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Ariel Levy

## Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture

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**FEMALE  
CHAUVINIST  
PIGS** With a New  
Afterword  
and Reading  
Group Guide  
**Women and the Rise  
of Raunch Culture**  
**ARIEL LEVY**

"Witty and provocative, painfully funny . . . as it documents the rise of trashy, raunchy, really, really bad female behavior, Levy's newly published book may well provide the next 'aha' moment in how North American women see themselves."  
—*Maclean's* (Toronto)

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## Description

A classic work on gender culture exploring how the women's movement has evolved to Girls Gone Wild in a new, self-imposed chauvinism. In the tradition of Susan Faludi's *Backlash* and Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth*, *New York Magazine* writer Ariel Levy studies the effects of modern feminism on women today.

Meet the Female Chauvinist Pig—the new brand of “empowered woman” who wears the Playboy bunny as a talisman, bares all for Girls Gone Wild, pursues casual sex as if it were a sport, and embraces “raunch culture” wherever she finds it. If male chauvinist pigs of years past thought of women as pieces of meat, Female Chauvinist Pigs of today are doing them one better, making sex objects of other women—and of themselves. They think they're being brave, they think they're being funny, but in *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, Ariel Levy asks if the joke is on them.

In her quest to uncover why this is happening, Levy interviews college women who flash for the cameras on spring break and teens raised on Paris Hilton and breast implants. She examines a culture in which every music video seems to feature a stripper on a pole, the memoirs of porn stars are climbing the bestseller lists, Olympic athletes parade their Brazilian bikini waxes in the pages of *Playboy*, and thongs are marketed to prepubescent girls. Levy meets the high-powered women who create raunch culture—the new oinking women warriors of the corporate and entertainment worlds who eagerly defend their efforts to be “one of the guys.” And she traces the history of this trend back to conflicts between the women's movement and the sexual revolution long left unresolved.

Levy pulls apart the myth of the Female Chauvinist Pig and argues that what has come to pass for liberating rebellion is actually a kind of limiting conformity. Irresistibly witty and wickedly intelligent, *Female Chauvinist Pigs* makes the case that the rise of raunch does not represent how far women have come, it only proves how far they have left to go.

## Insightful reviews

Klaudia: Read it, liked it. I don't think Levy necessarily attacks women "on top", pun intended, but rather states a different perspective on the gray areas that surround 3rd wave Feminism in the United States. As a young woman I grew up with many aspects of what Levy calls "raunch" culture, and as a 10 year old I remember constantly watching commercials for Girls Gone Wild, and watching MTV's spring break. Not so surprisingly I have many memories from my childhood that included watching girls go naked with only whip cream bikinis, and college girls having wet t-shirt contests for fun on TV. Sure, maybe someone can blame my parents for not supervising me like an inmate 24 hours a day; but really, we all know that advertisements have their way around parents. I actually used to think, that one aspect of growing up and going to college was "partying hard." I've also had female friends who started watching porn at around 11/12 years old. Their sexuality is completely formed by pornography because it was taboo to even mention sex in their houses.

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What we see today in our culture are; yes, women embracing sexuality and achieving orgasms (yippie), but also a youth culture that feels pressured to act as promiscuously as possible for the wrong reasons. Raunch and sexuality seem to have become one and the same. I'm all for women who embrace themselves and are liberated. However, for many girls, being a woman means to flaunt sexuality and promiscuity as much as possible and if you don't? You're labeled a prude maybe even casted out by your friends. Also, how many of us grew up caring more about our weight and breasts and hair than worrying about how well we did on an exam? How many times did we hear that our underdeveloped breasts were inadequate or our overdeveloped ones sexually enticing? With the world wide web of porn, hardly any girl reads playboy to teach them all about sexuality. This doesn't mean that playboy doesn't have its issues or that just because Playboy is run by a woman; they're sending positive messages to young girls and women. It's a magazine that caters to men's needs, and over the years, we've seen how playboy bunnies have changed aesthetically speaking. Most are hyper bleached, hairless, fake breasted young girls. Also another thing about playboy; look at who the media focuses their attention on. Is anyone following Christie Hefner around with a video camera and filming her escapades? No, they're filming her father and the form of female sexuality that he embraces. I think by interviewing Christie Hefner, Levy shows the duality that modern women face. Here we have the woman president of a large multimillion dollar company, supporting progressive rights and politics, yet she's fully endorsing her father's idea of sexuality by working for his company. It's like having a modern feminist Procureur. Though, I do think that my stance on Ms. Hefner would change if playboy catered to women's sexuality also.

