



Angela McRobbie (2020). *Feminism and the Politics of Resilience: Essays on Gender, Media and the End of Welfare (Feminizm ve Direnme Siyaseti: Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Medya ve Refahın Sonuna Dair Denemeler)*. Polity Press. 153 pages. ISBN-13: 978-1509525072 and ISBN-10: 1509525076

Angela McRobbie is an academic renowned for her British cultural theory, feminism, and media studies. She has authored numerous books and academic articles on these topics. Her most famous work is her book titled "The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture, and Social Change" published in 2008. She focuses on popular culture, issues such as the problems of young and modern women. In 2017, the British Academy elected her as a Fellow. The book discussed in this review was published in 2020 and it consists of 159 pages, has an introductory part, and 4 essay parts. There are more important arguments in the first two essays as they analyze how neoliberalism and media affected feminism in the UK after the 20th century. As women became more employed than over the past decades, media and neoliberal policies have begun to emphasize more successful women at work and home with a fit body because working women would have been contributing to the economy. Since women's participation in the workforce means more production, employment, welfare, etc., women will have important contributions to economic development. There is a win-win situation between neoliberal policy advocates and feminists. However, as the author argued, women's right to work, which feminism defends, has increased the competition among women in the neoliberal system and has made the hierarchical distinction based on class, race, and ethnicity evident because neoliberal policies mostly targeted white middle-class women. Therefore, the chore was burdened to immigrant or black working-class women (p.6). A neo-liberal discourse based on high performance has conveyed this concern to women by emphasizing the importance of diligence at work, a good marriage (professional wife), and planning for successful motherhood. McRobbie calls this neoliberal leadership feminism. When both parents go to work, situations of childcare, how the child should grow up are revealed. As a solution to this issue, as suggested by Riley, socialized childcare kindergarten was suggested. This system has three advantages: 1) women could be employed in this kindergarten 2) children might gain social skills 3) women would get rid of exclusive motherhood because it was a kind of unpaid slavery role (p.25). For women to fully participate in the labor market, there need to be comprehensive and well-managed childcare and after-school care programs (p.27). This suggestion is very important as it expands the choice of women because many women inadvertently give up their job after being a mother or give up the idea of having children for their career, despite their willingness. Even when the mother takes paid leave to raise her child, another person may be employed temporarily during this period.

As for the relationship between media and feminism, the author discusses how women's lives are shaped by media genres such as women's magazines and

television programs and what she called 'visual media governmentality'. In terms of visual media governmentality, she combined gender and the specific dimension of media such as magazines or TV programs into Foucault's biopolitical model of government (p.34). According to this model, the state controls or governs the body of the society that leads to guidance for middle-class young women's career and domestic lives. Known for her various studies on women's magazines before, McRobbie emphasizes in this book that such women's magazines expose women to the effects of being successful in business and home life and having a fit body. Authors such as Foucault and Donzelot drew attention to sexuality's surveillance of the female body but did not mention the influence of women's magazines on sexuality, women's health. Topics such as cleanliness, hygiene, good housekeeping, and later fashion, beauty, and courtship are covered in these magazines (p.29). McRobbie argues that lower-class or working-class women who read these magazines also envied this middle-class lifestyle and moved away from their way of life. Since women were exposed to this lifestyle, they began to plan their own lives accordingly (p.30-31). Some issues need further investigation such as how many women read these magazines or even if they do, how much are they affected? Also how those lower-class women can afford to read those magazines? Maybe she makes the mistake of over-generalizing the results of her analysis.

Another key argument of McRobbie is the emergence of new feminism since 2008. McRobbie proposes the 'perfect-imperfect-resilience', or 'p-i-r' which is a formula that manages change in the light of new feminist activism. A good career, home life, motherhood, which she calls perfect; what is imperfect is scope for criticizing these ideals and moving away from them; and finally, methods that have become the therapeutic tool for resilience, healing, and repair. P-i-r has worked in harmony with capitalism, inasmuch as that the challenges on the road to perfection were shared among women through the media. Especially famous women have done this frequently. In this way, they have learned to heal their wounds and created resilience, and integrated into the system. Online campaigns, organizations, and the media have had a lot of influence on this transformation as young women can clearly express their experiences on gender inequality and injustices. They have now more opportunities to learn about their bodies and sexuality from magazines and media (p.48-49). The author raises a key question here; how to understand the deterioration in eating and mental health of young women despite these positive aspects. Nancy Tucker determined that the reason for mental health deterioration was due to an overemphasis on success (p.45). Here, she integrates some psychoanalytic factors to the analysis such as criticisms and insults on ourselves and comparing ourselves to others in a Freudian term super-ego which aims for perfection. Especially a tendency to self-hate was seen among young women because of gender asymmetry in consumer culture and women's magazines also played a role in this. It is also revealed how the wounds caused by perfection are healed by resilience. Mental and physical problems may occur in women who do not reach perfection (p.54). In this regard, studies

and publications have been made on how to overcome the problems opened by the imperfect through resilience in various ways in the media and popular culture. Resilience's role here is to show how to tolerate disappointment, not to expect too much success, love, happiness (p.55). As a result, while perfect or imperfect women were forced to be resilient within the neo-liberal system, the inability to change the system itself created dominance over women. Therefore, with the p-i-r model, it is explained how the neo-liberal system fills the gap between feminism and how it harms women.

In brief, this book has contributed significantly to the literature in analyzing women's magazines, how neoliberal policies affect women's lifestyles, and class differences among women. This book provides a comprehensive thinking guide for current feminist issues in the UK. I recommend this book to academics who are interested in neoliberalism and feminism, and writers of women's magazines. The book makes us think more deeply about the issue of equality. When considering gender equality, it is necessary to consider the class differences within women. Also, how and by whom will the rules, norms, laws of this equality come about? It leads to a further discussion of the concepts of equality and justice over gender. Lastly, analyzes in the book raise awareness about the events and objects we encounter in our daily lives.

References

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