

Is Feminism a Sell-out?

Andi Zeisler's In-depth Analysis of Modern Day Feminism

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Last women's day, I saw many statuses on my news feed preaching many different things. Some claimed that getting a discount at the spa was indeed the only purpose of the day, some argued for what the movement truly aims for (which is gender equality), and some were very angry that men's day isn't a "thing" and that "women's day is just something girls use to get free desserts" and "it promotes inequality by separating men and women".

One status that belonged to the last category really triggered me despite my usual neutral netizen self, and I launched into a heated debate about what feminism is about. My opponent claimed that feminism is something that promotes free manicures but does nothing to establish gender equality.

This got me thinking how capitalism has changed the everyday person's interpretation of the word, and how the media has skewed our perception of a spirited political movement. I wanted to read up on this, and that is how I came across Andi Zeisler's detailed analysis of marketplace feminism.

This book is a collection of essays that deal with feminism in different fields such as advertising, fashion and film. Zeisler talks about the many flaws in how the "marketplace" has used and

abused feminism, for example, underwear that has feminist written on it (featured in articles such as "9 Feminist Lingerie Brands to Empower Your Closet") - because the next big thing in feminism isn't wage equality or women's safety, it's feminist underwear.

I thought her best essays were the ones on advertising. "The business of marketing and selling to women literally depends on creating and then addressing female insecurity, and part of the revelatory potential of women's lib involved rejecting the marketplace's sweet-talking promises about life-changing face creams and shampoos—not to mention the entire premise of women as decorative objects. There was good reason for industries that sustained themselves on the self-hatred of women to dread the potential reach of feminist movements," she writes.

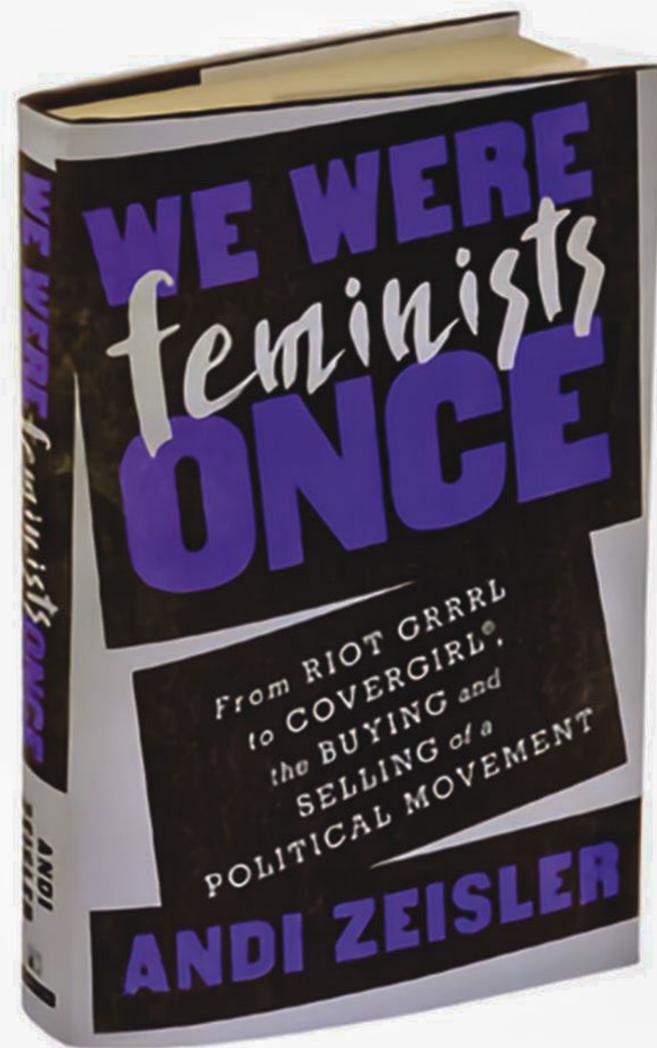
She points out how feminism was once a word that carried weight and represented an actual fight for equality, but has now become a label that celebrities choose to take on in order to increase their credibility. While there are actual women who are fighting for equality in education and work, the media chooses to focus on twerking as a feminist activity - I suppose they think it's prettier.

Zeisler spoke of the history of feminism in pop culture quite a bit in

this book, and honestly I was surprised by the current statistics, and by how little things have actually changed for women in the past few decades. However, there were some things that I didn't agree with, such as the writer's vehement advocacy of Beyoncé as a feminist icon, because this went against many points the writer herself made previously in the book.

This book is more of an analysis of marketplace feminism than it is a concrete solution to the problems with such feminism; it is difficult to magically solve such deeply rooted flaws in our society. I would recommend this book to any young person who is confused about what feminism means in the modern day, and how this movement has evolved in pop culture and capitalism.

The writer is passionate and unapologetic, and this is definitely a great read. But you must keep an open mind - remember that the writer will change many of your preconceived notions about modern day feminism, but it is also okay to agree to disagree with her at times.



Aanila Kishwar Tarannum started hating on everything the moment she realized why her parents put so many As in her name: because they knew her transcript would be devoid of any vowels. Find out about her relentless rants at aanila.tarannum@gmail.com

Book to Television Done Right

FATIMAH AKHTAR

HBO has become notorious for creating and airing brilliantly written, directed, and acted out television shows.

Westworld took its own place as an original idea brought to life by a great production team, and Game of Thrones lifted off the pages of a book to a screen, as a show that often many prefer over the books. But HBO did not just stop there. One of its recent books to television has made splashes for its realistic depiction of domestic abuse, marriage, and struggles of parenthood.

Big Little Lies is a mini-series about a community set by a beautiful beach town. Stories of murder, rumours, and fractured relationships dominate the narrative, as do mischief, friendship, and adorable children. Focusing specifically upon the stories of three mothers - Madeline, who is struggling with her kids growing up and her ex-husband; Celeste, who on the outside seems to constantly keep up the image of having the perfect life, but the reality seems to echo differently; and finally, Jane, a single mother recently moved to town who seems to have something to hide.

Although, the description may make the show to look like a serious drama, that's not what it presents itself as. The show at its heart tries to present the story in a comedic light, and it succeeds due to the

and Shailene Woodley. Even the supporting cast features well-known faces such as Alexander Skarsgård, Adam Scott, and Zoë Kravitz. From the cast alone the mini-series shows to have big ambitions,

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strong cast and crew holding it up.

The mini-series features a star studded cast, taking the roles of the three mothers are Nicole Kidman, Reese Witherspoon,

but it is especially seen in the storyline it delves into, which involve other violent narratives along with that of domestic abuse.

The mini-series has been continued to be lauded for its portrayal of the violent scenes - especially of abuse, and another instance of a violation. This seems to be for valid reasons as well. The director, Jean-Marc Vallée, crafts each scene in a way that clearly echoes the feelings of the characters in question. Instead of letting dialogues do all the talking, Big Little Lies approaches a lot of the emotions through juxtaposition with the ocean. The oceanic setting gives the show an edge in terms of the cinematic value.

Moreover, as someone who has had loved Desperate Housewives, I felt the mini-series was a take on a concept such as that of Desperate-Housewives-meets-an-Agatha-Christie-novel, but without a detective.

The characters and how they grow are the main focus of the mini-series rather than the plot - which ultimately is a murder mystery. But by the end of the show, it does not become about who the murderer is, but the influences the characters have had on each other, and the children. And it is the little nuances that have made Big Little Lies stand out in the time of great television.