Levy brings up many good points in this book, and I can see myself analyzing the points that she brings up. You're no longer pressured to lose your virginity by only your boyfriends, but you're also pressured by your friends and the rest of society. If you're not having sex, sex as a chauvinist man that is, it seems as if you're not liberated and you're frigid and therefore not a feminist. Also, forget about feelings. Those are not feminist either. Please read the part about cake parties. I think this book serves as exposure of 3rd wave feminism. Women have fought for rights, and work but it seems that sexuality is now the everlasting gray area. So, in other words, I am a fan of what Levy has to say about my generation of womanhood, and I'm actually wondering what is going to happen within the 4th generation of feminism. We already have little girl heels for three year olds (Suri Cruise), and Abercrombie and Fitch has designed a padded bikini bra for 8 year olds...what's next, the invention of mommy and me thongs?

Zack Rock: Pretty terrific analysis of the female contribution to "raunch culture." It's been frustrating to me, as a proponent of feminism (to the extent that it enables women to reconsider themselves as distinct individuals outside the bounds of traditional gender roles), to see so many women get on board with such demeaning activities as stripping, prostitution and the like. In facts, anecdotes and interviews, Levy addresses both the current shape of female raunchist, and reconstructs the history of the branch of feminism that gave the she-raunchies their birth. And while I realize that this book may not totally reconfigure society, it's at least a timely and lucid first step towards something better.

Brian: (3.0) 'Raunch' is the new feminism, but is it really?

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Read for f-word book club.

Short version: many women have taken control of their sexuality by defining their image by it. Is that progress? I agree with the skeptical view on this.

A) Being more openly sexual, getting rich and famous as a result doesn't necessarily feel like a huge step forward. Okay, better than being ostracized for premarital sex/pregnancy, but are Paris Hilton, porn stars and Playboy Bunnies really role models?

B) Playing along to men's traditional views of women as sexual objects to better one's career is certainly a strategy, it can work, but it seems to cement the subordinate role rather than destroy it. Just because a woman can now choose to take that path and define herself in such a way, doesn't necessarily mean that (all/many) men feel any differently about her.

A few quotes from the book with some responses:

"I think we can safely assume that many more women appear in Playboy for the simple reason that they are paid to. Which is fine. But 'because I was paid to' is not the same thing as 'I'm taking control of my sexuality.'"

bp: I totally agree.

"We have simply adopted a new norm, a new role to play: lusty, busty exhibitionist."

bp: But that's it: is it a new role or have women just convinced themselves it's different because they were able to choose it? What about roles women haven't played but now can? Religious leader, surgeon, president, CEO? Why would be empowering to adopt the role that many men have wanted for women for millennia? Would it be more or less empowering if men took no interest? Booed the stripper, turned down the aggressive barroom proposition, declined the offer to repair to the 'titty bar' (reference to text)? I think too much hinges on the male response.

"But I would be happier if my daughter and her friends were crashing through the glass ceiling instead of the sexual ceiling," Jong continued. "Being able to have an orgasm with a man you don't love or having Sex and the City on television, that is not liberation. If you start to think about women as if we're all Carrie on Sex and the City, well, the problem is: You're not going to elect Carrie to the Senate or to run your company. Let's see the Senate fifty percent female; let's see women in decision-making positions—that's power. Sexual freedom can be a smoke-screen for how far we haven't come."

bp: Yes.

Shannon: FCP is so easy to read. She selects provocative themes such as: ladies long past Wild, intercourse within the City, "Bois" in San Francisco, Playboy, the fellow Show, a supposedly feminist association known as CAKE, Jenna Jameson's bio, and a crop of incidents of kids giving BJs at the tuition bus. She additionally bargains a finished historical past of the feminist move that's really informative for a "beginner." Her complete shtick is an assault on "raunch" tradition a los angeles Paris Hilton and stripper/porn famous person idolization. She complains that too many ladies are appearing like men, objectifying themselves and different women. Her riskiest pursuit is evaluating this phenomenon to the racial dynamic in "Uncle

