

## 2 Boys Will Be Boys

Vintage advertisements seem rife with sexism nowadays. In a 1930s advertisement for Kellogg's PEP cereal, a woman wearing a figure-hugging dress, high heels, and an apron, and holding a feather duster, is embraced by her husband who says, "So the harder a wife works, the cuter she looks!"<sup>1</sup> A World War II advertisement from the United States Department of State shows a female factory worker who pleads, "The soldiers need our help! Gather 'round, American women!" The tagline reads, "Turns out you gals are useful after all!"<sup>2</sup> A 1950s advertisement for Schlitz beer features a tearful housewife clutching a scorched, smoke-filled skillet as her husband consoles her with, "Don't worry darling, you didn't burn the beer!"<sup>3</sup> These advertisements promoted traditional gender roles, especially among white, middle-class families. Today, the explicit sexism of this bygone era seems shocking, offensive, or even amusing. Some people believe that sexism is now a thing of the past. But our modern language reveals that sexism is still prevalent, while it has also taken on new forms.

Sexism can be defined broadly as attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that reflect negative evaluations of people on the basis of sex or gender.<sup>4</sup> *Sex* and *gender* are often used interchangeably, although there is a distinction between the two. Sex refers to biological identity based on physical characteristics such as genitalia, genes, and hormones, while gender refers to identity based on behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits. In a scientific sense, sexism originally referred to the categorization of an organism as male or female, but by the 1960s the term became used to parallel racism.<sup>5</sup> Sexism can involve the unequal treatment of people based on their sex, and includes institutional and cultural practices that treat people unfairly, such as the gender gap in

hiring and the gender pay gap. Sexism can also promote the belief that one sex is inherently superior; therefore implying that the other is inferior. Sexism includes the objectification of people in the media and advertising, and also sexist language, such as insults, jokes, and speech that abuses, belittles, or undervalues people based on their sex or gender. Sexist attitudes also underpin sexist behavior, including sexual harassment and sexual assault. Sexism is often referred to as *chauvinism*, although in usage, chauvinism almost exclusively implies *male chauvinism*.

Sexism can affect anyone, but it primarily affects women and girls. This is borne out in our language, both past and present. According to the way we talk, men are usually represented as the default sex, while women are talked about as subordinate, secondary, second-class citizens, or the “other.”<sup>6,7</sup> Men are said to be *the first sex*, while women are *the second sex*. According to the Book of Genesis (2:21–22) in the Old Testament of the Bible, woman was made from man.<sup>8</sup> To be a companion for man in the Garden of Eden, God created Eve from one of Adam’s ribs. (This is the basis of the urban legend that men have one less rib than women because of God’s act, and is also the source of the jocular term *rib* to refer to women.) Tempted by an evil serpent, Eve committed a sin by eating fruit from the forbidden tree, and goaded Adam to do so. (*Forbidden fruit* is often interpreted as a metaphor for sex.) God was displeased. He banished Adam and Eve from Paradise, and cursed women with the pain of childbirth and subordination to their husbands. Many other scriptural readings also subordinate women. Titus (2:5) states that women are “to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands,” while Ephesians (5:23) says, “the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.” 1 Timothy (2:11–12) declares, “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.” Colossians (3:18) asserts, “Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” Throughout the scriptures, God is characterized in exclusively masculine terms. “He” is described as “Lord,” “King,” “Father,” “Judge,”

“Master,” and the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the world’s other religious traditions in Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, and Africa, female deities are completely absent from Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

In light of the Adam and Eve narrative and other subordinate representations of women in the Bible, some people interpret the scriptures as promoting the idea of a male-centered, patriarchal society. A *patriarchy* is a social system in which men hold the majority of positions of power and influence, and where cultural values and norms favor men.<sup>10</sup> In such a male-centric or androcentric society, men control most aspects of the cultural, political, legal, and religious spheres in society. Several anthropologists claim that early human societies were matriarchies, female-centric or gynocentric societies.<sup>11</sup> It is believed that these “queen-dom” worshipped a “Great Goddess” or “Mother Goddess” and were peaceful, idyllic societies, until they collapsed with the “rise of the patriarchy.”<sup>12</sup> Some authors report that several modern-day matriarchal societies still exist in remote parts of the world. However, the consensus is that historical societies were patriarchal, while in practice, contemporary societies are still patriarchal.<sup>13</sup> Popular figures of speech remind us that we live in a *male-dominated society*, that *men rule the world*, and *it’s a man’s world*.

The existence of a patriarchy in Western society is reflected in historical inequalities between the sexes. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, women did not have the same rights and privileges in society as men. Women were disenfranchised in that they were not allowed to vote. Women were also not permitted certain legal rights; for example, a married woman’s property was considered to be owned by her husband. Education and employment opportunities for women were also severely limited. These inequalities inspired the creation of the Women’s Rights movement to achieve social reform. During this era, known as the “first wave of feminism,” the “suffragettes” campaigned for the women’s vote and were granted this right at different times in different countries (as early as 1893 in New Zealand, but not until

1928 in the United Kingdom).<sup>14</sup> Property and custody laws were eventually abolished. Women were finally granted access to higher education and greater job opportunities. During the World Wars, millions of men went away to fight, and this saw many women entering the workforce, where they worked in factories and shipyards producing munitions and supplies for the war effort. The iconic female factory worker, now dubbed “Rosie the Riveter” with her motto “We Can Do It!” represented these working women. But post-war, women were urged to return back to the home, to create stability after those times of uncertainty, and so many women did.<sup>15</sup>

At this time, it was widely believed that the only way a woman could achieve fulfillment in life was through marriage and motherhood.<sup>16</sup> It was warned that a woman did not want to end up an *old maid* or a *spinster*, or to be *always a bridesmaid, never a bride*. (See also Chapter 7.) Like the advertisements mentioned at the start of this chapter, advertising in newspapers and women’s magazines and women’s education focused on marriage, family, and the home, perpetuating this view. Within the family dynamic, men and women were socialized into traditional gender roles. The role of the man was to be the *provider*, to support the family financially. The husband was the *breadwinner*, the *meal ticket*, and the one who *brings home the bacon*. The woman’s domain was the home, and she was the *homemaker*. It was said that *men make houses, women make homes*. But the husband was the *head of the household*, and *a man’s home is his castle*. Like the title of the 1950s television sitcom, *Father Knows Best*, the father was the family *leader* and the family’s *protector*. Well into the twentieth century, America still had “Head and Master laws” that permitted a husband to have the final say regarding all household decisions and jointly owned property, without his wife’s knowledge or consent. In an infamous Head and Master case in Louisiana in 1974, Harold Feenstra was imprisoned for molesting his young daughter. He mortgaged his home to pay for his lawyer, an act that did not require his wife Joan’s permission, despite the fact that she had paid for the house.<sup>17</sup> Women too are often portrayed as the

property of men. At her wedding, a woman is *given away* by her father, and the married couple is pronounced *man and wife*. According to older social values, a woman was defined by her marriage, but the relationship was not equal. She was second to her husband, and *the woman behind the man*, because *behind every great man there's a great woman*. Women were raised to *stand by your man*, despite his shortcomings and faults.

There was the idea that the “natural role” of a woman was as a wife and mother, which was reflected in language. A wife was a dependent to her husband, the *kept woman* or *kept wife*, and she was his possession, the *little woman*, *the missus*, or *the wife*. She was the guardian of morality, the *good wife*, but also her husband's warden, as the *old lady*, the *old ball and chain*, *jailer*, *trouble and strife* (rhyming slang for “wife”), his *mother*, *the boss*, or *the chief*. She was a helper to her husband, a domestic goddess, and a servant, a *homemaker*, *housewife*, *housekeeper*, *maid*, *cook*, or *dough-beater*. The housework was considered to be *women's work*, although a *woman's work is never done*. Historical advertisements encouraged women to view housework as a career, and one that required specialized products. A 1960s Kenwood Chef advertisement displays a wife wearing a chef's hat as she leans happily against her husband who says, “The Chef does everything but cook – that's what wives are for!”<sup>18</sup> Women were reminded, *the way to a man's heart is through his stomach*. There was also the idea of a *woman's place*: That a woman *belongs* in the home, *a woman's place is in the home*, and specifically, *a woman's place is in the kitchen*. (Although there is no equivalent “man's place.”) If a woman impinges on a man in some way, she may be reminded of her social *place* and ordered to *get back into the kitchen*, *make my dinner*, or *go make me a sandwich*. During a 2008 speech given by American politician Hillary Clinton, a man in the audience heckled her with a sign that read, “Iron my shirt!” as he chanted the phrase at her.<sup>19</sup>

Upon marriage, a wife typically adopts her husband's last name, as do any children born to them. A wife's *maiden name* is supplanted by her husband's last name, and even her first name when

she is addressed as Mrs. John Doe. For some women, to be referred to in relation to a man is to experience a loss of identity, and so more married women are opting to retain their birth names, to hyphenate the birth name with the married name, or for both parties to hyphenate their last names. In 1969, John Lennon married Yoko Ono, and they changed their names to John Ono Lennon and Yoko Ono Lennon.<sup>20</sup> In a reversal of tradition, artist Marco Saldana took on actor Zoe Saldana's name when they married in 2013.<sup>21</sup> Honorifics, the titles prefixing a person's name, are unequal for men and women. *Mrs.* is inflected to show that the woman is married; *Miss* is used to address an unmarried woman, while *Ms.* emerged to avoid any guesswork of the age or marital status of a woman. However, there are no equivalent terms that reveal whether a man is married or single. *Mr.* is an abbreviation of *Mister*, which is derived from an earlier form of *Master*, that meant "one having control or authority."<sup>22</sup> *Mrs.*, *Ms.*, and *Miss* are all derived from *Mistress*, which was once the female equivalent term for *Master*, but now refers specifically to the extramarital lover of a married man.

