



# Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women

*Christina Hoff Sommers*

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## **Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women** Christina Hoff Sommers

Presents well-reasoned arguments against many feminists' reliance on misleading, politically-motivated "facts" about how women are victimized. The book has become the centre of debate about who really speaks for equality and for most American women.

## **Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women Details**

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Author : Christina Hoff Sommers

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**Christina Hoff Sommers**

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# From Reader Review Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women for online ebook

## Jon says

This book debunks myth after myth: that women earn 59 cents for every dollar men earn, that rape is a major problem on college campuses, that domestic abuse increases on Super Bowl Sunday, and plenty more. Christina Hoff Sommers makes the essential point that, while the founders of American feminism rightly regarded themselves as privileged, and obliged to help those less fortunate, today's feminist extremists wrongly view themselves as victims. In reality, it's the feminist movement itself that is the victim of their nonsense, as Sommers definitively proves. Unfortunately, the book is weakened somewhat by a lengthy digression about what Rhett Butler was really up to when he took Scarlett upstairs (I saw the movie, I read the book, and I still don't give a damn). But never mind that, anyone interested in American feminism and other progressive movements, and in how their initial promise has been betrayed, must read this.

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## Marshall says

This is a pivotal book about a rift that has happened in the women's movement over the last few decades. Sommers makes the argument that feminist leaders have become extreme and anti-male, speaking for women but not representing them. Rather than working for more equity between the sexes, which she calls equity feminism and more in line with the original first wave feminist movement. The last few decades has seen the rise of what Sommers calls gender feminism, which fights for special treatment of women, insisting on the differences between the genders, and reshaping society to be feminine.

She makes a very strong case that gender feminism is overtaking and overhauling academia, particularly liberal arts colleges. She argues that this ruins what makes universities strong. Although this book doesn't ignore how feminism is a force in mainstream culture and government, it does focus very heavily on academia, which I found somewhat tiring.

This book does a great job, overall, in showing that classic feminism is still going strong, although it is under attack from gender feminists. They each have a different answer for what is best for women, but they are both concerned about what's best for women.

UPDATE: I read this again. I realize that the over-emphasis on academia in this book has distracted me from how incredibly well written and researched this book really is. The stuff about academia and education is only about half the book. I also find myself disagreeing with one of its premises, that most feminists are not gender feminists, and thus gender feminism is without a strong constituency. This book is now 20 years old, and gender feminism has made some serious headway in that time. I believe the gender feminists have won this battle. They now own feminism, and most classical equity feminists this book champions have abandoned the label, or soon will.

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## G. Branden says

A critic of poststructuralist-influenced academic feminism in the 1990s, Christina Hoff Sommers found allies

of convenience, sadly enough at the American Enterprise Institute, and thereby got co-opted by the Right after this thrown gauntlet to a much greater degree than Camille Paglia, who was despite her self-chosen status as a "libertarian", is too rambunctiously lesbian and sex-positive to find a comfortable home among conservatives. Katie Roiphe, whose *The Morning After* I also read around this time, didn't accept the Faustian bargain and seems to have settled into a quiet intellectual life, making her case with books instead of TV appearances.

Sommers' fate is a shame, because the thesis of her book struck me then and now and basically sound.

Then, too, in the intervening years, perhaps libertarian feminists, understandably going where the honoraria are, have come to realize how badly they got played by the Right, and what the consequences were for the country and the world. Effectively neutralized by what Senator Larry Craig (of the airport toilet two-step) described as Bill Clinton's "nasty, bad, naughty boy" (*sic*) behavior, one is left to wonder to what extent they stayed home on Election Day, 2000, deciding with lofty detachment that one patriarch was as bad as another.

(Then, too, the culture warriors got played as well--the promise of a comprehensive abortion ban never materialized, nor did repeal of the Family Medical Leave Act. You'd think the *Christians* would know better than to make deals with the devil, but then they thought the devil was Tom Daschle.)

I wonder if Ms. Sommers has weighed in on whether she finds Sarah Palin to be preferable to Hillary Clinton...

