

Our Struggle Is My Struggle: Solidarity Feminism as an Intersectional Reply to Neoliberal and Choice Feminism

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Abstract

The women's movement has long been pluralistic, yet in recent decades has diversified further along lines of individual choice versus collective action. This has been enabled by new opportunities for women that were not universally accessible. As a result, a form of "choice feminism" has developed in some feminists, especially in contexts in which neoliberalism is dominant, while calls for intersectional allyship, inclusion, and solidarity have grown louder in others. Responding to this tension, many scholars, particularly those within the field of social work, have shown that choice feminism is characterized by a number of problematic themes that can, paradoxically, reinforce oppression for marginalized people. Particularly, it can offer a heuristic of choice that is used to justify feminist decisions that benefit a small set of women at the expense of standing in solidarity with others and remediating oppression. This complex problem may benefit from a detailed interrogation of allyship and its attendant repercussions. Consequently, this paper forwards a framework for *solidarity feminism*—that is, an approach to feminism that centers solidarity against oppression—by favoring inclusive values-based allyship over choice feminism as an intersectional means to address one aspect of the enduring universalism problem within the feminist movement.

Keywords: solidarity feminism; choice feminism; neoliberal feminism; solidarity; allyship; intersectionality

In 2005, Linda Hirshman coined the controversial term "choice feminism," which she went on to develop and problematize in her (2006) book, *Get to Work: A Manifesto for Women of the World*. For Hirshman, choice feminism claims that *whatever* a woman freely chooses is (intrinsically) feminist. Choices available to a feminist under choice feminism include, in her words, decisions to "work, stay home, have ten children or one, marry or stay single" (Hirshman, 2005). Obviously, choice feminism spawned considerable controversy. For example, Michaele Ferguson, who is one of its strongest critics, describes it as capturing "the widespread belief in the US that the women's movement has liberated women to make whatever choices they want" (Ferguson, 2010, p. 247) and Claire Snyder-Hall (2010), who is far less critical, describes it as "the idea that feminism should simply give women choices and not pass judgment on what they choose" (p. 255). Choice feminism, which arose in the liberal branch, incorporates quotidian, typically gendered decisions from behavior and dress to profound lifestyle choices. These have been summarized critically by Ferguson (2010), who wrote, "The view that today all choices are feminist can be invoked to support decisions to wear lipstick and high heels, to participate in *Girls Gone Wild!*, to sleep with men, to enjoy pornography, to not have children, to hire a maid, or to adopt a gendered division of labor" (2010, p. 247).

For Ferguson, then, the central problem with choice feminism is that it allows for sidestepping demanding political work of feminism to dismantle gender roles, alongside other forms of oppression, and focus upon one's own pleasure and fulfillment. It does so by considering "feminist" even those activities and

beliefs that work against broader feminist aims. Ferguson is not alone in her criticism. Park et al. (2017) raise concerns that some feminist social work scholars use the term “feminist” for their work without any engagement with feminist theory or scholarship. Bay-Cheng (2012) stressed the need to de-personalize and re-politicize sexuality, particularly among adolescent girls. The current “popular empowerment discourse,” she argues, is not consistent with a genuine empowerment argued for by feminist social work scholars who seek collective social change.

Among critics of choice feminism, Ferguson may be most forceful and Hirschmann (2010), who called it “choosing betrayal,” may be most derisive. Because Ferguson (2010) argued that choice feminism inherently arises from a fear of getting one’s hands dirty with feminist politics, it follows that choice feminism diffuses and weakens feminism as a movement and intrinsically perpetuates inequality by refusing to challenge the status quo (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Put simply, choice feminism maintains the dominant system for the sake of individualistic goals and pleasures and due to fears of offending, being criticized, or otherwise being ostracized by/from a patriarchal society. It declines to render (critical) judgment upon women’s choices even if those ultimately undermine women’s equality. Moreover, choice feminism attempts to simultaneously placate feminists and (patriarchal/oppressive) mainstream society while in the process rendering collective political action all but impossible (Ferguson, 2010).

Ferguson’s critique is significant and largely sound. It is all but impossible to seek equality for women so long as women are not recognized as a class of people who are oppressed for being women. Nevertheless, compelling concerns about universalism have been raised (Marso, 2010). Specifically, how can feminism be universalized to all women, by which is meant *made to work on behalf of all women*, if women have divergent experiences? So, Snyder-Hall (2010, p. 260) argued for the empowering potential of pluralism, self-determination, and non-judgmentalness but acknowledges this ultimately presents an individualistic approach to feminism that fails to recognize women as a class and inhibits collective action to change the structure of society (cf. Snyder, 2008). This indicates that the problem of universalizing feminism is that it has been the wrong approach all along; feminism should seek *inclusion* of all marginalized groups and *solidarity* against oppression—not universality, which has often stood as a *de facto* proxy for privileging the dominant conception of feminism and urging all marginalized “sisters” to “get in line.” Therefore, while Snyder-Hall’s defense of choice feminism at the *individualistic* level is problematic, her advocacy of pluralism becomes a much stronger argument when considered in an *intersectional* light (cf. Edwards, 2006, p. 54).

The importance of an intersectional approach built on plurality, self-determination, and non-judgmentalness becomes clear when remembering that not all women have the same experiences of oppression—there is no universal woman. These experiences vary not only in terms of gender, but also race, religion, sexuality, class, ability, and the ways in which those intersect (Collins, 1990). These indispensable contributions to feminism problematize the simplistic notion of women, privilege, and oppression as monolithic entities. For this reason, intersectional feminism has been misunderstood at times through the application of a lens of “universal womanhood” within materialist and Marxist (see Mitchell, 2013) feminism. It has also been misunderstood more generally by opponents to feminism (cf. Dhamoon, 2010). It has thus sometimes been unfairly seen as divisive rather than unifying (cf. esp. Carbin & Edenheim, 2013; Davis, 2008; McCall, 2005; Nash, 2008). Ultimately, this attitude lies in opposition to the capacity intersectionality has to reach across multiple dimensions of lived oppression. Boucher (2017, p. 25), of note, discusses the importance of an intersectional approach to social work practice while acknowledging the difficulty of doing so within cohesive alliances for women’s issues.

