

# PLUCKED

*A History of Hair Removal*

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Yet even as medical journals were filling with accounts of successful treatment of hirsutism with anti-androgens, a new prospect was emerging: that of abandoning hair removal altogether. “[A]lready,” noted one prominent medical journal in 1976, “some younger women are leaving body hair alone. The reason may be current fashion, indolence, a respect for untouched nature, women’s lib, or some other individual attitude. Who can say what the custom will be ten years from now?”<sup>85</sup> More radical approaches to the problem of hair were on the horizon.

[ 6 ]

## UNSHAVEN

*“Arm-Pit Feminists” and Women’s Liberation*

IN THE SUMMER of 1972, as the United States sat mired in a deepening war in Vietnam and facing an acrimonious presidential election, the editors of *Ms.* magazine prepared their first regular issue for distribution. The issue included essays on the value of housework, lesbian love and sexuality, and the Equal Rights Amendment. Joining such concerns to the forthcoming national elections, the cover displayed the cartoon figure of a strident Wonder Woman alongside the caption “Peace and Justice in ’72” (figure 6.1).

But it was not merely the magazine’s pursuit of peace and justice that resonated with readers, nor its consideration of labor in the household, sex between women, or an equal rights mandate. It was a three-page essay sandwiched between those articles, titled “Body Hair: The Last Frontier.” There, authors Harriet Lyons and Rebecca Rosenblatt described the idea that “a woman’s underarm and leg hair are superfluous” as an “embodiment of our culture’s preoccupation with keeping women in a kind of state of innocence, and denying their visceral selves.” Some women, they continued, go so far as to shave their pubic hair, “thereby emulating the infantile sexlessness of a little girl.” Hair removal was declared to be one more measure of the drudgery to which American women were unjustly subjected. Yet an “emerging feminist consciousness” promised to counter the inequity, revealing the social forces arrayed against looking and smelling “as we really are.” As the

authors concluded confidently, while “the hirsute woman is not yet an idea whose time has come . . . more and more individual women are risking those stares to affirm their natural femaleness. Eventually, this small but intimate tyranny will be resisted.”<sup>1</sup>

Lyons and Rosenblatt were accurate in their sense that the time had not yet fully arrived for the hirsute woman. During the Republican national convention later that summer, the *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Irving Wallace was walking along a Miami beach with reporter Walter Cronkite when Cronkite asked if he had seen “the new Women’s Lib magazine.” Wallace responded: “Yes, I read it—about body hair on women—how they should let hair grow on their legs.” He continued, “I don’t like it, but there are some good arguments for it, Walter.” According to Wallace’s recollection, Cronkite nodded and replied, “I guess there are, but I just can’t get used to it.”<sup>2</sup> Cronkite’s dismay about unshaven women was shared by others.<sup>3</sup> A letter to the *New York Times* in 1973 decried “arm-pit Feminists, women whose involvement with the ethic of body hair has overpowered other considerations.”<sup>4</sup> One Texas legislator was said to have referred to the twenty thousand people who attended the 1977 National Women’s Conference in Houston as “hairy-legged zoo girls.”<sup>5</sup>

Even self-identified feminists weren’t sure they were ready to cross the body hair frontier. *Ms.* decided to publish the piece after it had been rejected by *Cosmopolitan*, but even the article’s editor, Suzanne Levine, reportedly found the idea of allowing hair to grow “a little disgusting.”<sup>6</sup> Betty Friedan soon began criticizing Gloria Steinem and other *Ms.* contributors for telling American women “they didn’t have to bother to wear makeup or shave their legs.” Friedan heaped scorn on *Ms.* for “titillating . . . with sermons about unshaven armpits and pubic hair,” while she and others focused their sights on enhancing women’s professional mobility.<sup>7</sup> For Friedan, her biographer explains, “hairiness” became convenient shorthand for “anti-man, anti-marriage, anti-motherhood pseudo-radicals”—an efficient way of referring to all those activists Friedan considered “outside the mainstream.”<sup>8</sup>

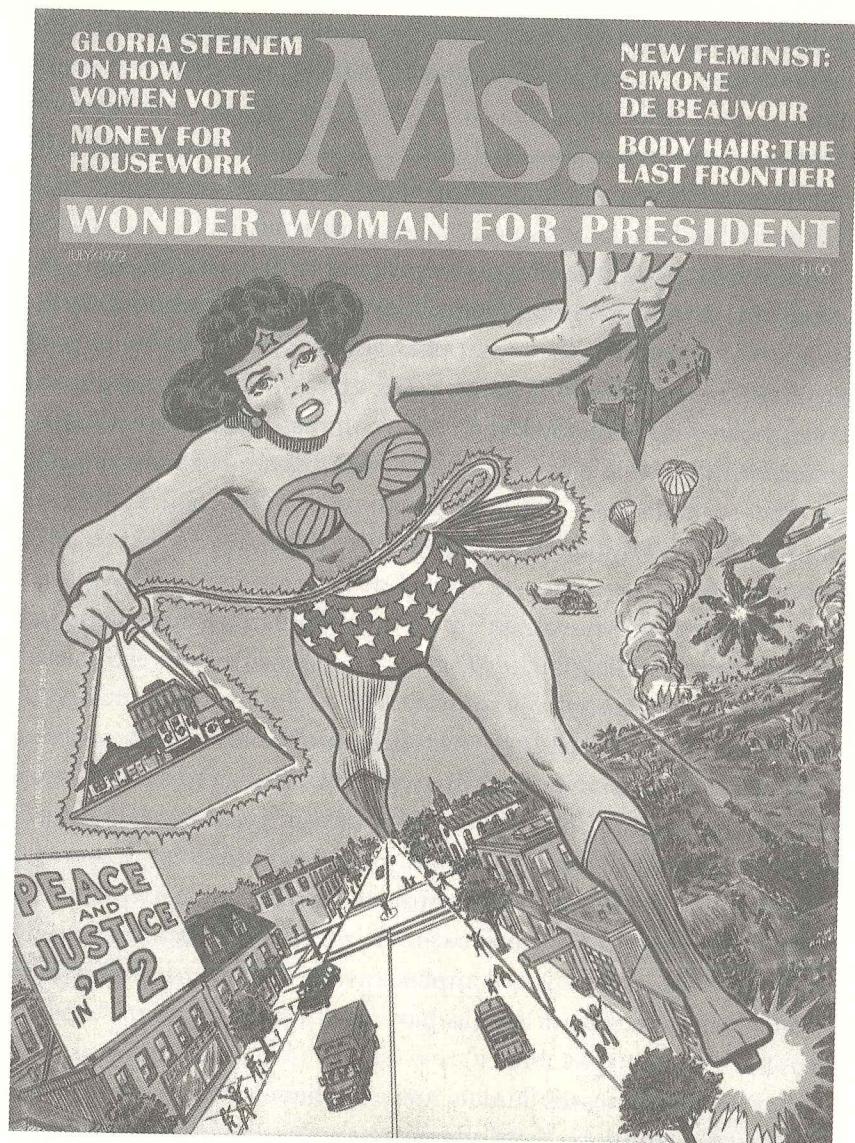


Figure 6.1. The cover of the first regular issue of *Ms.* magazine, announcing an essay on body hair. (Reprinted by permission of *Ms.* magazine, ©1972.)

