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Girl, Fight!

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Book Review

GIRL, Fight!

FIGHT LIKE A GIRL: HOW TO BE A FEARLESS FEMINIST by Megan Seely. New York and London: New York University Press. 2007. 250 pp. \$65 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

Reviewed by Angela Onwuachi-Willig†

I want to reclaim the idea of fighting like a girl—a phrase that is usually meant to suggest that those who fight like girls, as opposed to fighting like men, don't really know how to fight and that their struggle is not real, not intense, not legitimate. . . . I don't agree with that characterization at all. I know how to fight, and I know plenty of women whose struggles are all too real, all too harrowing, all too dangerous. I'm here to say that not only can we fight like girls; we can win.¹

INTRODUCTION

Today's twenty and thirty-something women have grown up in a world that is strikingly different from their mothers (p. xiii). Unlike their mothers, many of these women played sports in high school because of Title IX.² Indeed,

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1. MEGAN SEELY, *FIGHT LIKE A GIRL: HOW TO BE A FEARLESS FEMINIST* xvii-xviii (2007). Subsequent references to page numbers will be made parenthetically in the body of the text.
2. Title IX was passed thirty-five years ago in 1972. See 20 U.S.C. § 1681 (2000); see also Elizabeth A. Hueben, Comment, *Revolution, Numbers, IX: The Thirtieth Anniversary of Title IX and the Proportionality Challenge*, 71 *UMKC L. REV.* 659, 661 (2003) (stating that “[t]he law was] passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972”). Title IX provides that “[n]o person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in,

this generation of women has the opportunity to play professional basketball in the United States as opposed to just in Europe.³ A number of these women attend and study at colleges and universities with female presidents. Such women include undergraduate and graduate students at Harvard University, where Drew Gilpin Faust recently became the institution's first female President.⁴ Additionally, during the prime years of their careers, this generation of women has seen a black female, Condoleezza Rice, serve as Secretary of State for nearly three years (p. 38).⁵ In November of 2008, these women also may witness the

be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a) (2000); Jamal Greene, *Hands Off Policy: Equal Protection and the Contact Sports Exemption of Title IX*, 11 MICH. J. GENDER & L. 133, 134 (2005); see also Deborah Brake, *Revisiting Title IX's Feminist Legacy: Moving Beyond the Three-Part Test*, 12 AM. U.J. GENDER SOC. POL'Y & L. 453, 457 (2004) ("Title IX's role in furthering the explosive growth of girls' and women's sports has been widely acknowledged. Compared to the 294,000 girls who participated in interscholastic athletics in 1971, there were over 2.8 million girls who participated in interscholastic athletics in 2002-2003. The number of women participating in intercollegiate sports has gone from just below 32,000 in 1971 to over 160,000 in 2004.").

3. Other professional women's basketball leagues had previously existed in the United States for a short period of time, but the Women's National Basketball Association ("WNBA") began in 1997. See Lacie L. Kasier, *The Flight from Single Entity Structured Sports Leagues*, 2 DEPAUL J. SPORTS L. & CONTEMP. PROBS. 1, 11 (2004). Still, many American female athletes play basketball in European leagues that offer more money and better opportunities. See Alfred Dennis Mathewson, *Grooming Crossovers*, 4 J. GENDER RACE & JUST. 225, 279 n. 464 (2001). Although women in their twenties and thirties have experienced the explosion of the WNBA, they also have witnessed remarkably large differences in the salaries of professional female basketball players in the WNBA and professional male players in the National Basketball Association ("NBA"). See *Id.* at 279 ("The highest base salary in the WNBA in the 2000 season was \$75,798 and the minimum salary in the NBA was \$317,000."); Rachel Schaffer, Comment, *Grabbing Them by the Balls: Legislatures, Courts, and Team Owners Bar Non-Elite Professional Athletes from Workers' Compensation*, 8 AM. U.J. GENDER SOC. POL'Y & L. 623, 631 (2000) (noting that in 1999, the average WNBA player salary was \$35,000 for a three-month season).
4. Sara Rimer & Alan Finder, *After 371 Years, Harvard Plans to Name First Female President*, N.Y. TIMES, Feb. 10, 2007, at A1 (noting that the appointment comes two years after former President Lawrence Summers asserted "that a lack of intrinsic aptitude could help explain why fewer women than men reach the top ranks of science and math in universities"); see also Ellen Goodman, ALB. TIMES UNION, Feb. 20, 2007, at A9 (declaring her surprise at the appointment of Faust as Harvard's President, as there is "actually a higher percentage of women in the Bush Cabinet than in the tenured faculty ranks at Harvard"). However, this generation of women has also observed very little growth in the percentage of female presidents of colleges and universities. See Audrey Williams June, *Presidents: Same Look, Different Decade*, CHRON. HIGHER EDUC., Feb. 16, 2007, at A33 ("According to the study, 86 percent of presidents were white and 77 percent of them were male in 2006. In 1986, when the study was first conducted, 92 percent were white and 91 percent were male."). They also have seen that, even when selected as presidents, women sustain attacks by alumni, students, and faculty that are rarely used against men. See Lisa Belkin, *The Opt-Out Revolution*, N.Y. TIMES, Oct. 26, 2003, § 6 (Magazine), at 42 (noting that a member of the Princeton class of 1941 wrote in its *Alumni Weekly* that "since 'we now have a lady president and a lady second in command, to save time I recommend that the trustees promptly convert Princeton to a single-sex female university and be done with it'" and that "[a]nother wrote to suggest that the name of the school be changed to 'Princesstonia'").
5. At the same time, they have witnessed the media comment on the fashion of the second female and first black female Secretary of State, even once likening her to a dominatrix. See, e.g., Robin Givhan, *Condoleezza Rice's Commanding Clothes*, WASH. POST, Feb 25, 2005,

election of the first female President of the United States, Hillary Clinton.⁶ In light of these significant gains for women in society, one would expect this group of twenty and thirty-something women to embrace feminism. Yet, many do not.

