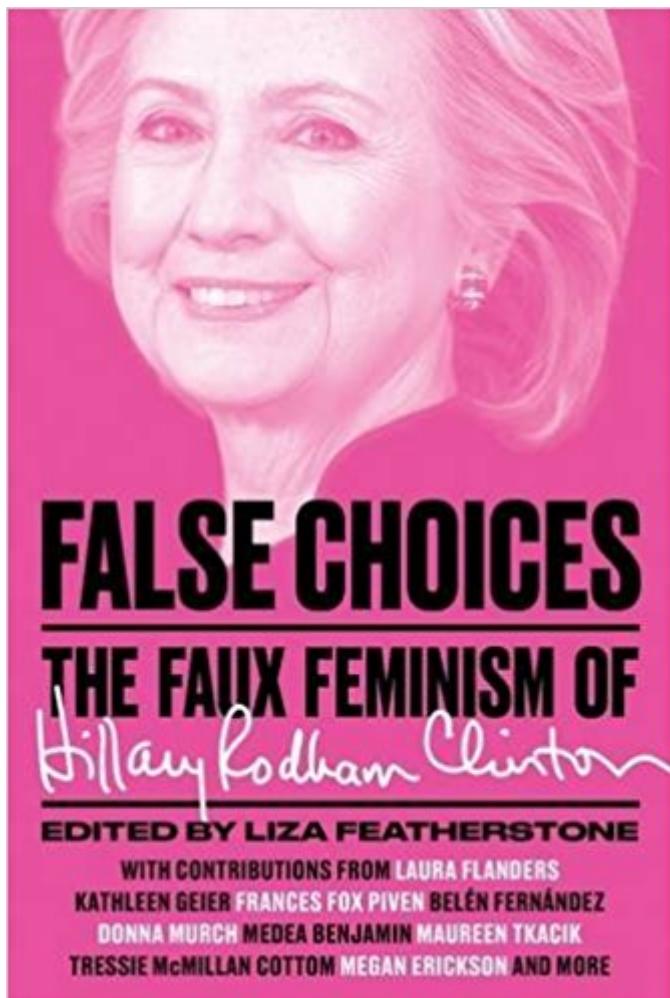


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False Choices: The Faux Feminism Of Hillary Rodham Clinton



Synopsis

Hillary Rodham Clinton is one of the most powerful women in world politics, and the irrational right-wing hatred of Clinton has fed her progressive appeal, helping turn her into a feminist icon. To get a woman in the White House, it's thought, would be an achievement for all women everywhere, a kind of trickle-down feminism. In the run-up to the 2016 presidential election, the mantle of feminist elect has descended on Hillary Clinton, as a thousand viral memes applaud her, and most mainstream feminist leaders, thinkers, and organizations endorse her. In this atmosphere, dissent seems tantamount to political betrayal. In *False Choices*, an all-star lineup of feminists contests this simplistic reading of the candidate. A detailed look at Hillary Clinton's track record on welfare, Wall Street, criminal justice, education, and war reveals that she has advanced laws and policies that have done real harm to the lives of women and children across the country and the globe. This well-researched collection of essays restores to feminism its revolutionary meaning, and outlines how it could transform the United States and its relation to the world. Includes essays from prominent feminist writers Liza Featherstone, Laura Flanders, Moe Tkacik, Medea Benjamin, Frances Fox Piven and Fred Block, Donna Murch, Kathleen Geier, Yasmin Nair, Megan Erickson, Tressie McMillan Cottom, Catherine Liu, Amber Lee Frost, Margaret Corvid, Belinda Fernández, Zillah Eisenstein, and others.

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Customer Reviews

For anyone who has become increasingly uneasy with the entire political landscape during the last few decades, the careful analysis presented by the essays in *False Choices: The Faux Feminism of Hillary Rodham Clinton*, edited by Liza Featherstone, is less a breath of fresh air than a cyclone of honest critique. The overall point is extremely well stated: Clinton is a woman, but not a feminist by any meaningful definition of the term. She is an advocate for the white-male-dominated, wealth-saturated power structure, and has been at least since her early days of involvement with Wal-Mart and other corporations whose hiring practices are a major contributor to poverty in general and the poverty of women in particular. The 2016 national election will in fact be the 14th presidential contest in which I've voted (my first was 1960, and yes, I voted for JFK). Further, I have not missed any mid-term elections in that time frame. I have not been actively involved in partisan politics, however, because of an awareness that the major political parties at the national level are not where the real action for social justice is taking place. In addition, since Vietnam, I've become increasingly disenchanted with the ongoing imperialistic militarism that has pervaded our cultural ethos. I have become convinced that *just war* is an oxymoron, and that all of the US interventions since WWII are greed-and/or-fear-motivated adventurism. Still, since the turn of the millennium and the abominations of the Bush-Cheney regime, it has been impossible to avoid increasing alarm at the resurgence of fascism as the right-wing extremists have taken over Congress. The dim hope that Obama would somehow not only avoid assassination, but also be able to actually reverse that neocon militaristic adventurism, make meaningful changes in economic injustices, and counteract massive environmental rape perpetrated by the greed of the fossil fuel oligarchs, has of course been dashed. It seems that the price for not only continuing to live, but to gain a second term, has indeed been to not expose the neocon military-industrial complex for what it is. This brings me to the current race, and this book of essays. Most "I would probably be correct in saying all " of the authors, despite Clinton's well-documented lack of authentic feminist credentials, would prefer to see her elected than the potential GOP opponent. There is a clear understanding that at this moment in history, actual fascism is a real possibility. However, if Clinton DOES succeed in achieving the Democratic nomination, it is the consensus that those who may vote for her if only because it's time for the US to at last elect a female chief executive dare not rest on their laurels and assume that somehow a female Commander in Chief will in any way support a genuine feminist agenda of peace, ecological responsibility, and economic justice. One other thing, I believe, makes this book extremely valuable. Rather than relying on the mass media, sound-bite criticisms being put forward by Clinton's opponents (what she should have done about