What made hair such a ready surrogate for both proponents and critics of the social movement that came to be known as second-wave feminism? Why would the simple cessation of shaving be described, on the one hand, as a “titillating” diversion from more serious feminist concerns and, on the other, as dangerous political extremism, a sign of opposition to men, marriage, and motherhood? How did body hair come to be such a potent, conflicted symbol of women’s political consciousness?<sup>9</sup>

Like blue jeans, bare feet, recreational drug use, and other elements of dress and deportment, body hair gained renewed symbolic resonance with the social change movements that emerged after the Second World War. No other element of countercultural style, however, developed such a lasting association with “feminism” as did visible leg or armpit hair.<sup>10</sup> Even a generation after the second wave, the American movie star Julia Roberts prompted international media frenzy by exposing a hairy armpit at a 1999 movie premiere. A major Canadian newspaper proposed that Roberts’s unshaven armpit “was probably some feminist statement type thing rather than laziness,” while the U.S.-based *Newsweek* suggested that a more fitting career for the actor might be “politics” or “teaching.”<sup>11</sup> At the 2010 Golden Globes a decade later, the unshaven legs of award-winning actress Mo’Nique prompted a similar flurry of online and print commentary, much of it devoted to discerning her intended political “statement.”<sup>12</sup> Americans’ identification of feminism with body hair was still so well entrenched in the early twenty-first century that one review could sum up the entire, complex history of diverse U.S. women’s movements with a single parenthetical allusion to “under-arm hair.”<sup>13</sup>

For both advocates and critics, unshaven armpits and legs served as a symbolic reminder of women’s labor—in this case, the repetitive, expensive, and often invisible labor of maintaining hair-free flesh. The question of whether such efforts were a trivial nuisance (as Betty Friedan gruffly suggested) or the very embodiment of women’s oppression (as Lyons and Rosen-

blatt argued) would shape discussions of women’s bodily choices for decades to come. Women’s hairy underarms and shins were transformed into badges of political consciousness, and the “hairy feminist” into an enduring cultural icon.

BEFORE ANY U.S. women could take up a call to stop shaving, however, they first had to be convinced to *start*, a shift that rested on several entwined technical and social developments. As noted previously, through most of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, non-Native American women and men largely avoided self-shaving, due in no small part to the skill and care required to maintain a steel straight razor. That aversion slowly began to recede with the introduction of safety razors, which included a guard over the blade to inhibit inadvertent slicing. Described by French artisan Jean-Jacques Perret as early as 1770, the first safety razors were not brought to market until the late nineteenth century, where they enjoyed only modest success in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Although a marked improvement over “cut throat” razors, the blades on the hoe-shaped devices still required time-consuming honing and stropping. The more significant technical development was thus the 1903 introduction of the now-familiar T-shaped safety razor with double-edged, disposable blades. The blade, designed by King Camp Gillette, was brought to manufactured reality by William Emery Nickerson, an MIT-trained analytic chemist who had worked previously for an association of leather tanners. With Gillette’s new razor, users were freed from the tedious labor of blade maintenance (figure 6.2).<sup>15</sup>

Shaving’s appeal, particularly for women trained to feel shame about use of “masculine” tools, was further augmented by the introduction of private, indoor bathrooms. Prior to the development of public water systems and indoor household plumbing, obtaining the water needed for rinsing razor and skin was a back-breaking activity: water was gathered in buckets from ponds, streams, or water-hauling carts, pumped and hauled from wells, cisterns, and rain barrels. Bathing was an understandably rare event, even

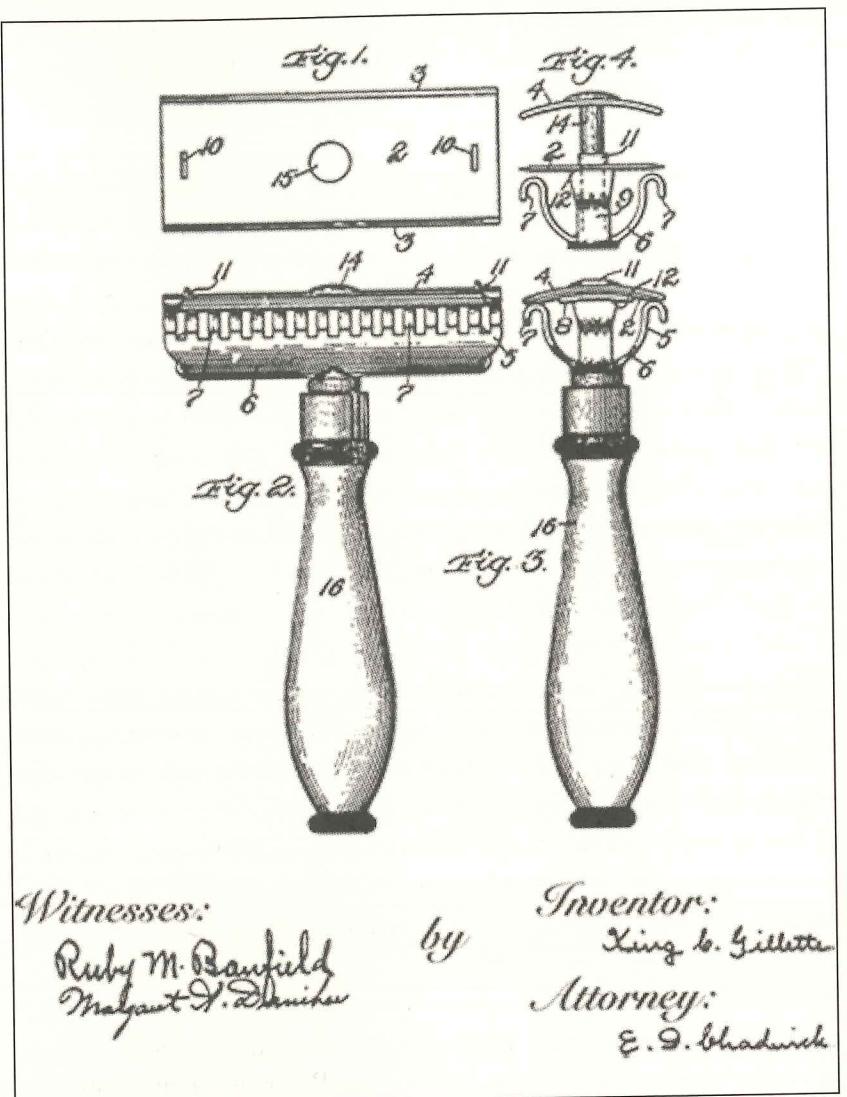


Figure 6.2. King C. Gillette's 1904 patent for a new safety razor, recorded by the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

