National Dialogue on Educating Women for Leadership
March 29, 2007 7-9pm
Ruth Dill Johnson Crockett Building, Rutgers University

"Changing the Face of Leadership: Young Women Leaders Speak Out."

Panelists:
Jennifer Baumgardner, co-author with Amy Richards *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* and *Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism*
Dawn Lundy Martin, co-founder, Third Wave Foundation; co-editor, along with Vivien Labaton, of *The Fire This Time: Young Activists and the New Feminism*
Amy Richards, co-founder Third Wave Foundation, co-author with Jennifer Baumgardner of the influential books *Manifesta* and *Grassroots;*
Debbie Stoller, founding editor, *Bust* magazine.

Panel Moderator:
Mary K. Trigg, Director, Leadership Programs and Research

Welcome by:
Mary S. Hartman, Director, Institute for Women's Leadership

MARY S. HARTMAN: Hello everybody, and welcome to a panel session that is going to be very special. This discussion is a part of our Institute for Women's Leadership National Dialogue Series on Educating Women for Leadership. My name is Mary Hartman; I direct the Institute for Women's Leadership. The Institute is a seven member consortium that is located here at Rutgers University. Most of its units are located in these two buildings, but not all of them. The Institute is devoted to issues of advancing women's leadership in education, research, and politics—in the workplace and in the world. The National Dialogue on Educating Women for Leadership was launched in the year 2000. The series is our effort to encourage an on-going conversation about the development, meaning, and social impact of women's leadership.

This year's panel discussion is entitled "Changing the Face of Leadership: Young Women Leaders Speak Out." Our panelists will explore ideas on young women's leadership, feminism, and on ways to bring a more diversity into leadership. We're delighted to welcome our terrific panelists, Jennifer Baumgardner, Dawn Lundy Martin, Amy Richards, and Debbie Stoller. It's a pleasure to have you.

Previous panels in the National Dialogue Series have discussed methods for educating women for leadership and reasons why we should all care about women's leadership in the first place. We have discussed leadership as a collective endeavor versus an individual mission, the on-going business about the positional leaders on top and the grassroots leaders and organizers—and who counts most. Selected speakers in

the series to date have included global rights and human rights scholar and activist Charlotte Bunch; physician and internationally acclaimed nuclear disarmament activist Helen Caldicott; distinguished scholars including Deborah Gray White, Elizabeth Tidball, Patricia Williams, Ruth Mandel, and Nancy Hewitt—some names that are familiar for some of you students, in particular, as they teach at Rutgers.

Tonight's dialogue will focus on inspiring and supporting young women's leadership, expanding our definitions of leadership, examining how popular culture and the media can empower young people and shape feminism. Like the other panels in our series, this discussion will culminate in a publication, and, in addition, the Institute will combine these into a volume on the challenges and the promises of educating women for leadership. Many thanks to you in our audience for joining us for what I know is going to be an exciting conversation. Gratitude goes to our panelists for agreeing to be part of this education series. Now, I'd like to ask Colleen Reilly to come up and introduce our speakers. Colleen is a first year Master's student in the Women's and Gender Studies Department and graduate assistant at the Institute for Women's Leadership. She's interested in young women, feminism, pop culture, and all sorts of other good things. With our undergraduate program assistant, Emily Schechter, Colleen had a major role in putting tonight's program together, so thank you Colleen.

Now I would like to turn the program over to Mary Trigg who is the Director of Leadership Programs and Research here at the Institute for Women's Leadership and our moderator for tonight's discussion.

MARY K. TRIGG: We are fortunate to have these women here with us tonight. I'm excited and thrilled and looking forward to a really dynamic conversation. This will be an informal, roundtable dialogue; each of our panelists has agreed to speak for five minutes on her ideas about young women's leadership, the feminist movement, ways to change the face of leadership, or other related topics. Then I will pose a few questions to each of our panelists to answer and dialogue around, and depending on our time, I may pose individual questions to each one of them based on their individual work. I promised to save thirty minutes at the end for a question and answer period. I also want to remind you that after the dialogue, each of the panelists has generously agreed to stay for a book signing. Now let's begin with the opening statements.

Opening Statements

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: Thank you for inviting me. I'm thrilled to be here with everyone. I am a feminist, and I have been involved with The Third Wave Foundation for many years, but I am also a poet and a creative writer, so one of the things I have been thinking about lately is how to bring those two worlds together. The way that I think about my poems is inherently feminist, but I've been thinking about the imagination and how popular perceptions of feminism are part of what shapes it. Feminism, I think, as its

primary location—or its primary public location— has a kind of rootedness in the past. If you were going to imagine a feminist activist, what would come to your mind? It would be perhaps women with banners and messages marching and a big group in Washington. What's interesting to me is that there's all this feminist activism going on right now—a lot of work being done by young women all across the country in very innovative ways and this goes largely unrecognized. It doesn't register on our barometers. When we think about feminism, it's still trapped in this particular past. In short, our public imagination at large and our individual imaginations have been shaped by this ever-present past, which indicates that a feminist movement is what we remember, not necessarily that which is. This influences the public perception of what feminism is, and more problematically, I think, this larger-than-life past also contributes to how feminists themselves think about what feminism is.

The reason I started working on this talk is because I was part of a faculty group at the University of Massachusetts where lots of women from different disciplines—such as women's studies, sociology, public policy—were all getting together to talk about integrative ways of thinking about feminism, and teaching about feminism and the women's movement, and ways that take into equal account gender, race, sexual orientation, national identity, physical and mental ability, and all different kinds of identity claims. The students who come to these classes generally have some kind of armor on at first--when thinking about feminism in these ways--because they think that it's solely a movement about gender.

One of the things that Vivien [Labaton] and I tried to do in *The Fire This Time* is talk about where is feminism located now?[1] People always ask, "Where are the young feminists? Where are they now?" One of the things we say is that people are looking in the same old haunts because their imagination, in part, is fueled by this particular past. People might go to the National Organization for Women or the Feminist Majority Foundation and say, "What are young women doing? Where are young feminists?" One of the things we were saying [in the book] is that you have to let go of those imaginative qualities. You have to let go of the preconceived idea about what feminism is and look at the actual work that young people are doing. Then you attempt to describe that work in the same terms that the young people doing the work do, which is extraordinarily multi-faceted. Young people are taking into account gender, race, and class—attempting to do feminist work in these small organizations that we have witnessed and funded at Third Wave.

I think that those will be my opening comments for now, but I'll end with this. I believe that in order for the public imagination to shift when it comes to feminism and any kind of social justice movement, not only must people *do* different kinds of work, but

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[1] Dawn Lundy Martin and Vivien Labaton, eds., *The Fire This Time: Young Activists and the New Feminism (*New York: Anchor Books, 2004).

other folks have to describe that work to the public. I think that this has to do with both the kind of writing that we all do, but also with artistic endeavors to represent that new reality in many different ways.

DEBBIE STOLLER: I know we are here to speak about women's leadership, but I feel like I am only an accidental leader, and I am certainly not young. I buy my clothes at Forever 21, but I'm not forever twenty-one. I was thinking that I don't really think that much about leadership. I'm certain that you at this Institute have done a lot more thinking about it than I have, so I was really trying to figure out how I could make comments to address this issue since it's not where my head is. But I used to think about women's leadership a lot—and don't take this as an insult—but when I was twelve. And the reason I thought about it a lot when I was twelve was because—like I said, I'm old—the second wave of feminism was just coming up then. The whole world was changing in front of my eyes, and I was old enough and sentient enough as a human being to understand what was going on. People were talking and fighting a lot about women's roles, women's rights in the workplace, and the right to be leaders; and all of these issues were incredibly important. I just took in everything without questioning it because I was twelve, and the women at the time were saying, "We can't go on calling women 'girls.' That's insulting. A woman that works at the office for you, you have to call her a 'woman.'" So, I would do things like ask my mom if I could have some women from school come over. And she said that that was fine.

When I was fourteen—it must have been close to an election year of some sort—I had this awesome feminist teacher in high school, and she had us read this essay that was really influential to me, and changed my whole way of thinking. This is one of the reasons I have not thought about leadership quite as much after this. It was a humor essay by Gloria Steinem, and this plays into the leadership thing as you'll see. It was called "If Men Could Menstruate."[2] Now, when I was fourteen, people were talking about possibly having a woman run for president. One of the things that always came up with older folks—my generation and older will remember this, the younger folks are going to be like, "what?!"— was the worry that women menstruate every month and some of them have pretty severe PMS. "What if we have a woman in the White House who is PMSing really badly one day and just decided to go to war with Russia?" I am serious. This came up as a reason why women should not become president. I was like, "that's kind of true. That could happen if she did have PMS, and that would be pretty bad." But then Gloria Steinem's essay said if men could menstruate, they would use that against women. They would say, "if you can't stand the sight of blood once a month, how can you lead a country to war?" Or they would make menstruation really macho like they would have Muhammad Ali rope-a-dope tampons. It was a funny essay, and I was young; but it

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[2] Gloria Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate," in *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions (*New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1983).

really made me understand how sexism operates in our culture, and it's a thing I thought about for the next thirty years.

