Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women Study Guide

Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women by Susan Faludi

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Introduction

Susan Faludi's bestselling book, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, is a methodically researched and documented work challenging conventional wisdom about the American women's movement and women's gains in achieving equality in the latter years of the twentieth century. Faludi begins the book by looking carefully at then-current myths about the status of women, including the press reports that single career women are more likely to be depressed than other women, that professional women are leaving their jobs in droves to stay at home, and that single working women over age thirty have a small chance of ever getting married. Not only are these myths not true, says Faludi, but they are evidence of a society-wide backlash against women and what they have achieved in recent years. She describes this backlash as a "kind of pop-culture version of the Big Lie" and declares that "it stands the truth boldly on its head and proclaims that the very steps that have elevated women's positions have actually led to their downfall."

In her book, Faludi takes the press to task for failing to challenge the myths about women in the 1980s and especially for spreading, through "trend journalism," stories about how unhappy women are, despite their having reaped the benefits of women's liberation in the 1970s. Faludi challenges the prevailing wisdom that the women's movement is to blame for women's unhappiness; she believes their unhappiness actually stems from the fact that the struggle for equality is not yet finished.

Faludi uses data from a wide variety of sources, such as government and university studies, newspapers, census reports, scholarly journals, and personal interviews to explore women's status in the 1980s. The personal interviews offer a look at the individuals who are behind the "backlash" and, according to Faludi, are hindering women's progress.

Author Biography

Susan Faludi was born in New York City on April 18, 1959 to Steven Faludi, a photographer, and Marilyn Lanning Faludi, an editor. When Faludi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* was released in 1991, the book received honors and positive and negative criticism for its controversial content. Susan Faludi, however, was already familiar with controversy. Faludi covered a number of contentious subjects for her high school and college newspapers. Writing for her high school newspaper, she addressed the issue of whether several on-campus Christian organizations had violated the concept of the separation of church and state. While an undergraduate at Harvard University, she wrote an article on sexual harassment that led to the dismissal of a guilty professor after the article was published.

After graduating from Harvard, Faludi worked for the *New York Times*, the *Miami Herald*, and the *Atlanta Constitution* and soon garnered a reputation as a crusading journalist. She received a 1991 Pulitzer Prize for an article she wrote for the *Wall Street Journal* on the Safeway Stores' leveraged buyout and its impact on employees.

In 1986, Faludi contacted the U. S. Census Bureau about the notorious Harvard-Yale marriage study and discovered that the study's methodology and results - including the much-quoted finding that single, educated, career women over thirty had only a 20 percent chance of ever getting married - were suspect. Though she and other writers reported the errors in the study, most of the national press simply focused on the sensational results. Faludi's interest in discerning the facts from the fictions about women's status in the 1980s prompted her to write *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*.

The book went on to win the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction in 1991. Since then, Faludi has written for various periodicals, including *Mother Jones and Ms.* In 1999, she published her second book, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, a similarly extensive tome on issues American men are feeling. Faludi currently lives and writes in California.

Plot Summary

Chapter One

Faludi begins by stating that, though many may agree that the end of the twentieth century is a good time to be a woman, press reports and surveys indicate that women are unhappy with their lives. Often, this is blamed on a variety of factors related to feminism, such as women working outside the home. "Women are enslaved by their own liberation, " claim many commentators who argue against feminism. But Faludi disagrees, arguing instead that women are unhappy because the real work of achieving equality has barely begun. She uses statistics that show that women still make less money and hold more low-status jobs than men and that domestic violence and rape are on the rise:

The truth is that the last decade has seen a powerful counter-assault on women's rights, a backlash, an attempt to retract the handful of small and hard-won victories the feminist movement did manage to win for women.

Chapter Two

Faludi presents a number of what she calls myths, stories "that have supported the backlash against women's quest for equality." Even though these myths have appeared in newspapers and have become accepted facts in America, they are untrue. These myths include the notions that women are finding it more difficult to find husbands, that no-fault divorce laws are to blame for the reduction in the standard of living of divorced women, that professional women are increasingly infertile, that career women have more mental illnesses than non-career women, and that children in day care suffer permanent damage.

Chapter Three

The history of women's rights in the United States is much longer than most people believe, Faludi says, and dates to well before the 1970s, a decade that many today see as the advent of feminism. While backlashes against women's rights can be traced to colonial times, Faludi limits her examination to the backlashes after the four most recent periods of advancement: the mid-nineteenth century, the early 1900s, the early 1940s, and the early 1970s. Currently, she says, Americans are in a backlash phase against the advances made in the 1970s. She also notes that each of the backlash periods included a supposed "crisis in masculinity" and its companion, "a call to femininity."

Chapter Four

This chapter covers how the media, through "trend journalism," helped create the backlash against women's rights and feminism in the 1980s by coining the terms "mommy track," "biological clock," and "man shortage." The press sought to answer the question of why women, after years of advances, still felt dissatisfied. Their answer was that feminism's achievements, not society's "resistance to these partial achievements," were causing the stress among women. The media claimed that there was a trend afoot (personified in the "New Traditionalist" woman) in which women were choosing home life over careers; this did not have any statistical support, according to Faludi. Media reports were presenting a view of single women as defective, while single men were lauded for making "mature" decisions.

Chapter Five

Here, Faludi addresses how the backlash shaped Hollywood's portrayal of women in the 1980s. While a number of films in the 1970s positively portrayed single women making choices that supported their careers, the 1980s produced a crop of films in which single career women were made to pay dearly for their decisions not to have children and husbands. Faludi points to *Fatal Attraction* as the epitome of anti-feminism in the late 1980s. In the movie, Glenn Close plays a bitter, single, career woman who takes out her anger on otherwise happily married Michael Douglas after a brief affair. In many 1980s films, as in *Fatal Attraction*, Faludi states, the plot involves the feminine "Light Woman" killing the aggressively manly "Dark Woman." The press, however, declared that these movies' themes constituted a trend and found actual women like Close's character to write about.

Chapter Six

According to Faludi, while women largely disappeared from prime-time television programming in the late 1980s (as they did in the late 1950s and early 1960s), "TV's counter-assault on women's liberation would be... more restrained than Hollywood's." During the mid-1970s, many television series tackled political issues, including feminism. But by the early 1980s, the tide was beginning to turn. The few shows with strong women were toned down to appeal to advertisers. Television in the 1980s condemned women who dared step outside the home, and single career women were usually given angry or neurotic personalities. The only "good" female character in the popular series *thirty something* was the angelic Hope, according to Faludi, a stay-at-home mom who was the envy of her careerist female friends.

Chapter Seven

In the 1970s, the fashion industry responded to a push from career women to produce more suits and practical clothing. But in the 1980s, a backlash occurred in which

designers decided that fashion would be more feminine and fantastical - even to the point of childishness. One of the chief perpetrators of this "little girl" look was Christian Lacroix, according to Faludi. After a lull in the 1970s in sales of undergarments and lingerie, the industry declared that the 1980s was seeing a boom in this area. However, according to Faludi, this was a press-generated trend and did not reflect reality. A major reason women were not buying lingerie was that the styles in the late 1980s "celebrated the repression, not the flowering of female sexuality."

Chapter Eight

In the 1980s, the beauty industry - including those who encouraged unnecessary plastic surgery as well as those who sold cosmetics - set a standard of femininity for American women that Faludi believes was "grossly unnatural." Even though it may be one of the most superficial of the cultural institutions involved in the backlash, Faludi believes that, because the beauty industry changed how women felt about themselves, it was the most destructive.

Chapter Nine

Faludi discusses the "New Right movement" of the 1980s and its agenda - purported to be pro-family but, in her opinion, was simply anti-women and anti-feminist. Faludi focuses on the women who work for New Right organizations, such as the Heritage Foundation and Concerned Women for America. She notes that even though these organizations claim that women cannot be both good mothers and good career women, the New Right's female leaders are living lives that contradict this sentiment.

Chapter Ten

Ronald Reagan's election to the presidency in 1980 came with the help of many New Right women, Faludi asserts. However, she notes that a by-product of Reagan's victory was that "women began disappearing from federal office" - even women who were conservative and anti-feminist. Faludi adds that Democrats did much the same thing during the 1980s and that no one challenged them.

Chapter Eleven

Faludi argues that "the backlash's emissaries" came not only from the New Right movement but also from among the numerous writers, scholars, and thinkers who appeared in the mainstream media. In this chapter, she profiles nine of these men and women, not in an attempt to "psychoanalyze" them, she says, but to offer an overview of those who helped make the backlash against women's rights more "palatable for public consumption." They include George Gilder, Allan Bloom, Michael and Margarita Levin, Warren Farrell, Robert Bly, Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Betty Friedan, and Carol Gilligan.

Chapter Twelve

In the 1970s, according to Faludi, commercially popular therapeutic and self-help books directed toward women told their readers that they had the right to be treated with respect. In contrast, similar books published in the 1980s urged women to keep quiet and not challenge the social order. These books also blamed feminism for women's unhappiness and asked their readers to criticize only themselves if their lives were not what they envisioned. Meanwhile, the American Psychological Association amended its standard diagnosis reference to include, according to Faludi, anti-woman definitions for two disorders, masochistic personality disorder and pre-menstrual syndrome.

Chapter Thirteen

The Reagan administration in the 1980s downplayed reports that women were losing status in the workplace, according to Faludi. The press failed to investigate this disinformation campaign and actually participated in publicizing misinformation about the backlash against working women. After the gains made in the 1970s, women particularly in the media, retail, and blue-collar industries suffered in their efforts to secure workplace equality in the 1980s.

Chapter Fourteen

In this chapter, Faludi discusses how the 1980s backlash against women affected their reproductive rights. In 1973, the U. S. Supreme Court declared abortion legal in *Roe v. Wade*, but during the 1980s organizations such as Operation Rescue and many conservative politicians wanted to reverse the result of the ruling. Faludi argues that women's ability to regulate their fertility contributed to dramatic changes "not in the abortion rate but in female sexual behavior and attitudes," and this was frightening to many. According to Faludi, in the 1980s, women were losing the right to make decision regarding the treatment of their bodies while pregnant.

Epilogue

Faludi tells a number of women's personal stories to show that "for all the forces the backlash mustered ... women never really surrendered." She is, though, somewhat disappointed that women as a whole did not take advantage of their numbers as much as they could have in the 1980s to make their case for equality. "The '80s could have become American women's great leap forward," she believes.

Part 1: Chapter 1

Part 1: Chapter 1 Summary and Analysis

Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women details how politicians, journalists, clergy, business leaders, physicians, and the legal profession in the 1980s blame feminism of the late 1960s and early 1970s for all the evil in contemporary society and systematically use popular culture to put women psychologically and physically back in their "proper" place.

Politicians, journalists, and business leaders agree that women, having come of age, need no more help advancing, but popular wisdom says women "have never been more miserable". Surveys show that an overwhelming majority of women do *not* feel liberated or equal. They need equal pay, equal opportunity, an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), the right to abortion, maternity leave, and decent childcare. Women realize that men's opposition causes "resentment and stress". An "insidious" counter-assault on women's rights uses the "Big Lie", joining scientific research to "dime-store moralism of yesteryear", framing women's liberation as a great "scourge", and stirring anxieties to break women's political will.

Some social observers question whether there is a backlash, or merely another flare up in the long-standing resistance to women's rights, but with Reagan's accession, both parties stop talking about these rights, the ERA and Office of Domestic Violence both die, the Supreme Court moves towards reconsidering abortion rights, and the media hail the arrival of a "post-feminist generation". Rarely do the backlash's "force and furor" become public, as when women's clinics are firebombed. The backlash is not a coordinated conspiracy; its propaganda simply becomes ingrained in the culture. It seeks to divide and conquer; pitting single versus married, working versus homemakers, and affluent versus working poor. It reissues old myths as facts and ignores appeals to reason. When cornered, it denies its own existence and hides deeper underground. The backlash charges feminists with all the crimes that it perpetuates.

Part 1: Chapters 2-3

Part 1: Chapters 2-3 Summary and Analysis

Part 1, "Myths and Flashbacks", begins with an analysis of "Man Shortages and Barren Wombs". Backlash myths are untrue, but bounce around until they cannot be discounted. In 1987, Shere Hite publishes a 922-page compendium in which 4,500 women despair about not being treated as equals by mates. *Newsweek* ridicules her as a "pop-culture demagogue". At the same time, the media embrace social scientist Dr. Srully Blotnick, who claims that careers make women miserable and declares the women's movement a "smoke screen" for ambition. It turns out that Blotnick has lied about his methodology and his credentials, but the media say little and his publisher defends his "good insights". Under Reagan, U.S. Census Bureau demographers are pressured to generate data that fit the war on women's independence.

A second myth claims there is a shortage of men for college-educated women. A reporter contacts the Yale sociology department for facts to cite in a human-interest story. Sociologists Neil Bennett and David Bloom, with graduate student Patricia Craig of Yale, have completed but do not yet published a study on women's marriage patterns. It provides a twenty percent chance of marriage at age thirty, five percent at thirty-five, and 1.3 percent at forty. These figures wind up everywhere in the media, proving data that supports the premise of a "marriage crunch". Bennett/Bloom later disclose their use of a questionable "parametric model" and off-year data from the 1982 census. Jeanne Moorman, a demographer at the Census Bureau, with a doctorate in marital demography, is intrigued, re-runs the a study using 1980 data, and finds a fifty-eight to sixty-six percent chance for women at thirty, thirty-two to forty-one percent at thirty-five, and seventeen to twenty-three percent at forty. The Administration orders her silent, but her colleague, Robert Fay, a specialist in mathematical models, finds a major flaw in the Bennett/Bloom study, repeats the study using the parametric model, and obtains results identical to Moorman's. The press overlooks census figures showing 1.9 million more never-married men than women, and surveys showing unmarried women "happy and complete" and their lives are "a lot easier" than married friends. The better women are paid, the less likely they are to marry. Women cohabit at rates quadruple those of 1970. Nevertheless, the Harvard-Yale study scares women into marrying "just to beat the 'odds'", and the Administration hails this as a comeback for traditional marriage.

Two reports underlie the myth that "no-fault" divorce brings disaster to women and children. By the 1970s, many states have passed such laws, which in the 1980s the New Right paints as a feminist conspiracy to undermine the family. Sociologist Lenore Weitzman's 1985 book, *The Divorce Revolution,* provides "devastating" statistics that the media regularly invoke: a seventy-three percent decline in a woman's standard of living during the first year after divorce versus a man's forty-seven percent increase. Weitzman does not blame feminism, but *Time* and others do. Economists Saul Hoffman and Greg Duncan are bewildered. Over twenty years they have found only a thirty

percent first-year decline for women versus a ten to fifteen percent rise for men. Within five years, women generally enjoy a standard of living higher than when they were married. Both Hoffman/Duncan and the Census Bureau fault Weitzman's numbers as being "way too high" and claim they are inconsistent. Focus on the seventy-three percent takes away from the core question of whether women are better off "protected" or equal. As she lacks pre-reform data against which to test her hypothesis, Weitzman calls for "fine-tuning" new divorce laws rather than returning to the "charade" of the old system. The media ignore all but the seventy-three percent.

Weitzman also claims, without substantiation, that divorcing women are less likely to receive alimony under the new system and are forced to sell the family home. Census Bureau data shows little difference in alimony rates since the 1920s (a mere fourteen percent). Weitzman's sole example has a hard-nosed judge and ex-husband refusing to show mercy. In 1978-85, child support falls twenty-five percent, with only half of the 8.8 single mothers entitled to it actually receiving money, and only half of them receiving the full amount. Only when facing jail do negligent fathers pay up. Ultimately, only correcting the pay inequality in the work force will help women. Social scientists ignore the effect of divorce on men, although thirty years of data show they suffer more from it psychologically than do women, who feel happier and respect themselves more a year after divorce, and after ten years believe they made the right choice. Lacking comparative data and using no control group of intact families, Judith Wallerstein declares in *Second Chance* that children are worse off when parents divorce. The New Right hails and showcases her work. Eventually, Wallerstein resents the way her work is distorted by politicians and the press, but is helpless to stop it.

In 1982, the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) declares women's chances of conceiving drops not after age forty but after thirty; women thirty-one to thirty-five have only a forty percent chance of infertility. It offers a "paternalistic" editorial, exhorting women to "reevaluate their goals". The popular media follow suit and alarmist books talk about a "biological clock", gradually raising the figure to sixty-eight percent and blaming feminism for not warning women. French researchers Schwartz and Mayaux, publish a study that is widely challenged and said to cause "needless anxiety" and "costly medical treatment". In 1985, the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics finds that American women age thirty-one to thirty-four have only a 13.6 percent chance of infertility -3 percent higher than those in their early twenties. The NEJM lead author brags that his provocative editorial got him on the *Today* show.

Convinced that both rising wealth and independence are the key to the "infertility epidemic", the media and medical establishment focus on professional women. Gynecologists label endometriosis the "career woman's disease" and warn of higher miscarriage rates and incidents of birth defects (both untrue). Legal abortion becomes a favorite "cause", despite 150 studies over twenty years that fail to link it and infertility. Backlash spokesmen ignore the decade's only real epidemic: infertility among young black women, caused largely by the failure to treat chlamydia early on. The White House and the press concentrate instead on falling sperm counts and decry a "birth dearth", proudly seeking to scare educated white women into keeping up with "paupers, fools, and foreigners", lest the U.S. fall behind the rest of the world. Equal attention is

given to *limiting* family size among blacks. Critics decry an "epidemic" of illegitimate births among black teenagers when, in fact, those numbers are dropping. The 1980s' birth rate of 1.8 children per woman is normal, and the U.S. population is the fastest growing in the industrialized world.

Backlashers declare unmarried and gainfully employed are women most likely to break down, but no studies exist to support this, since single women, as "statistical deviants", are ignored. In fact, married women suffer twenty percent more depression and three times the neuroses of singles. Experts warn about the physical and/or psychological dangers to superwomen-symptoms identical to supermen-and advise: go home and be full-time homemakers, although studies show that working women are *less* depressed than housewives. Heart disease deaths among women begin dropping sharply in 1972, when women become more active in the job market. By the 1980s, eighty-seven percent of women say that their work gives them satisfaction. The Epidemiological Catchment Area (ECA) test, the most comprehensive U.S. mental health survey ever undertaken, finds that rates of all disorders are similar between the sexes. It shows a brightening picture among women and darkening among men, with men having a hard time coping with changing roles. As millions of traditional good-paying "male" jobs evaporate in a changing economy, laid-off workers lose self-esteem. Dual earning conflicts with "conventional standards of manhood", no matter how men might speak of gender equality. The media continue to concentrate on depressed women.

Denouncing day care is next on the New Right's agenda, using frightening headlines yet offering no proof. *Newsweek* covers the "epidemic" several times. The University of New Hampshire's Family Research Laboratory conducts a three-year comprehensive study on sexual abuse in day care centers, which the press buries, since the study finds that children are overwhelmingly molested at home by relatives. The authors declare that day care is not inherently dangerous, "despite frightening stories in the media", and caution parents against avoiding it or quitting their jobs. Other research consistently shows that day care children are more "gregarious and independent", and suffer no ill effects when mothers work. Critics turn from toddlers to newborns, using dubious studies in wartime orphanages and refugee camps. In 1986, Jay Belsky, a prominent supporter of day care, expresses careful reservations about infants receiving more than twenty-four hours of day care a week. He becomes a regular on television, but is troubled by being embraced by the New Right. He fails to say what they want in congressional testimony, offers qualifications, cautions against overreaction, and calls for better funding and standards in centers, for "quality matters". No one in the "politically charged" field heeds his warnings. Social scientists could supply much research on how *dads* are happier and better adjusted when moms stay home, but this is of little use to backlash advocates.

"Backlashes Then and Now" offers historical context on this recurring phenomenon. Progress in women's rights seems always to be reversible. In the popular imagination, the movement begins in the 1970s and moves consistently upward, overlooking the work of earlier generations. Instead, women's progress should be seen as a corkscrew tilting to one side, looping towards the line of freedom but never reaching it. Each turn promises justice and dignity but falls short, and women learn to accept and even flaunt

it. Backlashes against women date back to ancient Rome, early Christianity, and the witch-burning Middle Ages, but have been particularly frequent and intense in the U.S., where males see sex as a "sort of pedigree". The first white women here are "purchase brides", purportedly "sold with their own consent". In the Victorian era, the media and mass marketing are invented, two pillars of the 1980s backlash.

The "woman movement" begins in 1848 in Seneca Falls, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony pushing for suffrage and various liberties. By century's end, a "cultural counter-reaction" nearly identical to the 1980s crushes hopes. Divorce laws pass and abortion is criminalized for the first time. The National Women's Party organizes in 1916 and campaigns for an ERA. As another counter-assault begins, feminists go unpublished, are branded communists, or exiled. "Post-feminist" sentiments first surface in the 1920s press and many women denounce the ERA. Labor policies protect men's jobs and deny women equal pay. Female professionals decline in numbers, and when the Depression hits, new laws institutionalize lower pay for women. Most social commentators hold that women have won their rights. The spiral swings again during World War II, as millions of women patriotically go to work in industry. By war's end, they constitute fifty-seven percent of the labor force, and seventy-five percent intend to continue working. They push again for the ERA, which both parties endorse. The war ends, however, and two million women are quickly "purged" as veterans are given their jobs by "right". The ERA is killed, and the U.S. refuses to sign a U.N. statement on equal rights for women, women again abandon the cause, and girls go to college just to find husbands. They marry young and have babies in record numbers. During the 1950s era of "feminine mystique", women work in record numbers, and most married women work until the first child is born and return to work once the children are in school. Culture derides them, however, and government and employers discriminate against them. Women internalize the message and accept lower-paying clerical and administrative jobs. Women in professional jobs decline from half in 1930 to a third in 1960.

Backlashes must be gauged not by lost numbers in the job market, but by attacks designed to stall and set back economic equality. In times of backlash, "cultural anxiety" focuses on women claiming their own paycheck and controlling their own fertility. In the 1970s, women make the greatest progress in these areas, so the 1980s must roll them back. The media ignore evidence of backlash and circulate "make-believe data" and misleading reports. They talk about "New Traditionalists" and "cocooning", a resurgence of the "back-to-the-home movement" of the 1950s, itself a recycling of Victorian fantasies. Since a cocoon is a husk that butterflies slough when they mature, this cultural myth is a form of mockery, hiding reality while claiming to be a mirror, and concealing the political assault on women's rights. Many avoid appearing feminist and adapt to injustice. In the 1988 Broadway hit, *The Heidi Chronicles,* the heroine laments feeling "stranded". Many women get the "chilling" feeling that it is every one for herself. While the loss of "collective spirit" is most debilitating, backlash pundits claim that feminists have merely pushed too fast and worn women out. As the revolution dies, discouraged women seek safe harbor in a reaction of prudent self-protection. By 1989, almost half of American women say they have "sacrificed too much for their gains."

Betty Friedan's prediction of a day when men will not fear women or need to prove their masculinity through another's weakness never comes to pass. Feminists always figure that once they prove the rightness of their cause, men's hostility will evaporate-and it never does. Anthony Astrachan's seven year study of male attitudes in the 1980s finds no more than five to ten percent genuinely support women's equality. Other polls show overwhelming support for "traditional roles for women". After the early 1970s, when "women's lib" is fashionable, men at best give "lip service" to abstracts like "fair play". Believing that women have achieved their goals, men lose interest, while women are newly energized and just beginning. This "his-and-hers" gap becomes a gulf between the sexes. Men grow more conservative and support Reagan, while women grow radicalized against a "bad decade". For the first time in 1980, a "gender voting gap" emerges over women's rights issues, traditional sex roles, and the degree of change in American society. By the end of the decade, both sexes' positions have hardened. Men believe the women's movement has made things harder at home.

Pollsters can gauge the level of men's resistance but not explain it, and sociologists fail to tackle "the man question" as vigorously as they do the woman's, but the studies available show "masculinity a fragile flower". Maleness largely defines itself as "beating women in every game that both sexes play". Men exaggerate women's every advance into a major threat to themselves. This has occurred since Cato in 195 BCE and John Knox in the sixteenth century writing against the "Monstrous Regiment of Women". In the nineteenth century, male fears hide behind "masks of paternalism and pity", and late in the century, a "blizzard" of literature develops, lamenting a generation "womanized". The period leading up to World War I is "one long drunken stag party" in politics, and the Boy Scouts form "to staunch the feminization" of the younger American male. After World War II and again in the 1980s, writers decry a "decline in American manhood". Macho action films, television shows, and books fill the 80s, and the 1988 presidential campaign is a "testosterone contest", with winner George Bush later proving himself by "kicking a little ass" in the Persian Gulf. All backlashes are marked by a "ludicrous overreaction to women's modest progress". Although data disprove it, women are said to be "taking over" companies, newsrooms, colleges, and even the Pentagon.

Yankelovich Monitor surveys for decades seek to define masculinity, and find that by a large margin it comes down to being a "good provider". Thus, women's drive for economic equality threatens fragile manhood. The 1980s backlash comes as men's wages drop twenty-two percent and the sole breadwinner becomes an "endangered species". Younger baby-boom males, the "Contenders", lose the most. Making up twenty to twenty-four percent of the population, they fear and revile feminism, are bitter "change resisters", and readily accept the backlash's message as framed by affluent men of media, business, and politics. Contenders lead the militant antiabortion movement, file reverse-discrimination lawsuits, and fill prisons with rapists and sexual assailants. The 1980s are marked by firsts: women outnumber men entering the job market, men outnumber women on unemployment lines, women outnumber men in total jobs and college attendance, and the Census stops defining head of household as the husband. Reagan blames economic woes specifically on women working, but in reality, their 1.56 percent rate of job growth is the smallest since Eisenhower, and consists of low paying service jobs unacceptable to males. Middle class families survive only by

having a second paycheck, rendering the "final blow to masculine pride and identity". Males do not care about the origins of "economic polarization" -greedy Wall Street and White House policies. Instead, they identify the enemy as the women's movement. The press attacks a minor player in the Wall Street scandals, Karen Valenstein, concentrating on her failings as wife and mother, and paints Leona Helmsley as "the Wicked Witch of the West", while treating Michael Milken with kid gloves. Women become "all-purpose scapegoats".

American society demands a "return to femininity" in the 1980s, to a "fabled time when everyone is richer, younger, more powerful". Women must be home-bound or bedridden-but either way, still. Advertising and television promote this and counter examples like Murphy Brown or Madonna are rare. Outspoken women like Roseanne Barr are publicly shamed. Demure, neo-Victorian ladies dominate. The "restrained woman" of the 1980s distinguishes herself from predecessors by choosing her condition twice-first as a women and then as a feminist. Liberated women are said to crave femininity. Bush promises to empower poor women, while slashing programs. *Playboy* even claims to ally with female progress. Women are free to have it all-but at the checkout counter, not in politics, in this "consumption-obsessed decade". Sophisticated, cynical methods are used to keep women in their place. Women's secondary status becomes a "long-running inside joke". It is "uncool" to show social outrage. Women have moved beyond caring about equal justice, and this is the greatest blow to their rights.

