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Gender and Mapping Fourth Wave Feminism

This presentation takes the theme of remapping gender as its prompt for (re)conceptualizing fourth wave feminism. It engages current scholarship (e.g., Chamberlain, Parry, Rivers) and works through several complex questions such as what are some of the key differences between fourth wave feminism and the previous waves? Is the concept of gender relevant in fourth wave feminism? How does the fourth wave mobilize itself and find ways to build solidarities or alliances? For the intents and purposes of this presentation, my research will concentrate on the intersection of gender and social media. Building upon key third wave terms such as queer, performativity, and heteronormativity, I argue that the new movement has articulated its own more appropriate vocabulary, e.g., expanding the language beyond the second and third wave acronym LBG(T) to LGBTQIA2S+ is one example. Gender identity thus holds a lot of personal significance; for example, one of the movement's main inroads into the mainstream has been challenging restrictive or inaccurate personal pronouns in workplaces, institutions, and other public settings, including digital meeting platforms. Many influencers and celebrities have also used social media to tell their stories; e.g., Demi Levato recently shared their identity as non – binary on Instagram and Janelle Monáe publicly announced their non – binary identity via Twitter. My work further aims to show that gender remains a meaningful way to build solidarity and alliances such as with movements like #MeToo. Rather than coalitions forming exclusively on a binary basis of sex and/or gender, fourth wave feminists encompass a more – inclusive, intersectional group of people with varying genders and sexualities who are working to disrupt systemic patriarchy, the cis – tem, privilege, and toxic masculinity (most often associated with white cis – het men).