

June 2022

Book Review: Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot

Shaunty James

Follow this and additional works at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws>



Part of the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

James, Shaunty (2022) "Book Review: Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot," *Journal of International Women's Studies*: Vol. 24: Iss. 5, Article 32.

Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol24/iss5/32>

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

This journal and its contents may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Authors share joint copyright with the JIWS. ©2022 Journal of International Women's Studies.

Book Review: Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot¹

Shauntee James²

Centering marginalized voices is the objective of *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot* by Mikki Kendall. Kendall unearths the plight and position of some voices ignored within the mainstream feminist movement. Some of the topics covered include gun violence, food insecurity, poverty, and housing. Comprised of eighteen chapters, the book presents key pivotal gems in each to be pondered and processed by the reader.

Kendall painstakingly and piercingly points out how traditional feminist writings focus only on white women while erasing other women. The lack of realization of alternative voices within the movement creates a vacuum fraught with limited discourse and omitted histories and issues, on a global level. Kendall also showcases the limited choices available to certain women in America based on their socio-economic status. For example, for women living in a food desert the lack of choices affects and is representative of their marginalization. This aspect of pulling back the curtain enables the reader to venture beyond their personal framework of various topics, considering inclusivity and the points at which the feminist movement has missed the opportunity for inclusivity to empower all women.

Kendall uses popular culture, history, statistics, and personal accounts to accent the pressing need to incorporate intersectionality into the mainstream dialogue. Kendall questions whether the feminist movement has created a myopic view of the needs of women. She suggests using an intersectional lens to provide insight into understanding practices, policies, and structures that increase the likelihood of women with intersecting identities experiencing disadvantages, discrimination, or both. Incorporation of this concept, Kendall argues, will catapult the movement into recognizing society's most vulnerable citizens, empowering those citizens, and creating an enlightened space inclusive of more than one voice.

In continuing with the theme of empowerment, Kendall showcases and articulates several talking points used by policymakers and mainstream feminists that may cause more harm than good within society. She questions whether this platform creates a measuring rod for womanhood based on the middle class. She offers a cautionary warning urging the feminist movement to recognize *when* and *who* should be placed at the forefront when giving insight into each issue. Through this process, she boldly calls for a restructuring of the centralized focus on a few speakers who present the plight of the diverse myriad of women. For example, among the suggestions and practical blueprints provided by Kendall is her suggestion that credence should be given to Black women to speak their truth instead of non-Black women speaking for them. That all organizations and the feminist movement have flaws is not missed by Kendall, but she also articulates and recognizes that one of the biggest objectives of the feminist movement is to make a nontoxic environment for all women on various levels. To only recognize a few voices and not make the environment safer for all women is implicitly addresses as the downfall of the movement.

In comparison to other books within this genre, the conversational stylistic structure of *Hood Feminism* makes it ideal for undergraduate students because it not only presents facts, but it also adds the personal

¹ Kendall, M. (2020). *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot*. New York: Penguin Books.

² Shauntee James is the co-author of *The History, Evolution, and Current State of Female Offenders: Recommendations for Advancing the field*. She is an assistant teaching professor of Criminal Justice in the School of Public Affairs at Penn State University in Harrisburg.
Email: sxj533@psu.edu

voice of Kendall. Students often gravitate to this classroom format, and the structure creates a “safe space” for student participants to divulge personal stories like the style incorporated by the Kendall. Additionally, the book would be ideal for use in a course as a backdrop to evaluate historical changes over time, questioning whether the Kendall’s key points still have merit. This critical thinking platform will help participants move beyond the isolation of the topic to real world conceptualization, especially since the historical context of the book generates analysis of the past and current state of the feminist movement. This makes it ideal for graduate-level analysis in a gender studies, women studies, or sociology course. The purposeful demand to do better within society may be interpreted as a flaw of the book, but if the demand and practical steps to achieve inclusivity of marginalized populations were not articulated within the book, why read it?