

## 'Sexism defeated!': Women for Trump and the binding energy of political hope

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### Abstract

Donald Trump seems flagrantly anti-feminist to many observers, but the group 'Women for Trump' claims to be feminist. They have stated that, out of the available options for US president in 2016, Trump best meets the needs of American women. This essay joins a handful of recent studies all aiming to remedy the long-standing omission of women from research on right-wing movements. Even if, as many have argued, Women for Trump are interested in defending whiteness, why would they vote for a misogynistic white man instead of a reasonable white woman? I argue that emotional investment in political hope – in the promise of belonging to a better national lifeworld – drives political behaviour more than 'rational' self-interest does. This essay takes for granted the crucial importance of intersectionality, and considers how sexuality, race, gender, class, and ethnicity interdependently construct Women for Trump's politics; each of these has a role to play in giving content and consequence to political fantasy and feeling. This turn to fantasy and feeling does not constitute responding with a mocking 'you're dreaming' to female Trump supporters. Quite the contrary: political dreams have highly material effects. Trump's promise to restore American empire – to return to jingoistically white heteropatriarchy, hostile to environmental health – is threatening because so many people, including women, see that promised scene as the good life, the happy life, the American Dream.

### Keywords

*Women for Trump, affect, cruel optimism, American Dream, happiness, hope, Hillary-hate*

The glass ceiling for women was SHATTERED last night when we stood up to reject the sexist call for us to treat gender as more important than qualification. Thank you TRUMP for raising up women in your organization long before others in your industry did. This woman is feeling like there's promise in America again. Sexism defeated! #MAGA

facebook.com/WomenforTrump [status update], 9 Nov., 2016

At an Auckland Writers Festival panel discussion called 'Women and Power,' an audience member asked: 'What do you make of the women who voted for Trump?' The panelists – Roxanne Gay, Mpho Tuto van Furth, and Michele A'Court – had discussed 'angry white men' extensively. Gay spoke first: 'Those women are more invested in whiteness and protecting whiteness' than in protecting women's needs. This account is better than the widespread popular and academic opinion that right-wing women are duped, that they are props in what is ultimately a men's movement, that they submissively follow that movement's men. Gay presents right-wing women as rational, self-interested agents who think they can get more from protecting white privilege than from advocating for women's specifically gendered needs. Logical as this sounds, it doesn't add up: Trump's women supporters are invested in women's needs as such. On social media, 'Women for Trump' (hereafter WFT) frequently describe themselves as feminists and state that Trump is a good leader for women. They don't think Trump is sexist; they think Clinton and her supporters are sexist for 'treat[ing] gender as more

important than qualification'. They see Trump's win as a *defeat of sexism*.

Mpho Tutu van Furth disagreed with Gay, although she didn't so much give an answer as extend the question, with careful, deliberate words:

I think that there is a ... story that we haven't heard ... and been able to speak back to... I feel that we've been able to dismiss the women who voted for Trump without really hearing from them and talking back to what their experience was ... As much as I hear your [point about] vested interests, I really don't think that people are *at base stupid*, and so there was an interest [interrupted by audience laughing at Roxane Gay's arched eyebrows] ... Maybe the interest was just whiteness, but what I heard that was really striking was ... 'what about *me*? Who's going to take care of *me*?' And the women who voted for Trump didn't hear themselves taken care of in the Hillary vision of America.

Tutu van Furth, I think, is right. I hear you asking: how could she be? If people are not *at base stupid*, how could they believe that Trump, the barefaced misogynist against whom 24 women laid sexual assault claims in 2016 (Jamieson et. al., 2016), could be a better leader for women than Hillary, the career feminist who has always advocated for children, women of colour, and working class women, who hacked her path through male-dominated powerhouses and backlash after backlash, and became a hero to so many women?

When we frame the question this way, we arrive at something of an impasse. This is an impasse of 'rational' self-interest as the typical critic's explanation of voter behaviour. It is also an impasse of political ideology, insofar as political ideology aligns women's politics with the left and patriarchy with the right, and thus cannot see right-wing women, let alone right-wing feminists, as independent and legitimate political agents. As Kathleen Blee has argued (1992), scholars have long omitted women from studies of right-wing movements because of the ideological trouble they pose, and that omission 'limits, and perhaps minimises, scholars' assessments of the consequences of reactionary politics' (p. 3). To omit women from accounts of Trump's appeal will leave us with white masculinist populism as the only explanation, a bold question mark standing in for the 53% of white women who played such a crucial and visible role in the 2016 US election, and, perhaps, a missed opportunity to understand how masculine nationalists appeal to women the world over.