This paper addresses a definitive aspect of this debate: it suggests a step towards reconciliation between choice feminism and the need for collective action on behalf of women by prioritizing the intersec-

tional understanding of the pluralistic nature of women's oppression. It then considers the arguments of Catherine Rottenberg (2014, 2017), who, in documenting the rise of neoliberal feminism, counters views that blame *liberalism* for a selfishly individualistic approach to feminism. Though we do not seek to defend liberalism per se, we agree with Rottenberg (2014, pp. 421–422) that selfishness in choice feminism is a product *not* of liberalism but of unrecognized privilege accorded those who benefit from *neoliberalism*. Though in different ways, liberal feminists such as Ann Cudd (2006), Marilyn Friedman (2003), and Diana Meyers (2004) reinterpreted choice as individualistic and rooted in autonomy, to choice seen as relational. As Friedman wrote, “what counts for autonomy is someone’s perspectival identity, her wants, desires, cares, concerns, values, and commitments” (2003, p. 11). As such, Cudd’s “deformed desire”—in which “the oppressed come to desire that which is oppressive to them...[and] one’s desires turn away from goods and even needs that, absent those conditions, they would want” (2006, p. 181)—is particularly key to a liberal feminist rendering of female/oppressed autonomy as relational. Following Rottenberg (2014, p. 426), these crucial nuances of liberal feminism were “expediently elided,” however, and replaced under neoliberalism and replaced by treating “climbing the power hierarchy...[as] *the* feminist objective” (emphasis original). Drawing on this crucial distinction, we add to and move beyond Rottenberg using the hermeneutic of intersectionality and the concepts of *allyship*, particularly in a values-based commitment to *solidarity* and *anti-oppression*. Finally, by considering allyship models as they have been applied in social work previously, we conclude by offering an eight-point framework toward renewing feminist solidarity.

Neoliberal Feminism

Rottenberg (2014) accurately describes individualistic choice-feminism approaches as *neoliberal feminism*, defined as

a dominant political rationality that moves to and from the management of the state to the inner workings of the subject, normatively constructing and interpellating individuals as entrepreneurial actors. New political subjectivities and social identities subsequently emerge. One of the hallmarks of our neoliberal age...is precisely the casting of every human endeavor and activity in entrepreneurial terms. (pp. 420–421)

In practical terms, neoliberalism translates into less accessibility for many women, for example, poor women who cannot easily afford or access childcare. Ultimately, these and other issues helped lead intersectional analyses to critique liberal feminists for failing to understand the intersectional nature of oppression (Collins, 1990), which then problematized universalizing approaches to feminism as representing relationally privileged interests ahead of marginalized ones (cf. hooks, 2000, 2014). In Rottenberg’s (2014, 2017) view, the essential difference between liberal feminism and neoliberal feminism is that the former critiqued liberalism to make it more inclusive while the latter offers no critique whatsoever against neoliberalism and, instead, settles into and enjoys its putative benefits (2014, p. 419). Specifically, the neoliberal feminist is neoliberal

not only because she disavows the social, cultural and economic forces producing this inequality, but also because she accepts full responsibility for her own well-being and self-care, which is increasingly predicated on crafting a felicitous work–family balance based on a cost-benefit calculus. The neoliberal feminist subject is thus mobilized to convert continued gender inequality from a structural problem into an individual affair. (Rottenberg, 2014, p.

The focus of neoliberal feminism, as Rottenberg (2014) notes, is on achieving happiness by balancing work and family life in a highly individualized, responsabilized, status-quo-preserving “feminism.” It assumes all women have the same access to rewarding and well-remunerated careers that, for example, cover the costs of child-care. Thus, neoliberalism is a matter of class and capitalism and has much in common with Genz’s (2006) postfeminism. Genz (2006) describes postfeminism as “entrepreneurial” and part of a center-left “third way.” This manifests in micro-politics and, she argues, yet again reduces feminism to an individualism deeply embedded in consumerist systems (p. 333).

While some feminists have been more optimistic and sympathetic to pressures on young women by arguing for accommodating neoliberal realities, more have not (McRobbie, 2015). Brooks (1997), for instance, in her in-depth study of postfeminisms, argues that accommodation can have some benefit in breaking away from older feminisms and producing a “non-hegemonic feminism capable of giving voice to local, indigenous and post-colonial feminisms” (p. 4). Critics, such as Rottenberg, Genz, and others, however, share a rich scholarly pedigree, most notably in following Featherstone (1996), who directly linked consumerist feminism with neoliberalism. This vein of research culminated in Banet-Weiser (2015, p. 191), who tracked these developments and argued that a model of empowerment that sees girls as consumers/commodities fails to address socioeconomic systems that disempower women. In this vein, Goodkind (2009) argued that neoliberal feminism is particularly problematic within social work and, with Ballentine, explained that this problematic “version of empowerment has been enabled by what has variously been called choice feminism, postfeminism, or commercialized feminism, that is, a neoliberal cooptation of feminist principles and goals” (Goodkind & Ballentine, 2017, p. 429).

While this buttresses Snyder-Hall’s advocacy, Rottenberg is quick to point out the ways in which the inherent neoliberalism supports a Western-centric imperialist mindset. This mindset, she argues, sees the Western understandings of liberalism, happiness, and achievement as exemplified by the American Dream and achievable to all women rather than only a more privileged subset. Further, neoliberal feminism uses these neoliberal ideals to claim moral superiority over other cultures—which have often been dominated by imperialist/colonialist Western neoliberal approaches to “liberalism”—with different understandings of gender and sexuality” (2014, p. 420). We see this, for example, in western attempts to “liberate” Muslim women who choose to wear the *hijab*. While Snyder-Hall’s (2010) argument for the importance of pluralism, self-determination, and (cultural and sexual) non-judgmentalness is robust, our point of departure is in her arguing for choice feminism and claiming this entails that feminism cannot be collectivist (p. 260). To achieve broad political aims and social reformation, feminism must be a united force on behalf of *all* women. The central question thus remains: How can feminism become inclusive enough to combat a steadfastly patriarchal oppression that affects all women *because they are women* while at the same time recognizing and working for the most vulnerable women—women of color, lesbians, religious minorities, trans women, queer women, disabled women, and above all those women who are several of these simultaneously? For this, we argue, we need to center feminism on the concept of solidarity rooted in *values-based* allyship.

Allyship and Solidarity Feminism

The concept of allyship—in which the rights of marginalized and oppressed groups are supported by people in more privileged positions—is related to but distinct from solidarity and more complex than it appears (Reicher et al., 2006). Both share in common a requirement for recognizing that while individuals can share the same or similar goals, different experiences, thus different priorities, also exist. This necessary turn

to positionality is captured by Kristie Dotson's (2014) development of Plato's Allegory of the Cave as a tool for explaining the epistemic oppression and exclusion suffered by those unfavorably positioned within society. Dotson argues that only by increasing the range of shared epistemic resources—by recognizing that some experiential knowledge is missing—can such oppression be addressed. However, allyship can be both limited and problematic, even reproducing power dynamics when people claim for themselves the title of “ally” and the relational power and privilege that go with it (Edwards, 2006; Mullaly, 2009; Gibson, 2014). That is, the type of allyship taken up by feminists matters.