For many of these twenty and thirty-something women, feminism has become a bad word—the new “F” word.⁷ A recent article in the *Los Angeles Times* described the way in which “feminism” has become a dirty word among young adult women. For example, Elana Mann, a twenty-six year old Master of Fine Arts student at CalArts, described the phenomenon among her friends, stating: “A lot of people my age have a problem with the term ‘feminism.’ I have had friends who would say, ‘I’m not a feminist,’ but then they would major in women’s studies.”⁸ Similarly, Audrey Chan, a twenty-four year old student in the same program, described a general ambivalence about the word “feminism” and its source, noting: “I do encounter discomfort with the term ‘feminism.’ I think that’s normal. It’s a problem with the way feminism has been represented. I think, for good reason, people are confused about what feminism is.”⁹

The fact that many women of this generation shy away from feminism, both in language and in movement, is no surprise. This group of women primarily faces subtle forms of discrimination in their homes, communities, and workplaces as opposed to the blatant forms of discrimination generally encountered by their female predecessors. As syndicated columnist Katherine Heine wrote in an article that identifies what she views as young women’s “responsibility to the Ann Richardses of the world”:

Today’s struggles are not clearly defined. We have unprecedented access to the work force, but we are still paid less. We’re told our opinions and ideas are valued, but we’re often deemed ‘aggressive and unfeminine’ when we voice them. We’re told we have sexual freedom, but we’re ‘easy’ if we embrace the sexual promiscuity of some men and ‘frigid’ if we don’t. . . . We’re told

at C1.

6. Women of this generation have also listened to criticisms of Senator Hillary Clinton in her presidential race simply because she wears too many pantsuits. See *Hillary Clinton should ditch the trousers: Versace*, REUTERS, Feb. 8, 2007, http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=politicsNews&storyid=2007-02-08T135217Z_01_L08322504_RTRUKOC_0_US-FASHION-CLINTON-VERSACE.xml (noting that Donatella Versace advised Clinton to “treat femininity as an opportunity and not try to emulate masculinity in politics”).
7. See Mary C. Dunlap, *The “F” Word: Mainstreaming and Marginalizing Feminism*, 4 BERKELEY WOMEN’S L.J. 251 (1989); see also Debora Halbert, *Feminist Interpretations of Intellectual Property*, 14 AM. U.J. GENDER SOC. POL’Y & L. 431, 431-32 (2006) (“For many, feminism evokes the image of a bra-burning, man-hating radical.”); Adrien Katherine Wing, *Global Critical Race Feminism Post 9-11: Afghanistan*, 10 WASH. U. J.L. & POL’Y 19, 27 (2002) (“For most of the world, not to mention for many Americans, feminism is a dirty word.”); Goodman, *supra* note 4, at A9 (“On college campuses where women take rights for granted, many shy away from the F-Word as if it were a dangerous brand.”).
8. Suzanne Muchnic, *Landmarks from a Younger Vantage*, L.A. TIMES, Mar. 4, 2007, at F15.
9. *Id.*

motherhood is respected, but people glare when we breast-feed on park benches, even though we cover up.¹⁰

Given their relative freedoms and the lack of definition of women's current struggles, many women in this third wave age category, especially those of privilege, may more easily blind themselves to the barriers generally faced by women. They may think of themselves as making a real choice about work and home, even though their choices are arguably influenced heavily by gendered stereotypes and expectations. They may rationalize the generally lower pay of women as being related to the difficulty level of the work or women's personal choices, rather than the association of certain kinds of work to women. They may even believe that true equality between the sexes has been achieved.¹¹

In her new book, *Fight Like a Girl: How to Become a Fearless Feminist*, Megan Seely, who at twenty-eight became the youngest woman to serve as President of California's National Organization for Women ("NOW"), makes an intelligent, well-intentioned, and long overdue statement to her generational peers about the need to continue the battle for equality for women and girls. Moreover, Seely cautions this group, the third wave of feminists, that they must do more than simply continue the movement, they must build upon it. In so doing, she highlights the way in which the voices and experiences of various groups, such as women of color and poor women, previously had not been recognized within the feminist movement (p. xiv). She urges the inclusion of every woman's voice and experiences in the effort to advance the struggle for sex equality. She writes, "As third wavers join with second wavers, we need to build intergenerational partnerships in which we incorporate the knowledge and experience of the women who came before us and the knowledge and the experience of the women who are now coming of age" (p. xiii).

Seely, now thirty-three, is right to reach out to her female peers in this fashion, and she does so in her book with much thought, passion, intelligence, and practicality. The time is ripe for a book like Seely's. Overall, study results indicate that sixty-three percent of black women, sixty-eight percent of Latinas, and forty-one percent of white women intensely feel that our country "needs a strong movement to benefit women."¹² Although a significant number of women in Seely's generation have distanced themselves from the word "feminism," as Seely notes herself, many of them accept the principles of feminism, such as its

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10. Katherine Heine, *We Owe Ann Richards and Our Mothers*, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER, Sept. 29, 2006, at B7.
 11. See Claire Harvey, *A Successful Young Woman with a Feminist Dilemma*, NEW ZEALAND HERALD, Mar. 27, 2006, at A13 ("Growing up, many of our generation rejected even the title 'feminist,' with its aura of hairiness and misandry, because sexism just didn't seem to happen in any overt way any more. We all studied what we liked, got the jobs we wanted, shared the flatmate vacuuming roster equally and still waxed our legs. . . .").
 12. See *Is Your Mother's Feminism Dead? New Agenda for Women Revealed in Landmark Two-Year Study*, PRNEWswire (June 24, 2003), <http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=104479> (documenting the results of a study by the Center for the Advancement of Women).

struggle for true equality between the sexes (p. xv).¹³ In this light, Seely's book could help to push these women toward activism or identify ways for them to become active in the struggle for women's rights. Other women in the third wave are starved for feminist action and embrace the gains won through their foremothers' sacrifices. As Carson Fox, a thirty-eight year old Masters of Fine Arts student at Rutgers University, declared, "I try to impress some of these ideas upon my students who don't identify themselves as feminists. It makes me feel crazy when they don't realize what we have inherited, how hard people had to work for this freedom and still work for it."¹⁴ For these women, Seely's book could serve as a resource for suggestions on how to remain active and influential in the movement.

