists Chris Crandall and Mark White documented the increased level of acceptance for

discriminatory hate speech toward the groups that candidate Donald Trump had targeted. One large group was asked how acceptable it was to say negative things about individuals in groups targeted by Trump (Muslims, immigrants, Mexicans, individuals with disabilities). Crandall and White found that the perceived societal norms on this matter had shifted from before the election in a negative direction and that Trump's array of racialized and other negative assertions about various groups now allowed more covert prejudices and stereotypes to surface.³²

In addition, the findings of a 2016 survey of 600 white adults offer a further glimpse into the normalization of white identity issues in the U.S. The participants rated, on a scale of 0 to 100 (the warmest), how warm they felt about the Ku Klux Klan and President Donald Trump. Somewhat surprisingly, 11 percent rated the Klan at 50 degrees or higher and nearly one quarter rated the Klan between 10 and 50. In the survey 40 percent also described being white as extremely or very important to their own identity, and just over half insisted that whites have a lot to be proud of *as whites*. Strong white-identifiers were more likely than others to believe that the population increase of certain nonwhite groups is having a negative impact on the country's dominant, historically white-shaped culture and institutions. The strong white-identifiers also tended to believe that the country owes white people more opportunities than they currently have. These results are consonant with Trump's lament about the "loss" of U.S. (white) culture at numerous political rallies.³³

Unsurprisingly, these public and political expressions of white racial framing, nativism, and homophobia have had significant effects. Feelings of fear and lack of safety among people of color, immigrants, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered/queer (LGBTQ) individuals, and members of Muslim and Jewish groups reportedly increased in the first years of the Trump administration.³⁴ In addition, a poll of 2037 millennials found that more than three quarters were concerned about the current status of U.S. racial relations. Most significantly, more than two thirds of the black millennials and nearly half of the Hispanic millennials reported that their racial group was now under racial attack from whites.³⁵

Discriminatory incident after discriminatory incident has reinforced feelings of fear, alienation, and lack of safety among nondominant individuals. This negative impact includes gender-related discrimination. A case in point on gender is Donald Trump's sudden, unscripted announcement that transgendered people would not be allowed in the U.S. military due to what he alleged were military disruption issues and medical costs.³⁶ Trump's official memo in August 2017 indefinitely extended a ban against transgender individuals entering the military and required the military to discharge transgender members by spring 2018. The memo was resisted by military officials, who cited the "inherent inequality" of its provisions and lack of formal processes accompanying the development of this major policy.³⁷ Nonetheless, early in 2019 the U.S. Supreme Court allowed his transgender military ban to go into effect, even as litigation at lower court levels continued.

In addition, aggressive attacks by President Trump on immigrants of color and other nondominant groups continued to stoke the winds of racial division, and they were unchecked by a largely silent, Republican-controlled congress. This political and epistemic crisis has been provoked by the silo-ization of conservative whites and reinforced by social media and selective reactionary news outlets such as Fox News and conservative radio talk-show hosts. And this crisis normalized much racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant speech, writing, and organized protests with a call for a return to what is deemed by many white conservatives to be (white) "American culture."

Take just three other important incidents as further examples of the normalization of racist speech and behavior. At a major White House meeting, Trump disparaged immigrants from Haiti and Africa, asking why the United States needed to accept immigrants from these "shithole countries" rather than from predominantly white countries "like Norway."³⁸ Fomenting a controversy with the National Football League over players "taking a knee" at the playing of the national anthem to protest racialized police brutality and other racial discrimination, Trump railed against the predominantly African American team members who protested, "Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'Get that son of a bitch off the field

right now. Out. He's fired.” The overwhelmingly white NFL owners, in response to Trump's invective, “knelt” to Trump's demonization of the African American athletes, voting to fine football teams when players do not stand for the national anthem.³⁹

Or consider the similar inflammatory remarks of Steve King, an important Republican congressman from Iowa elected nine times, who asked in a *New York Times* interview, “White nationalist, white supremacist, Western civilization—how did that language become offensive?” Referring to the number of women and minorities in the new (2019) Congress he added, “You could look over there and think the Democratic Party is no country for white men.” King, a former bulldozer operator who comes from a conservative district in western Iowa, has made racially nationalist and other provocative racist remarks for more than 15 years that were largely ignored by the Republican Party.⁴⁰ For example, in 2006, King proposed a border wall ten years before Donald Trump made it a mantra in his campaign rallies. Demonstrating a model of a 12-foot border wall with electrified wire on top while speaking on the House floor, King stated “We could also further electrify this wire We do that with livestock all the time.”⁴¹ King became further emboldened during the Trump administration and its open white identity politics. However, belatedly and following his 2018 win in Iowa by only a 3 percent margin and the Democratic takeover of the House of Representatives, he was rebuked by some Republican members of Congress and removed by the new House minority leader from important committee assignments.

“Whitopias”: Persisting Residential Segregation

Consider another major example of the effects of these ongoing demographic changes. A major countering strategy involving many whites is in the array of efforts they are making to maintain or extend residential segregation along racial lines. The U.S. has always been a racially segregated society, and it remains so today, especially in terms of the residential separation of most whites from most blacks and Latino/as. Even with modest overall declines in this residential segregation in the last two decades, significant racial segregation can still be seen within

most cities, large and small. In the decade prior to the 2010 census, 42 of the 100 biggest metropolitan areas saw a white population decline, while most had significant increases in residents of color. In recent years many whites have moved from large cities with increasing populations of color to selected suburban, exurban, and rural areas where predominantly white populations are relatively stable or growing. Numerous counties, often in Rocky Mountain and Midwestern states, have had substantial growth from internal U.S. migration but little growth in the external immigrant population, and thus have become whiter and older in their populations. These have been termed “whitopias” by one savvy analyst.⁴²

Residential racial segregation has serious and continuing consequences for most of those involved. Highly associated with this continuing residential segregation is very substantial elementary and secondary school segregation along racial lines. Most public school systems still remain racially segregated, especially in regard to white children being segregated from black and Latino/a children. This racialization is also generally true for most private schools. In turn, such primary and secondary segregation helps to ensure there is major racial channeling and segregation within our historically white public colleges and universities (see below). Moreover, social science research shows that whites who live racially segregated lives are often fearful of people of color with whom they have few sustained contacts. As a result, these whites do not view Americans of color with accuracy or sensitivity. As one education scholar, Gary Orfield, has put it, for decades whites in white residential enclaves often have had “no skills in relating to or communicating with minorities.”⁴³ We have already noted one result of this in the resurgence of white supremacist protests in and around our college campuses.

One sad irony of white fears of racial diversification and residential integration is that whites are often physically *safer* in more diverse areas. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control tabulated death-rate data that revealed whites were “safer in racially diverse areas—not only from violent deaths in general but specifically from guns, drugs, and suicides. . . . Fear-based White flight from ‘dangerous’ cities to the ‘safety’ of suburbs and small towns . . . actually *increased* the odds that Whites who fled would die violently.”⁴⁴

“Colorblindness” and Racial Segregation

In spite of this clear evidence of persisting political and residential racism, many mainstream media analysts and other social commentators still portray contemporary U.S. institutions and a majority of whites as being, for the most part, “colorblind” or the society as well the way to “colorblindness.” So, let us be more specific for a moment about what the words “colorblind” and “colorblindness” have actually meant, now over a substantial period of time. Significantly, powerful whites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries employed the term and concept of “colorblind” in a system-justifying way, including as an important strand in U.S. jurisprudence on legal racial segregation (Jim Crow). After the U.S. Civil War there was a brief period called Reconstruction (circa 1866–1877) during which formerly enslaved African Americans gained new freedoms across southern and border states. Significant progress was made in desegregating politics and public facilities, including transportation systems. However, over the next few decades this changed as the old white Confederate elite, backed by violent Ku Klux Klan type groups, came back into political power and reimposed a system of extensive racial segregation (Jim Crow). This rapidly spreading segregation was legitimated in Supreme Court cases, perhaps the most famous of which was one involving racial segregation in transportation, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). The “colorblind” legal perspective dates back at least to the dissenting opinion of Supreme Court Justice John Harlan in this *Plessy* railroad-car case. All but one of the white male justices ruled that a state’s law segregating African Americans from whites on trains was constitutional, in effect a precedent legitimating fast-growing Jim Crow segregation in many areas and across many states. However, John Marshall Harlan dissented from this majority opinion, making an explicit argument that the U.S. Constitution is officially “colorblind” (his word), with all U.S. citizens being legally equal under that Constitution.⁴⁵

Nonetheless, Justice Harlan, a former slaveholder, did not believe in *social* equality for African Americans, just in abstract legal equality. In his famous dissent he also argued that the “white race” is the “dominant race in this country . . . in prestige, in achievements, in education,

in wealth and in power . . . [And] it will continue to be for all time if it remains true to its great heritage . . .”⁴⁶ As the scholar Phillip Hutchison has convincingly argued, Harlan failed to convince his white colleagues of his firm belief that legal (Jim Crow) segregation was not required to keep whites as this dominant U.S. race because a colorblind Constitution operates just as “well in trapping blacks in the maelstrom of political powerlessness and economic destitution.”⁴⁷ That is, Harlan knew that whites had been so privileged by the U.S. socioeconomic system over several centuries that providing formal legal rights to African Americans would not prevent whites from maintaining their dominant political-economic and social position, as he said, “for all time.” (He was, so far, quite correct in this prediction.) Clearly, later twentieth-century realities like “colorblind ideology” and “colorblind racism” (e.g., whites insisting “I don’t see race”) aptly extend Harlan’s system-justifying perspective. Note, however, that in his period in U.S. history, even his system-justifying colorblind perspective was considered by most whites as too liberal; they still regarded official segregation of African Americans as necessary and quite acceptable.

Decades later in the 1940s–1960s civil rights era, however, many African Americans and other Americans of color protested for real change in racial inequality, not only in the law (legal rights) but also in many other societal institutions. Their civil rights movements pressed hard for white Americans to stop using the physical characteristics of people of color to discriminate—that is, to treat them in nondiscriminatory ways across U.S. society. Increased white support for the abstract ideal of equality of opportunity and white rejection of legal racial segregation were not sufficient. Civil rights activists strongly believed that major government action to implement that real racial equality and to end all societal discrimination was essential, and many also pressed for significant redress and amends for centuries of past white oppression. Interestingly, this much more aggressive approach to racial fairness, justice, and equality also used the language of colorblindness, but with a substantially different meaning.

For example, Dr. Martin Luther King, in his famous 1963 Washington, DC, speech stated that, “I have a dream that my four

little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”⁴⁸ In his famous speech he suggested strongly that whites should work to create a country where African Americans and other people of color would not face any discrimination on the basis of their skin color and would have full access to the opportunities and benefits of all major institutions. Furthermore, the whole of Dr. King’s speech about white people becoming *truly* colorblind showed that he had millions of white discriminators’ actions and associated insightful racism in mind. Accenting a colorblindness far more radical than the abstract legal liberalism of Judge Harlan, King was envisioning a future where whites’ racist framing, discrimination, and institutionalized racism *would completely end*. King also tied his much more radical view of a colorblind white America to major white redress and compensation for centuries of black oppression. Indeed, in the opening of his 1963 “I have a dream” speech that concluded with this famous colorblind language he had already argued that white America had “defaulted on the promissory note” of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” These were the redress goals he viewed as necessary for real change. Elsewhere, in his 1964 book *Why We Can’t Wait* King was even more specific; he accented there the necessity of reparative and remedial actions, the white-run country’s obligation “to pay a long overdue debt to its citizens of color.”⁴⁹ His radical view of colorblindness clearly contrasts with that often articulated by whites, for centuries now, as we see throughout this book.

Maintaining White Dominance in the Midst of Change

During and after the civil rights movements of the 1960s, key members of the country’s governing white elite, while accepting vague colorblind rhetoric, explicitly recorded their great concern with what many in that elite considered to be a seriously destabilizing “excess of democracy” in U.S. society. These white men clearly had in mind the civil rights movements of the 1960s, as well as the antiwar, feminist, and labor movements of ordinary Americans at that time. One major capitalistic group founded

in 1973, The Trilateral Commission, issued a major 1975 report, *The Crisis of Democracy*. The leading members of the Western white elite argued that certain problems of governance in the United States and some other countries at that time resulted “from an excess of democracy” and that the solution would be “a greater degree of moderation in democracy.” As these elite men saw it, the 1960s democratic movements in the United States were wrongheaded because a “good democracy” requires significant “apathy and noninvolvement on the part of some individuals and groups.” Very explicitly, they named “the blacks” as one of the “marginal social groups” that was then too aggressively seeking to be “full participants in the political system.” This type of political expansion clearly worried these white leaders because such formerly marginalized groups were “overloading the political system” with too many democratic demands. As they conclude in their celebrated report, and with black rights movements clearly in mind, there must be “desirable limits to the indefinite extension of political democracy.”⁵⁰

One of the socio-political solutions these elite men had in mind was a new kind of moderate racial integration somewhat like that of Justice Harlan in a previous century: some legal and opportunity desegregation that was intentionally maintained by powerful and ordinary whites at the modest level whites could tolerate. In the years between the 1896 *Plessy* decision and the present, most whites have come to accept some version of Harlan’s “colorblind racism” perspective—that is, a majority has been willing to support ending legal racial segregation and to accept an abstract legal doctrine of opportunity for individuals of color.⁵¹ But most twenty-first-century whites are unwilling to support aggressive government programs to dismantle and redress all patterns of racial discrimination and to eliminate racial inequality in major institutions. Among other things, ending racial inequality requires major government remedies and reparations for the continuing transmission of *unjust* racial enrichments (e.g., money wealth, land, houses, networking capital) inherited across many generations of whites who were racially privileged in the extreme (that is, under three-plus centuries of slavery and Jim Crow). In addition, for most whites today “colorblindness” means being polite in their racial language and some behavior in public settings and pretending to “not see” the still horrific

reality and impacts of institutionalized racial discrimination. We say they are “pretending” because few Americans can actually be “blind” to the racial discrimination and inequality of a United States that is still foundationally and systemically racist. The commonplace colorblind (“I don’t see race” or “I am not a racist”) framing actually uses reality-concealing language. It cloaks the continuing presence of discrimination in the garb of supposedly innocent racial blindness and fails to acknowledge the deliberate centuries-long exclusion of racialized others from socioeconomic opportunities and resources offered to most European Americans.⁵²

Significantly, when the first African American president, Barack Obama, was elected to two terms (2009–2017), many in the mainstream media aggressively played up the conventional notion of white colorblindness that they frequently linked to the country’s supposed movement to “post-raciality.” In doing this, they ignored the millions of verbal racial attacks and threats of violence against Obama and his family, before and after his presidency, in the conservative media and on numerous online websites.⁵³ These overtly racist actions alone demonstrated then, and do now, the fallaciousness of the assertions of a post-racial America. Unsurprisingly, the election of Donald Trump, mainly by white voters (including white supremacists and neo-Nazis), has been viewed by more critical media and scholarly analysts as partly a white backlash against the Barack Obama presidency. With this in mind, the prominent journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates has dubbed Donald Trump “the first *white* president,” a man whose “entire political existence hinges on the fact of a black president” serving just before him. With the openly expressed goal of negating Obama’s major accomplishments as a key foundation of his presidency, Trump’s political ideology has been unapologetic in its white nationalist framing: “To Trump, whiteness is neither notional nor symbolic but is the very core of his power.”⁵⁴

Reactions to Racial Integration: Maintaining White Dominance in Higher Education

As with racial segregation in U.S. society generally, the persistence of racial tracking and other informal racism in higher education is often

excused by white leaders and ordinary whites as the result of individual choices in what they consider now to be a mostly colorblind America, one in which most whites are said to no longer be seriously racist. Let us consider this racialized educational reality in some detail.