To me—and there's a lot of opinions, even represented at this table—people hold to different theories about this. Some believe that sexism is based in an economic system. Some base it in different types of political systems; but for me, I always end up coming to the conclusion that sexism is supported by our culture's values and that one of the things that really most supports and distributes cultural values in America in particular, is pop culture. For me the way we think about the possibilities as women—the way we think about ourselves—and the way that we look at our culture is completely distributed and shaped though the media, and that's why I've chosen to spend so much time trying to create different types of media that present different representations of women. When you look at the whole history of cultural beliefs about women and men and its potentials and limitations, there are always these very restricted ideas about women that seem to hold, even with all sorts of other changes. I feel like feminists are playing a constant game of whack-a-mole where women in the seventies managed to make certain advances and then sexism popped up in a different place and a different point—it's like a shape shifter. You hit it down over there, and it just pops up in a different place.

These cultural values are entrenched and really hard to change, and so for me—don't throw things when I say this— just bear with me. The most important leaders of the last century are people like Madonna, Martha Stewart, Courtney Love and Oprah Winfrey who have managed to break open new spaces in the culture with new images of women, creating different values around different things. Martha Stewart created a different kind of value around domesticity; Madonna opened a little space for a different kind of idea about women's sexuality; Courtney Love created a different kind of idea about women's anger and girlhood. Oprah Winfrey gives us a different kind of idea about housewives, older women, and images of race as a force across the culture. For me people who are able to pull the culture along in a little way— because that's where my head is— are important leaders, although they are not necessarily who you think of when you think of leaders.

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: I totally agree with that list of leaders, and I think about those women a lot—less of Courtney Love lately, but I'm sure that's just era-specific. But I think about Oprah all the time in terms of how much she magnifies the culture toward certain issues and how much people love her and how important that is as a leader. There are those singular people that Debbie mentioned and honored. I define leadership, though, beyond those very singular people. In fact, I'm really interested in a simple definition of leadership, which for me is taking initiative. If I look at leadership in my own life, it would be boiled down to taking the initiative, and I think I came to that based on my childhood. I was raised in Fargo, North Dakota, and I was really starved for glamour—Fargo is not that glamorous, contrary to what you might have heard. I was sort

of bummed that we lived there, and it was cold, and I wanted to be an actor. I think that's why I was so concerned with glamour. I was always trying to audition for things, and when you're in an acting role, particularly as a child (I think it's part of the theory of being a performer) you never squander an opportunity to perform. It is an honor to be allowed to perform, and it is a very specific thing that goes on when you perform, even if it's just—and this was often the case for me—at a nursing home for three people who are asleep. You never would say no. Nothing is beneath you. It's an honor and you don't know what's going to come out of it. You take that initiative. You don't over think it.

I think when I got to *Ms.* magazine—that was my first job out of college and right when I was beginning to think that maybe I didn't want to be an actor. I got into New York and was finally in the glamorous world of *Ms.* magazine, but I was starting to think about feminism. It had really come into my life and turned me on the way that auditioning for *Charlie's Angels '88* had once turned me on, and I took a lot of initiative. Initially I was an intern and then an assistant, and I was the one who had to answer the phone. I would pick up the phone and it would be the U.N. and they would say, "We want someone to come address this consortium of international feminist journalists." I would say, "Ok, I'll come." I wouldn't even bring it to other people, but I would take initiative—maybe I was a little inappropriate with my phone power, but I took initiative, and I went, and I felt empowered to have this experience. I certainly made mistakes, and I certainly went up there and fumbled, and learned things through this process. There were also things I did that other women I worked with who were busy didn't want to take the initiative on, and didn't maybe see as an honor. I do think that one thing that made me different from some of the other people on staff wasn't that I was more talented or had more natural leadership abilities but was this interest in taking initiative.

When Amy and I became friends this really went into turbo power. If there was a problem—if someone said there was something intractable going on— I considered it a personal challenge to figure out at least one step in the solution. To figure out just one thing that one could do. I do think that's the most powerful form of leadership, and it's something we all have access to. We all have different levels of privilege. Being able to take an inventory of what our powers are and then taking initiative on things that we believe in is something that's available to all of us.

As Dawn was saying, we do think of feminism as being in the past and really grand— the Madonnas of the women's movement. These grand women who symbolized the leadership at that time. And "Oh, we don't have anyone, we're so lame." A lot of those women have died recently. Bella [Abzug] died a while ago, but Betty Friedan, Rosa Parks, June Jordan, and Wendy Wasserstein have recently passed. There's just been an era of women who've passed away who were really, really inspiring leaders. When this happens—when another woman dies, Amy and I often get called by journalists and they'll say, "These incredible women died and they were so important. Who's coming up? Who in your generation is coming up?" It's always funny because they're calling us,

but they are basically saying, "It's clearly not you, but could you name some people?" But we like it that they make that assumption because it's *not* us. We'll say look at Alice Rossi and *The Feminist Papers*[3], and we'll say that the public heroines of one generation are the private citizens of the next. We all have the opportunity to be the Rosa Parks and the Betty Friedans of our own world and our own lives, and that's what Amy and I are always seeing when we travel to different college campuses. There are a lot of really exciting movements—and I don't know how we could quantify this—but I think taken as a whole, today's movement is more robust than that spike in the late sixties and early seventies was. It's involving more people. To me that's very exciting, seeing these individual women's movements.

AMY RICHARDS: The advantage of going last is that you get to build on what preceded you—metaphorically this evening, but in the women's movement as well. When people are looking for feminism they go to these very, I think, dated places. They go to NOW; they go to *Ms*. magazine. They go to how many people are graduating from women's studies programs every year, and say, "There were only seven! That's not a movement." I think they also go to very obvious and very dated places when they are looking for leadership. People will often ask Jennifer and me, "Where is young women's leadership?" They aren't running for office. They're not dying to work at IBM and climb to be the CEO. We should always be encouraging traditional leadership because I think power can bring you a lot in your own life and it can eventually bring a lot back to your communities, but I'm very sympathetic to young women, in particular, not wanting to assume power or leadership in the same way. I think that is the great benefit of our generation. We're redefining what it means to be a leader; and I'm also slightly frustrated about when we have this conversation in a feminist context because people will say, "What has feminism done?" Then we go to these obvious places like how many university presidents, how many corporate CEOs, how many female astronauts? When we go to these places, that's why we end up assuming it's a middle class women's movement because who has an easier time accessing those places than white, middle class, straight women? I'm also resistant to being dependent on that definition of leadership because I think it's going to be harder for certain people to get there. It's going to take some people longer to get there than other people, for instance, those who don't have a great, wonderful education.

I also know in my own life that leadership is so much broader than that, and I think that when I look back on my own life, from a young age, I was kind of singled out as being a leader. I took gymnastics from a young age and was the captain. When I was in second grade and somebody would say, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I'd say, "I'm going to be the first woman president of the United States." I'm sure everyone in this room said the same exact thing. Then I got to high school and was holding a lot of traditional public offices, and I realized that I didn't like being in those

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[3] Alice Rossi, ed., *The Feminist Papers: From Adams to deBeauvoir (*University Press of England, 1988).

typical leadership positions because what came along with them was that it took me away from the things I cared about. When I was the captain of the team, I couldn't just go hang out with everyone after the game. You had to sit there and make sure all the balls were in the bag, and you had to count uniforms. You had to do all these monotonous things, and so I think that it's also my own personal journey of realizing how much more satisfaction I've gotten from other types of leadership. I am asked a lot about women and leadership and, it's funny, because I think only in a setting where it's more second wave, would this panel be considered young. It's funny for me to be speaking to a room full of people that are coming up on being almost half our age and for me to be considered young. I just want to acknowledge that awkwardness, also because with age I actually can see myself getting more comfortable in a more traditional or conventional place.

I think what led me to a place of leadership was the chutzpah that I had when I was twenty and twenty-one when we were creating the Third Wave Foundation and what went before that, the Third Wave Direct Action. I had so much more energy and imagination, and the guts to pick up the phone and say, "Hi, I'm Amy. I know you have an indoor swimming pool, can you give money to this group that I feel really passionately about? Thank you." That would be my pitch. Or I'd sit next to somebody on an airplane where I would literally say things like, "So, you're flying first class for business, I assume. That must mean you have a really good job. Can I send you some material about Third Wave Foundation?" It was just as Jennifer said—it was this taking of initiative. I used to think what young women were contributing was their age, but I actually think what young women contribute in the form of leadership is not yet being so constricted in their language, and so constricted in their behavior. You're not yet speaking the language, the "movement speak," and so you're freer to go into a room and imagine more. I think that what goes along with being younger really is a sense of immortality. I think that that carries over into your leadership.