Honorifics for men that once had equivalents for women are no longer equal. *Governess* was once the equivalent of *governor*, but it has now narrowed to mean a woman employed to teach children in a private home. Several terms for women have developed negative connotations in a way that those for men have not. *Madam* was once the female equivalent of *sir*, but it now means the female manager of a brothel. *Courtesan* was once the equivalent of *courtier*, an attendant at a royal court, but it now it means a mistress to a royal or noble man, or a high-class prostitute. *Dame* originally meant a woman of high social position, and it is still the female equivalent to the rank of *knight* in Britain, but as a synonym for woman, *dame* is mostly archaic and slightly derogatory. *Hussy* comes from *husewif*, an early version of *housewife*, but it now means a disreputable woman. *Wench* once meant a female infant or young unmarried woman, but later referred to a server or prostitute. *Tart* was once just a contraction of *sweetheart*, but now means a prostitute or a sexually provocative

woman. Honorifics for men still speak of high power and status, while terms for women that were once equivalents now suggest a subordinate status, or sexual service to men.<sup>23</sup>

When people think about sexist language, they traditionally think of words and phrases that show gender bias toward men. This kind of sexism is entrenched in the English language, in which women seem to be left out of history. Those who led the American Revolution (1775–1783) are known as the *Founding Fathers*, while the United States Declaration of Independence (1776) states that, “All men are created equal.” Neil Armstrong, the first person to walk on the moon, famously said, “One small step for man; one giant leap for mankind.” More recently, technology entrepreneur Elon Musk has been dubbed “the savior of mankind.”<sup>24</sup> The rules of grammar once dictated the use of the masculine pronouns *he*, *his*, *him*, and *himself* to refer to both men and women, which is known as generic *he*. Everyday language refers to *man* as the generic sex for “human,” in words such as *mankind*, *manmade*, *manpower*, *man-eating*, and *man-hours*. Older titles favored the masculine suffix, such as *chairman*, *mailman*, *policeman*, *fireman*, and *congressman*. Gender-specific nouns imply that a woman is a lesser version of her male counterpart, in the terms *author* versus *authoress*, *comedian* versus *comedienne*, *hero* versus *heroine*, and *actor* versus *actress*, and they are now often considered to be inappropriate and demeaning. There used to be many more feminine nouns in use, although they sound strange today, including *neighboress*, *singeress*, *friendess*, *farmeress*, *spouseess*, and *soldieress*.

Using unmarked words for men (e.g., *editor*) but marked forms for women (e.g., *editrix*) suggests that men are the “default human,” the norm, or archetype, while women are less important or inferior. This kind of exclusive language is also said to promote an androcentric worldview. For this reason, some feminists prefer alternative spellings to *woman*, such as *womyn*, *womon*, or *wimmin* (old AAVE), to avoid the word ending *-man*. Using gender-biased language was considered unremarkable in Anglophone

countries until feminists challenged it during the “second wave of feminism” in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, many organizations have guidelines for using inclusive language, recommending gender-neutral alternatives for job titles, roles, and turns of phrase. *Humankind* is suggested instead of *mankind*, *spokesperson* instead of *spokesman*, and *server* instead of *waiter* or *waitress*. *Emcee* is preferred to *master of ceremonies*, *maintenance hole* is preferred to *manhole*, while *limbo* is preferred to *no-man’s land*.

However, the use of male-centric language is still common in ways we don’t think of immediately, such as the exclamations *Oh, boy!* or *Oh, man!* (Note that we don’t say *Oh, girl!* or *Oh, woman!*) Some everyday phrases suggest it is favorable to be masculine, but insulting to be feminine. Calling a group of women *you guys* or *dudes* is acceptable and common, although to flip this and refer to a group of men as *ladies* or *girls* is considered to be humorous, or an insult to their masculinity. Complimenting a woman as *just one of the guys* implies that being a *guy* is the height of achievement as a woman, while calling a man *just one of the girls* is humorous, or questions his sexuality and manhood. *Guys*, *dude*, and *bro* are not gender neutral and their use can imply that maleness is more natural and universal. Instead of using group terms that specifically address men, gender-inclusive terms are gaining popularity, such as *people*, *everyone*, *friends*, *folks*, *you*, *y’all* (Southern US), or *youse* (Australia and New Zealand). But overall, gender-biased language presents a narrow view of sexism. Everyday language reveals even more sexist attitudes and a lack of equality between the sexes.

The first wave of feminism tackled legal reform, but there were still social issues to address regarding the inequality of women. As well as being a *wife*, the other part of the *natural role* of a woman was motherhood. With the renewed domesticity of women after World War II, there was an increase in birth rate that is known as the *baby boom*, while the children born in that era are called *baby boomers*. Stereotypes surrounding the social expectation that women should become mothers are still around today. Women



are dubbed *the softer sex* and *the gentler sex*. They are described as *nurturing* and *motherly* and are believed to have an inherent *maternal instinct*. When a couple marries, they are encouraged to *be fruitful and multiply*, while it is expected that the mother will become the primary childcare provider. It was (and occasionally still is) believed that a woman should not work outside of the home, and that she should be kept *barefoot and pregnant* during her reproductive years because her *biological clock is ticking*. (See also Chapter 7.)

The second wave of feminism broadened the sexism debate to include a wider range of social issues that women face. Seminal books such as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) challenged the idea of the "natural role" of women as wife and mother.<sup>25,26</sup> Groups such as the National Organization for Women (NOW) were founded to seek equality for women in the family unit, to secure their reproductive rights, and to fight against discrimination in the workplace. During this time, women began entering the workforce in greater numbers. However, laws known as *marriage bars* forced women to quit their jobs once they got married, or became pregnant. To this day, women are told they have to make a choice between having children *or* having a career, because they *can't have it all*. Women who choose a career over motherhood are often stereotyped as *selfish* or are said to have made a *sacrifice* they may regret.

However, those early *working women*, *career girls*, *career ladies*, and *career women* (there is no equivalent *career men*) faced inequality in the workforce. For the most part, their employment options were limited to low paid, low status jobs. It was believed that women were naturally suited to certain *feminine* professions. Known as *pink-collar* jobs, these included nurse, waitress, teacher, sales lady, cleaning lady, secretary, or an assistant with the title *girl Friday*. Today, when a woman holds a position in a male-dominated profession, her title is often qualified unnecessarily, such as *female doctor*, *female lawyer*, *female soldier*, *female senator*, *female CEO*, or *female President*, implying that these women

are exceptions to the norm. Similarly, the titles of jobs traditionally viewed as feminine are often qualified when held by men, such as *male nurse*, *male secretary*, or *male teacher*. Women are criticized whether they choose career, motherhood, or to *juggle* both as a *working mother*. (We don't say *working father*.) In the past, career-driven women were taught that they had to be a wife and mother to be fulfilled in life, while today's women are asked, how can you possibly be fulfilled if you're just a *stay at home mom*? Modern mothers are often belittled and stereotyped in phrases such as *housewives*, *single moms*, *soccer moms*, and *stage moms*. They are mocked by "yo momma" jokes and sexualized as *yummy mummies* and *MILFs* ("Mother I'd Like to Fuck"). (See also Chapter 7.)

Gender discrimination is still common in the workplace. Women are less likely to be hired than men, and women earn lower wages than men worldwide, which is a form of institutional sexism that is known as the *gender wage gap*.<sup>27</sup> A woman's career is limited by the *glass ceiling*, but if she becomes successful, she may be accused of *sleeping her way to the top*. In the workplace, women are often stereotyped as less capable, competent, or intelligent than men. The perspective that *men are better than women* underpins the modern concept of *mansplaining*. In popular culture, mansplaining is when a man attempts to explain something to a woman (or an audience of women) in an oversimplified manner, often adopting a condescending tone, and making the insulting (and often incorrect) assumption that he has more knowledge. In the workplace, leadership is still male dominated, and men are often stereotyped as preferred candidates to fill higher status positions. (As the saying goes, the *best man for the job*.) During the 2016 US presidential election, former Mayor of New York City Rudy Giuliani stated his preference for candidate Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton and revealed gender bias when he said, "Don't you think a man who has this kind of economic genius is a lot better for the United States than a woman and the only thing she's ever produced is a lot of work for the FBI checking out her emails?"<sup>28</sup>

Throughout history, feminists have been mocked and attacked by those with opposing views. During the first wave of feminism, Susan B. Anthony and other suffragists were depicted as unfeminine, insulted as *spinsters*, and considered to be a danger to family life. Well-known activists received hate mail and death threats, while the police and even members of the public physically abused protestors during their demonstrations.<sup>29</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, second-wave feminists were commonly ridiculed as *women's libbers* (the term coming from the "Women's Liberation movement") and *bra burners*. (The idea of bra burning was actually a media-generated myth, although this titillating story has served to further marginalize feminism and feminists as ridiculous and irrational.)<sup>30</sup> Feminists were labeled *crazy*, *mad*, and *insane* for their beliefs that defied traditional gender roles. In the 1970s, Hugh Hefner launched a campaign to expose the "highly irrational, kookie trends" of feminism, that he argued were "unalterably opposed to the romantic boy-girl society" promoted by his *Playboy* magazine.<sup>31</sup> Second-wave feminists were stereotyped as unladylike "lesbian" women who didn't wear make-up or shave their legs.<sup>32</sup> These stereotypes of feminists have persisted throughout the decades.