Reduced State Spending on Higher Education: Racially Grounded

We can now set critical issues in higher education in this larger context of persisting U.S. racism. From the 1930s to the 1960s our historically white public colleges and universities were considered by whites to be a very important public good, and most agreed that heavy government involvement in supporting them was necessary because the so-called free market could not deliver reasonably priced higher education for white Americans. Indeed, expanded government funding for higher education during the New Deal era (1930s–1940s) and for the decades that immediately followed up to the 1970s was critical for the dramatic expansion of what became the *huge white middle class*. This major funding came from both state and federal governments—the former in the form of expanded college building and educational programs at historically white colleges and universities and the latter in the form of major post-World War II education funding programs like those for (mostly white) veterans. Numerous other New Deal government programs provided much important aid to (again, very disproportionately white) farmers and other businesses, enabling them to survive the Great Depression, to expand during World War II, to create good-paying jobs mostly for whites, and to pass along their new resources to later generations in the post-war years. In this Jim Crow (and de facto) segregation period a majority of white individuals and families experienced relative affluence compared to people of color, the latter often with equivalent or longer ancestries in the country. And ever since their white descendants have greatly benefited, to the present day, from these openly segregated and discriminatory federal programs. As the historian Ira Katznelson has noted, this 1930s–1960s era of extensive government aid programs favoring white socioeconomic mobility was one when government “*affirmative action was white*.”⁵⁵ Moreover, this dramatic increase in well-educated white workforces and family

prosperity over time also provided great public returns, including higher tax revenues, better public health, and public investments in an array of valuable national programs such as highway infrastructures and social security programs.

However, with the rise of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and subsequent pressures for educational integration of people of color into historically white institutions, elite and ordinary white Americans became much more resistant to providing these substantial government (tax) funds to make and keep public colleges and universities as public goods open to all students and reasonable in costs. Unlike the previous all-white era, now these historically white institutions needed to be open and accessible for the fast-growing numbers of students from working-class and lower-middle-class African American and other families of color, who since the 1960s have continued to be ready in ever larger numbers to attend these once all-white public institutions. Moreover, about the same time period during which most of these public colleges and universities were moving beyond token racial integration, in the 1980s and 1990s, conservative, mostly white legislators in most states began to make increasingly large cuts in their state budgets for the important public good of accessible higher education.

This shift in funding was substantially intentional. Some conservative white state legislators have revealed their racist framing by openly admitting that this large-scale higher education defunding is linked to the growing numbers of students of color seeking good educations. For example, one recent media report of a Tucson, Arizona, town-hall meeting described how some local business leaders had discussed with state legislators the state's extraordinarily poor legislative funding of their public colleges and universities. These local leaders apparently realized the workers of the future would not be majority white and were worried about having an educated Arizona workforce. Indeed, these leaders had previously met with state legislators and promised they would help defend those legislators politically if new educational funding required more state taxes. However, the Arizona legislators, likely mostly white Republicans, told these local businesspeople that they were *not* interested, with one of them saying, "*Those* kids don't need

college.” He likely meant the substantial majority of schoolchildren in Arizona who now are Latino/a or other students of color.⁵⁶ This aggressive defunding reality has now affected public colleges and universities in most states. A recent higher education report summarizes the situation: a white “generation that enjoyed a generously funded system—one which in which the public took responsibility for public higher education, enabling students to fund college on a part-time job—has pulled up the ladder.”⁵⁷

This massive educational budget cutting over recent decades has been conspicuous in many states, from New York to California. For example, reports from New York indicate heavy cuts to the major public SUNY and CUNY university systems, as well as major privatization efforts there, such as for student housing there.⁵⁸ The same is true for the Arizona and California university systems. For example, there have been sharp cuts in California’s state’s funding for public universities since 1980, by about 43 percent for the huge California State University system and 55 percent for the large University of California system. At the same time there have been large-scale increases in student tuition and fees—which now account for nearly half the University of California budget, more than double the percentage in the late 1990s.⁵⁹ For the last three decades this defunding has been a general phenomenon across most states and still persists into the present. As one statistical analysis put it,

Despite steadily growing student demand for higher education since the mid-1970s, state fiscal investment in higher education has been in retreat in [most] states since about 1980. Based on the trends since 1980, average state fiscal support for higher education will reach zero by 2059, although it could happen much sooner in some states and later in others.⁶⁰

Dramatic Increases in College Tuition

Conservative state policymakers have substantially reduced states’ higher education budgets but have allowed “colleges and universities to make up the gap in state funding by charging students more

in tuition, fees, and other charges.”⁶¹ In the 1970s, inflation-adjusted college tuition and fees *were actually declining*, but since about 1980 they have increased dramatically. As one report has put it, since 1980 the “Inflation-adjusted tuition and fee charges have increased by 247 percent at state flagship universities, by 230 percent at state universities and colleges, and by 164 percent at community colleges.”⁶² Unsurprisingly, many public colleges and universities now aggressively seek students who can afford these significantly rising costs. These sought-after students tend to be disproportionately from white middle and upper class families and include out-of-state students from affluent homes who can pay the higher out-of-state tuition.

Students of color and other lower-income students are among the hardest hit by rising tuition and other college fees. A U.S. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities report underscored the details of this impact:

Rising tuition threatens affordability and access leaving students and their families—including those whose annual wages have stagnated or fallen over recent decades—either saddled with onerous debt or unable to afford college altogether. This is especially true for students of color (who have historically faced large barriers to attending college), low-income students, and students from non-traditional backgrounds.”⁶³

This perceptive report accented the larger impact beyond students and their families: these high costs of education also jeopardize “the outlook for whole communities and states, which are increasingly reliant on highly educated workforces to grow and thrive.”⁶⁴ Without a doubt, the significantly rising costs at public colleges and universities mean that their student bodies stay whiter and more middle and upper class than otherwise would be the case. Indeed, this sharp reduction in state involvement in funding public higher education brings up larger questions of who now controls these “public” institutions and whose interests are actually being pursued by them.⁶⁵ The answers to these rhetorical questions are straightforward: whites do, especially those in the elite.

At the same time that public college tuition and other fees have increased, there has been a shift in the availability of college scholarships

and other financial aid. Over the last two decades college financial aid at public colleges and universities has generally shifted in the direction of so-called “merit” aid and away from “need aid,” a shift that benefits students who have the higher grade averages and conventional test scores. This changing aid situation has disproportionately benefitted white middle and upper class students, those who have had better access to first-rate secondary school resources because of their mostly well-off families. As a Georgetown University analysis has expressed it, this

general shift from need-based aid toward merit aid in selective public colleges reallocates aid from low-income students to middle-income and even high-income applicants. The result is that the students with the greatest financial need are asked to pay steep bills

for college, and this in turn makes colleges unaffordable for many such families.⁶⁶

Today, most students must now find relatively more, and indeed much more, monetary support than those white students in previous generations did, especially to attend today’s more advantageous and selective four-year colleges. They do this by drawing on their family’s savings and other resources, or they can go into personal debt by borrowing for their education. Generally, the old idea from the 1930s–1970s era of “working your way through school” with part-time jobs is “an antiquated myth,” not only for these four-year institutions but also for community colleges where costs have also risen dramatically.⁶⁷ Statistics reveal how different the present is from the earlier era of large-scale subsidization of white college students. “Nationally, the net price of a public 4-year college, after grant and scholarship aid, takes up one-third of median black family income and a quarter of median Latino family income, compared to a fifth of median white family income.”⁶⁸ In many cases this figure rises to over half of an average black or Latino family’s income. The percentage of average family income necessary to pay for college educations was *much lower* in the earlier decades when whites made up almost all the students in historically white public colleges and universities.

College student loan debt has been much discussed in the mainstream media. In one recent year just over 44 million Americans had student loan debt, altogether about \$1.5 trillion. The average student loan debt for graduating college seniors at public and other nonprofit schools—two thirds of seniors have such debt—has been more than \$37,000.⁶⁹ However, mainstream media commentators rarely discuss how high student loan debt affects the racial diversity of colleges and universities. The impact of potentially having high student debt includes preventing or limiting access to much or all higher education for working-class students—who are very disproportionately students of color and whose families cannot afford these sharply increased college costs.

In the current environment, a majority of the youth of color who do manage to go to a community college or four-year college, are forced to borrow much more (in inflation-adjusted dollars) than earlier generations of whites did for their college degree programs. This is particularly true for black and Latino/a students. This college borrowing, in turn, frequently creates other problems. Indeed, many students of color must also work long hours, which in turn affects their learning time and grade averages—and this can limit access to both graduate schools and better-paying jobs later on. And because of lack of funds many have to make unhealthy choices, such as paying fees but *not having decent housing or enough food*.⁷⁰ In addition, many students of color drop out of public colleges of various types because of financial problems, including the burden of student loans. Indeed, even one small financial setback means that they likely have to drop out of their educational program. The majority do not have the economic backup and parental college know-how, which white families often do possess, that would enable them to cope with these temporary setbacks. In addition, student debt, and fears about repayment later on, often limit the variety of academic fields that students can major in. This, in turn, has a negative effect on whether they can choose an array of humanities and social science fields that they might prefer, but fields that will not lead to higher-paying jobs that facilitate paying off student loans. Additionally, the limitation on student choices has had a negative impact on society more generally, because it means that a lesser range

of important knowledges is encountered and added to by many in the country's younger generations.⁷¹

If students of color do manage to graduate, their typically large student loans create yet more hurdles. Because of their often less prestigious college degrees (see below) and persisting racial discrimination in the workplace—often creating lower salaries after graduation—they frequently have a harder time paying off their student loans. One report sums up the overall situation of students of color succinctly: “As more students of color and working-class students have begun to attend college, it has become a much riskier, much more expensive proposition.”⁷²

Contemporary Racial Channeling: De Facto Segregation in Higher Education

As we suggested previously, college enrollments for African American and Latino/a students in public colleges and universities—the institutions where most U.S. college students still enroll—have increased significantly in recent years. So has their share of total college students. Yet they are still only *half* as likely as white students to get a four-year college degree. One reason is that these and certain other students of color disproportionately attend open-access, especially community, colleges that offer a two-year associate's degree. Many must choose less costly, and thus less-resourced, colleges *than they otherwise qualify for*. By sharply reducing the funding of higher education, and forcing increases in tuition and other college costs, conservative legislators in most states have created a racialized channeling system in which more affluent white families generally get better quality educations for their children at the better-resourced and selective public colleges and universities. White students are much more likely than black and Latino/a students to be able to attend better-resourced public colleges that grant the usually more valuable bachelor's and graduate degrees.⁷³ As a result, the previously well-funded public system in the post-war decades—mostly reserved for whites (and often by law)—has been replaced by a two-tiered system that in its top tier still greatly favors white students over most students of color, if now in different ways.

Supposedly, these better-resourced public colleges and universities are there to benefit the socioeconomic mobility of all college students, yet students from white families are much more likely to get access to these educational facilities and to secure first-class degrees than students from black and Latino families. A major Georgetown University study notes that black and Latino/a students are “primarily funneled into underfunded and overcrowded bottom-tier, open-access colleges.” Thus, state legislators’ better funding of selective public institutions “buys program quality and the student support services that drive student persistence and achievement of a degree or other postsecondary credential. . . . [state] spending is higher—and [now] increasing—at selective colleges that disproportionately enroll White students.”⁷⁴ This added funding means better educational programs and student support services for the latter students. In effect, this is contemporary educational *apartheid*, this time in the form of a racialized sorting and channeling system in higher education. The bottom line on this reality is that white students have much more opportunity to get into better-resourced and higher-ranked public colleges and universities. They get this because of a racialized “*political bargain* among legislators, governors, selective public colleges, and affluent (mostly White) families.”⁷⁵

How is this racial tracking implemented and maintained? Overt discrimination is not the main generating factor, but rather indirect and hidden racialized norms and routine decision-making are. That is, even as they typically operate from a colorblind ideology with equal opportunity rhetoric, predominantly white college officials “have created policies that, in effect, favor White applicants by creating standards that are exclusionary.”⁷⁶ For instance, these racially biased admissions policies rely far too much on student scores on certain SAT/ACT type tests, even though these have been shown by significant research to be class and racially biased and are weak predictors of college success.⁷⁷ In fact, these widely used testing procedures mainly measure the race, income, education, and social capital of students’ *parents*. These factors enable the majority of white children to reside in areas with better-resourced secondary schools and to get the private tutoring and other private resources that increase their college

opportunities and funding. The economic resources of white parents typically get their children into more affluent neighborhoods and better-resourced secondary schools, while their own social capital makes sure these public (or private) schools have the necessary college-prep tracks and other major educational resources for their children. In turn, this racially privileged reality sets the stage for their children's success in getting into the better-resourced colleges and universities.

Today, many mainstream analysts look at this differentiated educational reality and argue that it signals just socioeconomic inequality not institutional racism. Operating from the colorblind-racism perspective, they frequently accent the supposedly inferior work ethic and culture of families of color as the real educational barrier for most students of color. However, centuries of systemic racism are the actual reason for this country's huge and continuing economic and social capital inequalities between white Americans and African Americans and certain other groups of color. Consider the African American case. For *82 percent of this country's history* African American individuals and families were oppressed by white-imposed slavery and Jim Crow systems. These racial oppressions were so extreme that they generated many generations of unjust impoverishment for most African American families. In contrast, over many of these generations most white individuals inherited some or much unjust enrichment from their ancestors who had been racially privileged over those generations.