This book review recommends Seely's book for any woman or man who wants to learn where the current feminist movement stands, demands equal rights for women in all arenas, wants to ensure the inclusion of more voices and issues within the feminist movement, and desires practical information about how to join in that struggle for rights. Seely's book is neither scholarly nor legal; instead, it is a discussion of the principles of feminism as well as a general guide to activism that outlines the steps necessary for making one's activism count. The book is simple and clear, and it can teach us all a few tricks about how to effect change in our personal, educational, and work lives. Part I of this book review provides a review of the substance of *Fight Like a Girl: How to Become a Fearless Feminist*, providing an account of the issues that Seely discusses in each chapter. Part II considers, in light of Seely's description of the gap between the first two waves of feminism and its third wave, the perhaps bigger gap that may result between previous waves and the fourth wave. This potential gap is examined through recent conversations in the media regarding what has come to be known as the "opt-out revolution."¹⁵ Part II then uses this example as a means of highlighting the importance of Seely's call for activism to

13. Seely states that this "generation of women . . . align themselves with the tenets of feminism but reject the term and any association with the movement" (p. xv). Seely notes that "feminism simply means that women are equals of men" (p. 1). Supporting this principle in part means working towards "ending discrimination against all women and girls, securing [women's] safety, protecting [women's] health, ensuring equal opportunities, and respecting [women's] sexual identities" (p. xv). A number of third wave black women may distance themselves from the word "feminist" because they identify instead as a "womanist," a term coined by author Alice Walker. The term "womanist" is a synonym for black feminist or feminist of color. See ALICE WALKER, IN SEARCH OF OUR MOTHERS' GARDENS: WOMANIST PROSE xi-xii (1983); see also Angela Onwuachi-Willig, *Just Another Brother on the SCT?: What Justice Clarence Thomas Teaches Us About the Influence of Racial Identity*, 90 IOWA L. REV. 931, 934 n.10 (2005) (identifying myself as a womanist). The American Heritage Dictionary now includes the term in its volume, defining "womanist" as "[h]aving or expressing a belief in or respect for women and their talents and abilities beyond the boundaries of race and class." THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE 1978 (4th ed. 2000).

14. See Muchnic, *supra* note 8, at F15.

15. See Belkin, *supra* note 4, at 42 (discussing the way in which elite, successful women are increasingly choosing to leave the workplace for motherhood).

women in the third wave and beyond. Finally, this Book Review considers some of the weaknesses, though minor, of the manuscript and concludes by encouraging females everywhere to fight like girls.

I. ON BECOMING ANGRY AND FIGHTING FEMINISTS

When I look at your life, I see a world of choices that I could not have imagined when I was your age. I think of the rights that you take for granted—rights that would not exist if not for the grit and determination of all those women who resisted oppression. And at the close of the twentieth century, I think about how your rights are being seriously threatened. I wonder whether you fully appreciate how important it is to accept the responsibility of protecting your freedom. I pray that you will never forget that you are the beneficiary of the struggles and sacrifices of others, and that your children in turn will reap the investment you make in their future. —Faye Wattleton, President, Center for the Advancement of Women¹⁶

In her book, Seely covers a broad range of topics, which in themselves could consume thousands and thousands of pages. Yet, she adeptly addresses the place of history, grass roots activism, intergenerational differences, anti-racism, anti-able-ism, anti-heterosexism, political representation, work and family life, sports and education law, body image, globalism, health care, sex education, abortion, domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, and men within the feminist movement's third wave in just 250 pages. Further, she writes in a way that is fairly accessible to women of a variety of ages and education levels.

Seely cleverly begins her book with an Introduction that reminds readers of how far women have come and how much longer they have to go. After detailing statistics about assaults on women within their homes, the low numbers of female Congressional representatives and Fortune 500 board members, and the disparities in pay between men and women, among other things, Seeley asks forthrightly: "Why *aren't* we angry?" (p.9). She encourages women in the third wave to find their voice and speak out to advance the concerns and causes of women today and in the future. For those unconvinced by the need for such action, Seely gives a perhaps eye-opening account of the privileges that her peers currently have because of earlier generations of women who refused to remain silent. In the same vein as Peggy McIntosh's enlightening article "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,"¹⁷ Seely writes her own piece

16. Faye Wattleton, *Gifts of Speech: An Open Letter to My Daughter*, <http://gos.sbc.edu/w/wattleton.html> (last visited April 10, 2007).

17. In her article, McIntosh identifies in a list what she refers to as unearned privileges and assets of whiteness. Some examples that she lists are:

1. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
2. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.

“Women Have the Feminist Movement to Thank If . . .” that includes a list of hard-earned freedoms—such as voting, reading, wearing pants, driving a car, going to college, and owning property—that are routinely taken for granted by younger women (pp. 11-12).

In Chapter One, “Fight Like a Girl,” Seely provides lessons on how to become an effective activist. In so doing, she stresses that “[n]o act is too small” (p. 24), and she provides a detailed list of examples of feminist actions that one could take. Activism, she explains, encompasses mere conversations with friends about stores to protest, organized “girlcotts” (which are “defined as bringing resources into an organization, business, or institution to support their efforts” (p. 18)), and grander schemes such as organizing a march. As Seeley explains, “[a]ctivism is individual, but it is also collective” (p. 15). She then provides a general twelve-step plan for facilitating organized action around women’s issues, starting with the act of defining the problem or concern that needs attention. Fundraising, issuing press releases, and even debriefing after the event each constitute a step in the plan (pp. 20-22). In the end, Seely stresses the importance of widely spreading the message of any activist event to the public, especially through the media since “53 percent [of people] consider the television the most trusted source of information” (p. 23).

In Chapter Two, “Catch a Wave,” Seely emphasizes the need for women to know their own history in the United States. She rightfully contends that understanding the waves of history in the movement can only strengthen the struggle, now and in its future (p. 28).¹⁸ Seely then briefly describes the three different waves of feminism, citing their strengths and weaknesses. The first wave, she writes, focused on women’s suffrage and the abolition of slavery, though she admits that race divisions were strong and women of color were marginalized in this movement. Seely explains that many white feminists in this first wave refused to engage in struggles that they viewed as unrelated to them, such as the anti-lynching campaigns organized by Ida B. Wells (pp. 40-41). As

3. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

4. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.

5. When I am told about our national heritage or about ‘civilization,’ I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

6. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.

Peggy McIntosh, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (1988), available at <http://www.case.edu/president/aaction/UnpackingTheKnapsack.pdf>; see also Cheryl I. Harris, *Whiteness as Property*, 106 HARV. L. REV. 1709, 1729-49 (1993) (explaining property-like qualities of white skin privilege and its value to Whites of all classes).