for the affluent. Describing her first shower in 1798, Elizabeth Drinker, the famously beautiful wife of a wealthy Philadelphia merchant, noted that she had not been “wett all over at once, for 28 years past.”<sup>16</sup> As urban populations grew, received approaches to water delivery and drainage became untenable. Driven by concerns about epidemic disease, major cities began developing municipal water supplies early in the nineteenth century; Philadelphia’s pioneering water distribution system, constructed in response to recurrent outbreaks of yellow fever, began operation in 1801. Within a century of the nation’s founding, most cities over ten thousand had at least some public water supply.<sup>17</sup> This shift did not mean that Americans had yet changed their daily habits. Bathing remained an irregular activity, even for those Americans wealthy enough to possess a fixed bathtub with piped-in water. For most, bodily washing remained tied to a bowl and pitcher set in an individual bedchamber, filled with water hauled by hand into the house. In 1880, five out of six Americans “were still washing with a pail and sponge.”<sup>18</sup>

But as the nineteenth century drew to a close, perceptions and practices of bodily washing shifted. Immersed in a growing preoccupation with personal and societal cleanliness, bathing was transfigured from an elite affectation to a matter of personal and national health. The bathroom was described not only as a novel convenience but also as a bulwark against contagious disease.<sup>19</sup> Increasing numbers of municipalities installed public water mains and sewers, and pushed their growing immigrant populations to adopt new norms. “Every child,” the New York State Department of Health declared in 1914, “should have one tub bath daily.”<sup>20</sup> The urban poor, whose tenements did not yet include space or plumbing for middle-class amenities, generally relied on municipal bathhouses for washing; the rural poor continued to haul water by bucket as before.<sup>21</sup> Maintaining a separate, private area of the home for bodily washing—a “bathroom”—became a way to mark class status, and middle-class Americans strove to attain the luxury. Beginning in the 1870s, factory assembly

significantly dropped the price of plain and enameled cast iron tubs and other standard bathroom fixtures. By 1908, consumers perusing the Sears catalogue could find a choice of three complete bathroom sets—tub, sink and toilet—for prices ranging from \$33.90 to \$51.10, all shipped ready to be connected to household plumbing.<sup>22</sup> Many of these bathrooms contained mirrors, also made newly affordable by mass production, which allowed fresh scrutiny of one's hair growth.<sup>23</sup> New home construction and urban planning reflected Americans' changing expectations, and support for public bathhouses declined accordingly. By the mid-1930s, nearly all of the apartments in New York City had private baths or showers.<sup>24</sup> More and more energy, water, metal, and stone were required simply to sustain what was considered "normal, ordinary, and necessary."<sup>25</sup>

More to the point, the advent of the bathroom facilitated shaving's passage from the public barber shop to the private space of the home. Where shaving previously relied on the help of paid or unpaid assistants, razors could now be used, safely and discreetly, in a room equipped with running water, drainage for effluvia, and a well-lit mirror. Shaving, formerly conducted by men on men in public, male spaces, moved into a sequestered room dedicated to maintenance of the body, where it could be practiced in unobserved solitude. The labors of hair removal were newly individualized and concealed.

The privatization of shaving in the United States continued with the nation's entry to the First World War. As King Camp Gillette's biographer notes, "the raising of mass armies, with millions of men in uniform and under strict discipline," offered unprecedented opportunities for introducing men to self-shaving.<sup>26</sup> Shaving appeared advantageous to military leaders for several reasons: not only did beard removal help keep down lice and other vermin, but it also helped assure a close fit for the gas masks used in the trenches. By the time American soldiers joined the conflict in Europe, U.S. Army regulations required every soldier to possess a shaving device of some kind.<sup>27</sup>



## The Armies of the World Use the Gillette Safety Razor

**W**AR is the great test of any article of utility. The soldier's kit is reduced to actual necessities.

You can't imagine a soldier carrying 'round a strop and hone.

The Official Army Regulations of all Countries now call for a clean shave. And beyond all question the Gillette is the Razor of the Great War—if all the Armies, on all fronts.

Gillette Razors and Blades have gone abroad in a continuous stream of shipments from this Country—by thousands, by hundreds of thousands and by millions!

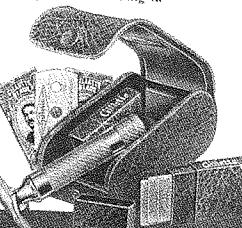
One recent shipment was 80,000 Razors and 600,000 dozen Blades.

They've gone by Atlantic Passenger Steamers—by Freight—by International Parcel Post. By first-class registered mail and they've gone as personal

Write for the New Gillette Catalogue. See the thirty series of Gillette Safety Razors, \$5 to \$30. Gillette Deales everywhere.

*Maintain Discipline in the service units. Gillette razors for the unshaven troops, to keep the uniforms white and smart.*

**NO STROPPING**



*If You Live in Canada—write the Gillette Safety Razor Company of Canada, Ltd., 73 St. Alexander St., Montreal, for Canadian Catalogue and Prices.*

**GILLETTE SAFETY RAZOR CO.**  
BOSTON, U. S. A.

**NO HONING**

Figure 6.3. A 1917 advertisement for the Gillette Safety Razor, stressing its place among the soldier's vital "necessities." (Courtesy of Matt Pisarcik, *RazorArchive.com*.)

The Gillette Safety Razor Company shrewdly anticipated this emerging market and began churning out special compact pocket razor and blade sets embossed with the insignia of the U.S. Navy and Army. They further allied their war effort with a new adver-

tising campaign, trumpeting the shipment of “millions” of razors and blades to men fighting overseas. “You can’t imagine a soldier carrying ‘round a strop and hone,’” one advertisement for the disposable blades stated.<sup>28</sup> “[B]eyond all question,” another 1917 advertisement declared, “the Gillette is the Razor of the Great War.”<sup>29</sup> In less than two years, hundreds of thousands of American men were initiated into the custom of regular self-shaving (figure 6.3).<sup>30</sup>

Gillette was equally canny about bringing that military custom back to the home front. As the nation demobilized, the company ramped up its campaign. It opened a chain of luxuriously appointed stores, launched a fleet of shiny Franklin convertible cars marked with the company’s logo, and sent out teams of young women to stage product demonstrations and address questions about shaving. By the time the company’s patent ran out in November 1921, Gillette had helped acculturate “a whole generation of men from all classes . . . to the idea of the daily shave.”<sup>31</sup> For American men, a freshly shaven face became “a normative cultural value.”<sup>32</sup>