Part 2: Chapter 4

Part 2: Chapter 4 Summary and Analysis

Part 2, "The Backlash in Popular Culture", looks first at trends in the print and television media. Whereas feminist marches for jobs, equal pay, and coeducation receive no coverage, a protest against the Miss America pageant does. The media focuses on burning bras (isolated displays, organized by males and using hired models) to form a myth that alienates women. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, most editors avoid the women's movement; when forced to write about it, declare it a fad, a bore, or dead-and try to discredit it. By the mid-1970s, media and advertisers cooperate to "neutralize and commercialize" feminism, claiming women with equality want only self-gratification at the shopping mall. Ads show "liberated single girls" and "perky MBA 'Superwomen'" enjoying themselves. The "pseudo-feminist cheerleading" stops suddenly in the early 1980s, replaced by a dirge about the death of the women's movement. "Grossly susceptible to the prevailing political currents", the press coins the terms "man shortage", "biological clock", "mommy track", and "post-feminism", and suggests that if women have achieved so much yet feel dissatisfied, feminism-not society-must be to blame. The press could have investigated and exposed the roles of the New Right, the "misogynistic" White House, the "chilly" business atmosphere, and "intransigent" societal and religious institutions, but chooses to "peddle" rather than probe the backlash.

In late Victorian times, feminists are termed hysterical revolutionaries. Broadsides against women's rights peak with every new suffrage campaign, claiming: liberated women become spinsters, sterile, or bad mothers. Language is updated and new "experts" enlisted, the clergy giving way to secular scientists in the 1980s. Omitting real women from stories is a hallmark of "trend stories", which gain authority by the "power of repetition". They deal with only innocuous male hobbies but serious female issues-husbands, marriage, and children. "Bad boys" who vastly outnumber "bad girls" are ignored, and the latter are warned to "re-embrace 'traditional' sex roles" or suffer dire consequences from AIDS, still primarily a male affliction. Trends come in "instructional pairs" and do not chronicle women's retreat as much as compel it. They lack factual evidence and hard numbers, cite three to four women (usually anonymously), use vague qualifiers, rely on the predictive future tense, invoke "authorities", cite other media trend stories, pretend to serve no political agenda, and make women believe they are in conflict not with society but with self-destructive personal problems. The media allow "woman on woman" conflict, warning married women to beware of "husband-poaching". Requiring no more than preachers to support their positions, trend journalists script morality plays about the "feminist sin".

One-half dozen Ivy League undergraduates bound for graduate school are used by the *New York Times* to announce a "back-to-the-home trend" in 1980. It takes off at mid-decade thanks to former consumer executive Faith Popcorn, whose market research firm, Brain Reserve specializes in "trend identification", charges handsomely, and claims

a ninety-five percent accuracy rate. Popcorn draws liberally from popular television shows, bestsellers, lifestyle magazines, and 1950's era cultural artifacts to help renew clients' brands and avoid developing new products. Popcorn invents the word "cocooning", which becomes *the* national trend of the 1980s. Popcorn may have envisioned cocooning as "gender-neutral", but the media equate it with women "abandoning" the office for "little in-home wombs". Government statistics and opinion polls do not support the theory, and Popcorn is no model of the trend: she is unmarried and childless after forty, hooked on work, and still a 1970s feminist, the third generation in her family to have a low view of "traditional femininity". She believes cocooning is a bona fide trend because "mom foods" are selling well, "big comfortable chairs" are in vogue, the "Cosby show is highly-rated", and a third of female MBAs have returned home.

Many magazines publish "bailing out" stories following a 1986 *Fortune* cover story, which seems to be based on hard data. The stories make some female MBA students opt for less demanding careers. The *Fortune* story originates when Alex Taylor III overhears female Harvard classmates talking at a reunion. Suspecting a trend, he talks with Mary Anne Devanna of the Columbia Business School, whose years of monitoring MBAs have revealed no such trend. Devanna suggests *Fortune* commission a study, but the magazine balks at the cost and runs the story using alumni records for the Class of '76. These show no gender gap in dropout rates, but still Taylor claims "significantly more women than men" after ten years simply want to stay home. Only in 1987 does *Fortune* conduct a survey and finds a tiny gender gap-with more men than women putting family over professional advancement. A 1989 survey of Stanford MBAs confirms this. Frustrated, *Fortune* concentrates on young, doting "trophy wives" who help aging CEOs compete, unlike their selfish first wives. *Esquire* follows suit. *Newsweek,* the *New York Times,* and *Savvy* find federal statistics frustrating and work other angles, are vague about numbers, and even insist that dads are doing more at home.

The media jump when Felice Schwartz, founder of the Catalyst consulting firm, claims in the *Harvard Business Review* that most women are willing to trade advancement for freedom from pressure to work long hours and weekends. They coin the phrase "mommy-tracking", and put the trend on front pages. Schwartz is interviewed and quoted widely, but offers nothing more than speculation and hope that companies can treat "career-and-family women" more leniently than "career-primary" women. Polls find mommy-trackers a small minority of working women, who dislike the trend as a basis for pay discrimination. Schwartz claims it is more expensive to employ women in management than men, but has little data to go on. She claims to have written as an expert, not a researcher, but she should have known that federal statistics show no gender gap in numbers of sick days and leaves taken. Schwartz eventually recants her position, but this goes unreported in a press concentrating on defending American maternity.

In 1988, *Good Housekeeping* launches a massive "New Traditionalist" ad campaign to flatter women into staying home, and it sets off another round of trend stories that acknowledge women's desire for autonomy but then co-opt them. Circulation of

traditional women's magazines is down sharply, with *Good Housekeeping* the worst off. *Working Woman* was the best off, concentrating on career women's needs. In 1987, *Good Housekeeping* management considers appealing more to working women, but managers seek outside advice that says to prepare for "neotraditionalism". The evidence is an increase in hot cereal sales, thanks to Popcorn's advice, but could just as well have stemmed from the cholesterol-fighting mania of the 1980s. They also find scholarly justification in a Yankelovich Monitor poll of twenty-five hundred Americans-much to the surprise of the pollsters, who disavow connection to the campaign. Women who want to work are as numerous as ever, and obligatory motherhood is less popular than before the campaign.

In the 1970s, the media elevates happy single womanhood to "trend status". While a bit queasy about boasts of women marrying only on their own terms, *Newsweek* applauds "spunky new singles". Housewives flee empty marriages where husbands cheat, criticize, and refuse to communicate. Marriage becomes "untrendy" and destined to vanish. In 1983-86, fifty-three magazine articles criticize or pity single women. By redefining their low social status as a "personal defect", the media contributes to single women's woes as much as report on them. They present forlorn "composite" workaholic singles who spend their nights alone. Pop psychologists say their troubles are "self-generated", the standard backlash approach from late Victorian times through the 1930s and again in the 1950s.

By the 1980s, the media talks of a "the spinster boom" and "hypermaidenism". *Newsweek* uses the flawed Harvard-Yale study to pronounce dire statistics. Months later, *Newsweek* and the *New York Times* both bury an inconvenient but comprehensive Census Bureau study of marriage that contradicts Harvard-Yale. *Newsweek* claims metaphorically that women are "more likely to be killed by a terrorist" than to marry, and the quote is widely repeated. The magazine finds unmarried women guilty of three deadly sins-greed, pride, and sloth. Judgment Day has come and they feel the consequences. Younger women should learn from their elders' mistakes. The "penitent unwed" are paraded tearfully through the media, particularly on the "CBS Morning News" and in *Newsweek.* ABC hires a psychiatrist adviser and the newscaster badgers one interviewee until she breaks down on-screen. ABC's "Single in America" has nothing to say about males in three hours over four nights, but when the media treat single men, they are happy and think that bachelorhood is a viable option and a "mature decision." The media helpfully peddles matchmaking, miracle cures, expensive workshops, and even a hotline for unwed women. Women's magazines address "nuptialitis", offering 1950s-style advice on "oiling the husband trap". At the same time it is pushing single women toward marriage, the media is scaring married women away from divorce. In 1986, NBC and *Cosmopolitan* warn of dire consequences, the latter citing depression, loneliness, and an empty bank account. CBS offers on-air reconciliation in the talk show "Can This Marriage Be Saved?", and *Newsweek* chronicles successful case studies of therapists keeping couples together-and hawking their own programs. There is a paltry 0.2 percent drop in the divorce rate.

In 1987, NBC asks if a "surge in infertility" is the "yuppie disease of the '80s"? Experts proclaim barren wombs the "curse" of career women and then hawk costly experimental

cures. *Newsweek* runs two cover stories on the trend and warns twenty percent of women in their early to mid thirties will end up childless-higher for those in "high-powered" careers. Bloom provides the inflated figure. *Life* writes of "millions" of career women paying the price for waiting and showcases forty-two-year-old Mary Chase, without questioning if her husband might be infertile-the odds are equal for both sexes. Because data contradict an infertility epidemic, the media must fudge, often by shifting to the future tense. The *New York Times* casts aspersions on skeptics. At the same time, *Time* talks of a "baby boomlet" among career women, which Census numbers do not bear out; a boomlet is needed as a carrot to the epidemic's stick. *McCall's* gushes about "Hollywood's Late-Blooming Moms" and the press says Koko the Gorilla wants a baby. Radio stations in two states sponsor "Breeder's Cup" contests for the first couple to conceive. Would-be moms who cannot get pregnant grow more guilty thanks to these terrorizing articles, and many internalize the message to believe that their "raging hormones" are making them want to reproduce.

The mainstream press does a poor job of covering the backlash. Smaller feminist newspapers close shop, and the "flagship of feminist journalism", *Ms*., retreats almost as fast as culture at large. *Ms*. drops its nonprofit status to be free to endorse candidates. Anne Summers takes over as editor from founder Gloria Steinem in 1987, and begins revamping the magazine's image, aiming it at high-income women who want to "feel good, valued, honored", rather than patronized or condescended to. Summers avoids using the demonized word "feminist" rather than fighting the backlash by clarifying its meaning. By the end of the 1980s, *Ms*. is serving up moral judgments issued by the backlash press. Writer Shana Alexander says the women's movement has "opened Pandora's Box". Only after the Supreme Court restricts women's reproductive rights in 1989 does *Ms*. declare war. Many big advertisers withdraw. Dale Lang takes control, shuts *Ms*. down for eight months, and restores it as a bimonthly without ads and a subscription price that loses half the readers. Men's magazines flourish, but *Victoria, Elle,* and *Lear* do not. In 1989, Frances Lear sells out to backlash orthodoxy.

Part 2: Chapters 5-6

Part 2: Chapters 5-6 Summary and Analysis

"Fatal and Fetal Visions" deals with how the movies serve the backlash. *Fatal Attraction* debuts in 1987, filling theaters with men screaming at the screen, "Kill that bitch!" and women sitting quietly. Hollywood joins the backlash years after absorbing the media's "trends" and magnifies them for viewers. Many factors combine to eliminate strong, complex female roles, leaving "morality tales" where good mothers win and independent women are punished. Movies can better drive home this message because they mold fiction characters rather than exhort independent women to keep quiet. In dark theaters, males work out "deep-seated resentments and fears about women". Silencing women is a feature of films in earlier backlash periods. Mae West provokes the 1934 Production Code of Ethics. Good girls like Shirley Temple replace her and other independent female stars. During World War II, strong women like Rosie the Riveter briefly shine, until a new backlash brings back "deaf-mute heroines", told by psychiatrists to quit work and marry. In the 1950s, good girls predominate until they completely disappear from war and western films. In the late 1980s, the trend repeats itself. All four of 1987's top-grossing films show good, subservient women rewarded, babies, and independent women punished. The media fuels a *Fatal Attraction* "trend" and seeks real women to illustrate the phenomenon. The movie ostensibly fuels a "monogamy trend", "reinvigorating marriage".

The story behind *Fatal Attraction* comes from British directory/screenwriter James Dearden, but his exploration of an individual's responsibility for a stranger's suffering" is modified to make the adulterous husband more sympathetic and, per actor Michael Douglas's condition, more heroic. Adrian Lyne, director of 1983's sexist *Flashdance* and sadomasochistic *9 1/2 Weeks*, is hired to direct. Several actresses turn down the woman's lead until Glenn Close takes it to shed her good-girl image. Meanwhile, the film becomes a struggle between "the Dark Woman and the Light Woman". Lyne finds women calling for equal rights unfeminine and unfulfilled, and Douglas and Dearden agree. Test audiences find the original ending-despondent Alex's suicide-insufficiently cathartic, so the producers spend $1.3 million filming a climax in which Alex attacks the sacred family home, is nearly drowned by Dan, and shot through the heart by Beth.

As in the silent era, in the late 1970s Hollywood deals briefly with feminism because of potential profits. Women boo *Sheila Levine Is Dead and Living in New York* because the screenwriter marries off the single women, changing the ending of the best selling novel, but send positive letters when, in *Private Benjamin*, the heroine walks away from the altar. Widowed on her wedding night, heroine Judy enlists in the army, goes to Paris in a panic because she is still unmarried, and becomes engaged to a French gynecologist who turns out to be a philanderer. The ending recalls 1967's *The Graduate*, minus the male liberator. Most women who go mad in 1970s films are repressed and neglected housewives, but do not turn to male "doctors" for a cure.

Instead, they turn to other women for advice, and are told to take action, speak up, and enjoy themselves. The economic and social inequities of marriage are examined.

The 1980s view single women in 1970s films as icons of selfishness, missing the fact that they struggle for humanitarian and social rights. Heiress Patricia Hearst is shown as a bound and blindfolded victim, lacking identity, which applies to many female characters in the 1980s, who flee the office for marriage and motherhood. Female jobs are tedious and supportive of male enterprises. The films do not indict "a demoralizing marketplace", but show why women are better off staying home. Female characters rarely smile and are usually exhausted, while single males are "immune to burnout". In *Surrender*, aspiring artist Daisy bemoans her "biological clock"; in *Crossing Delancy*, post-feminists mouth feminist aspirations only to eat their words. Professional women, like producer Jane in *Broadcast News*, become neurotic, unlike males in the same job. Aggressiveness diminishes Jane's chances for love and she repels men while trying to seduce. In *Working Girl*, Tess climbs the business ladder *and* gets her man, but only by playing dependent, getting investment tips from men, and tearing other women down; "female solidarity" cannot be allowed. *Baby Boom* teaches that child-rearing and job talents differ radically. Only men can have it all. Producer Nancy Meyers has changed radically since *Private Benjamin* seven years earlier. She can no longer conceive of women in the corporate world and takes care of two children with common law husband Charles Shyer, who now gets full credit for joint projects. Such compromise may not be fair, she says wistfully, but realistic.

Warner Brothers forces Shyer and Meyers to downplay politics in *Protocol*, to avoid looking anti-Reagan, and the result is a "scatterbrained national sweetheart" played by Goldie Hawn. In *Baby Boom*, "Tiger Lady" J.C. Wiatt is incapable of diapering when forced to care for an orphan, but learns, grows devoted to the baby, and is demoted. It does not occur to her that this is sexual discrimination. The film takes a feeble swipe at corporate life, but backs off, and piously rejects the "money ethic", but stays in its orbit. The producers claim Tiger Lady is based on Harvard MBA Nadine Bron who, however, marries and has a career without being "torn". Bron recalls her mother's frustration at being home-bound, and has experienced the male business world refusing her admittance. She observes that society does not adapt, but instead punishes working women.

Baby Boom is not the first film in its era to show working women being "strong-armed into motherhood" -and helping to market the idea. The ending of *Parenthood* is little more than "a commercial break for Pampers". Babies are cuddly "collector's items", unlike the precocious tikes in the 1970s. Procreation separates female characters into two camps, and those who resist "baby fever" get shamed and penalized. In *Immediate Family*, the heroine's biological clock expires and she is chagrined to hire a teenaged surrogate. Abortion is a "moral litmus test"; most films denounce it and show pro-life alternatives. *Three Men and a Baby*, the most popular of the "pronatal films", has an ambitious, single, career woman abandon her baby on the doorstep of three bachelors. The American version of the French film adds a dour lawyer, Rebecca, who lacks both maternal and romantic "juices". Seemingly a feminist storyline, with men caring for a child, it ends with the remorseful mother resuming her responsibilities and moving in.

Lusty women have no place on the screen (*Patti Rocks* is nearly given an X rating for offending language), but these three men act on every adolescence desire.

David Mamet's 1987 *House of Games* shows an unsmiling female doctor clutching a book she has written about obsession and compulsion, but needs a male to provide answers about who she is. The dialog recalls films from the 1950s. Mamet, who off screen writes against women's arrogance, casts his wife in the demeaning role. Backlash movies in the 1980s redefine women and reclaim them as property. *Pretty Woman* is the most explicit example, where a loud hooker turns into a "genteel appendage". Men are again potentates, providers, and protectors of female virtue. Pro-family films are sentimental but filled with anger and anxiety over women's progress. The "underbelly" of the backlash surfaces in films where spouses fight - not like in the 1940s and 1970s, with good intentions and not widening the gender gap-but both end up dead at the end of *The War of the Roses*. By the late 1980s, women are silenced or pushed off the screen in all-male war, action, and western movies. Men return to boyhood (most famously in *Big*) and orphaned boys bond with fathers. Men's roles in 1990 outnumber women's two-to-one. All but one Oscar-nominate women's roles in 1988 portray victims. Sherry Lansing produces the winner, *The Accused*, about a gang rape, and claims not to have known how horrible rape is before making it. A society that needs such a reminder-or witnessing male audience members hooting the scene-needs reeducation. It is not a feminist breakthrough as Lansing dares claim, but a sad artifact of an era in which women lose much ground.

Chapter 6, "Teen Angels and Unwed Witches" turns to television, which follows the big-screen trends. "Angels 88" supposedly updates Aaron Spelling's "Charlie's Angels" by giving the women detectives distinct characters. Publicists promise the jiggling is gone, and the new angels are today's women, dealing with today's problems. Screenwriter Brad Markowitz knows better, having been ordered to add more bikinis, and demote the police academy-trained detectives to incompetent unemployed actresses. As script battles continue, "Angels 88" goes on hold and younger coeds are hired. The 1987-88 season marks the high-water mark for the backlash with only three of the twenty-two new prime-time dramas having female leads. Female characters are down sixty percent, twenty percent of the shows have no females, and sixty percent have no regular women characters. Women even lose ground in situation comedy. In single-parent sitcoms, two-thirds of the children live with dad or a male guardian (compared with eleven percent in real life). Working mothers are killed off or quit-or the shows are canceled. Action-adventure shows take over, new male villains pulverize women, and male heroes toughen up their acts. Audience surveys show little interest in this programming, but network executives are tired of male "wimps".

Fatal Attraction and *Baby Boom* spawn television series and Westerns are back in vogue. An ABC TV movie sites the Harvard-Yale study, career women suffer baby fever and infertility, and there is an "epidemic" of sex abuse in day care centers. Television's assault on the women's movement is more muted than Hollywood's because women form a majority of viewers and are advertisers' prime target. In 1987-88, a devastating number of women tune out, plunging network ratings, so next in the season, programmers back off a bit to allow "Roseanne" and "Murphy Brown" - and both

become massive hits. *Newsweek* decides women are "seizing control of prime time". Murphy is defanged and Roseanne lambasted and consistently shut out of the Emmys. George Bush disapproves of her in public, and a nationwide club forms just to hate and revile her. The next season, prime time returns to teenage models, housewives, a nun, and a witch. By the next season, women's roles are scarce, with only two of thirty-three new shows about working women. Some ninety percent of TV writers are white males and resent taking orders from women, including audiences. Network programmers, like Victorian clergymen, protect women's virtue, but women simply flock to cable and VCRs, resulting in a massive loss in advertising revenue. Advertisers demand the kind of programming that women want least: "family shows", unchanged over decades. In the early 1980s, television banishes feminist issues and at mid-decade creates a new female hierarchy: suburban homemakers, career women, and finally lowly single woman.

Briefly in the mid-1970s, television had tackled political issues, but by 1978, "All in the Family", "Maude", and "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" are canceled and feminism encounters fierce resistance. Getting ABC to put Marilyn French's best-selling novel, *The Women's Room*, on screen is Esther Shapiro's "most grueling" professional experience. Men stand "monolithic" against it, and yield only when she assures them it will pull an "eleven share". The network assures the public it is set in the past and not intended to be relevant today, but right-wing groups threaten boycotts, causing advertisers to pull out. It is highly rated and wins an Emmy. Another battle occurs when feminist writers Barbara Corday and Barbara Avedon conceive a police drama featuring strong, mature women: "Cagney and Lacey". One is married, the other single. Even with the concept toned down, it still takes six years to sell, but the pilot does well in 1981, and CBS okays a series. After two episodes, however, they cancel it and reconsider only if the women are made less tough and Sharon Gless replaces Meg Foster and her character is retooled to be more feminine and high-class. The network worries about Cagney's "promiscuity" (while encouraging Magnum's). Episodes that center on feminist issues like the ERA are problematic; CBS forbids inviting Gloria Steinem to play a bit role. In an episode that finds Cagney pregnant, discussing abortion is avoided by having it be a mistake, but Lacey lectures her anyway about responsibility and marriage as the solution. The writers receive a three-page memo on thematic do's and don'ts, and leaks cause antiabortion protesters to mobilize around the country. Network executives claim they are meddling with content only because female viewers might feel "intimidated", although seventy percent of American women are pro-choice and four thousand fan letters show no concerns. The staff tries to save the show by denying any feminist bias, but recanting does no good, and in 1983, CBS cancels the show. Tens of thousands of protest letters pour in after Tyne Daly (Lacey) wins an Emmy and the show scores number one in summer reruns. It goes on to win five more Emmys before being reassigned to a "doomed time slot", where it dies.

With understatement, *TV Guide* predicts 1988 will be about nesting, as dozens of female characters succumb to "baby craving". Shows play off one another, as birthings become monotonous following a "thirty-something" episode. TV programmers "recycle" 1950s memories, and "reprogramming" rules the airwaves with "new" versions of "Leave It to Beaver", game shows, and regressive family programming. Mothers who

have jobs have them in title only. The "Cosby" show is less about the black experience than returning masculinity to sitcoms. Political concerns are absent. Other programs are packed with housewives and large broods, and even joke about becoming June Cleaver. Dads remove families to rural America where sex roles can be restored but creature comforts retained-to reassure advertisers that the revolt against the "capitalist rat race" is not serious. "Nesting shows" allow housewives to speak out against career women, and "cat fights" between female types are allowed. Several shows present adolescent daughters replacing self-indulgent moms who flee to do their own thing. Working mothers who fail to flee are shown as incompetent or miserable. One ("Who's the Boss?") requires a muscular male housekeeper to step in. "Day by Day" slams neurotic, inept mothers who use childcare, with the directors happy to sacrifice their own Wall Street careers for this noble task.

Television by the mid-1980s evicts single women as completely as in the 1950s, where even "hapless schoolmarms, maids, and typists" disappear until the mid-1960s, when they return as incidental characters. Most roles for single women are as patients getting an abortion or hospitalized for disobeying doctor's orders. In 1970, Mary Tyler Moore trades in the role of a perfect housewife for one in which she is over thirty, unwed, and unworried. She has real friends and a healthy sex life, but is subservient to her boss, Mr. Grant. It enjoys top ratings, wins twenty-five Emmys, and spins off two shows with female leads. In 1986, Moore returns to prime time as a burned-out divorcye. On "Moonlighting", Maddie Hayes gets pregnant and marries a dull accountant, over the objections of star Cybill Shepherd and many viewers. The marriage is annulled, but Haye's employee, bachelor David Addison, tames her the old-fashioned way: slapping her and making her grovel. This coincides with a behind-the-scenes campaign to curb Shepherd's "aggressive" personality. She receives a petty disciplinary letter, which reminds her of reform school.

On soap operas in the 1980s, marriage rates are up and divorce rates down; story lines allow conflicts that can be reconciled. Although only eight percent of AIDS victims are women in 1988, one hundred percent are in the soaps. "Murphy Brown" is the only 1980s prime-time show that lets a single working woman enjoy her vocation. Single women are also allowed to succeed in an all-female world ("The Golden Girls" and "Designing Women"). Most, however, are like the 1960s grim Sally Rogers: calculating careerists, or depressed and pitied spinsters. They must have no emotions or be an emotional wreck. "The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd" shows a thirty-four-year-old divorcee lose jobs, boyfriends, a friend, and a therapist before suffering a nervous breakdown-in just six episodes. NBC wants "Molly Dodd" to be about the real life of a single woman, but programmers cannot conceive of one *not* cracking up, although they portray a sane male neurotic on "The Bob Newhart Show". Had Dodd lived in a more diverse world of female characters, her character would not be as objectionable, but all have the same problems and no one is admirable. Dodd becomes an archetype and stereotype for the backlash's agenda. She is in every way the opposite of Mary Richards: her biological clock is ticking and she is silent on social issues. Female producer Jay Tarsus says she is tired of walking on eggs to please feminists and denies ever having had doors closed to her.

ABC's "thirty-something", a drama about yuppie baby boomers, is the ultimate 1980s trend story, embracing cocooning, mommy track, man shortage, biological clock, and no-fault divorce. The creators market it as "a thinking person's TV series", but it deals with nothing social or political. Scripts sound progressive but are hollow sermons about mock struggle with 1950s-style lifestyles. The press gives "thirty-something" the red-carpet treatment. Therapists and clergymen use it for teaching purposes, dating services claim to have its feel, and George Bush refers to it in a speech. Still, it never rates above twenty-fifth and slips steadily in the first season. Advertisers are unconcerned, however, because the "quality demographics" -affluent households with children under age three-are perfect. Ad agencies *know* there is a "trend" to cocooning because they see it on "thirty-something". Lead character Hope does nothing but feeling guilty about her perfect life. A "former overachiever", she marries Michael and returns to work part-time only when he has money troubles. This ruins their life and exhausts her, and she quits happily, as Michael wants. Liberty Godshall, wife of co-creator Ed Zwick, writes this "Weaning" episode to urge women to stay home with young children. She wishes she had made it stronger.

Melissa, a single, struggling freelance photographer weeps about her biological clock. Actress Melanie Mayron tones down the unrealistic man-hunger in a thirty-something woman; she plays Melissa as a fuller character with fewer mental problems-more like herself and her friends. Ellyn, the "hard-as-nails single career woman", gets no sympathy. Her job at City Hall requires she forfeit a love life. Actress Polly Draper tones Ellyn down, but she remains an unappealing character, stressed and non-maternal. Godshall wants Ellyn to be a mess and considers making her messier through drug abuse or a breakdown. The impression is that *all* single women are unhappy, which is "scary" given the show's popularity and how seriously fans take it. Writer Ann Hamilton and the actresses are uncomfortable with the treatment given working mothers, since they have children in daycare and believe they are balancing work and motherhood. Market research shows ABC that women viewers do *not* want Hope to vegetate at home, but male creators need to strike out at a world that does not let them be male in the way they wish. In 1988, an updated version of the 1950s game show, "Queen for a Day" is announced and touted to be with the times. All the pitiful contestants are now winners and get a prize. The losers are the millions of women viewers who get another distorted image of themselves.