Among cogent analyses, perhaps most incisive is a taxonomic account by Glenda Russell and Janis Bohan (2016), which mirrors that of Keith Edwards (2006), who has produced what is among the most important essays on the topic. Edwards characterizes allyship in three fundamental stages, that based in self-interest, on guilt, and upon a philosophical commitment to the values of social justice. Russell and Bohan offer a refinement that considers allyship in terms of relationship-based versus values-based allyship, on the one hand, or identity-based versus opinions-based allyship, on the other. These dichotomies have many similarities. Indeed, “values-based” and “opinions-based” notions of allyship seem almost indistinguishable except that values can be argued to “run deeper” (i.e., to carry more affective influence) than opinions. These are, then, a deeper and more superficial approach to Edwards' (2006) commitment-to-justice allyship. They also accord with Viraj Patel (2011), who rejects a white/non-white binary that retains the capacity to perpetuate a racial hierarchy and instead argues for a values-based *inclusive* allyship which is inclusive of all racialized people, including recognizing that white people can be victims of white privilege. “Relationship-based” and “identity-based” allyship are less similar. In the former case, people are motivated toward allyship with a specific identity group by compassion for the suffering of people they know and care about, i.e., through the self-interested (per Edwards) impacts of personal relationships that inform compassion for those afflicted by oppression, say by having a lesbian sister. By contrast, “identity-based” allyship need not entail a personal relationship to mediate compassion, but it nevertheless requires a specific interest in an identity group, which Edwards observes is often connected to (privileged) guilt (cf. Gibson, 2014, pp. 206–207). For example, “straight allies” for the LGBT movement whose allyship is predicated upon interest in promoting the welfare of LGBT people individually and as a group, are identity-based allies.

Allyship, as such, routinely manifests problems in that it intrinsically assumes a power dynamic of a superior ally to oppressed/inferior others (see esp. Gibson, 2014, pp. 205–208). The manifestations of these inherent power dynamics rapidly complicate under intersectional heuristics in terms of ally behaviors and positionalities (Edwards, 2006, p. 54; cf. Mullaly, 2009). There is also the persistent problem in which people, out of self-interest or for better but thoughtless reasons, label themselves “allies” to an oppressed group which does not see them in that light and has not named them as such (Edwards, 2006). This can give the ally, or allow her to assume, an often-undeserved veneer of innocence. Consider how Julie Greenberg (2014) distinguishes solidarity from allyship by reflecting upon how identity-based allyship has led her to defer to the ideas of People of Color because of their identity. This led to what were, for her, predictable failures caused by her own presumptive approach to allyship. It also has significance for social work and related domains of study: Greenberg's presumptive identity-based allyship led her to believe she had set up for failure the very people she intended to help, “In our effort to be anti-racist allies, the white clergy in the group had in many ways set up this African American leader to fail by outwardly endorsing her proposal even though we lacked the enthusiasm necessary to implement it” (Greenberg, 2014, p. 15). In this way, allyship is often tokenizing (Russell and Bohan, 2016). It can also be exploitative by pushing minorities into the unwanted role of spokesperson for an oppressed group for the benefit of more privileged (white) people. Per Gibson, “Having to live every day with minority stress, [minorities] communicate having little to no energy to advocate for other oppressed groups” (2014, p. 207). That is, allyship—especially *being an ally*—is deeply prob-

lematic without a careful consideration, especially of its interactions with inclusion (Gibson, 2014, p. 205). Here, solidarity distinguishes itself from allyship, its limitations (see esp. Edwards, 2006, pp. 52–55), and problematics by being active (cf. Gibson, 2014, p. 203), principled (Reicher et al., 2006), and apositional. Anyone can stand in solidarity with any oppressed other, no matter her relative privilege, and to stand in solidarity *is* an action. Hence, principled values-based allyship should progress, per Edwards (2006), away from self-interest, guilt, and self-designation and toward principled solidarity with all advocates for social justice.

These two ideas—the perpetuation of hierarchy and the failure to effectively help by excessive focus on identity over values—are synthesized in the deep analyses of motivations for allyship done by Edwards (2006) and Russell and Bohan (2016). The latter argue that a relationship- or identity-based allyship frequently results in paternalistic “rescue missions” that treat oppressed groups in tokenistic ways. Previous work on allyship, they claim, has been too individualistic and failed to realize the potential of collective action and solidarity, which an inclusive values-based allyship can produce. As they note, “The virtually exclusive focus on the individual is perhaps ironic when one considers that allies represent a central concept in collective action” (Russell & Bohan, 2016, p. 337). And,

By contrast, allies who approach their activism with a values- or principle-based identity perform such work exactly because they see sexual prejudice as an example of a broad violation of universal principles of justice and rights... allies should be attentive to practices that tokenize, infantilize, or marginalize... [and that] unduly center... those in dominant or privileged societal positions... the differences in perspective that derive from including differing identities in the conversation allow for richer discussion, problem solving, and action. Thus, discussions of positionality should be common. (Russell & Bohan, 2016, 346–350)

It should therefore be clear how an *inclusive values-based* approach to allyship, by foregrounding the right values (like solidarity and anti-oppression), can help to resolve the conflict between disparate forms of feminism without resorting to atomizing solutions like choice feminism, particularly given its invitation to neoliberal corruption (McRobbie, 2015; Rottenberg, 2014, 2017).

The operative value for feminism—as an anti-oppression movement and a philosophy for feminist social work—is overcoming oppression. Thus, the ideal values to foreground within feminism must be fundamentally inclusive and intersectional (Boucher, 2017). Because we all are complicit in relational oppression in one form or another, a turn toward solidarity and acknowledging that we are all complicit in oppression in fluid and multiple ways is needed (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013). This acknowledgement is, in fact, why solidarity works. Thus, a *solidarity feminism* rooted in scholarship on allyship, and the complexly interwoven, relational, shifting, and fluid dynamics of privilege and oppression may provide a needed site for feminist cohesion (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013; McCall, 2005). Particularly, it can facilitate resolution between those forms of feminism that foreground collective action on behalf of women as a class and those which seek pluralism and self-determination while working within an intersectional framework. As Suzanna Walters (2017) writes, “both the charge of fragmentation and lockstep identity party-lines are parodies that miss the theoretical richness of intersectional feminism and its manifestation in complex and successful political coalitions.”