18. See also Elizabeth M. Schneider, *Feminist Law Making and Historical Consciousness: Bringing the Past into the Future*, 2 VA. J. SOC. POL’Y & L. 1, 6 (1994) (“Hopefully, this generation can both imagine new possibilities and understand the historical tensions; consider the historical context but not be bound by it; work to understand the mistakes of the past and use this understanding to effect positive change.”).

Seely notes, “[w]omen of color have been forced to fight for their place in history and for their inclusion on the movement’s agenda. Tragically, this fight continues today” (p. 41). Likewise, Seely asserts that the first wave lost some of its effectiveness in the United States because American women had very little understanding of women’s status worldwide and of women’s efforts for freedom around the globe. Nevertheless, Seely maintains that this first era of the feminist movement remains a turning point in effecting change in women’s lives because it gave women a vote and thus a voice in American democracy.

Seely then moves on to describe the second wave of feminism, which began in the 1960s and continues today. Second wave feminists worked on a broad range of issues, including pay equity, the right to choose, and sexual harassment. The second wave coined the phrase “the personal is political” and achieved a number of concrete gains for women’s equality, including the enactment of Title IX, the decision in *Roe v. Wade*,¹⁹ and the creation of women’s studies departments in colleges and universities, to name a few (pp. 42-43). But, as in the first wave, second wave feminists were plagued by an agenda that excluded women of color and poor women (p. 66).²⁰ They were further hampered by a losing battle on the Equal Rights Amendment. Thus, while the second wave taught the third wave that they “could do, and be, anything” (p. 45), the second wave did not realize all of its goals, leaving much work for future generations.

In describing the third wave of feminism, Seely begins by stating that it is imperative that this group of women learn from their ancestors’ mistakes, which she claims they are in fact doing. According to Seely, third wavers bring the “appreciation of and the emphasis on the intersection of race, class, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and age” that is critical to overcoming the weaknesses of feminism’s past (p. 47). In the end, Seely calls for greater and improved communication between the second and third waves—for third wave women to join the movement in greater numbers and add their voices and for second wave women to mentor the third wave and incorporate them into the struggle. Finally, she urges greater understanding of the connections between all women globally since “[t]he movement, and feminism, belongs to us all” (p. 54).

In Chapter Three, “A Movement for Everyone,” Seely examines a major weakness of the feminist movement: the “divide among women . . . a disconnect that keeps us from unifying our efforts and achieving our collective goals” (p. 59). Specifically addressing past and present exclusions of voices and experiences of women of color, disabled women, lesbians, bisexual women, and transgendered people, Seely cautions that the third wave’s biggest contribution to the movement must be bridging these gaps among women. On the issue of race, she speaks directly to young white women and cautions them that it is their

19. 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

20. Seely notes that this wave of the movement focused on white women—“fighting for the rights of abortion—while women of color were fighting for their rights to have children” (p. 66).

job, not that of people of color, to “educate [themselves] on racism . . . to raise their consciousness, to reach out and partner with people of color, to consult, include, and take the lead from people of color on the issues of racism . . . and on other issues of social justice, as well” (p. 65). With respect to disability, Seely rightfully proclaims that “[t]he movement must educate itself about living with disability and advocate equal access and respect for all women, not ignor[e] women with disabilities” (p. 74). Seely also notes that, for much of the public, lesbians and bisexual women serve as the face of feminism and indeed are used by the greater society to discourage other women from joining the feminist struggle. However, Seely sees that lesbians, bisexual women, and transgendered people have been marginalized within the movement because much of the second wave movement focused on issues largely affecting heterosexual women. Seely then maintains that the feminist movement must actively embrace and participate in the fight for marriage equality as well as “create a safe space for personal exploration of gender” (pp. 80-81). Thereafter, Seely further urges veteran and newer feminists to forge together to create a powerful intergenerational leadership that builds upon and strengthens itself through the experiences, ideas, thoughts, and actions of women in various age groups. Finally, Seely notes the importance of recognizing men as feminists too, but states that she is “hesitant to take responsibility for a men’s movement.” She asks, “Why should I create or lead a men’s movement? I shouldn’t, any more than I would expect people of color to teach me how to unlearn racism” (p. 82). Seely is happy to work as a partner with men who recognize their duty to address masculinity and feminism, but stresses that men must recognize the importance of this work and initiate it on their own. In the end, she declares: “Our fight is a collective one—for any to be free from oppression, we must *all* be free from oppression. Everyone deserves a seat at the table. We simply need more chairs” (p. 84).

In Chapter Four, “At the Table,” Seely addresses the need for a place at the table for women in politics, work, and sports. First, she stresses the need for political action by women (and male allies) for women. Noting the sacrifices of early feminists, Seely urges women of the third wave to honor their female ancestors and exercise their right to vote. Second, Seely discusses inequalities within the workplace, highlighting the need for “daily practice[s] that support[] integrating work, family, and civic life” (p. 102). Finally, Seely briefly discusses the backlash against Title IX just thirty-five years after its enactment.²¹ She notes the numerous media stories about cuts in men’s programs because of Title IX and the relatively few stories about women’s financial struggles and pressures in sports. (p.110)

In Chapter 5, “Good Enough,” Seely delves deeply into her own life, demonstrating exactly how the “personal is political.” She begins by discussing

21. See generally Deborah Brake, *The Struggle for Sex Equality in Sport and the Theory Behind Title IX*, 34 U. MICH. J. L. REFORM 13 (2001).

her personal struggle with bulimia while she was in the throes of leadership within the feminist movement during college. Having bravely shared her own story, Seely clarifies that “[t]he fact that feminist women have eating disorders is evidence of the strength of a culture that continues to send the message to women that as we are is not good enough” (p. 124). She details how pervasive the pressure for ideal female appearance is with tales of how the pressure to be ultrathin in society has caused women, primarily white women, to abuse diet pills and undergo dangerous plastic surgery. She then explains how all of these practices are connected to the labor abuses of women in sweatshops around the globe, pointing out that “[w]omen throughout the world, in poor and underdeveloped nations, work in substandard and abusive conditions for below-poverty-level wages to provide rich nations affordable fashions” (p. 134). In the end, Seely calls for society to “demand an end to advertising that objectifies women and girls or articles that encourage girls and women to ignore their own needs, dreams, and desires in favor of those of men” (p. 141).