Part 2: Chapters 7-8

Part 2: Chapters 7-8 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 7, "Dressing the Dolls" deals with the fashion industry. Ten days before the stock market collapses in 1987, fashion designer Christian Lacroix unveils his "Luxe" collection for "women who like to 'dress up like little girls'" - at $45,000 per gown. Fashion writers proclaim him again the "messiah" of couture, but when the "High Femininity" (or "frou-frou") goes on sale, women fail to buy. Manufacturers and retailers adjust by inflating prices thirty percent, and sales drop forty percent. In 1988, they force bubble skirts and minis on consumers and another forty percent mark-up, and earnings drop fifty to seventy-five percent. It should be clear that designing little girl dresses around a body size that only twenty-five percent of American women fit is a mistake, but this is ignored. Frills represent male designers' rebellion against women's growing aloofness from their dictates, meant to "command liberated women's attention". In 1947, as postwar women refuse to abandon pants, low-heeled shoes, and loose sweaters, Christian Dior unveils his "New Look", a return to uncomfortable Victorian wear, and the fashion industry slumps sixty percent. Every backlash demands women adopt "punitively restrictive clothing". In the 1980s, publicists pretend to serve women's needs and free them from an "excess of equality that had depleted their femininity" and shackled their spirits. A spokesperson for the Intimate Apparel Council declares an "identity crisis" from dressing like men, hoping to bring anxious aging baby boomers back to the stores. Publicists blame feminism for foisting a "dress-for-success" ideology on women-another backlash myth (like bra burning).

Women's magazines in the late 1970s tell readers to dress confidently, project "confidence" and "authority", follow the "clothing hierarchy", and express their rising economic and political aspirations. This advice comes from John T. Molloy's best-selling *The Woman's Dress for Success Book*, a sequel to *Dress for Success,* aimed at men. Molloy collects hard data over four years and finds that women who wear business suits are more likely to feel like executives and less likely to be challenged by males. Dressing to succeed in business and dressing to be sexually attractive are mutually exclusive. A child of the lower middle class, Molloy helps "bootstrap types" overcome socioeconomic barriers in choosing clothing. Molloy becomes a media fixture and "dress-for-success" a bona fide trend. Sales of women's suits double, but merchants overlook Molloy's premise that dress-for-success avoids fashion swings and ultimately saves money. In 1980-87, annual suit sales go up six million units, while dresses decline by twenty-nine million. When manufacturers raise prices to cover the shortfall, women buy from foreign sources. As Molloy predicts, the fashion industry yanks suits from the racks to keep its domination over women. In 1986, manufacturers cut production by forty percent and by another forty percent in 1987. Several shut down women's lines. Department stores phase out executive-dressing wings opened in the 1970s. Fashion writers see "dress-for-success" as a threat to women's opportunities. Molloy is vilified and he subsequently loses subscriptions to his syndicated column. Charges against him are trumped up: he never mentions bow and advises women not

to dress like an "imitation man". He suggests a diversified professional wardrobe that a shrewder garment industry might have capitalized upon. Instead, it becomes its own worst enemy by narrowing women's choices.

Lacroix addresses the "ornamental ladies of American high society", the "better-business" customers. His inspiration comes from the late Victorian and postwar eras. Lacroix has suffered six failures, trying to restore retro-fashion, but does not give up his dream of being the next Dior. *Women's Wear Daily* declares his "baby doll" a success before the show opens, but the female audience is unimpressed. It is hard to tell whether Lacroix is offering women fun or making fun of them, given the models' demeaning accessories. Having sold gowns to a few dozen rich Americans, Lacroix prepares for the broader ready-to-wear market. Three elite stores are chosen for the premier, but their regular customers are older women, unwilling to buy such "crazy" stuff. Within a month, dresses are marked down and the line dropped within the season. The label ranks among the world's sellers and Lacroix's design house loses $9.3 million in 1989.

Apparel makers and retailers hope to woo "the average female shopper", but it means convincing them that they will be comfortable wearing frou-frou to the office. Calvin Klein issues more miniskirts and says older women want to feel sexy on the job. Bill Blass agrees: "gals" like to show their legs. Only designer John Weitz realizes that *Women's Wear Daily*, not actual women, are pushing this. Retailers use a "choice" sales pitch, making it sound feminist. Women have evolved to where they can wear anything to work. Dressing "cute" is the new key to success; frills are a "feminist victory sash". *Mademoiselle* uses the Harvard-Yale study to sell minis. Women do not buy the arguments-or the new short skirts. High fashion designers, however, can afford to wait, since they make their real money by licensing their names rather than sales. At the 1988 Market Week in Los Angeles, clothes are said to be more romantic and Victorian looking-a real trend. It is hard to see the "Thirty Something" line of frills and bows as 9-5 wear. Veteran seller Bob Mallard knows women want suits, but the design houses will not listen. Designers look at picture books and do not talk to women. Mallard representatives pitch "new romance" to skeptical buyers. Designers seek to enforce their styles by persuading mature women to think of themselves as "daddy's little girl".

Bob Mackie once again tries to launch an "Intimate Apparel Explosion". Slumping sales mean a need to stir up excitement, so "cleavage is back", average bust sizes increase, and exotic underwear becomes a fashion statement (without surveying female consumers). Du Pont launches a nationwide "education program" on the virtues of "body shapers". It is a feminist breakthrough to care for what one wears under one's clothes. The fashion press accommodates, without evidence. The *New York Times* claims women buy costly bustiers "for cocooning", and *Life* hails the centenary of the bra. Intimate apparel is featured in movies and on TV. The fashion press sees the explosion as a symbol of sexual freedom, although late-1980s lingerie successfully imitates a time when women are supposed not to have a libido. Spokesmen dissociate the explosion from Madonna's "vulgar" parading in a black bustier, years earlier. Mackie's lingerie is "more ladylike". The campaign is meant only to make money.

Howard Gross, president of The Limited, a California retailer, claims credit for the explosion. The Limited buys Victoria's Secret in 1982 from Roy Raymond, whose goal had been a store where *men* feel comfortable. Raymond hides behind the mythical Victoria. Each store is a "Disneyland version of a 19th-century lady's dressing room". The media proclaims it a trend, without statistics. The Limited continues Raymond's theme, urging women to wear bustiers and garter belts in the boardroom to feel "anatomically correct" beneath business clothes. The company avoids market research, basing decisions on managers' "romantic fantasies". In one store, only cotton underwear at bargain tables sells well. Men, says the "proprietress", buy the "frilly stuff", accounting for thirty to forty percent of the shoppers, and half the dollar volume.

No Intimate Apparel Explosion happens. Sales drop, because underwear is about comfort, not sex. Only Jockey International understands this. In 1982, President Howard Cooley suggests selling comfortable, high-quality women's underwear. Executives are horrified at risking the masculine image, but Cooley tries it, first ordering market research to solicit women's advice and test prototypes. In 1983, "Jockey for Her" launches an advertising campaign using real women of various ages and body types. The brand is an instant success and holds a forty percent share within five years. It inspires some imitation, but generally, the industry ignores Jockey and moves toward G-string-style "thongs". Maidenform uses male celebrities as openly sexist spokesmen.

Vogue publishes a fashion layout, "Hidden Delights", which shows models being tortured and killed. Victorian-style spanking returns to vogue, and one columnist suggests making 1987 "The Year of the Rear." Dozens of national magazines run an ad sequence showing a young girl in a bodysuit looking up at an older man's fly, and the man sneering at other cowering girls. The ad is for Guess jeans, a brand of expensive, skin-tight, stonewashed jeans by French entrepreneur Georges Marciano, who, with his brothers, sets up in Los Angeles for under $100,000, and sells to upscale shops. Annual revenues soon top $250 million. Advertising sets Guess apart from competitors. It never shows the product, but creates a "mystique" through grainy photographs of the American West and small town America in the 1950s-two timeless places when women know their place. The campaign's "little theme films" are based variously on Elia Kazan's *Baby Doll,* Fellini's *La Doce Vita,* and *Fatal Attraction.* Photographer Wayne Maser, a self-proclaimed "man's man", shoots *Fatal Attraction*. Few models will work for him because of his violence and mind-play. Maser hates feminists, who ostensibly dominate advertising. His work reacts to their "blandness" and he wants to endorse new, post-feminist options for women.

Chapter 8, "Beauty and the Backlash", looks at how the cosmetics industry and plastic surgery complete the "cultural undertow" of the 1980s backlash. Flawless mannequins sculpted by Robert Filoso in 1988 define the "New Generation" of female beauty - shorter, bustier, and wasp-waisted - to fit Lacroix gowns. Filoso's ideal is "an in-shape upscale Marilyn Monroe". His mannequins come to life and are prettier than in the 1970s, because women are no longer intimidated. A doctor can make them look just like them. The beauty industry in the 1980s promotes a "return to femininity" which often requires such harsh and unhealthy measures as surgery. Aggravating women's low self-esteem and high anxiety about appearing feminine has always worked, and advertisers

pound away, in step with the rest of the backlash propaganda, telling women career success is harming their complexions (a Victorian-era message updated), and causing dandruff, hair loss, and weight gain. During the 1970s, cosmetics, fragrances, and hair care profits slump as customers quit using products and services or seek cheaper alternatives. In the 1980s, the industry seeks to restore its fortunes by medicalizing its message, convincing women that they are ailing patients. Gynecologists and obstetricians switch to lucrative liposuction; hospitals open cosmetic surgery divisions and sponsor costly diet programs. The beauty industry's impact on women's minds and bodies is more destructive than the rest of the backlash.

Turning women into invalids is common to all backlash periods, but the late Victorian period turns it into a cult and exalts frailty, pallor, and the infantile, using near-toxic potions and creating the first cases of anorexia. A "porcelain and unblemished exterior" is seen as proof of inner purity and domestication. This gives way in the late 1910s and early 1920s to the bright, healthy, athletic look, which in turn is denounced in the late 1920s and early 1930s and its "glamour girls", but comes back as the "New American Look" during World War II. After the war, motivational research consultants advise inflating breasts, frosting hair, and whitening the face. In the 1970s, "Action Beauty" is touted, so the 1980s backlash must return to a "sickbed aesthetic".

In 1973, Revlon launches "Charlie", a fragrance that celebrates women's liberation, pictured in advertising as confident, single, and independent. Within a year, it is the nation's best-selling fragrance, and the ad campaign's success spawns knock-offs. Then, with sales still high in 1982, Charlie gives in to her biological clock, dissociates from the women's movement, loses her assertiveness, and becomes "womanly". The new campaign has no appeal and is replaced in 1986, using various chalky and lifeless "very Charlie" types. The fragrances are toned down, becoming "Aroma Therapy" for fretful careerists. In the early 1980s, five hundred high-priced perfume brands compete. Couture designers license their names and aristocracy is portrayed in ads. In 1985, Estee Lauder unveils "Beautiful", and the marriage motif begins. Prepubescent girls become the "icon of femininity", dressed demurely in Victorian clothes. Even one of the "very Charlie" types is under ten. Sales fall flat because this advertising ignores working women, who are the most loyal and numerous but out-priced customers.

The cosmetics industry tells women to be "seen but not heard". Muted is in and "muscle" colors out, in order to stimulate new demand. Teens and working-class women use the most makeup, and neither can afford the high prices on "elite" brands, so earnings drop to the point that cosmetics stocks are considered risky. Many companies turn to making medicinal-sounding potions to protect "sensitive" complexions from the environment-particularly the office. Salesclerks wear white nurse uniforms; costly, time-consuming treatments have medical names, packaging, and endorsements. The biological clock is exploited, as gynecological ingredients are added to treatments and breast creams to boost bra size comes back into vogue (last seen in the 1950s). Skin damage becomes a woman's worst nightmare, but they can "take control" (pseudo-feminist language) through anti-wrinkle creams that fight stress and fluorescent office lights. This campaign does better because it taps age-old cultural fears and fits the baby boom's aging demographic. By 1985, a survey shows ninety-seven percent of skincare

professionals notice that clients are more worried about wrinkles. In 1986, annual sales reach $1.9 billion-doubling in five years. Claims of the lotions' efficacy are fraudulent, and even the lax Reagan-era Food and Drug Administration (FDA) orders twenty-three firms to quit making promises they cannot deliver.

At the turn of the twentieth century, women are encouraged to take arsenic-laced "Fowler's Solution" to revitalize their aging skin; in the 1980s, doctors dispense Retin-A, despite problems in animal tests and links to birth defects. Its maker, Ortho Pharmaceutical Corp. admits seventy-three percent of participants in testing needed treatment for painful swelling and twenty percent suffered dermatitis and dropped out. One use has a "much improved" appearance. The study's author, Dr. John Voorhees, does not dwell on the medical dangers when endorsing Retin-A. He is hailed as a new Ponce de Leon. Sales of Retin-A reach $67 million in a year, even though the FDA does not approve it for use against wrinkles; it is for treating adolescent acne.

After forty years, the Breck Girl is retired. Born during the Depression, she debuts in 1946 as a seventeen-year-old advertising icon, eventually aging to twenty-something, but still clutching a doll. In the 1970s, she begins to fall from grace as women turn to herbal shampoos. The women's movement criticizes the "cookie-cutter vision of femininity". Her popularity keeps slipping until in 1978 she is dropped. In the 1980s backlash, she is resurrected, more "modern". The anti-feminist illustrator who paints her in the 1970s, Robert Anderson, is hired to hunt for a perfect Breck girl. He finds Cecilia Gouge, twenty-eight, a non-feminist working as a secretary after grown bored as a housewife. She tells how husband Joey heads the household. Gouge is not compensated for her services but receives a free trip to New York and tickets to a Broadway play and hopes this will open up a modeling career. Joey, however, cancels a contract when her absence makes the household hectic. In 1987, Breck sales rise eighty-nine percent, thanks more to a twenty-two percent price cut than to Gouge.

Dr. Robert Harvey is nicknamed "The Breast Man of San Francisco". He keeps busy with media appearances and speaking engagements, particularly before men's associations, where much revenue is produced as men subsequently talk their wives into surgery. Harvey's "patient counselor" helps by showing potential patients her augmented breasts and calming their fears of being "sold" by a man. She suggests they start with facial injections of collagen to "get their feet wet". These quadruple Harvey's revenue. Harvey begins altruistically, working on burn victims, but turns to "more artistic" -and lucrative-work in cosmetic surgery. He offers three types of breast implant: silicone-based, water-based, and "adjustable", involving a straw protruding from the armpit through which the volume of silicone can be controlled: perfect for the "Me Generation". The counselor claims every patient is thrilled and only five percent get the implants removed, but the first woman on her list of five "satisfied" customers suffers painful and embarrassing complications. Researching the procedure, she finds that implants through the armpit fail forty percent of the time, and after a year of anguish asks Harvey to remove hers. He installs a new set through the nipples, which leaves a scar but suffers a lower failure rate. She is grateful he helps her gratis. He blames her for not massaging properly.

In 1983, the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons (ASPRS) launches a "practice enhancement" campaign about safe, effective, and affordable "body sculpturing". Small breasts are a mental health hazard, and the Society fights it by offering financing. Plastic surgeons have quintupled since the 1960s, but "patient enthusiasm" has not kept up; hence the need for saturation advertising. The surgeons claim liposuction enhances women's self-image, expands opportunities. The media produce dozens of stories that urge women to "invest" and "go curvy". Cosmetic surgeons clip articles and add them to resumes, completing the "propaganda circle" -publicity somehow proves "professional excellence". By 1988, the annual caseload of certified plastic surgeons doubles to 750,000, while total procedures top 1.5 million. Half the patients make under $25,000 a year and must secure loans or mortgage homes to pay. The procedures remain as dangerous as ever and perhaps riskier in the hands of the untrained, who flock from other specialties. Congress discovers "widespread charlatanry", inadequate facilities, and botched procedures. Other studies find that at least fifteen percent of the operations cause bleeding, nerve damage, scarring, and complications from anesthesia. At least twenty percent of breast augmentations require correction. Implants fail fifty percent of the time and must be removed. In 1982, the FDA declares implants "a potentially unreasonable risk of injury", but in 1988, finding implants at the top the list of problems with procedures it monitors, simply stops monitoring them. When Dow Corning Corporation finds that silicone gel causes cancer in twenty-three percent of the rats tested, the FDA dismisses the findings. Only in 1991 does the FDA order manufacturers to demonstrate the safety of their products-after a congressional subcommittee intervenes. Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. pulls its brands, but the ASPRS reassures women there is no risk of delayed cancer. Late diagnosis is a negligent woman's own fault.

Liposuction has no better track record. These procedures increase seventy-eight percent in 1984-86, despite the fact it is painful, barely works, and often increases "variations from the idea". Pulmonary fat embolism syndrome and massive infections occur. "Numerous patients" require transfusions. In 1987, Patsy Howell dies of a massive infection after liposuction performed by Dr. Hugo Ramirez, a gynecologist who runs a plastic surgery clinic; she had decided "why not?" after reading literature at a shopping mall. Ramirez causes numerous injuries and two deaths before his license is revoked. Determining how many women die after the procedures is complicated by the fact that survivors are ashamed to admit a loved one undergoes a "vanity" procedure. The plastic surgery society calls for tightening guidelines, but some deaths come at the hands of real surgeons. Surgeons also market injecting liquid silicone into the face to sculpt it. In the 1950s backlash, this is used to expand breasts until it is deemed too risky. In the 1980s, it causes severe pain, numbing, ulceration, and deformities. Dr. Jack Statz ruins hundreds of faces before committing suicide. Few women need the operations, except to feel "control" and boost self-esteem. Doctors, however, enjoy making decisions for them.

Diana Doe (pseudonym), an accomplished, single working woman reads in *Newsweek* in 1986 that at thirty-five her chances of marriage are only five percent. She bets a male reporter that she will marry by forty. A former model, Diana decides her body needs a total overhaul and decides to use "deal-making" to finance it. She lines up a personal

fitness trainer, health care and cosmetics companies, a health club, beauty spa, wardrobe consultant, dentist, and even a plastic surgeon to donate services in exchange for favorable publicity. She launches "The Project" on an infotainment show. She hires a literary agent to sell her book, *Create Yourself.* In 1987, she nervously gets breast implants, and Oil of Olay pulls out when it learns, because their image is "natural". Male callers to talk shows turn belligerent over the implants. Paramount considers a movie of the week, but talks around her as they try to decide whether to marry her off at the end. She strikes up a "phone relationship" with a man and, against her better judgment, meets him before The Project is complete. He rejects her as looking too old. In 1988, Diana prepares for liposuction, a victim of the "cultural undertow".

Part 3: Chapters 9-10

Part 3: Chapters 9-10 Summary and Analysis

Part 3, "Origins of a Reaction: Backlash Movers, Shakers, and Thinkers," begins by looking at "The Politics of Resentment: The New Right's War on Women". Paul Weyrich, the "Father of the New Right" and founder of the Heritage Foundation, is encouraged in 1988 that after eight years of Reaganism, America (and even the "liberal media") is seeing women's liberation as a dangerous lie. His goal is to set the clock back to 1954 and then get out of politics. Most Americans reject the New Right's flaming rhetoric, but the media turns it into palatable "trends". Most leaders are fundamentalist rural or electronic preachers with shrinking followings, and like all groups resenting a loss of power, they seek "retribution" against those who "rob" them. Following Congress' approval of the ERA and the Supreme Court's legalization of abortion in 1972-73, this means the ERA and "satanic" feminism. New Right groups support only candidates who oppose the ERA. Preachers fear feminism because it threatens their status. Flocks are largely female, increasingly "disobedient", and Eph. 5:22-24 becomes a "weekly mantra" to keep them silent. The New Right sees "strident feminists" everywhere, calls for "moral Americans" to save the nation and the world from a feminist conspiracy, and produces lists of social ills to combat.

Weyrich and advisers draft what becomes the 1981 Family Protection Act, which seeks to dismantle the women's movement's legal achievements (funding for equal education, battered wives, and legal advice on abortion or divorce). Over the next few years, they seek to ban all abortions, censor birth control information, revoke the Equal Pay Act, and defeat the ERA. In the 1980 election, they force the Republican Party to oppose the ERA for the first time since 1940, thus producing the only clear differentiation from the Democrats. Reagan wants ERA killed and a "Human Life Amendment" passed. Most who study the election, however, see this as a "distracting sidelight" to important policy matters: government regulation, the budget, and defense. The first history books to cover the period follow suit. The right-wing fundamentalists of the time, however, know that punishing autonomous feminists is of primary importance.

Weyrich declares that the New Right is not like earlier conservatives; they are radicals, "macho preachers", "warriors" following Jesus-who "was not a pacifist". They fear already having become "weak men" as they take aim on proponents of women's rights. Like any conservatives, they depend on liberalism to give them meaning, and are galled to be fighting not Marxists but mere women-and reactively. Eventually, they hit on a way to turn this around, through "semantic reversal" (or "Orwellian wordplay") by claiming "pro-life", "pro-chastity", "pro-motherhood", and "pro-family credentials (rather than anti-abortion, etc.). Feminists thereafter must react to Weyrich's program. Pro-life advocates blithely torch inhabited family planning centers, champion the death penalty, and call the atomic bomb God's gift to the U.S. "Family rights" means only that the man rules at home as God intends.

The New Right also wants to strike feminism through women intermediaries, and Phyllis Schlafly and Beverly LaHaye oblige. They show themselves to be anything but models for the passive femininity they salute. A Harvard-educated lawyer and author of nine books who twice runs for Congress, Schlafly opposes the ERA because it would strip women of the right to be full-time wives and mothers. Her treatise, *The Power of the Positive Woman*, approves much of the 1970s legislation and the women she portrays are all "stereotypical Superwomen". Writing it allows her to "control her own destiny" and to motivate women. New Right women's organizations first organize as a reaction to the feminist 1977 International Women's Year and consolidate as the National Pro-Family Coalition in 1979. That year's White House Conference on Families spawns a "shadow conference" with a different agenda. Many participants are exhilarated by their first taste of political activism and become spokeswomen for the New Right.

Connaught ("Connie") Marshner is the highest-placed women in the New Right, having come to Washington out of college and the Young Americans for Freedom movement. Her parents' never making her feel helpless keeps her from needing "liberation". She has no plans to marry until she meets Bill Marshner at church. In Washington, at age twenty, she quickly proves more than a typist, producing the critique that defeats the Child Development bill and pumping out position papers. When she gets pregnant in 1974, they are too poor for her to quit her job; she has two jobs in 1976 when she is pregnant again. They live separately when Bill is in graduate school and she writes a book that changes her status. Marshner spends the 1980s traveling, talking about social issues, and training leaders for "grass-roots action". She calls herself a "commuter mother" before it is fashionable. She declines to run for the Virginia House of Delegates-too small a job for someone "saving the country". After speaking in 1984 forums timed to coincide with the political conventions, she is named vice president of the Free Congress Foundation, making her the highest-ranking woman in the New Right establishment. She admits to being terrible with children and finds housework unfulfilling. She needs "tangible rewards", but does not believe she is a "macho feminist". When, in 1987, a fourth child forces her to take time off, Weyrich drops her as just another woman who "can't do it all".

Beverly LaHaye, founder of Concerned Women for America (CWA) and wife of Moral Majority co-founder Tim LaHaye, claims to "wake up" to anti-feminism in 1978, reacting against an interview with Betty Freidan. Her real awakening occurs in 1965. A "fearful, introverted" bored housekeeper, she goes to work to help support the family and finds she likes the excitement. At a motivational conference for Sunday school teachers, she hears about a basic human need to improve and express, and comes to believe that if she seeks only "spiritual power", it need not conflict with her faith. She becomes a popular Christian speaker and broadcaster, and in 1978 publishes *The Spirit-Controlled Woman*, calling on fundamentalist women to overcome passivity and develop a public voice-all by and for Jesus. She also coauthors with her husband *The Act of Marriage*, a frank sex manual for evangelical readers, which shows her siding with feminist ideas. Soon she is leading the CWA charge, giving Christian women an "acceptable outlet" for their assertiveness. She sets up a national network of utterly loyal women she can summon on short notice to swamp Congress with letters or rally to antiabortion or anti-ERA protests around the country. In 1983, she moves to Washington, DC, and builds up

a twenty-six-person staff and five lawyers with a $6 million annual budget. She travels widely and becomes "president for life in 1987". LaHaye claims the women's movement has hurt career women, but exempts herself. She finds "as many useful media buzzwords as scriptural quotations", but no statistics to support her views. She allows select staff members to be interviewed. New Right women are less "trapped in the backlash eddies" than others because they internalize "self-determination, equality, and freedom of choice" while parroting anti-feminist views for men who ridicule and berate liberated women in the mainstream

Chapter 10, "Ms. Smith Leaves Washington", looks at how the backlash affects national politics. With Reagan's election, New Right women anticipate opportunities for themselves in Washington, but soon find the door shut. Female appointments drop to record lows. During his second term, they fall more steeply, despite federal regulations on hiring goals. The Federal Women's Program is essentially disbanded and the Paperwork Reduction Act results in recruitment statistics being abandoned. U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick quits government after concluding, "Sexism is alive". Faith Whittlesey, who has the highest female post on the White House staff, is consigned to "lip service" on Reagan's commitment to family issues. She begins to doubt it, is demoted, and quits. New Right women land in jobs with inflated titles and no power or are required to carry out "the administration's most punitive anti-feminist policies".

The Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) is specially targeted by the New Right, because it is an "important resource for the practice of feminist policies and politics" and because of its director, a "known feminist" and G.S. 15 veteran, Leslie Wolfe. The tiny program, in fact, seeks only to promote equal education for girls through small grants to non-sexist projects. It is hailed as cost-effective. Heritage Foundation fellow Charles Heatherly attacks Wolfe before a House committee and is named by Reagan as her superior in the Education Department. He brings in colleagues and consultants determined to wipe out WEEA, which suffers a forty percent budget cut. The anti-Wolfe campaign continues in the media, trying to show WEEA as a "slush fund for NOW". She is demoted to "advisor", protests, and is then assigned to a "task force on fraud, waste, and abuse", outside her area of expertise. WEEA's congressional supporters get her restored to her original job, but the agency is already completely changed. Heatherly has thrown out her field readers with women from Schlafly's Eagle Forum intent on curbing the agency's feminism. They neither understand nor support educational equity; twenty percent fail to meet a single job qualification, and most are barely qualified. Minority field readers are cut by seventy-five percent. A year later, Wolfe's job is abolished and she refuses a clerk-typist position. All five female staffers in WEEA leave but all file males are retained.