Ultimately, the aims and tasks of complex movements like intersectional feminism are so broad that they only have hope of being achieved through shared values against oppression. This requires solidarity, particularly within the realms of social work, which aims to support the most vulnerable with consistency and efficacy. To achieve this goal in praxis, it becomes necessary for feminists to create a clearer image of those ideas and aspirations conceived under the rubric of equality, particularly as it applies to women of ev-

ery race, sexuality, nationality, ability status, class, and creed. As Rottenberg (2014, p. 419) writes, “What does it mean, many longtime feminists are asking, that a movement once dedicated, however problematically, to women’s liberation is now being framed in extremely individualistic terms, consequently ceasing to raise the specter of social or collective justice?” It is the same fundamental objectives—generating inclusion, recognition, and equality—that millions of women inwardly visualize and unite around, though outwardly as individuals they differ. Solidarity feminism provides a means for this realization.

The Individuating Role of Privilege

Rottenberg (2014, 2017) persuasively argues for an organized solidarity around the most marginalized rather than around the small percentage of successful white women who, as feminists and feminist scholars, have historically dominated the movement. Feminists and scholars must recognize a central fact about all societal reforms: at first they are only advocated by a relative few, though many support the general aims as core to their ambitions. What brings reforms to fruition is a movement that can stand up and “think together,” as Rosalind Gill (2016) phrased it—and thus create change in terms of transformative ideas. There may be no “universal woman” to define a one true feminism, and under intersectional heuristics neither privilege nor oppression can be regarded as totalizing because they are relational and shifting, but standing in solidarity against oppression in all its forms remains one such transformative idea.

The fact, as bell hooks (2000, 2004, 2014) has eloquently articulated, is that obtaining a basic change in conditions is something the majority of women desire, which ultimately discloses a current of discontent under which all women suffer, even if not equally. This discontent is manifest in many ways, and only some of these are reified as feminist and then lauded under neoliberal and choice feminism (Ferguson, 2010); this appears to be the case despite the way in which such disunity “hollows out the potential” for collective feminist reform (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 420). We all have our privilege and our oppression, however. For some women, our discontent is anguish and lack of hope while other women are marred by violence. Some are marginalized, and others have no choice but to deal with their anger and indignation in effected silence. Where one woman can express herself only through her exasperation, others go off individually in impassioned excesses. These multiplicities bear out a single concern: the inner dissatisfaction felt by so many women remains women’s lot under a multivariate matrix of dominance, which individualized neoliberal/choice feminism cannot address.

Of course, feminism was never meant to appeal to the satisfied and contented. It was meant to embrace the marginalized, the oppressed, people excluded from contentedness, and to liberate them. In Rottenberg’s (2014) phrasing, feminism was never meant to be about finding some happy balance, which “neutralizes the radical idea of collective uprising by atomizing the revolutionary agents and transferring the site of activity from the public arena to each individual’s psyche, but also conceptualizes change as an internal, solipsistic and affective matter” (p. 426). Feminism was meant to destabilize deeply rooted systems of dominance, power, and oppression. For Rottenberg, feminism cannot be superficial, then; it must grow deep roots. Individuated neoliberal and choice feminism cannot accomplish these goals. As she notes, neoliberal feminism is “so individuated that it has been completely unmoored from any notion of social inequality and consequently cannot offer any sustained analytic of the structures of male dominance, power, or privilege” (Rottenberg, 2014, pp. 425–426). Of note, for Ferguson the same problem applies to choice feminism: “Choice feminism will continue to have broad appeal to feminists because it gives us an easy way out of the dilemmas of politicizing the personal” (2010, p. 250). That is, neoliberalism and choice feminism remove the imperative to solidarity and mire feminism in superficiality. It is only by more unified action that strikes to the roots of multiplicities of oppression that feminism can have any hope of overcoming

oppression in all its forms.

This is why Patel (2011, p. 86) rightly calls for an “allyship that is inclusive of all people.” It is why even liberal feminists like Friedman (2003, p. 71) call for “collective autonomy” in which autonomy for one recognizes the needs of the other. It is also why for Rottenberg (2014, pp. 433–434), feminism cannot be neoliberal or based in mere choice and thus be “most relevant for ‘high potential’ upwardly mobile women,” though a more inclusive and unified feminism is not an easy goal to achieve. Indeed, it is this challenge that leads Ferguson (2010, p. 250) to argue that for feminism to truly align with its anti-oppressive ambitions, feminists must acknowledge “the difficulty of living a feminist life.” That is, feminism needs to *not* be about making individuated choices but choices that foster inclusive values-based allyship and foreground intersectional values against all forms of oppression and domination—even when this makes the lives of (privileged) feminists more difficult.

Feminism Divided

There is a type of feminist whose views are more broadly attuned to range of oppression and dominance conditions. These feminists approach feminism primarily through inclusive values-based solidarity rooted in intersectional anti-oppression values, and aim to overcome patriarchal and oppressive domination (cf. Ferguson, 2010; hooks, 2004; Rottenberg, 2014, 2017). They reject the belief that their privilege is “just so” and therefore actively refuse the promotion of privileged interests for themselves; meanwhile, with what privilege they have, they work inclusively on behalf of marginalized groups outside their own (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013, esp. p. 245). These are feminists who understand Patel’s (2011) call for inclusive allyship and enact it by being “philosophically committed” to social justice (Edwards, 2006). They see both as integral to a successfully universal feminism without which an anti-oppressive society is both unthinkable and impossible.

The problem, however, is that no fundamental remaking of society—thus no true equality for sex, gender, race, ability, status, sexuality, identity, creed, class, and so on—has any hope of occurring except through the remaking of extant systems of power (cf. Foucault, 2008). The prerequisite for this is not in feminist choice, as some feminists argue (Frieden, 1963; Hirshman, 2005, 2006; Snyder-Hall, 2010), but in solidarity that comes with effective allyship (cf. Carbin & Edenheim, 2013; Reicher et al., 2006; Russell & Bohan, 2016). This is because activism by and for oppressed people has spanned centuries and should have been sufficient to achieve its aims, but oppression lingers because dominant groups have exploited the oppressed’s lack of solidarity and common cause. As hooks poignantly articulates, “Clearly we cannot dismantle a system as long as we engage in collective denial about its impact on our lives” (2004, p. 3).