People ask me all the time about younger women and I will say, "It's not for the younger women that you want them on the board, it's not even for you to look like you're a more inclusive organization. It really is for the organization." If you're an organization that is in some way speaking to young people, you need to have those voices in the room because they are going to give you a perspective that is so much fresher than what *has* been in the room. It is so much more unscripted. The more important thing I focus on when people ask me about young women and leadership, is trying to show leadership rather than trying to explain leadership. As much as I'm very proud of my accomplishments, I'm simultaneously very intimidated. I'm excited about the things I've done, but I feel like what enabled me to be a leader is not the conclusions, but all the work I put into all of those things.

I look back at my co-panelists and I think of creating the Third Wave Foundation with Dawn. She's a leader in my mind because she's an amazing poet and has been committed to her poetry but also because she would be up at three in the morning when

we needed to re-enter names into the database or when we needed to create a flier for the Third Wave. I'd call her and say, "You know how to make fliers. Can you do that? We need it right now." And Dawn would stay up all night doing that, and that's eventually what got Third Wave to being at a more secure place. Debbie is somebody that I don't always agree with, but what is amazing about her is that she persevered from the time when *Bust* was a cut and stapled zine. If you're in this movement, you don't want to bow down from your ideas. I think that we get mad at Hillary Clinton or Bill Clinton because they waffle. It's like, "No, a leader is somebody who is not going to waver in the face of public opinion that is saying otherwise." Jennifer has a number of accomplishments on her resume that are textbook leadership. From spending so much time with her, it's her humility that I feel really speaks to people, and that's reflected in her work but also really in her person. Looking at these qualities I think—I hope—exposes what it means to be a young woman and a leader—a leader of any age.

Women's Leadership: What does it Mean?

MARY TRIGG: I'm going to keep us on the topic of leadership and push you a little bit further. Why does it matter that we have women in leadership? Why do we have a place like the Institute for Women's Leadership? Do you believe that women make different kinds of leaders than men? Why is it that women are not in more recognized positions of leadership in the public sphere? We know if we look at percentages—it's about 17% of those positions we traditionally consider to be leadership that are filled by women. How do we redefine the parameters of leadership?

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: I think that it's hard for me to say whether or not a woman innately makes a better leader than a man. Because when we say that, we're saying something about the way women are or the way that men are which is the exact thing we're fighting against. We do, however, describe societies where women participate more in the democratic process as more politically progressive. There is something, I think, at least about the way women are socialized that makes it so that when we participate in democracy, those societies are more equal (especially when we're in leadership positions). It's different from the way men participate, but I don't think it's innate.

DEBBIE STOLLER: I was thinking, why have a women's institute for leadership? I was thinking how weird it would be to walk into a building that had a big plaque—and I'm sure you've thought of this—that said "Men's Institute for Leadership." And I thought pretty obvious things like, you don't really need that because it would just be the world. The world is the men's institute for leadership. I suppose women need some extra hats to stand on to help them get up and learn new skills. I'm also certainly not an essentialist. I don't believe that women make different kinds of leaders. A culture that would appreciate a different kind of leadership model would make different kinds of leaders out of both men and women. We have certain ideas about leadership in our

culture, and that's probably the type of leadership that women who want to be leaders aspire to. I think you can see that both women and men have the capacity to be leaders of all kinds. I was just sitting here thinking about how reality shows are kind of like a social psychologist's wet dream. We can all look at a show like *Survivor* or *America's Next Top Model,* and see some people are good at being leaders and other people are better at being followers. I want to see a culture where people can rise in their leadership abilities and not have it tied to what they have between their legs. Not everybody's cut out for it.

I was thinking about this men's leadership institute is just the world, and this is why my approach with *Bust* was never to make a feminist counter culture magazine that would be the *opposite* of the culture that we have, because that menstruation article really affected me a lot. It was not like, "Well, most women's magazines show these very limited, crappy images of women, so we're going to show only positive role models—women who are leading and doing all of these wonderful things," because that's not what I thought women were lacking. What we were lacking was the same kind of variety that men have, a world in which women were front and center and the men were more on the sides. Women in all their variety was the most important thing. I think in our pop culture, men are at the center in all of their variety; women play the roles of girlfriends and mothers, and not much else. People might ask whether someone like Courtney Love would make a positive role model, but they never ask whether Jack Black makes a positive role model for men. I mean, who cares? There are so many different types of male images in the media. All we've tried to do with *Bust* is create a variety, and I think if we can find a culture that envisions a greater variety of roles and personality types and positions in society (as we do for men), then that's another way to open up the capacity for more women to be leaders. Role models can be, in a certain way, as oppressive as supermodels—just another thing you have to live up to.

I remember talking about this panel on the phone and I flippantly asked, "Do these women who are twenty have to be leaders? Can't they just screw around for a little while, hang out, and party?" We know that women have leadership capacity. Anyone who's been in high school and had to deal with popular girls knows that women can lead like it's nobody's business. I think we have a culture that ends up being less accepting of female leaders, but for me the goal is to create more variety. The more we allow women to be jerks and leaders in the culture to the same degree—I think it's not just about promoting women as leaders. It's also promoting women as jerks, believing that women run the gamut of personality types and abilities as much as we know that and believe it about men.

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: Picking up on what Debbie was just saying— which I think is really true about what a feminist goal should be right now— is this idea that women get to be full, complicated human beings the way men get to be that. The only reason why I'm really interested in women taking on leadership positions in the classic sense is because when you say 17 percent, you're talking about Congress and elected

officials in leadership positions. The only reason I would like to push for that leadership in some way is because I don't want there to be any spaces that women are excluded from. It's not because I think we need to have this 50/50 situation, but if there's still a sense that women are not part of leadership, then I think it needs to be opened up in the same way that women's roles and spaces from which men have traditionally been excluded should be opened up to men. That's something Debbie talks about a lot, too, in *Bust.* It's definitely a philosophy that I think we all agree on.

I want to give some good news—or demonstrate that the glass is half full, if that's the positive term. There are way more women in leadership positions than there ever were before—just the example that's popping into my head, the Right to Life Movement has transformed in the last fifteen years into a much more woman-oriented movement, and it's affected the philosophies of the movement. It's much more woman-centered. It used to be these men who were in charge and they screamed in front of the clinics and they had the bloody fetus pictures. It's now much more women, some of whom have had abortion experiences talking and trying to provide as sisters, in a way, to other women who are seeking abortions. I'm not saying it's 100 percent positive, necessarily, in the way it's being practiced, but it's women-centered leadership. In the pro-choice movement, I think it's been women-dominated for a while in a lot of ways. If you look at the current peace movement, for instance, Code Pink, women head these groups. Thirty years ago, the women's movement was born because women worked in these movements like the peace movement and the civil rights movement but were totally treated like shit, and I don't think we're seeing that right now. I think we're seeing women who are in power. They feel totally entitled to those leadership positions, and I don't think it's necessarily a challenge so much for women the way it once was.

AMY RICHARDS: I think one of the reasons that women aren't in more places of conventional leadership is because they don't want to be in those places. I look at somebody like Hillary Clinton, and I'm so admiring of her, but I actually don't want to be that. I don't want to be criticized for how fat my ankles are, and I don't want to have so much expected of me as a woman—being expected to hold up not only the entire female half of the country, but being expected to account for the entire Latino community and everybody who's disabled and everybody who is an immigrant in this country. There's a lot of pressure when you're in those positions. When you look at people less powerful than Hillary Clinton—when you look at women in management positions in the workplace and they opt out, they're often opting out because they don't like their jobs. They're really making choices, and I think there is somehow this assumption that it's all because parenting won out, but it's actually because they were not satisfied in their jobs. Being able to make that choice that you're not going to, as Jennifer always says, choose to suffer, I think, in many ways is a strength for this generation.

Another reason that women don't want to proceed in the same way that most leaders do is that they recognize how important their out of work life is, so when you

interview women in management positions they often say, "Could you not raise me up one more rung on the ladder but can you give me more vacation time? I'd like a little bit more money, but I'd love Fridays off." They ask for things in exchange. Like everybody else on the panel, I don't think that there's a woman's way of looking at things and a man's way of looking at things, but I think in general women recognize that there's a lot more in their jobs besides money. I think that they're willing to make some trade offs in exchange for that. These are senior management women. I think that's what we're talking about when we're talking about conventional places of leadership. I think one part of what does not get explored is that it's actually a woman's choice not to be pursuing conventional leadership. It's not because the places won't allow them.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: Can I just add one more thing? I think there's something interesting that happens when we talk about gender. We're debating that there are good things and bad things about having a woman leader, and different ways in which women lead. When Amy and I were starting the Third Wave Foundation, one of the things we did was--we were not essentialists--but we made sure that our board of directors would always be diverse. We always wanted to have the voices of people of different races, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, sexes on the board. We mandated that. We put that in the by-laws, and I think there's something really important about having women's voices —and all kinds of different voices—be a part of who gets to make the decisions. I'm talking about leadership in the very traditional sense—who gets to decide what laws are made. I think those voices do need to be very diverse. It makes a better country and it makes a better world.