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## Patrick says

While many feminists tell men they need to call out sexist behavior in other men, very few feminists are willing to call out sexist behavior within their own movement. Hell, many of them don't believe they're even capable of being sexist. Christina Hoff Sommers is one of the few to do it and she's honestly the black sheep of the crowd. Hell, many feminists tend to be disgusted by what she writes. Here she differentiates between gender feminism (the gynocentric and misandric version of feminism) and equity feminism, the vocal minority. Despite it being the minority, equity feminism is slowly growing. Hell, even Steven Pinker identifies as one. Through the book, she tackles various gender feminists such as Naomi Wolf, Mary Koss, Susan Faludi and Peggy McIntosh (famous for her Male Privilege Checklist).

The feminist influence, for better or for worse, can be seen almost everywhere. While it has undoubtedly had positive influence in the lives of some women, it has had adverse effects in many places such as schools, laws, video games, technology, science, religion and atheism. That's not to say that there aren't good reasons for one to say they need feminism, but one must look at both sides of the coin. Criticizing feminism seems to be rather rare considering feminism's massive power and influence.

*Who Stole Feminism?* acts as a comprehensive guide to what went wrong throughout the decades. It has a lot in common with one of her other books, *The War Against Boys* in chronicling the misguided attempts at "equality." Christina Hoff Sommers points out that the original feminists such as Susan B. Anthony were saw themselves as privileged women who wanted to help those who were less privileged. (It's not mentioned in this book, but Susan B. Anthony was anti-abortion as well. Who would have guessed?) Nowadays, it seems like feminism has widely diverted from that. I've had feminists tell me that ALL women are oppressed and victims of the patriarchy. I've seen debates between feminists women and anti-feminist women where

the feminist tries convincing the anti-feminist that she is oppressed, even when the anti-feminist denies being oppressed in any way. That's not to say that there aren't inequalities such as slut-shaming and victim-blaming, but the fact remains that many people, including women, don't feel the need to identify with the ideology.

Many of the things that Christina Hoff Sommers talks about are things that I have seen several times among feminists.

One of the main problems with some mainstream feminism is the avid use of censorship. One only needs to look at the University of Toronto protests, the Donglegate incident, the Rebecca Watson/Richard Dawkins fiasco or the banning of Robin Thicke's Blurred Lines to notice this. Christina Hoff Sommers shows that many gender feminists are adept at silencing their opponents. Most of it seems to be within many women's studies classes as trying to refute, disagree or dismiss the curriculum was considered to be unjust. Dismissal of feminist writers or depreciation of feminist works are labeled as intellectual harassment. Sommers goes on to cite a few more examples such as banning nude artwork and so on. Some feminists, such as Catherine McKinnon, will attempt to silence opponents by simply labeling them as misogynists.

One of the most harmful things that gender feminism has done over the decades is its widespread use of academic fraud. Christina Hoff Sommers tackles many feminist myths such as the Super Bowl myth, the "rule of thumb" law, the pay wage gap, the 1 in 4 myth.. To quote from her book:

"In most fields, when a well-known study is flawed, critics can make a name for themselves by showing up its defects. This process keeps researchers honest. However, in today's environment for feminist research, the higher your figures for abuse, the more likely you'll reap rewards, regardless of your methodology."

Sommers has done very extensive research on many of the claims that are now considered facts. She has found that a lot of them simply don't have much of a basis in reality or have been manipulated and misused. Many people, such as Richard Gelles and Murray Straus, have been under attack by feminists for questions statistics and, in turn, rumors spread saying they were abusers themselves.

Another that Christina Hoff Sommers points out, mostly in the last chapter, is that many feminists are unintentionally misogynistic, despite claiming to be the ones who are fighting against misogyny. I've seen it several times myself. They tend to tell non-feminist women that they don't know what's good for them. They accuse women who speak out against feminism of merely trying to appeal to guys. Sommers gives plenty of examples of this. She cites how Naomi Wolf claims that women who join Weight Watchers are compared to cult members, how Gloria Steinem shames religious women, how Catherine MacKinnon says that women wear make-up as "a form of obedience to the patriarchy" and how Simone de Beauvoir said that women should not have the option to stay at home.

The book is massively detailed and cites examples from all over the place. As a feminist herself, Sommers has gone through great length to research and criticize many of the prominent gender feminists. Her writing style is clear and concise, though she does seem to over-elaborate at times. Regardless, the book was a very interesting and comprehensive read.

