

From Classic to Current: Inspiring Essays on Feminism

BY KARLA J. STRAND

Mallory Farrugia, ed., *The Future is Feminist: Radical, Funny, and Inspiring Writing by Women*. Chronicle Books, 2019. 144 pages. \$24.95, ISBN 978-1452168333.

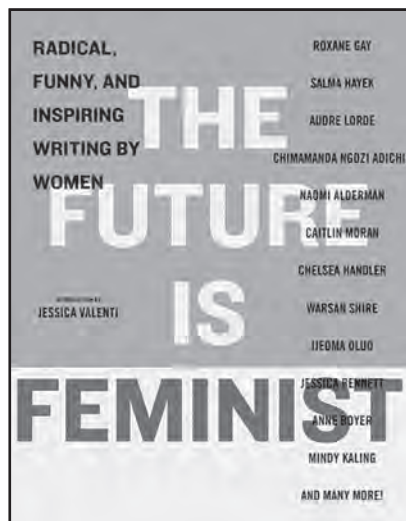
We've all heard the saying or seen the T-shirts: "The future is feminist!" Now we have the book to confirm it.

Between these brightly colored covers are 21 essays about feminism's past, present, and future. Some classic and some new, they are framed by a brief but valuable introduction by feminist writer and Feministing blog cofounder Jessica Valenti.

The first piece, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Feminism but Were Afraid to Ask," is a perfect primer. Rachel Fudge, who originally wrote the piece for *Bitch* magazine, explains various types of feminism, feminist movements, and feminist ideologies, including liberal feminism, womanism, suffrage, the ERA, postfeminism, radical feminism, and more. This piece sets an appropriate tone for the remainder of the collection, one that honors the history, complexities, and evolutions of feminism and its adherents.

The volume includes classic essays such as "Ain't I a Woman," by abolitionist Sojourner Truth; "I Want a Wife," by activist Judy Brady; and an excerpt from a longer work by the legendary Audre Lorde. These are

cleverly interwoven with contemporary pieces such as "Harvey Weinstein Is My Monster Too," by actor Salma Hayek; "Not Here to Make Friends," by Roxane Gay; and "12 Things about Being a Woman That Women Won't Tell You," by Caitlin Moran.



Essay topics vary from beauty standards and capitalism to online trolls and sexual harassment. It's a nice touch to add Warsan Shire's brilliant poem "Ugly" to the collection. Writers will appreciate "On Pandering:

How to Write like a Man," by Claire Vaye Watkins. Academics will find value in Arlie Russell Hochschild's "Gender, Status, and Feeling." More than a few of us will relate to journalist Jessica Bennett's "I'm Not Mad. That's Just My RBF."

These essays are by turns inspiring, hilarious, and engaging. The volume could be improved by including more voices from Native American, disabled, neurodivergent, justice-involved, and transgender/gender-nonconforming communities. The only other facet of the book I found challenging was color. Maybe it's my aging eyes, but although I loved the neon orange and pink on the cover, those colors on the text pages made it difficult to read the essays.

That being said, the variety packed into this 144-page volume is commendable, and the essays are accessible to a wide range of readers. The book could be used in introductory women's studies courses and easily supplemented by additional readings. This is an essential purchase for public libraries, high school libraries, and college libraries serving undergraduates.

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