The solidarity in inclusive allyship is the best means by which anti-oppressive goals can be achieved because activism is nearly worthless when it chooses its fights within itself as much as it does with the systems it seeks to change (cf. Carbin & Edenheim, 2013). That is, feminism has limited its own success—not for a lack of ambition or effort—because it has failed to stand in solidarity against oppression (cf. Greenberg, 2014; hooks, 2000). Centering solidarity in feminism is the imperative for overcoming oppression; as dominant forces in society (or feminists ourselves under neoliberalism and choice feminism) fragment feminism into several discordant factions, feminists will keep trading the chance to generate outward change for contributing to internal disputes (Walters, 2017). Thus, the question of improving (or, at this point, regaining) feminism’s effectiveness as a liberatory movement is, at root, a question of maintaining solidarity with other oppressed groups. This is the case for no other reason than because movements derive their success less from performativity than from a clearly recognizable moral orientation (Reicher et al., 2006). Indeed, for Ferguson, feminism fundamentally requires not overcoming judgmentalness but making the right judgments:

“If we are to take seriously the premise that ‘the personal is political,’ then we have to resist the notion that to critically analyse the politics of the personal is necessarily to be judgmental” (2010, p. 251).

Ultimately, developing a solidarity feminism depends on feminists’ ability to link arms with co-constituted anti-oppression movements (hooks, 2014) (and being led by needs articulated from within oppression, which must be heard on their own terms [cf. Dotson, 2011], rather than by presumptions about those needs [Greenberg, 2014]). This capacity is determined mainly by the visible presence of a fervid will for emancipation from oppressive dynamics. In this, it requires courage and commitment from more privileged feminists to put aside their interests and accept personal sacrifice and adversity from those outside the movement who wish to maintain other forms of privilege and thus oppression (Ferguson, 2010). Such alliances are only formed by people who share an inclusive values-based vision (Edwards, 2006) and who are willing to act (Gibson, 2014). If overcoming oppression represents a question of regaining solidarity through allyship against all systems of dominance, it is equally clear that such a goal cannot be achieved by disparate movements that travel roughly in a similar direction (cf. hooks, 2014). That is, mere intersectional feminism may not be enough unless it is reconstituted as solidarity feminism. As substantive as internal disputes in feminism may be, exacerbated by neoliberalism and choice feminism as they are, and adequate to liberation as any one theoretical approach appears, these engagements have unfortunately provided relatively limited emancipatory power against entrenched systems of domination. Rather than by resolving these disputes, deeply rooted oppression can only be addressed by setting internal conflicts aside and adopting a single feminist identity bound by a single broad-reaching principle, such as solidarity (Reicher et al., 2006).

Eight Steps Toward Renewing Feminist Solidarity

In order to effect a renewed internal solidarity within feminism, we turn our attention to the demands of allyship, so it can create an *intersectional-values-based* solidarity feminism that draws on the words of bell hooks:

It is obvious that many women have appropriated feminism to serve their own ends, especially those white women who have been at the forefront of the movement; but rather than resigning myself to this appropriation I choose to re-appropriate the term “feminism,” to focus on the fact that to be “feminist” in any authentic sense of the term is to want for all people, female and male, liberation from sexist role patterns, domination, and oppression. (hooks, 2014, p. 195)

To this end, eight basic points to outline inclusive allyship feminism follow. These have been derived from our own analyses and experiences and have been refined and prioritized by considerations of Edwards’s (2006) three-phase model of allyship, Mullaly’s (2009) advice about putting allyship into practice, and Gibson’s (2014) development of how the “Ally Model” can be applied in social work pedagogy. Among these, particular attention was given to Edwards’s (2006) indication that allyship tends to proceed from a position of self-interest (as in relationship allyship) through guilt (as occurs in identity-based allyship) to principled philosophical commitment (as in values-based allyship). Gibson’s (2014) clarifications about the roles of awareness, attitudes/beliefs, and actions/skills further informed this prioritization. For her, awareness is necessary but not sufficient and requires conscious decision-making and dialogic reflection in addition to a commitment to (skillful) action. The points below therefore generally follow a framework (both within particular points and overall) of beginning with awareness, influencing attitudes, and encouraging action while integrating a praxis that takes a potential partner in solidarity from self-interested allyship through guilt (as

an opportunity for positive outcomes) to principled commitment to values-based solidarity. Finally, recognizing the problematics (Edwards, 2006, pp. 52–55) and limitations (Gibson, 2014, pp. 205–206) of allyship overall, however, the points below seek to extend this theoretical model by coaxing it toward solidarity in anti-oppression and purposefully end by a reminder that even under these conditions, limiting problematics remain.

First, there is room for a *limited* choice feminism within a feminist movement that recognizes feminism must be organized through allyship and around solidarity against oppression (cf. Reicher et al., 2006). Allyship need not mean renouncing individual focuses (Kirkpatrick, 2010; Snyder-Hall, 2010). Divergent interests are coequal with schisms and are, indeed, the natural consequences of earnestly dealing with broad-scale societal problems. The issue, then, is not with subdividing efforts according to the varying interests of individual feminists. (This is not inherently opposed to a solidarity feminism because such efforts present opportunities for unity under every concern that might affect liberation). That is, there is room for unity within intersectional values and even under (limited) choice within feminism. The key, however, lies in articulating its limitations.

Both theoretically and practically, overcoming oppression and liberating oppressed groups cannot be accomplished by reducing greater privilege—which privileged groups will successfully reject through their greater access to power—but by acting to increase the rewards of “privilege” for those excluded from it. This was the heart of the Civil Rights movement, Gay Pride, and feminism, and here lies the strength of inclusive allyship for solidarity feminism. In turn, however, such a process will almost never be upheld by those benefiting from privilege because privilege preserves itself (Bailey, 2017). This reinforces neoliberal oppressions (Rottenberg, 2014, 2017) and trivializes feminism by the choices of the relationally and momentarily privileged (Ferguson, 2010; Hirschmann, 2010; cf. Snyder-Hall, 2010, p. 255). It can only be effected by oppressed groups fighting for equality and justice in their access to societal opportunities that dominant groups take for granted (hooks, 2004). Ideally this would occur alongside more privileged allies willing to do the work, which requires sacrifices and some renunciation of choice by the relatively privileged for the more deeply oppressed (Ferguson, 2010; Friedman, 2003; Rottenberg, 2014). Those graced by privilege would do well to remember that their advantages were not organized into society by means of some great force that came *ex nihilo* to shape society, but that privilege establishes itself through its own dominance by working from within its own privilege (Dotson, 2011, 2014). That is, privilege once established sustains itself, rendering the myth of meritocracy a pleasant salve for privileged guilt in those who have been positioned into their advantages by structures of power in which they are necessarily complicit (Rottenberg, 2017).