That's not to say that feminists like Malala aren't needed or that feminism hasn't achieved great things in the past, but Sommers does point out some serious flaws in American feminism. Feminism has done a lot to elevate the status of women in America and is something that is desperately needed in places like India or Saudi Arabia. However, it shouldn't go without criticism and shouldn't be above scrutiny. If I were to call myself a feminist, I'd take up the label of equity feminist much like Sommers and many others.

P.S. This review might be a bit controversial among my friends and followers, but I hope you enjoyed reading it.

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### **Sandra says**

Who stole feminism? Dedicated ideologues with a penchant for quilting, professional victimhood and more than loose relationship with facts and serious scholarship.

There were too many times during my reading of this book that I wished the arguments and facts in it were biased, politicized, exaggerated or wrong. It is an exhausting read, even if you don't try to do some cursory research on your own. It is very demoralizing to see so many instances of politicization and outright falsification of facts, used to influence education policies and laws, as well as public perception, by hijacking the natural inclination of public to be responsive and compassionate about the (actual and very real) plight of women in the society. Ms. Hoff Sommers makes the point early in the book to distinguish a principled indignation at social injustices that seeks dignified equality vs. an attitude that seeks to assign the blame, divide and antagonize, and plays loose with facts in order to achieve self-proclaimed goals, such as bringing down not only the oppressive patriarchy but also all that they believe represents it - the existing socioeconomic and political structures - as well as to obliterate "vertical" (read oppressive and apparently anti-female) thinking - reason, objectivity, science. There is little space to argue with the author that a political movement which aims to overthrow oppression easily becomes as pathological as the system it tries to cure, a caricature of itself.

Outrage aside, it was interesting to see the genesis of the brand of political activism running rampant nowdays.

February 9, 2018 update: Uber gender pay gap 'explained' (it's 8%, btw)

*Male Uber drivers earn more than their female counterparts because they drive faster, new analysis has found.*

*A study by Stanford and Chicago Universities, commissioned by the company, revealed that the average 2.2 per cent faster speeds of the male drivers accounted for around half of the earnings gap.*

*Men also earn more because they stay with the company longer, which increases the value of their pay, according to the research.*

*It follows months of accusations against the company alleging gender discrimination and workplace sexual harassment, which saw the resignation of co-founder Travis Kalanick as chief executive in June.*

*Revelations of a gender pay gap in the gig economy are thought to be particularly shocking because the format should be able to overcome the lack of flexibility in traditional workplaces which drives much pay disparity.*

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### **Linda says**

When I think of Feminism, I go back to my grandma, Jessie. She was a suffragette and marched in Lansing Michigan helping to garner the vote for women before it was National Law. She and my mom and dad

always told me I could do anything I wanted but I must get a college education (which I did) and always have a Plan B if you marry. Plan B is viable skills and preferably a personal savings account.

I think big issues and having graduated before the advent of Women's Studies, I look at national and global issues in feminism. This book (1991 copyright) uses excellent research and dispels many of the myths that have been perpetrated on women by women about women.

Now, the down side, it is fire on those in the US that still believe women have a place and it is not in the main stream leadership. I'd love to see a nice conversation between Christina Sommers and Sheryl Sandberg. Yes, the people who have been hurt by the feminist gender issue have been we, the woman that what an equal voice in home, politics, the world and the market. We can vote with our dollars and vote with our voice but the credos of our time remain:

If you are not WITH me, you are AGAINST me.

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## **K says**

With impressive thoroughness, Christina Hoff Sommers challenges a lot of feminist rhetoric and deconstructs the research on which many feminist claims are based. Sommers posits that the original "equity feminists" who fought legitimately for women's rights have now been replaced by "gender feminists" who perpetuate falsehoods about a hidden patriarchy which, they allege, victimizes women. These gender feminists tolerate no dissent from their party line and are as totalitarian as the supposed patriarchy they persist in vilifying.