Only the last two generations or so African Americans have been officially free of this extreme racial oppression, and that is not nearly enough time to catch up with white individuals and families that have had many generations of inherited white resources, privileges, and prosperity. These long centuries of white racial oppression and intergenerationally transmitted economic and social advantages are mostly covered up in conventional discussions of contemporary racial inequalities across the society. Clearly, the two-tiered apartheid in higher education today greatly favors students from white families, most of whom have benefited from unjustly gained economic and other social inheritances from their generations of privileged ancestors. Given this long history of unjust enrichment, it is not surprising

that the test scores of relatively affluent white students seeking college admission are higher, on average, than those of much less affluent black or Latino/a students.

Nonetheless, one major hidden feature of how the more selective public colleges and universities operate is that admissions officers use standardized test scores and related measures to turn away *three quarters of those students whose test scores do indicate they are ready for college, including disproportionately large numbers of black and Latino/a students.* That is, the latter students often do not have test scores that, while clearly adequate for college success, are on average not high enough to compete with the yet higher average test scores of racially privileged white students who get admitted to more selective public institutions in disproportionate numbers.⁷⁸ Thus, one can envision how greater equality of representation in these public institutions might be easily accomplished. The Georgetown University report cited earlier underscores the point that “There are more than enough Black and Latino/a students who score *above average* on standardized tests to fill the seats that would be required to secure” fully representative student bodies in the now disproportionately white selective public colleges and universities.⁷⁹ Many white legislators and senior college administrators ignore, often intentionally, the reality that many students of color who are excluded actually do reasonably well on college screening tests and are thus qualified for these historically white institutions.

A critical part of this racialized two-tiered reality in higher education is that many conservative state and federal legislators do *not* want to provide necessary funding for enough places in selective public colleges for all qualified students, including a great many students of color who have tested as ready for college. This too is frequently intentional, as these legislators often operate out of a white framing that fears the “browning” of educational institutions. It is not just chance that dramatically declining state and federal legislative support for public colleges and universities coincides with the very substantial increase in students of color in our college-age populations. Indeed, this response has been well-engineered by white conservatives since the 1960s civil rights movements. Over the period since then, the increase

in neoliberal (“free market”) thinking and goals in the white governing elite has meant a general reluctance to adequately fund many “public goods” programs—including making public colleges and universities more available and affordable for students of color. This elite movement away from much government social spending has been aggressively assisted by a growing number of right-wing think-tanks and media outlets, especially since the 1970s. The placement of right-wing “experts” in both mainstream and arch-conservative news media has helped to legitimate these reactionary educational approaches for the general population, approaches that accent lesser government funding of higher education and more individual funding for education from loans and family sources. Working alongside other conservative intellectuals, these think-tank experts continue to be successful in their campaign aimed at shaping public views on higher education in an individualistic and privatizing direction that favors affluent white families.⁸⁰

One last note on the impact of conservative legislators’ defunding of public higher education. These major cuts in government funding have yet other educational consequences that affect both selective colleges and universities and the community colleges. They have forced serious reductions in the college courses offered, substantial decreases in staff that support students, and major increases in lower-wage adjunct and temporary faculty. These changes affect the quality of the educations and the educational support that all students, but especially students of color, need and receive. Overall, the contemporary conservative movement and its predominantly white organizational leaders, media experts, and legislators have created an interconnected set of traps that significantly limit the educational options of students of color—the interrelated phenomena “of individual debt, expansive efforts to finance college tuition through loans, relatively low rates of college completion, and the slotting of poor students into the most underfunded institutions of higher education.” Understanding this substantially intentional conservative political plan is “essential to understanding how public policies intensify both individual struggles to attend and complete college and institutional struggles to adequately invest in classroom instruction.”⁸¹

Rejecting Reparative Programs in Higher Education

In addition, again since the late 1970s and 1980s, the conservative majority on the U.S. Supreme Court has periodically blocked the active and direct recruitment of qualified students of color to many colleges and universities. They too have provided excuses to keep favoring the admission of privileged white students over students of color. The High Court has blocked even the modest affirmative action programs that white college administrators have implemented. Indeed, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the Court's conservatives have used variations on Harlan-type colorblind language in their higher education jurisprudence. For example, a colorblind-constitution perspective was aggressively used in twentieth-century landmark *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) decision that set unreasonable limits on remedial ("affirmative action") college admissions programs designed to redress past and present discrimination affecting students of color. That Supreme Court decision by a white-male court majority, and principally authored by conservative white Justice Lewis Powell, *reversed* prior Court precedents that had correctly viewed the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment as protecting historically underrepresented black Americans and as remediating today the persisting impacts of extensive past discrimination (i.e., centuries of slavery). Instead, he and other conservative justices ignored these lasting impacts of slavery and Jim Crow—as seen in systemic racism in higher education we document in this book—and applied the equal protection clause to *all* racial groups, including the fictitiously "oppressed" whites currently applying in large numbers to historically white, and still disproportionately white, colleges and universities.

A series of subsequent court cases by conservative Supreme Court majorities have pushed back the progress of racial justice and equality in higher education and other institutions that used modest affirmative action plans to partially desegregate their facilities. The dominant reasoning continues to make use of white colorblindness and post-racial-America themes. In recent decades the Supreme Court's conservative majority has moved away from "disparate impact" and remedial theories of social justice that focus on how white-crafted laws

and institutionalized policies still oppress people of color to emphasize an individualistic “disparate treatment” theory that requires the usually impossible task of demonstrating white defendants’ subjective discriminatory intentions in racially limiting the educational or other societal progress of people of color. The naïve Court assumption is that historically white colleges and universities are now generally colorblind in their everyday operations, and only sullied occasionally by a few racist white individuals.

Yet, as we demonstrate from faculty, staff, and student accounts throughout this book, historically white colleges and universities have long histories of pervasive and institutionalized racial discrimination that continue to the present day—to which reality many white college officials and other powerful white actors regularly contribute. Few such educational actors will admit in a court or other legal setting to the white racial framing that typically lies behind their actions implementing the discriminatory norms and procedures of their white-controlled institutions. They too will frequently insist they were “not racist” and “colorblind” in their decision-making and blame non-racial factors for the discrimination and inequalities that still do characterize their historically white institutions.

A Note on Privatization: Seeking Corporate funds and Connections

Yet another result of the governmental defunding of public higher education by state legislators is an acceleration of college campus-area privatization in many states. States’ defunding has been accompanied by the privatization of much student housing on and off campus, of campus bookstores, of food and janitorial services, and of other campus services. Across the country, top college and university administrators are not only seeking increases in tuition to replace their major budget cuts but also aggressively pursuing major corporate contributions, corporate and federal research grants, and patent royalties. Yet, the corporate contributions at numerous colleges and universities have been highly problematic, such as when that money is given to set up specific educational programs directly reflecting the conservative business and political interests of these corporate donors.

In addition, for some years top college administrators have themselves sought yet more corporate connections. They have regularly served on the boards of major corporations, sometimes raising questions about major conflicts of interest. One recent case involved the chancellor of the University of California (Davis), who served on two corporate boards that some argued involved a conflict of interest with that of the university. One board was that of a corporation that runs for-profit schools that compete with public higher education; the other was a major textbook publisher. In addition, while faculty in the sciences and engineering there viewed the chancellor as supporting their educational programs well, many of the humanities faculty viewed the chancellor as unsupportive and committed to the “privatization of the public university,” as they put it in a letter of protest to a local newspaper.⁸²

The contemporary conservative efforts to control higher education no longer need to use overt racial action to restrict a disproportionate share of quality higher education to white students, but now do make greater use of certain capitalistic market forces. These market forces regularly favor those, like most white parents and students, who have inherited socioeconomic resources and privileges unjustly gained by white ancestors under the centuries of slavery and Jim Crow. One expert on higher education, Christopher Newfield, has argued against numerous current market-centered schemes in regard to who gets society’s public goods:

In reality, goods like clean air, sanitation systems, mass transit, vaccination, and education should be distributed according to individual need and general benefit, not according to ability to pay. . . . price signals don’t work. They give an oversupply to rich people and an undersupply—or much lower quality—to the poor.

He adds that “market-driven allocation of high-quality college is a main reason why U.S. attainment has fallen steadily over the last 4 decades from first to about sixteenth in the world.”⁸³ As a result U.S. society as a whole has lost much of its educational achievement, national standing, and future progress.

Systemic Racism and Systemic Sexism: A Better Conceptual Approach

In our view, given these continuing racial issues in higher education and related institutions, as well as the changing U.S. racial demography, a broader and profounder conceptual framework accenting systemic racism (and often related systemic sexism) is necessary for committed reformers of our educational institutions if they are to make much greater progress toward social justice. We recognize these are tough issues for a great many Americans, especially white Americans, to face candidly and forthrightly, but they *are our current and past societal realities*, whether we recognize those realities or not. For example, to characterize one impactful historical reality succinctly, we residents of the United States still live under a U.S. Constitution that was made only by 55 elite white men, about 40 percent of whom were or had been slaveholders. Less than 5 percent of the total population was represented at this very *undemocratic* convention. No people of color or white women participated. The elite white male “founders” built into that Constitution protection for the massive U.S. slavery system, which for about 60 percent of this country’s total history greatly shaped most major institutions, both in the South and the North.

Researchers Joe Feagin and Kimberley Ducey have demonstrated the long history and pre-eminence in U.S. society of this hierarchical system of elite-white-male dominance that encompasses and integrates the racist and sexist subsystems of social oppression in the U.S. case. This overarching dominance system was put into place by powerful European men with their invasion and colonization across the globe from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onward—and certainly in the North American colonies. As this extensive dominance system developed, the leading white men put into place several major subsystems of oppression, which they and their white (especially male) descendants have maintained well ever since.⁸⁴ Two of these major subsystems are systemic racism and systemic sexism, which we principally examine in this book.

Consider systemic racism, to which we give central attention. It has both surface and deeper societal structures. Today, as in the past, they include well-institutionalized discriminatory practices targeting

nondominant populations; unjustly gained white privilege and power imbedded in a racial hierarchy; and large-scale socioeconomic and other unjust resource inequalities along racial lines.⁸⁵ To preserve these oppressive hierarchical arrangements a strong rationalizing and legitimating *white racial frame* was developed early on. Over several centuries this pervasive racial framing of nondominant racial groups has been consciously and actively created and utilized by whites, in all socioeconomic classes but most powerfully by those in top institutional positions. This concept of a white racial frame offers a broader perspective on, and deeper explanation for, the motivation and legitimation of many millions of everyday acts of white racial exploitation and other discrimination characteristic of this country now for centuries.⁸⁶ We will further develop the details and dimensions of this white frame concept in Chapter 3 (see p. 100ff).

Additionally, as we also show throughout this book, this old white racial frame has long been accompanied by, or closely intertwined with, a still dominant male sexist frame. In the seventeenth century the European colonists in North America were led by powerful white men who envisioned and called themselves “patriarchs” and thus also brought to the colonies a heavily gendered, masculinist, and patriarchal framing. The second author has termed this the *male sexist frame*.⁸⁷ Over the last several decades numerous scholars have suggested that, as with racism, the analysis of gender (sex) discrimination needs to move beyond individualistic prejudice-centered conceptualizations to accent systemic sexism and its broad sexist frame.⁸⁸ As we see it, both racial discrimination and gender discrimination, on and off college campuses, cannot be adequately assessed and remedied just within an individualistic framework. As we demonstrate in later chapters, these well-institutionalized discriminations involve major asymmetrical interpersonal relationships that are part of larger racist and sexist systems within which more powerful individuals routinely impose their interests on those who are much less powerful.

Some Illustrative Examples

Let us now share a few accounts of troubling incidents from research that brings this reality, and often intersecting and interlocking character, of racist discrimination and sexist discrimination and their impacts within higher

education environments into a clear and specific focus for people of color. These commonplace discriminatory realities have both institutional and deeply personal impacts. Take, for example, the experiences of Tamara, an African American assistant professor in her third year, who recognized that any misstep in the academic tenure process could be over-magnified and used as an excuse for her disqualification by white colleagues:

The rules of the tenure game keep changing. As a faculty of color, I hoped and prayed that I had every “I” dotted and every “T” crossed while going through the process for promotion and tenure. I did not want to give my colleagues an opportunity to question anything in my dossier.⁸⁹

Or consider the invisibility of women of color in higher education workplaces, as underscored by Linda, an administrator of color in a predominantly white northeastern University. Linda describes how she was routinely ignored and not acknowledged by whites in the upper administration and her white co-workers:

[This colleague] just walked right past me and couldn’t even say hi. . . . That is a normal procedure where this person simply does not acknowledge my existence. . . . I [also] feel marginalized by people in upper administration in my college every day. . . . Marginalization is . . . when I’m simply ignored. . . . It feels very disrespectful.⁹⁰

Additionally, the scholar Nicole West records these reactions of a female African American student affairs administrator attending the African American Women’s Summit. She realized that her experiences of racialized marginalization as a woman of color were not unique:

For me it reaffirmed that even though their situation may not have been the same as mine, it reaffirmed that there were other women who felt marginalized, or who felt like they were an island by them self. You know, sometimes you wonder, “Am I being overly sensitive and am I looking at this in the wrong way? . . . Am I on the right track? Am I overreacting?”⁹¹

These examples of women of color in academia illustrate the impact of the white-male-dominated hierarchy in higher education that routinely imbeds and activates the often interlocking oppressions of racism and sexism. This complex everyday reality reflects what sociologist Patricia Hill Collins has described as a complex *matrix* of overlapping layers of oppression (also termed *intersectionality*).⁹² The substantial pain of these racialized and gendered events is plainly demonstrated here, as well as the high level of emotional labor and cognitive labor required of those targeted by systemic racism or sexism.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, current patterns of slow change, tokenism, and much backtracking on racial matters in our institutions of higher learning are insufficient to achieve the great humanitarian goals stated in the U.S. Declaration of Independence (e.g., “All men are created equal”). Or the famous humanitarian goals stated in preamble to the U.S. Constitution:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, . . . promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do . . . establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Equality, liberty, and justice are the founding ideals that guide us in this book, and they should be made *real* and not just be deceptive rhetoric by all those interested in eradicating all forms of discrimination and inequity in higher education. In the next chapter and those that follow we will continue to provide much evidence of contemporary racism and sexism across the country’s educational institutions.