War also transformed women’s relation to shaving, albeit in different ways. The Gillette Safety Razor Company introduced its first razor for women, the Milady Décolletée, in the midst of the European conflict. Small and curved to better fit the armpit, the razor was designed to supplement the sleeveless and sheer-sleeved fashions of the period. Yet increased pressure on women to remove their underarm hair did not translate simply or easily into greater comfort with the idea of shaving. Although depilatories remained messy, foul smelling, and—in the case of Koremlu—potentially lethal, many women continued to use them to avoid the masculine connotation of razors. Recognizing consumers’ ongoing aversion to the concept, Gillette studiously avoided the term “shaving” and “blade” in advertisements for their carefully ornamented Milady Décolletée, referring instead to modern kinds of “toilet accessories.”<sup>33</sup> Yet once American men returned from the war with established shaving habits of their own, women in their households might use men’s razors sur-



Figure 6.4. Early Gillette advertising copy for a women’s safety razor, which carefully avoids reference to “shaving” or “blade.” (Courtesy of Matt Pisarcik, *RazorArchive.com*.)

repetitiously, bypassing the stigma and hassle of purchasing their own tools for shaving. That women regularly swiped the razors of their husbands, fathers, and brothers is suggested by one magazine's reflection on the rise of razors designed for women: "The practice of 'razor-napping' has long been a source of mild marital and familial discord, and the greater availability of women's razors may even be a boon to family harmony."<sup>34</sup>

American women's gradual conversion to shaving reached a turning point with the production shortages brought on by the nation's entry into World War II. Animus against visibly hairy lower legs had been in place for two decades, but most women adhered to the social norm by wearing thick, hair-concealing stockings when appearing in public. As both nylon (a synthetic fiber developed by Du Pont) and silk were commandeered for military uses, stockings fell into increasingly short supply.<sup>35</sup> Two months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Du Pont converted its nylon production—go percent of which had been devoted to stockings—to military applications, even as raw silk imports from Japan ceased.<sup>36</sup> While England prioritized hosiery as an "essential" element of civilian life, the U.S. War Production Board sharply curtailed stocking manufacture: within a single year beginning in September 1941, production of all-silk hosiery declined 99.1 percent and all-nylon hosiery by 97.1 percent.<sup>37</sup> The resulting stocking shortage led to a dramatic rise in consumption of "liquid stockings," tinted compounds designed to create the illusion of fabric for women reluctant to appear bare legged. Sold as powders, lotions, and creams, leg cosmetics were applied with the fingers or an applicator pad—a process that could take anywhere from five to fifteen minutes a day, with additional time for drying and buffing. Sometimes paired with decals or penciled-in lines to create the illusion of a stocking seam on the back of the leg, "seam" and liquid stocking together cost only a fraction of the price of either silk or nylon stockings: where stockings cost on average about thirty dollars per month, effective liquid stockings were only about a penny per day, with a package of twelve "seam" decals running an extra twenty-five cents.<sup>38</sup>

The cosmetics only worked, though, when the legs were freshly stripped of hair. As consumer magazines emphasized, "The best liquid stockings available will deceive no one unless the legs are smooth and free of hair or stubble. Leg makeup will mat or cake on the hairs and make detours round the stubble and give a streaky appearance."<sup>39</sup> Shaving was essential for a "professional appearance" with the paints.<sup>40</sup> Despite the laboriousness of the process of shaving, painting, and striping, leg cosmetics gained popularity over the early 1940s, moving from fad to custom in a matter of months.<sup>41</sup> Several writers predicted that the use of the cosmetics would "go right on flourishing" even once silk and nylon stockings became available: "[T]hey're cheap, they're cool, [and] they never sag at knees and ankles."<sup>42</sup>

Wartime shortages, however, eventually caught up with the lotions, too. Beginning in 1942, the War Production Board, the agency appointed by President Roosevelt to convert the nation's industrial capacities to making munitions and other military equipment, set limits on cosmetics manufacturing along with other production deemed "nonessential." The popularity of leg cosmetics took another hit with the imposition of federal cosmetic taxes as high as 20 percent. By 1945, *Consumer Reports* noted that sales in leg make-up had leveled off, as more and more white women decided that it was cheaper and simpler to shave, "get a good coat of tan and let it go at that."<sup>43</sup> Regular shaving gained appeal, and continued to expand in the immediate postwar years, as women who adopted the practice in their teens and twenties passed the habit on to their daughters. By 1964, surveys indicated that 98 percent of all American women aged fifteen to forty-four were routinely shaving their legs.<sup>44</sup>

These changing social norms were eagerly supplied by a growing "personal care" industry, which expanded with the larger postwar boom in manufacturing. A hoe-shaped safety razor with replaceable cartridge (rather than simply replaceable blades) was introduced in 1970, and a hoe-shaped discardable razor—which required no maintenance or replacement of parts whatsoever—

was brought to market five years later. Both tools, priced to be marketed as disposable, relied on novel methods of plastic injection molding. And both tools carried with them the ecological implications of the postwar plastics industry, including consumption of petroleum and other composite materials, carbon emissions from production and incineration, and generation of solid waste, urban litter, and marine pollution. As historian of design Thomas Hine has observed, a “disposable world” had been created—a world that activists began to challenge.<sup>45</sup>

HOW DID A custom as widespread as leg shaving—widely adopted by 1945 and practiced by nearly all premenopausal American women by the mid-1960s—come to be targeted by proponents of “women’s liberation”? Part of the answer lies in hair’s prominent role in other emerging movements for social change: as a noticeable and relatively malleable physical feature, hair became a ready medium for communicating altered political consciousness. For advocates of Black Power and Black Nationalism, revised treatment of head hair became a vital element of resistance to racist perceptions of beauty. Rejecting pressed or chemically straightened hair was a way to “decolonize” the maligned black body, to directly challenge color-caste hierarchies that framed blackness as ugly or monstrous.<sup>46</sup> Unprocessed hairstyles, referred to as “natural,” provided a visible bulwark against Eurocentric standards of appearance.<sup>47</sup>

Hair also acquired heightened political significance within escalating youth protests against the ongoing American war in Vietnam. Increasing numbers of male high school students, particularly white students, grew their hair long, infuriating some parents and school officials. Although no public consensus emerged on the meanings of young white men’s uncut hair, for some observers the “hippie” style symbolized a “refusal to embrace the rationality, moderation, security, and orderliness that modern society expected from the best and the brightest of its young.”<sup>48</sup> In 1967, the musical *Hair* picked up on this generational

conflict. Structured around one young man’s struggle to decide whether to comply with the draft, the musical merged seemingly superficial questions of dress and hairstyle with larger questions about violence, liberty, and social duty. The theater-going public embraced the show, and its commercial success further solidified the associations between hair and contemporary social movements.<sup>49</sup>

As head hair was acquiring new political connotations, women were identifying and articulating new political demands. Middle-class white women’s increased participation in the paid labor force during World War II reconfigured their expectations of economic equity, as did the expansion of access to colleges and universities after the war. Growing disillusionment with sexism in the burgeoning civil rights, free speech, and antiwar movements further propelled some activists to enunciate distinctive positions within opposition politics. Feminist activists involved in Asian American “yellow power” organizations, the Chicano *Movimiento*, and American Indian struggles for sovereignty similarly staked out progressive roles for women within their respective movements for change.<sup>50</sup>