The *third wave of feminism* began in the 1980s, while beyond 2000 is loosely characterized as the *fourth wave of feminism*. This contemporary feminism is concerned with a range of ongoing issues, including sexual liberation, sexual harassment and violence against women, and reclaiming sexist language. Within modern feminism there are various branches of feminist ideology and intersectional movements that have specific concerns and goals, such as Black feminism and Native American feminism (whose issues often overlap with classism and racism). All feminists share a common goal, to achieve gender equality, although there is some infighting and disagreement within the movement today. Some commentators (both inside and outside of the movement) argue that the first wave of feminism was valid, along with various aspects of the second wave, but that modern feminism is not justifiable or necessary. Some people believe that sexism in the

West ended decades ago, and that equality has been achieved. They accuse modern feminists of exaggerating the problems experienced by women today and hyperbolizing that men are behind the *domination, subjugation, and oppression* of women.

In some usage today, the word *feminist* has been demonized and carries negative connotations. Critics of modern feminism characterize feminists as *angry, extreme, radical, rabid, and militant*. They are labeled *femtards* and *feminazis*. Some people reject the label *feminist* because of the negative stereotypes attached to the term. Authors known for critiquing the contemporary feminist movement distance themselves from the name. Christina Hoff Sommers instead identifies as an *equalist*,<sup>33</sup> while Camille Paglia calls herself a *dissident feminist*.<sup>34</sup> (Although some feminists would argue that these authors are “not feminists.”) Critics of contemporary feminism argue that the movement has gone too far. Some perceive feminism as a threat to the order of society. So-called *female supremacists* are said to have a *feminist agenda to overthrow society* and bring about *matriarchal domination*. Some claim that modern feminism has abandoned the cause of gender equality to become antagonistic toward men in a mission to *dismantle, fight, and smash the patriarchy*, as the mottos say. It is argued that having a feminist awakening has *destroyed or ruined* women and that modern feminism has pitted the sexes against each other in a *battle*, creating *the war of the sexes, the gender wars, and the war against men* in which men are perceived as the *enemy*. Feminists are accused of being *anti-male, man haters, man bashers, and misandrists*.

*Misandry*, the “hatred of males,”<sup>35</sup> was modeled after the earlier term, *misogyny*, which is often defined as the “hatred of women.”<sup>36</sup> Today, the meaning of *misogynist* has broadened to refer to someone who dislikes or is prejudiced against women. In modern usage it has become a synonym for *sexist*. In 2012, then Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Australia’s first female leader, called the opposition leader Tony Abbott a “misogynist” for his repeated use of sexist language.<sup>37</sup> (Abbott had also allowed himself to be photographed with placards bearing the slogans,

“Ditch the bitch” and “Ditch the witch.”)<sup>38</sup> Gillard’s opponents staunchly denied that Abbott was a *woman hater*. They accused her of exaggeration, and of not understanding the meaning of the word misogynist. The incident inspired the *Macquarie Dictionary*, Australia’s most authoritative dictionary, to update its definition of *misogynist* from the former “pathological hatred of women” to “entrenched prejudice against women.” However, certain groups of men are accused of having a pathological hatred of women and are branded *misogynists*, *anti-feminists*, and *women haters*.

The controversial Men’s Rights movement, the title modeled after the Women’s Rights movement, appeared in the 1970s as a countermovement to feminism. Men’s rights advocates have some serious concerns, including the conscription of men, sexual violence against men, and the discrimination of men in family courts with regard to child custody after divorce. (Ironically, in many of these instances of sexism against men, the perpetrators are not women but other men.<sup>39</sup>) These issues are not central to feminist theory; however, some components of the movement are anti-feminist. For example, Men’s Rights Activists, popularly known online as *MRAs*, state that women have rights and advantages in society that men do not, and that men are oppressed by women. They say that “the system” favors women, and argue that the concerns of men are considered to be less legitimate than the concerns of women. Some claim that affirmative action and similar attempts to correct institutional sexism constitute *reverse sexism*. (This term poses the same problems as *reverse racism*, implying that sexism against women is somehow expected or “normal,” whereas sexism against men is unusual or strange.) Not all MRAs are men, such as former feminist Bettina Arndt, who says there is a pervasive “anti-male bias” in society, and that modern feminists are guilty of “manshaming.”

Many so-called MRAs belong to an online network of blogs, forums, and websites that discuss issues related to men and is known collectively as the *Manosphere*. One popular online movement is called MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way). These

various groups tend to have a focus on community and anti-feminism, rather than activism of men's rights. This environment has bred contempt and hostility toward women, with many MRAs behaving in an abusive or harassing manner online, and often anonymously, although the community denies they are sexist or misogynistic. (Similar to *racist*, when accused of being a *sexist* (*chauvinist* or *misogynist*), many people tend to reject these labels and deny the accusation. The comparable phrase *I'm not a sexist, but . . .* is used as a shield to avoid being labeled *sexist* when expressing sexist attitudes.) MRAs appear to have a complicated relationship with women. They are said to be critical and abusive of women, but on the other hand, to also desire women sexually (although usually in an objectifying way). Some MRAs present themselves as *Pick Up Artists* (PUA) and seducers, who devote their time to seducing as many women as possible, and operate websites offering advice on how to pick up women. If they don't prefer visiting sex workers, MGTOW tend to be celibate. They call this *going monk*, and tend to avoid relationships with women, in their fear of false rape accusations and *gold-diggers*, and their general dislike of women, or belief that women dislike men. This *Manosphere* subculture has its own vocabulary. A *Chad* is a popular and attractive man who has no problems finding girlfriends, while *Stacy* is his female counterpart. According to their lingo, someone who has swallowed the *red pill* has woken up to the "fact" that society discriminates against men, not women. A *blue pill* is a person who "hasn't woken up to this fact." These terms are a nod to the 1999 film *The Matrix*, referring to a red pill that the main character must swallow in order to become aware of the "dark truths" about the world.

A related online community of youths is known as *incels*. Unlike MGTOW, *incels* ("involuntary celibate") do not want to be celibate. These young people (usually men) blame society, feminism, and women for their unwanted celibacy and believe that women owe sex to men. *Incels* have a reputation for violence as revenge for their perceived sexual and social rejection. A self-identified 22-year-old "incel," Elliott Rodger, posted a series of

YouTube videos titled “Elliott Rodger’s Retribution” and penned his “manifesto,” a lengthy autobiography describing his wishes for violent retribution against women because he was a virgin and had “never even kissed a girl.”<sup>40</sup> On May 23, 2014, he went on a stabbing and shooting rampage near the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he injured 14 people and killed 6. He then killed himself with a gunshot wound to the head. In the final pages of his manifesto he declared, “I am the true victim in all of this. I am the good guy.”<sup>41</sup> Rodger is idolized as a “hero” within the incel community, where he is referred to as “Saint Elliot.” Rodger has inspired other killing sprees, including the Toronto van attack of April 23, 2018. This is attributed to 25-year-old Alek Minassian, who allegedly went on a vehicle ramming attack through the streets of Toronto, Canada, killing 10 pedestrians and injuring 16. In a Facebook update posted prior to the spree, Minassian declared the “Incel Rebellion” and praised Rodger with, “All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger!”<sup>42</sup>

Men’s rights activists, MGTOW, incels, and related groups have a traditional view of masculinity that is based on stereotypical gender roles, which they call *Neomascularity*. Outside group labels tend to have more negative connotations. Gender scholars refer to this ideology as *hegemonic masculinity*, while in popular culture it is known as *hypermasculinity* or *toxic masculinity*. Many of these stereotypes of manhood and womanhood are reflected in language. Traditionally, a woman is expected to be polite, delicate, docile, and feminine. She must be *ladylike* and *act like a lady*, and then men will *treat her like a lady*. As the *fairer sex*, she is expected to be attractive and to take care of her appearance. Young girls often hear the comments, *You’re pretty*, and *She’s so beautiful*, which teaches them that being good-looking is a woman’s worth and value in society. They learn that if they are not beautiful, they can be smart instead, but they must have either *beauty or brains*. According to traditional roles, men are said to be the *dominant sex*. Men are expected to be physically strong, whereas women are referred to as *the weaker sex*. Traditional etiquette requires that women have doors opened for them, chairs pushed in for them,

and heavy objects carried for them. A traditional man should be a gentleman and chivalrous toward women. However, Neomascularity declares that *chivalry is dead*, because feminists have killed courtship and romance. It is argued that if a woman shouldn't be expected to make a sandwich, a man shouldn't be expected to pay for dinner on a date. Neomascularity states that women can either enjoy special treatment from men, or equality, but *women can't have it both ways*.