Reagan puts the "family policy" office in the Education Department. Czar Gary Bauer finds inspiration in the "Cosby" show's depiction of children respecting father, not in "economic, medical, or legal assistance". Frustrated throughout his career, Bauer's 1986 "The Family: Preserving America's Future" is more a tantrum than a policy statement, excoriating women for using daycare, divorcing, and having babies out of wedlock. He recommends barring single mothers from public housing, reviving

antiquated divorce laws, and denying contraceptives to young women-but rewarding with tax breaks women who stay home and have babies. He is concerned about the "birth dearth"; at 1.8 children per woman, free society is at danger. *Kramer vs. Kramer* is his evidence that feminists are taking over. Women no longer nurture, but are beginning to realize they cannot have it all and their biological clocks are ticking. Daycare is "Marxist", so he has sent his children to unlicensed "home-based" providers-which national statistics show more likely to offer abuse. His wife Carol is a top assistant to Congresswoman Margaret Heckler when their daughter is born in 1977. She cannot afford to quit nor does she want to give up the "intellectual stimulation". Their daughters are in daycare 8 AM-6 PM, are happy, and consider it normal. Carol has been obsessed with politics since childhood. After college, she gets the job working for a congress*woman* and moves with her to the Department of Health and Human Services, but quits in 1986 after Reagan forces Heckler out and she feels like a "fifth wheel". Carol finds nesting hard. Gary continues losing legislative battles in tight budget times.

In 1984, the Democrats boldly nominate Rep. Geraldine Ferraro for vice president and immediately experience an upsurge in membership and financial contributions from women. Her presence on the ticket encourages women to run for office in record numbers. It also inspires an immediate backlash from the New Right, who cast Ferraro as a "radical left-wing feminist", incapable of defending the nation militarily. Rumors spread about lesbianism, affairs, and an abortion. Her husband, real estate dealer John Zaccaro, is hounded to reveal his tax returns. Reporters pick into anything they can think of in their past. Exit polls show Ferraro favored over opponent George Bush and twenty-five percent of the electorate more likely to vote for a woman in the future, but revisionist historians later make Ferraro appear as a "surrender" to feminists by a "henpecked", wimpy Walter Mondale. Ferraro in her memoirs is bitter. Women no longer expect to see a woman president and are declining to run for office after her "public drubbing".

In 1988, at every level, women candidates above the state legislature are at record low numbers and those who run generally lose. Female legislators stand at twelve percent, down from fifteen percent the year before. During the Iowa primaries, no candidate from either party bothers to attend the moderate Women's Agenda Conference in Des Moines. Republicans worry about the "gender gap" that first emerges in 1980, when women's rights is the only area in which Carter leads Reagan. By 1988, forty percent of women who favor equal rights want a "feminist party", the greatest fear of suffrage opponents in the 1910s. Women become a majority of the electorate in 1984 and in 1986 return the Senate to the Democrats. In 1988, they factor heavily in over forty state elections, casting ten million more ballots than men. Dukakis has a twenty-four percent lead among women and Republicans are fearful, but refuse to court them. GOP candidates who previously backed the ERA and other women's issues recant and strike macho poses. Bush's campaign managers dismiss women's rights as trivial; his only gesture to women is selecting a charming, handsome running mate. The Democrats, however, are also intent on being macho and "pro-family", ignore women's issues, even in Dukakis' acceptance speech. He thus closes the twenty-four percent gender gap to eight percent by Election Day. Afterwards, the GOP boasts about this feat, but it is a case of Dukakis losing women's confidence. Women's affiliation with the GOP continues

to drop and the majority does not support Bush. Female Democratic activists are told the party is doing "family issues", not women's. This repeats the pattern of the early 20th century. In the 1980s, woman can ask for childcare and parental leave only if they forego seeking educational opportunity, equal pay, and reproductive freedom. This unfair, "half-a-loaf" strategy also fails: all such bills are defeated. Women at the end of the 1980s are on the political fringes and are barely getting noticed. They are missing from post-election analysis in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. Bush is absent from the first Women's Agenda Conference, just after his inauguration in 1989, and sends a videotape to the second in 1990, promising to "keep talking" to women.

The summer after the 1988 election, the National Organization for Women (NOW), meeting is in Cincinnati, as Bush is applauding the *Webster* decision on abortion. Feeling betrayed by both parties, some delegates in both parties propose talking about a third party and the motion passes unanimously. The press, which usually ignores NOW conventions, is outraged. Dozens of editorial tantrums are thrown, ignoring basic facts: NOW President Molly Yard does not "foist" the idea on the convention, but is surprised by the grass roots movement. The delegates are generally moderates because the East and West coast "rabid radicals" have stayed home from a meeting at which no election takes place. The resolution calls only for exploring the idea, not forming a party, and proponents want a broad-based human-rights movement, not one limited to women's issues. All overlook the fact that half of the last forty-nine presidential elections have at least three parties. The blitz has its desired effect. Women's rights organizations rush to denounce the idea. The political establishment has reason to fear a women's party, given the gender gap. In 1989, a majority of women believe both parties are "out of touch" with them and feel akin to NOW, the leaders of the women's rights movement, and feminists. Younger women fell this the most, with eighty-three percent of sixteen to twenty-one-year-olds believing NOW over the politicians. This could be a powerful voting bloc if properly mobilized-as the New Right mobilizes for 1980. The women in Washington, however, are still running for cover, since they take most of the New Right's flack.

Part 3: Chapter 11

Part 3: Chapter 11 Summary and Analysis

"The Backlash Brain Trust: From Neocons to Neofems" examines how a variety of "experts", drawn from various backgrounds and political persuasions, claiming to be objective "concerned bystanders" wishing the best for women but carrying "personal baggage" from two decades of conflict between the sexes, both frighten and confuse people about feminism in the 1980s.

George Gilder calls himself "America's Number-One Anti-feminist". In 1970, he is a liberal opposing the invasion of Cambodia before aspiring to be a "famous writer". Editing the liberal Republican *Ripon Forum*, he attracts the ire of feminists, counterattacks, and markets himself as the country's foremost "male chauvinist". He writes four books on how feminism "ravages" male egos and the family, spinning cautionary tales based on his own experience as a frustrated bachelor over the age of thirty. He is at least honest about the advantages marriage brings to men and the real ration of unmarried men and women. Supporting a family is the "acid test of manhood", so males denied this are apt to devolve into brutes. The early books do not sell, but in 1981, Gilder becomes a Reagan speechwriter and publishes *Wealth and Poverty*, a "broadside against liberals" that also attacks "feminists and their handiwork". He talks about how the women's movement first undercuts male providers by encouraging women to work and then champions social welfare programs that allow women to survive economically without husbands. He marries a "traditionally minded" woman who continues her writing career.

In *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), author Allan Bloom blames women in every arena for depleting men of "vim and vigor". The sexual revolution is but a "warm-up exercise" for a reign of feminist terror. Bloom's rant is the most notorious of the "decline of America" books in the late 1980s, a resurrected theme from the late 19th century. Bloom at fifty-seven teaches Plato at the University of Chicago, and is a member of the Committee on Social Thought. Male academics in an era of "political correctness" are like "shell-shocked" Cambodian refugees. Feminists change departments and courses, and hire only their own. (In fact, feminists hold just ten percent of the tenured positions overall, and three to four percent at Ivy League schools, up six percent from the 1960s. Five times more female Ph.D.s than males go unemployed, and only twelve women's studies chairs exist. Women's academic publishing has risen five percent since the 1960s and is declining in Bloom's field, philosophy. Opportunity is shrinking in the liberal arts because funding is shifting to medicine and business.) Before settling in Chicago, Bloom flees Cornell for Toronto, has trouble getting published, and feels ostracized and constrained. He laments the loss of male authority at home and in public life, and is upset by liberalized divorce laws and unsupervised daughters. He is nostalgic for days before rape and sexual harassment are major issues, and finds that pornography differentiates sex roles. A bachelor, Bloom harangues women to marry and points out the "inharmoniousness" of career and

marriage. *The Closing of the American Mind* is packed with classical allusions, metaphors, and rhetoric, but empty of the scholarship he champions.

In *Feminism and Freedom* (1988), Michael Levin finds no redeeming features in "antidemocratic" feminism. Like Mussolini, it achieves good only accidentally. Levin asserts that career women sacrifice marriage/motherhood, sees sex roles as innate, and declares men are better at math. He supports his theories by citing "eunuched monkeys and idiopathic hypogonadics" rather than contemporary men and women. Wife Margarita is a professor at Yeshiva University, specializing in the philosophy of math. They share domestic duties including-despite his denials-cooking and child-cuddling. Michael readily admits that Margarita is brighter but claims to be dominant because he is formerly her teacher. Margarita discovers her aptitude in grammar school and is fortunate to be pushed by an enlightened teacher to major in math and go on to a Ph.D. She sees herself, much like Connie Marshner, as an "exception" to the rule about women, and claims to be the "bigger anti-feminist". In 1988, she writes against preferential treatment for female students in science departments-perhaps because they would dilute her uniqueness. *Newsweek* publishes her critique of an increasingly "unisex" world of children's books. Both Levins experience difficulty getting published and lament the feminists' takeover of the media, advertising, and the universities.

Warren Farrell lectures on "male powerlessness" and other "men's issues". His *Why Men Are the Way They Are* claims that by blaming men for inequality and focusing on women's independence, feminism has increased misunderstanding between the sexes. Older women who still "understand" men will benefit because men will pick them over insensitive younger ones. Until the 1960s, marriage is a "lifetime arrangement" for women, assuring them economic security-a system that works in most societies for millennia. He dismisses a young woman's objection about women's role in gathering supplies, and condemns no fault divorce in the 1970s. In the 1970s, Farrell had sided with women trapped in claustrophobic or destructive marriages-his mother in particular, had identified with the emerging women's movement, and was surprised at how fellow graduate students trivialize the struggle. His dissertation is a feminist examination of changing sex roles. He begins writing *The Liberated Man,* organizes men's groups, and studies the link between machismo and violence. Other male feminists take up this theme in the 1970s, but Farrell is their undisputed leader and widely publicized. As feminism fades in the media, so does Farrell's enthusiasm. By the mid-1980s, he stands up for "downtrodden" men. Females must be reeducated and sensitized, give up their leverage, drop the achievement obsession, and not oppress male subordinates or be married to their jobs. Farrell does not pretend there is a man shortage. He writes two more anti-feminist books, but is bitter no one seems to want to listen.

Poet Robert Bly speaks to mostly all-male audiences about healthier views of masculinity in the time of the Norsemen, the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey*. In the 1960s, Bly is a peace activist and in the 1970s, he holds "Great Mother" conferences fostering the "feminine" peace-loving spirit. By the early 1980s, Bly commands no crowds, feels diminished and overexposed to women (his mother particularly), decides his earlier views are a mistake, and begins running all-male workshops and wilderness retreats to rediscover "the beast within". Drawing crowds, he is picked up by the media and

publishes *Iron John*. Professionals attend his "mythopoetic" weekends during which women are hardly mentioned. Men beat drums, wail about fathers they have not known, and scorn the women who control their lives. The weekends are about seizing and wielding power. American men are passive and naive. Women have turned them into "yogurt-eaters". Fairy tales let him generalize about men and women without offending. The sexes are becoming like their opposites. He needs no evidence to know this.

Sylvia Ann Hewlett, a member of several think tanks and the author of *A Lesser Life: The Myth of Women's Liberation in America*, says the ERA and NOW are not helping "ordinary" women. In the1970s it comes to her that the ERA would remove "special protective labor legislation for women". In the book, Hewlett shows little contact with blue-collar women. In one example, she gets her facts wrong about textile mills in Atlanta, GA; and talking about Middle America, she misquotes Gilder. Still, she is convinced that feminism has "gypped" women by weakening the family structure and consigned women to "a lesser life". The backlash mass media latch onto this repentant feminist. Her book is a financial success; talk shows and politicians make her an authority on family policy, and writers invoke her to "underscore the tragic consequences of feminism". Women alienated from the movement defeat the ERA, she claims, not Goodwater, Falwell, or other male chauvinist pigs. Women want the benefits they have accrued that the ERA would destroy. She quotes only Schlafly and an unnamed lawyer. Her data are wrong; sixty percent of women support the ERA at the time (seventy percent by 1991), with low-income women being the strongest. The ERA would have made labor benefits "sex blind" as in most states, and the courts have already been eliminating illegal "protective" benefits. In fact, a handful of powerful men in three state legislatures defeat the ERA because they believe women should serve their husbands. Hewlett draws her information on no-fault divorce from Weitzman's flawed study. Her allegations about childcare and maternity leave are widely quoted. She claims Western European "social feminists" have a better record, but that is because postwar European governments must rebuild their populations. American feminists campaign for five bills, and three of NOW's original eight points in the Bill of Rights for Women deal with child care, maternity leave, and other benefits. Hewlett overlooks how mothers and children benefit from other feminist causes. Her evidence for an "anti-motherhood" bias stems from difficulties balancing teaching and childcare while at Barnard College. Jane Gould, director of the Barnard Women's Center, is baffled, having never seen her inside the women's center. Real "anti-motherhood" crusaders are New Right leaders, politicians, and executives, including Schlafly and the Chamber of Commerce. When Hewlett tries to organize a family policy panel at the Economic Policy Council, big-name men bail out after hearing the topic, fearing to be called "wimps" for dealing with "women's stuff". When the panel continues and issues its recommendations, they are filed in "the usual spot" on Capitol Hill.

Betty Friedan also attends only one of Hewlett's meetings, and later criticizes her "deceptive backlash book". Freidan has just published *The Second Stage* in 1981, in which she claims that feminists have concentrated on political confrontation rather than volunteerism in the "Beta style". Friedan is the most famous feminist to retract her views, but is hardly alone, and the New Right loves to find and quote them. Literary scholar Camille Paglia becomes an overnight celebrity in 1990 after publishing her

openly spiteful *Sexual Personae.* Former "saucy feminist" Germaine Greer publishes a dour *Sex and Destiny*, championing arranged marriages, chastity, and the chador, at the same time LaHaye endorses birth control, sex for fun, and clitoral orgasms. Susan Brownmiller, author of a 1975 landmark work on rape, in 1986 produces a fuzzy volume on feminine behavior. Much "retrograde fare" is churned out, including Erica Jong's confession in *Ms*. Still, *The Second Stage* is the most damaging "declaration of apostasy" in the era, because Friedan's name is synonymous with the women's movement. Her minutely-researched *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), which sets off the movement for social change, contrasts with the thinly-documented follow-up that faults feminists for not affirming male/female differences, overemphasizing rape and abortion rights, and letting males co-opt the ERA. The backlash may have made it inevitable that Friedan and other frustrated, aging leaders turn and bite their own tails, but Friedan shows herself as an angry "fallen leader", quickly set aside by the media for the photogenic Gloria Steinem. The new Friedan calls for a "second-stage solution" in which women rediscover the family circle and exert influence "from the home front". As men will never change, women must bear the burden. The book shows Reagan's influence in criticizing the welfare state and pushing volunteerism and individual responsibility, but is too muddled to determine what Friedan truly believes."

The 1980s are awash with books about "feminine caring" and scientific papers on women's special virtues of nurturing, caring, and "contextual thinking"; ideas that once fascinate Victorians. Most researchers seek to challenge the convention that men's behavior is normal and women's is deviant, and hope to find a humane life can be shared by both sexes. Many academics see sex roles as "biologically predetermined and intractable". Under the backlash, proponents of women's "difference" are rewarded by the media, which need a counterbalance to "equality". Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982) is the most widely quoted and influential feminist work in the 1980s. As a teacher of psychological development, Gilligan notes that research is always done exclusively on men, and that female colleagues are oblivious to the omission. Gilligan's purpose is to show how women's moral development is devalued and misrepresented by male researchers and ethics have become defined in male terms. Lawrence Kohlberg's six-stage ladder is skewed to male bases for moral judgments. Gilligan proposes that women make moral choices in context and out of concern for specific individuals. She leaves herself open to misinterpretation that anti-feminists exploit when she focuses her "rights and responsibilities" study on eleven-year-olds Jake and Amy, "near archetypes of gender behavior" in solving a dilemma about a man stealing drugs to save his wife's life. Jake is decisive, but Amy waffles. Gilligan expands this into ideals of perfection and care, failing to factor in social status and power as she originally intends. A "college student study" uses a limited and non-representative slice of Harvard undergraduates and the "rights and responsibilities" study comes down to anonymous quotes from four youngsters. The most frustrating part of the book examines how twenty-nine young women decide whether to have an abortion. Males are obviously excluded. Gilligan fails to analyze subjects' backgrounds, education, and income, and gives no allowance to the difference between what people say they will do and what they actually do when forced to act. Other studies show women to be consistently more altruistic than men in deed. Critic Zella Luria says Gilligan's book fights a "straw man" in attacking Kolhberg's moral scale, and researcher Lawrence Walker finds no statistically

significant difference in how the sexes reason morally in nineteen Kohlberg studies. Differences are more often linked to class and education than sex, factors that relational feminists avoid. Luria points out that humans are two sexes, not two species, so overlap is likely. The "roar of acclaim" for Gilligan's book is so great that Luria goes unheard. It is popular because of many literary allusions and lyrical writing, not for its dubious statistics. "Retrograde pop psychology books" invoke it to argue that independence is unnatural and unhealthy for women. Levin says that Gilligan confirms traditional Freudian analysis of the female psyche and comes back to what males have been saying all along. Gilligan objects to having her work used to rationalize oppression and says she would refine her argument, were she to do it all again, but realizes the damage has already been done.

Part 4: Chapter 12

Part 4: Chapter 12 Summary and Analysis

"It's All in Your Mind" looks at the chilling contribution popular psychology makes to the 1980s backlash. Melvin Kinder and Connell Cowan make the media rounds, telling women they have pulled away from "caring about relationships" to focus on careers, leaving husbands "rejected". Their advice manuals, *Smart Women/Foolish Choices* and *Women Men Love/Women Men Leave*, are classic best-sellers, emphasizing that postponement of marriage is the root of their problems. At the end of the decade, they suddenly contradict themselves: women are obsessed with getting married. They deny that their "protracted scolding" has produced this "disorder", but their highly profitable moralizing has left insecure women feeling completely isolated. It has first knocked down liberated women's independence and then allowed them to "nurse" them back to mental health. Seeing little hope for social or political change, women clutch at therapy for relief; but receive instead of comfort, new anxieties, demands, and dictates about how to win a man. All the backlash pressures become their individual problems; no outside factors are at play. Advice books aimed at men are not sufficiently profitable to produce. Women have been courting "male wrath" in an updated version of standard myths about the masochistic female psyche.

The self-help manuals of the 1980s use feminist-sounding rhetoric to pound home that women must submit to man's every whim. They must "overcome obstacles" to get married. The manuals degrade the commercialized advice of the 1970s, which says women have a right to be "treated with respect", listened to, and taken seriously. In the 1980s, they are told to stop challenging society and fit the mold. Little has changed in this message since the postwar era, when Franham and Lundberg's *Modern Women* proposed subsidizing psychotherapy to get neurotic women married. Susan Page's popular *If I'm So Wonderful, Why Am I Still Single?* (1988) warns of a new misogyny but does not help women grow strong and self-confident enough to deal with it. Sociological factors must be accepted as *givens*. Women can be happy only by stopping trying to make men change and by learning to compromise, by postponing careers until their children are grown. Media-conscious therapists discover that "feminist-bashing 'feminists'" garner the most airtime. Susan and Stephen Price (*No More Lonely Nights*) see "androphobia" as a "problem that has no name" (shameless misappropriation of Friedan's phrase) and indict single women over thirty too influenced by feminism.

Both Pages claim to be feminists in a post-feminist age. Susan stops encouraging women to pursue careers when she perceives this prevents their putting enough energy into relationships. She has no answer for why surveys show professional women ranking highest in mental health. They both advise clients to refrain from any sexual aggression, citing *Fatal Attraction*. Rather than admit there are other forces affecting women's lives, they encourage women to see themselves as "defective units", isolated by their own "aberrant behavior" and personal crises. Insisting on respect and equal treatment by a mate is the most offending trait. If a man mistreats a woman, she has

asked for it. Androphobia has no scientific basis, but it allows the Prices to call themselves "marriage gurus" and be inundated with business. Before marriage, Susan does not want to be a homemaker, over Stephen's objections. She puts him through graduate school and then studies to be a therapist. They use babysitters and nursery schools and she is content.

Toni Grant claims to be the "media's number one psychologist", broadcasting live, nationwide, from Los Angeles. Grant gets annoyed by callers who complain about their husbands; this is a sure sign of being "feminist-infected". Unless they learn to hold their tongues, their husbands will stray. Millions have taken Grant's best-selling *Being a Woman: Fulfilling Your Femininity and Finding Love* to heart. They learn that strong women are not cherished by men, but frail ones thrill them. Grant begins researching "being single" in 1981, seven years after her own divorce. She flaunts her independent lifestyle but eschews the "feminist label". The book is timed to take advantage of new market trends, rather than emerging from the psychological research that leads her first to Freud's "Biology is destiny". This sours her on the "modern working woman". Jung leads her to the idea that equality creates Amazons in denial of their biological clocks. Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* teaches her that the "quest for romance" is the essence of being a woman. Self-assertion for women is abnormal. Relinquishing control is naturally feminine, so most women are masochistic. In 1988, Grant concludes that women's liberation is a set of "big lies" that lead to stress, depression, addition, exhaustion, and promiscuity. Women lose their bodies and souls, and are devoured by a monstrous Lady Macbeth. *Being a Woman* shows "feminism leads to professionalism leads to psychosis", a common claim of Victorian clinicians and 1947's *Modern Woman*. Grant tells listeners and readers to surrender to "being a woman", replenish the spirit by becoming passive and silent. Meditation, long walks, warm baths, and virginity produce the "feminine mystique" and lead ultimately to finding a husband. As she writes this, Grant applies the steps, for it is a marketing mistake still to be single when the book appears. While lecturing in Hawaii, Grant meets John Bell, a divorcee looking for a wife, and initiates a whirlwind courtship. The media promotes the engagement. In the fall, Grant quits her radio show to live the book she has written. Her retreat is more like Coco Chanel's seven-year hiatus that leads to her true fame. Grant is at best semi-retired, working the media circuits, lecturing, and directing seminars. She misses her work and plans a television comeback.

In 1986, therapist Robin Norwood, author of *Women Who Love Too Much: When You Keep Wishing and Hoping He'll Change*, conceives Alcoholics Anonymous meetings for such women. Women are taught to confess addition to men, emotional pain, and periodic depression. They may not advise one another or talk about "him". Allowed only to point accusingly at themselves, they are "like children in a sandbox, engaged in parallel play". After their admissions, they chant the Serenity Prayer and file out, alone. The best-selling book becomes a "guiding light" to some twenty million desperate readers. Its "quasi-mystical" message is to become childlike, accepting what cannot change, and changing what they can. Norwood puzzles over evidence of massive verbal and physical abuse by husbands in society, but demands that "man junkies" deal with their own self-destructive patterns. She never asks why there are so many abusive men around for her patients to choose from. Women must surrender, let go of self-will,

and convince themselves they are no longer suffering. They are never cured, but always in "recovery", having to attend "support groups" to keep their sickness under control. Norwood's Victorian-like program coincides with Beverly LaHaye's efforts to conceal self-determination and authority under the guise of "spiritual Submission". For Norwood, surrender allows one to take charge of one's life. Norwood writes as a "spiritual medium", taking dictation from a "higher power", like the childlike Verena Tarrant in Henry James' *The Bostonians*.

"Codependency" spreads in the 1980s to other forms of therapy, doubling membership in self-help counseling organizations, spawning "support groups" of all sorts. Medical journals support the "illness metaphor", defining codependency as "a disease of relationships" in which individuals *select* dysfunctional life partners. Female patients are advised to picture and treat themselves as little girls. They cuddle dolls at all times to "reclaim the inner child". They never transcend childhood victimization or reject victim status, but only sink deeper into "the quagmires of childhood". The co-directors of the National Self-Help Clearinghouse declare themselves "the psychological arm of the women's movement" and Norwood likens her groups to the consciousness-raising session of the 1970s. It is far more like late nineteenth century "rest cures", however, than feminist rap sessions, where women "act, speak out, and grow up". Those sessions are free and leaderless so all may think and speak for themselves. Norwood initially intends such a structure, but soon leaders are well paid. One such therapist leader blames herself for letting herself go and thus losing her husband of twenty-three years. Other women in the group accept their demanding husbands' affairs are their fault. Women join the group to learn to be strong, but are told to embrace their inner child.

Norwood is in great demand as a "symbol of hope" for "women in pain". For eighteen months after publishing her book, Norwood delivers six-hour speeches to thousands of women around the country, telling them (for a $2,500 fee) minute details about the dead-end relationships in her life. In each case, she chooses wrong. An alcoholic second husband who so depresses her she loses her job and cannot function, but when he returns, vowing to reform, she gets better-until he begins binging again and she knows she is dying. Al-Anon teaches her the value of surrender to God and she prays for a "nice man". Her third husband is "real boring", but that is for the best. In fact, the case studies of patients that Norwood features are autobiographical or fictional-but she claims there is no misrepresentation. Norwood's recovery by marrying the "right" man is short-lived. She stops making speeches, divorces, and withdraws into a "shell-like existence".

Masochism is first diagnosed in the Victorian era as deriving sexual pleasure from pain. Soon, however, it degenerates into an "all-purpose definition of the female psyche". In the 1920s, psychoanalyst Karen Horney points to the sexist system of rewards and punishments that make women submissive-and Horney is drummed out of the New York Psychoanalytic Society. Still, her view prevails and by the 1970s, "innate feminine masochism" is a discredited relic. In 1985, however, some members of the American Psychiatric Association decide to add masochism to their professional "bible", the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).* It guides diagnosis,

research, insurance, and legal decisions. Dr. Teresa Bernardez, chair of the APA Committee on Women, hears only by accident about the new diagnosis, rather than being consulted directly as is proper. Bernardez investigates and learns of two other new diagnoses affecting women, dealing with PMS and rape/molestation. "Masochistic personality disorder" is the most regressive and peculiar. Nine broad characteristics mark the disorder, none of them involving the enjoyment of pain. Instead, they sum up how females socialize, and dubs it a "personality disorder", which makes it most difficult to change. It could let battered women again be seen as courting violence.