Such political agitation, importantly, tended to focus on spheres formerly considered outside the realm of politics. Having gained many of the characteristic political and economic rights of self-governance (the rights to control their own earnings, to hold and transfer property, to enter into contracts, and to vote), liberal and radical women (and men) increasingly turned their attention to matters long held to be “private.” Sexual relations, the nature of the family, housework, and medical care all came to be treated as rife with persistent inequity. As activist Charlotte Bunch argued, “there is no private domain of a person’s life that is not political and there is no political issue that is not ultimately personal. The old barriers have fallen.”<sup>51</sup> Reflecting on her domestic life after reading Friedan’s 1962 *Feminine Mystique*, one Atlanta housewife spoke for many when she declared that for too long she had “voluntarily enslaved” herself within the home.<sup>52</sup> Routinely echoing this language

of enslavement, the dominant voices of second-wave feminism—white, middle-class—sought to extend “liberation” to the “prison” of the private home, the “subtle bondage” of sexual relations, the tyrannies of caring labor, and other domains.

WOMEN’S BODIES WERE at the center of these calls for liberation. For more than a century, achieving bodily self-determination had been a key objective of struggles for women’s equality, evident in nineteenth-century radical Ezra Heywood’s assertion of “Woman’s Natural Right to ownership of and control over her own body-self.”<sup>53</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, support for rights to self-ownership and bodily control animated many of the activities of women’s liberation, as reflected in the title of one of the era’s most widely read books, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. The idea that women should “take control of their own bodies” informed approaches to issues ranging from violence against women to participation in organized sports. Freedom and equality, activists proposed, resided in increasing command over one’s “own” body.<sup>54</sup>

Body hair readily denoted this evolving regard for self-ownership and self-determination. The treatment of armpit, facial, or leg hair, like the changing head hair styles of antiwar hippies and Black Nationalists, provided women’s liberationists with a malleable and visible symbol of their commitment to the “natural,” unconfined body. Simply by ceasing shaving, advocates of women’s rights might quickly establish their identification with larger social movements. Indeed, the representational power of hair was especially potent for women’s rights advocates, given that routine removal of body hair so readily evoked the myriad other elements of so-called women’s work that second-wave feminists were beginning to question. The shaving of women’s pubic hair before hospital births, for instance, became one of several routine obstetrical interventions challenged by advocates of “natural” childbirth, along with mandatory episiotomies, the use of enemas, and the immediate withdrawal of newborns from their mothers.<sup>55</sup> As women gained new rights to determine their sexual and repro-

ductive lives through landmark court cases such as *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, *Roe v. Wade*, and *Doe v. Bolton* (which together established the rights to use contraception and to terminate pregnancy within the first trimester), they also began to fight constraints on other kinds of bodily expression, such as prohibitions on cross-dressing.<sup>56</sup> Routine shaving—setting “your flesh . . . on fire”—was targeted as one among many “barbarous rituals” associated with womanhood in America.<sup>57</sup> In this context, body hair provided a convenient stand-in for larger disputes over which elements of the self were (or should be) subject to the woman’s individual control. As expressed by one Seattle-based YMCA employee, fired for refusing to remove “excessive hair growth” from her chin, “If God gave it to me, why should I have it off?”<sup>58</sup>

Many of the white feminists who took up body hair as a badge of heightened political consciousness were not particularly reflective about the legacies of racial injustice invested in attitudes toward body hair. “The fact is,” Germaine Greer comfortably declared in 1970, “that some men are hairy and some are not; some women are hairy and some are not. Different races have different patterns of hair distribution.” “Some darkskinned Caucasian women have abundant growth of dark hair on their thighs, calves, arms and even cheeks,” she continued, while “[t]hat most virile of creatures, the buck Negro, has very little body hair at all.”<sup>59</sup> In their feature article in *Ms.*, Lyons and Rosenblatt noted, without critique, that visible body hair marked one not as a member of dominant American culture but as a “dirty foreigner.”<sup>60</sup> They exemplified the point with an anecdote meant to shock the magazine’s readers: “A young woman involved in a bicycle accident was asked by a New York policeman examining her injured, unshaven leg, ‘You’re not Puerto Rican, are you?’”<sup>61</sup> The iconic “hairy-legged feminist” was implicitly or explicitly coded as white and U.S. born.

Equally important, the racially coded rhetoric of women’s liberation was easily converted to revenue-generating ends. Over the course of the 1970s, individual bodily control, rather than adherence to norms of hygiene or health, became the dominant theme

of popular representations of hair removal. That ideal of bodily control, moreover, supported new trends in hair *removal* as readily as new trends in hair growth. Mainstream U.S. women's magazines shifted from describing body hair as "superfluous" or "excessive," as defined according to some abstract medical standard, toward describing hair as personally "unwanted." Through titles such as "Six Ways to Get Rid of Unwanted Hair," "Removing Unwanted Hair Permanently, Not a Do-It-Yourself Job," "Hair You Don't Want," and "Hair That You Can Do Without," magazines stressed the hope of liberation through consumption—specifically, the choice to purchase and use specific hair removal products.<sup>62</sup>

A GENERATION LATER, hair removal remained a flashpoint for battles over women's sexual and political freedom. In 1998, for instance, an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission appellate judge awarded compensatory back pay with interest and benefits for the harassment endured when a driving instructor referred to the appellant's "big old hairy legs" during a driving test.<sup>63</sup> Far more than their predecessors in the 1970s, however, "third wave" feminist activists began to oppose the corporate capitalism that encouraged the conflation of choice and consumerism. Spoken word artist Alix Olson expressed such opposition in her 2001 "Armpit Hair [Mammally Factual]":

*Well, I want to go to Europe, the land of Brave and Free  
Where it's considered natural for girls to be hairy.  
Where Gillette don't make a profit off of  
keeping womyn busy  
As pleasers with their shavers  
and their razors and their tweezers.<sup>64</sup>*

A group of self-described "radical cheerleaders" similarly challenged the nexus of corporate profit and hair removal, calling on the "goddess" as they rallied against a brand-name depilatory:

*gals say no to nair!  
we like our armpit hair!  
if the goddess meant 4 our legs to B bare  
she wouldn'tA put hair down there!  
so gals say no to nair!  
gals say no to nair!  
FUCK YER FASCIST BEAUTY STANDARDS!<sup>65</sup>*

Other commentators proposed that resistance to hair removal was itself a dangerous sign. As references to "bearded terrorists" began proliferating in mainstream media after the attacks of September 11, 2001, some commentators began linking hairy-legged women to violent radicalism.<sup>66</sup> In 2006, a leaked version of a promotional pamphlet from the National Rifle Association—ominously



Figure 6.5. An image from the 2006 National Rifle Association pamphlet, *Freedom in Peril*, focused on the unshaven legs of the "Animal Rights Terrorist."

titled *Freedom in Peril*—used an illustration of a woman’s striding, visibly hairy legs to represent the distinctive threat of “Animal Rights Terrorists.” Even as some online commentators questioned whether the leaked document might be a hoax, they also highlighted the image of the hairy-legged terrorist as particularly compelling.<sup>67</sup> Visible body hair on women signaled political extremism (figure 6.5).

