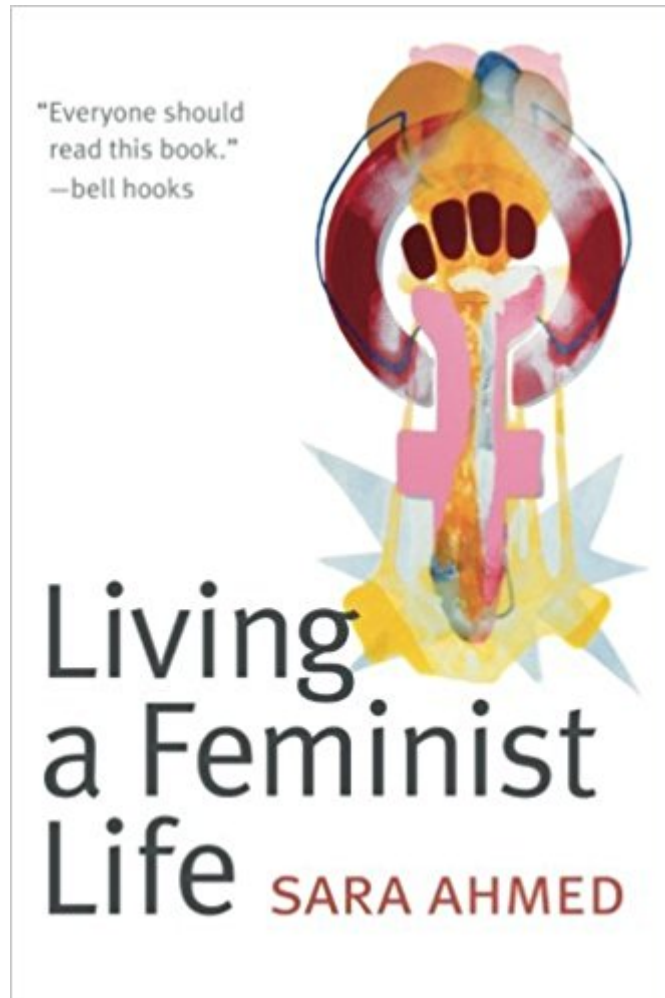




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Living A Feminist Life



Synopsis

In *Living a Feminist Life* Sara Ahmed shows how feminist theory is generated from everyday life and the ordinary experiences of being a feminist at home and at work. Building on legacies of feminist of color scholarship in particular, Ahmed offers a poetic and personal meditation on how feminists become estranged from worlds they critique—often by naming and calling attention to problems—and how feminists learn about worlds from their efforts to transform them. Ahmed also provides her most sustained commentary on the figure of the feminist killjoy introduced in her earlier work while showing how feminists create inventive solutions—such as forming support systems—to survive the shattering experiences of facing the walls of racism and sexism. The killjoy survival kit and killjoy manifesto, with which the book concludes, supply practical tools for how to live a feminist life, thereby strengthening the ties between the inventive creation of feminist theory and living a life that sustains it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“From the moment I received Sara Ahmed’s new work, *Living a Feminist Life*, I couldn’t put it down. It’s such a brilliant, witty, visionary new way to think about feminist theory. Everyone should read this book. It offers amazing new ways of knowing and talking about feminist theory and practice. And, it is also delightful, funny, and as the song says, “your love has lifted me higher.” Ahmed lifts us higher. (bell hooks)” I read *Living a Feminist Life* with a deep sense of recognition. This is a book that feminists will find illuminating—acutely painful at times, but mostly profoundly insightful. Written in Sara

