

Toward a Waveless Feminism

BY LACHRISTA GRECO

Alison Dahl Crossley, *Finding Feminism: Millennial Activists and the Unfinished Gender Revolution*. New York University Press, 2017. 256 pp. notes. bibl. index. pap., \$28.00, ISBN 978-1479884094.

As a millennial activist, well aware of the negative connotations of the term *millennial*, I tend to be wary of studies and reports about my generation by researchers/writers who aren't of this generation themselves. So I was apprehensive about reading *Finding Feminism: Millennial Activists and the Unfinished Gender Revolution*.

Author Alison Dahl Crossley says the book is “arranged around two central concepts, social movement abeyance and waveless feminism” (p. 17). She has studied feminist activism and activists on three different U.S. college campuses (University of California, Santa Barbara; University of Minnesota Twin Cities; and Smith College) to find out whether feminism has become obsolete for young women and men. She has gathered an enormous amount of data, and her writing is mostly accessible.

What I appreciate about this text is Crossley's concept of waveless feminism. She writes that “‘waveless’ does not mean serene or flat. Rather, in keeping with the water analogy, waveless feminism is akin to a river....Waveless feminism captures the sentiment that ‘feminism has been not a series of disconnected upsurges

but a continuous flow’” (p. 20). One could argue that feminism has both the natural flow of a river and the upsurge of waves.

Although Crossley's interview participants were diverse with regard to racial, ethnic, and sexual identity, her study lacks class and disability analysis. My greatest criticism is that in focusing solely on college feminists, the study is classist and ableist and does a disservice to young feminists outside of academia, where there are many young people doing

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amazing feminist activist work. It's a bit of a snub to discount this population. Crossley states that colleges and universities are “essential to the persistence of the feminist movement,” which seems to ignore the fact that not all feminists are able to attend these institutions of privilege.

Although research about how students relate to feminism on campus is important, it would have been interesting to see that juxtaposed with research on feminists outside of academia.

The author speaks to confusion about young people — specifically millennials — and feminism, but that confusion is unwarranted. Feminist activists who happen to be millennials are doing and have been doing the work. Just because someone's activism isn't publicized in a *BuzzFeed* listicle doesn't mean it doesn't exist. There are pockets of activism on- and offline. The bigger issue, and one that needs to be wrestled with, is that non-millennials don't take the activist work of millennials seriously.

Through all of her questioning and researching, Crossley does come away with the knowledge that “young feminists are carrying the torch of the movement, important in propelling feminism into a new era” (p. 148). That conclusion might not be obvious to some, so this book could be of interest to nonmillennial feminists and scholars. For those of us who are millennials, though, there is nothing new or intriguing here.

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