



## Men and Feminism: Seal Studies

*Shira Tarrant*

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There's no denying that men's involvement and interest in feminism is key to its continuing relevance and importance. Addressing the question of why men should care about feminism in the first place, *Men and Feminism* lays the foundation for a larger discussion about feminism as a human issue, not simply a women's issue. Men are crucial to the movement — as fathers, brothers, husbands, boyfriends, and friends. From "why" to "how" to "what can men do", *Men and Feminism* answers all the questions men have about how and why they should get behind feminism.

## Men and Feminism: Seal Studies Details

Date : Published May 12th 2009 by Seal Press (first published January 1st 2009)

ISBN : 9781580052580

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Format : Paperback 208 pages

Genre : Feminism, Nonfiction, Gender, Sociology

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## From Reader Review Men and Feminism: Seal Studies for online ebook

### Veronica says

First off, when you see the cover of the book you'll notice that this book is part of the Seal Press Studies series. But DO NOT FREAK OUT! While this book can easily be in a Gender & Women's Studies course syllabus, I also believe this is an excellent book for anyone to pick up in order to know more about how men have fit into the feminist movement.

What's that? You don't think that men have been a part of the feminist movement? Oh how mistaken you are! But it's not your fault that you believe that, first of all, our history classes don't teach women's history and when we take it upon ourselves we do focus on the accomplishments of kick ass women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Dolores Huerta. In fact men have been supportive of the movement all along, not as many as we would want, but that's where Tarrant really gets into the question of men & feminism.

Tarrant goes thru the history of the (mostly American) women's movement and reveals the men behind the amazing women, but also reveals some of their contradictions including how their public voice did not match their private lives or how men used motherhood as a way to push for women's rights.

But I felt that the gem of this book was how Tarrant wrestled with trans and gay issues within the context of feminism and masculinity. She showed us how the fear of being labeled a sissy keeps even the most feminist of men silent thus complacent in continuing our sexist and homophobic society. She walks us thru how ignoring or being ignorant of trans-issues keeps us focused on the false binary of boy-girl, masculine-feminine and thus keeping all of us in gendered boxes. As close friends know, I believe my feminism can connect almost any issue and Tarrant does a brilliant job at showing us how we must pay attention to the plight of boys and men under patriarchy in order to bring out a more just world. I wish I had had this book a few years ago when I was trying to create a men's issues committee for a feminist org I use to work with. I was shot down loudly and quickly.

Tarrant also has a great chapter on male privilege. It's an easy read in terms of vocabulary, althou it might be hard for anyone to totally grasp. Essentially Tarrant says "Great, you're a great guy. You might love a feminist woman, never hit her and even support her work. But unless you are taking progressive steps to call out others on their sexism there's still work to be done." It's not finger-pointing or male-bashing at all. Rather it's a straight forward call to action for all the "I'm not a feminist but..." men in our lives who really need to walk all that talk.

This would be an excellent present for a feminist dad/husband in training. It's 150 pages of the feminist manliness. If you're a nrrd like me, it's great summer reading too.

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### Rebe says

Most of what I knew about feminism and sexuality/gender issues before reading this book came from the one Gender & Society class I took last semester at Sweet Briar, and from things I've read on the Internet. So, I'd managed to learn quite a bit, but in mostly a scattered way.

Overall, I found this book easy to read and follow, with lots of quotable lines. It went over a lot of things I

was already familiar with (introductory stuff as well as some more advanced topics I'd covered in my Gender & Society course) as well as helping me to understand some concepts I hadn't previously grasped, like intersectionality. Oh, and Dr. Tarrant also includes a chapter on the history of feminism, which I hadn't heard much about before. While that's not essential to understanding feminism, it's a nice addition and provides context for the movement.

I see people online, IRL, and in the media misunderstanding feminism all the time, and that's frustrating because feminism's not that difficult a concept. People just haven't read up about it. It's also frustrating because ignorance is a big part of what keeps sexism alive and well in our society.

As Dr. Tarrant points out, our society's treatment of gender affects everyone, not just women, so I definitely recommend this to everyone, regardless of gender, either as a starting-off point or as a way to better understand ideas you've already encountered to some extent.

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### **Louis says**

I was hoping for a book on current gender issues pertaining to business, divorce, parenting and more; and hoping it would include a balanced incorporation of male gender issues as well. I had just finished a popular title that touched the subject of feminism, but it didn't dig into the modern feminism that I was interested in. I saw the PhD and figured I'd be getting a well researched and informative look into the topic. Instead, I read a biased and overgeneralized account of feminism. What a crock! This book disguised itself as an objective and academic look at the subject, but Tarrant never welcomed any critical viewpoint of feminists seriously. I felt the book carried an ultimatum that Tarrant's view of the subject is the only one and you're either with her or against her. She callously derides every group that has a reactionary critique of feminism, but she never gives any of the arguments a fair case. Even with the advances of genetics and neurology, Tarrant still contends that any proof found scientifically is "essentialist" used purely to maintain the domination of the male gender. I shut the book at page 57.

