#MeToo was a major movement in the United States and beyond, with many nuances, and #MeToo and Beyond: Perspectives on a Global Movement, edited by M. Christina Alcalde and Paula-Irene Villa, does a fantastic job explaining the nuances and the overall impact of the movement in countries around the world. This book is broken up into four sections: “Politics of Change,” “Law and Media,” “Higher Education,” and “Conflicts with the Movement.” This book came about after the global rise in visibility of the #MeToo movement. The editors wanted to present the #MeToo movement in different contexts through different positionalities and expertise. Within the chapters, authors were tasked with showing how issues such as borders, religion, sexualities, political ideologies, and gender created a renegotiated identity following the mobilization of the #MeToo movement.

The first section of this book discusses the politics of change and focuses on three different countries and how #MeToo impacted these countries on a political scale. Chapter 1, “#MeToo and the Future of Feminist Antiviolence Activism in Australia,” by Rachel Loney-Howes, focuses on #MeToo in Australia and the changes that were made following the #MeToo movement, which involved naming high-profile men within the entertainment industry. Following the #MeToo movement, a nonprofit organization, NOW Australia, was established; although it ultimately closed during the COVID pandemic,[1] NOW Australia was a triage center where survivors of sexual assault and sexual violence could go for treatment as well as other forms of help and support. NOW Australia faced backlash due to the lack of diversity among its leaders and its shortcomings in helping survivors (p. 38). #MeToo also led to the development of the Respect@Work council, which looks into workplace allegations of sexual harassment and assault. Loney-Howes uses these examples to emphasize the lack of social/ethnic representation within these organizations. I believe the author could have elaborated on the broader impacts of
the changes from the #MeToo movement in Australia. These organizations might not be the perfect solution, but what does the author suggest in their place?

Kammila Naidoo and Denise Buiten wrote chapter 2, “Tackling Gender-Based Violence in South Africa: Organizing, Calling Out, Embracing #MeToo,” which shows the impact of the movement in South Africa. #MeToo led South African women to speak out against sexual violence, though it did not prompt the same change as in other countries due to a fear of backlash. In general, having the ability to call someone out for sexual harassment is seen as an upper-class privilege. As such, this type of “elitist feminism” is regarded with skepticism and as a Western-centric trend. Naidoo and Buiten acknowledge that there is a lot that South Africa, as a country, can learn and has learned from the #MeToo movement that could benefit other social movements in the future. In contrast, they also argue that social media and the transnational angle impacted local organizations and work done before #MeToo. What was missing was a deeper evaluation of the shifting roles of local organizations since the introduction of the transnational version of #MeToo.

Chapter 3, “Changing Men and Masculinities in the United Kingdom and Beyond in the Wake of #MeToo,” by Stephen R. Burrell, focuses on how boys and men can make a better society and resist “masculinity” and the outcomes of patriarchal society to prevent violence against women. This chapter, ultimately, is trying to project that this is not just a women’s issue but an issue that concerns everyone. It also shows the inequities between men and women in a patriarchal society. This leads to the implication that to foster social change within society, we should try to prevent gender bias from the beginning rather than try to alter that bias after it becomes a reality. This is an important chapter since it shows how both men and women impact the #MeToo movement, though it is more hypothetical in comparison to the other chapters.

The second section of the book shows the impact of law on the #MeToo movement and the impact of media on the movement. Srimati Basu writes chapter 4, “In Singular and Plural Voices: #MeToo, Law, and Solidarity.” This chapter looks at the impact of the current laws in India and the creation of solidarity for a specific cause like #MeToo. Basu notes that though in its immediate inception, #MeToo focused on sexual assault and sexual harassment, it evolved into conversations about consent and how consent is not blanket and can be revoked at any time if one becomes uncomfortable. She examines a case study in India in which a post-secondary student who belonged to a lower caste created a list of male Indian academics who were sexual harassers. She was ultimately shamed by other female Indian academics for publishing this list without going through university channels. The situation of elitist women shaming a woman of a lower caste to protect the men in their own caste leads to a discussion of solidarity with caste members versus solidarity with your own gender. This chapter shows how within both India and the United States, which have different laws, women face the same problems and blurred lines in trying to achieve justice.