The intellectually dishonest behavior Sommers describes in some of her anecdotes was outrageous and even comic at times, and I wasn't sure whether to believe it. But then I remembered a highly recommended text that I used to teach family therapy once which disappointed both me and my students. One suggestion offered by the authors of this text was that therapists ask, in their initial interview, questions to challenge the family about their relationship to society, questions which clearly had nothing to do with any clinical presenting problem the family might be coming in with. In this and many other cases, it was obvious that political correctness had completely supplanted teaching the students useful clinical skills. When I think back to that text, I find the behavior described by Sommers far more believable.

Sommers' painstaking attention to detail and overwhelming amount of evidence makes this an informative, if sometimes dense and difficult read. Though other goodreaders objected to her angry tone, I was not particularly bothered by it and feel that a more detached manner would have only served to make her book more dry and plodding. Having said that, I think you need to find this topic pretty interesting in order to feel sufficiently motivated to wade through all the data here. I would also like to see an updated version. This book came out in the early '90s and I'm not sure how much of the perspective still applies.

Still, Sommers makes some provocative and intelligent arguments and gives the reader many interesting things to think about.

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## **Ben Hourigan says**

It is perilous even to speak of feminism today if one does not agree with its radical adherents, now

populating the opinion pages of *The Guardian* or Australia's *Daily Life* with essays claiming that women are universally victims of a male conspiracy known as patriarchy. This is especially so if you are a man, and a man who loves women—with the simplistic equation current that critics of feminism must be misogynists (i.e. women-haters)—you become viewed as an enemy of women, and the women you love may turn against you.

Christina Hoff Sommers' 1994 book *Who Stole Feminism?* is remarkably pertinent in this climate, some nineteen years later, for it offers the apparently forgotten prospect that one might be a critic of some feminism or feminists, but a supporter of others. In fact, it offers the forgotten prospect that there are *multiple feminisms*, and that while one kind may be collectivist, doctrinaire and illiberal, there is another that is liberal, inclusive, and in favor of equality and the full complement of rights for all. Elsewhere Sommers speaks of "freedom feminism"—here she calls the good feminism "equity feminism" and the bad "gender feminism."

While this distinction is perhaps Sommers' major gift to readers, the other gem is chapter 5, "The Feminist Classroom," which covers the gender feminist model of education as ideological indoctrination, and its advocates' at least occasional use of intimidation tactics such as "defense guarding," which Sommers describes as "extremely reminiscent of fascism, of brown shirts." The tactics and experiences recounted therein may seem familiar to humanities students (and former students) in other disciplines theoretically or institutionally dominated by Marxism or other forms of extreme opposition to the status quo that view all means as justified in the fight for their ideals. Still more familiar may be the experience of some that if they speak out against a political opinion viewed by some as self-evident, orthodox, or "what all good people believe," they will be ostracised and shamed.

In its use of these tactics of indoctrination, intimidation, and social pressure, gender feminism is concerning not necessarily in its sexual politics, but as a movement that irrespective of its content, is illiberal and respects neither the autonomy of those who are not part of it, nor the possibility that a person of good character may rationally and acceptably hold a different and defensible view.

The remaining value in Sommers' book is as a catalog of areas in which ideologically motivated gender feminist researchers have made selective use of statistics to fabricate a case for ongoing universal female victimhood even in a scenario where a prior generation of equity feminists had already won almost total legal equality and material equality of opportunity for men and women. She devotes particular and effective attention to dissecting and debunking gender feminists' inflated (but seldom questioned) estimates of the incidence of rape and other forms of sexual violence, and their claims that girls are disadvantaged in education.

In this regard, *Who Stole Feminism?* has much in common with Warren Farrell's *The Myth of Male Power*, which is also in large part a sourcebook for those who find the gender feminist critique of our society unconvincing and are looking for the counterexamples to the myth of female victimhood that they instinctively know must be there. Here, Sommers' is the better book: she is wittier, and happy to draw amusement from the eccentricities and irrationality of the gender feminists she criticizes. There is also, here, none of the perhaps unavoidable feeling of self-pity in Farrell's book, which is full of cries of "but men suffer too!" (and yet, it is one of Farrell's points that we have been wrongly conditioned to view the openly suffering man as unattractive).