In Chapter Six, “Knock ‘Em Up . . . Knock ‘Em Down,” Seely focuses on the need for women-focused health care and specifically examines issues related to reproductive health. Under a section subtitled, “Take a Good Look,” Seely returns to the basics and bluntly encourages women to grab their mirrors, take a look, and get to know their own vaginas. She explains that a woman-centered health care agenda requires that women recognize their bodily differences from men and appreciate them. She urges sex education beyond “abstinence only” to address unwanted pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, such as AIDS. She then touches upon the controversial subject of abortion. She reviews the history of abortion in the United States; analyzes anti-choice attacks on abortion and their effects on access to legal abortions, including for minors; explores women’s reasons for having abortions; and examines the safety of abortions within the context of hostile anti-choice protests. She warns her generation who grew up with the legality of abortion—and thus may take it for granted—that the fight is not over: *Roe v. Wade* hangs in the balance. She also takes the time to employ what she has learned from past movements to discuss the ways in which different women are affected by reproductive issues. For example, Seely discusses the need to address the ways in which so many women of color have been sterilized as a form of governmental birth control. She also describes how, given that lesbian women have no risk of unwanted pregnancy through consensual sex, the focus on abortion has worked to marginalize them within the feminist movement. Seely ends with a demand for women to take back the debate on issues of health care and reframe them in a way that protects women’s freedoms and choices “from abortion, to birthing, to adoption, to the decision not to have children—without shame or blame” (p. 178).

In Chapter Seven, “Fighting Back,” Seely examines the physical, verbal, and emotional assault on women in the United States. She highlights commonly held perceptions about women as victims to explain why some women do not often “fight back.” Citing statistics about the pervasiveness of violence against

women,²² Seely explores issues of domestic violence, rape, and sexual harassment. First, she delves into issues of intimate partner violence by both opposite and same-sex partners and details the various kinds of abuse that women endure and the general cycles of domestic violence. Thereafter, she analyzes the system of rape and gang rape of women by strangers, acquaintances, and spouses; the ways in which women get blamed for men's behavior in rape; and the effects of such blaming on reports of rape. Finally, she explores sexual harassment in the workplace and schools and insists that everyone be educated about the issue. In the end, Seely declares to male allies, "[t]his fight is not just ours. Men must step up and change the consciousness of other men" (p. 199). In looking at the ways in which women fight back daily and should continue to fight back, Seely defines the phrase that entitles this chapter, noting:

Fighting back is about more than physically fighting our attacker. It is about fighting back against violence on every level—fighting for recognition, fighting so that violence against women will be taken seriously, fighting for legislative provisions that will protect women and punish perpetrators (and not the other way around), fighting that our law enforcement and our courts do not re-victimize women in their pursuit for justice, fighting to hold men accountable—both as those who perpetrate violence and as those who stand by in a culture that allows this violence . . . and fighting to create a social and political no-tolerance policy about violence (p. 208-09).

The final chapter of the book, entitled ". . . Like a Girl," is intended to inspire the reader. Seely begins the chapter with descriptions of organizations that were started by young women across the country to address a wide variety of issues. In so doing, Seely carefully conveys her message that "there is a strong presence of young women" in the feminist movement (p. 220). At the same time, she pays homage to those women—like Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth—who, as she notes, "made a difference (pp. 220-23). Lastly, Seely reiterates her call to action, asserting that we, the women of the third wave, "must believe that we are worth fighting for—because we are" (p. 225).

Seely's book does not end there, but instead concludes with a seven-part appendix of information related to practical feminist action. Appendix A provides a timeline and checklist for action, beginning at six weeks prior to any

22. Seely writes:

Violence against women is real. It is not entertainment. One in three women in her lifetime will experience some form of sexual violence. One in four will experience domestic violence. Fifty to 70 percent of women will experience sexual harassment on the job, and 83 percent of girls will experience sexual harassment in school. Women experience sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, dating violence, domestic abuse, sexual trafficking, and many other heinous acts of violence. Many of us survive. But tragically, many of us do not (p. 187).

scheduled event. Appendix B lists the necessary materials for the “activist kit,” which includes items such as flyers, clipboards, and rubber bands. Appendix C gives detailed instruction on how to write a press release. Guidelines for giving an effective media interview with sound bites that can reach broad segments of the public can be found in Appendix D. This appendix also gives the activist information about her rights before, during, and after the interview. Appendix E lays out tips for how to create and earn effective media attention for one’s cause. Appendix F, the Feminist Shopping Guide, lists a number of socially responsible, feminist businesses and organizations for both the individual shopper and the more organized “girlcotters.” Finally, Appendix G provides a list of places and organizations at which women who want to support other women can donate their time, clothes, cell phones, hair, and blood (pp. 247-50). Similarly, each chapter of the book ends with a list of additional resources on its topic, providing names of books, ideas for action, and websites for more information. The chapter and overall book appendices add a unique flavor to Seely’s manuscript, making it inspirational as well as practical. These features make the book a must-have for “junior” feminists in training and even for senior feminists in action.

Overall, the book made me, and will make any reader, evaluate her current place in the feminist movement and re-consider its future. It raised questions about how to convince other women (for me, especially my students) of the need to continue the struggle for sex equality and about how the feminist movement can be inclusive through both its issues and composition. And for a second, it made me wonder aloud whether we, the third wave, were beginning to lose the fight. Moreover, it made me concerned about the future of the fourth wave.

II. ARE WE LOSING THE FIGHT?: RE-LEARNING HOW TO FIGHT LIKE GIRLS

I’m just a girl
 Take a good look at me
 Just your typical prototype
 Oh. . . I’ve had it up to here!
 Oh. . . am I making myself clear?
 —Gwen Stefani, No Doubt²³

A. So Many Places, So Many Choices?

As I read Seely’s book, I considered her request for general feminist action within the context of my own life. Specifically, I focused on the situation of law, lawyers, women, and work by considering the rumored growth of the “opt-out revolution” among professional women, including female lawyers. This

23. NO DOUBT, *Just a Girl*, on TRAGIC KINGDOM (Interscope Records 1995).

movement is filled with well-educated and high-achieving women who have opted out of the workplace to focus their efforts inside the home as opposed to outside, or both inside and outside, of the home.