Alarmed, Bernardez contacts Dr. Robert Spitzer, chair of the APA panel revising the *DSM*. The panel is dominated by Freudians still bitter by earlier excisions of antiquated terminology and resentful of females in the profession pushing lower-cost and shorter-term treatments than full psychoanalysis. Simmering animosities boil over when women refuse to back down. Only when the Feminist Therapy Institute threatens legal action against the panel are six women allowed to address the hearing. The precedent of a 1950s diagnosis and the results of a biased questionnaire are entered into evidence before the female therapists are allowed to speak in favor of considering "social conditioning and real-life circumstances"; using "deference and martyrdom"-two "badges of honor" for women in American society-to define masochism can only lead to misdiagnoses, mistreatments, and successful legal defenses by battering husbands. Leonore Walker presents a study of hundreds of battered women, evidence that violence of women is so widespread that female masochism cannot account for it all. The panel calls the studies irrelevant and scoffs at the statistics. The women are told to leave before the panelists begin the drafting process. The "rude" women protest and are allowed to stay under a gag order. The women watch the panelists decide on diagnoses like choosing a restaurant, by whim. Critical letters, a formal protest by the APA, and petitions from thousands of mental health practitioners force a compromise: the names are changed (e.g., "masochistic personality disorder" becomes "self-defeating personality disorder") but the definitions remain unchanged. Female protesters are again dismissed when an ad hoc committee of the APA board of trustees takes the final vote. Male resolve to defeat the women strengthens in the spring and Bernardez' last plea is ignored. She is later purged from the APA women's committee, as are all other feminists. Masochism and PMS diagnoses are entered into the *DSM*'s appendix, but given code numbers, which makes them eligible for reimbursement by insurance companies.

Part 4: Chapter 13

Part 4: Chapter 13 Summary and Analysis

"The Wages of the Backlash" shows Reaganomics, recession, and an expanding minimum-wage economy undermining the progress women make in the 1970s. Trend stories clash with facts. The "pay gap" between sexes is said, based on non-standard calculations, to have shrunk in 1986 to 70? on the dollar, but in fact, women make 64? on the dollar-as in 1955. Half the closing comes from men's falling wages. The gap worsens for the college-educated and for Hispanics, while blacks see no progress. The gap is widest in fields where female employment grows most: food preparation, service supervision, waiting tables, and cleaning services.

Women invading a "man's world" of business, law, the military, and factories is a trend, but in fact they are increasingly stuck in the secretarial pool and traditionally service jobs that become more female-dominated. The U.S. government, the nation's largest employer, hires more women at the bottom and cuts them from the top. Women make inroads only where males refuse jobs that have declined in pay, power, and status. Women's success is most publicized in higher-paying white-collar jobs, but these positions become rare, and the proportion of women in "elite or glamorous fields" shrinks. Almost no progress is seen in the corporate upper echelons and the tiny numbers fall late in the 1980s. Much touted female "entrepreneurs" generally sell under $5,000 a year. Women's progress in the military comes under fire and an eight hundred percent growth rate under Carter ends. The press ignores statistics about women seeing no progress in blue-collar trades.

Another trend proclaims job discrimination is fading and corporations are welcoming women. In fact, inequity and intimidation reach record proportions. Sex discrimination and other kinds of complaints before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) climb twenty-five to forty percent. Women are far more likely to lose jobs or have wages cut, and the courts ignore challenges. Despite press claims, women are hurt more than men by mass layoffs. The federal "reductions in force" hit women over G.S. 11 level twice as badly as men. Far more women than men accept "temp" jobs at 52? on the dollar, with no job security, benefits, or pension. Women take a sixteen percent reduction in pay when rehired, double the rate of men. Reagan cuts the EEOC budget in half, jettisons its caseload, and muzzles or fires investigators. The number of suits pursued drops three hundred percent and compensation to victims by two-thirds-at a time when virtually every U.S. company is out of compliance. Contractors no longer feel any pressure to comply.

An exhaustive study of occupational patterns in the 1980s is beyond the scope of this book, but a few examples suffice to show the ridicule, ostracism, threats, and assaults women face when they buck the system. The media warrants special attention because of its role in spreading myths. Prominent media figures gather in 1988 for a conference on "Women, Men and Media: Breakthroughs and Backlash". Women speak of

backsliding and bleak prospects, of losing jobs in downsizings, but are not outraged or call legal action and confrontations. They vow just to "monitor" the situation. The "glass ceiling" is a "self-inflicted metaphor". Women applaud when a speaker talks of her "womanly part" shrinking from the *male* word "empowerment".

In 1970s, lobbied by NOW, Congress creates the EEOC, and women enter the media in significant numbers. Under Carter, the FCC vigorously enforces affirmative action, but Reagan's commissioner, Mark Fowler, seeks to abolish regulations and cuts back on the information the FCC complies, making class-action suits hard to document. With government pressure gone, the networks drop female anchors, as when Jane Pauley is pushed aside by Deborah Norville, who is later bumped by model Katie Couric, or when unmarried Kathleen Sullivan yields to Paula Zahn, married with a child, who is a more fitting "model of true womanhood". The pattern repeats at local news stations, where, most famously, Christine Craft is demoted for being "too old, too unattractive, and not sufficiently deferential to men", and even the trial judge tongue-lashes her. By 1983, female anchors on commercial stations nationwide almost disappear, sportscasters drop to 0.4 percent, and executives remain at six percent, virtually unchanged since 1978.

Major newspapers lose enthusiasm about equal opportunity as consent decrees run out. Progress in improving sex ratios stalls or and the pay gap again widens. Women stop being promoted to top posts, after reaching a "high" of two percent in 1982. By the late 1980s, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) finds that seventy-six percent of dailies have no editors. Still, the *Washington Post's* Ben Bradlee assures an ASNE convention that women's presence has "changed radically." Women's desire to enter journalism is at an all-time high, but newsrooms are sixty-five percent male and growing. Women form a majority only in small suburban papers, where the pay is substandard. Despite the erosion, crews complain about "too many women" on the job, an attitude fomented by management's tendency to blame affirmative action when rejecting male applicants. In fact, mergers, declining circulation, falling ad lineage, and a shrinking market share for network news are cutting into available jobs, and women suffer more lay-offs. Activists are forced out as a warning to other women. Efforts to organize women at NBC and ABC fail after women are hit hardest by layoffs in 1984. ABC is notorious for its record on hiring and promoting women, a thirty percent pay gap, and "egregious" cases of sexual harassment. In 1983, experienced reporter Rita Flynn is treated like a cub reporter, and takes the lead among colleagues who realize they have the makings of a lawsuit. An appeal to Roone Arledge yields a token advancement for a company loyalist. An activist is summarily fired when she complains of being fondled by a vice president. Other committee members back off and drop their demands. Flynn is "promoted" to an insignificant beat and socially shunned, moves to Oregon, but finds her reputation precedes her. She concludes that it is more than ever "a man's world".

Real job growth for women occurs in the service sector, where 4.2 million sales workers earn 51-53? on the man's dollar, working "women's" counters rather than "big-ticket" items. In 1973, the EEOC begins investigating Sears, Roebuck & Company after receiving hundreds of complaints. It finds "major disparities" in pay, hiring, and

promotion. By the end of the 1970s, the EEOC makes AT&T, General Electric, and General Motors negotiate and pay multimillion-dollar settlements to avoid even costlier court fights, but in 1979, Sears judges the atmosphere in Washington ripe for a fight. Sears' defense is that women prefer non-demanding jobs. Sears finds an ally in Rosalind Rosenberg, a feminist professor whose *Beyond Separate Spheres* (1982) examines early twentieth century challenges to Victorian views on biologically determined sex differences. In the 1980s, however, Rosenburg finds women are less competitive and less eager to work full-time, nights, or weekends. Rosenberg conducts no independent research. Her major source is *Out of Work* by Alice Kessler-Harris, who objects to the misrepresentation of her work and testifies on the EEOC's behalf. Another distortion of Phyllis Wallace's study of the AT&T case is so egregious that Rosenberg has to retract it and have it expunged from the record. Sears also fails to "prove" that NOW has formed a "female underground" within the EEOC, is "usurping" the agency, and "injuring" Sears. The Reagan administration twice tries to settle. Judge John A. Nordberg is skeptical about discrimination and throws out the EEOC case.

During the trial, two women testify against Sears. Lura Lee Nader first applies to Sears in 1965 as a recently widowed pregnant mother of four. She has a track record of successful sales commission jobs, but is turned down, considered a "helpless damsel" -hardly an accurate portrayal. Alice Howland is also a sole-provider when she applies, having sold Chamber of Commerce memberships "cold-call, door-to-door" for three years, but was rejected to sell major appliances. To make up for no one asking actual Sears saleswomen what they think, Faludi questions several in San Francisco. An elderly woman in apparel hates to be selling dresses, where she has been suddenly reassigned from cameras, where she has expertise. She dismisses as "baloney" Sears' contention that women do not have the same interests as men. Ann Sirni remembers many women willing to sell big-ticket items, and Charlotte Mayfield in jewelry recalls recruiters placing minority women in management classes to please the EEOC, but offering no actual jobs.

Diane Joyce battles for ten years to become the first female skilled crafts worker in Santa Clara, CA. The Reagan economy puts over a million blue-collar men out of work, reduces wages, and creates fear about females entering the male domain. Joyce arrives in 1970 as a widowed mother of four, and finds a $506 a month job as a clerk in the county Office of Education. In 1972, she applies for a senior account clerk job at $50 more a month, and later a "road maintenance" post at $723 a month. She becomes active in the union. In 1974, she and Paul Johnson both apply for a road dispatcher job. Neither have requisite road crew experience. Joyce takes the new road crew job that opens and the applicable courses, places high on the job test, and lands an opening. She endures four years of "pervasive" abuse, hazing, and ostracism. In 1980, Joyce and Johnson again apply for the same job. The country affirmative action office backs her protest, Joyce gets the job, and Johnson files a reverse discrimination suit. In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court sides with her. Following the verdict, Joyce's male coworkers grouse about her qualifications and unfair courts, Johnson distributes "Open Letter to the White Males of America", and by the end of 1988, women still occupy only twelve of 468 skilled-crafts jobs in Santa Clara County.

Depressed Montgomery, IL, is home to the Western Electric plant that makes and tests AT&T circuit boards. Women are lowly bench hands and men high-paid testers. In 1976, three women cross the "gender line", led by Pat Lorance. The teacher discourages them, but they complete the courses needed to be testers. Under EEOC scrutiny, the personnel office tries to buy them off. In 1978, Lorance applies for a vacancy, is accepted, sees the job eliminated, protests to the union, and is reinstated. Male resentment grows. In 1980, Jan King becomes a tester. When twelve more female bench hands sign up for training, the male testers organize a secret union, meeting to draft rules that exclude years as bench hands from seniority calculations. Fearful of losing their jobs, the women accept the word of union officials that this will have no effect on downgrades or layoffs. Recession hits in 1982, and women are laid off or switched back to the test bench. Lorance and three others file *Lorance* v. *AT&T Technologies*. The case becomes a technical battle over whether the filing deadline dates from the rules change or the layoffs. Judge John Nordberg rules the former. Lorance is disappointed and King not surprised, but does not regret her participation-something must turn the system around. This is far more principled than the female journalists recoiling that year from confrontation.

Part 4: Chapter 14

Part 4: Chapter 14 Summary and Analysis

"Reproductive Rights under the Backlash" completes Faludi's analysis. Feminists outflank the antiabortion "warriors" of Operation Rescue at a Sacramento family-planning clinic. Down the street, their silent, female auxiliary grieves for the lost children. The media frame the struggle as a moral and biological debate over when life begins, but it is fueled by animosity over socio-economic dislocation. Men like John Willke of the National Right to Life Committee view legal abortion as an assault on patriarchal power, a "bitter subtext" in the 1980s. While critics decry the "runaway pace of abortions", the rate has not changed in a hundred years. *Roe* v. *Wade* only makes them again legal and safe. By 1980, the sexual "double standard" dies, and by 1987, eighty-seven percent of single women accept bearing and raising children outside wedlock (up from fourteen percent just four years earlier). Nearly forty percent of women believe men should have no say on abortion and one in six gets sterilized. Frightened by the speed with which women become sexually free, men fixate on abortion as the one area in which they can "apply the brakes".

The antiabortion movement uses the demonizing rhetoric of the New Right. Both Joseph Scheidler's *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion* and Willkes' *Abortion: Questions and Answers* advise "controlling" language and vocabulary to appear as protectors of the unborn, infirm, and aged. Antiabortionists invent a "post-abortion syndrome" to frighten women. Most leaders claim to favor women's rights, but not the ERA. Randall Terry, the leading figure, is careful to skirt women's equality. His emotional baggage dates from being raised by three feminist aunts, each of whom has a personal stake in legal abortions. Terry proclaims his "diehard enemies" are nearly all feminists. His Binghamton, NY "command-central" is decorated with bloody photos and embalmed fetuses that he uses as props at press conferences. The founder of Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger, he says, is an adulterous "whore", and he wants contraception and premarital sex banned. He accepts Christ and trains at the unaccredited Elim Bible Institute and works at menial jobs until Operation Rescue produces rich donations. His "vision" is to blockade clinics, counsel women, and provide homes for unwed mothers, but only the first pans out. The media pay attention only after he lays siege to Atlanta, GA, clinics before national cameras during the Democratic National Convention. Cindy thinks of picketing clinics after frustrating years of trying to get pregnant, but is shunted aside by her more violent and threatening husband. By 1985, church people are vandalizing, holding people hostage, assaulting opponents, and Points 2 and 3 in the plan never materialize.

In the 1990s, harassment, kidnapping, death threats, and assault and battery occur nationwide. Over fifty bills are introduced to restrict *Roe*, a constitutional amendment is attempted, and in 1976, the Hyde Amendment blocks federal funding of abortions. In 1989, the Supreme Court upholds state restrictions in the *Webster* decision, and in 1991, it allows the government to prohibit *speaking* about abortion when counseling

women. Nevertheless, national polls show a majority favoring *Roe*, the margin growing after *Webster*. Only white followers of televangelists dissent. Since colonial times abortion is legal in every state until women's rights becomes an issue in the mid nineteenth century. By then, doctors, lawmakers, writers, and clergy all band together to make abortion the "evil of the age". By century's end, there is a federal ban on distributing birth control, and abortion (except to save the mother's life) is outlawed in every state. Activists in the 1980s seek not only to repeal *Roe*, but to ban abortions to save women's lives, to require husbands' permission and mandatory counseling, to ban birth control information from libraries, to allow strangers to file court orders to prohibit abortions, and even to imprison-or execute-abortion providers. Journalists, clergy, and lawyers join the attack. Catholic bishops "pull out all the stops", even threatening to excommunicate pro-choice politicians and abortion clinic workers. Still, public support for legal abortion increases, but gradually actual services become hard to find as practitioners quit rather than face harassment. A quarter million women on Medicaid cannot afford abortions. The handful of private agencies that dispense funding are overwhelmed. Women's health providers who receive federal funds may not point patients to surviving clinics; information on abortion and birth control is withheld from students; sex education classes and public-service programming are shut down; advertising and informational announcements by pro-choice groups are suppressed but the antiabortion message is championed by Domino's Pizza and the New York Giants; and pro-choice controversy is avoided while pro-choice is promoted. The Vatican orders Catholic hospitals to halt, and many corporations, charities, and foundations stop funding Planned Parenthood, despite what shareholders feel. Curtailment of family planning funds leads to more abortions and the downward teenage birthrate reverses after eighteen years. In the thirty-four states that require parental notification or consent, dangerous delays and trauma occur. The birth rate among fifteen to seventeen-year-olds climbs forty percent, and second trimester abortions rise two percent. Frightened teens go underground and suffer tragedies. Judges can approve abortions but are rarely supportive and many will not accept bypass cases, while others intimidate the girls and violate confidentiality provisions. By 1989, research on birth control is the worst in the industrialized world, work on abortifacients ends, and the French abortion pill RU-486 is banned by the FDA in 1989. Researchers wander off into other areas.

The 1980s "antiabortion iconography" concentrates on the "unborn child" in a "disembodied womb". Willkes advises humanizing the fetus and neutralizing the mother. Pregnant women who abort are a "bombed-out shell" and "haunted house". Medicine and law come to view the fetus as primary, with more rights than a live child. One doctor claims custody of a patient's embryo but is forced to give it back when sued in federal court. Humanizing the embryo diverts attention from in-vitro's dismal record of live births (under ten percent) for expensive, uninsured treatments. Child abuse laws are extended to the fetus and "fetal neglect" bills flood legislatures. In many states, juvenile courts claim "custody" of fetuses and make the newborns wards of the state. By 1988, half of the people polled believe mothers who drink, smoke, or refuse obstetrical surgery should be criminally liable. Male prosecutors, doctors, and husbands haul poor pregnant women into court for the "good" of the fetus, but the impetus is too "vindictive" for that to be the prime motivation. Police "throw the book" at women who fail to follow doctors' orders. Legislators assail poor care for fetuses but cut funding needed to help poor

women do otherwise. Where doctors refuse prenatal care to Medicare mothers, infant mortality rates soar.

Government and the media grow obsessed with crack addiction and prosecutors apply to pregnant users felony laws intended for dealers. Judges enforce contraception, routine testing, and permanent restraining orders on addicted mothers. Legislators want mandatory sterilization. Charles Krauthammer calls for rounding up drug-using pregnant women and confining them, lest a "bio-underclass" develop. Black women bear the brunt of journalists' attacks on crack users. it is the cutbacks in insurance and medical care-not addiction-that drive infant mortality rates up by twenty percent. By the mid-1980s, with forty percent of poor women uninsured, Reagan strips a million mothers and babies of benefits. The black/white gap widens, and childhood diseases rather than drugs claim infant lives. Drug treatment programs are cut back leaving no help for addicts, even as police and prosecutors demand treatment as an alternative to jail. Women are frightened into going underground and there is a rise in "toilet-bowl babies".

Doctors begin operating on pregnant women without their consent and want them detained for posing any risk to fetuses. Judges back doctors with unusually swift decrees, ordering caesarians even for mentally competent women. Predictions of harm to the fetus often prove wrong when healthy babies are delivered in hiding. These decisions break a long-held tradition that holds that parents may not be compelled to take actions beneficial to their children's health (like donating a kidney). In the new climate, any choice between the health of a fetus and its mother goes to the fetus. The worst example is that of Angela Carder ("A.C"), age twenty-eight, a bone cancer victim who conceives in 1984 while in remission, but in her sixth month is diagnosed as terminal. Her long-time oncologist recommends aggressive treatment, but doctors and lawyers at George Washington University Hospital worry about endangering the fetus and liability. They part company on the wisdom of performing a caesarean. Without consulting her family, the hospital calls on Judge Emmet Sullivan to decide. Obstetricians oppose the operation; fetus' lawyer, Barbara Mishkin, maintains Carder's life is essentially ended. After a brief recess, Sullivan orders an immediate operation, and the ACLU's last-ditch appeal citing Supreme Court precedent for putting a mother's health before a fetus' fall on deaf ears. Doctors deliver a stillborn girl; Carder awakens, grieves, enters a coma, and dies. Her autopsy says the operation contributes to her death. Later, the Court of Appeals supports the operation, but a higher court overturns. Carder's mother is angry that Hollywood covers up the crime when the story becomes an episode of *L.A. Law*-with the baby surviving.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, America's largest corporations, many under EEOC scrutiny for unfair hiring policies, draft "fetal protection policies" intended to bar women from high-paying "male" jobs, ostensibly to prevent birth defects. This is a return to "protective labor policies" common at the turn of the twentieth century. Neither industry nor the government cares about real health threats in sweatshops, medical facilities, dry cleaners, and beauty shops, or the radiation emitted by computer screens. The threat to men's health is never investigated. With pregnant women seen as just an "environment" for fetuses, companies jump on protecting fetuses' rights. Data on the subject are non-existent, dated, or flawed, and Reagan cuts funding for research into hazards. Women

at Johnson Controls sue over a fetal-protection policy that blocks them from any career path leading to high-paying jobs. The Bush Administration sides with the company. In 1991, the Supreme Court declares the policy violates the 1978 Pregnancy Discrimination Act, but grants the women no compensation. Companies grow subtler in handling their policies.

American Cyanamid produces Breck Shampoo and skin-treatment products at Willow Island, WV, a major source of environmental pollution but the only place in the state that offers a living wage. The work force is solidly male until 1973, when the federal government presses Cyanamid to hire women. Betty Riggs has many mouths to feed and needs more than "women's" jobs pay. The personnel office finds the women who apply too feminine, too unfeminine, too pretty, or-in Rigg's case-too fat. She goes on a diet, keeps returning, is finally hired as a janitor, but gets transferred to the lead pigments department at six times the pay. As women increase production dramatically, men, who "pace" themselves, resent it and begin reprisals, including sexual assaults. The women are determined to stay.

In 1976, management stops hiring women, and without research, Dr. Robert Clyne proposes barring women of childbearing age from production jobs that expose them to any of twenty-nine chemicals, of which only lead is known to cause birth defects (and affects men equally). In 1978, the company unveils a draft, admitting it may infringe on women's chances of advancement. Managers make women choose between jobs and sterilization. Five of seven women in pigments accept and endure jokes about being "spayed" and becoming "one of the boys". In 1979, OSHA levies a $10,000 fine for the forced sterilizations and orders a cleanup of lead. The company instead closes the department and male coworkers blame the women, who lose both uteruses and jobs. The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International files suit under the Civil Rights Act, but Appellate Judge Robert Bork finds for the company, saying the women have a choice. Seeing Bork at his hearing for a Supreme Court nomination, Riggs sends a protest telegram that male senators ignore. Bork's rhetoric enters the mainstream: it is easy for women to complain-and they have a choice.

The sterilized women of Cyanamid turn their anger inward, feeling "unfeminine" and "incomplete". They withdraw from husbands and society, treating crippling depression with mind-numbing drugs. The backlash has taught them well. Motherhood is woman's highest calling, so they have become defective in an irreversible way. The women need their jobs in the 1980s economy: if they follow the "social signals and go home, they would starve". If they are sterilized, they are told they lose the "most glorious reason for living". To some degree, all American women in the 1980s face this predicament. The backlash cannot succeed in returning to a "dad-hailing" ideal. Women's freedom has little to do with their widespread misery: it comes from being lashed by "self-doubt and recrimination" by the voices of the backlash. Women's lives are split in two and offered only a "faulty cure". Women need always to move forward.

Epilogue

Epilogue Summary and Analysis

The unremitting 1980s backlash fails to stop women from entering the workforce or follow other social dictates. Bruised and discouraged, Riggs and other women know there is nowhere to go but forward. Many heed the "little voice" inside that calls for self-expression, and find a niche that does not conflict with the backlash message. Others sink deeper into their ruts and wait for the world to take pity on women. In the 1980s, women do not mobilize like the suffragists and the Women's Strike for Equality in 1970; instead, they go back to worrying about "offending men". Men cling to their macho role because women expect it and affect their expected demeanor. Where women work together, vocally and unapologetically in the 1980s, they change the minds of many individual men, particularly on abortion politics, through the largest demonstration ever in Washington, DC. Pro-choice candidates are placed in governors' and congressional chairs in 1989 and restrictive abortion laws are repealed. Men see more clearly than women how women united could change government and society. The backlash propaganda is a purposeful overreaction precisely because men "got it". At the start of the 1990s, some forecast a "Decade of Women", perhaps no more than another nostalgic trend, but conceivably real movement towards true justice for American women. Demographics and opinion polls are on their side.

Characters

Neil Bennett

Neil Bennett was one of the researchers involved in the 1986 Harvard-Yale marriage study, which concluded that college-educated, never-married women past the age of thirty had a slim chance of ever marrying. Bennett was a Yale University sociologist when stories about the as-yet-unpublished study on women's marriage patterns ran in various media outlets. This study generated the idea that there was a "man shortage" in America, something Faludi denies in her book.

Allan Bloom

Allan Bloom was a professor at the University of Chicago and writer of the bestselling book *The Closing of the American Mind*. While the book has been publicized as a treatise on education, Faludi argues that it was actually "an assault on the women's movement." According to Faludi, Bloom believes that "most faculty jobs and publication rights are now reserved for feminist women" and that women who try to mix a career with rearing children are hurting their families.

David Bloom

David Bloom was one of the researchers involved in the 1986 Harvard-Yale marriage study, which claimed that college-educated, never-married women past the age of thirty had a small chance of ever marrying. Bloom was a Harvard economist when stories about the as-yet-unpublished study on women's marriage patterns ran in various media outlets. This study generated the idea that there was a "man shortage" in America, something Faludi denies in her book.

Robert Bly

Originally a poet and Vietnam-era anti-war activist, Robert Bly re-created himself in the 1980s as a leader in what Faludi calls "the men's movement." This movement, according to Faludi, was based upon the idea that men were becoming "soft" and were out of touch with their masculinity. "In short," she writes, "the Great Mother's authority has become too great." Across the country, Bly held weekend retreats in the woods devoted to reconnecting men with their masculinity through drumming and Native American rituals.

Diana Doe

Diana Doe is a pseudonym for a thirty-five-year-old single, working woman who, though she was a public figure, asked Faludi not to use her real name in the book. Doe bet a doubtful male colleague - who had called her "physically inferior " to younger women - that she would be married by the time she was forty despite press reports in 1986 stating that professional single women over thirty had a 5 percent chance of ever marrying. To help her chances of marriage, Doe decided to get a complete physical makeover through plastic surgery and other techniques. She created a market plan in which she agreed to sell the story of her physical "metamorphosis" to various media outlets and gave herself a stage name: "the Ultimate Five Percent Woman." The "project," as Doe referred to it, required her to mention the names of her plastic surgeon, dentist, exercise trainer, and beautician in articles and during personal appearances in exchange for their services. During the project, Doe appeared on a radio show and received criticism from male listeners who considered her vain and unnatural. Faludi bemoans the case of Doe, noting that first a male colleague criticized her for not being young, and then "men were criticizing her for trying to live up to male-created standards - standards she had made her own."

Greg Duncan

Greg Duncan was a University of Michigan social scientist working with Saul Hoffman. They challenged Marlene Weitzman's argument that divorce was impoverishing women. Duncan used his and Hoffman's research and Weitzman's numbers to conclude that, while women did suffer a drop in their standard of living after divorce, that drop was temporary. According to Duncan and his research partner, women's living standards five years after a divorce were actually higher than they had been before the divorce.

Warren Farrell

As a young academic, Warren Farrell supported the women's movement, writing the "celebrated male feminist tome" *The Liberated Man*, and founding some sixty men's chapters of the National Organization for Women. But by the mid-1980s, Farrell decided that men were more oppressed than women and wrote *Why Men Are the Way They Are*, in which he argued that women had been venting too much anger at men and had exerted too much power over them. He taught classes on men's issues at the University of California School of Medicine at San Diego.

Geraldine Ferraro

Geraldine Ferraro was a member of Congress when Democrat Walter Mondale selected her to be his vice presidential running mate in 1984. Faludi notes that Ferraro's nomination provoked attacks from many conservative politicians and notions that the Democrats had "surrendered" to feminists by choosing her.