If one is looking for an alternative to what one may suspect is the distorted view of sexual politics presented by the gender feminist commentariat, this is an excellent place to start, not least because Sommers reminds us that in spite of its many illiberal proponents, there was once, and remains, much that is laudable in a

certain kind of feminism that is rigorously focused on the pursuit of rights and equality.

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## Ben Babcock says

And in other news, local authorities reported today that “feminism” has been stolen. Anyone who has any tips on the whereabouts of feminism or its thieves, please contact the hotline.

Seriously, how does one “steal” feminism? I know it’s just a title, and it’s probably the publisher’s idea of a grab for readership, but *Who Stole Feminism?* is not a title that bodes well for a measured, logical analysis of the state of feminism. The subtitle, *How Women Have Betrayed Women*, is even worse. Christina Hoff Sommers clearly has a bone to pick with feminism, or at least the feminism of 1994. This book is a little dated, which is not to say it’s necessarily obsolete. However, as I noted in my review of *The Beauty Myth* (which Sommers targets explicitly in this book), my knowledge of the state of the world, much less feminism, in 1994 is somewhat vague at best. So I’m coming to this book with a perspective different from someone who was, say, a university student at the time Sommers wrote this.

A previous reader of this book (I borrowed it from the library) took the time to scratch some pencil notes in the margins. I love notes from the past (almost as much as I love notes from the future)! I don’t mark up library books or books I think I’ll donate to the library, but I enjoy encountering them when I do. The first of several somewhat cryptic notes appears on page 37, next to a paragraph in which Sommers recounts Professor Faye Crosby’s experiences with trying to be inclusive in her classes. The sentence from the book reads, “Like Raphael [Atlas], she was clearly exhilarated by how terrible she felt.” The note says, “In ‘love’ with how good she is—that’s vanity.” Various admonishments such as “look in the mirror!” and “that’s vanity” appear sporadically throughout. Whoever this person was displays an almost religiously vehemently agreement with Sommers’ thesis.

I guess I should mention what the book is *about*. Sommers essentially advances the argument that a subset of feminists, whom she calls *gender feminists*, have come to have an undue amount of influence when it comes to public policy, particularly education. Gender feminists see the world through a “sex/gender lens” and generally promulgate radical, even misandrist views. In contrast, Sommers labels herself an *equity feminist* of the old school, one who believes women merely need to be accorded equal rights and privileges of men. (I suspect this is second wave versus first wave stuff but am not clear enough on the distinctions to say for sure.)

Sommers is reacting against the gender-feminist claim that “mainstream” (whatever that means) society and media are oppressive (towards women) and inherently patriarchal. She asserts there is no evidence for such claims and goes on to show, in painstaking detail, how some groups within this school have used misleading statistics and surveys to advance their agendas. Finally, Sommers turns it around and accuses the gender feminists themselves of being oppressive, of curtailing debate and censoring dissent at any opportunity. Thus the title, the implication that the feminist movement has been hijacked by a select subset of those who claim the label.

Sommers speaks of “transforming the academy” (Chapter 3) and the movement to revise both the humanities and the sciences to be more inclusive of women voices. She laments the vandalism of the Western Canon: “Why can’t we move on to the future and stop wasting energy on resenting (and ‘rewriting’) the past?” This subject is near and dear to my heart because, as a teacher, I’m on the front lines of education. *What* should I be teaching in an English class? *Who* should I use to help teach concepts and ideas? These are a big

questions, and while I think Sommers raises some good points about the overzealousness of policy-makers in attempting to include more diverse voices, her tone detracts from the effectiveness of her argument. She's whining: why can't we move on, why can't we just let the past be the past?

Such a sentiment is absurd. As much as Sommers is eager to demonstrate that gender feminists and their allies are blinded by their own transformationist agendas, she seems remarkably quick to discount the possibility of extant bias in culture. Her attitude appears to be that it's either/or, that if we bring more women voices into the conversation we're obligated to sacrifice the traditional classics on the altar of feminism. I'm sure there are *some* "radical" feminists out there who would love to do that, and I'm sure this attitude lends itself well to a polemic—but it seems just as radical and wishful as the thinking being done by the people Sommers criticizes. The reality is much more complicated than she portrays here.