In thinking about this issue, I heeded Seely's call for the inclusion of all voices and experiences within the women's movement, though her words alone were not the only reason I took note of this need. (As a black woman at the older end of the third wave, the exclusion of my voice from the feminist movement has been all too real in college, law school, and my work life.) Admittedly, my choice to focus on the opt-out revolution in this Book Review excludes a large number of women from the discussion of the work-related issues raised by Seely in her book. The women at the center of the opt-out revolution are privileged women who actually have a "real choice" to make about working outside the home.²⁴ They are mostly white, college-educated, heterosexual, and middle or upper-class. But, as a working mother in legal academia, I ultimately decided to use this review of Seely's book as a vehicle to begin a discussion with female law students about an issue that is certain to impact their lives—if not within their own homes, then within the homes of their friends and classmates. Indeed, it already has affected my own.

Ten years ago, I graduated from a law school where I had been surrounded by many smart, capable, and passionate women who truly believed that women were equal to men. Despite the ways in which female law students may be devalued in law schools across the nation,²⁵ many of us weathered the storm, exited law school, and entered the legal workforce. Some of us entered into

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24. See Belkin, *supra* note 4 (noting that the revolution consists "mostly of elite, successful women who can afford real choice—who have partners with substantial salaries and health insurance—making it easy to dismiss them as exceptions"); see also Sylvia Ann Hewlett & Carolyn Buck Luce, *Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success*, HARV. BUS. REV., Mar. 2005, at 43, 44-45 ("[O]nly a relatively privileged group of women have the option of not working. Most women cannot quit their careers unless their spouses earn considerable incomes. Fully 32% of the women surveyed cite the fact that their spouses' income 'was sufficient for our family to live on one income' as a reason contributing to their decision to off-ramp."). One other type of woman who chooses to stay at home is the one who, through her salary, cannot cover daycare costs or can barely do so. See Peg Tyre et al., *Smart Moms, Hard Choices*, NEWSWEEK, Mar. 6, 2006, at 55, 55 ("Four years ago, after the birth of her first child [Stacey Parrent] sat down with her husband, an auto mechanic, and crunched the numbers. The best job she could get would pay about \$7 an hour, and that would barely cover day-care expenses and gas for her car. So, Stacey opted to become a stay-at-home mom."). Women of color are likely to fall into this second category, since their husbands are less likely to have sufficiently high incomes to enable opting out. Also, women of color are more likely to earn incomes that equal or are greater than their husbands' salaries. See Dorothy A. Brown, *Race, Class, and Gender Essentialism in Tax Literature: The Joint Return*, 54 WASH. & LEE L. REV. 1469, 1501-04 (1997).
25. See, e.g., Sari Bashi & Maryana Iskander, *Why Legal Education is Failing Women*, 18 YALE J.L. & FEMINISM 389 (2006); Celestial S.D. Cassman & Lisa R. Pruitt, *A Kinder, Gentler Law School? Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Legal Education at King Hall*, 38 U.C. DAVIS L. REV. 1209 (2005); Lisa A. Wilson & David H. Taylor, *Surveying Gender Bias at One Midwestern Law School*, 9 AM. U.J. GENDER SOC. POL'Y & L. 251 (2001); Morrison Torrey et al., *What Every First-Year Female Law Student Should Know*, 7 COLUM. J. GENDER & L. 267 (1998); Lani Guinier et al., *Becoming Gentlemen: Women's Experiences at One Ivy League Law School*, 143 U. PA. L. REV. 1 (1994).

government jobs, judicial clerkships, and consulting positions, but many of us started our work lives in large law firms (which demonstrates the immediate class privileges of women at elite law schools). I imagine that many of my classmates initially viewed their choices within the work arena as endless. But today, a number of my female classmates have chosen a work route different from my own by focusing their energies primarily or entirely on their families within the home. Their work in their families is difficult and tireless and, in many cases, thankless, and I sincerely admire their complete dedication of time to their families. Without a doubt, there is no right choice for all women. The fact that many professional women struggle daily with the question of whether to stay at home with their children is evidence of the difficulty of these decisions.²⁶ However, the choice for many of my classmates and other women in their position was not entirely their own. They married or settled down with doctors, engineers, professors, consultants, or other lawyers; they had babies and more babies; and they became pressured by familial expectations that required women to take on most of the burden of childrearing. They, as Professor Joan Williams would assert, hit the “maternal wall” long before they hit the glass ceiling,²⁷ and life simply became too demanding for a two-career family. As one of my friends once cautioned me, “you cannot have two stars in one family.”²⁸

The decisions of my peers must, to some extent, have some of our feminist foremothers rolling in their graves (or in their offices). After all, they fought hard for what they hoped would be a true choice between full-time work at home and fuller-time work both at home and on the job. However, our foremothers would understand that, given the lack of change in the work world today, the choices that they worked so hard to provide for us are not “real” in any sense of the word.²⁹ What our foremothers may not understand is what appears to be the third wave’s unwillingness to fight these limited choices like girls. Popular movies like “Girlfight”³⁰ and “Million Dollar Baby”³¹ may depict an increasing number

26. See Nicole Buonocore Porter, *Re-Defining Superwoman: An Essay on Overcoming the ‘Maternal Wall’ in the Legal Workplace*, 13 DUKE J. GENDER L. & POL’Y 55, 79 (2006) (noting that “women with children will always be torn between two conflicting roles: ‘mother of the year’ and ‘superstar attorney.’”).

27. Joan C. Williams, *Canaries in the Mine: Work/Family Conflict and the Law*, 70 FORDHAM L. REV. 2221, 2223 (2002); see also Joan C. Williams et al., *Law Firms as Defendants: Family Responsibilities Discrimination in Legal Workplaces*, 34 PEPP. L. REV. 393, 405-407 (2007) (describing lawsuits brought by women who had run into the maternal wall).

28. See also Belkin, *supra* note 4, at 85 (paraphrasing and quoting Shirley Tilghman, the President of Princeton University, as stating the following: “[A]mbitious women seem to be attracted to ambitious men. Then when they have children together, ‘someone has to become less ambitious.’ And right now, it tends to be the woman who makes that choice.”).

29. See Louise Story, *Many Women at Elite Colleges Set Career Path to Motherhood*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 20, 2005, at A5 (quoting Laura Wexler, professor of American studies and women’s and gender studies at Yale University, as saying that “[w]omen have been given full-time working career opportunities and encouragement with no social changes to support it.”).