Thus pushed from opposite ends of the political spectrum, women’s body hair became an indelible symbol of women’s political consciousness, one that equated “freedom” with the ability to manage one’s own individual bodily capacities.<sup>68</sup> Paradoxically, such individual choice was elevated as a virtue even as mundane bodily care was ever more entwined in vast, opaque networks of labor and resources.

[ 7 ]

## “CLEANING THE BASEMENT”

*Labor, Pornography, and Brazilian Waxing*

RESIDUAL DEBATE OVER the political meanings of hairy armpits or shins was largely swept to the side with the rise of so-called Brazilian waxing in the early 2000s. A “Brazilian” entails removing all or nearly all hair from the genital area, including the vulva, anus, and perineum (figure 7.1). Adoption of the practice soared after Carrie Bradshaw, the main character of the popular HBO television series, *Sex and the City*, described the procedure in a 2000 episode.<sup>1</sup> Within a decade, some estimates suggested that one in five American women under the age of twenty-five were maintaining consistent, complete removal of their genital hair. A large survey published in 2010 indicated that at least a quarter of all women aged eighteen to sixty-eight had completely removed their genital hair within the previous month.<sup>2</sup> Some men, too, began adopting the practice; of the majority of American men who reported regularly waxing or shaving body hair from below the neck, a portion were opting for the complete genital depilation variously known as “Brozilians,” “guyzilians,” “manzilians,” or, simply, “back, crack, and sack” waxes.<sup>3</sup>

PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE physical pain associated with total genital waxing (the pioneering Carrie Bradshaw described her procedure as a “mugging”), the practice took off with astonishing speed. Even as Americans expressed concern about visible hair on

- tic Ovarian Syndrome," *Social Science & Medicine* 54 (2002): 349–61.
81. Andrée Boisselle and Roland R. Tremblay, "New Therapeutic Approach to the Hirsute Patient," *Fertility and Sterility* 32:3 (September 1979): 278.
  82. Shapiro and Evron, "Novel Use of Spironolactone," 432.
  83. D. Delanoe et al., "Androgenisation of Female Partners of Men on Medroxyprogesterone Acetate/Percutaneous Testosterone Contraception," *Lancet*, February 4, 1984, 276.
  84. Jocelyn R. Rentoul, "Management of the Hirsute Woman," *International Journal of Dermatology* 22:5 (June 1983): 269.
  85. "Hairy Legs," *British Medical Journal*, October 2, 1976, 777.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. Harriet Lyons and Rebecca Rosenblatt, "Body Hair: The Last Frontier," *Ms. Magazine*, July 1972, 64–65, 131.
2. Mary Thom, *Inside Ms.: 25 Years of the Magazine and the Feminist Movement* (New York: Holt, 1997), 53.
3. *Time* magazine described feminists as not only "strident," "humorless," and "extremist" but also "hairy legged." See Martha Fineman and Martha T. McCluskey, eds., *Feminism, Media, and the Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 14.
4. "TV Mailbag—Dear Jane: Shave," *New York Times*, April 29, 1973, cited in Gail Collins, *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present* (Little, Brown, 2009), 171.
5. Anna Quindlen, "Out of the Skyboxes," *Newsweek*, October 15, 2007, 90.
6. Thom, *Inside Ms.*, 41. Apparently Helen Gurley Brown was similarly vexed by the antishaving perspective. See Jennifer Scanlon, *Bad Girls Go Everywhere: The Life of Helen Gurley Brown* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 176.
7. Betty Friedan, *It Changed My Life: Writings on the Women's Movement* (New York: Norton, 1985 [1963]), xvi.
8. Judith Hennessee, *Betty Friedan: Her Life* (New York: Random House, 1999), 184. Hennessee further notes that Friedan claimed that Steinem told other women that "they didn't have to bother to wear makeup or shave their legs," but in actuality (Hennessee reports) "neither Gloria nor *Ms.* told other women not to look good" (161). Hennessee further claims that the revised introduction to Friedan's best-selling book lambasts *Ms.* for "encouraging women to throw away their razors and stop shaving under their arms" (184): "Like Gloria (and virtually everyone else in public life with

- an image to protect), Betty had a tendency to rewrite history. *Ms.* had no policy on hair" (184).
9. On the "second wave," see Marsha Lear, "The Second Feminist Wave," *New York Times Magazine*, March 10, 1968, 24–25, 50, 53, 55–56, 58, 60, 62; Maggie Humm, *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990), 198. On hair, specifically, see Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Ann Snitow, eds., *The Feminist Memoir Project* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998), 166; Nancy Whittier, *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Women's Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 144.
  10. See, for instance, Carolyn Mackler, "Memoirs of a (Sorta) Ex-Shaver," in *Body Outlaws: Young Women Write about Body Image and Identity*, ed. Ophira Edut (Seattle: Seal Press, 2000), 55–61; Jennifer Margulis, "Musings on Hairy Legs," *Sojourner* 20:8 (April 1995): 9, n.
  11. "Julia Roberts, Uncovered," *Ottawa Citizen*, May 1, 1999; "Her Personality's the Pits!" *Newsweek*, July 23, 2001.
  12. See, e.g., Catherine Saint Louis, "Unshaven Women: Free Spirits or Unkempt?" *New York Times*, April 12, 2010; "Leg Work: Body Hair Is Not Always a Statement," *Jezebel*, April 13, 2010, <http://jezebel.com/5516049/leg-work-body-hair-is-not-always-a-statement>.
  13. "Feminism isn't always pretty (see: underarm hair). Without it, however, Kate O'Beirne would have been unlikely to have this book published—and most women would not have their own money to waste on it." Ana Marie Cox, "Easy Targets: A *National Review* Editor Revisits the Excesses of Feminism" [review of Kate O'Beirne, *Women Who Make the World Worse and How Their Radical Feminist Assault Is Ruining Our Families, Military, Schools, and Sports*], *New York Times Book Review*, Sunday, January 15, 2006, 21.
  14. J. J. Perret, *La Pogonotomie, ou L'Art D'Apprendre A Se Raser Soi-Meme* (Yverdon, 1770).
  15. Russell B. Adams Jr., *King C. Gillette: The Man and His Wonderful Shaving Device* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), 26–46.
  16. Richard L. Bushman and Claudia L. Bushman, "The Early History of Cleanliness in America," *Journal of American History* 74:4 (March 1988): 1214.
  17. Thomas J. Schlereth, "Conduits and Conduct: Home Utilities in Victorian America, 1876–1915," in *American Home Life, 1880–1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, ed. Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 226; Martin V. Melosi, *The Sanitary*