Betty Freidan

Betty Freidan was once one of America's most famous feminists, a founder of the National Organization for Women and author of the groundbreaking 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*. Faludi writes about Freidan's 1981 book, *The Next Stage*, which argues that the leaders of the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s had ignored the issues of motherhood and family and had been too confrontational.

George Gilder

George Gilder initially supported feminism and women's rights, according to Faludi, but ultimately made a name for himself as a conservative media commentator and writer. In his words, he decided to become "America's number-one anti-feminist" by writing such books as *Wealth and Poverty, Sexual Suicide, Men and Marriage, and Naked Nomads*.

Carol Gilligan

Many books were published in the 1980s on how women are different from men and about "women's inordinate capacity for kindness, service to others, and cooperation," according to Faludi. During this period, Carol Gilligan wrote *In a Different Voice*, a book Faludi refers to as "one of the most influential feminist works of the '80s." While Gilligan wrote the book to illustrate how men diminished women's moral development, the book was misinterpreted by anti-feminist groups to support discriminatory practices against women.

Sylvia Ann Hewlett

Sylvia Ann Hewlett, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and other think-tanks, indicted the women's movement in her book *A Lesser Life: Myths of Women's Liberation in America*. The book argued that, while feminism may be helpful to upper-class career women, it is actually harmful to what she calls "ordinary women."

Saul Hoffman

Saul Hoffman was a University of Delaware economist who specialized in divorce statistics and worked with Greg Duncan. They challenged Marlene Weitzman's argument that divorce was impoverishing women, using their own research and Weitzman's numbers. They discovered that, while women did suffer a drop in their standard of living after divorce, that drop was temporary. According to Hoffman and Duncan, women's living standards five years after a divorce were actually higher than they had been before the divorce.

Christian Lacroix

Christian Lacroix was a fashion designer. Faludi writes that Lacroix launched a look called "High Femininity," in which women's bodies were cinched into waist-pinching corsets and reshaped by push-up bras. In his own words, Lacroix created these clothes for women who like to "dress up like little girls." Lacroix and other designers participated in the backlash against feminism by promoting "punitively restrictive clothing," according to Faludi.

Beverly LaHaye

Beverly LaHaye was an example of a paradox for Faludi: a high-powered career woman with a family and yet a supporter of the New Right's conviction that such a life is neither possible nor appropriate. LaHaye founded the anti-feminist organization Concerned Women for America in 1978. In Faludi's book, LaHaye claims that her power and authority did not contradict the concept that men should be the heads of households, as women like her were only seeking "spiritual power" and not earthly power. LaHaye wrote a book outlining this philosophy, *The Spirit-Controlled Woman* and also wrote *The Act of Marriage: The Beauty of Sexual Love*, a book Faludi calls "the evangelical equivalent of *The Joy of Sex*."

Sherry Lansing

Sherry Lansing was a movie executive responsible for releasing films such as *Fatal Attraction* and *The Accused* in the 1980s. Faludi points to *Fatal Attraction*, the story of a single career woman whose affair with a married man sparks her obsession with him, as part of the evidence of a societal and cultural backlash against women's rights in the 1980s. According to Faludi, Lansing's release of *The Accused*, a film about a woman who is gang-raped while a group of men stand by but don't interfere was a feeble attempt to "polish up her feminist credentials." Faludi questions whether audiences needed to be "reminded that rape victims deserve sympathy."

Margarita Levin

Margarita Levin was a philosophy professor at Yeshiva University, with a specialty in the philosophy of mathematics. She was also, according to Faludi, "an intellectual partner" in her husband, Michael Levin's, "anti-feminist writings." Faludi reports that, ironically, many of the typically female jobs in the Levin household, such as child care, were done by Michael Levin as well as by his wife.

Michael Levin

Michael Levin was a philosophy professor who wrote *Feminism and Freedom*, a book arguing that sex roles are innate and that women who attempt to have both family and career are denying these sex roles. He was married to Margarita Levin, also a philosophy professor. Faludi reports that many of the typically female jobs in the Levin household, such as child care, were done by Michael Levin as well as by his wife.

Adrian Lyne

Adrian Lyne directed the 1987 blockbuster movie *Fatal Attraction*, in which a single career woman has an affair with a married man and stalks him after he tries to break off the relationship. Faludi points to this movie as part of the evidence of a societal and cultural backlash against women's rights in the 1980s. She highlights Lyne's role in turning the character of the single woman into "the Dark Woman." According to Faludi, Lyne once commented that unmarried women are "sort of overcompensating for not being men."

John T. Malloy

John Malloy, a former English teacher, wrote the 1977 bestselling book *The Woman's Dress for Success Book*. The book encouraged women to dress for the jobs they wanted. Faludi notes that Malloy was "an advocate for women's rising expectations - and urged them to rely on their brains rather than their bodies to improve their station." She argues that much of the "High Femininity" fashion look of the 1980s was a backlash against what Malloy stood for.

Paul Marciano

Paul Marciano, along with his brothers, created the Guess line of jeans and clothing in the early 1980s. Faludi asserts that Guess found a way to "use the backlash to sell clothes" by developing an ad campaign featuring passive-looking women with strong-looking men. Marciano claimed that the design of the ads reflected his love of the American West and the 1950s, places and periods in which women, he said, "know their place, which is supportive, and their function, which is decorative."

Connie Marshner

Connie Marshner was an executive with the conservative organizations Free Congress Research and Education Foundation and the Heritage Foundation. She was the child of liberal parents who encouraged her to go to school and have a career. Faludi draws a profile of her as a woman who has been helped by feminism - she has had a thriving

and powerful career as well as a family - and yet still supports the New Right thinking that a woman cannot have a career and be a mother.

Jeanne Moorman

Jeanne Moorman, a demographer in the marriage and family statistics branch of the U. S. Census Bureau, heard about the Harvard-Yale marriage study from the numerous reporters who called her looking for a comment on it. Moorman attempted to reproduce the survey's results. According to her calculations, the likelihood that college-educated, never-wed women past the age of thirty would marry was considerably greater than the Harvard-Yale study had concluded. Her findings showed that these women were simply getting married later in life, not failing to marry. Moorman's attempts to contact the researchers at Yale and Harvard were ignored at first. When they finally did respond, the researchers were uncooperative and difficult, according to Faludi.

Faith Popcorn

Faith Popcorn was an advertising executive and "leading consumer authority" who became well known in the 1980s for predicting social trends. She admitted that her predictions often came from popular magazines, television shows, and bestselling books, rather than from consumer research. Popcorn predicted that "cocooning" was the major national trend for the 1980s, meaning that people were becoming more interested in staying home and eating "Mom foods" such as meatloaf and chicken potpie. Faludi argues that, while Popcorn may have intended for cocooning to be a "gender neutral concept, the press made it a female trend, defining cocooning not as *people* coming home but as *women* abandoning the office."

Ronald Reagan

Ronald Reagan was elected United States president in 1980 on a conservative social and economic platform. Faludi notes that in a 1982 speech he blamed working women for the tight job market. Reagan said in the speech that high unemployment figures were related to "the increase in women who are working today."

Charles Revson

Charles Revson was the head of Revlon, a cosmetics company. In the early 1970s, he came up with the idea of creating a perfume for women that would celebrate women's liberation and independence. The perfume, Charlie, was a huge success. By the late 1980s, however, the marketing campaign for Charlie was modified, according to a Revson spokesperson, to reflect that "we had gone a little too far with the whole women's liberation thing."

Phyllis Schlafly

Phyllis Schlafly was a part of the conservative New Right political movement in the 1980s. She campaigned against the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U. S. Constitution. Schlafly was a Harvard-educated lawyer, author of numerous books, and two-time congressional candidate who fought against the ERA because, in Schlafly's words, "it would take away the marvelous legal rights of a woman to be a full time wife and mother in the house supported by her husband."

Aaron Spelling

Aaron Spelling was the producer behind the late 1980s television series Angels '88, a reprise of his earlier series *Charlie's Angels*, in which, according to Faludi, "three jiggle-prone private eyes took orders from invisible boss Charlie and bounced around in bikinis." Spelling assured the press that his new show was much more advanced than *Charlie's Angels* because the women's boss was a female nurse.

Ben Wattenberg

Ben Wattenberg was a syndicated columnist, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and author of the 1987 book *The Birth Dearth*. In the book, Wattenberg introduced the concept that American women's decisions to have fewer children would hurt the nation's economy and culture. According to Faludi, Wattenberg and others were urging women to have children based on "society's baser instincts - xenophobia, militarism, and bigotry" by arguing that if white, educated, middle-class women didn't have babies, "paupers, fools and foreigners would." Wattenberg blamed the women's movement and feminism for discouraging women from their more traditional societal roles.

Lenore Weitzman

Lenore Weitzman wrote the 1985 book *The Divorce Revolution: The Unexpected Social and Economic Consequences for Women and Children in America*. According to Faludi, Weitzman's thesis, that the recent no-fault divorce laws in America were systematically impoverishing divorced women and their children, increased the "attack on divorce-law reform" in the 1980s. While Weitzman herself never blamed feminists for no-fault divorce legislation, Faludi notes that those who were promoting and supporting her book did so.

Paul Weyrich

Paul Weyrich, head of the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, is considered by many to be the "Father of the New Right." The New Right was the

conservative political movement that supported Ronald Reagan in the early 1980s and put many conservative Republicans in Congress. In Faludi's book, Weyrich called the late 1980s a period when "women are discovering they can't have it all" and that having a career will destroy their family life. He also said that the New Right movement was different from other conservative movements in that it did not want simply to "preserve the status quo" but to "overturn the present power structure of the country." One of the major pieces of legislation he supported at the beginning of the 1980s was the Family Protection Act, which, according to Faludi, was intended to eliminate federal laws supporting equal education.

Shere Hite

Dr. Srully Blotnick

Betty Friedan

Beverly LaHaye

Connaught ("Connie") Marshner

John T. Molloy

Jeanne Moorman

Robin Norwood

Faith Popcorn

Lenore Weitzman

Objects/Places

"The Contenders"

The designation used by the Yankelovich survey organization for the youngest of the baby-boom males, "Contenders" form the twenty to twenty-four percent of the population in the 1980s that lose the most in the economic downturn. Failing to attain the economic status enjoyed by fathers and older brothers, "Contenders" fear and revile feminism, are bitter "change resisters", and readily accept the backlash's message as framed by affluent men of media, business, and politics. "Contenders" lead the militant antiabortion movement, file reverse-discrimination lawsuits, and fill prisons with rapists and sexual assailants.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

Lobbied by the National Organization for Women (NOW), Congress in the 1970s creates the EEOC to deal with sex discrimination, as women are far more likely to lose jobs or have wages cut, and the courts ignore challenges. In 1973, the EEOC begins investigating Sears, Roebuck & Company after receiving hundreds of complaints. It finds "major disparities" in pay, hiring, and promotion. By the end of the 1970s, the EEOC makes AT&T, General Electric, and General Motors negotiate and pay multimillion-dollar settlements to avoid even costlier court fights, but in 1979, Sears judges the atmosphere in Washington ripe for a fight. Sears charges but fails to "prove" that NOW has formed a "female underground" within the EEOC, is "usurping" the agency, and "injuring" Sears. The Reagan administration cuts the EEOC budget in half, jettisons its caseload, and muzzles or fires investigators. The number of suits pursued drops three hundred percent and compensation to victims by two-thirds-at a time when virtually every U.S. company is out of compliance. It twice tries to settle the Sears case. In the end, Judge John A. Nordberg is skeptical about discrimination and throws out the EEOC case.

The Equal Rights Amendment

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution meant to guarantee equal rights to Americans, regardless of sex. The National Women's Party gets the ERA before Congress in the 1920s. It is introduced in every session until 1970, but rarely gets out of committee to the floor for a vote. During World War II, with millions of women patriotically working in industry, both parties endorse the ERA; but after victory, it is killed by a coalition that includes the federal Women's Bureau, forty-three national organizations, and the National Committee to Defeat the UnEqual Rights Amendment. The *New York Times* hails its demise. The ERA is finally adopted by Congress in 1971-72 and sent to state legislatures for ratification with a seven-year

deadline by three-quarters of them. New Right groups form and support only candidates who oppose the ERA. In the 1980 election, they force the Republican Party to oppose the ERA for the first time since 1940, thus producing the only clear differentiation from the Democrats. Reagan wants the ERA killed and a "Human Life Amendment" passed. In 1988, GOP candidates who previously back the ERA recant and strike macho poses. In the end, a handful of powerful men in three state legislatures defeat the ERA because they believe women should serve their husbands.

The Harvard-Yale Marriage Study

Conducted by thirty-one-year old, unmarried sociologist Neil Bennett of Yale, Harvard economist David Bloom, and Yale graduate student Patricia Craig, the Harvard-Yale study finds that women at age thirty have only a twenty percent chance of marrying, dropping to five percent at thirty-five, and 1.3 percent at forty. These figures wind up everywhere in the media, showing that there is a "marriage crunch" among baby-boom college-educated women. Bennett/Bloom later disclose that they use a "parametric model" to compute marital odds and use off-year data from the 1982 census. Other researchers rerun the study and find the numbers are grossly misstated (fifty-eight to sixty-six percent chance of marriage for thirty-year-old women, thirty-two to forty-one percent for thirty-five-year-olds, and seventeen to twenty-three percent for forty-year-olds). Through all of this, the press overlooks the point that there is no "man shortage".

Ms. Magazine

Founded by Gloria Steinem, *Ms*. Is the "flagship of feminist journalism", but in the 1980s it retreats almost as fast as culture at large. The beauty industry is no longer its enemy and celebrities are popular. *Ms*. drops its nonprofit status in order to be free to deal with politics and endorse candidates. Anne Summers takes over as editor from Steinem in 1987, and begins revamping the magazine's image. It aims at high-income women. Market research shows they want to "feel good, valued, honored", rather than patronized or condescended to. Summers avoids using the demonized word "feminist" rather than fighting the backlash by clarifying its meaning. By the end of the 1980s, *Ms*. is serving up moral judgments issued by the backlash press. Only after the Supreme Court restricts women's reproductive rights in 1989 does *Ms*. declare war. Many big advertisers withdraw. Dale Lang takes control in October 1989, shuts *Ms*. down for eight months, and restores it as a bimonthly with no ads and an "impossibly high subscription price", which results in the loss of half the readers.

The National Organization for Women (NOW)

The premier women's rights advocacy group, NOW is shown in *Backlash* largely as taking the brunt of the New Right's attacks. The circumstances of 1966 are omitted and its responsibility for forming the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to fight discrimination is only hinted at. Founding President Betty Friedan is most noted for

turning against the movement in the 1980s. Some note is given to men's work within the organization. The most detail given about NOW comes in the summer after the 1988 election when women meet in Cincinnati. Feeling betrayed by both parties, they spontaneously begin talking about a third party. A motion to explore passes unanimously; the press, which usually ignores NOW conventions, is outraged, and dozens of editorial tantrums are thrown, ignoring basic facts: President Molly Yard does not "foist" the idea on the convention, but is surprised by the grass roots movement. The delegates are generally moderates because the East- and West coast "rabid radicals" have stayed home from a meeting at which no election takes place. The resolution calls only for exploring the idea, not forming a party, and proponents want a broad-based human-rights movement, not one limited to women's issues. In 1989, a majority of women believe both parties are "out of touch" with them and feel akin to NOW, the leaders of the women's rights movement, and feminists. Younger women feel this the most, with eighty-three percent of sixteen to twenty-one-year-olds believing NOW over the politicians. This could be a powerful voting bloc if properly mobilized-as the New Right mobilizes for 1980. The women in Washington, however, are still running for cover, since they take most of the New Right's flack.

The U.S. Supreme Court

While *Backlash* never directly discusses the landmark abortion rights case, *Roe* v. *Wade* (1973), much of its content revolves around how the Supreme Court is gradually swayed by the 1980s backlash. The Court and Congress (by approving the ERA in 1972) become the targets of a militant New Right movement. They manage through legislation to restrict the effects of *Roe*, primarily by blocking the use of federal funding on abortions through the Hyde Amendment. Then in 1989, the Court falls in line with the political climate and upholds state restrictions on abortion in the *Webster* decision. In 1991, it goes further by allowing the government to prohibit even speaking about abortion when counseling women. Nevertheless, national polls show a majority favoring *Roe*, the margin growing after *Webster*. Only white followers of televangelists dissent. In the ongoing battles, the Supreme Court precedent for always putting a mother's health before a fetus' fall by the wayside. Bucking the Bush Administration in 1991, however, the Supreme Court declares that a policy "protecting" women from exposure to allegedly dangerous chemicals violates the 1978 Pregnancy Discrimination Act.

"thirty-something"

An ABC television drama about yuppie baby boomers, "thirty-something" is the ultimate 1980s trend story, embracing cocooning, mommy track, man shortage, biological clock, and no-fault divorce. The creators market it as "a thinking person's TV series", but it deals with nothing social or political. Scripts sound progressive but are hollow sermons about mock struggle with 1950s-style lifestyles. The press gives "thirty-something" the red-carpet treatment. Therapists and clergymen use it for teaching purposes, dating services claim to have its feel, and George Bush refers to it in a speech. Still, it never rates above twenty-fifth and slips steadily in the first season. Ad agencies claim to *know*

that cocooning is a "trend" to because they see it on "thirty-something". Lead character Hope does nothing but feeling guilty about her perfect life. The impression is that *all* single women are unhappy and, which is "scary", given the show's popularity and how seriously fans take it. Writer Ann Hamilton and the actresses are uncomfortable with the treatment given working mothers, since they have children in daycare and believe they are balancing work and motherhood. Market research shows ABC that women viewers do *not* want Hope to vegetate at home, but male creators need to strike out at a world that does not let them be male in the way they wish.

Trend Stories

The most distinctive way in which the media deal with women in the 1980s, "trend stories" lack factual evidence or hard number, cite three to four women (usually anonymously), use vague qualifiers, rely on the predictive future tense, invoke "authorities", and cite other media trend stories. They pretend to serve no political agenda and make women believe they are not in conflict with society but only with self-destructive personal problems. Trend stories gain authority not by facts but by the "power of repetition". They cover husbands, marriage, and children, and dwell on "bad girls" to the exclusion of "bad boys", who outnumber them greatly. While AIDS is primarily a male affliction, women are warned to "reembrace 'traditional' sex roles" or suffer dire consequences. Women's trends always come in "instructional pairs" -what to avoid and what to join: Superwoman "burnout"versus "New Traditionalist 'cocooning,'" "spinster boom" versus "return to marriage", and "infertility epidemic" versus "baby boomlet". Trend stories do not chronicle women's retreat as much as compel it.

The Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA)

A particular target of the New Right and the Reagan Administration, WEEA is a tiny federal program in the Department of Education, seeking only to promote equal education for girls through small grants to non-sexist projects. It is hailed as cost-effective. Its director is a G.S. 15 veteran, Leslie Wolfe, whom critics brand a "known feminist" and the program an "important resource for the practice of feminist policies and politics". Heritage Foundation fellow Charles Heatherly attacks Wolfe before a House committee and is named by Reagan as her superior in the Education Department. He brings in colleagues and consultants determined to wipe out WEEA, which suffers a forty percent budget cut. The anti-Wolfe campaign continues in the media, trying to show WEEA as a "slush fund for NOW". She is demoted to "advisor", protests, and is then assigned to a "task force on fraud, waste, and abuse", outside her area of expertise. WEEA's congressional supporters get her restored to her original job, but the agency is already completely changed. Heatherly has thrown out her field readers with women from Schlafly's Eagle Forum intent on curbing the agency's feminism. They neither understand nor support educational equity; twenty percent fail to meet a single job qualification and most are barely qualified. Minority field readers are cut by seventy-five percent. A year later, Wolfe's job is abolished and she refuses a

clerk-typist position. All five female staffers in WEEA leave but all file males are retained.

Themes

Structure and Functioning of Families

Conservative thinkers and writers object to feminism because it ignores what they see as a woman's natural inclination toward making a home for her children and husband. In their eyes, feminists' endorsement of a woman's ability to maintain a home while pursuing a career threatens the family structure by subverting the man as the traditional head of the household. This, in turn, threatens the country's social and economic structure. Those who view feminism in this way believe that the women's movement is not only encouraging women to work while they have children but also to forgo or delay having children. Faludi is particularly concerned that the backlash against women delaying childbirth encourages press reports that there is an "epidemic " of infertility among career women.

Some conservative commentators, who argue that feminists have encouraged women to remain childless, believe that such urgings place the nation at an economic disadvantage in the world. In her analysis of this argument, Faludi asserts that those who make this case for American women having children can be accused of racism and xenophobia. She believes that they are worried not only about America's economic future but also about the possibility of whites becoming a minority among people of color and foreigners.

Faludi delights in revealing the personal lives of many of the conservative thinkers who oppose feminism, observing that those lives very often run counter to the tenets of their public comments. She writes about a number of the women involved in the New Right who, despite their arguments that careers and motherhood do not mix, are pursuing lives filled with both children and work. She also points out the number of men in these prominent couples who take over the household duties, such as child care and cooking, so that their wives can pursue careers.

Popular Culture in the 1980s

Faludi uses popular culture during the 1980s to buttress her argument that the decade was a period of backlash against women and feminism. Her evidence for this backlash includes examples from the movie industry, television, the cosmetics and beauty industry, the fashion world, and societal trends.

For example, Faludi notes that after a decade filled with television series like *All in the Family*, which tackled tough political issues (including women's rights), television in the mid- to late 1980s featured few programs in which women's issues were considered. The rare 1980s show featuring a strong woman was usually under threat of cancellation. In the movies, women were regularly beaten, pitted against each other, or punished for being single. Hollywood supported the backlash by showing American

women who were "unhappy because they were too free [and] their liberation had denied them marriage and motherhood," says Faludi. The fashion industry reinforced the backlash, as well, by designing clothing that was either childlike or extremely restrictive and binding.

The Struggle for Equal Rights

Faludi's book is concerned with a period in history - the 1980s - during which women's struggle for equal rights suffered setbacks. She notes, however, that these periods of backlash historically occur after periods of advancement in women's rights. According to Faludi, the mid-nineteenth century, the early 1900s, the early 1940s, and the early 1970s were eras during which American women saw large gains in their economic and social status. "In each case, the struggle yielded to backlash," asserts Faludi.

Faludi points out that the backlash against women is cyclical. For example, when she speaks of movies in the 1980s, she also looks at the tenor of movies in the 1970s. When she examines 1980s fashions, she also considers what women were wearing in the 1950s, a period of backlash after the advances of the 1940s.

Myths and Their Role in Society

Faludi points out that many in society, including some well-meaning writers and thinkers, have accepted the truth of myths about the status of women in the 1980s. She exposes many of these myths and supposed trends, which have appeared so often in the press that most Americans consider them as fact. For example, Faludi discovered that the Harvard-Yale marriage study, proclaiming that unmarried women after the age of thirty have a very slim chance of ever becoming wed was full of methodological errors. She also challenges stories claiming that single career women suffer from depression in epidemic numbers.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is defined as a figure of speech that uses exaggeration for emphasis or effect. *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women* is filled with examples of exaggerated rhetoric. To listen to the 1980s message, the family is disintegrating, society crumbling, males perplexed, and women neurotic and miserable all because in the 1970s the women's movement ordered women to leave home and go to work. The message comes across first and most frantically from the pulpits of New Right preachers, whose followers are falling in numbers. The media, however, takes up the message and calmer "talking heads" anxious to restore their formerly glory as feminists in the 1970s are able to calm the response to the jeremiads and make the myths palatable to mainstream America. Women are assured that if they put off marriage and childbearing until after they have established themselves in a career, they have little chance of either. The study that provides statistics is shown to be defective and overblown, but the numbers stick and soon pervade the media, movies and television,

and advertising for fashion, cosmetics, and plastic surgery. Women are scared into marrying to "beat the odds". Another false statistic scares them away from taking advantage of no-fault divorce laws, creating a pervasive myth that women and children suffer loss while men prosper. In fact, men are more often devastated psychologically by marital breakups, but the inconvenient statistic is not made known.

Women are told that by ignoring their "biological clocks" they are undermining the only source of joy that is natural to them. Work only wears them out, ages their complexions, and causes depression and physical ailments that in the past characterized only workaholic men. Surveys showing that working women rank higher than stay-at-home moms for psychological health are not publicized. Women do not merely enter new jobs (which government and media overstate) but massively invade and quickly dominate in the minds of male onlookers, if not in the mainstream myth. Hyperbole, naturally, is most prevalent in the highly emotional debate over abortion rights. As a result, in law and medicine, pregnant women are reduced to the status of mere rental units for fetuses. Vendettas against women's health centers seem justifiable, as do legal proceedings against women for failing to take proper prenatal care. The intent of child endangerment laws is stretched to cover the unborn until new draconian laws can be enacted. Anti-abortionists are careful to avoid harsh clinical language. Instead, they humanize and romanticize the fetus and reduce the mother to a passive role. The hyperbole is so effective that long-standing preference for saving the mother's life over that of the fetus is reversed in practice.

Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is the act of condemning others and demanding that they be punished for acts that one also practices. It often involves a "double standard". *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women* is filled with such cases. Benign examples include the notion that Christian women who convince themselves as seeking power through and for Jesus Christ present no conflict with religion and the stay-home-with-the-children tenets of the New Right. These spokeswomen have their cake and eat it too. Far more serious is men's reaction to the way in which women continue to defy the age-old sexual "double standard", and they avail themselves of the sexual revolution. In the 1970s, contraception and legal abortion free women to enjoy themselves with no more cares about unwanted pregnancies than men. By the 1980s, women indulge in non-marital sex in numbers that rival men and control whether or not to bear children. Many men feel emasculated and set aside, particularly when women insist that biological fathers have no say in whether to end an unwanted pregnancy. Men struggle not to understand and adapt to the new situation, but to regain control. They thunder rhetorically about the destruction of home and family and crusade for family values as had been shown on 1950s television-and quite often continue the wife beating and intimidation that is another part of the traditional arrangement. Domestic violence soars.

The "Contenders", the youngest baby-boom males, lose the most in the economic downturn of the 1980s, fail to attain the economic status enjoyed by their fathers and older brothers, fear and revile feminism for their failures, bitterly resist change, and

readily accept the backlash's message as framed by affluent men of media, business, and politics. Their hypocrisy comes out most clearly in the militant antiabortion movement that they seize upon as the one area in which they can reclaim a measure of control. Only white followers of right-wing televangelists dissent against *Roe* v. *Wade*, the 1972 Supreme Court's decision legalizing abortion. A majority of all other Americans accept it, regardless of age, background, and geographic distribution. Adopting the fiery rhetoric of the preachers, the anti-abortionists create a moral cause, clothe their condemnation of fetus murder in Christian scripture, and frequently take calculated action to shut down women's clinics. They commit felony assaults, vandalism, intimidation, and kidnapping, and cause a few deaths. Their hypocrisy lies less in requiring "thou shalt not kill" only from those they oppose' in being so wrapped up in their own economic misery they cannot allow others-women-to realize the long denied destiny of social and economic equality for which they in their reduced circumstances also long.