According to sexist ideology, women need to be protected but also controlled and *kept in their place*. They should be submissive, passive, quiet, and even-tempered. Women who are not are branded *difficult* and *dramatic* or as *drama queens* and *bitches*. Ex-girlfriends and ex-wives are commonly dismissed as *crazy* or *psycho*. Wives are described as *shrews* or *shrill*, and their voices *nagging* and *grating*. Women in general are described as *emotional*, *irrational*, *irritable*, *neurotic*, *hormonal*, and *hysterical*. Until quite recently, *female hysteria* was pathologized as a disease. Since ancient times, Egyptian and Greek societies believed that women could develop a "wandering womb," wherein her uterus migrated around her body, placing pressure on other organs and causing disease. By the eighteenth century, hysteria was viewed as a mental disorder that caused a woman to become anxious, depressed, and emotional. Over time, treatments have included exercise, smelling salts, hysterectomy, sex (or abstinence), pregnancy, or gynecological massage until *paroxysmal convulsion* was achieved (that is, an orgasm).<sup>43</sup> Hysteria was considered to be a mental disorder and was listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* until it was removed in 1980, while hysterical is still used to describe a woman who is considered to be *overly emotional* or *deranged* (see also Chapter 5).<sup>44</sup>

Women are still said to suffer from *mood swings*. Their emotional state is blamed on *PMS*, it being *that time of the month* or *she's on the rag*. Conversely, when a woman behaves *like a man* by displaying dominance, independence, and assertiveness, her behavior is reinterpreted negatively as controlling, aggressive, domineering, and unfeminine. Politicians such as Hillary



Clinton and Elizabeth Warren are often described as “not likeable,” because they defy traditional gender roles in their behaviour. Strong women are often accused of having *penis envy*; that is, that they are envious of the power and status of men. Conversely, some men’s rights activists say that men having all the power in society is only an illusion. They argue that women control and exploit men through the power of their sexuality. Women are said to manipulate men by engaging in or withholding sex. In a relationship where a strong woman is considered to be the dominant partner, the man is derided as *hen pecked*, *pussy whipped*, *limp-dicked*, a *eunuch*, or *dickless*, while *she wears the pants in the relationship*. If a husband shares the *women’s work* in the home, then it is said his wife must have him *well-trained*.

From a young age, children are socialized into gender roles that dictate their expected social behavior, from their choice of toys to their clothing and its colors. Boys are conditioned to prefer the so-called “masculine” color blue, while girls are conditioned to favor the “feminine” color pink. Ironically, this is nothing more than a more recent fashion trend. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, the opposite was thought to be true. Pink was perceived as a “stronger” color suitable for a boy, while blue was viewed as delicate and dainty, and therefore more appropriate for a girl.<sup>45</sup> Pink is also used metaphorically to refer to women, in the phrases *pink-collar jobs*, relating to work traditionally associated with women; *pink wave*, an increase in female political candidates in the United States; and the *pink tax*, the extra amount paid for goods and services marketed toward women and girls because of gender-based price discrimination.

Children, as well as adults, are expected to conform to rigid gender roles that are diametrically opposed; girls are emotional, gentle, and submissive, while boys are logical, tough, and dominant. It’s a compliment for a boy to be like his dad; *like father like son*. Comparisons of boys to girls are often negative. A boy is told to not *throw like a girl*, *hit like a girl*, or *run like a girl*. He should not be *girly* or *sissy*. Even for adult women, being too *girly* is often perceived as a bad thing. Gendered stereotypes of adults tell us

that women are inherently *bad drivers* and *bad at computers*, while men supposedly cannot cook or clean. Traditional gender roles dictate that women and girls should be *feminine*, while men and boys should be *masculine*. Gender roles demand that a man should be *macho* and *manly* and not reveal a *feminine side*. Feminists are often accused of defying this structure by making women more *mannish* and *man-like*, but also of *feminizing* society, and especially men.

Emasculating insults are popular among men's rights activists (in the vocabulary of the Manosphere) to describe and humiliate male feminists, feminist allies, and pro-feminist males. Like a modern form of chivalry, a *white knight* is a man who *comes to the rescue* of a *damsel in distress* to defend her honor when it is attacked on the Internet. (He is accused of only wanting to have sex with her.) Other terms insult men who are perceived as unmasculine, submissive, and womanish. A *mangina*, a portmanteau of *man* and *vagina*, is a man with a weak masculine side. A *soy boy* (or *soyboi*) is a man who is woman-like or not manly enough. The term comes from the urban legend that consuming soy will lower testosterone and increase estrogen production in men, thereby making them more effeminate. Soy is a meat alternative eaten by many male vegetarians and vegans, who are stereotyped as *wimps*, while eating (red) meat is perceived as masculine, as shown by the tropes *Real men eat meat* and *Real men don't eat quiche*. (Some foods are gendered. There is the idea that men eat meat and other manly, hearty foods, while women eat salads and sweets, foods that are considered to be dainty and feminine.)

A *beta male* (or *beta*) is a man who is weak, meek, timid, and not assertive, as opposed to his counterpart, the dominant, aggressive *alpha male* (as borrowed from animal etiology.) The *Chad* of the MRA vocabulary is viewed as an alpha type male. *Cuck* or *cuckold* (literally referring to a submissive man sexually cuckolded by a woman) is an insult for a weak, emasculated man. Many of these terms have entered mainstream language. During a presidential debate in 2015, Donald Trump complained that moderator Megyn Kelly asked tough questions of him because

“there was blood coming out of her whatever.” (Harking back to the PMS trope.) Radio host Rush Limbaugh later remarked, “If Trump were your average, ordinary, cuckolded Republican, he would have apologized by now.”<sup>46</sup> This term has also given rise to the vulgar portmanteau *Cuckservative* to refer to a political conservative considered to be excessively moderate or too willing to compromise.

According to popular culture, and the Manosphere in particular, there is a trope that women prefer a *bad boy* type, a *bastard*, *asshole*, *jerk*, or *player*, to a *Nice Guy*. This stereotype holds that women are more interested in a man if he is unkind to her. *Treat 'em mean, keep 'em keen* goes the adage. *Nice Guys* are viewed negatively as overly sensitive, vulnerable, boring, needy, and weak, when a woman wants a strong man to lean on. The related acronym SNAG (Sensitive New Age Guy) mocks a man who is seen as having feminine characteristics. It is feared that a woman only ever wants a platonic relationship with *The Nice Guy* who is relegated to the *friend zone* with the dreaded rejection, *let's just be friends*. Alternatively, he is rejected with the backhanded compliment, *You're like a brother to me*. This attitude is borne out by the saying *nice guys finish last*. Within this community, a woman who is *man-like* in her behavior is welcomed as a *chill girl*, *just one of the guys*, or even an *honorary man*, whereas a man who is *woman-like* is rejected as a *wimp*, a *wuss*, a *pansy*, or a *pussy*. If he does anything seen as *unmanly* by his peers his *man card* will be revoked.

By promoting the traditional gender role of a man as rational, unemotional, and in control of his feelings, toxic masculinity limits the emotions “allowable” for boys and men to express. Society encourages men to show emotional restraint. There is cultural pressure for a man to be stoic, self-reliant, and tough; a *tough guy*. Men (especially white, middle-class, straight men) are socially conditioned to repress their feelings. From an early age, boys are taught to hide their emotions, to *grow up* and *be a big boy*, because *boys don't cry* like a *little girl*. A popular understanding of masculinity is that *men don't cry, women do*.<sup>47</sup> A masculine man is expected to restrain or hide his tears or pretend to have something

in his eye. Men are told to *suck it up, grow a pair of balls, stop being a princess, man up, take it like a man, act like a man, be man enough, be a man, or be a real man.*

In some contexts, gender labels can become insults. Referring to an adult male as a *boy* is demeaning and has racial implications. (See Chapter 1.) However, it can be considered endearing to call a boy a *little man*, while *little woman* is an (often belittling) term for a wife. Similarly, referring to an adult woman as *girl, little girl, or little lady* can be disparaging and infantilizing. In 2012, UK Labour MP Austin Mitchell abused his former colleague Louise Mensch when she disagreed with something her husband had said. In a message that appeared on Twitter, Facebook, and his official website, Mitchell wrote, “Shut up Menschkin. A good wife doesn’t disagree with her master in public and a good little girl doesn’t lie about why she quit politics.”<sup>48</sup> There is also a recent tendency for *female* to be used as a synonym for *woman*, but in a derogatory way.<sup>49</sup> *Female* is used as a noun, often to show contempt, as in the stereotype, *Females are too emotional*. Using the adjective as an identifying label, *a female* is comparable to calling someone *a black* as opposed to *a black person*. Replacing *woman* (which specifically means “female human”) with *female* (which non-specifically means “female species of animal”) can be a dehumanizing way of talking about people, and it is noted that *man* is rarely replaced with *male* in this way. As we have seen, some older synonyms for *woman* have also become derogatory, such as *wench, hussy, dame, and broad*. *Woman* can be wielded as an insult too, especially when paired with disparaging qualifiers such as *old woman, stupid woman, or difficult woman*. During the 2016 US presidential election, Donald Trump referred to his opponent Hillary Clinton as, “such a nasty woman.”<sup>50</sup> *Nasty woman* was quickly adopted as an empowering label for women who do not adhere to traditional gender roles. The phrase became an Internet meme, and a popular motto on mugs, t-shirts, and buttons.