30. GIRLFIGHT (Green/Renzi Productions 2000).

31. MILLION DOLLAR BABY (Warner Bros. 2004).

of women fighting more and more like boys, if not girls. The reality, however, is different. Arguably, in the workplace, professional women in the third, and even the second, wave are not fighting too much at all. In her *New York Times* article, “The Opt-Out Revolution,” journalist Lisa Belkin notes, “it’s not just that the workplace has failed women. It is also that women are rejecting the workplace.”³² That may be so, but the important question is: are women rejecting the workplace because they freely choose to do so or, rather, because the workplace has, in so many ways, rejected women and their lives? If it is the latter—which I suspect it is for a number of professional women (though certainly not all)—then, as Seely suggests, we must fight these restrictions and rejections like girls. If it is the rejection of us, rather than our rejection of work, that is influencing the employment choices of many highly educated women, then we are not, as Belkin suggests, redefining success or redefining work, but instead merely finding a space within the boundaries of work that is laid out for us, but not by us.

The fact is that many women, including those who are happy working solely in the home and who insist that the choice was solely theirs, often reveal that the decision to leave the workplace was not completely within their own hands, but was instead influenced (at least in part) by the failure of businesses and organizations to make time for the family lives of both women and men.³³ Others expose that they made their decisions because of gendered social expectations and roles. For example, Vicky McElhaney Benedict, who graduated from Princeton University in 1991 and later from Duke University School of Law,³⁴ explained that she left her career as a lawyer “because [she] knew that the long-term career was going to be his [her husband’s].” Likewise, Jeannie Tarkenton, a 1992 graduate of Princeton University, in part chalks her decision up to biology, proclaiming: “I think some of us are swinging to a place where we enjoy, and can admit we enjoy, the stereotypical role of female/mother/caregiver. *I think we were born with those feelings.*”³⁵ Others stress that their decision to stay at home is only temporary—that they will re-enter the workforce at a later date—because their “degree is [their] insurance policy.”³⁶ Yet, as Belkin highlights in her article, there is a serious question regarding whether such degrees are enough insurance.³⁷ As Professors Sylvia Ann Hewett and Carolyn

32. Belkin, *supra* note 4.

33. Of course, some women quit their employment because motherhood is their true calling or because they did not like their jobs. See Belkin, *supra* note 4 (“Among women I know, quitting is driven as much from the job-dissatisfaction side as from the pull-to-motherhood side.”). Again, however, the question is: does the work dissatisfaction come from the failure of employers to successfully allow for the integration of work and family life for employees, or from the work itself?

34. Belkin, *supra* note 4.

35. *Id.* (emphasis added).

36. *Id.*

37. *Id.* (“Because at the moment, it is unclear what women like these will be able to go back to.”).

Luce Buck found in their study published in the *Harvard Business Review*,

Unfortunately, only 74% of the off-ramped women who want to rejoin the ranks of the employed manage to do so. . . And among these, only 40% return to full-time, professional jobs. Many (24%) take part-time jobs, and some (9%) become self-employed. The implication is clear: Off ramps are around every curve in the road, but once a woman has taken one, on-ramps are few and far between and extremely costly.³⁸

My point is not to claim that choosing to work only in the home is the wrong decision or that choosing to work both at home and on the job is the right decision. Rather, my goal is to examine the forces influencing women to make these decisions and to combat these forces if they are at all linked to sexism. Yes, Jeannie Tarkenton is correct that feminism is “a battle fought for ‘the choice,’” but that choice must be real in that it must be free from gender socialization and workplace rejection of women.³⁹

In fact, this trend of surrendering to gender socialization has trickled down to the next wave of young girls. Thus, the gap among the various waves may be widening even further with the coming fourth wave. In September of 2005, journalist Louise Story published an article in the *New York Times* that revealed that first-year and senior-year female students at elite colleges like Yale University had opted into the opt-out revolution before they even began their careers.⁴⁰ More importantly, it showed that these young girls and women had done so fully knowing that “[m]en aren’t really put into that position.”⁴¹ Specifically, Story found that 85 of 138 first-year and senior-year female students in her study, approximately 60 percent of the respondents, “said that when they had children, they planned to cut back on work or stop working entirely.”⁴² Of the remaining 40 percent, only four of them expressed any thought as to their husbands staying at home as primary caretakers. Two of the four indicated that either they or their husbands would stay at home with the children; the other two indicated that they expected their husbands to stay at home with the children as they pursued their careers.⁴³ Moreover, the male peers of these females encouraged their decision to opt out of jobs. Sarah Currie, who

38. Hewlett & Luce, *supra* note 24, at 46.

39. Belkin, *supra* note 4.

40. See Story, *supra* note 29; see also Mary Eberstadt, *Revenge of the Rugrats: A New Generation Weighs in on Divorce*, WEEKLY STANDARD, Oct. 10, 2005, at 20 (arguing that “at least some of these young women have grown up in the very world their progressive foremothers dreamed of—and reject it precisely *because* they know it.”).

41. Story, *supra* note 29.

42. *Id.*

43. *Id.* Amy Allen, Women and Gender Studies Professor at Dartmouth College, asked about the phenomenon, “Why don’t they envision their husbands or partners staying home while they work full time, for example?” Sara del Nido, *Give Motherhood a Chance*, THE DARTMOUTH, Sept. 30, 2005, available at <http://www.thedartmouth.com/article.php?aid=2005093002020>.

at the time was a senior at Harvard University, indicated that many of her male classmates found such decisions to be great and, as one guy even noted, “sexy.”⁴⁴

Peter Salovey, the dean of Yale College, gave a partial and blunt explanation of this trend to surrender to gendered expectations: “[S]o few students seem to be able to think outside the box; so few students seem to be able to imagine a life for themselves that isn’t constructed along traditional gender roles.”⁴⁵ Rather than fighting the status quo, as Seely urges, there is a tendency among the fourth wave to resign themselves to it. The words of Angie Ku, then a first-year at Yale, demonstrated as much. She stated, “I accept things how they are. I don’t mind the status quo. I don’t see why I have to go against it.”⁴⁶

This trend left me wondering, just as Seely had wondered early in her book, “why aren’t we angry, or rather why aren’t they, the fourth wave, angry?” I wondered if we, women and girls, had become too much like frogs in a lukewarm pot of water, as opposed to a boiling one. My colleague and friend Professor Marjorie Florestal explained this phenomenon best during our conversations:

[I]f you put [frogs] in a pot of boiling water, they will jump out. But put them in a pot of warm water and gradually increase the heat, and there they will remain until the boiling water kills them.