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Introduction – A brief history of the media portrayal of crime and criminals

A glance at the television schedules for tonight, or the film listings for your local cinema, or the headlines in today's national or local newspapers, will quickly indicate both the vast and seemingly insatiable interest the general population has in crime and criminals, and the key role the media play in portraying and describing all aspects of criminal behaviour. Some of this crime will be fictional, other 'real life', and our appetite for reading and watching about both appears to be enormous – popular television programmes such as soap operas invariably include criminality in their storylines; television documentaries, news programmes and our newspapers highlight and discuss crime and criminal justice issues on a daily basis. And the knowledge and understanding the public have about crime and criminals is largely based on what they have seen or heard through the various media forms. More generally, it is impossible for us to know through direct experience everything about our society. In a study looking at crime news in the USA, Dorfman (2001) found that over three-quarters (76 per cent) of the public said they formed their opinions about crime from what they see or read in the news, more than three times the number of those who said they got their primary information on crime from personal experience (22 per cent). More recently a survey of over 2,000 people in New Zealand found that most people receive their information about crime from television news

and hard copy or online newspapers, with almost nine in ten citing national television news as one of their main sources of information and eight in ten believing such sources to be reliable (New Zealand Ministry of Justice 2014).

Given the popular media and general populist interest in this area, it is not surprising that the academic interest in crime and criminal justice is growing – and that there are more and more criminology courses available for students to study, with the consequent increase in the number and range of criminology textbooks such as this one.

QUESTION BREAK

Look at the television listings for tonight. How many programmes are clearly focused on crime and criminals? How many other programmes are likely to include criminal incidents in them (e.g. in plays, soap operas, etc.)?

Do a similar exercise with the films at a local cinema.

Look at a couple of newspapers on one particular day (ideally a ‘quality’ paper, such as *The Guardian*, *The Independent* or *The Times*, and a ‘popular’ one). How many crime stories are there and roughly what proportion of the paper do they account for?

Consider how the different newspapers report those crime stories.

When we look back through history it is apparent that this massive interest in crime and criminals is not just a recent phenomenon; and although the forms of media have changed over time they have always reflected and reported on this interest. In the rest of this chapter we will provide an overview of the media reporting and depicting of crime over the last 200 or so years, and in doing so, will look at how specific criminal cases have been presented by the different media of the day.

While the history of crime goes back way beyond 200 years ago, this account will focus on the period from the late 1700s/early 1800s – the period of the industrial revolution in the Western world and the democratic revolutions in France and the USA. This was a period that led to the development of the social sciences (see Nisbet 1970) and the ‘birth of the prison’ (Foucault 1977) and, in general terms, the development of what was seen by social theorists of the nineteenth century as the emergence of ‘modern society’. In terms of the media, it was a time when the press was expanding and becoming a major source of information – as Sharpe (1999) puts it,

By the 1760s, another literary form was making its contribution. By that decade it was possible, even in a provincial town, to witness that most modern of phenomena, the significance of a crime wave being amplified by newspaper

reporting. In 1765, public fear, engendered by a series of robberies in Colchester, was considerably heightened by the hyperbolic reporting of these offences in *The Chelmsford Chronicle*.

So our focus in this introductory history of the media reporting of crime will be on the period from the late eighteenth century, through the Victorian period and then the twentieth century. In his writings on the history of the press, Curran (1977) examines how the emerging national and local press in Britain developed its independence in the nineteenth century. He quotes Chaney's (1972) view that 'the British press is generally agreed to have attained its freedom around the middle of the nineteenth century' and argues that this has been reiterated in other histories of the British press. Curran suggests that this 'watershed in British history' came as a consequence of a struggle against state control of the press – while concessions in terms of press reporting were gained in the eighteenth century it was only in the Victorian era that 'the forces of progress finally triumphed' and an independent press emerged free from the legal and financial control which governments had previously exercised. It should be pointed out that Curran does question this view of a sort of triumphant rise of a free press in Britain – while the emerging press may have performed a 'democratizing function for society' it is important to bear in mind the arguments that the press also served the interest of the powerful groups or classes in society and could be seen as an instrument of social control. We will look at different theoretical perspectives on the media in Chapter 2, and here it is enough to highlight the point that there are different interpretations of the emergence of the media in Britain.

In contemporary society, the media come in a massive and ever growing range of forms and formats. However, in looking at the early part of our historical period our focus will be on the press, which was very much the key media form in the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. Broadcasting, first radio and then television, developed its mass market in the mid-twentieth century. In his account of broadcasting history, Seaton (1981) points out that broadcasting is a social rather than technical invention and that the capacity for transmitting programmes for a mass audience existed long before it was utilized. Indeed, for some time after popular broadcasting started in the 1920s, the radio was seen as 'little more than an experimental toy'. However, once radio manufacturers became aware of the potentially huge market, applications for setting up broadcasting stations expanded. This new development needed to be controlled, and the BBC emerged. This is not the place to go into the academic debates concerning the development of mass broadcasting, but merely to note the emergence of the BBC as the starting point for this form of mass media in Britain and elsewhere.

We will start our review by looking at some examples of early press reporting of particular and well-known crimes. Probably the most (in)famous of all Victorian crimes were the murders attributed to the serial killer Jack the Ripper. These crimes excited a mass interest at the time and still continue to intrigue, even though there have been many more prolific and brutal serial killers since – indeed doing a Google

search on 'Jack the Ripper' shows over two million online results. As Creaton (2003) puts it, 'why does one Victorian murderer still exert such world-wide fascination in an age hardly short of its own violent crime?' While a good deal of the interest in this case has been over the supposed identity of Jack the Ripper, we will refer briefly to how the crimes were reported. In 1888, five (or maybe six) prostitutes were killed and mutilated in the East End of London by an unknown murderer who was never caught. The public panic, fuelled by a 'media frenzy', according to Creaton, spread well beyond London. After four months the attacks ended. In his study *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, Curtis (2001) examined the role of newspaper reporting during the police search for the Ripper, focusing on 15 London-based papers. They were seen as playing a key role in heightening the public's alarm by portraying the East End as inherently dangerous. The press coverage emphasized and exaggerated the stereotypical view of the East End of London as being a 'crime and disease ridden, uncivilized "jungle" full of semi-barbarians' – with the press adopting the name Jack the Ripper (taken from a letter sent to the Central News Agency, almost certainly by a hoaxer after the fourth murder). And they turned the murders into a media event, assuming all the murders in that area were committed by the Ripper – only five of the nine murders in the Whitechapel area between 1887 and 1888 were eventually attributed to the Ripper, the others being just part of the routine brutality of the area. A great deal of newspaper column space was devoted to these crimes, with the newspapers varying in the amount of graphic detail they printed, with the emphasis being on the violent nature of the murders rather than the sexual aspects. The papers varied in their style of coverage according to their political allegiances, the Liberal and more radical press focusing on the police's incompetence to protect working-class Londoners and the Tory-leaning press seeing the crimes as evidence of a growing semi-criminal underclass. Curtis also highlights the speed with which the newspapers managed to get their stories to the public – for instance, the Sunday paper *Lloyd's Weekly* gained information about the murder of Catherine Eddowes at 2.10 a.m. on 30 September, 20 minutes after her body was found; and by 4.00 a.m. was able to print a special edition so the news could reach people's homes by breakfast that morning (impressive even by today's high-tech standards).

As mentioned above, there was a good deal of media speculation as to the identity of Jack the Ripper – speculation which has never been resolved. Some of this speculation was evidenced in the publicity surrounding other murder trials of the time. The trial of Florence Maybrick in Liverpool in 1889 for the murder of her husband James, as well as exciting a massive media interest around the marriage and affairs of the Maybricks and James Maybrick's use of arsenic, also led to suggestions that James Maybrick himself was Jack the Ripper. Although there has never been conclusive evidence for this suggestion, Maybrick was a Liverpool businessman who made regular overnight trips to London at the time of the Ripper killings which stopped after 1889, when James Maybrick was killed. There was an enormous public outcry at the conviction of Florence Maybrick which led to her death penalty being commuted to life imprisonment (she was eventually released from prison in 1904).

The almost mythical status attributed to Jack the Ripper is evidenced in the popularity of recent television crime series such as *Ripper Street* (2012–2016) and *Whitechapel* (2009–2013) as well as contemporary reporting of murders of prostitutes where the name Ripper is typically given to the murderer – especially when the killings are unfolding and the killer has not been found. So the series of murders in Yorkshire in the late 1970s led to the hunt for the ‘Yorkshire Ripper’ leading to the arrest and subsequent demonization of Peter Sutcliffe. Indeed the widespread fascination with these serial killings is evidenced in the massive media coverage that was given to the Yorkshire Ripper case and that is still generated by anything to do with Peter Sutcliffe over 30 years after his life sentence in May 1981. For instance, Sutcliffe’s relationship with ex-television personality and DJ Jimmy Savile was widely reported during the investigations into the alleged paedophilia of Savile, with headlines including, ‘Jimmy Savile was suspected of being the Yorkshire Ripper’ (*The Daily Telegraph*, 5 December 2012) and ‘Ripper: Savile is Innocent. Yorkshire Ripper Peter Sutcliffe insists his old mate Jimmy Savile is innocent’ (*The Sun*, 6 November 2012). More generally, as well as a Yorkshire Ripper website (www.yorkshireripper.co.uk) there have been numerous books and television programmes about Peter Sutcliffe (including *Wicked Beyond Belief* (Bilton 2003) and *Somebody’s Husband, Somebody’s Son* (Burn 1984)).

The more recent killings of five women in Suffolk within a short period of time in 2006 were accompanied by headlines displaying the same (lack of) originality, such as ‘Suffolk Ripper’s Rampage’ and ‘Suffolk Ripper Body Count’ (*The Sun*, 13 December 2006). In similar manner the arrest of Stephen Griffiths in 2010 for the murder of three prostitutes in Bradford (and as part of an investigation into several other murders) led to further use of the ‘Ripper’ tag – for example ‘Stephen Griffiths: Loner with a Ripper Obsession’ (*The Daily Telegraph*, 27 May 2010). The reporting of this Bradford case made great play of the fact that Griffiths was studying for a PhD in Criminology and of his obsession with the history of serial killers and his macabre collection of books and videos on killers such as Fred and Rose West and Ian Brady as well as the ‘original’ Jack the Ripper and the ‘Yorkshire Ripper’, Peter Sutcliffe.

QUESTION BREAK

Find two web sources of information on Jack the Ripper and his crimes. To what extent does their description focus on (a) the crime, (b) the criminal and (c) the victims?

Find two similar sources on the more recent cases of the ‘Yorkshire Ripper’ (1970s), the ‘Suffolk Ripper’ (2006) and the ‘Bradford Ripper’ (2010). Compare the coverage of these cases with the earlier one in terms of the crime, the offenders and the victims.

Of course, reporting of brutal and sensational crime was commonplace well before these late nineteenth-century murders; however, the development of a national daily press allowed for the unfolding of a crime story to be developed – and the activities of a serial killer certainly fitted into that category of crime reporting. Other crimes got massive press coverage, both in Britain and elsewhere. Cohen (1998) cites the brutal murder of New York prostitute Helen Jewett in 1836 as being the event that ‘inaugurated a sex-and-death sensationalism in news reporting’ – a style of reporting very typical of contemporary media accounts. Helen Jewett was an intriguing and mysterious figure who had a number of aliases that encouraged the press to try and outdo each other in trying to establish her identity. It turned out that Jewett was herself the source of the various different stories about her, fabricating versions of her life and circumstances to build up her clientele. Unlike many prostitutes of her time (and indeed of other times) Jewett had gained a good education and used this to establish working relationships with only selected, ‘suitable’ clients. However, this changed in April 1836 when one of her ‘suitors’ violently slashed her to death and set her brothel room on fire. The case became a classic who-done-it and encouraged the new style of reporting referred to above. As Cohen (1998) suggested:

Up until the 1830s, most standard newspapers were very low key about crime reporting, considering it to be beneath newsworthiness or else too local to put into print. But a new kind of newspaper had emerged by mid-decade, the penny press, a humorous, irreverent, and cheap daily paper that claimed crime as news. There were three or four such papers in competition with each other in New York City in 1836, and they latched onto the Jewett murder, taking different views of it as a way to pump up circulation figures.

Another popular form of nineteenth-century media reporting of crime was printed transcripts of court cases. Publishers of these transcripts chose trials that had particular appeal – those exposing the more bizarre, mysterious or humorous cases. Nowadays these trial pamphlets look rather quaint, but they certainly captured the public interest in their day. The one detailing the trial of Albert Tirrell in 1846 sold in large numbers. Tirrell was a young man from a respectable family who murdered a prostitute in Boston and set her brothel on fire; however, his ingenious lawyer convinced the jury that Tirrell had been sleepwalking. The Tirrell pamphlet went through a number of reprintings, selling over 80,000 copies in less than a month (Crain 2002).

Trial pamphlets included those dealing with divorce cases (divorce still being a relatively rare occurrence) as well as criminal trials. Trials that involved particularly gory murders and those involving celebrities were typically popular. Another example of a trial transcript cited by Crain was *The Trial of Hon. Daniel E. Sickles*. Sickles shot his wife’s lover Philip Barton Key, who was the son of the author of ‘The Star Spangled Banner’, giving the case a ‘celebrity angle’ as well. In addition to their entertainment value, the trial pamphlets were also used as evidence in court and cited as precedent in some cases.

So the penny press and trial pamphlets provided popular coverage of crime and criminal justice in the nineteenth century. Reporters were sent to court every day to write daily instalments, which were collected and issued as pamphlets at the end of the trial.

The interest generated by real-life crimes in these early days of newspaper reporting was reflected in the popularity of fictional crime representations. The most famous of these was the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Holmes first appeared in popular magazines in the late 1800s, with the short stories of his crime detecting attracting a tremendous following. Between 1887 and 1927 Holmes featured in four novels and 56 short stories; and his popularity has continued unabated since then and since Conan Doyle's death in 1930. There have been 47 feature films (most recently *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* in 2011) plus hundreds of television series and spin-offs centred around this fictional crime fighter. The overlap between fact and fiction in the reporting of nineteenth-century crime is indicated by the linking of real-life detectives with the fictional character of Holmes and for the role Holmes (through Conan Doyle's writing) played in the early developments in the forensic investigation of crime. One example of this was in the famous murder trial in 1915 which became known as the 'brides in the bath case'. This involved the trial of George Joseph Smith who, under a variety of aliases, married and then murdered his three wives by drowning them in baths. The case was solved by a young forensic pathologist, Bernard Spilsbury (later Sir Bernard Spilsbury), who was likened to Holmes for his application of the scientific mind to solving crime. Conan Doyle based the character of Holmes on Dr Joseph Bell who worked at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and was acknowledged for his ability to draw correct conclusions from the smallest observations.