Benghazi, what was really in those e-mails), most of which are of the dog-whistle, red-herring variety, it deals explicitly and in detail with the facts of public record concerning policies she has supported or opposed from the time she was First Lady of Arkansas up through her stint as Secretary of State. For those much younger than I, this provides a valuable historical perspective. Even for me, it serves as a cogent reminder of how extensive Clinton's involvement in the imperialist stance of the ruling oligarchy of the US was, is, and is likely to remain.

I have long been on the Hillary-isn't-really-a-feminist bandwagon, so I was happy to see this book come out (although I really wish it could have come out sooner — Bernie's chances are, as of this writing, somewhere between slim and fat, and we're now well into Hillary-is-better-than-Trump season). Sure, Hillary is all about breaking the glass ceiling and getting more women into power and that is a sort of feminism. And she talks a good game about various women's issues like reproductive rights, equal pay and work-life balance issues (although I'm harder pressed to find what she's actually done about these things). But Hillary's brand of glass ceiling feminism overlooks the women (and men, children and families) who have no chance of breaking any ceilings because they are stuck to the floor (or the basement). This book was written by several different authors at different times for different purposes, so it really is a mixed bag. The essays weren't necessarily coordinated in advance, so there is some repeated information, and some of the writers seem to meander around their topic without really getting to the point of connecting Hillary to the issues they are writing about (the one on Hillary and abortion, for instance could have been much clearer). But overall the essays are well written and deliver their message, but, as I said, I'm already singing in the choir. I'm not sure how convincing any skeptical readers would find this book as a whole, although certain topics are devastating. The book opens with a fictionalized play of two lesbian partners watching a Sanders-Clinton debate. While it's not exactly high-quality literature, it is probably the most succinct place to find all the supporting information for why Hillary isn't really a feminist from pro-Bernie partner Laura. Following a brief introduction and overview, there are thirteen chapters covering various aspects of Hillary's career, her populist persona and her policies and actions in office. The various essays focus on everything from Hillary's support for Bill's policies like welfare reform to her own role in pushing for intervention in Libya. The first part of the book focuses on Hillary at home and how her domestic policies (and her husband's policies, which, for all practical purposes, are her policies) have been, at best, tepid for women and children, including a look at her relationship with the

Children's Defense Fund, her belief in the power of the market to end poverty, her on-going war on teachers, the carceral state and the war on drugs. The second section focuses on Hillary and foreign policy, such as her failure to support sex workers (despite her rhetoric), a detailed look at her disastrous support for a right-wing coup in Honduras and her general warmongering. This is an important book for the historical record, but I don't know how much it will accomplish this election season. As noted, it's a bit late to get it into enough hands to make a difference before primary season ends. As things stand now, Hillary is the likely Democratic nominee.

Assuming she can beat Trump, I don't know how much we can do to stop her once she's in the Oval Office. She's not exactly known for her willingness to listen, plus she'll be amply defended by her leagues of supporters who insist that she is indeed a progressive and a feminist. As a final note, I read an advanced readers copy of this book and there are a couple of rather glaring issues that I hope will be corrected in the final. In one place Gramm-Leach-Bliley gets mixed up with Glass-Steagall (Gramm-Leach-Bliley was the law that repealed the part of the Glass-Steagall Act that separated commercial banks from investment firms). At another place Temporary Assistance for Needy Children gets mixed up with Aid for Dependent Children (again, TANF is what replaced actual welfare, which was AFDC). And finally there is a misspelling of Frederick Douglass's name. It would be most unfortunate if these errors made it into the final version as it might seem that the authors don't know what they're talking about.

If you continue to think of Hillary Clinton as a feminist, as a strong advocate for women, you need to read this book. This is the type of privileged, imperialist feminism that is not feminism. You will be floored and outraged at the information in this book, at least, I hope you will be. And then I hope we can, finally, put to bed the myth that Hillary is even a progressive, let alone a feminist.

I've long NOT been a fan of HRC but her actions in the past year further turned me away from her. I'm still open-minded to learn more, that's where False Choices came in. The essays were startling. I honestly had no idea HRC was a voice behind so many negative situations. No spoiler alerts, but this book False Choices is a must read for ALL and I do mean ALL Bernie delegates, both state and national. I hope Democratic Superdelegates will read False Choices with an open mind, as well. I've already repeatedly mentioned False Choices to hundreds of Bernie delegates across Missouri.

This is an excellent book to be reading in this election year, especially as once again Hillary Clinton

seems to be poised to be the Democratic candidate. I have been watching her since 1990 and have frequently questioned her status as a feminist icon only to be told that I have no idea of what I am talking about. I believe that the various authors whose essays are included in the book have sufficient street cred that the book should be required reading by Hillary supporters, who frequently see her as a victim.

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