DEBBIE STOLLER: I've been doing a lot of thinking about Paris Hilton and Britney Spears lately. I'm trying to understand their position in the culture because I think that they are really interesting, and I'm not going to go off on too long of a riff about them. They are definitely leaders, right? Paris Hilton is some kind of a leader. After a long period of hating this kind of image of women, I've revised my thinking. I think now that they are interesting pop culture figures in that they represent girls who party and have a lot of sex and don't apologize for it, and I think in a certain way, it's one of those jokey images, but I think we should have as much access to that as men always have. These girls that are going out, they're not any different than the brat pack or the rat pack or any of those other male party groups. Young girls—younger even than you guys [audience members]—apparently really like them. I think the reason they like them is because they see girls having fun, and that's something that you just don't see very often in the culture.

At the same time that they are getting all this pop culture attention, we have Hillary Clinton getting a lot of pop culture attention, and I like to see those two ends of the spectrum that are so opposed. I think it's interesting, having both of those images of womanhood in the pop culture, and it is a great thing for young girls to be seeing. Not just Hillary—"oh, I can grow up to be president." There's this greater variety of images of women that is coming out. Even though I was saying there are a lot of men and

women that are born with leadership skills and not everybody has to be a leader, gender shouldn't keep you out. Of course, the other person that's in the media a lot, our president, is an example of a case where not having very good leadership skills but being of the right class, gender, and race, can get you into a leadership position.

Public and Private: Work and Life

MARY TRIGG: Amy and Debbie both talked about private life, and I wonder if you could each reflect on how young women and men in the U.S. in 2007 are imagining their future lives to be in terms of work, parenthood, love, and partnering. Can we talk about the private and how it bumps up against the public because this is very relevant to leadership?

AMY RICHARDS: Somebody called me the other day. She was being approached by NBC to do a special on the modern woman, and she wanted to know who I thought the modern woman was. I sat there for a minute and thought, "Who is it?" She was fearful that it was a trap—that it had to be a conventional person. I said, "I actually think modern women in some ways are in conventional roles, but I think they're redefining themselves within those roles." What I hear a lot of college students say, and please challenge me if this is not what you see to be true, is that they do want it all. They want a little bit of everything, and I think they're more understanding that life is a compromise. They do want jobs; they want respect. They want an income. Many women I hear who are in upper income families—people will say to them, "but why do you work? Your husband's a doctor." She replies, "Because I want to have a say over the household too." It's true money still buys a lot of decision-making power, and that goes on as much in the world as it does in decisions that we make in our homes. Women want to make sure that they always make some money so their husband or partner can't say, "Well, that's not your decision because I'm the one making the money." I see people wanting money, wanting a job, wanting an identity beyond being a woman. I think a lot more men are recognizing the responsibilities of family and wanting to be connected to that. Many people want children or want family, but I think how that's defined is not rigid at all.

It's funny because when most people read the statistic that the number of children born out of wedlock is at an all-time high—Jennifer and I both had kids out of wedlock. My mother had a child *in* wedlock but was more or less a single mother. That's who they're thinking of—my mother, the woman on welfare who had to leave a husband because he was crazy. But today it's different. We *chose* this. Young women—and young men— are very much wanting everything: they're wanting to stay connected to the issues that they care about and they don't see that as mutually exclusive of their jobs.

Jennifer and I talk all the time about how people express feminism today by taking their feminism with them wherever they go, not solely to feminist places. They know they need to get the job at Johnson & Johnson because that will help them pay back

their tuition, but they say, "Well, while I'm at Johnson & Johnson, I'm going to get them to develop this product; and I'm going to give all the proceeds to the New Jersey Women's Foundation because I think that's really cool." It is that complex mix of things.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: I think there's something interesting about being a young person or a person relatively young at this particular historical moment. We were talking in the car about marriage, and my girlfriend and I—even though I'm one of those people who has been really against marriage forever and ever—

AMY RICHARDS: And kids.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: I hated marriage and kids.

DEBBIE STOLLER: She's a feminist!

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: But my girlfriend and I—we live in Massachusetts for one more day—we decided a few months ago that we would get married. We made this decision that's both a legal and personal decision. Then when I was hired at the University of Pittsburgh one of the things we realized was, if we got married in Massachusetts, then we wouldn't have rights as a married couple once we moved to Pittsburgh. We could get rights as a couple—a same sex couple or domestic partners—when we moved to Pittsburgh, but if we got married we would not have those rights. I think, wanting to have it all is related to these issues of—so, then what do we do? We decided we were just going to have a commitment ceremony, or marriage ceremony. It won't really be legally binding. At the same time, the other thing that I've been thinking about is—when we decided to get married, it became a normalization of a particular kind of public declaration of our love. When people think of marriage, they think of it in a certain way. One of the things that we let go of in that moment of deciding to get married was the creativity to do something cool and different. The regulations under the state actually brought us back to this moment where we were like, "OK, forget about it." We're just going to do something completely different. We might not call it a wedding. We might not call it a commitment ceremony. We do want to have a big party where we do something really fun. Our decision seems indicative of this moment, in some way.

DEBBIE STOLLER: I love this subject, and it's at the core of one of the things that's uncomfortable for me about the subject of women and leadership. One of the people mentioned on the panel was Betty Friedan, and a lot of the ideas that she put forth in her time were very much of her time. They have remained influential in what people think about women and feminism and the importance and fulfillment of work and the oppression of being a housewife. These ideas have been very, very hard to evolve. I've been trying to make the same argument in *Bust* for the past fourteen years in every single issue, and I still feel like I can't quite get people to understand what I'm trying to say. I certainly won't be able to tonight—I must be a terrible communicator. One of the things

that Betty Friedan said that was very influential for that generation of women was, here were all these really educated women who ended up being kept in the home, not having to work and certainly not having leadership opportunities. She wrote about the woman who after making peanut butter sandwiches for the kids, lies in bed next to her husband and thinks, "Is that all?" I was raised with, "Yes, of course, that's terrible."

My mom was a housewife and I thought, "What a waste of potential." My mom was kind of happy being a housewife. She came from a different culture. She came from Holland where the role of housewife and mother was valued. It was as valued as a career, and in fact, people don't value their careers that much in Holland. They do their jobs. I don't know how many of them would actually say that they are fulfilled by their jobs. The home and the domestic sphere are the part of life that women are in charge of, and it's really important. People don't take their work home at night. They don't work on the weekends. My mom was never dissatisfied in her role as housewife because she came from a culture that really valued it. In America, that role wasn't given that much value—and this all plays into my culture idea of things. I read Betty Friedan's book now and I think these women were dissatisfied—was it because the work was so dissatisfying or was it because the work was so devalued? Even a garbage man, because he's going out and making a paycheck, feels more fulfilled in his role than a woman.

My generation—Generation X—we were like lab rats. These women who had families—who were married and had kids—were like, "You know what, this sucks. You need to go out there and get a job that's fulfilling. Fill your potential. Go do what you need to do." I was raised thinking, "Yeah, that's totally true. I totally believe that." The problem is that we don't value all the roles that people have. There are some women who make great career people and don't need to be the ones at home taking care of their kids, and there are certain men who are more nurturing than women. Right now, even though there's a lot of discussion about motherhood, I think it is really interesting because it's like a new frontier about valuing that role. What I am really seeing (because I work with a lot of younger women in their twenties at *Bust* and we write for younger people) is that this generation is not doing what my generation did. I don't mind having been the sacrificial pig for this human experiment because I think it's important. I don't want to lean too far toward something that says this [career] is the ultimate way to be a fulfilled human being because this is what men have always done. I want more variety for women—I want more varieties of what's important in society and in our lives.

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: I think with each subsequent generation, or maybe even five-year spans, we're creeping forward to where women are getting to be more full human beings. I definitely think you see that. Betty Friedan—if you know her real story—*The Feminine Mystique* was her reverse memoir. She had given up—she was brilliant—and she had given up a lot and gotten married because she was really scared not to. She made a lot of sacrifices, and then found this theory that could—not exonerate her—but make that meaningful at least, make that sacrifice worth something. It was highly

influential and it spoke for people for whom it shouldn't have. My mom was very proudly a homemaker, but I think also chafed because it was so devalued by American culture. She was chafed a little bit by the tedium and was constantly struggling with negotiating an identity while still being a homemaker because it was what she, in some ways, had chosen. She was really proud of being a stay-at-home mom and at the same time extremely defensive and bitchy about it to us kids: "You don't seem to notice what I'm doing. I'm going to have a laundry strike, so I'm going to withdraw my labor and then it will be visible." There were issues about it. Meanwhile, we three girls (and especially me) are intense homemakers and don't feel a conflict about being extremely invested in our homes. It's certainly a burden keeping house, and it's something that takes a lot of time, but I take pride in it and I do feel like a part of me is valuing that, and at the same time valuing my other roles. I see younger people—men and women—not even having to think about it and feeling more liberated as individuals.

