

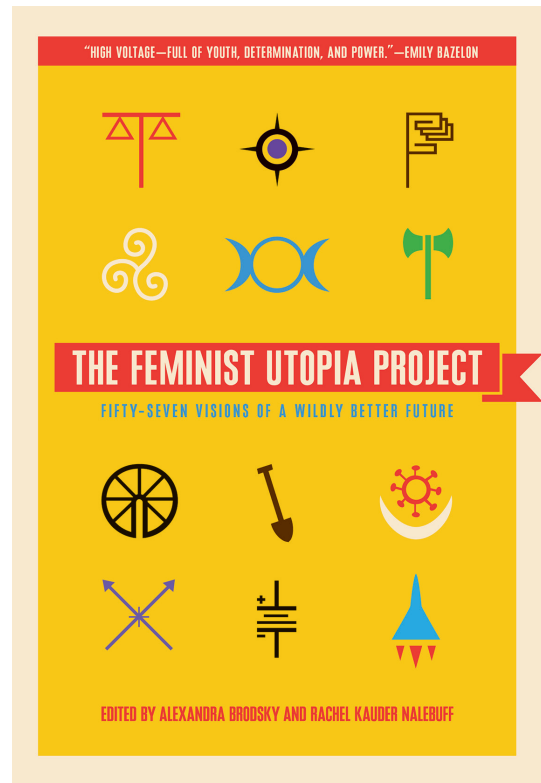
EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

THE FEMINIST UTOPIA PROJECT

Fifty-Seven Visions of
a Wildly Better Future

EDITED BY

ALEXANDRA BRODSKY
RACHEL KAUDER NALEBUFF



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“This remarkable collection of essays, stories, and artwork showcases multiple ways in which feminists have and continue to struggle for equality and a just society. Brodsky and Nalebuff have created a collection of highly readable interpretations of feminist utopias as they emerge from a wide array of perspectives, including women’s political standpoints, their ethnic and racial situations, sexual preferences, and class positions. Taken together, these brilliant and beautifully crafted essays signal new and radical directions in feminism. *The Feminist Utopia Project* is essential reading for anyone who has ever imagined a better world.”

—CRYSTAL N. FEIMSTER, author of *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching*

“This book shows a state-of-the-art feminism where human experience meshes with institutional policy and public life.”

—CHRIS KRAUS, author of *I Love Dick*

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear educators, readers, and dreamers,

The two of us came up with the idea for *The Feminist Utopia Project* sitting on the steps of a university building. As students and young activists, we found ourselves stuck in a defensive posture, busy with the day-to-day work of resisting terrible misogyny and navigating the waves of backlash to our activism. We knew that work was crucial, but lacked the time and space to create a vision of the world we wanted.

We also felt that our college years had trained us well to critique but had, in some ways, scared us away from advancing positive visions; we were much more comfortable deconstructing than constructing. In our favorite seminars and late-night dorm room debates, we were invited to point out what was wrong with a given idea but rarely to venture a guess about what would be right.

So we started asking writers, activists, and thinkers we admired what they thought a feminist world would look like. How would families be structured? What kinds of stories would kids read? What kinds of work would we do? How would we get birth control and abortions? What words would lose their sexist meanings and take on whole new lives? (Amy Jean Porter thinks “shrill” would be an intergalactic space creature that looks kind of like a squid.)

Over the three years we spent editing *The Feminist Utopia Project*, we learned so much, and we continue to grow from the visions readers share with us. So our question for you is this: What would your feminist utopia look like?

All the best,

Rachel and Alexandra

THE FEMINIST UTOPIA PROJECT

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APPENDIX A: IMPERFECT CATEGORIES

The pieces in this collection don't fit into neat boxes—that's why we haven't arranged the anthology into chapters. However, we've done our best to point out a few porous and overlapping categories that may help you navigate this book.

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NOTES ON AN EXCERPT

Feminist Utopia Teen Mom Schedule

GLORIA MALONE

→ teenmomnyc.com
is the author's blog

how does this world compare to depictions
in popular TV Reality shows like

- MTV's Teen Mom (2009-2012) or
Baby High (2010)

- ABC's The Secret Life of the American
Teenager (2008-2013)

OR books like

- Gather Together in My Name (2009)
by Maya Angelou

- YA novels like Make Lemonade (2006)
by Virginia Euer Wolff

This made me consider the
day-to-day issues and
experiences of young mothers,
which I had never imagined
before. Things like

• If custody becomes a legal
issue, how do teen moms
find the resources to
prepare for trial?

• How do young parents
face medical issues, for
both themselves and
their children, esp. since
healthcare can be
costly and complicated?

• Is it ever an issue filling
in with, or being taken
seriously, by older parents
or the administration
of their children's schools?

6:00 a.m. Sophia wakes up, eats breakfast, pumps breast
milk for the day, takes a shower, and wakes up the baby.

6:30 a.m. She changes the baby's diaper, feeds the baby,
plays with her for a little bit, then Sophia's father takes
the baby so Sophia can double-check her backpack and
her daughter's diaper bag.