This essay steps toward remedying the omission of women from studies of conservative politics. It is the beginning of a larger project intended to respond to Tutu van Furth's call to hear WFT's story, a story that is missing from even the best accounts of Trump supporters' enthusiasm. As a beginning, this essay is driven to clarify the phenomenon of female Trump supporters. A neighbour said to me recently, 'by studying Women for Trump, do you mean you are asking, *How could they?*' This question captures the essence of my point of entry into this project: I come from a place of confusion and alarm. I felt this most acutely when I saw a particular photograph that captures something of the essence of female Trump fans' faith in their chosen candidate (Fig. 1). We should think of faith in both its divine and its secular forms here. This photo is one of a vast number of images that blanket WFT social media platforms, together with news coverage that features them. These images show women, mostly white, young and old, grouped closely together, waving glittery banners, wearing special bright WFT-branded clothing and 'I Voted' stickers on election day, and displaying a tremendous pride in their group's movement. That pride's tremendousness is what I am most interested in, because it speaks to the affective potency of the supporters' experience of being together, being political together, hoping together – hoping in euphoric excess, in ecstasy.

Their collective hope is an attachment to the fantasy of the 'great again' place Trump promised to build. Because of Trump's rhetoric and policy, Lauren Berlant (2011) would call this hope cruel optimism: optimism that drives your belief that being close to the object or scene of your desire will transform you or your world in a crucial way, but is cruel because

that object/scene prevents the transformation you desire from ever happening. (Trump will not make America great ‘again’ for women.) Your optimism binds you to this attachment, despite its cruelty, because it is sometimes pleasurable to be bound; cruel optimism is ‘a situation of profound threat that is, at the same time, profoundly comforting’ (p. 2).



Figure 1: Photograph posted on [facebook.com/WomenForTrump](https://www.facebook.com/WomenForTrump), November 9, 2016

The comfort of political optimism comes from the togetherness of the hopeful, the corollary opposition to outsiders, and the act of longing itself. The political consequences depend on what, specifically, is longed for, the fantasy’s content, as that dictates who is ‘together’ and who is ‘outside’ the world the collective hopes to build. Karen Nairn (2017) has recently argued that hope drives radical climate activism in Aotearoa/New Zealand; she is right, but there is nothing intrinsically leftist about this emotion. What are the citizenship requirements for the country in the (conservative) American Dream? How might those mirror and support, for instance, Trump’s immigration policy? Political optimism is not ‘“mere” fiction and fantasy but ... violence and desire that [has] material effects’ (Berlant, 1997, p. 13). Trump supporters’ optimism, so potent and so powerfully attached to his particular vision – not ‘Hillary’s vision,’ as Tutu van Furth said – has very real consequences; it wills his vision into being. Below I consider how WFT’s hope for Trump’s vision feeds their hatred of Hillary Clinton, which helped significantly to bring about the destruction of her would-be presidency.

Arlie Russell Hochschild (2016) agrees that we need to understand political feeling in order to understand political behaviour.<sup>1</sup> She names a paradox of apparent conservative irrationality in her account of the recent rightward drift of the Republican grassroots. Hochschild lived among Louisiana Tea Party supporters on-and-off from 2011 to 2016, and frames the paradox

thus: If Louisiana is one of the poorest US states in terms of GSP (Gross State Product), average household income, and environmental health, why has the state become a hotbed of Tea Party fervour, which calls for radically reducing government welfare and slashing government-led environmental protection? In other words, why do people vote against their self-interest? Hochschild got to know Tea Party loyalists with low incomes who have experienced industrial pollution so extreme that whole families have been plagued by new cancers, and whole areas, such as Bayou d'Indhe – places of life-sustaining fishing, leisure, and deep generational pride – have been utterly devastated by petrochemical pollution. The deeper Hochschild follows the paradox, the more paradoxical it becomes. For instance, the more polluted a parish is, the more likely its inhabitants are to be both poor and radically opposed to state-funded environmental protection, state-funded welfare, and 'big government' in general. She finds that an often cited explanation of the paradox – that middle and upper class whites support the Tea Party in areas where working class people don't vote – is simply untrue.