AMY RICHARDS: First of all, Debbie, I just want to confirm that you should keep saying it until people get it. I always quote Victor Hugo who says that there's nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come. It's not that you're not a good communicator; it's that the rest of us aren't good listeners. There will come a time when we're ready to listen. Since we've been talking about Betty Friedan, one of the things that that generation did so well was to say that the personal is political and tried to get us motivated. I think that what we have to say in this generation is we have to bring it back, not to our personal lives, but to our personhood.

What I'm most frustrated about in feminist history and today is that we say one thing and then we do another. We say staying home is a valuable job, and then we don't really stay home. We hire nannies to stay home. We don't ask for money. We skirt around it. We don't really value it and yet we say that we do. I'm not sure that I do believe that motherhood is the most valuable job. When I'm taking care of my kids, it's not the same as when I'm writing. It's not the same as when I'm lecturing. It's time-consuming, and I love it, but I don't know that I would describe it as work, and that might be my own limitation. I think we need to be a little more honest about what we are practicing in our own personal lives. Otherwise, it leaves this mythology out there that there is somebody who is more resolved than us, and therefore, we've failed because we can't live up to that.

I think that goes a long way toward activism. Jennifer and I try to get people to examine their own lives and look at the limitations that our own lives already present for activism. One issue I think about all the time is the environment. We're so obsessed with global warming right now. We've all changed our light bulbs. We threw all these light bulbs away only to get the good light bulbs. We've wasted them. Today I walked into my house and I did everything I always do. I flipped on all the lights and if it's cold, I turn up the heat. If we're concerned about global warming then it's not just signing the petition, it's not just replacing our light bulbs. It is trying to live without electricity once

in a while. It is dressing warmer when you're cold. It is trying to get the hybrid car. That's just one example, and there are numerous other examples that we're probably more passionate about. We need to examine what we are doing in our own lives doing and not always promote one thing and practice another.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: It's interesting that we all use the same language. What do people want? What do young people want? Do they want to stay at home or do they want to work? I think about the limits of the imagination, why is it that we're confined to this particular language or these particular experiences? Not attempting as progressive people, as human beings, to operate outside of those boundaries. When we use language somehow we fall into the same pitfalls of, is it this? Or is it that? Can we have it all?

Changing Definitions of Feminism

MARY TRIGG: I was struck by a statement in your book, Dawn, *The Fire This Time: Young Activism and New Feminism,* when you describe being twenty-five years old and having felt "cast out" of feminism—that the movement whose philosophies had literally changed the lives of you and your friends neither wanted nor needed you and your peers. You wrote that in response, you and Amy Richards, writer Rebecca Walker and filmmaker Catherine Dunn co-founded the Third Wave Foundation. Since the title of our panel is "Changing the Face of Leadership," can I ask how do we, generationally, change the face of leadership? Where is the U.S. feminist movement right now, who is leading it, and is there room for new people to be leading it?

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: My thinking about that has changed over the past ten to fifteen years. After college, I really wanted to get involved in the feminist movement and did what I thought I needed to do which was to get a job in a feminist organization. I ended up working for several feminist organizations on the West coast. When I moved to New York, I ended up working at a lesbian feminist organization, and I felt that in that organization, young people's voices—and I still believe that this is true—were not valued. I love what Amy was saying about the way that young people think: the risks that they take, the innovations that they create. In the technological world, that is really valued. In this particular activist world, it was not. I felt honored to meet Amy and Catherine and Rebecca and to start talking about what we could do differently. How can we nurture young women's leadership potential? How can we nurture young women's activist potential? We did that by creating a foundation because we thought money is one of the most important things to building a movement. You can't really build a movement without some access to financial resources. At that point, I was falling into the very pitfall that Vivien and I critique in *The Fire This Time.* I was looking in the same old places. I didn't know that there were all of these underground movements at that time. If I could relive my life with everything I know now, I would go and work for an underground or small organization doing the kind of work that I really wanted to do. In that case, I don't know if I would have the opportunity, necessarily, to help start Third Wave.

DEBBIE STOLLER: Well, this question about who are the new leaders and where are the new leaders coming from? The other panelists have a lot to say about that—they write about it and talk about it all the time. I don't think people bestow leadership upon themselves. The media decides that a group has leaders, and they make them into leaders by interviewing them and making them into pundits. The third wave of feminism is a younger— which is now already older—generation of feminists. That generation could certainly have leaders, but when CNN wants a feminist's comments, they don't call me, although they could have. They call Gloria Steinem. They don't even call Amy, Jennifer, or Dawn. They call Gloria Steinem. The media and even our culture got fixed on these seventies feminists— who did amazing work—as the be all and end all of feminism. The reason that the media doesn't have similar pundits is that no one (even the leaders of the group themselves) wanted to pass it along. I don't think third wave feminists, or whatever wave, need leadership. Even this idea that there are faces of certain movements. I know there's a lot of movement around gay rights, for example. But I can't think of whom gay rights movement leaders are. It doesn't matter. Maybe there are certain people who get called more for pundits, but there's not a name, like a Gloria Steinem. It doesn't matter. There's a lot of power behind that group—

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: Urvashi Vaid. She's probably the one.

DEBBIE STOLLER: There are a lot of different people doing a lot of different work agitating for gay rights. Back in the day when you think of what the feminist movement was—it was a bunch of women marching behind a banner. You need someone to stand in front saying, "Hey, we're marching forward." I'm creepy because I don't even like the word activism, but I suppose we *should* be activists rather than passive. It's important to act. I'm just not a political feminist because I'm so convinced that it's the culture, and when you change the culture, then the politics follow.

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: But those *are* activist acts. I feel like we've been talking about it in those terms.

DEBBIE STOLLER: Our generation has evolved certain ideas from feminism and we're experimenting with things. We've been this laboratory rat generation, and now I'm really excited to see what the younger generation's going to come up with. I am not going to be like the generation before me, who I felt was kind of stubborn about allowing their ideas to evolve. I know that I've got some experimental ideas that I'm putting out there and you all are going to live them and say, "That doesn't work at all. That was a dumb idea. We have to do it like this." Every generation lives and you refine because the ultimate goal is the same. One thing I wanted to say about valuing things that women have traditionally done is that when you go into leadership and you go on, you're going to be leaders anyway because we're going to be old and dying. You younger people are going to have to take on the work of transforming the world. I think you need to

transform it into your image, and you need to change the world so that it makes room for whatever type of leadership you want to have and you want to create. Rather than trying to keep molding ourselves into the idea of the man in the gray flannel suit from the fifties, which was an image that even the men in the fifties were sick of…The strategy I've taken is that I don't change myself. I try to change the world to be in a little more agreement with me. I think you [audience members] should do the same.

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: That's a working definition we use all the time of activism: changing the world to correspond with your values. You don't have to use the word activist, but we refer to you as an activist. I think it's pretty easy to succeed leaders like us. Write a book. Publishers always want new books. They're sick of the old people; they want new people. You can succeed Amy and me pretty easily. Same with Debbie: make a zine. There are these blogs such as feministing.com that make spaces for new feminist thought. There are always going to be new professors and poets. When we're talking about leadership succession and the leaders of the women's movement, we're talking about four organizations: The Feminist Majority Foundation, Planned Parenthood, NOW, and *Ms.* magazine, and the *Ms.* Foundation too. Five. Five marginalized organizations that dominate our imagination about the women's movement. Five white women of a certain age who run them. When you're talking about those organizations, the leadership is a little bit more entrenched. I think as younger people we are often drawn to those organizations. I got my first start at *Ms.* And yet, maybe we'll find that it is rigid in terms of a place where we can learn leadership or be handed the baton. I think the stories that I've heard the most heartbreak around this is with NOW. Amy and I will get a really tearful story from a young woman about being at a conference where she did a ton of work and none of it was acknowledged and she felt completely destroyed by the experience. I'm not really sure why—if it's because it's more hierarchical. I don't know what it is about that structure. I used to just feel so frustrated by the way *Ms.* wouldn't change to be more like *Bust.* I finally realized: stop trying to change *Ms. Ms.* and NOW are speaking for smaller and smaller groups of people. If *Bust's* readership is 100,000, that's many times more than *Ms.*' Stop giving it so much power. Respect it as an institution. We don't want our institutions to die. Respect it, but realize that's not where your future is going to be, unless it is. I think there is some young upstart that's going to have a coup and NOW will be headed by some really young person soon.

