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### Postfeminism as Fantasy: Feminism is Ongoing, Political, and Personal

Why are certain individuals inclined to accept a fantasy of postfeminism rather than practice, or at least engage with, ongoing intersectional feminism and its inherent implications, like the homework and housework Ahmed describes? Why are feminists tasked with what Ahmed calls the political labour of insistence?

These questions are valuable in guiding an understanding of Sara Ahmed's Introduction to *Living a Feminist Life* because they function as reminders that postfeminism does not exist. Postfeminism refers to the misconception of feminism as something that should be referred to in the "past tense" as its aims have 'already been achieved' and thus is no longer necessary (Ahmed 6). My questions ask readers to consider the political labour of insistence and to reflect on what acknowledging postfeminism as a fantasy must require. To be an everyday feminist, it is necessary to recognize that postfeminism is both a fallacy and a fantasy. Intersectional feminism is not obsolete and the goals of the vital movement have not simply been accomplished, or "brought 'sexism, sexual exploitation, or sexual oppression' to an end as if feminism has been so successful that it has eliminated its own necessity" (Ahmed 5). Feminism is not 'complete,' but rather, it is present in everyday life and in continually resisting patriarchal power structures. My questions imply that the fantasy of postfeminism can be particularly persuasive to those who inhabit the space of privilege and could be swayed, even for a moment, that the feminist movement has already made its lasting impact and finished its course. The onus of everyday feminism, in this case, does not weigh heavily on their shoulders. Perhaps these are the reasons the concept of postfeminism exists in the

first place: complacency and ignorance. My questions aim to interrogate this complacency and to encourage self-reflexivity: has one been complicit in accepting postfeminism, even partially? If the answer is yes, why? Or more appropriately, due to what privilege?

Rejecting the fantasy of postfeminism is to acknowledge that there remains a dire need for everyday feminist work—that systems of oppression, such as patriarchy, capitalism, sexism, and racism still exist and need to be challenged daily. For instance, as a woman, I experience the necessities of everyday feminism first-hand in my relationship with a man, sexist workplaces, or within my University career. Based on gender, I have often been discounted, sexualized, or discriminated against in my everyday life. I am tired of being objectified by men who feel as though they are entitled to remind me to smile, undress me with their eyes, or refer to me with pet names such as ‘smiley’, ‘darling,’ or ‘sweetie.’ I have to insist that my experiences of sexism exist because when “[I] point to structures; they say it is in [my] head” (Ahmed 6). In other words, like many women, I have to continually explain to others that my personal encounters with sexism are real and not simply imagined. Consequently, I cannot accept postfeminism; I must engage in the political labour of insistence. This labour is tiring—and as a cis-gendered and heterosexual white woman, I have not experienced this labour in the exhaustive ways BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ women have. To be sure, feminists are tasked with “convinc[ing] others that sexism and racism have not ended; that sexism and racism are fundamental to the injustices of late capitalism; that they matter” (Ahmed 6). Living a feminist life requires shattering the illusion of postfeminism and reflecting upon how feminism functions in the twenty-first century. My questions aim to lead readers to a heightened awareness that feminists have to insist upon sexism and racism as pervasive and ongoing while also fighting to dismantle these oppressive structures. To recognize that postfeminism is an insidious fantasy, then, is to admit to an implication in

everyday feminism; it is to admit that feminism is ongoing, personal, and political. Feminism is a call to action. My questions implicitly ask: how will you respond?

#### Work Cited

Ahmed, Sara. "Introduction. Bringing Feminist Theory Home." *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press. 2017. pp. 1-18