I believe in gender equality. With high rates of divorce, wage inequality, and the lack of women leaders; feminism is an issue we should be discussing seriously. What makes Tarrant's book atrocious is that her credentials fool the reader to thinking she's an expert on the subject. It's tough early on not to be seduced by her "expertise." However once you realize her logic is shoddy, research lazy, and she doesn't even bother with accurate citations you can be quite comfortable putting this empty rhetoric down.

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### **SpaceBear says**

An introductory role to feminism, mostly as an introduction for men who aren't sure what it is. Great introductory reader.

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### **Katherine says**

this is an extremely accessible and non-confrontational look at men's (essential!) role in feminism. coming from a place of acceptance and not alienation, this book is great for both ladies and gentlemen. a lot of guys are under the impression that they are either unwelcome or unnecessary in the feminist movement, and this book explains clearly and concisely why they are so crucial. it's also a great overview of the evolution of the

feminist movement in general, and is highly readable. The book also touches, more briefly, on gender roles and stereotypes, as well as on transexual and gay male involvement in feminism. The book is so successful because it also examines the difficulties of engrained male societal expectations: it doesn't paint men as perpetrators only, it challenges them to think about their own cultural expectations as well. A good preface to "guyland."

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### **Dan says**

I really liked this book. It does a thorough job of walking its readers through a little bit of feminist history in the United States, critically reviewing current trends, and dispelling a lot of myths. I think this book is great for everyone--not just men--but I definitely think that men everywhere will benefit from reading it.

One of my favorite parts of the book talks about different views on masculinity and how the feminist movement can help secure a positive, balanced form of masculine identity for both men and women. Definitely a must-read.

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### **Anne says**

This book was fine. It provided historical context of men's involvement with feminism/women's movements, and it is written in an accessible way for the general population (as opposed to academic/scientific community).

It was well-organized, discussed historical and modern issues alike. It took into account transgender and genderqueer issues, which was refreshing to see.

However, I was disappointed by the citations. They are incomplete, to say the least. For example, FBI reports or "university studies" are cited within the text for the information provided, but then in the list of citations, there are none listed that have anything to do with the FBI or one that could possibly be the university study in question, which leads me to believe that some of the information is taken from secondary sources without those sources being mentioned in the text. To me, this makes the entire text lose credibility and takes away the ability of the reader to find the information in the original sources.

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### **Abbey says**

This is a fantastic primer on masculinity and men within the feminist movement. I think it would be completely perfect for a Women's Studies 101 course.

It's really exciting to see all of this emerging scholarship on men within the feminist movement. I really love Seal Studies!

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### **Ethel Margaret says**

This primer is a wonderful feminist overview. Shira Tarrant makes the case that all genders have a stake in gender equity, and in the process she helps normalize the notion of male participation.

The book succeeds by highlighting feminism's internal critiques. And, by showing the periodic shortcomings of theory-to-practice transitions. It seems to me that occasionally people are timid of, or repulsed by, feminism because they imagine it as a herd of monolithic characters; a doctrine espoused and adhered to. The reality shown is that feminism evolves and continues to re-examine itself. Men and Feminism highlights juxtaposed ideals and practices, the intersections of identity and experience, and the shifting of spheres we inhabit. Hopefully those who are more feminist-minded than they realize will find this as an open door.

What I know is the brief history provided by chapter 2 contextualizes some of today's debates, showing how they've morphed over time. It's an important, illuminating chapter. And I know that my "to read" list has grown. I now have to (re-)read several of the authors referenced in Men and Feminism, as well as others from the Seal Studies series.

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### **J says**

I bought this book for my little brother as an introduction to feminism. I think that this book is perfect for a primer to feminism in a way that is accessible and engaging especially for teenagers. It didn't get too in depth, but I think that that is appropriate for trying to speak to audiences whom may be new to feminism! Even as a gender studies major, I loved reading it!

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### **michelle says**

i had to read this for one of her classes— it's fine

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### **Thea says**

"There's no denying that men's involvement and interest in feminism is key to its continuing relevance and importance" imagine being this wrong. Women's rights happen in spite of men, not because of them, men are literally the cause and beneficiaries of misogyny and patriarchy.

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### **Yasmin says**

This book was quite informative, sometimes funny, had a pretty cover, and their last chapter actually had tops on what you can do to help. And they were GOOD tips, albeit simple, which is even more extraordinary.

Maybe if SOMEONE wouldn't be so scared and just read it!

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### **Emily says**

I got this as a nice Women's Studies 101 primer for my boyfriend, as we were discussing different ways for those with privilege to be allies in pushing for equality. Tarrant lays out an informative, but conversational guide on different routes men have taken to advocate for feminism. She treads carefully over points where there is disagreement: how some self-identify, the challenges of single-gender spaces, how patriarchy both harms and benefits men, etc. I learned a great deal from the book, as well, on some of the historic pushes for equality, and the role that men can take as allies, supporters, and, yes, feminists.

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### **Rick Homuth says**

Not as in-depth as I had hoped. The author made some good points, but they came across as common sense in my opinion. Perhaps better viewed as an entry-level reading on the subject.

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