History has shown that members of oppressed groups cannot and will not be raised out of oppression (Dotson, 2011, 2014; Foucault, 2008). They will not be granted privileges in an unjust and unequal society, not least by feeble scenes of fraternization that ultimately define self-interested relationship-based allyship (Edwards, 2006; Russell & Bohan, 2016). As Ferguson (2010, p. 251) instructs, the personal is political—hence feminism cannot fear politics and thus abnegate itself in the name of choice—it requires sacrificial work to raise consciousness about privilege (cf. Gibson, 2014) until every difference, even the most outrageous, is effectively redressed (hooks, 2000, 2014). For feminism to undertake such a goal, it needs to build support from among the relatively oppressed through listening, solidarity, and inclusion and appeal to relatively privileged allies by awakening their compassion until they understand the problem and thus internalize the need for change.

Among the obstacles to inclusive values-based allyship, the most severe is convincing relatively privileged allies to take up, *at their own cost*, causes of oppressed groups. As Friedman points out, “collective action may require some suppression of the individual autonomy of at least some of its participants. Group solidarity can sometimes be antithetical to autonomy” (2013, p. 71). It isn’t in defense of their own right to

liberation but in the dispersed interests and attitudes that are, from within a relatively privileged engagement, incidentally inimical to the greater needs of more or differently oppressed peoples. This is the danger of the purely personal that rests at the heart of choice feminism: if the personal is political, and the personal underestimates the need to overthrow oppression in all its forms, not just one's own, then the selfishness inherent in such a "feminism" renders it in many ways anti-emancipatory and thus self-defeating (Ferguson, 2010). That is, under allyship that can enact a broader solidarity project, many individual feminists will lose sight of various struggles taking place over purely personal matters—as has produced schisms between radical feminists and trans activists and between some LGBT activists and queer theorists. It is this "disjuncture between our political principles and our personal lives that produces dilemmas for feminists" (Ferguson, 2010, p. 249). For Friedman, "It is therefore crucial to consider the ways in which personal autonomy might undermine the collective struggles those groups need to undertake in their fight against oppression" (2013, p. 71).

This is why, for Ferguson (2010, p. 248), "Choice feminism hopes to defuse these criticisms by representing feminism as a nonthreatening, capacious movement that welcomes all supporters—however discordant their views—while demanding only the thinnest of political commitments." As Rottenberg (2014, p. 432) points out in criticizing the feminist "happiness industry," however, this stands to favor those with greater access to privilege in terms of pursuing their own work/life balance at the (often inadvertent) cost of generating, perpetuating, or ignoring oppression. Put more plainly, a movement that sincerely wishes to liberate marginalized groups from oppression and tear them away from existing structures of dominance—which should be feminism—must renounce, even sharply attack, the very idea that privilege is granted from the more privileged to the more oppressed. Because privilege, at best, typically renders one oblivious to the full extent of their privileged status (see Dotson, 2014), such an assertion is not only false, it is a (un)conscious lie (Bailey, 2014; Dotson, 2011).

As certain as any given person "sins" against a movement predicated on allyship when, without considering the ways her actions may aggravate the plight of others, she raises acquisitive demands that serve her own causes narrowly, a choice feminist likewise breaks the affective threads of allyship when she applies influence to her own benefit in a selfish or exploiting way. A conventionally beautiful woman may choose to become a model, actress, or porn star, and she may see it as a feminist act that she can rise to neoliberal success in this way, but at what cost to those whose oppression she ignores? Hence, choice feminists may fall victim to a force like internalized misogyny and thereby betray others for their own gains (Hirschmann, 2010), or turn to (trivial) neoliberal concerns accessible only by the most upwardly mobile and privileged among women (Rottenberg, 2014). Such a choice feminist has no real right, then, to designate herself champion against oppression and spoils her right to claim allyship with an oppressed community (Gibson, 2014). Rather, she mishandles her privilege, fails her allyship, and induces social injustice (Greenberg, 2014). And she does this while provoking future conflicts in such a way that too frequently end in harming the effort to remediate oppression. As Ferguson (2010, p. 250) asks, "This is a vision of a world in which we all get along not because we agree, but because we studiously avoid conflict. What good is a political consciousness if we are afraid to use it?"

Second, then, in creating solidarity for overcoming oppression, sacrifices will be necessary, and, though we must remain aware of the real and material barriers feminists and others may face that limit their potential for activism, no accessible sacrifice *that abnegates neoliberalism* should be considered too great. As Ferguson (2010, p. 251) remarks, "Feminists need to publicly make judgments about personal matters—sex, career decisions, dress and makeup, power in intimate relationships—because reimagining our personal lives is an essential component to a feminist reimagining of the world we share." Whatever compromises are made by neoliberal feminists for the causes of oppressed people, they do not stand in significant propor-

tion against the potential gain of those oppressed, including women, if oppression is considerably remedied. Only myopic selfishness, as often arises in neoliberal and choice-centered contexts, can forward individual autonomy over collective autonomy and thus prevent understanding that genuine liberation requires achieving liberation for all. This cannot occur unless, through right allyship and solidarity, feminism can be solidified internally first.

Put another way, if more feminists had, rather than becoming distracted by seductions of choice, the baubles of neoliberalism, or male approval, implacably guarded the interests of oppressed people—especially those dominated by racism, colonialism, imperialism, ableism, homophobia, classism, and all other manners of oppression that intersect with feminism—and if in matters of remaking society more feminists had avowed only their commitment against all oppressions with equal intensity as they defended their will to female choice, and if with equal firmness they had demanded justice for all those oppressed by systems of power (cf. hooks, 2000), today we would very likely have equality. And how exiguous all concessions to this choice-based pet project or that neoliberal aim—even the greatest among them—would have been as compared against the greater importance of disrupting oppressive systems of dominance. Ultimately, a feminism that hopes to overthrow oppression by remaking society in a way that is free of it, however unrealistic that ideal may be in practice, must apprehend that making sacrifices of choice, individual autonomy, and opportunity are of minor importance so long as they imperil the opportunity for others to be freed from oppression.