Chapter 5, “The Language of #MeToo in South African and North American Media Discourses,” by Desirée Lewis, shows the impact of print media on #MeToo, especially through the coverage of high-profile assault victims and high-profile members of society accused of sexual assault and harassment. Media tended to take different perspectives, with liberal news media creating more emotional coverage and conservative news creating more sensationalized stories. Within patriarchal societies, this could lead to the stocks of liberal media companies dropping because of the emotional discourses within the coverage, which people tend not to like. More conservative coverage used stereotypical gender framing, portraying
women as voiceless. These framings create coverage about sex and violence that becomes stereotypical and undermines the victim. The author also notes that though these frames did create an emotional response and lead to some sort of movement, it is very unlikely that this will lead to the political response that the movement is striving for. It is important to note that though these media systems are different, they face similar problems. However, these problems should not limit these discussions in this chapter, and the coverage of gender violence and the impact print media can have on the movement.

The third section of this book looks at different systems, such as higher education, as well as different communities inside the system, such as Jewish Americans and LGBTQ communities, and the impact of #MeToo on these communities. Keren McGinty’s chapter 6, “#GamAni: How #MeToo Inspired the American Jewish Community to Look Inward ... and Where the Human Family Goes from Here,” focuses on the impacts of #GamAni or #MeToo within Jewish culture, noting that it took longer for the Jewish community to get beyond a “Steve will be Steve” mentality, which is a play on a “boys will be boys” mentality (p. 133). The #MeToo movement within the US Jewish community started within academia and the Jewish studies community and created a ripple effect within the American Jewish community, taking the movement far beyond academia.

Chapter 7, “Intimacy, Transgression, Ethics: Scripts and Silences in Gender Academia,” by Rukmini Sen, talks about the changes to academia in recent years and how younger millennial students have changed the dynamics within higher education institutions. The younger generation has been more open to exposing sexual assault and sexual harassment from professors and other faculty members since #MeToo. These students created open physical and virtual spaces for discussion of these issues while not undermining other students and their experiences. Though the chapter focuses on Indian academics, I believe that it can be applied to academics worldwide.

Chapter 8, entitled “Queering #MeToo: Working Toward Queer and Trans Inclusion,” by Xavier Guadalupe-Diaz and Elizabeth Whalley, talks about how #MeToo applies differently to the LGTBQ community. It claims that the #MeToo movement took longer to have the same effect on LGTBQ survivors of sexual assault. In fact, #MeToo is not as LGBTQ-friendly as might be perceived. Guadalupe-Diaz and Whalley ultimately conclude that until our systems are more accountable to LGBTQ issues or have a new system of accountability outside of the mainstream that is inherently racist and queerphobic (p. 177), society will be unable to move forward in helping LGTBQ victims.

The final section focuses on the theme of conflict within the movement around societal ideals. Chapter 9, “On Being Public: Feminism, Sexual Harassment, and the Question of Palestine,” by Ruth Presser focuses on how social movements bring themselves into the public sphere. The author uses a case study of the Israeli feminist movement, whose members are divided over the occupation of Palestine. These divides may also lead to ideas not being explicitly stated in the public sphere because of what is culturally accepted. Rather than simplifying the #MeToo movement, it is important to understand the complexities within it and the people behind it to fully understand the movement and the negotiations within these complexities that created its political effect.

Chapter 10, “NiUnaMenos: Beyond the Rally, a Field in Dispute,” by Fanni Muñoz Cabrejo, discusses the implications of NiUnaMenos (Not One [Woman] Less). This rally took place in Peru in August 2016 and helped make gender violence more visible to political and media actors in Peru. The intentions for this rally were good, but there was a lot of conflict between the organizers, as traits of ethnicity, race, class, and gender influenced each of the organizers’ views on the rally. The authors bring forth the conflict within the movement and
the influence it had on the rally. However, it created this shared issue, that everyone is going to experience it differently. Both chapters of the third section reflect the role of compromise in #MeToo movement, which enables a broader group of people to be involved. In my opinion, the author of chapter ten does a good job of showing how there was compromise within the Peruvian rally, which enabled its success.

Overall, the editors did a fantastic job bringing these chapters together and showing #MeToo in multiple countries, contexts, and scenarios. Despite the multiplicity, the book shows the global cohesiveness of the movement and its struggles. Social movements have ultimately changed in the last ten years, and I think #MeToo is a prime example of how societal norms have become more accepting of a movement like this. The importance of media in the story of #MeToo is undeniable, whether by encouraging people to participate or spreading information about events or struggles. Ultimately, the role of the media is implied within all these chapters, but more in-depth discussion would have been beneficial. I think all the authors and the editors do a good job bringing a wider perspective to #MeToo outside of the United States and reflecting its global implications.

Note


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