

The beauty myth

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It's not uncommon to hear comments online criticizing the appearance of female celebrities. Even to this day, there's no denying that women have a harder time succeeding in the workforce than men. The question, however, is why does this happen? "The Beauty Myth" by Naomi Wolf answers this issue.

The book traces the origin of this so-called myth, which bears down on women the burden of having to conform to a beauty standard meant to stop them from fulfilling their complete potential. As Wolf says, "The stronger women were becoming politically, the heavier the ideals of beauty would bear down upon them, mostly in order to distract their energy and undermine their progress." In an essay-like format, she explores the effect of the myth, and also how to confront it in order to be done with it. As she points out in the revised edition, progress has been made in the realm of beauty and body image, although new problems have arisen and various loose ends still need to be tied. Her style, which can come off as a bit bombastic at times, is compensated by her moments of sheer frankness, those which shape the book and give it its value and meaning.

While she adheres as much as possible to empirical evidence, Wolf allows herself to extrapolate in quite a few moments, albeit rarely without any sort of justification or warrant. I really like the way she tackles the issue - in the most politically correct way, but without denying the passion she feels (and we should all feel) about this issue. I however, don't like the fact that at certain points of the book (especially in those dealing with gender equality), her way of expressing her emotions are perhaps not the best. In a sense, her way of expressing in favour of gender equality detracts from her message,

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as she seems to be advocating for the contrary. Regardless of this, in the moments in which Wolf lets her passion, research, and wit expose the issue, there's simply no way of turning away from the problem she presents to the reader.

I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a read regarding gender equality or social justice in general. Many people are aware that sexism and other sorts of ostracization are still commonplace, but not many realize just how commonplace it is and how much it affects people. I'd recommend this book to whomever would like to take a glimpse of what the Beauty Myth is, how it affects them (both as females and males), and what can be done to solve the issue. The quality, depth, and questions raised by the book and the way they are presented make it a quality read, but most importantly, one of learning and advocacy to social justice.