Hochschild solves the paradox by changing the question. Political scientists and commentators tend to assume that people vote according to self-interest, largely economic self-interest, and that political preference is pragmatic, rational, and usually consistent with coherent political ideology. Hochschild argues that feeling – feeling that binds communities and identities – influences political preference much more than the supposedly rational weighing up of factors we all believe we engage in as citizens. She explains this emotion as a 'deep story,' a story we aren't aware of that is deeply felt nonetheless. This 'feels-as-if' story, which is different for each cultural, political, geographical, and economic (and I would add, sexual) group, explains the political world. The classic liberal deep story produces a love of the melting pot, unscarred land, free libraries, unions, 'peace and love', the renegades of history we memorialise for expanding 'the people' to include our people. The conservative American deep story has a different central character, a different narrative, and produces a different belief in what national 'progress' is. Hochschild tells that story at length, in fragments throughout her book. Here is a summary:

You are patiently standing in a long line leading up a hill, as in a pilgrimage. You are situated in the middle of the line, along with others who are also white, older, Christian, and predominantly male, some with college degrees, some not. Just over the brow of the hill is the American dream ...

Many people at the back of the line are people of colour – poor, young and old, mainly without college degrees ... In principle you wish them well ...

You have suffered long hours, layoffs, and exposure to dangerous chemicals at work ... You have shown moral character through trial by fire, and the American dream of prosperity and security is a reward for all of this ...

The source of the American Dream is on the other side of the hill, hidden ... Are there good jobs for us all? Or just a few? Will we be waiting in line forever? It's so hard to see ...

The sun is hot ... Is the line moving backwards? You have not had a raise in years ... You've taken the bad news in stride because you're ... not a complainer. You count your blessings. You wish you could help your family and church more, because that's where your heart is ...

Look! You see people cutting in line ahead of you! ... Who are they? Some are black. Through affirmative action plans, pushed by the federal government, they are being given preference for places in colleges and universities, apprenticeships, jobs, welfare payments, and free lunches. Women, immigrants, refugees ... Where will it end?

And President Obama: how did he rise so high? The biracial son of a low-income single mother becomes president of the most powerful country in the world; you didn't see that coming. And if he's there, what kind of a slouch does his rise make you feel like, you who are supposed to be so much more privileged? Or did Obama get there fairly? How did he get into an expensive place like Columbia University? ...

Women: Another group is cutting ahead of you in line, if you are a man: women demanding the right to the men's jobs. Your dad didn't have to compete with women for scarce positions at the office ...

There are days when you feel like a refugee yourself ... But it's people like you who have made this country great. You feel uneasy. It has to be said: the line cutters ... are violating rules of fairness. You resent them, and you feel it's right that you do. So do your friends. *Fox* commentators reflect your feelings, for your deep story is also the *Fox News* deep story ...

You're a compassionate person. But now you've been asked to extend your sympathy to all the people who have cut in front of you. So you have your guard up against requests for sympathy. People complain: Racism. Discrimination. Sexism. You've heard stories of oppressed blacks, dominated women, weary immigrants, closeted gays, desperate refugees, but at some point, you say to yourself, you have to close the borders to human sympathy – especially if there are some among them who might bring you harm. You've suffered a good deal yourself, but you aren't complaining about it ...

Then you become suspicious. If people are cutting ahead of you, someone must be helping them. Who? A man is monitoring the line, walking up and down it, ensuring that the line is orderly and that access to the dream is fair. His name is President Barack Hussein Obama. And – hey – you see him waving to the line cutters! He feels extra sympathy for them that he does not feel for you. He's on their side. (Hochschild, 2016, pp.101-4).

When Hochschild read this story to her new Tea Party friends, they concurred; one, Lee Sherman, said, 'you've read my mind' (p. 108).

This explanation crosses the partisan empathy divide so well because of its heady affective charge: the anger everyone has directed toward people who skip ahead in slow-moving or unmoving lines. Hochschild depicts how it might feel to have a national leader who appears not only to disregard you and your kind, but to support people who (seem to) have cheated you out of your dream, the dream that is your birthright – and this in a time of economic, national, and environmental crisis, just as you begin to feel you have no chance of ever achieving that dream, and your kids probably don't either, despite all your hard work. This story explains the role of class for Trump supporters who are not wealthy: you were never at the front of the line and always expected to work and to wait, although the front was once closer. It explains the role of whiteness for people who are not active hate-mongers: you feel cheated because you have been cheated (by late capitalism), and your blame is (mis)directed toward people of colour who represent social changes that coincided with the cheating, a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* scapegoating that works both because of historic racist custom, and because you cannot blame capitalism – capitalism means freedom, capitalism is intrinsic to the Dream itself.