Another aspect of the general interest in crime and punishment evidenced in the media was the reporting of public executions (see the question break box below).

QUESTION BREAK

Read the extract below adapted from Walliss (2013) and consider the questions that follow it.

The press reporting of public executions

On the 26 May 1867, Michael Barrett, a member of the Fenians, was executed outside Newgate Prison, for his part in the attempt to free fellow Fenians from the Middlesex House of Correction, Clerkenwell by planting a bomb against the walls of the prison in order to bring down its walls, thus releasing the prisoners. The bombing, however, failed; although it brought down

an eighteen-metre section of the wall, no prisoners escaped and the blast destroyed several houses opposite to the prison, killing twelve persons and injuring many more.

Barrett's execution was the last to take place in public. Following decades of parliamentary and public debate about capital punishment, executions were removed from public view in 1868 to inside prison walls, where they would continue until the abolition of capital punishment in 1965.

Public executions were great affairs that were greatly attended and widely reported in both the national and provincial presses, with provincial newspapers syndicating reports from the capital and other counties. The authorities intended executions to be highly ritualised, hoping that those who witnessed the 'lesson on the scaffold' would then avoid a life of crime. Central to this was the penitent behaviour of the condemned on the scaffold, and any confession or last words they uttered – this being reported, as verbatim as possible in the press:

Much of the night previous to their execution was passed in prayer and devotional reading . . . Fortis [a prisoner who was to be executed], with much natural and impassioned eloquence, addressed his fellow prisoners in a long and well-adapted exhortation, which he thus concluded: 'In a few minutes I shall be no more: remember my dear fellow prisoners the dying words of poor George Fortis; and may God bless you, and have mercy on you all!' They then took an affecting leave of their companions in confinement, and thanked the Governor for his kindness and humanity. Upon reaching the scaffold . . . Fortis, with a loud voice, repeated part of his exhortation at chapel.

(‘Execution’, *Norfolk Chronicle*, 20 April 1822, p. 2)

The reality, however, was often different. Crowds were often raucous, their behaviour more akin to a fair or a modern music festival than the air of solemnity intended by authorities. Newspapers would regularly bemoan how crowds would sing, chant bawdy phrases, or throw someone's hat in the air and laugh as it was thrown around the crowd. In other cases, members of the crowd would be lifted onto the heads of the packed mass, and would then be passed forward like a modern 'crowd surfer'. Bored crowds would also amuse themselves by throwing clods of earth at each other, or start fights with each other, and there was always the constant danger of pickpockets. Indeed, even the call for 'hats off!' when the condemned came out on the scaffold was motivated more by the desire to not have one's view blocked, than any sense of solemnity.

In other cases, the condemned would reject the ritual of the execution, and attempt to die 'game', either by denying their guilt to the last or, through

their behaviour, undermining the theatre of execution. A particular notable example of this phenomenon was James Taylor, executed in Salisbury in March 1841 for the execution of his wife. The *Berkshire Chronicle* reported how ‘during the interim between the unhappy man’s sentence and execution, he has conducted himself in a manner most extra ordinary’:

His conversation was blasphemous, lewd, and insulting to the authorities – justification of his own conduct, and determination not to repent. Even on his last day, his first words were imprecations, alleging that the workmen were lazy fellows for not coming and putting up his drop (the scaffold) at an earlier hour . . . Finding that it was his determination to display this conduct to the last, the under-sheriff and other officers were resolved to allow him no time to corrupt the public morals on the scaffold, and a few minutes before twelve o’clock the prison bell announced the approaching time of his dissolution . . . He arrived on the fatal spot without betraying any very evident symptoms of intimidation, and went readily and placed himself under the fearful beam, saying in a hurried manner – ‘Ladies and gentleman, I am very glad to see so many of you present – such a grand assemblage of people to see me hanged! And mind, if you ever any of you go a robbing, be sure and take a double-barrelled gun with you to murder all you can! – and mind and do it as it should be . . . I am glad I killed my wife, and I don’t mind being hanged’ – (here the executioner drew the cap over his eyes, and the unhappy man resumed) – ‘I don’t care for that, I can keep on talking. Oh! What a pleasant view – what a grand sight. I likes this sort of fun!’ At this moment the bolt was withdrawn, and he was launched into eternity.

(‘Public Execution of James Taylor,
for the Murder of His Wife’,
Berkshire Chronicle, 20 March 1841, p. 4)

Newspapers, however, did not only report executions, but they debated them through editorials and by publishing letters from members of the public. Perhaps the most famous such letter was that published by Charles Dickens in *The Times*, describing the execution of Frederick and Marie Manning in November 1849:

Sir – I was a witness of the execution at Horsemonger-lane this morning. I went there with the intention of observing the crowd gathered to behold it, and I had excellent opportunities of doing so, at intervals all through the night, and continuously from daybreak until after the spectacle was over.

I believe that a sight so inconceivably awful as the wickedness and levity of the immense crowd collected at that execution this morning could be

imagined by no man, and could be presented in no heathen land under the sun. The horrors of the gibbet and of the crime which brought the wretched murderers to it, faded in my mind before the atrocious bearing, looks and language, of the assembled spectators . . . When the day dawned, thieves, low prostitutes, ruffians and vagabonds of every kind, flocked on to the ground, with every variety of offensive and foul behaviour . . . When the two miserable creatures who attracted all this ghastly sight about them were turned quivering into the air, there was no more emotion, no more pity, no more thought that two immortal souls had gone to judgment, no more restraint in any of the previous obscenities, than if the name of Christ had never been heard in this world, and there were no belief among men but that they perished like the beasts.

I am solemnly convinced that nothing that ingenuity could devise to be done in this city, in the same compass of time, could work such ruin as one public execution, and I stand astounded and appalled by the wickedness it exhibits. I do not believe that any community can prosper where such a scene of horror and demoralization as was enacted this morning outside Horsemonger-lane Gaol is presented at the very doors of good citizens, and is passed by, unknown or forgotten.

(Charles Dickens, 'To the Editor of *The Times*',
The Times, 14 November 1849, p. 4.)

QUESTIONS

- Why do you think newspapers published reports of executions? Do you think that there are any parallels with our own contemporary media?
- Newspapers often related their life of the criminal and their last words in their execution reportage. Why do you think they did this?
- What do you think execution reports can tell us about attitudes to crime and the criminal justice process in the past?

Moving away from the specifics of the nineteenth-century reporting of crime, in a renowned and widely cited study of the history of street crime in Britain, Geoffrey Pearson (1983) examined the way the popular media had described and reported crime and criminals over the last 200 or so years. He argued that popular accounts of crime showed how important it was not to view criminality in modern society as a new or unique problem. In a journey back through the history of crime and delinquency and of the popular responses to it, Pearson shows that for generations, Britain has been plagued by the same problems and fears. As his historical account

made extensive use of contemporary journalistic reporting of crime, it is worth considering Pearson's study in a little detail. His history of street crime starts by looking at current accounts of youth crime – and as the book was published in 1983, this period was the late 1970s and early 1980s. Pearson argues that as each generation tends to look back with nostalgia and fondness to the recent past, it is sensible to start with present-day society and compare it with the situation a generation previously, and to compare that generation with its predecessor and so on. While there are bound to be methodological difficulties in comparing different periods of time – given the changing definitions of crime and the lack of adequate records of crime in previous times – an impression of the extent and form of street crime and, particularly, of the popular concerns about it, can be gained by looking at contemporary media accounts.

QUESTION BREAK

Before the summary of Pearson's study below, think about the images of youth at different periods of history.

How are youths typically portrayed in the media today? (Consider newspaper and television representations.)

Going back a generation, how would you describe the youth of the 1970s? What media images can you recall of 1970s youth?

Do the same for youth of the 1960s and 1950s.

As mentioned, Pearson starts his history by looking at the 'fears' of crime, and how they were reported, in the early 1980s – indeed the subtitle of his study is 'a history of respectable fears'. Here we will just provide a few newspaper headlines and comments from some of the periods Pearson considered. His study, then, commences with concerns over the inner-city riots or disorders of 1980 and 1981 and the popular media interpretation of these events as demonstrating a new and previously unknown violence in Britain. As the *Daily Express* put it in July 1981, 'there has been a revulsion of authority and discipline . . . there has been a permissive revolution . . . and now we all reap the whirlwind' and 'People are bound to ask what is happening to our country . . . having been one of the most law-abiding countries in the world – a byword for stability, order and decency – are we changing into somewhere else?' In similar vein, in March 1982, *The Daily Telegraph* was suggesting that 'we need to consider why the peaceful people of England are changing . . . over the 200 years up to 1945, Britain became so settled in internal peace'. Indeed, Pearson points to the consistently expressed view that Britain's history has been based on stability and decency and that the moderate 'British way of life' is being undermined by an upsurge in delinquency.

However, 20 years or so previously, we find remarkably similar comments and press accounts. Youth subcultures such as the Teddy Boys in the 1950s and Mods and Rockers in the early 1960s were arousing similarly apocalyptic warnings of the end of 'civilized' British society. The reaction to the Teddy Boys was one of outrage and panic, with the press printing sensational reports of violence at cinemas and concerts featuring rock and roll films and music. An article in the London *Evening News* of 1954 suggested that

Teddy Boys . . . are all of unsound mind in the sense that they are all suffering from a form of psychosis. Apart from the birch or the rope, depending on the gravity of their crimes, what they need is rehabilitation in a psychopathic institution.

And this sort of reaction was widespread; Teddy Boys were viewed by the rest of society as 'folk devils', to use Stan Cohen's phrase (see p. 50), and off-duty soldiers were banned from wearing Teddy Boy suits (1972). Nowadays, when we look back at old photographs and films of these youth subcultures, it is difficult to imagine what all the fuss was about and groups such as the Teddy Boys are remembered with a degree of nostalgia – however, the hostile reaction and panic at the time was real and is illustrated by the media of the day.

The Mods and Rockers of the early 1960s excited similar media reaction. In a now famous comment, made during a press conference scene shown in The Beatles' movie *A Hard Day's Night*, Ringo Starr responded that he was a 'Mocker' in response to being asked whether he was a Mod or a Rocker. This was at a time when those youth groups were beginning to be news and the media of the day played a big part in creating this (and other) divisions within British youth culture. At a time when the Hell's Angels were gaining publicity and notoriety in the USA, the British press were looking for an equivalent. The phenomenon of scooter gangs – the Mods – versus motorbike gangs – the Rockers – was developed (if not caused) by the press reports of two days of comparatively mild violence in Clacton, Essex, over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend of 1964. Headlines such as 'Wild Ones Invade Seaside' and 'Day of Terror by Scooter Groups' were followed up by television and newspaper reporting of clashes between youth groups and the police at Margate over the May Bank Holiday – with the *Daily Mirror*, May 1964 front-page headline, 'Wild Ones "Beat Up" Margate', illustrating the tone of this reporting. The media response to and reporting of these post-war youth subcultures is discussed in more detail in relation to Stan Cohen's work on moral panics later (1972) (see pp. 50–55).

Returning to Pearson's (1983) historical overview, his study then looks back to the 1920s and 1930s to see if Britain before the Second World War was a more stable and law-abiding society, given that the war has sometimes been seen as a kind of watershed with the post-war period viewed as morally inferior to the 'life and culture of pre-war England'. However, when we look more closely at this period, familiar allegations and concerns appear, with the media homing in on

similar targets of criticism such as football hooliganism and increasing crime and disorder. As *The Times* put it in 1937, 'There has been a tendency of late to paint a rather alarming picture of the depravity of the youth of the nation . . . Headlines scream the menace of "boy gangsters"'. It is clear that crime was rife in the inter-war years and was characterized by razor gangs, feuds between armed gangsters, vice rackets and so on.

Moving back to the late 1800s and early 1900s there is little evidence of the traditional British way of life based on a 'healthy respect for law and order' and as ever the youth of the day were compared unfavourably with previous generations. Indeed, Pearson describes the founding of the Boy Scout movement by Baden-Powell as a response to the widely held feeling that British youth were a major problem. In *Scouting for Boys*, published in 1908, Baden-Powell comments that:

We have at the present time in Great Britain 2 million boys of whom a quarter to a half a million are under good influence outside their school walls . . . The remainder are drifting towards 'hooliganism' or bad citizenship.

It was in the late 1890s that the words 'hooligan' and 'hooliganism' were first used to describe delinquent youth and there were regular newspaper reports of hooligan gangs smashing up coffee stalls and public houses, robbing and assaulting old ladies, foreigners and the police. As with many later youth subcultures and gangs, the hooligans had a distinct look and style of dress and were no doubt overreacted to – although, again, at the time the media and public reaction was one of alarm and panic.

Earlier in the Victorian period, in the 1860s, a major panic swept through respectable London over a new type of crime called 'garotting', a type of violent robbery that involved choking the victim. The press of the time reacted in familiar style, with *The Times* observing that it was 'becoming unsafe for a man to traverse certain parts of London at night'.

Similarly, it does not seem to be the case that it was industrialization that destroyed a stable and peaceful pre-industrial Britain – from the late seventeenth century there were complaints of increasing crime and disorder, while the streets of London were extremely dangerous, with no effective system of street lighting nor a police force.

Time and again, then, a permissive present is contrasted with the not too distant past and if such accusations were accepted uncritically, we would be forced to conclude that with each generation crime and disorder have increased dramatically. Looking back over Pearson's historical review it is difficult to believe that Britain's cities are any more perilous nowadays than those of pre-industrial Britain or when they were frequented by garotters and hooligans. What Pearson shows is that a pre-occupation with violence and lawlessness is part of a long tradition, rather than a uniquely modern phenomenon, and that media commentaries have taken a similarly outraged and moralistic stance over many years.

In a more recent analysis of press reporting of crime, Reiner *et al.* (2003) looked at the media reporting of crime from the end of the Second World War in 1945 to the 1990s. In particular, they analysed samples of stories from *The Times* and the *Daily Mirror*, in order to compare a 'quality/broadsheet' paper with a 'popular/tabloid' one. They considered a random 10 per cent of all home news stories between 1945 and 1991 as the basis for their analysis. Their study was set in the context of a review of previous work on media representations of crime, whereby they highlighted certain distinctive characteristics of the media reporting of crime stories. Reiner and colleagues aimed to consider whether their content analysis supported these general findings.