This oversimplification pervades *Who Stole Feminism?* and makes it difficult for me to praise Sommers even when I'm inclined to agree with her. Such is the case when she calls out Sandra Harding for advocating for "feminist science" without really describing what that would look like. I encountered Harding in *Feminism: Issues and Arguments* and a chapter on "Feminism, Science, and Bias." Harding's contention that scientific knowledge is a social construction, as well as similar introductions to the anti-realist position in the following year's Philosophy of Science & Technology course, triggered a mini-crisis in my personal philosophy of science. It's something I'm still working through (though I still think I'm a reductionist—or maybe just a physicalist—don't know!). So when Sommers dredged it up again, I felt that familiar stab of disagreement—but Jennifer Saul provides a far superior analysis in *Feminism: Issues and Arguments*, in which she points out that even if Harding is off the mark, science has historically had a lot of bias in it. Much of that bias happens to be white and male.

Sommers is eager to reject the idea that our society is patriarchal. She is dismissive of the "sex/gender lens" perspective of gender feminism. I find this tactic peculiar considering her background in philosophy—rather than analyze the philosophical claims of the gender feminists, Sommers chooses to criticize particular people and organizations within this movement. To be sure, some of the concerns she raises are valid. For example, misuse of statistics or surveys to influence public policy is bad news no matter who is doing it. Furthermore, the problems she notes in academia are real and troubling. But none of these invalidates the sex/gender approach at all, nor does Sommers demonstrate to my satisfaction a causal link between the sex/gender perspective and divisive politics. Conflating radical and misandrist feminism with "gender feminism" is, to borrow a term Sommers hates the gender feminists using, "shortchanging women."

Speaking as a mathematician, I know the siren call of statistics—and I know they can be misleading. Empirical data is an important, essential part of doing science and of decision-making. But in focusing solely on the statistical side of feminism, Sommers is ignoring the larger philosophical debate. Consider her chapter on "Rape Research", in which she discounts the notion of *rape culture* as a byproduct of inflating the percentage of women who are victims of rape. Sure, maybe the numbers are wrong—Sommers' point that definitions of rape vary greatly is valid—but this does not change the fact that, in our society, victim-blaming remains pervasive. Rape continues to be viewed as a problem *women* have—as in, "boys will be boys—and rape you—so don't do anything to attract a rapist's attention." This toxic idea is harmful to men as well as women. Even if the prevalence of rape remains statistically ambiguous, the cultural representation of rape as something women must prevent remains a problem. And *that* is rape culture right there.

**When I look at society through a sex/gender lens, I see a lot I consider wrong, a lot I want to change.** If some feminists are abusing this perspective, that is deplorable and needs to stop—but that doesn't invalidate the basic ideas that **we can work together to make culture less white, male, and heteronormative**. Why is it so wrong to point out the ways in which women are marginalized and objectified? Why is it so wrong to

want to have a conversation about it? It might be the case that some gender feminists want to shut down the conversation, if Sommers' anecdotes about being censored are true. Yet, again, that's the misconduct of certain voices within the feminist discourse and not a flaw with the sex/gender perspective itself.

The problem with Sommers' cheerleading of equity feminism is that it's insufficient in our twenty-first century society. I won't blame Sommers for not anticipating how the adoption of the Web has created new opportunities for feminist discourse. However, I'm willing to argue that it was insufficient even in the 1990s when she wrote this. Feminism may have begun as a movement for women to have rights equal to those of men, but **today it is inextricably linked to larger issues of social justice**, including anti-racism, anti-homophobia, anti-colonialism, etc. The struggle for equity requires us to struggle for equity for *all*; otherwise, it is hollow. Sommers' perspective is a very limited, very academic and American one, in which there are men and there are women and she wants the two to be equal. It's a nice sentiment and a good start, but it's not nearly enough.

*Who Stole Feminism?: How Women Have Betrayed Women* is everything it promises to be: a polemical, confrontational invective against so-called gender feminism. It's also just as divisive and exclusionary as the feminists Sommers is criticizing. As far as books go, it is by no means a train wreck: it's well-written, with thoughtful and organized arguments backed by an almost overwhelming amount of citations and statistics. Sommers identifies issues, predominantly in academic departments, that are probably still relevant now in 2012 (though I'd opine they are part of a larger crisis in higher education that Sommers fails to discuss). As with any mosaic movement, feminism has its own internal struggles of dogma and doctrine it must overcome.