My question remains unanswered. 'Women', says Hochschild, are 'cutting ahead of you in line, if you are a man' (p. 103). How do those women feel? The women who are line-cutters themselves, but also feel pushed backwards by people of colour? Is their story the same, fused to men's out of filial sympathy or dependence? Do they stay behind deliberately? If they seek their own advancement, how do they reconcile this with a community that blames women for its wounds, its wounded pride?

Hochschild began writing about this story well before Trump announced his candidacy; but, watching him rise, she felt no surprise. He came to the people she knew like a lit match to a quietly billowing gas leak. All of her participants supported him, especially after the primaries ('never the Menshevik,' they said of Hillary (p. 88)). Trump gave his supporters an 'ecstatic high,' making much of his loathing of 'political correctness' and his willingness to kick protesters out of his rallies ("I'd like to punch him in the face" he said as a protester was escorted out; "I would have gone, *bum bum bum*" [he imitates pummelling the protestor]' (pp. 160-1)).

For Hochschild, Trump created new *feeling rules* for her line-waiters, releasing their pent-up rage, and releasing them from the liberal feeling rules that solicit sympathy for the underprivileged and exiled. ‘Trump is an emotions candidate’, Hochschild writes (2016, p.161). I don’t think this is unique to him, but the feeling he solicits and praises in his followers – ‘We have passion... We’re not silent anymore’ (Trump, quoted in Hochschild, p.161) – is particularly important to Trump and more naked than in most political campaigns, less packaged as policy. Trump points to supporters’ ‘passion’ and praises them for it, giving pride in return for hope, so as to create more pride and more hope in an exchange that, like layered glass refracting light, has incendiary potential. He does not follow the political convention of prioritising measured debate because, just as Berlant wrote of George W. Bush, Trump ‘wants the public to feel the funk, the live intensities and desires that make messages affectively immediate, seductive, binding ... [For him] a public’s binding to the political is best achieved neither by policy nor ideology but the *affect of feeling political together*’ (Berlant, 2010, p. 224, her emphasis). Feeling political together creates a *bond*, a union that feels good; that good feeling feeds the desire to be political together; that desire binds those who feel it to the collective and its vision. Hochschild confirms this when she notes that ardent Trump supporters leave ‘no interstitial moments [in dialogue] when skepticism might emerge’, because of a powerful desire to ‘hold on to ... elation’ as ‘a matter of *emotional self-interest*’ (p. 163, her emphasis).

Emotional self-interest, in Hochschild’s account, is the province of white men, for whom she justifies Trump’s emotional appeal: he is the first ‘identity politics candidate for the white man’ (p. 164) who ‘sometimes feels like a refugee’ himself because of feminism and civil rights and new immigrants, but isn’t ‘a complainer’ (pp. 101-4). This sometimes-refugee feeling, a vulnerable political ‘identity,’ has lately become increasingly characteristic of citizenship, as ‘a nationwide estrangement from the hegemonic centre seems now to dignify every citizen’s complaint’ (Berlant, 1997, p. 100). Trump represents white men who feel marginalised: ‘Implicitly, Trump promised to make men “great again” too’ (Hochschild, 2016, p. 164). Perhaps the promise to ‘make America great again’ was not delusional nostalgia (as implied by liberals who ask, ‘when was America great?’), but instead refers to the real time when all white men felt as if they were at or near the front of the line for the American Dream. This would explain the Tea Party’s obsession with the founding fathers and other romanticised versions of colonial history.

The question about women persists. In his 2015 book *Between the world and me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates describes ‘the Dreamers’<sup>2</sup> as ‘people who believe they are white’ rather than ‘white people’. Whiteness is the visual embodiment of an old belief that class privilege and protection are written into the flesh; it is a belief that the world is yours and you deserve it, it is your future, whereas people of colour are raised to be twice as good (which amounts to ‘accept half as much,’ an ‘inescapable robbery of time ... the raft of second chances for them, and twenty-three-hour days for us’ (Coates, 2015, p. 91)). Whiteness is a citizenship requirement for the country in the Dream. Coates reminds us that not all pale people have always been considered white in the United States: workers, Catholics, Jews, Quakers, bootleggers and other law-breakers, queers, migrants from Italy or Ireland, and women (women of means – pale and well-behaved – have always been a prized symbol of whiteness-as-class, but it took feminism for their whiteness to count as citizenship). More people than ever have been raised to believe they are white, and as resources become less and less accessible to any except the super-rich, the distance from the life that the Dreamers believe is their birthright grows.