Some of the most offensive insults and swearwords in the English language are related to women. Many of these terms of abuse

invoke female body parts. When the word emerged during the thirteenth century, *cunt* referred literally to “the female genitals; the vulva or vagina,”<sup>51</sup> but it was not considered obscene at the time. Today, it is generally accepted that *cunt* is the most tabooed swear word in English. It is so offensive that it is often referred to as the *c-word*, or censored with asterisks or dashes. The lexicographer Samuel Johnson omitted the word from the first *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755),<sup>52</sup> while it appears as \*\*\*\* in *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1796), where it is defined as, “a nasty word for a nasty thing.”<sup>53</sup> Despite its offensiveness (particularly in US English), *cunt* is in common usage as a strong insult to describe a despised person. It is equally used in a jocular, familiar sense in Australian English, in phrases such as, *How are you going, you old cunt?* In a literal sense, *cunt* is a dysphemism for “female genitals,” while *twat*, *cooch*, *beaver*, *muff*, *quim*, *minge*, *fanny*, and *pussy* are just some of the dozens of euphemisms. There have been some attempts to reclaim *cunt* as a positive term by those who resent the use of a female-related word as profanity. The revulsion for the word and its referent is often thought to reflect contempt for women. As general terms of abuse, *cunt*, *twat*, *pussy*, and the related insult *douche* are all used toward both sexes, although predominately toward men. They imply that a man is weak, like a woman, and insult men by association with women and femininity. Some profanity refers to male genitalia, but these terms are often considered less offensive, including *dickhead*, *bollocks*, *dick*, *prick*, *cock*, and *knob*.

Many terms of abuse for women refer negatively to their appearance, such as *witch*, *crone*, *battle-axe*, or *bag*, while these insults further imply age and are often paired with *old*, such as *old hag*, *old biddy*, or *old bat*. (See also Chapter 7.) *Bimbo* implies youth and beauty but insults a woman’s intelligence. It is interesting to note that in the early twentieth century, *bimbo* originally meant “an unintelligent man,” but it shifted in meaning to refer to a woman who is “sexually attractive but of limited intelligence.”<sup>54</sup> Animal metaphors are commonly used as dehumanizing insults, in which a woman is likened to the stereotypical traits ascribed to

the creature. A spiteful woman is described as *catty*, an evil woman is a *dragon* or a *bat*, a larger woman is a *cow* or *pig*, while an ugly woman is a *horse* or *dog*.

*Bitch* is one of the most common insults used against women. Derived from Old English, *bitch* literally meant “a female dog”. Since the fourteenth century, it has been used as an insult toward women, especially “a malicious or treacherous woman.”<sup>55</sup> In modern use, *bitch* can have either negative or positive connotations, depending on the context. When used in a negative sense, *bitch* refers to a woman who is variously considered to be mean, bossy, cold, domineering, aggressive, intimidating, or masculine; qualities that are usually valued in men. As such, *bitch* is a common insult used to attack women in spaces typically dominated by men, such as politics. *Bitch* is also used as a general term of abuse for women, to express hostility and contempt. Since the 1960s, there have been ongoing efforts to reclaim *bitch* as a positive word to describe a woman who is assertive, strong, competitive, and independent.<sup>56</sup> *Bitch* can also be used in a jocular way among friends, to show familiarity. There are many euphemisms for *bitch*, including *biotch*, *beyatch*, and *biznatch*, which can all be used humorously. *Bitch* is also applied to men; in this sense it is an emasculating insult that likens a man to a woman. But there is no masculine equivalent to *bitch* as used against a woman to show anger and derision. *Son of a bitch* and *SOB* are male-specific insults, although they are less offensive than *bitch*, while they still relate back to women. Similarly, *motherfucker* describes an unpleasant person, and usually a man, but the insult relates back to women.

According to traditional gender roles in our society and the way we talk, women are expected to be the *moral guardians* or gatekeepers of sexuality. By this thinking, a young woman must be virtuous, wholesome, and sexually pure. But there is a sexual double standard. A young man is encouraged to *play the field* and *sow his wild oats*, that is, to have sex with as many women as possible before he settles down. In contrast, premarital sex is considered to be unacceptable for a young woman, who is expected to remain a virgin until she is married. Her virginity is talked about as

a precious *gift* that she should only give to her husband. Only a *good girl* is considered to be *wife material*. There is the saying that *men only want sex, while women want love*. But if a woman does *sleep around* before marriage, she is considered to be *used goods* or *damaged goods*. The woman is blamed if she *gets herself into trouble* and *gets herself pregnant*, and she may be accused of trying to *trap* or *trick* the man into marriage. Then the father-to-be must *do the right thing* by marrying her to *make an honest woman of her*. In what is known as the Madonna–Whore Dichotomy, women are cast as “either ‘good’, chaste, and pure Madonnas, or as ‘bad’, promiscuous, and seductive whores.”<sup>57</sup>

Many terms of abuse for women imply promiscuity, including *tart*, *tramp*, *slag*, *skank*, *moll*, *slut*, *floozy*, *Jezebel*, *whore*, *ho* (derived from *whore*), *thot* (“that ho over there”), and *loose*. Women are *slut-shamed* by these terms for their real or presumed sexual activity, which attack a woman’s right to say “yes” to having sex. In stark contrast, promiscuous men are instead praised as a *stud*, *playboy*, *ladies’ man*, *lady killer*, *Don Juan*, *Casanova*, and *Lothario*; labels that have positive connotations of handsomeness, charm, and virility. This difference in attitudes and labels across gender implies that when a woman has sex, her worth decreases, but when a man has sex, his worth increases. If a man has an ongoing extramarital affair, *the other woman* or *adulteress* is his *mistress* or *bit on the side*, and branded a *homewrecker*, while his spurned wife might be described as bitter and vengeful. As the saying goes, *hell hath no fury like a woman scorned*. However, there is no equivalent term for an adulterous male partner, so this kind of behavior does not define or condemn the unfaithful man in the same way it does the woman.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, there are comparatively few names for men who provide sexual services in return for payment, including *male prostitutes* or *male escorts*. These are the marked forms of each label, suggesting that a prostitute or escort is typically a female. In contrast, there are many words for female sex workers: *whore*, *harlot*, *hooker*, *call girl*, *working girl*, *trollop*, *lady of the evening*, *streetwalker*, and *strumpet*, that all have negative connotations.

Labels for sex workers often make a comment on a woman's morality, including *fallen woman*, *loose woman*, *scarlet woman*, *woman of ill repute*, or a *woman of easy virtue*. To avoid the negative overtones of these labels, the sex industry now favors the euphemism *provider*. Meanwhile, the male customers of providers are known by non-judgmental slang terms, including *john*, *buyer*, *trick*, and *hobbyist*, while their pastime is referred to as a *hobby*.

Prostitution, pornography, exotic dancing (stripping), and other types of sex work are often viewed as objectifying, along with the portrayal of people, especially women, as sex objects in advertising, music videos, television, movies, and beauty contests. Objectifying language only values a woman as *eye candy* and an object of male desire, rather than as a person with thoughts and feelings. A woman is often talked about as an object; a *doll*, a *dish*, a *skirt*, a *bit of skin*, a *bit of crumpet*, or a *piece of tail*. She is referred to by her body measurements, such as the so-called *perfect vital statistics* of 36–24–36. She is reduced down to a specific body part, such as the character “Hot Lips Houlihan” from the TV show *M\*A\*S\*H*. In 1989, *Time* magazine bestowed Australian model Elle Macpherson with the nickname *The Body* (of Our Time).<sup>59</sup> Images of women are fragmented and fetishized in film, TV, on book covers, and in advertisements. In 2016, comedian Marcia Belsky began a social media project to document the “Headless women of Hollywood,” in which she collected the numerous movie posters that feature the faces of men but only a faceless woman's legs, cleavage, or other body part, except her head.<sup>60</sup>

Some men profess to have a preference for a particular female body part, describing themselves as a *breast man*, *butt man*, or *leg man*. A self-styled *boob man* may have a preference for a specific bra cup size. Women are often identified metonymically by the color of their hair, as *the brunette*, *the redhead*, or *the blonde bimbo with the big tits*. Often they are referred to specifically as sexual body parts; as *Double D*, *tits and ass* or *T&A*, *pussy*, or a *piece of ass*. In a 2004 interview, Donald Trump allowed shock jock Howard Stern to refer to his daughter Ivanka Trump as a “piece of ass.”<sup>61</sup> Women are sexualized and talked about as



possessions or playthings; as objects to be used for sexual gratification. They are perceived as conquests or prizes to win, such as a *sugar baby* or a *trophy wife*. A man can be said to *score* with a woman, but then she becomes just another *notch on his bedpost* or number in his *little black book*. A woman's worth is often based on her desirability, which is then pitted against other women. Facemash, the forerunner to Facebook, was a site that placed photos of female college students beside each other and asked users to choose the *hotter* woman.<sup>62</sup> Women's appearance might be rated on a scale of 1–10. In the movie *10*, the bride-to-be played by Bo Derek is rated an "11" by Dudley Moore's character, who proceeds to stalk her on her honeymoon to Mexico. In the above-mentioned conversation with Stern, Trump said, "You know who's a great beauty? My daughter Ivanka. Now she's a 10."

There is the idea that, in an exclusively male setting, men often talk differently among themselves. When women are not present, men are free to engage in crude and vulgar talk about women and to boast about their sexual conquests. This is called *locker room talk*, named after the sports locker room-style environment where it stereotypically takes place. This behavior is often excused, normalized, or even encouraged as *male bonding*, *men's club*, and *boy's club*. It is brushed off as *boys will be boys*, *it's just a guy thing*, and *that's just how men talk*. During the 2016 US presidential election, a recorded conversation between Donald Trump and Billy Bush surfaced. In this *Access Hollywood* videotape recorded in 2005, Trump bragged about forcibly kissing and groping women. Two widely shared quotes were, "I moved on her like a bitch, but I couldn't get there. And she was married. I did try and fuck her," and also, "You know, I'm automatically attracted to beautiful – I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything. Grab them by the pussy. You can do anything."<sup>63</sup> Trump shrugged off his talk about assault and adultery as "locker room banter."

