



We Don't Need Another Wave: Dispatches from the Next Generation of Feminists

Melody Berger (Editor/Contributor), Alix Olson (Contributor), Lisa Jervis (Contributor), Jessica Valenti (Contributor), Dean Spade (Contributor), Lenelle Moise (Contributor), Courtney E. Martin (Contributor), Elena Azzoni (Contributor), more... Shelby Knox (Contributor), Ariel Fox (Contributor), Jessica Hoffmann (Contributor), Liz Latty (Contributor), L.A. Mitchell (Contributor), Alexia Vernon (Contributor), Eli Effinger-Weintraub (Contributor), Dali S. Dela George (Contributor), Maria Cincotta (Contributor), Sarah Kennedy (Contributor), Lea Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (Contributor), Alexandra DelValle (Contributor), Stephanie Seguin (Contributor), Cindy Crabb (Contributor), Kristina Wong (Contributor), Jennifer A. Stein (Contributor), Joshua Russell (Contributor), Mary Christmas (Contributor), Maria Christina Rangel (Contributor), Staceyann Chin (Contributor), Kat Marie Yoas (Contributor), Kelly Zen-Yie Tsai (Contributor), Stephanie Abraham (Contributor), Jennifer L. Pozner (Contributor) ...less

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We Don't Need Another Wave is a critique of the ways in which feminism is discussed in the mainstream media. Today's young feminists are wary of being labeled. They are media-savvy, hyper-aware of being categorized and marginalized, and are here to tell the world that feminists are feminists — diverse in age and experience — and that it's time to drop the labels in favor of proactive agendas and united goals.

Topics that matter to young feminists range from lighter issues, such as DIY culture and craftivism, to heavy-hitting issues that feminists have struggled with for generations, including abuse, rape, shame, and self-hatred. The young writers in this collection band together under the banner of feminism to share the message that the F-word is a good thing, and that feminists are breaking new ground while still valuing the traditions and achievements of their sisters and foremothers.

We Don't Need Another Wave brings a message of unity and a message to get beyond subcategorizing a movement that needs cohesiveness and strives on strength in numbers.

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From Reader Review We Don't Need Another Wave: Dispatches from the Next Generation of Feminists for online ebook

Eli says

I have a piece in this anthology. Read it!

Cherie says

B++ While a lot of these are quite interesting, I didn't find the book life affirming or life changing in any way. Not too many new things have been said; we don't need another anthology.

David says

I read only about half of this book, and thus can't rate the whole thing, but it has the usual strengths and weaknesses of an eclectic anthology. Lots of points of view on contentious topics, invariably resulting some interesting stuff, some banal stuff, and some weird stuff. (An early contender for the latter category is an essay that claims that "the heternormative family structure" - man, woman, kids - is "unhealthy" and a "technology of postindustrial late capitalism". An interesting reminder that although they're extremely rare, there are occasional people who are just as nuts as your average religious righty, but in the opposite direction.)

Sarah says

Overall a wonderful anthology, which challenges the reader to expand the realm of feminism and feminist issues while simultaneously calling for less division between groups of feminists. I particularly liked that many essays gave examples of/from activist work instead of relying on theory. Like any anthology, there are a few lemons, but overall this is an excellent addition to the feminism canon.

Liz Latty says

Holy Crap this is the best book ever. If you haven't read it yet, your life is shallow and incomplete. Buy it now and be sure to read it cover to cover and read my essay like 3 or 4 times or at least until you have committed it to memory. You'll thank me.

Lisette says

I absolutely love the essays in this book! This was assigned as one of the three books in my Intro to WS class and I thought this was a very informative read. This touches on just about every topic you can think of when

it comes to feminism, racism, classism, and just about any other -ism you can think of.