These key characteristics of the media reporting of crime stories are summarized below:

- Both news (factual) and entertainment (fictional) crime stories are prominent in all media.
- These stories overwhelmingly focus on serious violent crime, especially murder.
- Offenders and victims in these stories are of higher status and older than actual offenders and victims (as processed by the criminal justice system).
- The risks of crime are portrayed as more serious than the actual figures on victimization would indicate.
- The effectiveness of the police and the wider criminal justice system tends to be shown in a positive light.
- Stories focus on specific cases and events rather than on general trends or policy issues.

(adapted from Reiner *et al.* 2003, pp. 15–16)

Without going into great detail on their study, Reiner and colleagues found that the reporting of violent crime was as great in *The Times* as in the *Daily Mirror*, although the reporting of sex offences was slightly lower. Over the period of their study, they found that the reporting of property crime declined markedly and was only rarely reported at the end of the period unless such crime related to celebrities or had some particularly unusual features. This is in contrast to the fact that over 90 per cent of officially reported crime is property crime. Fraud stories were reported more frequently in *The Times* than the *Daily Mirror*, as were drug offences. In relation to the list of general characteristics highlighted above, the majority of offenders in the crime reports were older than the official figures would suggest and of a higher social status. Overall, they found that

the pattern of crime news found in previous studies holds for most of the half-century we studied – but even more so . . . Crime in the news is overwhelmingly violent . . . Perpetrators and victims are typically older and higher in social status than their counterparts in the official statistics. The police are presented as honest and effective guardians of the public against crime.

(Reiner *et al.* 2003, p. 24)

QUESTION BREAK

Look at two current newspapers from the same day (possibly use the ones suggested for the question break on p. 2 – a ‘popular’ and a ‘quality’ newspaper).

Compare their reporting of crime stories to the findings of Reiner *et al.* (2003) and consider the extent to which they support the differences between quality and popular newspapers referred to above.

One aspect of this study, the reporting of victims of crime, did indicate a significant change in approach over the period of the study. They referred to a case of serious child abuse reported in the *Daily Mirror* in 1945 – after detailing the injuries to a two-year-old girl the majority of the story focused on the offender, who was sentenced to six months hard labour and whose behaviour was explained by the suffering he endured in the war. Reiner and colleagues point out the absence of any demonization of the offender and the concern with understanding his point of view. Recent cases of child abuse are reported in a very different manner, with much more emotional language to emphasize the offender’s evilness (see Chapter 3, pp. 72–77).

Greer and Reiner (2012) refer to a study that analysed the reporting of homicides in three British newspapers (Peelo *et al.* 2004). It found that sexual homicides were most likely to be reported in all three newspapers with the least likely reported being the most common homicides, those arising from an argument or rage. The characteristics of the victims were also linked to the likelihood of reporting, with children, female or ‘higher status’ victims more likely to be reported.

Another aspect of the role of the media in relation to crime is the way in which the media can be used to appeal to the public for help in solving crimes. This aspect of the media’s role is discussed later when we look at the relationship between the media and the police (see pp. 163–175). It can, however, lead to bizarre situations where those appealing for help with solving the crime turn out to be the perpetrators of that crime. This was evidenced most recently in the tearful appeal of Mairead and Mick Philpott after a house fire killed six of their children in Derby in 2012; and which was followed shortly afterwards by their being arrested and subsequently charged with murder.

In the following chapters, we will be referring to the reporting of particular crimes to illustrate wider arguments and to comment on, for example, moral panics, media portrayal of criminals and victims and of criminal justice agencies. It is clear that certain crimes become massive media stories and capture the interest and mood of a particular time. Studying the manner of the reporting of these crimes is essential for an understanding of the relationship between the media and crime and here we will refer briefly to such ‘signal crimes’ (Innes 2003).

Recent such crimes in Britain include the killings of Rhys Jones (2007), Anthony Walker (2005), Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in Soham (2002), Damilola

Taylor (2000), Sarah Payne (2000), Stephen Lawrence (1993) and James Bulger (1993). In all these cases, the victims were children/youths and the detailed and extensive media reporting led to a social reaction that seemed to go well beyond the cases themselves. They lead to, as Innes puts it, ‘widespread popular concern that it signals that something is wrong with British society and its criminal justice process, which requires some sort of corrective response’ (2003, p. 51). Innes defines signal crimes as ‘events that, in addition to affecting the immediate participants (i.e. victims, witnesses, offenders) and those known to them, impact in some way upon a wider audience’. Such crimes are responded to with decisions to do something about preventing such crimes in future through more policing, better risk-avoidance techniques, situational crime-prevention measures, and so on.

The response to such crimes overlaps with the notion of moral panics (Cohen 1972 and see Chapter 3) and the way in which the media present key factors as representing a symbolically loaded ‘crime problem’ which then leads to the wider population, egged on by the media, demanding that something be done, typically through widening the ‘social control net’ (Cohen 1985). In concluding his discussion, Innes argues that, in order to understand such signal crimes, it is necessary to examine the role of journalists and broadcasters in relation to the activities of the police and criminal justice system, with the police, for instance, often actively encouraging media publicity for a case so as to assist them in their detection work. Indeed, it is often in the interests of both detectives and journalists to work together to, on the one hand, get help in ‘cracking’ the case and, on the other hand, to get a ‘newsworthy’ story. However, such collaboration will, according to Innes, amplify the signal value of a crime and ‘either intentionally or unintentionally transform it into a focal point for public concerns about crime and crime control’.

These signal crimes, though, do not just relate to child or youthful victims, who are perceived as innocent and/or defenceless, and we will finish by considering the coverage of the recent murders of prostitutes in and around Ipswich, Suffolk, in 2006 and in Bradford in 2010.

QUESTION BREAK

The Suffolk and Bradford Ripper murders – 2006 and 2010

As mentioned, it is conventional and sensible to compare the coverage of a particular event or crime provided in different media representations – in this case from the BBC and in quality newspapers and popular newspapers – in old terminology to compare a broadsheet with a tabloid (although the quality newspapers in Britain have now abandoned the broadsheet format).

Below, we include extracts from *The Sun*, the *Daily Mail*, the BBC News and *The Guardian*. Read them and consider the questions at the end.

Suffolk Ripper Body Count Rises

The bodies of two more victims of the Suffolk Ripper were found yesterday – taking the monster's grim tally to FIVE.

The dead girls are thought to be missing Ipswich hookers Annette Nicholls, 29, and Paula Clennell, 24.

Shaken cops described the shocking speed at which the fiend is claiming his victims as 'unprecedented'. He has murdered the five prostitutes – all were Heroin addicts and three were mothers – in less than six weeks.

By comparison, it took Yorkshire Ripper Peter Sutcliffe SIX YEARS to kill the first five of his 13 victims. And his reign of terror in the 1970s and 1980s spanned a total of 11 years . . .

The spree has already equalled the toll of the original Ripper – Jack, who strangled prostitutes in London in 1888 . . .

It is thought the Suffolk monster murders girls, then STORES their bodies before disposing of them at the dead of night from his car or van . . .

Experts offered a series of theories about the Ripper's motives and actions. Psychologist Dr Wilson, 63, said: 'The killer seems to have embarked on a rampage – a kind of pre-Christmas spree . . . He seems to be racing against time to kill as many times as possible before he is caught. And he is certainly not going to stop until he is caught. He is killing at a much faster rate than Peter Sutcliffe did, possibly because he fears he could get caught at any moment and wants to pack in as much excitement as possible'.

(Troop J. and Sullivan M., *The Sun*, 13 December 2006)

Snatched, Killed and Discarded

The man walking along Old Felixstowe Road, near the village of Levington, could not be sure at first. In the failing light he stepped off the road and approached the darkened form. Only then was he sure. She was naked, lying in the wet scrubland where she had been dumped. It was 3.05 pm. Forty minutes later a police helicopter hovered over the open ground south of Ipswich as detectives sealed off the area and covered the body with tarpaulin . . .

Within a few minutes the worst suspicions of police officers in Suffolk were confirmed. Any lingering hope that this was not a serial killer disappeared in the late afternoon with the discovery of the suspected fourth and fifth victims of a predator on an apparent mission to murder young women who work in the red light area of the East Anglian town.

What they were witnessing, Detective Chief Superintendent Stewart Gill said, was what he called a 'crime in action' . . .

'This is an unprecedented inquiry', said the chief constable of Suffolk police, Alistair McWhirter. 'When you look back to the Yorkshire Ripper, you are talking about murders carried out over months and years'.

Last night Suffolk police were faced with the task of investigating five murders. Already overstretched, the small force called in a senior Metropolitan police commander, Dave Johnston, an experienced homicide detective . . .

As detectives worked through the night, they could not disguise their shock at the sudden increase in the speed of the killings, fearing that as they spoke another woman could be attacked.

(Laville S., *The Guardian*, 13 December 2006)

Man Held Over Suffolk Murders

Police today arrested a man on suspicion of murdering five women working as prostitutes in the Ipswich area. The 37-year-old man, named in a series of reports as Tom Stephens, a supermarket worker, was arrested at his home near Felixstowe, Suffolk, early this morning. Detective Chief Superintendent Stewart Gull told a news conference. 'Detectives investigating the murder of five women in the Ipswich area have today, Monday 18 December 2006, arrested a man', he said in a brief statement read out to reporters . . .

Police sealed off Jubilee Close, a small street of semidetached suburban houses in Trimley, where Mr Stephens lives. Officers later erected a protective screen around the front of the building as forensic examinations began inside. Yesterday's Sunday Mirror carried a lengthy interview with Mr Stephens in which he admitted having used the services of the murdered women and said he was a suspect, though he strongly maintained his innocence . . . 'I am a friend of all the girls', said Mr Stephens, who told the paper he had begun seeing prostitutes 18 months ago, after his eight-year marriage ended. He added: 'I don't have alibis for some of the times. From the police profiling it does look like me – white, male between 25 and 40, knows the area, works strange hours. The bodies have got close to my house', he told the paper, adding that police had already questioned him four times. The first interview had taken place days after Miss Nicol was reported missing on 30 October, he said . . .

Asked in the interview why he thought he could be arrested, Stephens said: 'I would have complete opportunity, the girls would have trusted me so much . . . I know I am innocent and I am completely confident it won't go as far as me being charged', he added.

(*The Guardian*, 18 December 2006)

'Horrific' flat of Bradford killer Stephen Griffiths

Stephen Griffiths had been seeing Zeta Pinder for almost two years before he let her step inside his home for the first time. What she found there horrified her so much that she immediately wanted to end their relationship. Shelves carrying hundreds of horror films, books about serial killers and the sight of a crossbow and samurai swords in the living room made her feel 'really scared' and desperate to leave. She ended the relationship over the telephone as soon as she arrived home and did not see Griffiths again. Ten years on, Mrs Pinder was watching the news when she saw her ex-boyfriend had been arrested on suspicion of murdering three women in Bradford . . .

Mrs Pinder met Griffiths through a lonely hearts column in a newspaper and they had their first date in a local pub. She said: '{He was} very charming. He brought a photograph of himself which he gave me straight away, said he'd had them done professionally . . . I was laughing and called him a poser'. Mrs Pinder said the couple enjoyed a 'normal, typical relationship', but she did find some of Griffiths's behaviour disturbing. She said: 'He had a thing about horror films. But he'd think they were really funny, the really horrible slasher horror films . . . and when somebody got murdered he'd just laugh his head off and go: "Great look at that"'.

(BBC News, 21 December 2010, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bradford-west-yorkshire-11985080)

Bizarre double life or murder suspect: Privately educated loner studying PhD is charged with murder of three prostitutes

The man charged with the Bradford prostitute murders attended one of the leading private schools, it has emerged. Stephen Griffiths . . . benefited from a high quality education at a £9,000-a-year day school and went on to a top university. Despite a fine start in life, the criminology student soon became obsessed with the history of serial killers and descended into a seedy, internet-addicted existence . . . In addition his parents split up when he was young . . . Griffiths was arrested on Monday after police were handed graphic CCTV footage showing a prostitute being killed. Body parts of missing prostitute Suzanne Blamires, 36, were later found dumped in bags in a river.

(Daily Mail, 29 May 2010)

QUESTIONS

- How would you describe the style of reporting of these murders by each newspaper/website?
- What similarities are there? What differences?

FURTHER READING

- Pearson G. (1983) *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears*, London: Macmillan. This excellent history of crime and responses to it is based around contemporary media accounts of crime, and particularly newspaper reporting, at different periods of time.
- Reiner R., Livingstone S. and Allen J. (2003) 'From Law and Order to Lynch Mobs: Crime News since the Second World War', in Mason P. (ed.), *Criminal Visions*, Cullompton, UK: Willan Publishing. This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of crime news reporting since 1945 based on a sample of stories from *The Times* and the *Daily Mirror*.
- Sharpe J. A. (1999) *Crime in Early Modern England 1550–1750*, 2nd edn, Harlow: Longman. A detailed analysis of crime and punishment and how it was represented in the period specified.

THE INVENTION OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

Women's Studies is arguably the most revolutionary new field of intellectual inquiry of our current age. In its early form Women's Studies brought all of women's experience under the scholarly microscope, subjecting it to the most advanced scientific methods available in the university. Researchers would dig up facts and develop insights about that experience and then teachers and students looked at the findings coming from an array of disciplines, processing and often perfecting them. Women's Studies programs include almost every perspective—from the natural sciences to the social sciences, from law to the arts. This breadth makes Women's Studies the most wide-ranging of academic fields. Its rich diversity provides the judgments, research, and energy of a broad group of scholars and students. They advance and constantly transform the discipline.

Women's Studies is a global undertaking. It began almost simultaneously around the world. Ewha University in Seoul, South Korea began its first Women's Studies program in 1977. In the United States, Cornell University and California State University—San Diego began Women's Studies programs in 1969; more generally in the United States, Women's Studies went from several courses in individual universities across the country late in the

1960s to more than 600 degree granting majors and programs today. India established vigorous Women's Studies research early in the 1970s and became one of the most active countries in the world to investigate women's experience and thought. Even this phenomenal growth hardly captures the energy that continues to motivate those in Women's Studies.