The use of objectifying language can lead to or accompany objectifying behavior. Women are subjected to *street harassment* in

public areas such as streets, shopping malls, restaurants, and on public transportation, and to *sexual harassment* in the workplace or community. Sexual harassment can include lots of different kinds of non-verbal behavior. Women feel uncomfortable under the *male gaze*, when men *stare*, *leer at*, or *ogle* them. A man eyes a woman up and down, known as *elevator eyes*, or he *undresses her with his eyes*. Non-verbal harassment includes honking at or following someone, blocking their path, or making facial expressions at them, such as winking, throwing kisses, licking lips, making sexual gestures with the hands or body movements, or exhibiting (flashing). There is the stereotypical scenario of the construction workers *wolf-whistling* at or *catcalling* women passing by. Harassing verbal behavior can include making kissing sounds, howling, smacking lips, calling someone *honey*, *dear*, *doll*, *sugar*, *sweetheart*, *darling*, or *baby*. Referred to by the innocuous-sounding *diminutives*, *terms of endearment*, or *pet names*, these names imply familiarity and affection, although they can be interpreted as condescending, patronizing, and even contemptuous. Sexual harassment can involve making sexual comments about a person's body, such as *nice legs*, *nice rack*, or *nice ass*, or telling a woman to *smile*, *loosen up*, or not be *so serious*. Sexual harassment can also include physical behavior, such as standing close to or touching another person or touching oneself sexually around a person.<sup>64</sup>

The woman is expected to respond positively to this harassment; to smile, giggle, blush, bat her eyelashes, or reply in kind. But in actuality, she often feels uncomfortable, fearful, intimidated, powerless, ashamed, embarrassed, or humiliated. She sees the man as a *creep*, a *pervert*, or a *sleaze*, and his behavior as *rapey*. (Derived from the word *rape*, *rapey* is a contemporary term that describes a man who acts *creepy* by giving unsolicited hugs or kisses, leering, making sexually suggestive remarks, or in general, giving off a *creepy vibe*. The word is deliberately exaggerated, describing inappropriate behavior that is a *red flag* for a would-be rapist.) A woman who is harassed may feel like she is being *treated like a piece of meat*. But if she ignores the man's advances,

she is accused of not having a sense of humor or she is branded a *prude*, *lesbian*, *bitch*, or *slut*. When a woman rebuffs a man in a bar, a common face-saving response is, *You don't want to go out with me? You're ugly anyway*. She is expected to interpret the behavior, not as harassment but as flattery, attention, or playfulness. He may defend himself with, *But I was just trying to give you a compliment*. Or he may argue that he was just admiring, appreciating, or flirting with her. But women often interpret this behavior as threatening, and fear for their safety. If she complains or reports the incident, she may be accused of *over-reacting*, because it is just a trivial or small matter. However, sexual harassment can escalate. In November 2019, 19-year-old college student Ruth George was catcalled by a man in Chicago but she ignored him. Angry that he was being ignored, the man followed her into a parking garage, where he put her in a chokehold from behind and dragged her into the back seat of her car. He proceeded to sexually assault the unconscious woman. The force with which he choked George caused her to be strangled to death.<sup>65</sup>

In general, sexual harassment refers to “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating someone’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them.”<sup>66</sup> Sexual harassment also extends to sexual assault, which involves forced sexual acts, including inappropriate touching, kissing, or grabbing a person’s genitals. Rape is defined as a type of sexual assault that involves sexual intercourse or other sexual acts committed without consent. Throughout much of history, forced sex in marriage, known today as *spousal rape* or *marital rape*, was not considered to be a crime due to the belief that the husband enjoyed *conjugal rights*, which could be taken by force against the will of his wife. Marital rape was not completely outlawed in the Western world until the 1990s.<sup>67</sup>

The modern perception of sexual harassment is broadening, and transforming in line with new technology. Sexual violation can be digital as well as physical, including unwanted *sexting* (a portmanteau of *sex* and *texting*), which refers to the sending of

sexually explicit messages or photos via phone. Sending *dick pics* is a common form of digital harassment in which a man sends an unsolicited candid photo of his penis to an unwilling recipient (also known as *cyber flashing*). Digital harassment includes sending unwanted messages of a sexual nature via email or social media, abusing people with sexually offensive language, or stalking people online. Nonconsensual pornography or *revenge porn*, which is the distribution of sexually explicit images of individuals without their permission, is an increasing problem online. On August 31, 2014, more than 500 celebrity photos, most of them nude, were leaked onto the imageboard website 4chan.<sup>68</sup> The incident was dubbed “The Fapping,” which is a portmanteau of *fap*, a slang term for masturbation, and the title of the 2008 movie *The Happening*.

Sexual harassers are overwhelmingly male.<sup>69</sup> According to traditional gender roles, men are supposed to be potent, virile, and sexually aggressive. This belief is borne out by common figures of speech. It is said that men are preoccupied with sex; *Men have a higher sex drive than women, men only have one thing on their minds, he's thinking with his dick, and men are all the same*. A man feels he *deserves* and is *entitled* to sex from the women he is attracted to, and especially from his girlfriend or wife. Sex may be *just another chore* for a woman, but it is her *wifely duty* to be available and ready for sex, to *put out* and *please her man* at any time, whether she wants to or not. It is argued that there is a biological dimension to the aberrant sexual behavior of men, that it is not a result of social or cultural conditioning; it is *male instinct*. With all of that *testosterone pumping through their veins, hot-blooded and red-blooded men have needs and urges that are uncontrollable*. Urban legend states that *men think about sex every seven seconds*. It is said that a man simply cannot resist sexual temptation, *he can't keep it in his pants*, and if he does not have sex when he wants it, he will get *blue balls*. Men are told that *no means yes*, so *don't take no for an answer*. A man's belief that he is entitled to a woman's time, conversation, affection, or body is known as *male entitlement*.

The term *sexual harassment* did not exist until the 1960s, but even without a name for the behavior, it was extremely common, as it is today. In some sections of society there is a minimization of and complicity in sexual harassment. Traditional views still hold that sexism and sexual harassment are *normal* and *a part of life for women*. They are told they should just *accept it, deal with it, put up with it, and toughen up*. It is spoken of as a rite of passage to womanhood. Some older women culturally accept and perpetuate harassment by saying, *I went through it, and I turned out okay*. They are complicit in harassment when they state, *It's the price you pay for being a woman*. Women are groomed to accept bad behavior from men from an early age. It is said that girls are *sensible*, whereas boys are *silly, naughty, and immature*, while girls *mature faster than boys*. Girls are taught that teasing and bullying are forms of flirting and affection; *He picks on you because he likes you*. They are taught that men are predators; *Your dad will have to chase the boys away when you're older*. They are taught that (*dirty old*) men prey on younger women, even women in their own families, with the *creepy uncle* trope of a male relative or family friend who behaves inappropriately. Girls learn that sexual attention from boys and men is supposedly their fault when they are told, *don't wear that to school, you'll distract the boys*.

*Victim blaming* is holding victims and survivors responsible for the sexual harassment, sexual assault, or rape that is committed against them. Women's feminine performance is often used against them. Sexual harassment in the workplace may be blamed on the fact that the victim wore clothing that was *revealing* or *distracting* because it exposed her cleavage or legs. Date rape might be blamed on the victim for *dressing like a whore*, or being an *attention whore* who posts sexy selfies on social media. Victims are made answerable for their abuse with remarks such as *she wants it, she asked for it, she is asking for trouble, she is begging for it, and she deserved to get raped wearing those clothes*. When a woman reveals that she has been abused, she may be interrogated with questions like, *What were you wearing that night?* or

*How much did you have to drink that night?* It will be said that she *brought it on herself* because she was drunk or high. It will be said that she *led him on* by flirting with him, so she was a *prick teaser* or a *cock tease*. It is argued that women secretly desire nonconsensual sex because they *fantasize about rape*, and because many women enjoy reading *bodice-rippers*, a genre of romance novels that feature sex and violence. Acts of domestic violence are defended by perpetrators with the victim-blaming refrain, *See what you made me do?* In February 2020, following a domestic violence murder-suicide in Queensland, Australia, a police detective commented that this was a case of a “husband being driven too far” when he burned his estranged wife and their three young children to death in the family car.

Sexual harassment or assault is often denied. Assumptions are made about its rarity and it is trivialized. The panicky adverb *alleged* precedes claims of harassment to undermine their legitimacy. Survivors are accused of lying. It is said that a woman’s accusations are *false*, she is *making it up*, or that she has *false memories* of what really happened. She is said to be experiencing guilt or shame after consensual sex; that she has *buyer’s remorse*. She is accused of being a *slut*. As part of her *anti-slut defense*, she will be accused of saying she was too drunk to say *no*, so she could not be labeled a *slut* or have to take responsibility for having consensual sex. Some survivors who speak out are accused of being *vindictive*. It is said that she accused the man out of petty revenge, jealousy, or she is seeking money or attention. Survivors of sexual harassment experience lifelong negative effects, but their suffering is overlooked, and they are branded *career destroyers*. They are accused of having *ruined a man’s life*, and his *reputation*, and of *dragging his name through the mud*. But if the claims were true, they ask, *why didn’t she report the incident earlier?* Women are often too afraid, ashamed, or confused to report incidents of harassment. One study found that only one in five women report sexual harassment. Of these, 80 percent found that nothing changed as a result, while 16 percent said the harassment worsened.<sup>70</sup> Women are reluctant to report harassment, assault, and rape

because of prevailing social attitudes and the existing legal system. When a woman stands up to accuse a man, she ends up being the one placed on trial in the court of popular opinion, and charged with a lack of credibility.<sup>71</sup> These attitudes are said to have created a *rape culture*; a society that excuses, normalizes, and tolerates sexual violence.