The first generation [of feminists] was asked to jump into a pot of boiling water, and they rebelled; the rest of us were given some luxuries and so [we] believe the water is just not warm enough to risk action, even as the heat increases.⁴⁷

As the heat from inequality slowly increases for women in society, one question remains open for those of us in the third wave who understand Seely’s call to us and the fourth wave: Are we losing the fight? Not only the fight in the workplace, but the fight in reaching each other.

B. Opting Out of the Opt-Out Revolution

In her book, Seely provides four suggestions that will enable women to gain a seat at the table of power in the workplace. First, she calls on other women “to identify who is coming up the path” and “then . . . mentor, hire, and advocate for other women so that the glass ceiling is broken permanently” (p. 99). Second, she insists that we as feminists must continue to combat, unlearn, and undo gender socialization since it is “often used to categorize people and

44. Story, *supra* note 29.

45. *Id.*

46. *Id.*

47. E-mail from Professor Marjorie Florestal (Mar. 12, 2007) (on file with author).

determine their abilities” (p. 99). Third, she stresses the need for structural changes within the workplace: “flexible work hours, comprehensive paid family leave, childcare available or compensated, strict sexual harassment policies and prevention, institutionalized mentor programs, and benefits for all family members, including domestic partners” (p. 101). Finally, she emphasizes that cultural attitudes and informal networks within organizations and businesses must change to incorporate “a daily practice that supports integrating work, family, and civic life” (p. 102). Her suggestions are not unreasonable or unrealistic. As Belkin points out, companies like accounting firm Deloitte & Touche have remained successful and profitable while allowing for more flexible work schedules, which arguably has helped the business quintuple (from 97 to 567) its number of female partners and directors within a decade.⁴⁸ Furthermore, these changes within the workplace are about more than just the status of women on the job; they are about everyone’s status in the workplace. Seely’s proposed changes will benefit men as well as women and, in the long term, enable all employees to maintain a better balance between their work and home lives.

But the trend of the opt-out revolution in the second, third, and fourth waves is disturbing in that the increase in the rates of women opting into the opt-out revolution makes it difficult for us to get past suggestions one and two. This trend is why Seely’s book is so important for young women today. If we continue to lose our ranks among young women in the workplace, then there will be no women to hire, mentor, or help in their struggle to combat learned gendered norms. In this sense, Seely’s call for intergenerational coalitions and leadership is critical. Clearly, we as women and girls need to talk to each other more. We need to listen to the passions and concerns of each generation and to work on those issues together to advance the rights of all women. We need to get more girls and women to opt out of the opt-out revolution now in order to have a chance of ensuring that women have a real choice as to whether they want to opt out of the workplace.

CONCLUSION

Overall, while not espousing any new theories of feminism or new strategies for the feminist struggle, Megan Seely’s book, *Fight Like a Girl: How to Become a Fearless Feminist*, serves its very important purposes. For example, the book serves one of its primary purposes of giving beginning female and male feminists a basic lesson for understanding and joining the feminist struggle for equality. It also fulfills its goal of reinvigorating the enthusiasm and zeal of more seasoned feminists, and it even teaches them a few tricks along the way. Specifically, the book’s appendices and resource lists help to push both seasoned and new feminists toward engaging in feminist activism and effecting social change. Likewise, the book’s acknowledgement and examination of issues

48. Belkin, *supra* note 4, at 86.

ranging from racism to abortion to sexual harassment is strong and informative, and its call for action by those in the third wave is both powerful and necessary. Finally, the book's message of both anger and hope is certain to reach a great number of women, men, girls, and boys. Personally, I hope that we, the third wave, learn better to appreciate the sacrifices made and privileges left for us by our foremothers. I also hope we fight matters—such as the sources behind the opt-out revolution—“like girls.” More importantly, we must continue to pass the baton on to the fourth wave because unless we reach out to them they may decide to give up fighting before they even start.

I have very few criticisms of this practical guide to feminist activism, and all of them are fairly minor. My first criticism is that certain segments of a few chapters seem out of place in their home sections. For example, the section on popular culture images of women in Chapter Four seems to fit better in Chapter Five, which concerned images of beauty and appearance; likewise, there seems to be more room for Chapter Four's discussion of religion in Chapter Three, which examines the importance of including every woman within the feminist movement. But such a criticism is minor because each one of the book's chapter subtopics was interconnected in one way or another. In this sense, all of the subtopics within each chapter fit anywhere in the book, and my views here may just reflect my own personal preferences more than problems with the book.

My second critique is based on my hope, as a black woman, for a richer explanation of the racial divides that stifle the feminist movement. I especially desired more of this conversation in light of Seely's repeated urges for the inclusion of all women in the feminist movement and of the movement's dire need to remedy the mistakes of the past. I recognize, however, that Seely's book is more of a general guide than an in-depth intellectual analysis of the intersection of race, class, racism, and classism within the feminist movement. Such an analysis would be more suitable for truly race-conscious women who are willing to take an honest introspective look at their role in the stunted dialogue between women of different races and ethnicities. And the same may apply for the concerns of any other women who may desire further discussion on marriage equality, able-ism, rape, or sexual harassment within the movement. The plain fact is that, in just 250 pages, Seely had an immense amount of ground to cover and, given the desired reach of the book, may not have been able to delve too deeply into any one issue.

My final “criticism” speaks indirectly to one of the purposes of the book, and it is that the book tries too much to convince women who find themselves on the fence between feminism and non-feminism to identify as feminists, and does so in a manner that is somewhat disturbing. From my point of view, Seely tries almost too hard to convince them that not all feminists are fat, ugly, hairy, bra-burning lesbians. After all, “the personal is political.” When feminist leaders try too hard to demonstrate that not all feminists are fat, ugly, hairy, bra-burning lesbians, some women must inevitably ask: “What if I am all those things? Can I too be a feminist?” While Seely's tactics are understandable as a strategic move

to recruit women on the fence into the fight for women's equality, Seely appears to take for granted or be ashamed of (at least to some extent) women who may fit into what can be described as a fat, ugly, hairy, bra-burning lesbian image. On the other hand, a major point of Seely's book is to convince women on the fence to join the feminist struggle. With her powerful and inspiring book, Seely hopes to revive, not just in feminists, but in all women and girls, a passion about achieving sex equality. She wants to be inclusive and bring all women, including those on the fence, into the fold in working toward that goal and to leave them with one simple message: "Girl, fight!" In the end, Seely seems to win this fight with her words and statements. For now, I'm choosing to opt in.