The founding of Women's Studies was full of drama, as the enthusiasm of the first students and teachers met with disapproval from the male university establishment in the West. Some non-Western governments pushed for Women's Studies programs as part of their new-found independence from imperial control. The 1970s and 1980s saw women at the global grassroots challenging established dictators. At the time, celebrated Western intellectuals in socio-biology and anthropology were asserting women's biological and intellectual inferiority as scientific fact. They pointed, in contrast, to the risk-taking and intellectual originality of men. Women's Studies was a fad, other naysayers claimed, and one without the slightest intellectual merit. The field was simply gynecological politics, according to many. Yet, after several millennia of women's being seen as simply unworthy of consideration, Women's Studies inquiry emerged to take the innovative path that it still pursues today.

WOMEN'S STUDIES: WHAT IS IT?

Women's Studies is not exactly new. Despite public and professional neglect, for centuries there have been histories of women, anthologies of women's literary writing, statistical and sociological studies of such topics as the working conditions of women and the organization of family life. The African oral history tradition had long celebrated noble, accomplished women. Written studies from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries that included women were mostly produced by amateurs. They often found appreciative women readers and even received praise male commentators. Yet not everyone applauded. Consider the case of Lucy Maynard Salmon who taught an early form of Women's Studies at Vassar College until the 1920s. Salmon had trained with the great scholars of her day, including Woodrow Wilson, who would

become US president in 1913. Salmon's master's thesis on the appointing powers of American presidents won a national prize. After that, however, professional scholars disapproved when she began writing about domestic service, kitchens, cookbooks, and outdoor museums that displayed farm houses and household tools. She was interdisciplinary and used methods that historians, art historians, sociologists, and others use today in their study of women. At the time, however, young male teachers tried to get her fired from her post as department chair even as others began adopting some of her methods. Salmon was an unsung pioneer in Women's Studies, inspiring methodological creativity.

In the late 1960s, some half a century after Salmon's retirement, individual courses took shape in Canada, Great Britain, the United States, India, and elsewhere around the world to investigate women's literature, history, and psychology and to look at them through the lens of the professional lens of sociology, economics, and politics. Scholars probed their disciplines for evidence on women and came up with astonishing material such as criminal and work records, diaries and account books, reports on fertility, health, and activism. What was most astonishing is that disciplines had almost unanimously claimed no such evidence existed and that studies of women in most fields were impossible because traces of their existence simply did not exist. We know the outcome: essays, anthologies, monographs, novels, and ultimately reference works came rolling off the presses; databases and online bibliographies came into being; encyclopedias and biographical dictionaries produced millions of words and multiple volumes, all of them testifying to the infinite amount of facts, works of art, writing, scientific material, and philosophical thought by women. Hundreds of thousands of books sold, and within a few years Women's Studies was thriving.

Almost immediately, the new Women's Studies curriculum of the 1970s galvanized teachers in individual disciplines to mainstream this new information—that is, to add it to the content of regular courses. The floodgates of knowledge opened. At the beginning, Women's Studies came to offer a cafeteria-like array of disciplinary investigations of the past and present conditions under which women experienced, acted, and reflected upon the world.

Initially the field mounted courses in women in the arts, the sociology of women and sex roles, women in politics, and the history of women—to name a few of the offerings. Such courses were revolutionary simply because they explicitly brought the study of women into an academic curriculum that was almost exclusively about men. There came to be more to the field of Women's Studies—in fact, much, much more. This book presents some of yesterday's and many of today's concerns and achievements.

Created as a comprehensive field, programs in Women's Studies attract tens of thousands of students worldwide, and these students come from every conceivable discipline. In my own Women's Studies courses, women, trans individuals, and men from psychology, social work, education, engineering, the sciences, and literature make the classroom a lively place as they share expertise and debate ideas with other students from history, the arts, and politics, all sharing wildly different points of view. From the beginning Women's Studies engaged those who were the most intellectually adventurous, whether the course took place in Seoul, South Korea or Los Angeles, United States. In short, Women's Studies is a global scholarly enterprise with sparks of energy crossing the disciplines and building varied communities of students and teachers. All this makes Women's Studies an exciting and innovative program of study.

It is hard to recapture the ignorance of women's achievements that existed in those days when Women's Studies was founded. Many of us, for example, could not name five notable women from the past or five major women authors. We were utterly ignorant of women's major role in activism—whether political or economic. The 1970s was Women's Studies' "age of discovery." Whereas some fields of study such as philosophy go back millennia, it was only recently that Women's Studies came into being as a coherent program. Often they began with experts in history and literature, who re-educated themselves to investigate women. Sometimes pioneers in sociology and literature team-taught to bring a comparative perspective to their initial study of women. They looked for exemplary and forgotten women writers or women actors in historical events such as revolutions and strikes. Women's Studies also focused on social scientific investigation of women in the workforce

or the underground economy or women in political parties—but again, with many instructors building their own expertise. The idea behind social scientific investigation was to uncover structures, create models, or to discover the ways in which social roles operated and were created. Ignorance among academics on issues such as gender inequity in the workforce was phenomenal—although women in trade unions were all too aware. Behind such investigations there was often an urgency to remedy what was seen as discrimination and the “oppression” of women through fact-finding.

Over the decades Women’s Studies has changed from an initial cluster of fledgling courses springing up in a few colleges and universities to populous programs with majors and graduate curricula. Whereas Women’s Studies started in undergraduate education, new findings entered elementary and high schools, transforming the curriculum. Feminists criticized the ordinary curricula in schools for the complete lack of information on women. They also blamed schools for fostering traditional sex roles, which gave young girls the idea that they only had one course in their lives: to be a wife and mother. Women’s Studies showed options in the many contributions that women had made to society and the many ways in which they had made those contributions. Women’s Studies investigations also gave hard evidence of the bias toward boys and young men in education. For example, they received more feedback when they talked in class and were said to be “brilliant” whereas girls and young women were characterized as “hard-working.” Additional scholarship by Women’s Studies researchers in the 1970s showed that in schools an essay with a boy’s name attached to it consistently received a higher grade than an identical essay with a girl’s name attached—a fact that remains true today. Women’s Studies findings sparked attempts to even the playing field for girls and young women as they progressed through the curriculum. The 1970s became an eye-opening time for everyone concerned with fairness, citizenship, and equal opportunity.

Along the way, Women’s Studies itself changed in its content and even its personnel, as we will see in the chapters that follow. Soon after cobbling together a curriculum of individual courses from the disciplines, Women’s Studies brought the various forms of inquiry under one umbrella and asked that the individual forms of

inquiry join in working with others. From a cluster of courses, Women's Studies became an international phenomenon with journals published and read internationally and with a subject matter in constant evolution. From a program that sometimes did not want male students, it found itself engaging women and men alike in classrooms and in research. It branched out to adult education courses and to technical, law, and business schools. It embraced the study not just of women but of gender. Finally, in some cases Women's Studies has changed its name and identity over the decades, going from Women's Studies to Women's and Gender Studies and sometimes becoming Gender Studies, Feminist Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, or simply Sexuality Studies. Women's Studies multiplied and became diverse, highlighting variety in national and international meetings and associations. This evolving, sometimes contested, identity will be traced in the chapters of this book.

FEMINIST ROOTS OF WOMEN'S STUDIES: A BRIEF LOOK BACK

As we may know, the late 1960s and 1970s in the West were the heyday of what is sometimes called "second wave feminism." There was noisy activism around the world for equal pay, control of women's reproduction, an end to violence against women, and women's under-representation in politics and public affairs as elected officials. Women also wanted access to good jobs and an end to discrimination in the workforce. Many countries were concerned with women's poverty, women's brutalization in the household, and sexual abuse not only of women but of girls and boys. This list of concerns was long and the activism earnest and sincere. In some cases, the problems were so glaring that governments found themselves forced to pay attention and even change policies both to protect and to advance the well-being of women.

Before this activism came the "first feminist wave," which occurred in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when women around the world organized to gain basic rights such as the right to own property (including the wages they earned), to receive an education, to appear as witnesses in court, to bring suits against

aggressors, and to have the same political rights men, such as the vote. During the “first wave,” many women became avid readers of novels and their own histories. They participated in clubs, discussion groups, and politics. Women in Egypt, India, and other colonized countries sought reforms not only for their own sake but to show that their countries were as modern as the imperial powers. In 1905, one Bengali woman, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, wrote a short story, “Sultana’s Dream,” describing how very advanced her country would be if women ruled: gone was deadly warfare. Instead the women rulers of “Ladyland” defeated the nation’s enemies by harnessing the sun’s powers to drive them back; in Hossain’s world there was technological efficiency and, because of it, harmonious rule. Many men in nationalist movements, including Hossain’s husband, supported women’s efforts because they too saw an improved status of women as making a strong statement about the nation’s fitness for self-rule.

In the long run, World War I (1914–1918) brought the vote to many women in the West (though not in populous European states such as Italy and France). After 1945, full independence for countries such as Vietnam and Egypt, where women had played major activist roles in anti-imperialist movements, resulted in few specific advances for women. The goal of independence meant everything—including a sense of belonging—and it took energy and funds to nation-build. For many women the goal of equality was a distant dream and they contented themselves with freedom. Likewise, in the West, the vote hardly brought permanent improvement in conditions for women. Instead, “first wave feminism” seemed to weaken as a public phenomenon. Yet, union women and civil service workers kept agitating for fair wages in the 1940s and 1950s while gay and lesbian activists lobbied quietly for basic human rights.

There was additional movement below the surface. Research and writing about women’s literature and women’s history continued, and “liberated” women around the world loved reading such works in translation as John Stuart Mill’s *On the Subjection of Women*, which boldly advocated for women’s equality and rights. In 1926, Arthur Waley published a translation of Lady Murasaki’s *Tale of Genji*, an eleventh-century classic of men, women, and

court life in Japan. American author Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth* (1931) was translated into more than thirty languages, while Chinese novelist Pa Chin's *Family*—filled with oppressed women characters—was equally read worldwide. There were, most importantly, women's periodicals around the world that published researched articles full of statistics on their status in the economy and society. Magazines for housewives showed women being informed mothers and rational household managers—that is, “new” or “modern” women. Activism as some women lobbied against Apartheid in South Africa and colonialism in India, and culture laid additional building blocks for the rise of Women's Studies around the world.

WOMEN'S STUDIES AND THE UNIVERSITY

Although “first wave” feminism helped some women enter higher education and become professionals in the social sciences, history, and literature, their numbers were small. When the second wave of women's activism began in the 1960s, a new emphasis on education was already taking place, as societies became “post-industrial.” That is, breakthroughs in science and technology showed the need for a knowledge-based society. As a result, new universities and technical schools sprang up overnight and existing universities expanded both in numbers of students and in the variety of their offerings. One accomplishment of the “second wave” was to mount a clear and surprisingly successful assault on the male domination of higher education even as it engaged in this expansion. “Women's studies grew out of the recognition of the gross inequities in women's lived realities,” one South Korean researcher explained, “and through an accumulation of academic knowledge from across the disciplines exploring these problems.”¹ From the 1970s on the number of women students in universities began slowly outnumbering men. Some critics charged that such statistics showed the neglect of men and boys and the discrimination they—not women—faced. The truth of the matter was that women then and today understand that they need to get a university diploma simply to match the wages of a man who has graduated from high school.

Male domination of higher education continues, but the presence of women as professors has made for change. It's not that there were no women professors before the "second wave" and the creation of Women's Studies. A small number of women professors had served in universities for centuries, for example as professors of chemistry and math in eighteenth-century Italy. The important point is that Women's Studies and the feminist movement changed the consciousness of many women and men in academe to recognize the vast problem of discrimination in education. This discrimination existed in the number, salaries, and status of women in universities. There was also a laser-like focus on the consistent privileging of men in the curriculum and classroom. Women's Studies and its feminist advocates awakened awareness of this fact.

Women's Studies programs spawned many offspring. There are now centers for women's leadership, women in politics, the study of sexuality, queer, trans, and lesbian studies, women and race, and many others. Women's research centers also flourish and many of these reach out within and outside of regions. There are cooperative ventures for publishing in the East Asian region, for example, that come out of Women's Studies. Many of these have included programs for global cooperation: for example, Rutgers University houses a Center for Women's Global Leadership, from which programs with worldwide resonance and to which ideas from women around the globe flow. Such offshoots of Women's Studies add to the changing profile of the university.

WOMEN'S STUDIES GROWS FROM KNOWLEDGE OUTSIDE THE ACADEMY

Women's Studies was born alongside the women's movement and prospered with a fruitful interaction between amateurs outside the academy and professionals within it. Beyond the academy, activists were founding magazines such as *Ms.*, publishing about women in the women's press, and starting their own publishing houses such as the Feminist Press in New York, the *Des Femmes* press in Paris, and *Kali for Women* in New Delhi. These institutions sponsored the work of researchers and freelance writers, which became another building block of Women's Studies. Soon university and

trade presses alike saw that there was a demand for books to read as part of one's everyday life or to use in courses. Women filmmakers and those in television were also active at the birth of Women's Studies. In Europe, for example, there were dozens of well-received films by directors such as Italian Lina Wertmüller. US artist Judy Chicago composed "The Dinner Party"—an installation celebrating the great women of the past, a sampling of whom Chicago grouped around a large triangular table. Knowledge about and portrayals of women helped businesses thrive.

Finally, Women's Studies and the centers associated with it attracted numerous independent scholars—researchers who for one reason or another did not hold positions in the university. These scholars threw and continue to throw their considerable energy into the many projects that Women's Studies now comprises. "Non-traditional" students such as those who had interrupted their studies to raise a family or who were imprisoned also found a place in Women's Studies and added their vitality to these programs. Their perspectives brought enormous vitality to the research and community building side of Women's Studies for young and older students.

CHANGING THE CLASSROOM AS PART OF CHANGING THE UNIVERSITY—FIRST STEPS

Women's Studies began at a time of social change and activism and many movements pointed to the need for reform in colleges and universities. They were out of touch, students chanted on streets globally during the protests of the 1960s. Women's Studies, many believed, would make universities more relevant by offering courses that had direct meaning in young people's lives. This program, it was argued, would attract people to the university who had thought the teaching of Plato or poetry out-of-touch with the need for practical subjects. Learning how to combat violence against women or to protect the rights of children, women prisoners, and the female poor, as taught in Women's Studies, would open jobs up to women who were generally shut out of positions of authority in the welfare state. Women's Studies provided new opportunities.