AMY RICHARDS: I think I spent many years being angry and frustrated that I wasn't getting more attention. I do remember early on in my years at Third Wave--this woman who had been the head of Equality Now--she was doing lectures. And I said, I want to do lectures. I'm a leader; I should do lectures. I called and wrote a letter to her speaker's bureau, and they never returned my phone call. Every now and then I think Gloria Steinem, who is a very thoughtful person when it comes to young women's leadership, would say, "I can't do the CNN interview, but talk to Amy. She founded Third Wave Foundation." They would never call me. Then I did start to get some calls, and it's not

because Gloria mentioned my name enough times, and it's not because the speaker's bureau found my letter one day and was just desperate for more speakers. It was because I just kept doing the work and persevering. When younger women come to me and ask, "What are you the saddest about looking back over your work?" it's that young women aren't more valued in leadership positions. I always say to them, "just do the work and the attention will follow. Do the work and the label will follow." I think that that's really true. That said we have to do more pushing.

Dawn mentioned that we mandated diversity at the Third Wave because it was a young women's organization for activists between the ages of 15 and 30. No board member can be over the age of 35. Planned Parenthood's constituency, I would argue, is between the ages of 15 and 35—just like Third Wave. They have two "young people" on the board that are older than us on this panel. I think we need to start pushing organizations to recognize this. People often get to be board members because they're bringing money. Well, you don't even know who has access to money. I've got a lot of rich friends that I didn't even know were rich until I started working in fundraising.

DEBBIE STOLLER: Maybe they could put Paris Hilton on the board.

AMY RICHARDS: Every time I go to a feminist conference, there's now at least, very thoughtfully, a third wave feminism panel, or a young women and leadership panel. Yet, it's mostly packed with the young women in the house. Jennifer and I give lectures on college campuses and often there's some diversity there and some very wonderful older feminists who come to support us, but it's pretty much packed with younger women. When Gloria Steinem comes and gives a lecture, it's all those same young women *and* older women. As younger women, we have to increasingly put ourselves into positions and push to be in those places. We also have to call on older women who are in our lives to come and support us. Maybe if this panel had not been called "Young Women Leaders Speak Out," there would have been more age diversity in the audience. I don't know that conclusively, but sometimes when we put the young women in there, it's only young women talking to young women. Here it's older women talking to younger women. I think we need to stop buying our own bad press. Stop marginalizing ourselves in some way. Say, "No, I'm a woman leader. I'm doing this panel, and I'm not going to call it 'young women.' I'm not even going to call it feminism. I'm doing a panel on the future and you should come and hear me."

Question and Answer Period

MARY TRIGG: I'd like to open up the discussion now to the audience and invite you to ask your questions to any of the panelists.

Q: I want to direct this comment to Dawn. I think unless you're taking a class in a queer context or you have a queer professor, queer or lesbian issues are left out of feminism and

the teachings of feminism, so your presence here means more than you know. I also want to say that there isn't a course on lesbian leaders—how we're supposed to balance work and family and kids and also gay rights or the lack thereof. I'm really interested in language. I just finished Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*.[4] I'm interested why you decided to call [your organization] the Third Wave Foundation. I know you had mentioned that we're sort of stuck in the second wave, and that maybe there should be some revamping or new direction of language in terms of how we view feminism and young women today.

AMY RICHARDS: I think the reason [we named it Third Wave Foundation] was that we simultaneously wanted to acknowledge that we were connected to this strong, vibrant feminist history, but we were too chicken to say "feminist," and so we felt like third wave said "feminist" without saying it directly. We were trying to acknowledge that we look at things in binary ways, and we were also proposing a third way or a third option and multiplicities. I think we were playing with the idea of waves—it will always move with us and grow with us and it's a sensibility, not age. We've debated over and over again within the organization whether that's the appropriate word or name for the organization. I'm tired of having that debate—not because I think it's the most appropriate name but because I feel like it's what it's been for the last fifteen years and so that's just what it is. You can call it Third Wave and recognize the limitations in that.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: It's also important to keep in mind that we were starting an organization and we were building a movement. The Third Wave as the name of an organization really worked for us—and I think it still works for us. This fluid way in which waves are both a part of the past and a part of the future, I think that's one of the things we wanted to convey in the naming of the organization. It really helped us with funding, especially when we started reaching out to the larger foundations. You have to be able to encapsulate your mission in language.

Q: I'm a Ph.D. student in political science studying women in politics. You talked about this choice between staying home and working, and I don't know if that's really fair for this generation in terms of economic issues, the dual income household, and things of that nature. Should we redefine value? Is that what we should be imagining? How trapped in monetary values are we?

DEBBIE STOLLER: I know that there are certainly families where it's pertinent that there are two incomes. There are families where there's only one wage earner and that person clearly doesn't have any kind of choice. I also know lots of families where, if certain sacrifices were made, that family could be supported on one income—not buy an apartment in Manhattan, not have two cars, or not have a huge wide screen TV. I see people who say, "Well, we have to both work because our mortgage is really expensive

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[4] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

and we want kids." Back in the day when there were a lot more stay-at-home moms, it wasn't simply a time when it was cheaper to live. It was also a time when people didn't expect to have quite as much when they were raising their families. One of the reasons that more people don't feel comfortable making that choice, and they're not willing to give up those things, is because we don't value the work that people do in the home, and we over value things that we can buy. I don't think it's an issue of capitalism. I think it's an issue with our cultural values around our economic system.

The thing that makes me crazy is we so under value the work of the domestic sphere that even when we choose to do it, we don't do it. I've seen women proudly say, "Yes, yes, yes! I opted out of my career and decided to stay home and take care of my child, but I don't cook! I'm not doing that. We go out or we order food in. I'm not cleaning; that's not my job!" I'm thinking, "Well, what do you do then? What do you do as a stay at home mom if you've got a five year old who spends half the day in kindergarten and the rest of time you just hover around him, not cooking and not cleaning?" I do think that the role that my mother—and possibly Jennifer's mother—had was a lot of work. It was work, and a lot of it was tedious, but a lot of my work at *Bust* is tedious too. Work is work. Part of it is fun, but it's not always so fun and satisfying. This issue comes up all the time like it's a middle class choice to stay home, and not everybody has that choice. It's true that not everybody has that choice, but I think more people have the option. There are different ways of working it out—fewer of which we think about because that role is still not valued, so much so that even people who choose it don't really want to do it.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: It's important to note that—I may be putting words in your mouth—but part of your critique has to do with race and class. You can't talk about some women being able to make the choice to stay home when, historically speaking in this country, white women were trying to get out of the home—were trying to get into the world—black women were already in the world. They were already working. They'd been working since they arrived to the country. I think that there has to be a more nuanced class and race distinction when talking about work.

DEBBIE STOLLER: At the same time a lot of the women who are in the workplace are handing their domestic chores over to black women and lower class women because that work is still undervalued.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: Absolutely.

DEBBIE STOLLER: Those women aren't getting paid very much for it. People Betty Friedan's age—that generation—used to say, "women work in the home and we don't get paid." There was an economic trade off in those situations. Women who said, "Ok, you do that part of the job and we'll do this part of the job"—those partnerships where there is an economic agreement—don't have to be gender defined.

AMY RICHARDS: It can also be disempowering if you're paid by your spouse to be at home because when you're paid by your boss, you have to do what [he or she] says. I think that's problematic. I think as a country we need to value parenting and what goes on in the domestic sphere. Being paid to do housework would bring a lot of problems because I would be paid a lot more to do work in my household than a Jamaican woman would be paid to do work in her household. So then we're going to have the same class and race problems playing out in the domestic sphere that we're having in the workplace or that we're having in the world. While I want it to be more valued, I'm not sure that that's the answer.

Q: I'm interested in the domestic work that you were discussing just now, and if women's domestic work is undervalued, then how about men's domestic work? Is it shameful? If we are talking about young women's leadership then can we correspond with young men's leadership? A young man's leadership in the public sphere is the definition of what a good husband should be. Should we choose a husband who is very good at housework or should we choose a husband who is excelling in the professional field?

DEBBIE STOLLER: From my perspective, and I'm trying not to be an essentialist (I don't think that women are particularly better at housekeeping than men) I think that some people are better nurturers and other people are better sharks or leaders or whatever it takes to make it in a career world. I don't think women are looking for people who are better housecleaners or better breadwinners, but I think if you have two people trying to make a partnership work and you are able to separate out these responsibilities, then you are lucky. You want to put the person (like you would on any kind of team) who's best at being a leader and bringing in the money in the workplace. The person who's a better nurturer should stay home. Sometimes neither of them are right for these roles, then there's no kids.

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: This might be too anecdotal, but I remember when my mother was doing her laundry strikes. My father was making the money; she didn't earn income. There was a lot of discussion about the ways in which he *did* need to know how to do certain things. I don't remember it being that awkward, but my mother says there were some fights and then eventually my dad learned he was good at ironing and there were a bunch of things within the house that he became really good at doing. Now when I go home, it's like he's a butler. Not only does he work, but he's like a butler in the house. I think that men can be turned on to the joys and values of domesticity as well.