Third, a movement seeking cultural reform cannot succeed only by raising awareness, applying scholarship, or convincing privileged people (mostly white men) in power. It must find/create its own cultural and political influence. Power cannot be of the self-perpetuating neoliberal sort that Rottenberg (2014) critiques, but instead must take a form consistent with Ferguson (2010), who draws neither on neoliberalism nor selfish choice but upon intersectionality, thus allyship. Still, a recognition of every marginalized person's right to power is justified. Every movement that might help raise people from oppression has a duty, not merely a right, to take steps through which it can translate its theories into praxis. In this way, choice feminism is deficient in that it is too individuated to secure such means in any one concentrated place (Hirschmann, 2010). Liberation is not liberation if all it achieves is freedom of choice for a small number of privileged women, as choice feminists believe; it must dismantle the systems by which oppression limits the opportunities of others. That is, if feminism is to stand against oppression it cannot only enable the choices of its most privileged advocates (Ferguson, 2010).

Fourth, for feminism to achieve solidarity, it must change culture. To accomplish this, it must change the discourses defining culture. Feminist education must therefore take place indirectly through social uplift—"feminist politics are made, not born" (hooks, 2000, p. 7)—which is best achieved by a philosophical commitment to inclusive values-based allyship and solidarity (cf. Edwards, 2006; Patel, 2011; Russell & Bohan, 2016), particularly in a way that listens (Dotson, 2011; Greenberg, 2014) and acts upon the awareness it has raised (Gibson, 2014). By exclusively pursuing this approach a feeling of liberation can be generated that permits all oppressed people to fully participate in a state of justice.

Fifth, though change may come in stages, feminism cannot limit itself to half-measures in solidarity or be selfish. These manifest under choice feminism (Ferguson, 2010), for example, by placing emphasis upon a so-called objective standpoint (cf. hooks, 2000, p. 8) or through pursuit of aims that appear feminist but actually support neoliberalism (Rottenberg, 2014, 2017). Though what constitutes justice is itself multifarious and pluralistic, only a single-minded alignment with solidarity for effecting the goal of justice will suffice (cf. Hirschmann, 2010; hooks, 2000; Patel, 2011; Russell & Bohan, 2016). That is to say, under neoliberal approaches, society will not be made "feminist" in the true sense (Rottenberg, 2014; *pace* Snyder-Hall, 2010) but only "feministic" with many limitations. This is the state in which we now find ourselves. Neolib-

eral oppression can only be countered by an effective antidote to neoliberalism—which Rottenberg demonstrated that neoliberal “feminism” cannot provide. Only the blinkering of privilege (cf. DiAngelo, 2011; Dotson, 2014) could underestimate the need for solidarity and regard choice feminism as a workable solution (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 428). Most people are neither scholars nor activists—indeed, few even consider themselves feminists (Houvouras & Carter, 2008). As such, they possess little understanding of abstract theoretical knowledge, and this directs their opinions toward the affective, which is where their compassion and frustration lies. In this sense, individuals are receptive to appeals in one direction or the other but never to a “nuanced” halfway point between the two. Allyship is a means by which compassion can be directed toward more oppressed others in stages (Edwards, 2006), whereas, as Rottenberg (2014, p. 428) explains, neoliberalism and choice limit compassion and foster “forgetting” toward groups outside one’s own.

Still, people’s emotional disposition enables their compassion while rendering considerable stability. This can support the status quo, as it does under neoliberalism (Rottenberg, 2014) and choice feminism (Ferguson, 2010), but it also conditions affective solidarity that can be directed through inclusive values-based allyship. This is more difficult to discompose than is its conceptual basis (opinion-based allyship). That is, compassion—the awareness of and concern for the suffering and oppression of others, which is the root of solidarity and inclusive values-based allyship (cf. Greenberg, 2014; Patel, 2011; Reicher et al., 2006)—is less likely to dissolve than mere respect (so also, e.g., as through identity-based allyship [cf. Russell & Bohan, 2016]). Likewise, disgust is more powerful than aversion, and thus the aversion of the political afforded by privilege within neoliberalism and choice feminism can be set aside through a disgust of the mistreatment of those already oppressed (Ferguson, 2010). In short, the willingness to “get one’s hands dirty” in creating change comes less in some abstract notion of “feminism” than from an affective “passionate politics” that (re)makes feminism for everyone (hooks, 2000). Willingness acts as an impetus to the centrality of listening to lived experience in effecting the allyship (Gibson, 2014), and it is a key to unlocking compassion. Detached “objectivity,” which is ultimately a weakness that maintains oppression (Dotson, 2011, 2014), then, is not enough; what is needed is a will for inclusion, compassion, and the power to achieve liberation.

Sixth, feminism requires recognizing that among the most pressing concerns in any society are questions presently relevant about the consequences of particular causes (cf. hooks, 2004). At present, the concern with the broadest causal importance to feminism is the matter of understanding and defying oppression in multiple and intersecting forms (hooks, 2000, 2014). So long as many feminists forward individuated personal choice and fail to recognize the importance of intersecting power dynamics and their intrinsic capacity to oppress, they will also fail to realize that entrenched and self-reinforcing dominance in power and the reciprocal docility in subjugation are the exact qualities inherent to all unjust social dynamics. That is, groups that ignore the role of power in generating oppression, of which theirs is but a single part, or that benefit from it and thus refuse to challenge it (Rottenberg, 2014), have no ultimate hope of liberation from it (cf. Collins, 1990). This is the basis of a call to allyship with deep, affective, solidifying roots; without a clear appreciation of oppression, and hence the problem intrinsic to privilege itself—even within feminism itself—there can be no remediation (cf. Ferguson, 2010; Rottenberg, 2017). It is the question of power that is key to understanding culture, and power comes from coalition, and coalition comes from solidarity through allyship (Walters, 2017).

Seventh, the future of a movement that fights oppression is predicated not on its tolerance, particularly of the intolerable, but upon its intolerance of oppression in all its forms. This is Ferguson’s (2010) point. It is best phrased, however, by hooks in *Ain’t I a Woman?*, where she asks, “how does one overthrow, change, or even challenge a system that you have been taught to admire, to love, to believe in?” (hooks, 2014, p. 121). It is a common but significant error to believe that feminism can be strengthened by merely forming a coalition with some other similar movement (cf. Walters, 2017). It is true that coalitions of this

kind result in an increase in the outer dimensions of feminism, and it follows that superficial assessments will render this as an increase in the capacity to effect change. Historically, however, such a coalition usually leads to internal disagreements and inner weakening that will later render it ineffective—for whatever one can say about the similarities in character of two separate movements, it is, in reality, rarely present. Take, for example, the case of the deep struggles between broader feminism and Black feminism that initiated the need for intersectionality, which arose under insufficiently articulated allyship and porosity instead of solidarity in feminism (Collins, 1990; cf. hooks, 2014). If there were solidarity between the movements then there would not be two movements in coalition but only one movement based upon the values and conditions of that solidarity. This is why the core notion for solidarity feminism should be inclusive allyship based on a legitimate apprehension of the harms of oppression in all of its manifestations (Mohanty, 2003; cf. Reicher et al., 2006).

