

**Alison Phipps, *Me, Not You: The Trouble with Mainstream Feminism*,
Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2020; pp: 205 paperback; RRP
£12.99 GBP.**

The trouble with mainstream feminism is determining a point of unified argument that functions across the social lives of a diverse range of people. Alison Phipps, a professor of languages and intercultural studies, pushes to the heart of the issue within the opening moments of her latest book. Phipps' book is founded on resources from sociology, politics, gender studies and philosophy with intersectional research of Spivak and Lorde creating the core for analysis.

Phipps has worked hard to balance the fine line between speaking of, instead of speaking for, women of colour in the feminist movements. Her measured tone is a product of fifteen years of research and participant activism around sexual violence. The introduction dedicates the book to Black feminists and pledges royalties from the book to projects by and for Black women with a particular focus on anti-violence programs.

The damage white women have done to feminist movements and the gains made by them, for them, makes this a book of accountability. *Me, Not You* appears to be designed to illuminate and explain the inherent contradictions within mainstream feminism as, '[e]ven when women of colour are in leadership roles, the pull of whiteness is strong' (2). She demonstrates whiteness is an undeniable factor of social and cultural life. Whiteness informs one's values, orientations, and everyday behaviours. Whiteness is what we see in social media when middle-aged American white women scream for police when they are the ones vilifying African-American men and women, at times for something as trivial as a car space.

Phipps argues that 'being a victim and a perpetrator are not mutually exclusive' (10). Weaving class into the discussion Phipps contends white women can be victims of sexual violence and 'perpetrators of race and class supremacy' (10). As readers traverse through chapters about 'Gender in a Right Moving World', the Me Too movement, functions of political whiteness, the costs of the 'Outrage Economy', how white feminism works as a 'war machine' and 'Feminists involvement with the Far Right', they are shown the undeniable and long history of gendered and racialised violence by white women. This is most notable when Phipps asserts that '[t]oday's reactionary feminists are descendants of nineteenth-century 'vice-fighters', Christian moralists' and anti-miscegenation's, the bourgeois women enlisted by Fordism to 'improve' the working class and those who ran the reformatories for 'wayward' Black girls and who abused them for their own good' (154).

A highlight chapter was 'Feminists and the Far Right'. Although the chapters of this book can be read independently, it was worth reading the whole book to get the payoff from this slow burn and powerful point of analysis. Phipps examines white feminists and their involvement with 'far right', conservative, politicians and demonstrates the significant and active powerful relationships between 'reactionary',

transexclusionary, feminists and the 'right' or religious conservatives that endures to ensure 'the borderlands of feminism and womanhood remain secure' (135). It is also valuable for illustrating inconsistencies within white conservative feminist arguments, such as male bodies are inherently violent but this sense of violence is often only applicable to men of colour or transwomen, not men such as Donald Trump (141).

A strong thread throughout this book is instances of everyday violence. This sense of social harm and cultural destruction occurs not only with the subject matter, but Phipps' analysis of social and political processes. She rips apart the steams of the contemporary feminist movement to illuminate a space of contention and misunderstanding. Phipps demonstrates that mainstream feminism thrives on arguments of trauma and outrage to make illogical claims that women with political and social power are silenced (146–150). Phipps' book is also notable for discussions concerning anti-sexwork and trans-exclusionary discourse. This discussion is much needed, as demonstrated in recent months by the divisive commentary from children's author, J.K. Rowling.

Overall, this book is very relevant to feminism now. The carefully considered research and representation of Phipps provides a way for white feminists to understand the long history and complexity of current public debates surrounding race, gender and, at times, sexuality. Phipps' work raises serious questions and challenges to mainstream feminism and how white women engage with trauma in the outrage economy. *Me, Not You* is not a book that will change minds, but it does offer a considered pathway for those wanting to do the work to recognise and dismantle the racist structures in which they gain from the work of women of colour. Phipps' book provides a roadmap for white feminists to push against their capitalist systems and neo-colonial projects, of which they are an integral part, and create and maintain opportunities for political and social hope.

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