By default of having gotten pregnant by someone I didn't want to be with, I have a co-parent who I don't live with. Our child has two separate homes. Two separate apartments in Brooklyn, so even one second after the baby was born, I was like, "Ok, so I'll see you in six hours." He had to have a setup in his apartment that's totally different —as if he's Mr. Mom. He had to be Mr. Mom because when he was with our son, he was

with him alone. We do the handoffs, and we don't spend a lot of time parenting together, but we co-parent. It's been really interesting for me because I know if we lived together (I'm pretty controlling in the home and clean, and he's less so) I would have controlled a lot of these details that I sometimes see my friends struggling with. "Jim, I can't believe you dressed him in that! Give him to me." "No, that's not the bottle we use. That bottle leaches chemicals into his mouth." There are all these weird things and when the dad is trying to do something, the mom is judgmental and unwilling to give up that control and say, "Yeah, there are various ways of dealing with this stuff around the house." I'm not even there when Gordon takes care of our son. I don't have the opportunity to do that. Sure, sometimes I feel freaked out. Like, "Oh really, you pick him up from preschool with a chocolate donut every day?" But I don't have the opportunity to rein him in, and I think it's been good for me. It's been a good challenge.

Q: I have been reading about identity politics in different parts of the world in the nineties. You see in different countries women were organizing. What is your sense of why this happened in the nineties—when young women started to work together around this identity?

AMY RICHARDS: The most obvious answer is that in 1995 there was the Beijing Women's Conference. Leading up to that conference, concentrated in the three years before that, there were lots of regional gatherings where people were coming together. I also think that we became more global in the early nineties because of the Internet. We got more information about what people were doing in other countries, and it gave us a vehicle and a way to correspond. I was just in India a month ago, and we were having this exact same conversation sitting in somebody's apartment in Bombay, but many more people wore saris and many more of them were Indian. I think we were hearing about it then more because there was a newness to be able to have that access to people.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: I think it also has to do with the fact that states in a global world can become secondary powers to organizations or businesses that exist internationally or transnationally. In response to laws that were transnational and no longer state laws, women and young women responded in kind with non-governmental organizations.

DEBBIE STOLLER: I totally disagree. I love you guys. What you have both said is wonderful, but my thought about why young women really started organizing in these little whirlwinds and tornadoes that were happening all around the world in the nineties is completely different—so much so that I'm thinking maybe I totally misunderstood the question.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: Or maybe I did.

AMY RICHARDS: Or maybe there are multiple answers.

DEBBIE STOLLER: There are multiple answers, and maybe there are multiple orgasms. In the seventies there was a very clear idea about what feminists were organized around. In the eighties, it was like push-me, pull-me feminism. There were huge sex arguments about anti-porn/ pro-porn. We got stuck like that for about ten years. Sometimes I think about it as a lava lamp: there was all this force pushing up and then in the nineties, a little solution broke off in this head to head combat and it organized around a number of different things that happened at the same time. A lot of research was being done that got a lot of press, like Carol Gilligan who was talking about young girls.[5] She had this idea that young girls are actually a lot fiercer and stronger than their adult counterparts, and this was a new idea because people thought that girlhood was quaint and pretty and then we became women and we became fierce. She was saying that the process of becoming a woman took girl's power away.

Then there were these little pockets of young women who were really into this idea of girlhood as a site of empowerment and took it further. There was the riotgrrl movement, which was small but it got a lot of media play. Anytime something gets a lot of media play, it influences people. Same thing happened with my *Stitch-n-Bitch* series.[6] I was knitting and I had a Stitch 'n Bitch group and wrote about it. Someone read about it and they thought, "Hey, I could start a group like that, too." Young women were coming up with some fresh ideas that were like the little blip that comes off the lava lamp. They said, "Hey! Let's do this instead and really embrace girlhood and fierceness! Let's reclaim language, inspired by the gay rights movement and the queer rights movement from the eighties." There was a big constellation of interesting things that helped younger women to take off and get us un-stuck from the sex wars of the eighties. That's where I see a lot of the third wave ideas coming from. I hardly even knew there was a Beijing Women's Conference.

Q: If you think about the U.S. in the eighties, there was a lot of talk about young women's identity. In the nineties, it continued. At the international level (it depends on each context) young women were organizing around the identity of young women. My question is why at this moment, were people organizing around this particular identity?

AMY RICHARDS: I think the answer still stands. The reason that the Third Wave Foundation was founded was because there was the Rodney King verdict, the Anita Hill/ Clarence Thomas hearing, the William Kennedy Smith date rape, what became the 1992 election, and everybody was talking about abortion rights. There was the Casey decision in Pennsylvania. There were very political moments that stacked on top of each other, and they were simultaneous to what Debbie described as these more cultural moments.

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[5] Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (*Harvard University Press, 1982).

[6] *Stitch 'n Bitch Series*, Workman Publishing Company.

They worked together, both angering and inspiring. I do think that the organizing for Beijing was a very tangible thing that brought people to meetings and gave them a voice and a visible place to focus.

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: And there were some young women leaders who wrote bestsellers. *Backlash* came out in 1991 and it was the first book to really look at the cultural backlash against women and feminism. [7] A lot of people had commented on backlashing and had tried to understand what had happened to the second wave, but here was this younger woman looking at it, and she wrote this bestseller and was really thoughtful about it. Then Naomi Wolf wrote *The Beauty Myth*—I was eighteen when that came out—and it really spoke directly to young women, whereas my mother's *Ms.* magazine, which she kind of forced me to read growing up, did not inspire me in a direct way.[8] It was more like a knee-jerk reaction. Then here was something that was really trying to speak to me, and it did.

DEBBIE STOLLER: There was a lot of young women's rock music. All of a sudden rock 'n roll was about women, which shook things up, and it inspired a lot of people.

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: Like Liz Phair. It was an exciting time. Things were really shaking up.

DEBBIE STOLLER: And that was the moment *Bust* was totally born in. I developed a lot of heroes over those years. Speaking about young women and leadership, I'm often sitting in my office with the younger women that work for us, and I say, "Come on! You can't keep thinking of the same people to put on the cover of this magazine! Come up with something. How come your generation hasn't come up with someone?" Finally now there are some interesting cultural figures, and I'm not even talking about Paris Hilton. I'm talking about musicians like Lily Allen and Amy Winehouse. I think there's an interesting movement starting to happen where younger women are finding some different voices.

AMY RICHARDS: I think you're leaning toward having Paris or Britney on your cover.

DEBBIE STOLLER: Oh, no.

Q: One of you said earlier that you wanted to hear from us what we think young women's leadership is. At least in this community at the Institute for Women's Leadership, where I have been growing up for the past three or four years, I think we're moving away from thinking about leadership as strictly positional. When we're talking about young

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[7] Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women (*New York: Crown, 1991).

[8] Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women (*New York: Harper Collins, 1991).

women's leadership, it's less about who is in governmental positions, who is the president of the United States? It's more about who embodies certain skill sets, who inspires people to combat bad things that exist in our society? I wanted to pull the conversation away from this idea that being a leader means you hold a position or that you are a media pundit figure. A lot of the people—especially the high school students that I talk to—when I ask them, who is a leader in your life? --a lot of them will say their mothers, their friends, their sisters, their teachers, people who wouldn't traditionally be identified as leaders in a community or the country.

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: That's such a good example of how things evolve. We're struggling to get into the culture this idea of new kinds of leadership. I think the way leadership is being practiced by people twenty years younger than us is exactly what we were hoping would happen. My generation has barely wrapped our minds around it, and I think it just shows how the generation you're born into gives you a certain perspective, but you can also be burdened by it. Younger people—because they've grown up in a slightly more liberated time—can imagine more. I think they are probably already internalizing some of the things that we are just struggling to wrap our minds around.

Q: We talk at the Institute for Women's Leadership about how young women want it all. We want a career and we want a family and the kids and we want to be happy and successful. What do you think we can do and should demand society do for us to be able to have it all and be fulfilled and satisfied and happy?

MARY TRIGG: There's a small question.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: You can't.

AMY RICHARDS: You seem to have put the biggest priority on being happy. You have to look at that and backtrack. I get frustrated with a lot of my friends because they'll say, "I need to work." Really? You need to work? You need to go on that Caribbean vacation every year? You need to send your kid to private school? You need to go to the best doctors in New York City? Like you really need those things? In their own way, they might. I don't know. They might feel that that is a real need. I think if you do need those things, then you're probably going to have to either be rich or be with somebody who's rich or you're going to have to win the lottery or you'll have to be at your job all the time. If you're somebody who wants to have happy, healthy kids and have fun with your family, I think that there are ways. If you want to get them an education and you want them to have good nutrition, you can make that happen. It is a trade off; and it is a balance. You have to look at what it is you think you need in your life. Sometimes it is saying "no" to the raise and saying "yes" to something else.

DEBBIE STOLLER: I like that there are men in the room, and I don't want them to feel insulted with what I'm about to say. I don't think your question would have been asked by any of them. I think that men believe they have been getting it all—

AMY RICHARDS: I don't think that's true!