Ahmed's trademark evocative style whereby concepts, experiences, words, ideas, structures, and bodies are examined thoroughly from all possible angles, the book documents what it means to understand and lay claim to living everyday life as a feminist. Analytic gems like 'sweaty concepts' and 'feminist killjoy' are peppered throughout, causing the reader to pause and reflect – stopping us in our tracks, making the act of reading a 'sensational' one, thus enacting theory in the flesh. A beautifully written, smartly provocative book that belongs on our shelves, in our classrooms, and in our daughters' hands." (Chandra Talpade Mohanty, author of *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*) "Fans of bell hooks and Audre Lorde will find Ahmed's frequent homages and references familiar and assuring in a work that goes far beyond Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, capturing the intersection so critical in modern feminism." (Abby Hargreaves *Library Journal* 2017-01-01) "Living a Feminist Life is a work of embodied political theory that defies the conventions of feminist memoir and self-help alike. . . . Living a Feminist Life makes visible the continuous work of feminism, whether it takes place on the streets, in the home, or in the office. Playful yet methodical, the book tries to construct a living feminism that is neither essentialist nor universalist." (Melissa Gira Grant *Bookforum* 2017-02-01) "Living a Feminist Life is perhaps the most accessible and important of Ahmed's works to date. . . . [A] quite dazzlingly lively, angry and urgent call to arms. . . In short, everybody should read Ahmed's book precisely because not everybody will." (Emma Rees *Times Higher Education* 2017-02-16) "Beautifully written and persuasively argued, *Living a Feminist Life* is not just an instant classic, but an essential read for intersectional feminists." (Ann A. Hamilton *Bitch* 2017-03-01) "This book is about a wriggling out, a speaking out. And it teaches me to write, to think, like this – word twists word, and body to thought. Because for Ahmed, words make worlds and her book – the first after she left academia in feminist revolt – is full of bluesy world-play." (Caren Beilin *Full-Stop* 2017-02-28) "Living a Feminist Life is the perfect introduction to Ahmed's academic work, if a general reader is unfamiliar with her. . . . For me, her lack of despair is the book's strongest point. Ahmed's work is as cutting and critical as it is joyful. There is a distinct hope and optimism for the future of diversity work – but still a demand for better." (Evelyn Deshane *The F-Word* 2017-03-19) "Undeniably, Ahmed's book is a highly crafted work, both scholarly and lyrically, that builds upon itself and delivers concrete, adaptable conclusions; it is a gorgeous argument, crackling with kind wit and an invitation to the community of feminist killjoys." (Theodosia Henney *Lambda Literary Review* 2017-04-19) "Ahmed gifts us words that we may have difficulty

finding for ourselves.... [R]eading her book provides a tentative vision for a feminist ethics for radical politics that is applicable far beyond what is traditionally considered the domain of feminism." (Mahvish Ahmad The New Inquiry 2017-05-15)"Anyone at odds with this world—•and we all ought to—• owes it to themselves, and to the goal of a better tomorrow, to read this book." (Mariam Rahmani Los Angeles Review of Books 2017-06-06)"Living a Feminist Life offers something halfway between the immediacy and punch of the blog and the multi-layered considerations of a scholarly essay; the result is one of the most politically engaged, complex and personal books on gender politics we have seen in a while." (Bidisha Times Literary Supplement 2017-06-14)

Sara Ahmed is a feminist writer, scholar, and activist. She is the author of *Willful Subjects*, *On Being Included*, *The Promise of Happiness*, and *Queer Phenomenology*, all also published by Duke University Press.

In the second decade of the 21st century, "feminism" has become a buzzword of sorts. As varied technologies allow for wider inclusion in and engagement with feminist discourse, theories of feminism have become increasingly used in daily parlance. But what does it mean when theory doesn't align with practice? What happens when we separate feminist theory from the everyday events and occurrences that gave theory life? In this book, Ahmed uses critical theory, cultural studies, literary analysis, memoir and personal reflection to bring practice and theory back together, to remind us that feminism is just as much of an experience as it is an idea. The experience matters; how we live our lives as feminists is meaningful. I wouldn't say that the text serves as an introduction to feminist theory: it's written in a very accessible manner, but Ahmed assumes her readers have prior engagement with feminist philosophy. Ahmed's analysis of the feminist killjoy, the willful feminist, and institutional passing are illuminating. Part II of the text, the section in which Ahmed recounts her experience as a diversity worker within academia, was truly the heart of the text. Here Ahmed's incisive critique of sexism and racism within universities, amongst other forms of marginalization, truly shined. Ahmed's work, while insightful, is difficult to follow. At times, remaining engaged with the text was difficult because of the loose, stream-of-consciousness-esque style. Ahmed would begin elaborating on a concept, pause to share a personal story or reference other feminist writers, or provide an analysis of a book or film, and then return to the concept without fully showing how the previous reference was related. Consequently, as a reader, I had a difficult time following some of her analyses. Nonetheless, this was a deeply necessary and timely book. I

received an e-galley of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I found this book difficult to read, both hard, at times, to follow the larger arguments being made and hard in that the book challenged me very much in terms of my own life. It's definitely an important book by an important writer engaging with important questions and problems about gender and feminism in our time. The key unit of the writing in this book, as far as I could tell, was not the chapter or the paragraph but the sentence. Ahmed writes many, many beautiful, lyrical sentences and then piles them on top of each other.

I was really looking forward to reading this book, but after reading the introduction I am completely put off by the redundant writing style. Just within the intro I was tripped up multiple times thinking I had accidentally re-read the same sentence, but in fact Ahmed had repeated the same phrase twice (or more) within a sentence with a very minor adjustment that was just annoying and didn't add to her point. It just has no flow and is poorly written, sorry.

Stunning! Ahmed incorporates her theoretical concepts of queer phenomenology in a way that brings her experiences and claims to the real. Very readable for academics and students.

This will touch you.

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