The university itself began to change in important ways when it introduced Women's Studies. For one thing, more women students came to attend universities and found the curriculum relevant, even exciting. At the time, as mentioned, the wages of a woman with a college degree was below that of a man with no college education or even without a high school diploma. By the early twenty-first century when women generally composed more than half the college population, the need for a university degree remained as important as ever. Women's Studies took credit for expanding the university's appeal to women with its array of courses that could help bring them jobs in social work, psychology, technical fields such as reproductive counseling, and an array of other positions. It made the university friendlier to them.

Women's Studies also led the way in changing the classroom. In the first place it brought new knowledge to the university. Valuing information about women and appreciating the contributions of women in the classroom marked a drastic alteration in intellectual hierarchies. Male and female students alike became able to challenge sexist clichés and they actually did so as probably every Women's Studies professor will attest. They had facts at their fingertips; women in particular gained a new-found confidence. The simple phenomenon of women—whether student or professor—speaking authoritatively in what was traditionally a male space marked a dramatic change. Simultaneously, the functioning of classrooms changed to value student voices more generally and to question the droning voice of a professor reading from frayed and faded notes. Informed participation by everyone flourished along with the expansion of opportunity for women to learn. Creativity thrived.

The combined influence of feminist activism and Women's Studies lobbying brought more women onto both the permanent and part-time faculty and boosted the percentage of women among students. Gradually some women scholars involved in Women's Studies moved up the ranks to become high level administrators such as university deans, chancellors, vice-presidents, and even presidents. This advance occurred in every type of institutions of higher education—from community colleges, to the Ivy League, and beyond. Whereas once a woman scholar might be dean of a

woman's college (but rarely its president), in the twenty-first century women headed major research institutions. Even though percentages of women's advancement to the ranks of full or chaired professor remain low even today, there was far greater potential than had existed a century earlier.

Indications remained that despite the growth of Women's Studies programs, which many had first seen as a fad soon to disappear, there was still a powerful gender hierarchy at work. The status of Women's Studies in the 1970s and 1980s and even down to the present remained an inferior one. Because Women's Studies is about a less well-considered social group—women—its status in the university is generally lower than that of other fields. Here's an example: one of my favorite colleagues some thirty years ago commiserated over the inferior nature of Women's Studies teaching and writing. "It must be difficult," he said soberly, "working in a field where all the books are so poor in quality." A scholar in early modern history, he continued, "In my own field, a brilliant book is published almost every day." This kind person had most likely never read a book in Women's Studies or women's history, but there was and remains even today the conviction that any study of women had to be less well-written, less well-researched, and less important than books about men. This is not because Women's Studies actually *is* less important or because its books actually *are* less well-crafted and researched but because women themselves still receive lower pay and fewer social benefits and are still held in lower esteem than men. These values shape the university and the ranking of the disciplines within the curriculum. Women's Studies helped improve the climate to some extent but has not yet perfected it. There remains more to do.

WHAT IS A WOMAN? AND OTHER EARLY QUESTIONS

In the first days of Women's Studies, several issues were key to laying foundations and shaping debates. They have resonated ever since, so we need to understand them even though they are not front-burner concerns today. The first was posed in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), arguably the most influential

book about women written in the twentieth century. Translated and read around the world, *The Second Sex* asked “What is a woman?” No one, the author claimed, would ever ask a similar question about men, nor would anyone really be puzzled about men’s wants and desires. That was because men were taken to be the norm, the unquestioned human type, the universal category by which all else was measured. In contrast, women were the non-norm, the opposite, and the Other.

Simone de Beauvoir was a first-class French philosopher, and she lived at the center of a popular philosophical circle of Existentialists. This philosophical school claimed that biological life in itself was not true existence but merely a natural or biological condition. Existence was something one chose and acted upon in order to create freedom. Men, de Beauvoir claimed, lived out such an existence based on choice and action. Women, as the other, lived in an unfree state, following the dictates of nature to reproduce. Additionally, women made no rational choices but rather lived as the “Other” by following the notions men had of them and all the rules and regulations for female life that society constructed. The “Other” as a concept became foundational to early Women’s Studies and other fields such as post-colonial and cultural studies. It has only grown in importance, while continuing to evolve, as we shall see in later chapters.

Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) picked up on de Beauvoir’s question. It described the dwindling intelligence of women who stayed at home to be housewives and mothers. Her contention that middle-class women’s IQs actually dropped over their life course in the home was based on interviews with her college classmates and on statistical studies done of similar women. Moreover, Friedan claimed, women who should have led sparkling lives of creativity that enhanced society, saw only banality in their existence: “Is this all?” she found them repeatedly asking. A woman was a trapped housewife.

Yet when women went to look for work outside the home, they faced a hostile culture. Friedan looked at psychology as it was shaped by influential voices such as that of Sigmund Freud, inventor of psychoanalysis. Therapists followed in Freud’s footsteps when they diagnosed women who wanted jobs outside the home as

driven by “penis envy”—that is filled with a neurotic desire to have the power of men. Friedan, like de Beauvoir, wanted to combat the entire culture of women’s inferiority and they did so by taking on men’s words about women and by analyzing women’s own belief in those words. Mostly writing about white, middle-class women, these two very brainy pioneers laid some of the ground-work for further study of women’s condition.

Another important body of writing that informed and continues to inform Women’s Studies is the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, nineteenth-century philosophers and activists who built the foundations for a socialist/communist analysis of women’s situation. Their thinking argued that the oppression of women began with the institution of private property, which developed by overthrowing a system from the early days of human society in which land and tools were shared among everyone. The end of common possession of the earth’s goods (from which comes the term “communism”) and the subsequent creation of individual property led to the heavy regulation of women’s sexuality so that there could be legitimate heirs to a father’s property. Thus, the confinement of women and their inequality began. Marx and Engels had what is known as a “materialist” view of society and of history. In other words, the conditions of private property, production, and work under capitalism determined how society functioned. Once the material system of private ownership disappeared, there would be no more inequality among men and women. Instead, the return to a more communal or communist ownership by all people would provide liberation.

Marx and Engels’s analysis influenced initial Women’s Studies debates and often it still does in China, India, and Latin America. Scholars see in global capitalism, in which there are extremely wealthy owners of factories, financial institutions, and land, the cause of women’s poverty. They find the present-day flows of capital around the world as particularly oppressive to women. Other theorists used Marxist materialist concerns to dig into the conditions under which women lived and worked. In particular, they demanded that the conditions not just of work and production be considered important but the conditions of reproduction, including the birthing and raising of children. That reproduction

needed to be investigated as a fundamental structure of life, just as work was, proved revolutionary in universities globally. Motherhood became a rich field for Women's Studies scholarship because of Marxist theorists and their concerns.

Women's Studies grew up at a time of intense questioning of the social, political, and economic order, and feminists in other parts of the world looked to the communist countries for guidance. There was the thought that because all women worked in countries such as the Soviet Union (present-day Russia and the smaller spinoffs in Central Asia such as Uzbekistan), East Germany, Hungary, China, and others there was greater equality than in capitalist countries. The investigation of working women became a touchstone of Women's Studies. A concern to understand disadvantaged women's lives and their place in pre-capitalist societies and under present-day global capitalism still characterizes Women's Studies research. Marx and Engels had described women's condition under capitalism a century earlier and women's situation had changed drastically since then. Women's strikes, their situation in the workforce, their political activism, and their poverty were crucial to understanding how to make society more just. Given the field's mission to study oppression, Marxist insights about the operation of capitalism came to underpin investigations that would become increasingly complex by the twenty-first century.

NATURE VERSUS CULTURE

A spinoff of de Beauvoir's question in Women's Studies has been about "nature" in all its forms. As women entered the university in greater numbers, they did so in an atmosphere of general doubt. Women's "nature," the belief went, was emotional and better suited to such nurturing activities as childcare and home management than to the hard thinking involved in mastering university courses. Moreover, because women reproduced the human species, they were attached to childlike things rather than to sophisticated reasoning. Women's Studies confronted and still confronts the prejudice about women's "natural" intellectual capacities.

Great effort laid the groundwork for undermining clichés about women's connection to nature. In 1970, Canadian artist Shulamith

Firestone published *The Dialectic of Sex* in which she wrote that women needed to be liberated from their biology. Artificial wombs needed to be designed, so that women would not have to be hindered in their quest for jobs and lives of accomplishment. Far from being uplifting and “natural,” Firestone claimed, childbirth was like “shitting a pumpkin.” Attacks on women’s nature and their mutual relationship with nature continued in the press, while Women’s Studies took up the issue of women’s natural lives or life-cycles.

Anthropologists looked more broadly at the extent to which women’s lives and behavior were determined by their biology—or nature. The thought was that “culture” was the more important factor in shaping the course of women’s lives. In coming to this conclusion, examples from other societies proved decisive. Outside the West, for example, childbirth proved no deterrent to women leading highly active lives. Chinese peasants, the evidence taught, spent little time in childbirth and no time in getting back to work. Nature, it was believed, should take a back seat when it came to assessing women’s capacities.

Instead the role of culture in shaping an image of women as more emotional and less rational than men, weaker and less capable than the “stronger” sex, needed to be re-examined. Looking at school books for young children showed that early lessons in reading told highly gendered stories. The women in them were all mothers and wives, who tended the house and dealt with children. In contrast, the adult men left the home to work and provide for the family. They did rugged outdoor activities and, as leaders, made the important decisions that women and children followed. School books created the inequality of women simply through storytelling for children. Although the storybooks showed these roles as natural, Women’s Studies judged them to be the result of culture. By all sorts of means, the superiority of men in societies came to look as if nature had simply made men more talented and skilled than women, whom nature made overly emotional.

The debate rages on. Women are slighter and, according to scientists, have hormones that make them unstable before menstruation—that is to say, women are regularly and predictably unstable. Nature makes women unreliable for leadership because they might have difficult decisions to make at “that time of the

month.” Reproduction would also weigh on women’s capacity for focused participation in public life. Those wanting women’s equality argued that all of this was cultural, not natural. Down to the present, women have been successful heads of state in the vast majority of important nations around the world except the United States. It was culture alone that kept women in the home.

WOMEN’S STUDIES AROUND THE WORLD BROADENS THE QUESTIONING

Other questions emerged globally as companions to these, depending on specific national concerns, especially of post-colonial society. In India, for example, a government-sponsored study of women by researchers preceded and even sparked the university-wide investigations that began in the mid-1970s, and government funding and that of private donors fed research to help Women’s Studies in India rapidly become one of the world’s pioneers in the field. This initial report, “Toward Equality,” helped guide the development of a parallel focus on poverty and literacy for women, some of the answers informed by Marxist analysis. Women’s Studies spread across the West in the 1970s and 1980s. During this time women in Latin America were struggling against dictators, and with success in the 1980s, some of their early Women’s Studies initiatives focused on political relations, especially those deriving from neo-imperialism alongside the more theoretical questions on the nature of women. Activists in Africa were also involved in national liberation movements during the formative years of Women’s Studies in the West. They too responded to what they saw as the neo-imperialist programs for “development” from international organizations that were aimed at the continent: most of them affected women negatively by targeting men for development aid and by aiming to have active women marketers and farmers pulled out of the workforce and confined to housekeeping. Health and motherhood along with women’s economic well-being were at the forefront of questioning as Women’s Studies programs developed in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. We will examine the important questions arising in post-colonial nations in greater detail in many chapters but specifically in Chapter 4.

In yet another scenario, central and eastern European teachers only felt themselves free enough to study women after the fall of the Soviet Empire in the late 1980s and early 1990s—that is, after the fall of Communist rule. Still, many voices had been raised before then. In 1968, the short story “A Week Like Any Other” by Natalya Baranskaya appeared in the Soviet press and circulated like wildfire. It described a typical day in the life of an ordinary Russian woman scientist, including the stresses and strains of being a career woman, wife, and mother, as most Soviet women were. The book resonated with the population at large. A Russian feminist, Tatiana Mamonova, published a collection of women’s testimonials to their working lives under communism, sparking feminist debate. Mamonova cited specific accounts of discrimination and was sent into exile in 1980 because of it. Mamonova’s crime was to document sexism in the Soviet system despite official declarations that the USSR was a workers’ paradise. Women, Mamonova’s anthology showed, were discriminated against, kept from important positions, and vastly overworked.

Once the Soviet system collapsed in 1989 and thereafter, many of these voices reappeared, some of them in Women’s and Gender Studies programs. There were interactions with scholars around the world, thanks to financing by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), but there was simultaneously a rejection of what came to be called “Western feminism.” Unevenness plagued Women’s Studies in the post-Soviet world. On the one hand, the more open climate for academic research agenda motivated the kind of novel inquiry that the study of women offered. On the other, Women’s Studies came to be seen as a luxury that a country in transition could not handle. Even more, it was also seen as an example of the kind of women’s equality that had been a slogan of the old Soviet Union. Russians and those administering other post-Soviet nations wanted to escape the professed equality of communism to be more like the United States where women’s inequality was striking in wages and lack of leadership positions. After rising interest in the 1990s, Women’s Studies declined in Russia especially with changes in the political climate and the rise of what one scholar has called the grand “automobile and harem culture” of the newly rich “oligarchs”—virtually all of them male.

CONCLUSION: ITS MEANING IS CHANGE

Women's Studies started the disciplines talking to one another around the investigation of women and sent researchers into archives or led them to consider data sets differently. It led others to reconsider what their methodologies were and what they should become in order to study women with non-sexist eyes. The result of Women's Studies in its early days was that new knowledge flooded into the world of education and that universities began to change. Women's Studies energized and motivated new groups of women, who themselves inspired snowballing new ways of thinking. However, there was great variety in programs and in the pace of development. Many women outside the West were gaining hands-on experience in national liberation struggles, nation-building, and anti-authoritarian activism that would shape Women's Studies in their societies.

In their postgraduate lives the many students from Women's Studies programs have entered every career path the contemporary world offers. Early on Women's Studies graduates brought their skills to psychology, social work, and teaching. Others became lawyers, doctors, and politicians. Having sprung from feminism, some early graduates embraced activism, working for the relief of women's poverty, protection of the environment, and other causes. They were also committed to improving the overall situation of children and providing health care for underserved women and children. They also founded or participated in NGOs devoted to setting policies for political and social improvement or for skill and capacity building. In the long run, it has been the case that most Women's Studies graduates have been active in the promotion of democracy and equality in many different regions of the globe and often in worldwide organizations. This was just the beginning.

NOTE

- 1 Huh Ra-keum, *The Nature of Women's Studies as Experienced in Feminist Research in Korea* (Seoul: Asian Center for Women's Studies, 2005) 14.

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