So in that respect, this book offers some interesting perspectives on the nuanced and often conflicting voices within feminist discourse. Yet as much as I can appreciate some of her criticisms, I can't agree with most of Sommers' proposed solutions. Her future of feminism seems like it's moving backwards, folding inwards upon itself, in an attempt to return to roots that are always receding into romanticized histories ("it was better in the good old days, when feminism was ... and feminists were ..."). Perhaps this is just my bias in favour of the idea that society is still oppressive, but I think feminism, in order to make progress, has to be an agonistic process. Anything less is palliative at best.

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## Melanie says

While I won't write a full review, I want to express my appreciation for Christina Hoff Sommers' voice of reason amid the cacophony that is gender feminism.

First of all, this book explains the difference between equity feminism and gender feminism. For those of us who have been confused at the ideological noise in the media and in our classrooms, and have tried to stay as far away from the whole writhing Medusa head of feminism as possible, this is an important distinction.

Equity feminism has its roots in the 1848 movement and objectively promotes equal legal rights for women.

Gender feminism, on the other hand, is a rampage against a patriarchal society--and men in general--in which women are apparently systematically oppressed and terrorized. This is the madness that has bullied its way into college classrooms and hijacked the curriculum to propagate "awareness" of imaginary oppression.

Its "gynocentric epistemology" screeches its demand to be heard, backing its claims with faulty social science research and willful misrepresentation of women. It is an affront to intelligent, rational women who are fully in support of equity feminism, but have no desire to be entangled in irrational, self-propelled hysteria over fake persecution and suppression.

This book, the result of serious journalistic investigation and fact-checking, provided clarity and understanding for me on the issue. I highly recommend this book for any woman--and anyone being force-fed extreme, misandric gender feminism in classrooms or workplaces.

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### **Shauna says**

What was best about this book was that the author really took the time to do her research. She's not just throwing out accusations against noted feminists; rather, she spends the time to look at the numbers and statistics and see what they say, in order to compare what's REALLY happening to what the feminists say is happening. Though the book is numbers-heavy, it's a very good read, and eye-opening.

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### **Erin says**

Excellent Book that shows you just how often we as women are lied to in order to support certain agendas.

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### **Scott says**

Christina Hoff Sommers is an anti-feminist funded by right wing foundations; her books are only intended to act as misinformation.

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### **Aisha says**

24 May 2013

Half way through the 13 hours long audio book! I'm simply blown away!

31 May 2013

**"That is the corrosive paradox of gender feminism's misandrist stance: no group of women can wage war on men without at the same time denigrating the women who respect those men."**

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## Leseparatist says

There are moments when Sommers makes some valid points about the necessity to check research more thoroughly and about feminist overzealousness that results in essentialism (women have better \_\_\_\_ skills; women are more empathetic etc.). Unfortunately, that is lost under a deluge of bile and such pearls as the aforementioned "feminist college will turn your daughters gay, deprive them of religion and morals and turn them against you." Her arguments against Foucault are mostly quotes from others and show that she either did not actually read him, or failed to understand him, or willfully misrepresents his points. I also appreciate how quick she was to decide that Naomi Wolf will be universally hated by feminists for publishing *Fire with Fire* - while there has undoubtedly been a lot of (valid) criticism of that book, the edition I own boasts an enthusiastic blurb from the much-maligned Steinem, whom Sommers considers to be the exemplary "gender-feminist".

I did not much care for the America-the-Great-Liberal-Country-of-Liberty-and-Equality spiel. But, overall, I'd say I hated it a little less than I did Badinter's "We the French Women Are Not Some American Prudes."

Other highlights: being forcibly finger-fucked (after consensual sexual activity that did not involve penetration) is not rape, it's "a boy misbehaving". 1 woman raped in 20 equals low rape rates. (The bad type of) feminists get all the funding and spend it on evil curriculum reform designed to deprive youth of education.

Sommers has a rosy view of American society (apart from the short moment when she admits that it has violence issues - and a bad education system) and a very bleak view of feminists. She does not manage to prove that either of them is justified.