Put differently, the capacity for feminism to effect change is exclusively guaranteed by its ability to achieve inner solidarity through allyship. This is the character of a feminism which does not merely seek early or momentary successes, as are provided by choice feminism (Ferguson, 2010) and under neoliberalism (Rottenberg, 2014), but of a feminism for which the enduring work against oppression is elicited by absolute intolerance to oppression as the root of long-term growth. Superficial allyship for particular aims can only produce a feminism that owes its strength to compromises, which leaves them like plants germinated in a conservatory that then lack the hardening to withstand adverse weather and thus defy history (cf. hooks, 2014). The apparent advantage feminism obtains by forming coalitions on grounds other than inclusive allyship is often undone as maturing factions begin to turn to their own interests (Rottenberg, 2014, 2017).

Eighth, and finally, on principle, feminism must endeavor to present itself so that feminists do not view the oppression of others as remote, as can happen under choice feminism, but as the object of their own endeavors. Ferguson (2010) captured this notion clearly and articulated it in her imperative to judiciousness of concern and identification between the personal and the political. That is, oppression is not something feminists should avoid; it is the bedrock upon which feminism is grounded. Part of this work demands feminists not fear criticism and outrage that can follow from challenging privileged systems (cf. Bailey, 2014, 2017; Dotson, 2014). Instead, we must look for these signs, heed Ferguson's admonition not to fear the political, and recognize them as forms of privilege-preserving pushback (Bailey, 2017) and fragility (cf. DiAngelo, 2011).

Feminism and Solidarity

Because of the real and material barriers that prevent many from taking such risks, it may go too far to say that any feminist who is not reproached by more privileged detractors, who is not subject to censures for her contributions, may be shortchanging her feminism. Still, for activists, among the best measures for the impact of one's feminism—for the sincerity of allyship, the conviction to the cause against oppression, and the force of solidarity and (good)will behind it—is evoking the privilege-preserving hostility, pushback, and outrage from positions of privilege (Bailey, 2014, 2017; DiAngelo, 2011; Dotson, 2011, 2014). Dominance and oppression seek to retain their status, power, and dominance over those they oppress, as this is the intrinsic function of privilege upon society (Bailey, 2017; cf. Ferguson, 2010).

Of all the seductions of choice feminism, indulgence and flattery of privilege is the most potent lure away from doing the difficult work against oppression. It therefore must be repeatedly pointed out that privilege always seeks to preserve itself (Bailey, 2014, 2017; Dotson, 2014). Privilege, therefore, always pushes back. This is often through (inadvertent) dishonesty of willful or strategic ignorance (Bailey, 2017; Dotson, 2011), so much so that even the occasional truth that comes out against liberation is mainly intended to

cover a greater falsification and thus acts a tool of untruth or epistemic exclusion/oppression (Dotson, 2014). Privilege can therefore lead people to be unwitting masters in deception, especially of themselves, and so we all inadvertently perpetuate privilege. Consequently, every assertion of privilege made against a feminist standing in solidarity against oppression—especially every misrepresentation made against the unmaking of oppression and dominance—can be interpreted a mark of honor upon she who stands in solidarity. This is because privileged fragility will always fight the loss of privilege and dismantling of oppressions, and thus receiving its opprobrium, when it can be done, means one’s solidarity was effective. And every such act of solidarity against privileged domination carries with it the diminution of oppression.

For Ferguson (2010), then, this requires a willingness to enjoy the sacrifices of one’s feminism (cf. Friedman, 2003, p. 71); for Rottenberg (2014) it is an imperative to relinquish the selfishness inherent in a “happiness project,” posing as neoliberal feminism, possible only for the most privileged women. Ferguson asks the requisite hard questions of feminists committed to allyship, ultimately encouraging them to learn to love the emancipatory struggle for what it more deeply represents:

However, if we suspend judgment in the context of our personal relationships, we seem to be failing in courage as feminists—for feminism is precisely about reimagining and reworking the personal... Our political views also exact a demanding standard for ourselves... It can be exhausting to subject our every thought, our every decision to feminist analysis. (Ferguson, 2010, p. 249)

Understandably, though not quite forgivably, this is not widely considered desirable within choice feminism or feminism maintained under neoliberal aims. As noted by Ferguson, “As long as feminism provokes these criticisms, some feminists will be tempted to adopt some kind of a choice feminist orientation in response... Choice feminism will continue to have broad appeal to feminists because it gives us an easy way out of the dilemmas of politicizing the personal” (2010, pp. 249–250). Identical issues exist within neoliberal feminism for the same reason—an abnegation of responsibility against oppression. As explained by Rottenberg (2014, p. 432), neoliberal feminism, like choice feminism, is “No longer concerned with issues, such as the gendered wage gap, sexual harassment, rape or domestic violence, ambitious individual middle-class women themselves become both the problem and the solution in the neoliberal feminist age” (p. 432). Why? Because it doesn’t need to be; hence the demand for allyship as a solidarity capable of producing a genuinely liberatory feminism.

In conclusion, the call for feminism is a call to allyship and internal solidarity to stand against privilege, oppression, and dominance in all its forms. It is for feminism to recognize the moral worth and practical strength of allyship and solidarity, then, and to step away from narrower concerns that manifest under choice feminism and in service to neoliberalism that masquerades as “feminism.” Once an oppressed group earns access to privilege and chooses to enjoy and multiply it rather than continue to fight on behalf of others who are more oppressed, as many women have done after choice feminism took root, it loses the best part of its power. There is a moral potency in standing in solidarity on the side of anti-oppression. It is sold on the veneration of privilege. There is both strength and duty in allying through values of inclusion and anti-oppression with those who suffer distress, disgrace, slavery, and compulsion. Feminism’s charge is to find allyship by looking at oppression wherever it arises. We should hold out our hands to each other, and may those who are too proud, privileged, or ashamed to take them recognize the cost of their choices and reconsider their commitments.

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