Ciara says

i was fairly psyched to read this book, being that i am of the generation of feminists that the book dispatches, as it were. & i recognized several contributors' names as either writers i like or people i actually know. the author even once sent me her zine for distro consideration (but i didn't pick it up--it wasn't really covering any new ground). i guess the "not covering any new ground" criticism could also apply to this book. i mean, it would be an excellent gift to a new feminist, a great read for someone who has only gotten into feminism in the last years or two. the contributors come from a lot of different angles & cover a lot of different aspects of feminist thought, from movement-building to reproductive justice to anti-oppression work to becoming the media, & this is just a small sampler platter of the contents. but for me, i mean, i can't remember a time when i haven't identified as a feminist. & not just passively, like, "yeah, girls rule!" i have been reading feminist theory since i was like twelve. so this book mostly served to reinforce a lot of ideas i've already had, or in places where i disagreed with an author, it made me dislike the author (haha). i will say, the most annoying part of this book was josh russell's piece about the importance of including men in the feminist movement. SHUT THE FUCK UP, dude. i found it really distasteful that a dude would write something for a feminist book about how the feminist movement should make space for men. seriously! it boggles the mind. i'm not of the opinion that dudes can't be feminists, or that there is no place for guys in a feminist movement. i actually think it's really important for men to educate themselves about feminist issues & take pro-active steps to make feminist choices. this could involve, say, taking a bigger role in birth control--maybe even paying for half the cost of your female partner's birth control pills. just to name one tiny example. but instead, most of the most vocally "feminist" men i have met/worked with/interacted with/whatever have been super-invested in the importance of men having "a role" in the feminist movement. they haven't really taken steps to define what this role might be. they just want to be included. & the fact that they are so focused on centering themselves within a movement that actually isn't all about them being special snowflakes kind of makes me ill. & josh's piece was a lot of, "i didn't really understand feminism until i had this incredibly epiphany: women are oppressed!" DUH, dude. get the fuck over yourself. it was just a bunch of self-congratulatory privilege-flaunting & i don't think it should have been included, especially because it was a transparent attempt at resume-bulding more than anything else ("publishing credits include..."). that is why i knocked the rating down to three stars. the end.

James says

Melody is one of philly's finest writers. When I picked up the F-Word, I was absolutly amazed to see the famous people she managed to get interviews with. Margaret Cho, Gloria Steinem and Alix Olson are all in here, which makes this zine worth picking up. Melody is coming out with a book in November, which, based on this zine, will be a must-read. I liked the F-WORD because it focuses on positive action and the ability of young feminists everywhere to organize for issues like choice, women's liberation, and breaking out of the traditional thoughts of what it means to be a female or a male. There's also sex advice, book and music reviews, and a whole lot of other quick pieces that make this a worthwhile read.

Shamany Wallace says

While I appreciate the authors were quite diverse, not many of the stories really made me feel much, which

considering this was a lot of personal essays, was disappointing. It also felt like a lot of them were like "I took a gender/women's studies class and became a feminist activist, and you can too!" I'm for activism, but something about it felt hollow to me. Not sure I would recommend this as a go-to feminist anthology.

Terri says

My first major disappointment from Seal Press. I think the editor picked the authors more for identity politics reasons than quality of writing for this anthology. Too many of these essays felt like a report for a women's studies class (ex: "I went to the March for Women's Lives and this is what happened..."). Yikes. Not to mention too many of the essays really blurred together in terms of the authors' experiences. For a book that so blatantly tries to demonstrate diversity, it sure lacked in the subject matter.

Monica says

An uneven collection of essays- some are incredibly thoughtful and others feel more superficial!

caitlin says

Fun Fact: I took a women's studies class with the editor of this anthology. I'm proud of how good her writing is, and really want to purchase her F-word zines.

Other Fun Fact: Some of the writers in this anthology represent exactly what I hate about contemporary young feminist writers (whiny; close-minded about who should be entitled to call themselves a feminist) so I am struggling to finish it.