Sexual harassers are often in a position of power.<sup>72</sup> In October 2017, *The New York Times* published a story detailing decades of allegations of sexual misconduct against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein.<sup>73</sup> More than 80 women accused him of sexual harassment, assault, or rape, and making promises to advance their careers in return for sexual favors. In 2006, activist Tarana Burke began using the phrase *Me too* on social media to promote empowerment through empathy among women who have experienced sexual abuse. Following the Weinstein revelations, actor Alyssa Milano reinvigorated this *Me Too* movement by tweeting, “If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote ‘Me too’ as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem.”<sup>74</sup> This inspired an international conversation in which countless women responded with “Me Too” (and the hashtag #MeToo) and shared their personal stories of sexual harassment. In 2020, Weinstein was convicted of rape and sentenced to 23 years in prison. Prominent politicians, comedians, actors, athletes, scientists, and other public figures, many of whom have been sexually abusing women and men for years, are finally beginning to face consequences for their actions.

There are many different reactions to the Me Too movement. It is said to be a *scary time for men*. Some see this social change as a form of persecution; saying it is an *attack against men*, and a *witch hunt*. They fear that women conflate flirting with sexual harassment, or construe behavior as harassment if they don’t find the man to be attractive. There are complaints that *you can’t talk to women anymore, you can’t compliment women anymore, you can’t flirt anymore, and you can’t so much as look at a woman anymore*. The Me Too movement prompted the response on

Twitter, “Not all men are like that” from some feminist allies, which led to the hashtag #NotAllMen and *that’s not me*. This is not an unexpected reaction; although similar to the All Lives Matter argument in response to Black Lives Matter, Not All Men is not a helpful reply to Me Too. Women know that not all men are rapists, murderers, or violent; they do not need to be told this.<sup>75</sup> However, when a woman encounters a man while walking down the street, or she goes on a blind date, she does not know which category the man belongs to: *the good men* or *the bad men*. Not All Men is a defensive argument that distracts from the topic at hand: sexism. Another common reaction to Me Too expresses apparent sympathy: *I have a daughter and I wouldn’t want this to happen to her*. However, it is important to have empathy without having to think about how other people exist in relation to oneself. Not All Men was soon replied to with, “Yes All Men,” arguing that even *the good men* are complicit in the behavior of *the bad men*, and that all men benefit from male privilege.

*Male privilege* describes the viewpoint that being a man, especially a straight white man, means being granted a lot of inherent privilege in society. That is, unearned advantages, opportunities, benefits, or rights which are afforded to men, solely on the basis of their sex. Men live without the fear of walking alone day or night, or being harassed on the streets and in the workplace. Men can dress how they want to and not worry that it will be used as a defense if they are raped. Men are not asked in job interviews how they will balance a career with a family, or not be hired because an employer assumes they will have children in the near future. Men who rise to prominence in their jobs will not be accused of sleeping their way to the top. Men can have promiscuous sex and be viewed positively for it. Men are not labeled *bossy* or *domineering*, or told to *loosen up* or *smile*. Men can use expressions and conventional language that reflects their sex. Men are not expected to change their last names when they marry. Men are treated better in society in most of the areas discussed in this chapter, because they belong to the non-stigmatized group. Male privilege has parallels to *white privilege*



(see Chapter 1), the inherent benefits that white people enjoy in society. Women face prejudice, injustices, and fears that men might not even think about, recognize, or accept.

The idea of *male fragility* has parallels to *white fragility* and involves the anger, fear, denial, guilt, argumentation, silence, and use of other defensive moves by men when they are challenged about their sexism. (See Chapter 1.) Male fragility can involve the refusal to acknowledge the existence of modern sexism. It may be argued that a sexist phrase, *wasn't sexist back then*, or that sexism *isn't as bad in America* (or the UK, or Australia, etc.), or that sexism today *isn't as bad it used to be*. Sexism is often minimized, and it is argued that Westerners exaggerate women's issues. Sexism in the Western world is compared favorably to sexism in other countries, such as the plight of women in Muslim countries, gendecide (the preference for sons in India and China leading to female infanticide), child marriage, female genital mutilation, or the former practice of foot binding in China. These arguments imply that Western women, *have it easy in comparison*, and so they have *no right to complain*. However, sexism is still sexism at any level, and there is no hierarchy of what is valid sexism and what is not. Despite the advances in equality over time, social inequalities and power imbalances still exist between the sexes. As we can see, many of these biases are reflected in the English language. Sexism is still typically against women, but our modern language reveals that both men and women endorse and perpetuate sexist beliefs about each other and themselves. Maintaining strict gender roles can be harmful, although we belong to a culture that often demands gender and sexual conformity.

When a baby is born, the first question usually asked is, *Is it a boy or a girl?* But not all humans are born fitting into the male or female binary. Biologically, some people are not one or the other sex, but perhaps neither, or both. *Intersex* people are born with a combination of male and female biological characteristics.<sup>76</sup> They may have variations of sex chromosomes or sex hormones, or ambiguous genitalia, genitals that do not fit the typical

definitions for male or female bodies. This is a naturally occurring variation in humans; with up to 2 percent of people having intersex traits, or 1 in 2,000 children.<sup>77</sup> However, intersex people are often stigmatized for their physical difference. Some cultures in African countries believe that intersex babies are *bad omens*, a sign of witchcraft, a punishment from God, and a curse on the family and community.<sup>78</sup> In these instances, the midwife kills the child and the parents are often told the child was stillborn and not to ask further questions.

The current medical name for intersex conditions is Disorders of Sex Development (DSDs), although some stakeholders find this term to be offensive, because it implies that having these traits is a defect or disorder. Others feel that the popular term *intersex* sensationalizes the condition. In the past, the term *hermaphrodite* was used, although it is now offensive. The name derived from Hermaphroditus, the character from Greek mythology who possessed both male and female physical traits. In scientific fields, hermaphrodite now describes an organism that has both male and female sets of reproductive organs.<sup>79</sup> When used to refer to humans the term is stigmatizing and also inaccurate, because it implies that the person is both male *and* female.

In the Western world, when a baby is born with a body that is deemed to be sexually ambiguous, parents and medical staff are forced to identify the newborn as either male or female on birth certificates and other official paperwork, so a gender is assigned. To support this gender assignment and in the hopes of avoiding future social ostracism, it is standard medical practice to surgically alter these infants and children to *fix*, *normalize*, or *correct* their genital appearance that is perceived as abnormal, unnatural, or deformed.<sup>80</sup> This *genitoplasty* or cosmetic genital surgery to reflect the sexual anatomy associated with “standard” male or female bodies is controversial. It is often criticized as *Playing God*. These irreversible procedures can cause scarring, sterilization, loss of sexual sensation, the need for lifelong hormone replacement therapy, and possible psychological harm.<sup>81</sup> The procedure also poses an ethical dilemma, because the person is

too young to give informed consent for the surgery and may later reject the sex assignment. They may be assigned to be one sex, yet identify as another. They may also identify as a different gender.

Since the fourteenth century, *gender* has referred to grammatical categories (typically masculine, feminine, and neuter) of nouns and pronouns as used in languages such as Latin and Greek.<sup>82</sup> From the 1940s, gender has also been used to mean a person's internal sense of being a boy or a girl, or a man or a woman, as expressed by social or cultural factors, rather than biological ones. Gender is not genitalia; gender is determined by the brain rather than biology. There are several components to gender. A *gender role* is the social expectation of how people "should" behave, dress, and present themselves, based on their actual or perceived sex of male or female. *Gender expression* is how people express their gender through their name, behavior, mannerisms, clothing, hairstyle, voice, and other outward appearances. *Gender identity* is one's internal sense of being a woman, a man, or neither. Gender exists on a spectrum.<sup>83</sup> Some people do not fit neatly into one of two categories and instead identify as *non-binary*, *gender non-conforming*, *genderqueer*, or *transgender*. It is estimated that there are 1.4 million transgender people in the United States alone, and that number is on the rise.<sup>84</sup>

*Transgender*, *trans*, or *trans\** are the preferred terms for people whose gender identity or gender expression is different than the sex that was assigned at birth. It is now offensive to use transgender as a noun, to refer to someone as *a transgender*; or a verb, *he is transgendered*, which is comparable to calling a gay person *a gay* or saying they have been *gayed*.<sup>85</sup> Other outdated terms include *tranny* (or *trannie*) as a slang term for transgender, while *transsexual* is now considered derogatory. Transgender is not to be confused with *transvestite*, an outmoded term for a *cross-dresser*, a person who wears clothing associated with the opposite sex. Dressing in *drag* is also different from transgender. *Drag queen* describes a man who *dresses as a woman*, while a *drag king* is a woman who *dresses as a man*, often for the purposes of

entertainment. Transgender people are not in costume, acting as a character, playing a part, or pretending to be a man or a woman.