- City: Urban Infrastructure in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 22, 30.
18. Katherine Ashenburg, *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History* (New York: North Point Press, 2007), 224, 236; Maureen Ogle, *All the Modern Conveniences: American Household Plumbing, 1840–1890* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
  19. Elizabeth Shove, *Comfort, Cleanliness, and Convenience: The Social Organization of Normality* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 106; Ogle, *Modern Conveniences*; Marina Moskowitz, *Standard of Living: The Measure of the Middle Class in Modern America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), chap. 2.
  20. Quoted in Shove, *Comfort*, 101; Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Bushman and Bushman, "Early History," 1213; Suellen M. Hoy, *Chasing Dirt: The American Pursuit of Cleanliness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
  21. Ashenburg, *Dirt on Clean*, 207, 219; Carroll W. Purcell, *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 249.
  22. Ashenburg, *Dirt on Clean*, 224.
  23. Mark Pendergast, *Mirror Mirror: A History of the Human Love Affair with Reflection* (New York: Basic Books, 2003); Sabine Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, trans. Katharine H. Jewett (New York: Routledge, 2001).
  24. Ashenburg, *Dirt on Clean*, 220.
  25. Shove, *Comfort*, 79; Schlereth, "Conduits and Conduct," 238.
  26. Adams, *King C. Gillette*, 101.
  27. G. Bruce Retallack, "Razors, Shaving, and Gender Construction: An Inquiry into the Material Culture of Shaving," *Material History Review* 49 (Spring 1999): 8; Adams, *King C. Gillette*, 102.
  28. *Life*, May 17, 1917, 875.
  29. *Outlook*, May 16, 1917, 117.
  30. Adams, *King C. Gillette*, 104.
  31. Retallack, "Razors," 8; Adams, *King C. Gillette*, 96–105.
  32. Retallack, "Razors," 6.
  33. See the Gillette advertisement in *Life*, June 3, 1915, 1009. Also see van Oost, "Materialized Gender," 202.
  34. "Advice for Women Who Shave," *Today's Health*, July 1964, 50.
  35. Jeffrey L. Meikle, *American Plastic: A Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 137. Meikle further notes that nylon

- stockings were in short supply even before the United States entered the war, as consumers impatiently scrambled to scoop up Du Pont's "run proof stockings" at \$1.15 a pair, while industry leaders, fretful about the prospect of "stockings that would last forever," did little to increase manufacturing capacity (146).
36. Meikle, *American Plastic*, 147; "Opaque Leg," *Fortune*, October 1942, 26, 30; "Stockings Scarce," *Business Week*, March 3, 1945, 90.
  37. "Opaque Leg," *Fortune*, 30; "Less Leg Lure," *Business Week*, November 7, 1942, 64. The Office of Price Administration set a nationwide ceiling on hosiery prices (\$1.65) in response to the shortage.
  38. "Bottled 'Stockings,'" *Consumer Reports*, July 1943, 181.
  39. Ibid., 181.
  40. "Cosmetic Stockings," *Consumer Reports*, July 1944, 172.
  41. Ibid., 172; "Bottled 'Stockings,'" *Consumer Reports*, 181.
  42. "Cosmetic Stockings," *Consumer Reports*, 172. See also Edith Efron, "Legs Are Bare Because They Can't Be Sheer," *New York Times Magazine*, June 24, 1945, 17.
  43. "Instead of Stockings," *Consumer Reports*, July 1945, 175.
  44. Gerald Wendt, "Reports on Products: Stockings from a Bottle," *Consumer Reports*, August 1942, 202; "Stocking Savers & Substitutes," *Consumer Reports*, September 1941, 138–39; "Cosmetic Stockings," *Consumer Reports*, 172–74; Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941–1945* (New York: Lippincott, 1972), 8–11; "Advice for Women Who Shave," *Today's Health*, July 1964, 37.
  45. Thomas Hine, *Populuxe* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 66; Anthony L. Andrade, ed., *Plastics and the Environment* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2003), 33–36; Retallack, "Razors," 9.
  46. bell hooks, *Killing Rage* (New York: Holt, 1995), 122, 120.
  47. Tracey Owens Patton, "Hey Girl, Am I More Than My Hair?" African American Women and Their Struggles with Beauty, Body Image, and Hair," *NWSA Journal* 18:2 (Summer 2006): 40; hooks, "Black Beauty and Black Power," in *Killing Rage*, 119–32.
  48. Dominick Cavallo, cited in Gael Graham, "Flaunting the Freak Flag: *Karr v. Schmidt* and the Great Hair Debate in American High Schools, 1965–1975," *Journal of American History* 91:2 (2004): 541. See also Anthony Synnott, *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self, and Society* (London: Routledge, 1993), 115–16; Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (Harmondsworth, England: Pelican, 1973 [1970]), 102.
  49. David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, an Unfettered*

*History* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2000), 125–26.

50. Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, eds., “*Takin’ It to the Streets*”: *A Sixties Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 459–557; Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and New Left* (New York: Vintage, 1980 [1979]); Robin Morgan, ed., *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women’s Liberation Movement* (New York: Vintage, 1970); Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Karen Anderson, *Changing Woman: A History of Racial Ethnic Women in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Gabriela F. Arredondo, ed., *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin, 1991); Stephanie Gilmore, ed., *Feminist Coalitions: Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).
51. Cited in Evans, *Personal Politics*, 212.
52. Cited in Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: Norton, 1998), 295.
53. Heywood cited in Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, “Reproductive Freedom: Beyond ‘A Woman’s Right to Choose,’” *Signs* 5:4 (1980): 666.
54. Sandra Morgen, *Into Our Own Hands: The Women’s Health Movement in the United States, 1969–1990* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 17–22; Kathy Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves: How Feminism Travels across Borders* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Michelle Murphy, “Liberation through Control in the Body Politics of U.S. Radical Feminism,” in *The Moral Authority of Nature*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 331–55; and idem, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), esp. 87–88.
55. See Robbie E. Davis-Floyd’s thorough discussion in *Birth as an American Rite of Passage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003 [1992]), 83–84. Physicians’ public discussion of the merits (or lack thereof) of obstetrical shaving began several years before critics of technocratic hospital births took up the cause. See, e.g., W. J. Sweeney, “Perineal Shaves and Bladder Catheterizations: Necessary and Benign, or Unnecessary and Potentially Injurious?” *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 21 (1963): 291; H. I. Kantor et al., “Value of Shaving the Pudendal-Perineal Area in Delivery Preparation,”