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Tom's Cabin": "...there are parallels within the methods we will take into consideration the bounds of what will be won through "acting like" an exalted crew or reifying the stereotypes attributed to a subordinate group... In doing so, you'll be getting forward in a few ways... but you're at the same time reifying the process that traps you." She makes many different fascinating and ambitious points. Regardless of that, I didn't learn it one hundred percent snowed through her principles and command of language and argument. I couldn't fairly place my finger at the text's flaws so I learn a few stories and a few in their issues hit home. Though her issues are different and interesting, they don't seem to be synchronized in addition to they can have been. One evaluation complained that Levy looked as if it would have taken a host of her editorials (she writes for brand new York magazine) and associated them including a sentence or two. One other evaluation commented that FCP used to be only a glorified collage thesis. Levy additionally interviews numerous younger ladies and makes use of their tales as proof to help her arguments, yet real learn and research calls for extra inflexible statistical accumulation and Levy bargains the reader none of that. Other than that, I like to recommend the ebook to any woman (and male) who thinks approximately our society and tradition and examines the way it affects us. It really is great effortless to learn and if anything, FCP is able to elevating people's consciousness. I appraise her attempt to restore feminist thought.

Cori: From my blog: Let me start off by means of announcing this is often certainly now not whatever I might mostly choose up, and I am feeling a bit bizarre writing an assessment of an e-book so brazenly approximately sex. Yet over the past few years I have turned into fascinated by teenage lady tradition (I characteristic this to operating with the highschool early life crew at my church). Staring at those ladies navigate the murky waters among girlhood and womanhood has been so fascinating to watch. Whereas the vast majority of my women have left the adolescence workforce to turn into nice, basic collage students, there are a couple of who've thoroughly rebelled and embraced this "slut-it-up" mentality that I simply do not understand. While did performing like a stripper develop into cool? Ariel Levy, who considers herself a feminist, attempts to discover why lots of us, as American women, have embraced this raunchy culture: stripper periods on the gym, long island instances most sensible by way of porn stars, every kind of waxing and implants and dye jobs, etc. She says, "If Male Chauvinist Pigs have been males who looked girls as items of meat, we'd outdo them and be lady Chauvinist Pigs: girls who make intercourse items of alternative girls and of ourselves." What's it approximately strippers and porn stars that experience American girls fascinated? Levy interviewed a couple of ladies (and more youthful girls) who locate "adult culture" attention-grabbing and empowering. Yet Levy makes the purpose that these items are not inevitably empowering. A lot of her interviewees notwithstanding that through observing porn and going to strip golf equipment they have been capable of run with the boys. Yet how is it empowering, in a feminine sense, to be one of many guys? And different ladies suggestion strippers are final sexual delusion -- yet it really is their activity to faux arousal. How is that empowering -- or perhaps horny at all? Levy is anxious that now we have taken anything so personal and private -- our personal wants and wishes -- and bottled them up right into a neat little package deal of what's "sexy." No matter what we each, individually, locate sexy. It is all approximately monstrous boobs, brief skirts, and placing out. Something that I assumed used to be lacking from Levy's e-book used to be parental responsibility. Now not as soon as did she question, "who might permit her daughter depart the home donning that?" Mom and dad were not pointed out at all. I believe it is a parental accountability to assist teach daughters. I additionally imagine society must step up

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and prevent sexualizing younger girls. maybe we should always reconsider thongs for ten-year-olds. Anyway, i believe Levy sums up her ebook nicely: ""How is resurrecting each stereotype of lady sexuality that feminism endeavored to banish stable for women? Why is laboring to seem like Pamela Anderson empowering? and the way is imitating a stripper or a porn star--a girl whose activity is to mimic arousal within the first position -- going to render us sexually liberated? 'Raunchy' and 'liberated' usually are not synonyms. it truly is worthy asking ourselves if this bawdy global of boobs and gams we now have resurrected displays how a long way we have come, or how a long way we've left to go." My Rating: 7 out of 10 for aiding positioned phrases to whatever i have been seeing for years. Still, can have used a few options rather than simply mentioning the place girls have long past wrong.

Rachel: i'll learn this ebook 1000000 instances and it will nonetheless be awesome. If you're a lady and also you "hate girls" and look at your self "one of the guys" you higher choose up this book. If you're thinking that stripping is "liberating" and "empowering" you higher choose up this book. If you could have or ever plan on observing a kind of "Girls long past Wild" tapes, do your self a want and decide up this book. If you ever suggestion that the womens stream has misplaced massive floor some time past few years, you larger learn this book. Basically, each person should still learn this book.

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Running some furniture as should get them renew the financial quarter during a interest. Billion'

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