Transgender is contrasted with *cisgender*, which means “not transgender.” *Cis-* comes from the Latin preposition meaning “on this side.”<sup>86</sup> Often abbreviated to *cis*, a cisgender person’s gender identity corresponds to the sex they were assigned at birth. The behavior, appearance, clothing, and genitals of cisgender people “match” how they feel about themselves. Non-binary gender describes any gender identity that does not fit inside the traditional male or female categories. Non-binary people have created their own self-identifying labels, and there are hundreds of unique identities for gender. Some of the more common non-binary identities include perceiving oneself as: *androgynous* (or androgynous), both masculine and feminine; *intergender*, in between male and female; *agender*, *no gender*, or *genderless*, having neutral gender; or *bigender*, *polygender*, *pangender*, or *all genders*, having multiple gender identities. Some indigenous North Americans use the term *two-spirit* to describe intersex, transgender, and non-binary people. (See also Chapter 3.) Two-spirit is a recent name that replaced the colonial-imposed label *berdache*, and is now used as an umbrella term for LGBTQ+ indigenous Americans. Two-spirit people are seen as a third gender, similar to *muxe*, a term used in Zapotec cultures of Oaxaca for a person who doesn’t identify as a man or a woman, but as someone in between. These terms describe the fluidity of gender. Gender identities can be fixed or fluid, while *gender fluid* people have a gender identity that varies over time. Gender fluidity is the idea that gender is dynamic and can change over the course of a lifetime.

There is a naive belief that if a transgender person has not undergone surgery they are not really transgender. However, being transgender does not necessarily mean that the person has undergone gender-affirming surgery, which is costly and invasive. Not all transgender people undergo surgery, because there are many non-medical ways to transition. Social transitioning can include making changes to hairstyle or clothing to more accurately express one’s gender. It can involve adopting

a preferred first name, or using a non-gender-specific honorific such as *Mx* (usually pronounced “mixt”), *Ind.* (which stands for “Individual”), and *Misc.*, which are used in place of *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Ms.*, and *Miss.* Instead of the gender-specific pronouns *she/her* and *he/him*, transgender people may prefer the new gender-neutral pronouns *xe/xem/xir* or *ze/zem/zir* (corresponding to “they”/“them”/“their”). Many people have a preference for singular *they* as used in, *If someone hugged me, I’d hug them back.* This usage emerged in the fourteenth century and has been in common use ever since, even by revered authors such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Jane Austen, because this was Standard English until the Victorian era when grammarians imposed the use of generic *he*. Grammarians still prescribe the use of *he*, as in, *If someone hugged me, I’d hug him back.* Singular *they* is criticized by some style guides as substandard or “wrong.” As we have seen, generic *he* is not gender-neutral and is perceived as sexist for promoting masculine gender as the default or norm. In 2019, Merriam-Webster announced the personal pronoun *they* as “word of the year” for its increasing usage by non-binary people.<sup>87</sup> The use of gender-neutral nouns is also becoming more popular, such as *all genders* instead of *men and women*. Both the London Underground and New York City subway no longer address *ladies and gentleman* in their announcements, but instead opt for *passengers, riders, or everyone*.<sup>88</sup>

Some transgender people do seek to transition medically, to bring their bodies into alignment with their innate gender identities. This is done by way of hormone therapy and/or surgery, which is called *sex reassignment surgery* (SRS) or *gender-affirming surgery*. (These are the preferred terms instead of the outdated and now derogatory *sex change operation*.) For these transgender people, feeling that their bodies do not reflect their gender can cause severe distress, depression, and anxiety. This state is called *gender dysphoria*, which may be a diagnosis to help them to receive medical treatment to assist in making a transition.<sup>89</sup> In psychiatry, gender dysphoria was formerly called *gender identity*

*disorder*, but it was reclassified when the condition became better understood, and to remove the stigma associated with the label *disorder*. However, there are still many misconceptions about transgender people, with some believing that it *is* a disorder, a mental illness, a disease, or deviant behavior. There are some who believe that transgender people are sick, confused, or misled. They are told that they should *get over* the feeling that they *hate their bodies* or that they are *stuck* or *trapped in the wrong body*. Being transgender is often dismissed as just a *phase*, a current *trend*, or a *fad*. Transgender people are warned they will regret transitioning or will later change their minds. They are abused as *weird*, *strange*, *crazy*, or *perverts*, and dehumanized as *freaks*, *creatures*, *monsters*, and an *abomination*.

*Transphobia* and *cissexism* refer to the fear, dislike, or hatred of transgender, non-binary, or intersex people and the everyday discrimination and harassment they face in society. According to this prejudice, cisgender people are perceived as *normal* and *natural*, while transgender people are represented as *abnormal* and *unnatural*. Some cisgender people say they feel awkward and uncomfortable around transgender people, or they are even afraid of them. As a result of this ignorance, transgender people are stared at, whispered about, pointed at, and laughed at in public. Transgender people report various microaggressions. Curious strangers ask invasive and inappropriate questions about transgender people's bodies, genitalia, and lifestyle, including: *What's your sex?*, *How do you have sex?*, and *Do you have a penis or a vagina?*<sup>90</sup> They are asked personal questions about their medication or surgeries: whether they take hormones and have they had "the surgery" to "turn" them into a man or woman? Some transgender people are disagreed with, or accused of lying, when completing forms that ask for their sex.

Transgender people often experience a lot of negative judgment from others, whether they are recognized as transgender or not (at first). There is a stereotype that transgender people with a very feminine gender presentation who "pass" as women are only men *pretending* to be women in their attempts to *deceive* other people

(or alternatively, women who *masquerade* as men). A transgender woman might be represented as *really a man disguised as a woman*. Having one's transgender identity *found out* or revealed can be dangerous for the person, and the representation of transgender people as *deceivers* has promoted and excused acts of transphobic violence. In Newark, California, in 2002, transgender woman Gwen Araujo was beaten, killed, and then buried in the Sierra wilderness. The slaying occurred at a party, after Araujo was subjected to forced genital exposure, and it was announced *he was really a man*.<sup>91</sup>

In contrast, a transgender person may see herself as a woman but be categorized as a man by others (or a transgender man categorized as a woman). If a transgender person is not viewed as "convincing" in their gender performance to be able to "pass" as a woman (or a man), they may be asked by strangers, *What are you really?* Transgender people may be accused of not looking "enough" like a woman (or a man) or of not appearing *womanly* (or *manly*). In 2009, Germaine Greer, who was a powerful feminist voice in the 1970s, referred to transgender women as "ghastly parodies" of femaleness.<sup>92</sup> It is often argued outside the group that transgender people are not *real* women (or men). In particular, there is the belief that only *women born women* are authentic, *real women*, and that a trans woman is really a man. This is a position held by a subgroup of "gender critical" feminists who have been labeled *trans-exclusionary radical feminists* (TERFs).<sup>93</sup> (People with this point of view consider the label to be a slur.) However, for transgender people, *transgender* is just an adjective used to describe a part of their identity, and they see themselves as no less of a woman (or a man). It is often said among the community, *a transgender woman is a woman and a transgender man is a man*.

Related to the belief that a person's sex assignment at birth is their *real sex* is the belief that a birth name or given name is that person's *true* or *real name*. Transgender people who have changed their names as part of their social transition may be asked, *What is your real name? The one you were given at birth?* Undergoing a name change can be an affirming step in the transition process and alleviate the suffering associated with one's former name.<sup>94</sup>

But friends, family, and colleagues may struggle to adhere to a transgender person's new name or even refuse to acknowledge the change altogether. *Deadnaming* is the practice of, intentionally or not, referring to a transgender person by the name they used before transitioning. This is invalidating and disrespectful to transgender people and can effectively "out" them, and expose them to discrimination and harassment.

Some transgender people are addressed by titles or pronouns that reflect how they identified before transition. This is known as *misgendering*, and it might involve mistakenly referring to a transgender woman as *sir*, *he*, or calling her *a guy*. Misgendering might be unintentional, but it can be avoided by asking for a person's preferred pronouns. Conversely, misgendering may be intentional, to show disapproval for a *man pretending to be a woman*. As a form of social reproval, cisgender people are also misgendered deliberately for being a *gender bender* when they defy expected gender roles with respect to dress or behavior. For example, a man with long hair might be addressed contemptuously as *ma'am*, while a woman wearing boyish hair and clothing might be mockingly called *sir*. Transgender people report being addressed by the impersonal pronoun *it*, when they are deemed to be of indeterminate gender. This is dehumanizing, because *it* is typically used to refer to things, or non-human animals, but not to people. Related insults include *shim* and *heshe*, which are slang blends of pronouns that imply that a person's gender is unidentifiable. *Shemale* and *chicks with dicks* are abusive terms specifically used against transgender women, especially those who have undergone breast augmentation but still have a penis, while these labels are typically associated with the pornography industry.

Being cisgender, that is, having a gender identity that matches the sex assigned at birth, has social advantages and benefits. This is known as *cis privilege*. Transgender, non-binary, and intersex people face social stigma and everyday challenges that are not faced by cisgender people. In most countries, birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports, and other forms of government identification only offer *male* or *female* as gender options. Public



spaces are not always inclusive, such as restrooms and change rooms, where transgender people using them have experienced verbal and physical abuse for not being a “real” woman (or man). Various states in the US have tried to pass “bathroom bills” to force transgender people to use the restroom associated with the sex assigned to them at birth, making it illegal for them to use the restroom appropriate to their gender identity, even though there is no legal or ethical way to enforce such a law. The need for gender-neutral restrooms has been met with scaremongering that sexual predators will exploit nondiscrimination laws by sneaking into women’s restrooms to commit sex crimes, although this has been repeatedly debunked.<sup>95</sup> A large number of transgender people have experienced anti-trans discrimination, harassment, homelessness, and violence, and they are at a higher risk of suicide.<sup>96</sup> Our modern language reveals that transgender, non-binary, and intersex people are still feared, mocked, hated, and misunderstood in society and accused of “blurring the lines” of traditional gender roles.