6:55 a.m. There's a quick emergency diaper change
before putting the car seat in Sophia's car, loading the
diaper bag and her backpack into the car, and leaving for
the childcare center.

7:00 a.m. Before pulling out of the driveway, Sophia
looks down at the gas gauge on her car. She sends her
mother a thank-you text message for topping off her gas
tank without her asking or knowing. She no longer has to
stop at the gas station during morning rush hour.

* there's no mention of the biological father of Sophia's child
in this schedule.

- why is support from Sophia's parents necessary/important
in this utopia while the support/presence of the father of
the child is not?

* What percentage of U.S. high schools, right now, have childcare services?

7:15 a.m. Sophia arrives at her friend Naomi's house to pick Naomi and her son up so they can ride to school together.

7:45 a.m. Sophia, Naomi, and their children arrive at the high school's on-campus childcare center. They unload the car, walk inside, and are greeted by the friendly staff of the facility.

"Hi!" the front desk clerk says when the girls walk in. Sophia's daughter and Naomi's son begin cooing and smiling when they hear the familiar voices of the friendly, knowledgeable, and loving staff that takes care of them while their mothers are at school.

7:50 a.m. The mothers walk into their children's clean, bright, and safe day-care room where they spend the next ten minutes talking and breast-feeding their children, without being obligated to cover up, while the staff puts the morning's freshly pumped breast milk into the center's refrigerator.

8:00 a.m. Sophia and Naomi say goodbye to their children and walk over to their high school's courtyard where they meet up with their other friends. The girls talk with their friends about life, annoying teachers, their plans for the weekend, and the latest episode of their favorite show.

↳ erases the conceptions that motherhood should completely replace a social life

Teen moms in pop culture often become alienated because their peers have no concept of the responsibilities of parenthood.

In this utopia, Sophia has other women, sharing a similar experience, to look to for support and solidarity

* stigma against public breast-feeding is gone
- discuss: double standard for male and female breasts?

Continued in The Feminist Utopia Project...

* This utopia seems like it could be possible for the privileged and wealthy in our society today. What can we do as a society to make this utopia available to all teen moms?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) *The Feminist Utopia Project* is loaded with voices. Through personal essay, fiction, and visual art, fifty-seven contributors bring us glimpses of what they imagine a feminist utopia to be. How did this variety of form and experience influence your reading of *The Feminist Utopia Project*, as well as influence your own process of visualizing a feminist utopia?
- 2) What specific piece struck you the most, and why?
- 3) Each piece in *The Feminist Utopia Project* focuses on different issues within feminist debates—uptalk, work/life balance, marriage, body image, etc. If you were to write/sing/draw/dance a piece about your feminist utopia, what issue would you explore?
- 4) Imagine you have two copies of *The Feminist Utopia Project*—one to give as a gift to a feminist role model and one to give as a more pointed gift to someone who needs to think seriously about feminism. Who would receive these copies? What would your feminist role model appreciate in *The Feminist Utopia Project*? What would you hope the latter gift-receiver learns from *The Feminist Utopia Project*?
- 5) Although *The Feminist Utopia Project* exists in the form of a published book, many contributors use the Internet as a space for their work. Today, a large amount of feminist thinking happens on blog posts, Tumblr posts, and Tweets. How do these different platforms influence how we talk about feminism and feminist utopias? In a feminist utopian Internet, what would you expect from the administrators and users of social media?
- 6) The editors of *The Feminist Utopia Project* initiated this project with a perspective not always found in feminist discourse—that is, a wildly positive and imaginative tone that gestures toward a future utopia rather than focusing on present-day critique. How do utopian visions also include present-day critiques within their narratives? In what ways might these visions fall short of critically examining today's issues?
- 7) What seems to be the energy or tone that appears in other popular, feminist writing? Think about Roxane Gay's collection *Bad Feminist*, the e-newsletter *Lenny Letter*, magazines like *Bitch*, websites like *Rookie*, etc.
- 8) Think about a moment you've experienced in your world today—perhaps even in the past few days—that provided you with a glimpse of feminist utopia. Maybe this moment was in a music video, a poem, a Tweet, or a conversation you had with a friend. What made it feel utopian? How far did it seem from today's reality?

THE FEMINIST PRESS

The Feminist Press is an educational nonprofit organization founded to advance women's rights and amplify feminist perspectives. We publish classic and new writing from around the world, create cutting-edge programs, and elevate silenced and marginalized voices in order to support personal transformation and social justice for all people.

As an independent publisher, the Feminist Press is able to provide a personalized experience for the universities and professors that adopt our books through close attention to dealing with all aspects of utilizing books in classrooms, from providing desk and exam copies, bulk sales, programming, and more.

Feminist Press authors are available for lectures, Q&A sessions, or workshops, either in person, via video conference, or through use of social media and message boards. Our authors are committed to working with your students to enrich and broaden their understanding of the commonly read text, and of the issues and themes highlighted by the book.

