***#Feminism: Popular Culture and the Representation of a Movement***

When *Ms.* magazine was launched in July 1972, Harry Reasoner of *60 Minutes* challenged, “I’ll give it six months before they run out of things to say.”[[1]](#footnote-1) The editors of the magazine met Reasoner’s challenge by becoming the one of the first mainstream publications to explore and promote feminism in the 1970s and 1980s. According to its self-styled origin story, in fact, it was “the first national magazine to make feminist voices audible, feminist journalism tenable, and a feminist worldview available to the public.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Which feminist voices, however, did the magazine offer mainstream readers? Which feminism worldview did it emphasize?

*Ms*. magazine was not the only effort to bring feminism to the mainstream. Many pop culture industries have also offered important spaces to promote certain feminist worldviews. For example, the legends of *Wonder Woman* in their many incarnations,movies such as *An Unmarried Woman* (1978), television shows such as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, and the Beyoncé persona etc., feature independent women saving the universe and navigating every day life. While hailed as feminist triumphs in the mainstream, these stories, like *Ms.* magazine, also provoke questions about whose feminism is being explored: Do these mostly upper-middle class, white, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied, settler population women represent all feminism has to offer?; Do they provide a space for other women to be heard?; Do they provide a space for non-North American voices, given the power of U.S. popular culture?; Do these accurately represent the internal debates in feminism?; Do they mostly celebrate neo-liberal versions of feminism?; What is the role of the market imperative to “sell” feminism play in denying intersectional considerations of oppression?; and How does New Media create sites of public history that commemorate a narrow vision of feminism, ignoring the contributions of many women?

All of these questions, and more, are guiding this project, which I would eventually like to either publish as a series of articles or make into a book project. I really appreciate you taking the time to consider my project in its very early stages.

1. “History 1971-Present,” *Ms. Magazine*, accessed November 4, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)