Cycles

The New Right ostensibly comes to Washington with Reagan in 1981, not to become politicians, but to restore the U.S. to the good old days of "Leave It to Beaver" and then escape political Sodom as soon as possible. The Cleavers and other ostensibly perfect families of the post-World War II era frequently turn up in quips and allusions. In fact, that viewpoint harkens back to an idealization of the Victorian era when the media and mass marketing are first invented. In late Victorian times, feminists are termed hysterical revolutionaries. Broadsides against women's rights peak with every new suffrage campaign, claiming that liberated women are destined to be spinsters, sterile, or bad mothers. Pop psychologists declare that women's troubles are "self-generated", at the turn of the twentieth century, in the 1930s, the 1950s, and the 1980s, when the media talks of a "the spinster boom" and "hypermaidenism". Women always need their virtue protected, by the clergy in earlier times and by network censors in the 1980s. After every advance women make, men put them back in the "punitively restrictive clothing" of the Victorians and free them from that "excess of equality" that "depletes femininity". The French fashion designer Christian Lacroix in particular draws inspiration from the late Victorian and postwar eras-but American women in the 1980s reject him.

They do, however, fall victim to the Victorian cult of frailty, pallor, and the infantile, using near-toxic potions and suffering anorexia. The history of cosmetics use provides a graphic way of summarizing cycles of women's progress and repression. The Victorian dead look gives way in the late 1910s and early 1920s to a bright, healthy, athletic look; it in turn is denounced in the late 1920s and early 1930s, which feature "glamour girls". Athleticism returns in the "New American Look" of World War II, but after the war, motivational research consultants advise inflating breasts, frosting hair, and whitening the face. In the 1970s, "Action Beauty" is touted, so the 1980s backlash must compensate by returning to a "sickbed aesthetic". As troubling as the efforts to achieve this effect are, far more troubling is how masochism as an "all-purpose definition of the female psyche" is promoted in the 1920s, scientifically discredited, but then in 1985 is reintroduced by the American Psychiatric Association over the protests of women

professionals and included in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, opening the way for women to be victimized by medicine and the law simply because they are more giving than men. Every step forward for women seems to require a massive overreaction by men, followed by a slow re-gathering of the dispirited forces for another try at becoming equal.

Style

Use of Evidence to Make an Argument

Faludi's book is overflowing with data and information that she believes bolsters her case that the 1980s represented a period of backlash against women and their advances. Her supporting data comes from a wide variety of sources, including newspapers, scholarly and academic journals, personal interviews, and government and university studies. This use of authoritative sources is an important way writers convince readers of their argument; however, some critics have suggested that Faludi uses almost too much factual data and that its volume actually hinders her argument.

Personal Profiles

Faludi also includes short profiles of people she believes were critical to the evolution of the backlash against women in the 1980s. Inclusion of these profiles helps move the book along in a number of ways: reading about specific individuals who contributed to the backlash - even though Faludi obviously disagrees with their philosophy - puts a human face on the philosophy and makes the issues seem less amorphous; and the profiles offer some relief from the pages and pages of data. Faludi is able to point her finger directly at the commentators, writers, politicians, and thinkers who she feels helped the backlash gain momentum.

Perspective

Susan Faludi is a young, Harvard-trained journalist who in the 1980s writes for the *New York Times,* the *Wall Street Journal*, and many smaller publications. She sees resistance to feminism rise throughout the decade. Having won a Pulitzer Prize in 1991 for the human suffering caused by the leveraged buy-out of a supermarket chain, Faludi turns her analytical skills to this problem in *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*, which appears late in 1991. It becomes a national bestseller and wins for her the National Book Critic's Circle Award in 1992.

Faludi includes no personal author's notes that could have revealed what might have inspired her to take on this topic or how she has gone about her obviously extensive research. The reader must determine her motivations from the text itself. It is clear that Faludi is a surviving feminist, unwilling like so many others who, by 1991, surrendered the ideals and advances of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Faludi is not willing to be silent and wait for society to change its mind about injustices to women. She is militant. This comes across most clearly in the final paragraphs of the main text and, more sharply, in the epilogue.

The reader can feel throughout the book Faludi's resentment at how in the wake of the Supreme Court's *Roe* v. *Wade* decision and the Equal Rights Amendment's finally going

to the States for consideration (1972-73), a vehement New Right movement arises, builds a political power base that takes over in 1981, and proceeds to weave together a fabric of lies, distortions, unsubstantiated claims, and self-serving myths to feed to the American people. Americans overwhelmingly buy it and women are made to feel like victims of their own success. Society is pervaded by the myth. Backlash is a systematic attempt at revealing the evolution of the lie.

Faludi does not indicate for whom the book is written, but one can assume she would hope, as a journalist, to reach men and women, old and young. Her prose is flowing and easy, and many of the concepts are quite simple; however, she seems determined to document every point thoroughly. The book demands and probably presupposes an attentive, open-minded reader.

Tone

Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women is completely subjective and polemical, and the effect on the reader depends entirely on how she or he reacts to massive amounts of hard facts and data that support the author's arguments. Faludi attacks the pervasive war on American women in the 1980s with the ardor of the attackers, partly because the New Right succeeds in cowing women, preventing them from uniting to force through their agenda to obtain full equality in all arenas of life. The spokesmen of the backlash make bald statements of semi-divine fact but cannot put their fingers on documentation. Sometimes colleagues find their research faulty or their conclusions unsupportable. Faludi is unrelenting in supplying statistics and other hard data from the U.S. Census Bureau and respected pollsters, in the text and in supporting end notes. She is a journalist doing a thoroughly professional job-even when showing how her colleagues in the 1980s shirk theirs by becoming mere cheerleaders for the New Right.

A convinced opponent of women's rights might object to the book's theses and tone but would find it hard to fault the author for her achievement in exposing the falsehoods needed to maintain an anti-feminist position. These people badly need to study this book carefully. Some will be convinced and others at least exposed to another way of thinking. All other readers can expect to be offended and outraged at how the media, advertisers, moralists, legislators, judges, lawyers, and doctors team up to sell America a false image of womanhood, the family, and basic human rights. Such readers also need to study the book for clues how to undo the harm wrought in the 1980s and prevent future backlashes from occurring.

Structure

Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women consists of fourteen numbered and titled chapters, divided into four parts, an Epilogue, extensive Notes, Acknowledgments, and an Index. Chapter 1. Introduction: "Blame it on Feminism" (pgs. vii-xxiii) sets the tone for the book and introduces its themes. Part 1 examines "Myths

and Flashbacks" in two chapters (2. "Man Shortages and Barren Wombs: The Myths of the Backlash" and 3. "Backlashes Then and Now"). Part 2 examines "The Backlash in Popular Culture" in five chapters (4. "The 'Trends' of Anti-feminism: The Media and the Backlash", 5. "Fatal and Fetal Visions: The Backlash in the Movies", 6. "Teen Angels and Unwed Witches: The Backlash on TV", 7. "Dressing the Dolls: The Fashion Backlash", and 8. "Beauty and the Backlash"). In discussing each topic, Faludi looks back to pervious backlashes and the women's advances in the 1970s that cause males in control to react.

Part 3 examines "Origins of a Reaction: Backlash Movers, Shakers, and Thinkers" in three chapters (9. "The Politics of Resentment: The New Right's War on Women", 10. "Ms. Smith Leaves Washington: The Backlash in National Politics"), and "The Backlash Brain Trust: From Neocons to Neofems", sketches of nine select opponents of feminism. Finally, Part 4 examines "Backlashings: The Effects on Women's Minds, Jobs, and Bodies" in three progressively chilling chapters (12. "It's All in Your Mind: Popular Psychology Joins the Backlash", 13. "The Wages of the Backlash: The Toll on Working Women", and 14. "Reproductive Rights under the Backlash: The Invasion of Women's Bodies"). The Epilogue summarizes the various fates suffered by characters throughout the book and muses about what the 1990s might bring if women could draw together and exert their majority power.

Historical Context

The Equal Rights Amendment

Despite the apparent simplicity of the language in the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U. S. Constitution, it was one of the most divisive political issues in the 1970s. The fifty-two words of the amendment were as follows:

1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article. 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

The issue of an equal rights amendment to the U. S. Constitution first emerged in the 1920s and appeared on a regular basis thereafter. Early opponents to the amendment□including labor unions and social reform groups□cited uncertainty about how the proposal would affect legislation meant to assist women and children. In 1972, the U. S. Congress passed the ERA. The next step was for the legislatures of thirty-eight states (three-fourths of the fifty states) to ratify the amendment by 1979. In about a year, twenty-five states had passed the ERA.

The pace of ratification then slowed tremendously. In 1977, only three more states were needed for the amendment to become part of the U. S. Constitution, but by the 1979 deadline this had not happened. Congress extended the deadline to 1982, but no other states ratified the ERA after 1977, and the amendment failed.

Opposition to the ERA came primarily from political conservatives who feared that the amendment would substantially change the roles of men and women. Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative activist, organized the Stop ERA campaign, based primarily on the issue of the amendment's impact on families. She and others argued that the ERA would bring an end to a husband's obligation to support his wife and children, force the creation of unisex bathrooms, and include women in the military draft.

Abortion Rights

Faludi points out that American women's access to legal abortion was generally uncontested until the last half of the nineteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century, every state in the union had outlawed abortion except in cases in which the woman's life was in jeopardy. In 1967, the National Organization for Women advocated the repeal of abortion laws, and other organizations, such as the group Zero Population Growth, also saw access to abortion as part of their agendas. By 1969, the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL) was founded. NARAL made progress organizing at the state level and had received qualified support from such

religious groups as the American Lutheran Church and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. Soon, four states had eased access to legal abortions.

In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of abortion rights activists, deciding in its landmark case *Roe v. Wade* that the Constitution prohibits interference by states in medical decisions between a woman and her physician during the first trimester of a pregnancy. In the later stages of a pregnancy, the court ruled, states could regulate abortion.

The reaction to the *Roe v. Wade* decision was immediate and galvanized a number of groups against access to abortion. The Catholic Church in America issued a statement that its members would be excommunicated if they participated in or received an abortion. Many Christian evangelical groups condemned the ruling as well, claiming that the Supreme Court had rejected morality. The anti-abortion movement, now referring to itself as pro-life, also gained strength and numbers among political conservatives during this period and into the 1980s. Abortion clinics became battlegrounds for the fight between pro-life and pro-choice (those supporting access to abortion) groups.

Critical Overview

When *Backlash* was published in the fall of 1991, it was a popular success and stayed at the top of the *New York Times* bestseller list for months. Numerous critics praised Faludi for her use of compelling data and for the book's timely topic. Wendy Kaminer, writing in the *Atlantic*, called the book a "comprehensive survey of a powerful ten-year backlash against feminism." Faludi's critique of the media's role in maintaining this backlash, according to Kaminer, was "powerful," and she rejected some critics' accusations that the book was based on conspiracy theory. Kaminer, however, did warn readers that Faludi's work was much more descriptive than analytic.

Gayle Greene's review of Faludi's book in the *Nation* was similarly receptive, calling the book a "rich compendium of fascinating information and an indictment of a system." Greene also lauded Faludi's considerable interviewing skills and expressed surprise that the author was able to get her subjects to "blurt out marvelously self-incriminating revelations, offering up the real reasons they hate and fear feminists."

This praise continued in the *Whole Earth Review*, in which Ann Norton admired Faludi's book for its clarity and logical arguments. Norton also appreciated Faludi's use of specific examples in popular culture to drive home her points, making her book accessible to everyone interested in the topic. "This is the book for those who have puzzled and despaired ... over magazine and newspaper articles and TV news shows declaring the 'death of feminism,' " remarked Norton.

Not all of the reviews were positive however; Karen Lehrman, writing in the *New Republic*, argued that despite the large number of examples, Faludi's assigning malevolent and organized motives to the backlash was the book's undoing. She called Faludi's arguments "dubious" and accused Faludi of seeing "a cabal of villains.. .successfully intimidating a large class of victims: women." Lehrman complained that Faludi's book portrayed women as victims until the very end, where the author admitted that woman have not been totally beaten by the backlash. "Writing this in the introduction would have undermined her portrayal of women as helpless, passive victims of society's devious designs," Lehrman asserted.

Some of the criticism of Faludi's book became quite vehement. Maggie Gallagher, writing for the *National Review*, called Faludi's book "an ignorant, nasty, little book ... small-minded, crafty, conniving, a disgrace even to journalistic standards, and an insult to women." She pointed to what she claimed was Faludi's misrepresentation of the facts in a number of instances, asserting that "evidence is not Miss Faludi's strong point." Gretchen Morgenson, writing in *Forbes*, condemned the book for shoddy reporting, bad writing, paranoia, and for encouraging women to think of themselves as victims. "In the opinion of this career woman," wrote Morgenson, "*Backlash* is a last gasp of Seventies feminism, a final attempt to rally women to a shrill, anti-male cause that has been comatose for years."

Some critics, while not agreeing with all of Faludi's arguments and methods, still realized the importance of the book. Nancy Gibbs, writing for *Time*, declared that the success of Faludi's book was based on "the resonance of the questions Faludi raises." While Gibbs admitted that Faludi did mishandle some statistics in her book, this "should not be an excuse to dismiss her entire argument." Faludi had, according to Gibbs, inspired both men and women to rethink how they relate to each other, on a personal as well as on a public level.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2

Critical Essay #1

Sanderson holds a master of fine arts degree in fiction writing and is an independent writer. In this essay, she considers the language Faludi uses in her book and how it contributes to her purpose of sounding the alarm about women's rights.

Some critics have argued that in her 1991 book, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, Faludi constructs a world filled with organized schemes perpetrated by those who wish only ill upon all of America's women. For example, Karen Lehrman, writing in the *New Republic*, charges that Faludi's book is based on a "conspiracy theory" and implies that "a cabal of villains has been at work successfully intimidating a large class of victims: women." After summarily dismissing Faludi's book, Gretchen Morgenson writes in *Forbes*, "if you are naturally paranoid, you may like this book."

Faludi, on the other hand, when asked about the book, denies that she believes in an organized conspiracy against women. During an interview with *Time* six months after the book was released, Faludi responded to the interviewer's question about these allegations. "Anyone who says that can't possibly have read the book. I say about fourteen times that I don't mean there's a conspiracy. This is not a book about hating men," she answers.

In the book's first chapter, where she sets the tone for her work, Faludi makes clear that she does not see the backlash against women in terms of a conspiracy. Referring to the various ways in which the backlash has made itself known in society and popular culture, Faludi remarks that these aspects are "all related, but that doesn't mean they are somehow coordinated. The backlash is not a conspiracy, with a council dispatching agents from some central back room." But, as she points out, the fact that the backlash isn't coordinated or organized does not reduce its destructiveness.

Before completely rejecting these critics' complaints, however, there may be a practical reason why so many have seen a conspiracy theory in Faludi's book. In the first chapter, Faludi explains her plan for the book and also briefly considers the language used to describe the backlash. "Women's advances and retreats are generally described in military terms," she notes, acknowledging the value of using such terms as "battle." Tempering this sentiment, though, she goes on to note that by "imagining the conflict as two battalions neatly arrayed on either side of the line, we miss the entangled nature ... of a 'war.'" While she seems to be saying that she will not use warlike language, such language does appear throughout the book.

A majority of the information Faludi relays in the book is presented as cool, hard data, but an important part of her message is delivered using words that are angry and warlike. By using these types of words, she signals that she believes the struggle between feminists and those opposing feminism to be an ongoing, organized conflict between two forces.

The book does draw lines along which two armies might stand: feminists versus anti-feminists. Even though Faludi claims not to express this image, she has done just that by her use of language. Hardly a chapter is presented that does not depend upon military metaphors or use language to bolster Faludi's argument. She refers to the "*campaign* against no-fault divorce" in one chapter; in another, she claims that the sour 1980s economy pushed society to consider women as "the *enemy";* and in yet another chapter Faludi describes how, with the help of 1980s advice writers, "the backlash insinuated itself into the most intimate front *lines*." Sprinkling such terms throughout the book, Faludi has made it clear that she envisions the opposition of parties involved.

Even chapter titles illustrate conflict: only two of the fourteen chapter titles do not include the word "backlash," and those two remaining chapter titles include the equally strong words "blame" and "war." Other chapter titles include the words "refugee," "occupation," and "invasion."

In the backlash against women, Faludi is not ambiguous about her enemy's identity. Not only does she name names throughout the text, but she also paints unflattering, almost propagandistic portraits of the opposition camp. When she describes photographer Wayne Maser setting up an advertising shoot for the "anti-women" film *Fatal Attraction*, for example, Faludi considers how vain Maser is about his clothing. Randall Terry, founder of the anti-abortion campaign Operation Rescue, is described as "a used car salesman" who jerks his thumb at his wife to indicate that she's not to speak to Faludi.

Faludi delights, as well, in showing politically conservative thinkers and writers in ironically conflicting situations. Though Gary Bauer, an aide to President Ronald Reagan, once called children's day care "Marxist" and urged women to stay at home, his own wife worked for nine years, and they placed their children in, as Faludi jokes, "this leftist institution." Faludi gleefully relates that when asked about the apparent hypocrisy, Bauer claimed that "his use of day care was 'different' and 'better' because he placed his children in 'home-based' day care - that is, an unlicensed center run out of a woman's living room." A visit to conservative authors and professors Michael and Margarita Levin unearths even more unflattering information about the home life of anti-feminists. The Levins argue in their writings that sex roles are innate: men naturally don't like to cook, and women naturally enjoy housework, according to the Levins. When Faludi arrives at their house for an interview, Michael is taking care of the children while Margarita gets ready to teach for the evening. Later, Michael "emerges from the kitchen to say goodbye. He looks a little chagrined - he's wearing an apron," Faludi notes.

Faludi's eye for hypocritical anti-feminists is nothing if not equal opportunity. Those who would claim that Faludi condemns only men should note that anti-feminist women do not escape Faludi's sights; she cites numerous examples of women with children working in high-powered jobs at conservative think tanks while still contending that, for society's own good, women should remain at home with their children.

Though Faludi does create a contentious atmosphere in her book and sets two opposing forces against each other, perhaps her intention isn't to indicate that there is an organized conspiracy against women. Maybe she actually means to show that the

fight is not as hidden as a "conspiracy" would be; that is, there is no conspiracy, but there is, in fact, a battle.

Ultimately, *Backlash* is a book filled with passion and *chutzpah*. Faludi's passion for her topic is clear from the first page. To write with any less strength and vigor would be to submit to those people who argue that being a woman requires one to be polite, forgiving, and invisible.

This, then, begs the question: Why do Faludi's critics find it surprising that she is up front and even fiery about the backlash, especially when she believes that women's rights are under attack? If Faludi feels the need to sound the alarm, writing in courteous terms will not help achieve her goal of an America in which women are "just as deserving of rights and opportunities, just as capable of participating in the world's events" as men.

Critical Essay #2

In the following interview, Faludi discusses her views on feminism and its place in American society and the negative reaction to Backlash.

I think, underneath, all women are feminists. It's just a matter of time and encouragement.'

Susan Faludi, author of the best-selling *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, recently gave a speech to a standing-room-only audience at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Afterwards she appeared on *Second Opinion*, a radio program hosted by The Progressive's Editor Erwin Knoll, and then she spoke with me in the studio for an hour or so. I've incorporated some of her remarks from Erwin's show here, and some she made when we talked again on the telephone after she returned to California, where she is a visiting lecturer at Stanford University. Throughout the interviews, she spoke softly but intensely about her book, her mother, her sudden rise to stardom, and feminism in post-Bush America.

Susan Faludi grew up in New York City and graduated from Harvard in 1981. She went to work as a copy girl at The *New York Times*, and then as a reporter for The *Miami Herald*, the *Atlanta Constitution*, the San *Jose Mercury News*, and The *Wall Street Journal*. In 1991, she won the Pulitzer Prize for her expose of the Safeway leveraged buyout. Since Backlash was published last year, Faludi has become a media star, dubbed the torchbearer for anew generation of feminists. Yet, she says, she's more comfortable when she's out of the public eye, working as an anonymous reporter, poking holes in the myths that constrain American women.

One powerful section of *Backlash* is devoted to the movie *Fatal Attraction*, which Faludi says both represented and reinforced backlash resentments and fears about women. Faludi paints director Adrian Lyne as a sexist bully who badgered and humiliated actresses, and went to great lengths to transform the originally feminist script for *Fatal Attraction* into a fable in which the uppity single woman is violently suppressed. In Lyne's most recent movie, *Indecent Proposal*, he takes a passing shot at Faludi - the camera zooms in on a copy of *Backlash* in the hands of a blonde and apparently air-headed secretary. In the next scene the secretary is shown vamping in front of the movie's hero. So much for feminist enlightenment.

[Conniff]: Did you see Indecent Proposal? [Faludi:] Yeah, I did.

What did you think of it, and of Backlash 's *little cameo in it?*

Well, I actually heard a reporter who had talked to Adrian Lyne explain that Lyne said he wanted to "tweak me," because I had been so hard on him about *Fatal Attraction*. To which - I don't know - I say tweak away. I think he just threw it in. I don't think there was much thought behind it. I suppose one could spin out a grand textual analysis of why he

assigned the reading of *Backlash* to some gum-chewing secretary in spandex, but I think that would be giving more intellectual heft to his reasoning than it deserves.

The reviewer for the Village Voice called Indecent Proposal *''the Zeitgeist shocker for the 1990s." (In the movie, Robert Redford's character offers a couple $1 million to let him sleep with the wife.) The reviewer says you won't be able to catch this one in "such easy feminist pincers" as you did* Fatal Attraction, *because it's the wife's choice - it's very subtle and complex. What do you think of that?*

I didn't find that so subtle and complex. That's one of the standard hallmarks of a lot of *backlash* cultural artifacts, that they take feminist rhetoric about choice and use it to attack the whole agenda of feminism.

Do you think it was a backlash movie the way Fatal Attraction *was?*

Sure. I mean it's not the same movie. I'd have to read this review, but I guess what I find irritating is the assumption that anything that is subject to feminist analysis is "easy," that there are only certain reductive feminist ideas. The fact that this movie might have a slightly different spin to it or shows a woman who supposedly is choosing to have an affair doesn't mean it's not open to feminist analysis.

Anyway, you have to see this movie in the context of all these new movies that are coming out about the bartering of women. I see it as more a movie about masculine anxiety. A number of movies out in the last year - from *Falling Down to Mad Dog and Glory* (which I actually liked for other reasons) - all seem to express extreme anxiety over men's ability to attract women, hold onto them, support them. And this movie seemed to me to be more about that kind of economic male fear. It seems that it was a struggle between two men, and the woman was really irrelevant. She's the object that's being traded. She has no personality. The movie's about who is going to claim this piece of property. Then there's this very calculating insertion of a scene in which she says, "No, I made the choice to do this." Which I think was just Lyne's attempt to get the feminists off his back.

Do you think there's some hostility there - that the movie is really lashing back at Backlash?

I think the way he dealt with it in the movie, by dismissing it - and in his mind, I'm sure, trivializing it - by putting it in the hands of a dippy blonde secretary is an expression of hostility, sure. That's often how we dismiss what we fear. On the other hand, usually feminist theory is equated with some beast with an SS outfit. I mean that's generally how men who are hostile toward feminists like to portray them.

That brings me to my next question, which is about Camille Paglia.

Speaking of dominatrixes.

What do you think of Paglia's claim that the backlash isn't against women, it's against doctrinaire feminism ? I think you 've used the phrase "the heiresses of Puritanism" to describe the way feminism is often portrayed. Is there any grain of truth in that?

Well, that assumes that most people are so familiar with feminist doctrine that they would find it pervasive and overwhelming. I mean, she's speaking from within the academy, which is a very different brand of feminism than the average woman on the street is exposed to. Having now spent a year in academia, I can to a degree understand the point she's driving at. I mean, sure - not just in feminist studies but in academia in general there's this sort of narrowing specialization and use of coded, elitist language of deconstruction or New Historicism or whatever they're calling it these days, which is to my mind impenetrable and not particularly useful.

But I think to claim that the *backlash* was inspired by doctrinaire feminism in the world at large is to make the false assumption that people are that deeply steeped in feminist theory, and that so-called doctrinaire feminism has that much sway in the general popular culture, which I don't think it does. I don't think the average American woman was turned off by feminism because of the effect of French feminism in the academy.

But Paglia also has a lot of snappy, vicious things to say about Gloria Steinem. Do you think it's possible that a lot of people share her perception that feminism is just not particularly useful to your average woman?

Well, if you look at public opinion polls, the vast majority of women say that the women's movement is very relevant to their lives. They think the only problem is the women's movement hasn't gone far enough and hasn't made enough change. Gloria Steinem is also consistently one of the most popular women in those polls of "who do you admire most?" She's always up there with Princess Di.

What galls Camille Paglia is that she's not on the Top Ten list. We should just stick her there so she'll be happy and stop haranguing us. If you go back and read her complaint against the so-called feminist establishment there's this recurrent theme of Camille as an outsider battering down the door trying to get in. The bone she has to pick with feminists is not an intellectual one. It's not over theory. It's the fact that she hasn't been invited to the party. There's something a bit sad and certainly misbegotten about this notion she has that there is this feminist establishment that's yucking it up till three in the morning. I mean, in fact, I don't know what parties she's talking about. I haven't been invited to them either. And she should just relax and not feel so left out. I don't want to psychoanalyze her, but it seems that a lot of this resentment is the resentment of someone who perceives herself as an outsider, which is doubly sad because there is no inside club except in her imagination. And if she is spurned by feminists it's because she goes around making claims that no self-respecting feminist woman would want to be identified with, such as sneering at sexual harassment, sneering at feminists for calling attention to the high rate of rape.

Did you see the television coverage on this high-school gang, the Spur Posse, accused of raping girls for points?

No, unfortunately that was when I was out of the country. What was your impression of it?

It was sort of amazing. I saw several boys on a talk show, bragging about their conquests. And then the camera would pan across the high-school campus and show girls' legs in mini-skirts walking back and forth.

It's like the coverage of the William Kennedy Smith rape trial. First you think, great, at least they think this is worthy of coverage. But then you realize that they think it's worthy of coverage because they think of it as an excuse to show body parts or, you know, the offending torn panty-hose in the William Kennedy Smith trial. I don't know how many times they showed the defense lawyer dangling her black, push-up bra. And it sounds like this was another case of a chance to do some cheesecake.

Have you ever been sexually harassed?

In ways that are not particularly dramatic, but fairly mundane and common. At The *New York Times*, when I was a copy girl, one of the editors was notorious and had been reprimanded for sexual harassment, although only with a slap on the wrist, so he continued to harass mostly younger women who were copy girls. He took me out to lunch and sort of ran his hand up and down my leg, telling me how "talented" I was, and how much he wanted to assist my career.