I propose that we accept Roxane Gay’s argument that WFT are invested in protecting whiteness. This does not mean that they are conscious of this investment, let alone that they would admit to it. Whiteness is implicitly coded in the American Dream, because that Dream

– of perfect wealth and perfect safety – has long depended on the exploitation of the bodies of the colonised. People raised to believe they are white are raised to believe the Dream is theirs to strive for. Given that Trump supporters are statistically likely to be both Christian and married,<sup>3</sup> I think we can assume that heteronormativity definitively characterises the whiteness these women are invested in. It is through this sexual/racial nexus that women are implicated in the Trumpian project. Below I link this to Trump-supporting women's will to protect the normative coupling of womanhood-as-motherhood, for this too is a citizenship requirement for women in the world of the Dream.

I propose, then, that in accepting Roxane Gay's argument that WFT are invested in protecting whiteness, we ask what this means for such women specifically, and why they support a misogynist white man and not a reasonable (and heterosexual) white woman. How might women's interests become a proxy for whiteness? How might white women understand their interests *as women* to be served by the dominance of white men? What is women's 'feels-as-if' story, and how might that help us with these questions?

I think Hochschild's waiting-in-line applies here. There's a woman who feels she has been overtaken by people of colour, although she has passed many men who were once in front of her. She feels sympathy for the men she has passed. This has something to do with the normative bond between heterosexuality and whiteness. If we recall the central place of the heteronormative family in the Dream, it seems obvious that part of the work of being in line is the work of creating that family. The concept of 'virtue' will help us understand how this work sustains the attachment between this woman and the men she has passed. Being virtuous is necessary to keep your place in line and to advance, regardless of gender, as Hochschild notes of her line-waiting man: 'you' are patient, compassionate, and have 'shown moral character' by working doggedly and not complaining. To be virtuous you must also be normatively sexual, especially if you are a woman, because women's virtuous work is more about sexuality and reproduction than the industrial work Hochschild refers to – because women's work is more sexual than men's. Sexual virtue has a teleological quality: women are promised (eventual) happiness in exchange. Sexually normative behaviour is the key kind of virtuous labour women do to work toward the Dream, the good future; virtue maps what *will be*, and in doing so *wills* heteronormative future into being. This woman feels attached to the men behind and around her because of her attachment to a heterosexual future. This attachment is why she excuses Trump's 'locker room talk'<sup>4</sup> because boys *will be* boys, and thinks Hillary's feminism *will* destroy her daughters' future, perhaps by giving them a *will* that is more like Hillary's own, that does not prioritise family happiness.<sup>5</sup>

There's also a woman who hasn't moved ahead of men in line, or barely so. Because she believes in Christian family values, she would prefer not to work outside the home at all, but must, because of an absent or insufficient partner's income. She works for very little in a service job that is paid less than blue collar men's jobs (because it is women's work). She lives in a state that limits or prohibits access to reproductive healthcare (and supports this, because she is loyal to her church); she became a mother young, and has never had access to affordable childcare either. This woman has been overtaken not only by people of colour, but by professional women too: classy city women, feminists (known often as 'feminazis' – Hochschild, 2016, p. 89), women who started wearing trousers in the 1960s, women who don't marry or reproduce, or have unconventional marriages, or reproduce unconventionally, women such as – Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The former is a middle class version of the latter, with an economic difference, but the same enemies (including feminists like Clinton). The question then becomes, why do WFT claim to be feminists? What does feminism mean to them? Could feminism be a proxy for whiteness



– whiteness that is also heteronormativity? How so? And how has Clinton become the devil opposed to their feminism? These questions drive a larger project I am undertaking, which involves skimming the surface of the Trumpian media worlds that women occupy, trying to get a sense of what WFT's hope points to or sticks to – who is included in their 'us,' who gets bound by their feeling of being political together, what vision they are bound to, what sort of dream they are waiting in line for. Contemporary 'politics is something overheard', Berlant (2010) writes, 'encountered indirectly and unsystematically, through a kind of communication more akin to gossip than to cultivated rationality. But there is nothing fundamentally passive or superficial in overhearing the political' (p. 227). The word *gossip* nicely describes social media, where rumour, clickbait 'news', and narcissistic oversharing circulate notoriously, but in this we are active and deeply engrossed. In online political communities, names and faces and first-person testimonies give thick layers of flesh to a deep story, bolstering the feeling of being political together with the banal details of people's lives and the resonance of each individual voice used in concert, building up the intimacy of the political, feeding bodies hungry for belonging.