- Obstetrics and Gynecology* 25 (1965): 509; R. L. Nooyen, “Removal of Pubic Hair for Delivery without Shaving,” *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 66:1 (1966): 58; and A. E. Long, “The Unshaved Perineum at Parturition: A Bacteriologic Study,” *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 99:3 (1967): 333.
56. Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 247.
  57. Robin Morgan, *Going Too Far: The Personal Chronicle of a Feminist* (New York: Random House, 1977 [1968]), 108, 107.
  58. Cited in Synnott, *Body Social*, 119.
  59. Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971 [1970]), 28.
  60. Lyons and Rosenblatt, “Body Hair,” 131.
  61. Ibid., 131.
  62. “Six Ways to Get Rid of Unwanted Hair,” *Good Housekeeping*, July 1978, 244; “Removing Unwanted Hair Permanently, Not a Do-It-Yourself Job,” *Consumer Bulletin*, October 1966, 34–36; “Hair You Don’t Want,” *Harper’s Bazaar*, April 1974, 43; “Hair That You Can Do Without,” *Vogue*, April 15, 1970, 121–22. For further discussion of how second-wave feminisms were co-opted as “new strategies of market segmentation,” see Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage, 2003), 316; Susan J. Douglas, “Narcissism as Liberation,” in *The Gender and Consumer Culture Reader*, ed. Jennifer Scanlon (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 267–82.
  63. “Employee Harassed by ‘Hairy Legs’ Insult and Touching,” *Federal Human Resources Week*. December 21, 1998: *Frantaga C. Humphrey v. Henderson, Postmaster General, U.S. Postal Service*, 99 FEOR 3090 (EEOC Comm. 10/16/98).
  64. *Built Like That* (Subtle Sister Productions), 2001.
  65. Available at <http://radcheers.tripod.com/RC/idi.html>. Thanks to S. Stone and Hannah Johnson-Breimeier for bringing the cheer to my attention.
  66. A LexisNexis search of major U.S. publications reveals a more than six-fold increase in references to “bearded terrorists” in the two years following the attacks of September 11, 2001, as compared to the two years beginning September 1999.
  67. See “Freedom in Peril: Guarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” 2006, available at [http://boingboing.net/images/NR-F8\\_PERILFINAL.pdf](http://boingboing.net/images/NR-F8_PERILFINAL.pdf); Marcus Baram, “NRA’s Graphic Attack on Its Enemies Leaked onto Internet,” *ABC News*, December 29, 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/>

story?id=2759754; "Is This (Freedom in Peril) an Actual NRA Document?" *AR15.com: Home of the Black Rifle Archive Server*, December 27–31, 2006, <http://www.ar15.com/archive/topic.html?b=1&f=5&t=530989>.

There is a certain irony in the NRA's association of hairiness and animal rights, given that strong words have been exchanged between the heads of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and the National Organization for Women over hair removal: NOW accused PETA of misogyny for an ad that seemed to describe female pubic hair as disgusting. See "Crossing the Bikini Line," *Harper's Magazine*, April 2000, 26–28; "Fur, Smoothed," *Harper's Magazine*, June 2000, 18–20.

68. Murphy, "Liberation," 352; Foner, *Story of American Freedom*, 295.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. See "Sex and Another City," September 17, 2000 (*Sex and the City*, season 3, episode 14).
2. Debra Herbenik et al., "Pubic Hair Removal among Women in the United States: Prevalence, Methods, and Characteristics," *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 7 (2010): 3322–30.
3. Michael Borroughs et al., "'Male Depilation' Prevalence and Associated Features of Body Hair Removal," *Sex Roles* 52 (2005): 637–44; Matthew Immergut, "Manscaping: The Tangle of Nature, Culture, and Male Body Hair," in *The Body Reader: Essential Social and Cultural Readings*, ed. Lisa Jean Moore and Mary Kosut (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 287–304.
4. See, for example, the case of a 25-year-old bride whose pubic hair was so matted as to render coition on the first night of marriage "impracticable." Physicians resolved the problem with a paste composed of arsenic, copper sulfate, lime, soap, and water. See "Pathology?" *North American Medical and Surgical Journal* 12 (October 1831): 455.
5. Sarah Hildebrandt, "The Last Frontier: Body Norms and Hair Removal Practices in Contemporary American Culture," in *The EmBodyment of American Culture*, ed. Heinz Tschachler, Maureen Devine, and Michael Draxlbauer (Munich: Lit Verlag, 2003), 59–71.
6. Ruth Barcan, *Nudity: A Cultural Anatomy* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 148; Wendy Cooper, *Hair: Sex, Society, Symbolism* (London: Aldus, 1971), 116, 89.
7. Lenore Riddell, Hannah Varto, and Zoe Hodgson, "Smooth Talking: The Phenomenon of Pubic Hair Removal in Women," *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 19 (2010): 121–30; Jonathan D. K. Trager, "Pubic Hair Removal: Pearls and Pitfalls," *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology* 19 (2006): 117.

8. Kristin Tillotson, "Liberation Gone Wild: Is This Power and Freedom or a Post-Feminist Backslide?" *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, Minnesota), December 18, 2005, 1F.
9. Ariel Levy, *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 4.
10. Sheila Jeffreys, *Beauty and Misogyny: Harmful Cultural Practices in the West* (London: Routledge, 2005), 4. Other analysts take a similarly dour view of genital depilation, seeing in it an intensification of social control of the female body in general and the construction of women as childlike and "powerless" in particular. See, e.g., Marika Tiggeman and Sarah J. Kenyon, "The Hairless Norm: The Removal of Body Hair in Women," *Sex Roles* 39 (1998): 874; Susan A. Basow, "The Hairless Ideal: Women and Their Body Hair," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 15 (1991): 83–96; Susan Brownmiller, *Femininity* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984); Christine Hope, "Caucasian Female Body Hair and American Culture," *Journal of American Culture* 5 (1982): 93–99; Magdalena Peixoto Labre, "The Brazilian Wax: New Hairlessness Norm for Women?" *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 26 (2002): 113–32; Sarita Srivastava, "'Unwanted Hair Problem?' Struggling to Re-Present Our Bodies," *Rung: A South Asian Quarterly of Culture, Comment, and Criticism* 1:4 (1993): 5–7.
11. Kira Cochrane, "A Choice Too Far," *New Statesman*, September 24, 2007, 30–31.
12. Ibid., 30–31.
13. Rex W. Huppke, "Brazilian Wax Ban in New Jersey Is Scrapped," *Chicago Tribune*, March 21, 2009, <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/2009/mar/21/news/chi-talk-bikiniwax-0321mar21>.
14. Mimi Spencer, "Freedom Is a Hairy Body," *Age*, February 24, 2003, <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/02/23/1045935277714.html>.
15. Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2000), 56–57 (emphasis in original).
16. Cochrane, "Choice," 30–31.
17. Labre, "Brazilian Wax," 121, 117. Also see Janea Padhila with Martha Franklin, *Brazilian Sexy: Secrets to Living a Gorgeous and Confident Life* (New York: Penguin, 2010).