Miri says

It's pretty much what I've come to expect from these feminist anthologies. Some really good pieces, some not so much. Some pieces that contribute a unique perspective, some that don't. Some pieces that are very well-written, some that read like a high school assignment (not that there aren't many fantastic teenage writers). Some that explore intersections of race, class, etc., and some that are just another straight white woman's narrative about her body image problems. kat marie yoas' piece about being from a poor, "white trash" background in feminist academia was really, really good, as was Elizabeth Latty's piece on sexual violence between queer women. Also glad that polyamory got a mention in Dean Spade's piece. However, the whole anthology ended rather awkwardly with a piece on how to get the media to report progressive issues more accurately and fairly. It's really important stuff, but an odd way to close off a book of very personal and emotional essays.

Debbie says

Way more interesting than the average young women's feminist anthology (and there are so many). I reviewed this for Shamelss magazine.

Tinea says

Hit or miss anthology about feminist activism, mostly by youth, in the early 2000s. Much of it was miss, but a few really good pieces did stand out. A remarkable amount of essays began very strongly, pushing boundaries and questioning accepted feminist thought, only to end in inconclusive whimpers. *We Don't Need Another Wave*, evidently, because we lack theoretical and historical coherence within individual essays, let alone a movement.

Uncertainty ran throughout. Many authors participated in huge street protests in this era, including anti-war and immigrant rights marches and the March for Women's Lives. They grappled with what they saw as the importance of these actions in their lives and for the causes they care about, but the overall ineffectiveness and irrelevance of these protests in actually effecting change. Several other essays expressed ambivalence towards academia and women studies classes as young women found them both inspiring and frustrating, liberating and alienating. Many authors wrote about sex: queering it, selling it, being really uncomfortable with it. A lot of politics, a lot of brooding, but not a lot of real reflection.

The essays that most struck me were the introspective analyses of personal experience. Yeah feminist epistemology! Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha redefined "survival as resistance" as a queer Sri Lankan immigrant woman and activist living in North America after 9/11 in her essay (whose title alone is brilliant), "A Time to Hole Up and a Time to Kick Ass: Reimagining Activism as a Million Different Ways to Fight." Yes. I also liked kat marie yoas on how academic feminism doesn't speak to or for poor people; Mary Christmas on punkrock, spanging, and organizing sex workers; Lanelle Moise on race, love, and trying to spare a loved one the rage brought on by constant racist assaults of life; and Maria Cristina Rangel on navigating her life as a queer working class Latina through the stories of her queer Latino uncle, who was murdered in Seattle when she was just coming out.

A few essays were downright bad. In "The Early Trials of the Novice Postfeminist Pornographer," Kristina Wong fails to grasp why her "humorous" male porn shoot proposal (Asian men with ridiculously long dicks) is called racist by the men she asks to model for it; at another point she assures us she "never ever, ever, ever wanted to be a porn star," obviously shaming the work she's supposedly supporting. A surprise failure was Dean Spade's "For Lovers and Fighters," an engrossing exploration of overcoming power dynamics in polyamorous relationships, only to end with the admission that it was only an intellectual exercise, because Spade is just too jealous to actually engage in healthy poly relationships.

There were a lot of essays with this bait and switch ending, fascinating writing leading up to clunky, weak, or downright awful conclusions. The worst was Alexia Vernon's "Troubling the Performance of the Traditional Incest Narrative." It is hard to write critically about someone's expression of how they experienced growing up and processing incest and its longterm ramifications on their life. Vernon raises so many good questions about how we react to sexual abuse in children (Vernon says she was as traumatized or more by all the therapy and stigma as from the incest), how the limited victim/survivor roles available don't fit everyone's experiences, and how even children's sexuality is not always passive. But while I respect that Vernon claims her sexual agency, I really object to the extent she "reframes" her abuse narrative, including comparisons of her aggressive childhood masturbation on a stuffed animal with abuse directed at a live being. It's not "troubling the narrative" when you remove power from the equation.