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: Yeah, men do worry about that. I don't know if every man in this room does, but we get those questions [from men]. They worry about body image and they've developed a lot of our neuroses.

DEBBIE STOLLER: We still have a culture in which men feel like they're going to have careers, and they'll probably have families too. Because of the traditional way that things have gone, they're pretty clear in their heads that a lot of time is going to be spent at the job and maybe some time spent with the family. What we women have been led to believe, and I think is a mistake, is that you can be the traditional stay-at-home mom and have the traditional career and combine all that into one life, and I don't think it's possible. It doesn't need to be. All you need to decide for yourself is what is important and satisfying to you. You may not be able to have a career that's on a rocket ship trajectory because you decide (and maybe if you're lucky enough your life will work out this way) that you really want to spend more time with your children and then the career will come later, or it won't come at all. Or you decide, "No way, I don't want to do that!" Maybe you won't have children or you will and the other person that you're with will spend more time with them.

Because my generation had an imagination that was limited, I don't think I ever really thought that *not* having the husband and kids would not happen. "Of course that's going to happen!" But you also have to have a career. I don't feel bad about the way my life has worked out. I'm a little bit in between generations, so I was raised with one idea and grew up into a world with a different set of ideas. In order to not feel like you are dissatisfied and lying in bed at night thinking, "is that all there is?" like Betty Friedan did, you need to transform the world and the way we think about these different choices. I see it happening now, with this generation of women writing about motherhood. I think younger women are starting to transform these things. Then whatever choices you make will be more satisfying.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: I have the answer actually. Before when I said it was impossible, I was just kidding. It's *so* possible, but I think that one of the things that is really difficult to do is to differentiate between what *you* want and what society wants you to do. Once you figure out what you want and what you think is going to make you happy, then that's the thing that you do or attempt to do. Sometimes it takes multiple attempts. Those of us on this panel, the ways in which we have created our lives so far, are very different from each other, but they are also very different from what society expects of us.

Q: I'm writing my dissertation about post-feminist pop culture. I have an observation about leadership and femininity— where are the leaders of this generation? They might be part of a larger model of activist groups and subcultures today, where they learned a lesson from the civil rights movement and the American Indian Movement. If you center your movement around a leader and you kill the king, your movement falls apart. Rather they've taken on this network format. Unfortunately, this model works in terrorist groups as well.

This whole idea of the "feminization" in popular culture in the nineties is often affiliated with the term post-feminism (and you can see it in *Bust* and riotgrrls). It seems to me a big part of this is the tension between feminine and feminist. How do you see that tension in today's culture, with the Britney Spears and Lindsay Lohans? Because it does seem to me to be shifting into different kinds of tensions, and since you're cultural watchers from a certain point of view, I wanted to know how you saw those tensions changing from your generation.

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER: I think those early nineties women you mentioned like riotgrrls and Madonna (let's put her in there too) were making feminine feminist. We grew up thinking that to prove we're feminist, we're going to have to critique everything feminine because it's what is expected of us. We were able then to claim it or reclaim it. I think what we're seeing now with Lindsay Lohan and Paris Hilton is another generation beyond that where they don't have to be model "feminine feminists." They can be crazy ones. They are broadening the idea of what a woman is supposed to be.

AMY RICHARDS: I think that expanding what a woman can be is very feminist. I also think that leadership isn't just about who gets the most attention. Leadership and fame, or leadership and celebrity have been conflated in this generation because we live in a very hyper-celebrity culture. The other thing that has been conflated in our generation, and not solely in the realm of pop culture, is the idea that a successful woman is automatically a feminist. I think there are more women out there giving us a greater range of what is available to us, and I think that's great. We do need more range, in terms of how to be more aggressive, how to be more sexual, and we need to ask for what we want in our personal lives. I think we also have to be clear—it goes back to what Dawn was saying—what do *we* want versus what does society want *for* us? Or what does society value? We'll always negotiate that. As a feminist, I embrace things in me that are feminine and I feel that it took me a long time to own that space. What I had to do in my own life was reject it and then re-choose it. "I can't wear perfume. I can't cook. I can't do those things because that's feminine; that's what is expected of me." Then I realized that I didn't feel more complete not having them in my life, so I re-chose them.

DEBBIE STOLLER: I never wanted to suggest a way of being feminist. I did want to go back and look at everything that we had seen as weaknesses in women and see if they

really were, or if there wasn't a different way to look at it. It's complicated, but I certainly never want to sound like my *Bust* vision of leadership is all these clickety click heel ladies.

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN: It's an interesting and complicated question that I can't address in thirty seconds, but I will say that I love the comparison you made to terrorist groups and the way they function. The way Vivien and I describe it in our book, we use the term multiplicity and simultaneity.

MARY TRIGG: On that note, I want to invite everyone to go out and buy these authors' books. Please join me in thanking our great panel.

BIOGRAPHIES

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER is an activist, writer, and editor who has spent the last fifteen years in New York City as an advocate for young women and girls. From 1993-1997, she was an editor at *Ms.* magazine. She later began writing for publications such as *Harper's, The Nation, Jane, Glamour, Marie Claire,* and *Elle,* on issues ranging from abortion rights to sexual violence to the Miss America pageant. Her first book *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the* Future (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2000), co-authored with Amy Richards, has garnered support and recognition for being an early book detailing third wave feminist politics and philosophies. Baumgardner and Richard's second book, *Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism* (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2004), is a how-to guide for feminist social change. Baumgardner's latest book, *Look Both Ways: Bisexual Politics* (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2007), grapples with issues of feminist politics surrounding bisexuality. Following the publication of *Manifesta,* Baumgardner and Richards lectured at hundreds of colleges and high schools, inspiring them to create *Soapbox, Inc: Speakers Who Speak Out*, a feminist speakers' bureau. Baumgardner is a former board member of the New York Abortion Access Fund, creator of the "I-Had-An-Abortion" campaign, and was named by the Commonwealth Club of California as one of six "Visionaries for the 21st Century."

DAWN LUNDY MARTIN is a scholar, poet, activist, and co-founder of the Third Wave Foundation, a feminist, activist foundation that works nationally to support young women and transgender youth ages 15-30. She is co-editor, along with Vivien Labaton, of *The Fire This Time: Young Activists and the New Feminism* (Anchor Books, 2004), a collection of essays examining issues such as criminal justice, the media, globalization and immigration from a feminist perspective. Martin is the author of *The Morning Hour* (Poetry Society of America Chapbook, 2003), a collection of poems selected by C.D. Wright for the Poetry Society of America's National Chapbook Fellowship, and *A Gathering of Matter /A Matter of Gathering* (University of Georgia Press, 2007), winner of the 2006 Canem Book Prize. She currently teaches in the Language and Thinking

Program at Bard College and is an assistant professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh.

AMY RICHARDS, a graduate of Barnard College, is a feminist activist, writer, and organizer. With Dawn Lundy Martin she co-founded the Third Wave Foundation, and has initiated projects such as "I Spy Sexism," a public education campaign combating daily injustices; and "Why Vote?", which is a series of panel discussions on funding for arts, education, reproductive rights, and affirmative action. Richards is a national spokesperson and leading voice for young women and feminists. Co-author with Jennifer Baumgardner of the influential books *Manifesta* and *Grassroots,* she is also the co-founder of Soapbox, Inc. Her writing has appeared in magazines such as *The Nation, L.A. Times, BUST, Ms.,* and various anthologies. She has worked closely with many organizations including the Third Wave Foundation, Choice USA, The Sadie Nash Leadership Program, feminist.com, and Planned Parenthood of New York City. She was profiled in *Ms.* magazine in their "21 for the 21st: Leaders for the Next Century." Women's E-news named Richards as one of their "Leaders for the 21st Century" in 2003, and the American Association of Women chose her as a 2004 woman of distinction.

DEBBIE STOLLER received a Ph.D. from Yale University in the psychology of women, and is the founding editor of *Bust* magazine. Founded with the idea of creating better media for women, *Bust* began as a Xeroxed-and-stapled zine, and is now a glossy magazine with a circulation of over 1,000. *Bust* has been noted as a pioneer of girlie feminism, where popular culture and typically feminine pastimes (such as knitting and fashion) can be incorporated into the lives of feminists. With the success of *Bust,* Stoller has shown that many feminists want humor, style and sex along with political gains. She is also co-editor of *The Bust Guide to the New Girl Order* (Penguin, 1999), an anthology of some of the best of *Bust's* past articles. She is the founder of Stitch 'n Bitch, a knitting circle which has spawned hundreds of similarly named groups all around the world. In addition, Dr. Stoller is the author of the *New York Time*'s best-selling *Stitch 'n Bitch* series of books (Workman Publishing Company) about knitting and crocheting. Stoller is credited as being a pioneer and a positive force in the modern feminist movement as well as the media.