And how did you respond?

You know, like most twenty-one-year-old women on their first job, I guess I responded like a deer in the headlights. I just sat there and then sort of gingerly moved my leg away and said thanks so much for the words of support but I need to get back to the office now. I talked to all of the other copy girls I knew and I sort of let the story get out, but I didn't go formally report it. Part of the reason was the reason why all women hesitate before reporting such things when they're in positions of little power and they're at the bottom rung and desirous of moving up a few rungs. But part of the reason was that I knew it wouldn't help any because of this other woman just a year ago. He had gone a great deal further with her, sort of hauled her back to his apartment and jumped on her. But nothing happened. So for me to go knock on the door of human resources and say, well, this guy put his hand on my knee, was not going to go anywhere. You know, it was also a different climate. This is back in the early 1980s, and sexual harassment was not something that one even complained about. I wonder now if it would be different.

What do you think of the debate over sexual harassment - Catharine MacKinnon's theory of the hostile work environment versus the concern that punishing sexual harassment threatens free speech?

On the one hand, as a journalist I'm not in favor of banning pornography or anything that smells of censorship. For one thing, it's just not very productive. It doesn't make things go away. On the other hand, I do like the ways in which, as women enter the law, because of our social experiences, we approach ideas of law and of what should be a

basic right, and what shouldn't, differently. I think if all the founding fathers were founding mothers, the right to bear arms would not necessarily be the first right to pop into our minds. Perhaps the right to have some control over our child-bearing capacity would be a more important place to start. In Canada there's some interesting work being done now with recasting the definition of political refugee to include women who are victims of sexual violence.

In Canada they also now ban pornography. How do you recognize the damage that pervasive misogynist images do and respond to it in a way that isn't restrictive of speech?

On the sexual harassment front, I don't know - part of me thinks we've barely gotten to that point. For all the kicking and screaming about how men can barely flirt without a woman slapping them with a sexual harassment complaint, sexual harassment is still vastly under-reported. And women don't rush off to the court when a guy says, "Oh, you're looking cute today." I mean, it just doesn't really work that way.

But my gut feeling is that it's one thing to expand the definition of political refugee and another thing to start slapping restrictions on what can be in printed material or on the air. And I just become very queasy whenever anyone starts saying that certain material is unsuitable for publication, because that can easily be turned against us. Which is why one defends the right of neo-Nazis to march down the streets of suburban America.

So what do you do if you're feeling overwhelmed in a hostile work environment? Or about the proliferation of images of violence against women everywhere in advertising and television?

It's this horrible chicken-and-egg problem because the ultimate solution is to have vast numbers of women in positions of influence and power and presumably few of us will be tacking up pinups of the Playmate of the Month. But that's part of the reason we're not in those positions of power, because of that kind of hostile climate that we're working in. If women were running advertising agencies, if women had control in a real way of television stations, of radio stations, we'd be seeing a whole different world. Maybe the place to start is revising FCC regulations to grant radio licenses to women. Starting at that sort of macro level rather than the level of the pinup. Again, I guess it's the sort of raising hell rather than prohibition approach. Just because I say I feel uncomfortable about banning pornography doesn't mean I don't think women should be screaming bloody murder about it. The best way to get rid of pornography is to change people's way of thinking to the point where it doesn't sell anymore.

/ want to ask you another question on the micro level. I gave a speech to a group of high-school kids and the girls' big complaint was that they didn't speak in class and they got shouted down. I watched it happen. Even when I was speaking there were guys leaping up in the audience and interrupting to deliver their opinions on abortion. What would you say to those students?

I have a friend who's writing a book based on that American Association of University Women study that shows that girls have a big plunge in self esteem at adolescence, and this gender gap occurs between boys and girls. She's been spending a lot of time observing high-school kids in San Francisco Bay Area public schools. And even in the most enlightened classes, where the teacher thinks about it and is very consciously calling on girls, it's still horribly unbalanced.

I saw this myself last year. I was doing a volunteer project teaching writing at the public schools in San Francisco. And the boys, in particular the boys who have nothing to offer, are the ones who are the loudest and just drown out the girls. I don't know. I have a couple of practical thoughts on it. Personally, I wish someone had forced me to go through public speaking and debating classes. I mean a lot of it is that girls don't have the tools. Nobody has taught them how to raise their voices, how to use their diaphragms to project. How to be heard. I went through much of my childhood and college years feeling very oppressed by the fact that no one was listening to me. And then finally someone pointed out, well, no one can hear you.

But this goes on endlessly, In Italy, I was on this show that's billed as the *Phil Donahue show* of Italy - the *Maurizio Costanzo* show. It was a panel, me and eight men, and it was as if I wasn't there. The men would talk, and if I would say something, they'd just keep talking right over me. But if one of them spoke up, they would fall silent. Partly there were certain little tricks they used to do that. The male voice is deeper and all that. Also, we are so trained to be polite, and there's something so awful about a woman who speaks in a loud voice, it's so unfeminine. Maybe that's the area to work on, to change notions about femininity. Teachers could do girls a world of good by glamorizing the loudmouthed girl. It's still going to be a problem though, no matter how many voice lessons you give to girls. It's a real argument for going to a girls' school. They do learn to speak up.

Surely something has to be done for the guys as well. Isn 't it disturbing to read all of the self-esteem literature that tells women if you just fix yourself then all these social problems are going to go away?

Right. That's really true. I mean girls could be heard if the boys weren't shouting so damned loud. Part of the problem is how we define masculinity, rewarding boys for talking at the top of their lungs, for interrupting, for pushing girls and for swaggering and being arrogant, and speaking up when you have nothing to say. Part of it is this idea that the public forum belongs to men. It's the realm in which they are comfortable. And they're taught that in a million different ways. Whereas, by the time we women reach adulthood it's so deeply ingrained in us to feel that we're kind of the mouse in the palace in a public situation or at a lectern.

Do you often run across that famous line, "I'm not a feminist, but...?"

I've certainly run across that. I tend to operate on the assumption that every self-respecting woman is a feminist, and I sort of act as if they are, saying, "Of course you're a feminist, too." Then let them make the case against it if they like. I think underneath it,

all women are feminists. It's just a matter of peeling away the layers of denial and self-protection, and all of the reasons why women back off and try to disavow their own best interests.

I find it really curious that people will always ask me, "When did you become a feminist?" That doesn't make any sense to me, because it seems to me that one is always a feminist. It's, "When did you discover that you were at your core, of course, a feminist?" I assume all other women are that way, and eventually something will happen in their lives that will make the light bulb go on. It's just a matter of time and encouragement. And I like to think that it helps just standing up in an audience, especially of undergraduates - young women who tend to be more vulnerable and fearful of stating their opinion - and just saying, here I am - I'm a feminist and it didn't destroy my life. Quite the contrary, everything good that's ever happened to me came from that starting point of declaring my feminist belief. When I was speaking in Virginia at this real frat-and-sorority campus, young women came up to me and said that they had always said that they weren't feminists, but that now they understood that they were. And I thought well, gee, it was worth coming all the way across the country just for that.

Who made feminism attractive to you?

I probably owe a lot of that to my mother, who is a strong feminist and never presented it in a pejorative way. In high school, I was already doing my little feminist crusades. I think a lot of women of my generation would have had a similar experience of being in that age group in which your mother experienced the last *backlash*, the postwar feminine mystique, "a true woman is a woman with a polka-dotted apron, armed with Shake-n-Bake in the kitchen." Observing the women's movement come to suburban America, where I spent most of my childhood, and observing the radical and beneficial effects that wrought in my mother's generation, had a profound effect on me. My mother does not believe in being quiet. She's actually far more assertive than I am. I've always admired that about her. She has a very strong sense of social justice, and belief that one should loudly point out injustice.

Did she like your book?

Yeah. She likes to introduce herself now to people as the grandmother of Backlash. She has always encouraged me to pursue my work and I don't think she's ever said, "Why aren't you married?"

Or, "Hurry up, you're past thirty." She's always been far more interested in creative pursuits than maternal and marital ones. And by doing that she's cleared away a huge obstacle that I think a lot of other women face. Not only is the culture telling them that they're worthless if they don't have 2.5 kids by the time they're thirty-five, but their mothers are telling them that. And my mother has never pushed that line. She never thought marriage was such a hot idea so she doesn't see why her daughter has to experience it.

Do you think that things have gotten better or worse for American women since you wrote Backlash?

I think things have gotten a lot better. I hope they do another one of these polls that asks the question, "Are you a feminist?" The last time they did that poll was in the late 1980s, and it had done a complete turnaround since the early 1980s, when almost 60 per cent of women said yes, they were feminists. By the late 1980s almost 60 per cent said no, they were not. It would be interesting - now that we've had Anita Hill and a series of consciousness-raising events - to do that poll. In the absence of that, all I can go by is anecdotal evidence. I don't know how reliable that is, in that women I talk to are a sort of self-selecting group. They come to my speeches or book readings because they agree with my point of view. Of course, from my perception it seems like the world has turned feminist.

You were just in Europe. When you got home did you feel better or worse about the status of women in American society?

Certainly on the level of Government policy, a lot worse. I mean even in Italy - you know American women like to think that we have all this liberty and freedom and a more supportive environment than the Vatican-ruled country of Italy - but there the maternity and social welfare policy is so much more advanced. So it's embarrassing, watching people's jaws drop when you say, "Yes, we're so proud that we finally passed this family leave act where we get three months of unpaid leave."

In a curious way, because American social policy makes no provisions for women's needs, child care, maternity leave, etc., and there's so much violence against women here, the lines are much more clearly drawn. In France, for reasons that have nothing to do with concern about women's rights, but with pro-natalism and restocking the population, they have these wonderful policies. If you're in the civil service you can take up to four years of maternity leave, about a year of that paid.

On the other hand, right now, because many European governments from Germany to France seem to be swinging to the Right, the United States is in this curious position of experiencing a feminist revival, where women have a sense of hope and possibility about influencing a more liberal government. We're slightly out of sync with the political cycle of our sisters across the water.

What do you think of the way last year was celebrated in the American mass media as the year of the woman?

I think it really was a slogan that sought to buy off women with a few crumbs. It's a way of sort of ending or truncating the revolution, by giving us the veneer of celebratory achievement, a trophy instead of decent pay.

Did it work?

I don't think so. As much as those who are opposed to women's advancement would like to imagine that women are no longer eager to press the Government on abortion

rights, workplace rights, etc., women have shown no signs of losing interest. If anything, every day there's a new women' s-rights organization, a new campaign on everything from RU-486 to the rights of women in Bosnia. But it's a typical strategy in a consumerist culture to offer a kind of celebrity status in exchange for real rights.

One of the things that's so gratifying about reading your book is that you illustrate connections among very elusive phenomena. You connect individual men's misogyny, and larger, economic forces, and expose a whole sexist structure. Can you succinctly say what happens-how sexism is produced?

I don't think that you can find an easy starting point. We're born into the cultural loop, so it's hard to know where we first entered. By the time you've reached the age of three, you've been inundated by images of proper female and male behavior, and it's hard to dig your way out of that, if your desire is to be more enlightened.

If you're talking about mass culture, 85 to 90 per cent of the screenwriters and scriptwriters who are doing TV and feature films are men. And certainly in the executive suites, the people who are able to green-light a show are almost solidly white, middle-aged, rather panicky, midlife-crisis men. And I think there's this very complicated, unconscious tendency for men especially in Hollywood to compensate for the fact that it's not a traditionally macho job. This goes back centuries - this anxiety among male writers that what they're doing is somehow sissified, because they're writing, not fighting, and then the compensation for that is to treat writing or filmmaking as if it were some sort of male ritual, and to be more macho and more testosterone-ridden in their approach than a man who's doing a blue-collar or more physical job.

So you think that men in intellectual professions are more macho?

Sometimes. I know this is a grotesque generalization. I can think of many examples to counter it. But you do see this in Hollywood - the whole language of "taking a meeting" and this swaggering and strutting that goes on. Also, it's just the old corruption of power. If you have a desk the size of Madison Square Garden, after a while you think that you deserve it and your ego should be as large. That's part of it, too. I think there's also this problem of the feedback loop, where once an idea is declared the social norm, it's very hard to remove it. So with something like *Fatal Attraction*, it wasn't just a movie. It became this whole social phenomenon. There were constant references to it, and it became this buzzword that you saw in fashion and beauty ads, you saw in greeting cards, you heard over the airwaves, and that repetition that is so fundamental to American pop culture itself breeds conformity of thought.

What about the hostility and extreme violence toward women - for instance, the "audience participation" you've described in theaters that showed Fatal Attraction, *where the men were yelling, "Kick her ass" and "Kill the [b-]." Where does that come from?*

Clearly violence toward women is one of the peculiarities of American culture. A lot of the other aspects of sexism - denouncing the career woman, or saving that women

should go back to the home - you find the world over. But this extreme, physical violence is, I think, part of our historical origins. There's a wonderful trilogy - the final volume just came out - by Richard Slotkin. The first one's called *Regeneration through Violence*. The one that just came out is called *Gunfighter Nation*. He talks about an idea that other historians have laid out as well, that from the very beginning American national identity was wrapped up with the sense that in order to create who we were as a nation we had to crush the culture that was already here. That sort of winner-take-all mentality is bred in the bone from the beginning.

That somehow has transferred itself onto gender relations, where there is no middle ground. There's a sense that if you give women an inch they'll take a mile. They always have to be kept in check through extreme means. That's one reason why the rape rate in the United States is fourteen times higher than in England and other cultures that are quite similar to ours in all other ways. Violence is part of proving not only national identity but male identity, the two of which are very hard to separate in this culture.

Do you get accused of being a conspiracy theorist?

I find I do get accused of that all the time, and that's part of the American mentality, too - "Who's to blame? Let's get to the bottom of this and find these three people who organized this thing." I mean, Americans love conspiracy theories - Trilateral Commissions and people on the grassy knoll and all that. When the reality is - and I'm sort of baffled by it because it seems so obvious - that far more pernicious than some sort of plot or cabal is that all-pervasive social smog of stereotypes and prejudices. I mean, nobody says that racism is a conspiracy. It's odd.

You once said that within the women's movement, there are things you feel you can't say because you don't want to step on toes. What are those things?

I think I was talking about what happens when you go from being the anonymous journalist to being a public figure. In a curious way, becoming a so-called celebrity in American culture silences you. They give you the floor, but then you're suddenly worried about whom you are going to offend. Whereas before, when you're the private journalist, if you're worth anything you want to offend as many people as possible. And that's a very uncomfortable role for me, as a journalist, who would rather, as the Yugoslavian proverb goes, tell the truth and run.

So how do you resolve that tension?

Ultimately, I don't know if it is resolvable. But for me, I try as much as possible to say what I think and be aware when I'm censoring myself and fight it. It's difficult. I think a lot of it goes on at the unconscious level. In many cases, one is simply on the same panel as other people and one doesn't want to offend them. That's just courtesy. But it's very destructive not to be able to argue publicly. For example, I got a lot of flak for criticizing the "difference" wing of feminism, the feminist academics who say that women are special, women are more nurturing, women are more cooperative. I don't agree with that. And I did pick up a sense from some feminists that, no, no, no, you shouldn't be

criticizing your sisters. But we're better off for not putting up this false united front. I mean, we're united in other ways, but by censoring our disagreements or papering them over, we ultimately set ourselves back.

I've also seen a quotation from you in which you refer to your revulsion against the capitalist system - a wonderful comment from a former Wall Street Journal *reporter*.

Yes. somebody called me the next day and said, "Well, I hope you're not planning on returning to the *Wall Street Journal"* Although, actually, I think the *Journal*, putting aside the editorial page which is obviously far to the Right of my beliefs, is much harder on businesses, has written much more critical stories than the average front page of a daily newspaper.

But what about that revulsion for the capitalist system? Why do you feel that way? I think this goes to the heart of why feminism is so deeply resisted in this country. On one level, feminism is this very uncontroversial idea that women should be treated the same as men, with the same rights and opportunities, the same access to the goodies that a capitalist system provides. But on a much deeper level what feminism is about is not simply plunking a few more women into what was largely a male-designed set of structures and institutions, but it's about overturning the whole applecart and coming up with a way of life that accommodates both sexes, so that it's a more humane and compassionate world.

Source: Susan Faludi with Ruth Conniff, "Susan Faludi," in *Progressive*, Vol. 57, No. 6, June 1993, pp. 35-39.

Quotes

"To be fair, the 73 percent statistic is only one number in Weitzman's work. And a 30 percent decline in women's living standard is hardly ideal, either. Although the media fixed on its sensational implications, the figure has little bearing on her second and more central point - that women are *worse* off since 'the divorce revolution.' This is an important question because it gets to the heart of the backlash argument: women are better off 'protected' than equal." Part 1, Chap. 2, pp. 22-23

"By the end of the year, 2 million female workers had been purged from heavy industry. Employers revived prohibitions against hiring married women or imposed caps on female workers' salaries; and the federal government proposed giving unemployment assistance only to men, shut down its day care services, and defended the 'right' of veterans to displace working women. An anti-ERA coalition rallied its forces, including the federal Women's Bureau, forty-three national organizations, and the National Committee to Defeat the UnEqual Rights Amendment. Soon, they had killed the amendment - a death sentence hailed on the New York Times editorial page. 'Motherhood cannot be amended and we are glad the Senate didn't try,' the newspaper proclaimed. When the United Nations issued a statement supporting equal rights for women in 1948, the United States government was the only one of the twenty-two American nations that wouldn't sign it." Part 1, Chap. 3, pp. 51-52

"The press might have looked for the source of women's unhappiness in other places. It could have investigated and exposed the buried roots of the backlash in the New Right and a misogynistic White House, in a chilly business community and intransigent social and religious institutions. But the press chose to peddle the backlash rather than probe it." Part 2, Chap. 4, p. 78

"But the magazine's editor did take very seriously one comment the women made. 'One of the things that emerged from the groups was that - especially in the young age groups - there was this incredible resistance to the word "feminist",' Summers says. One might have thought *Ms*.'s whole mission was to tackle that resistance, to show women that 'feminist' was a word they might embrace instead of fear, to explain how American culture had demonized that word precisely because it offered such potential power for women. The magazine could, in fact, have helped fight the backlash by expositing it, and driving home the point that feminism simply meant supporting women's rights and choices. This was, after all, an agenda that the women in the focus group uniformly supported; every woman interviewed said she believed she shouldn't have to choose between family and career. "But instead of revitalizing the word, Sumers came close to redlining it." Part 2, Chap. 4, pp. 109-110

"If all the '80s trend stories about women were collated and fed into a television script machine, the result might be 'thirty-something,' ABC's celebrated 'realistic contemporary drama' about unpwardly-mobile baby boomers. The topics addressed in this prime-time program, introduced in the fall of '87 to intense media attention, include cocooning, the mommy track, the man shortage, and the biological clock. There's even an episode on

the downside of no-fault divorce that could be straight out of Lenore Weitzman's *The Divorce Revolution.*" Part 2, Chap. 6, p. 160

"This became the party line, voiced by merchants peddling every garment from poufs to panties. 'We are wearing pinstripes, we didn't know what our identity was anymore!' cried Karen Bromley, spokeswoman for the Intimate Apparel Council. 'We were having this identity crisis and we were dressing like men.' "But the only 'identity crisis' that women faced when they looked inside their closets was the one the '80s fashion industry had fabricated. The apparel makers had good reason to try to induce this anxiety: personal insecurity is the great motivator to shop. Wells Rich Greene, which conducted one of the largest studies of women's fashion-shopping habits in the early '80s, found that the more confident and independent women became, the less they liked to shop; and the more they enjoyed their work, the less they cared about their clothes. The agency could find only three groups of women who were loyal followers of fashion: the very young, the very social, and the very anxious." Part 2, Chap. 7, pp. 173-174

"Soon after the New Right scored its first set of surprise victories in Congress, an ebullient Paul Weyrich assembled his most trusted advisers at the Heritage Foundation. Their mission: draft a single bill that they could use as a blueprint for the New Right program. It would be their first legislative initiative and an emblem of their cause. They would call it the Family Protection Act. But the bill they eventually introduced to Congress in 1981 had little to do with helping households. In fact, it really had only one objective: dismantling nearly every legal achievement of the women's movement." Part 3, Chap. 9, p. 235

"The backlash's emissaries reported from all scholarly outposts; they were philosophers invoking the classics, social scientists brandishing math scores, and anthropologists claiming aboriginal evidence of women's proper place. But they weren't just academic authorities. They were also popular writers and speakers; they were mentors in the men's and even women's movements. These middlemen and women did not ally themselves with any single ideological camp, either; indeed, their endorsements helped spread antifeminist sentiments across the political spectrum." Part 3, Chap. 11, p. 281

"The '80s backlash therapists firmly rejected another fundamental feminist principle - that men can, and should, change, too. '[L]ately it seems there is a rising tide of utter frustration among women concerning men,' *Smart Women/Foolish Choices* observes, and a lot of women 'always end up feeling disappointed by men.' But Cowan and Kinder do not go on to consider what men might be doing to inspire such an outpouring of frustration, nor how men might change their behavior to make women feel better. Instead, the psychologists conclude that men are fine and any disappointment women feel is wholly self-generated. It's not the men who are 'inadequate,' the authors write; it's just that the women's 'expectations are distorted.' Women are just 'hypercritical' of men. All would be well if women only learned to 'truly understand men' and their 'need for mastery and career success.' Women would be happy if they only quit 'pushing' the opposite sex to change and learned to 'compromise.'" Part 4, Chap. 12, pp. 339-340

"In the end, the APA's trustees approved both the masochism and the PMS diagnoses. (The rapism disorder was temporarily shelved, pending further study). The APA officers made one concession to all the protests over these two diagnoses: they listed both of them in the *DSM's* appendix - supposedly a section for provisional disorders. "But even this qualification was a ruse. Ordinarily, disorders in the appendix don't have the code numbers that medical insurance companies require for reimbursement. The APA leaves them uncoded purposely - to discourage mental health professionals from applying such controversial diagnoses in their practice. In this case, however, following Dr. Spitzer's recommendations, the APA trustees made an exception. They assigned code numbers to both masochism and PSM. The new female ailments were on the books." Part 4, Chap. 12, p. 362

"Randall Terry was raised in the suburbs of Rochester, New York, birthplace of Susan B. Anthony and launching pad for the nation's first wave of feminism 150 years ago. But his relationship to feminist activism would involve more than the coincidence of geography and history. Terry was the eldest son in a family that, on his mother's side, had produced politically vocal and self-determined women for three generations. From the start of the century, when his maternal great-grandmother disobeyed a parish priest and quit the Catholic church, the DiPasquale women had been outspoken, progressive, and feminist. 'Randy Terry's backlash against women's rights may be more intimate than people realize,' says Dawn Marvin, former communications director of the Rochester chapter of Planned Parenthood - and Randall Terry's aunt. 'He was raised at the knee of feminists.'" Part 4, Chap. 14, p. 407

"The backlash gave women a prescription for happiness that wouldn't and couldn't be effective. It split women's lives into two half lives, work and home, and then billed the latter as a full, fulfilled existence. When women resisted the prescription, they were made miserable through psychological and material punishments; when they tried to follow it, they found that it was a faulty cure - half fantasy, half punishment - that had no place in their contemporary lives. In fact, it had never been effective; it was always a poor substitute. It could never meet the basic human needs and desires that women have brought forward time and again through the centuries - and that society has always sought to turn back." Part 4, Chap. 14, p. 453

Adaptations

Susan Faludi is the reader on the audiotape version of her book, *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*. Publishing Mills produced the audiotape in 1992.

Topics for Further Study

Susan Faludi wrote her book primarily in the late 1980s. Do you think the status of women in the United States has changed since then? What about societal attitudes? Is society in a period of backlash or of advancement for women's rights? Provide specific examples from some of the sectors of society covered in Faludi's book□the entertainment industry, the media, government, and so forth□to support your opinion.

Faludi mentions quite a few movies as evidence that a backlash against women occurred in the 1980s. Watch one of the movies she says is anti-feminist and write a short essay agreeing or disagreeing with her position. Use specific examples from the movie to make your argument. Has she misinterpreted this movie or is she correct in her evaluation?

Research the four periods of American history during which Faludi says there were advancements in the status of women. Also research the years following these periods, when Faludi argues that there was backlash against women. Create a time line for each of these advancement and backlash eras, including both events pertaining to women's rights and unrelated national and world events. Analyze and explain any patterns you see.

Interview a woman you know who has a career and is also a mother. Ask her questions about some of the issues explored in *Backlash*. Choose your questions based on the issues you find most interesting. Then write up your interview in the form of a newspaper feature article.

What Do I Read Next?

Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man is Susan Faludi's second book, published in 1999. In this work, she furthers her studies in gender relations, chronicling the thoughts and words of post-World War II men.

Simone de Beauvoir's groundbreaking 1953 book, *The Second Sex*, uses history, philosophy, economics, and biology to understand women's roles in the second half of the twentieth century. This book was published well before much thought was given to issues surrounding women's place in the world, and was one of the first books to discuss post-World War II feminism.

The Reader's Companion to U.S. Women's History is a collection of four hundred articles celebrating the role of lesser-known women who have had an impact on American history. Wilma Mankiller, Gwendolyn Mink, Marysa Navarro, and Gloria Steinem edited the collection, published in 1999. Entries include an essay on the role of Native American women and a narrative on the female slave experience.

American writer Grace Paley has described herself as a pacifist, feminist, and anarchist. Her short stories include characters struggling to understand their roles in a society that often limits behavior based on gender. *The Collected Stories*, published in 1995, brings together more than thirty years of her acclaimed stories.

Further Study

Bloom, Allan, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Touchstone Books, 1988.

In this book, University of Chicago professor Allan Bloom expounds on the failings of the American education system. He argues that the social and political crisis of twentieth-century America is truly an intellectual crisis. Some feminists have criticized this book for a dismissive attitude toward women and their professional roles.

Bly, Robert, *Iron John: A Book about Men*, Vintage Books, 1992.

Poet and former anti-war activist Robert Bly was one of the leaders of the men's movement in the 1980s, in which men were encouraged to rediscover their masculinity. This book was one of the critical texts of the movement, providing an examination of what it means to be a man through the story and adventures of the mythical Iron John.

Douglas, Susan J., *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*, Times Books, 1995.

Susan Douglas has written an analysis of the effects of mass media on American women in the second half of the twentieth century. The book combines hard facts with humor.

Friedan, Betty, *Life So Far*, Simon and Schuster, 2000.

Betty Friedan's autobiography covers her life from her beginning as a labor reporter to her work in founding the National Organization for Women and her work and writings since then.

Gilder, George, *Wealth and Poverty*, Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1993.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Nonfiction Classics for Students (NCfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NCfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on

□classic□ novels frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NCfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NCfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NCfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NCfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NCfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Nonfiction Classics for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

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A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NCfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

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