Naturally I am as interested in Hillary-hating as in Trump-loving: two sides of the same coin, two poles of WFT's answer to the question of progress. One of the most concrete differences between Hillary's female supporters and Trump's is that, despite being feminists, WFT are anti-abortion. Pro-life memes are scattered throughout their Facebook activity and often present Hillary as a babykiller, a monstrous (anti-)mother, the enemy of women because she is the enemy of mothers, since she is the enemy of 'the unborn'. In one meme, she carries a bloodied mallet and looks murderous. In another, the caption to a photograph of a glowing foetus reads: 'Hillary Clinton says you can kill a baby the day of its delivery just hours before its [sic] born. I don't know what happens in somebody's mind or how dark their heart must be to say things like that.' The 'dark heart' inscribes an ominous, witchlike evil to the blackness that, in this image, represents the body of the mother who may choose abortion, and by extension, those who permit her choice. This is highly political: foetal images implicate women in the project of nation-building, because 'the [reproductive] space of public dignity and value that used to be reserved as a Utopian promise for women' has been taken up by the image of the bright, perfect, horrifyingly vulnerable foetus, the only perfect life, not yet scarred by identity or material struggle (Berlant, 1997, p. 98). The bodies of women are figured as obstacles to national flourishing; the foetus's 'fate is said to be the nation's fate' (Berlant, 1997, p. 87). Pro-choice women 'threaten a rupture in a traditional notion of continuity between feminine value and motherhood' (Berlant, 1997, p. 99), and this helps to explain the feminism advocated by WFT: their feminism names a political stance women can take *as mothers and potential mothers*. Mothering, reproducing the nation, is the political work of women. In that model of feminism, abortion is anti-feminist because it breaks the coherence of woman-as-mother that is the root of women's political agency and belonging.

If reproducing the nation is the political (dream)work of women, we must keep asking what the nation is, as a Dream, what kind of place it is. What sort of life is promised to women there? What kinds of women get to live it? I have suggested that whiteness is a crucial component of the Dream, of perfect happiness in a perfect suburban family, a perfect marriage. If Hillary is anti-mother she is also anti-white, because she is anti-Dream (this particular dream). This is not simply due to her pro-choice stance. Because of her suspiciously slim reproductive record, and because she never compromised her professional ambition for reproductive or familial reasons, Clinton herself is not properly white according to this criterion.



In a white supremacist prison-industrial nation, the call to ‘lock her up!’ – ubiquitous in WFT’s social media as well as Trump’s pre-election rallies – testifies to Hillary’s improper whiteness most plainly. For Coates (2015), ‘I could have you arrested’ really means ‘I could take your body’ (p. 95), strip it to bare life; your body belongs with the other dissenters and deviants, the black men who make up 8% of the world’s imprisoned. This has nothing to do with ideology or reason (otherwise ‘lock her up!’ would have died when faced with proof Hillary had not broken any laws), and everything to do with the affective role of the prison as a holding area for bodies that disrupt feelings of safety and belonging in the national affective community, bodies that fracture that community’s unity and interrupt its progress toward the Dream.

WFT’s visions of Hillary as a criminal, as an iconic anti-mother, perform their powerful will to protect the normative coupling of woman-as-(white)-mother, because (for them), that is the condition of possibility for aspirational female citizenship. Political possibility holds the future open for the hopeful; it keeps people coming back to politics as an instrument of change. In this story, WFT put faith in the possibility that being political together can make better lives, and that with Trump’s leadership, they will have a better shot at achieving the Dream life, with a family safe and happy at the heart of a great nation.

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## Notes

- 1 All the Hochschild quotes which follow are from Hochschild (2016).
- 2 That is, those who lust after the American Dream and take that desire to be their right as American citizens, the root of their national identity and sense of belonging.
- 3 See CNN exit polls, November 2016: <http://edition.cnn.com/election/results/exit-polls>
- 4 WFT describe the leaked Access Hollywood clip of Trump bragging about sexually assaulting women as the sort of talk all real men participate in, and something that they, as real women, are too strong (too feminist) to be injured by.
- 5 See Ahmed (2010) for more on will and wilfulness in relation to the way girls are raised vis-à-vis normative womanhood versus feminist wilfulness.

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