

The ideas and narratives in this summary were collected at a time of catastrophe.

Jia Tolentino started recording them just preceding the polls for Donald Trump in 2016. By narrating them, she tries to evaluate the cultural, social, and political updates that came after and served this remarkable case.

Thus, Jia takes into consideration the world wide web and real TV, the familiarities between medications and religion, the traps of liberal feminism, and other several aspects that characterize our present. By wiring what is personal to what is cultural and political, she explains how our joint stories form our singular ones - and how it has formed her own.

As a trick mirror, this summary may influence and change your perspective about yourself and the world where you exist.

Chapter 1 - The web has made us all narcissists - and our narcissism into a profession.

"I'm literally addicted to the web," Jia Tolentino said on her web blog when she was just 12.

It happened in the early beginning of the Millenium before all of us hooked on using the internet. In fact, at that time, the web wasn't full of wonders we enjoy now. It was mainly a random group of personal pages of people's interests. Facilities such as GeoCities made it possible for people to have their own webpages devoted to golfing, or Ricky Martin, or, Jia's case, the Tv show Dawson's Creek.

Yet, at that time, Web 2.0 was launched. With the arrival of blogging, people's published narratives began to join and merge. As much as individuals began to publish their personal stories, it became more difficult to engage in the community before having your own existence on centralized platforms like Myspace - or later, Facebook and Instagram.

When Web 1.0 was directed by the notion that you could personify any character you wish online, Web 2.0 nearly twisted our virtual existence with our actual one. For sure, we all meant to publish only the good things about ourselves on the internet.

In such life dictated by Instagram, comments, and likes, we acquired to publish only the best amazing selfies. We acquired to show either our most allied or our most radical views. And we acquired to arrange ourselves with popular political events to illustrate our value to the globe.

For sure, people always fake their actual being in real as well. In 1959, sociologist Erving Goffman showed how any personal communication needs us to act in a specific part.

When you're at an interview for a position, for instance, you might act as an honest employee. Yet, when you're with friends, you're recognized as the entertainer. It's only when you're alone that you might think as if your persona is disappearing.

The issue is that the web doesn't have display time-offs or a behind-the-scene, for this to occur. Our online selves require us to act always, for everybody. Your Facebook self, for instance, communicates with your manager, your spouse, and your 11-year-old relative in the same way.

And firms such as Facebook have created a business out of our sophisticated online acting. They are not benefiting now from trading in products with us, but by trading with us in our personalities, our connections, and surely, our information.

Chapter 2 - Being in a reality TV show can be far to satisfy your self-delusion - and to judge with it.

There's a deep puzzle in Jia's history, which she's ready to uncover, ever to herself: at the age of 16, she's been in a reality TV show.

Girls v. Boys - Puerto Rico was the season four of production with a minimum cost at the beginning of 2000. In the show, Jia was in a group of four girls against a team of four boys in a competition of different bodily challenges to win \$50,000.

The 16 years old Jia went to the mall with her family when a casting booth stopped them for the show. Unseriously, her family hinted that she might consider it. Thus, Jia taped an audition casting vides and never looked back at it. Yet, in less than a month, the producers contacted her for an invitation to the show.

The show was shot in Puerto Rico for twenty days round when Jia stayed in accommodation with the other seven players.

When the show became on TV, Jia called her friends to her house to see the first episode together. However, watching the artificial character of herself which she cast on the show annoyed her so that she couldn't continue watching the episode for the next 13 years. Also then, the grownup Jia couldn't but flinch.

Young Jia is eager to look like a distinctive person. On day one of the show, she offers to have a plate of mayo to imprint her fellows. During the show, she appears as a clever girl with

organized beliefs. When a boy attempts to flatter with her, for instance, she refuses and proudly ignores him for she has “morals”.

Considering that history, Jia believed that the show experience served her narcissistic imagination that her life was a film.

Certainly, the producer of the show, Jessica Morgan Richter, said after the show that all players had been chosen to introduce remarkable teenage ideals. As in any comedian show on a high school, the show had a good boy, a jock, a moralistic girl, and a naive person. Jia was selected to ply the tightly wound know-it-all.

Adult Jia thinks that her involvement in reality TV developed her personality for the web. She'd known so early that you may not have the capacity to modify what people think of you, but you can expand your features to drag the others' eyes to see you.

Chapter 3 - Goddess role-models for ladies haven't become any less difficult - they've only changed their looks.

Feminism is now the dominant trend - and most of all, that's not bad.

Now, also “old school” women's journals such as Cosmopolitan promote the concept that females need to choose for themselves their appearance, passion, and the way of living.

Yet, dominantly trending feminism has its boundaries. To become a dominant trend, it had to give permissions to the two policies that still dictate our realm: capitalism and patriarchy. This gentle feminism puts a high price on the progress of singular women but reduces the importance of the group's act that scares these policies.

One aspect in which the dominant trending feminism disappoints us is female beauty criteria. Like the observation of Naomi Wolf in *The Beauty Myth*, a modern feminist classic, anticipations for ladies' looks have raged always from the moment ladies achieved financial freedom from men.

Dominantly trending feminism would like us to think that our beauty criteria have considerably enlarged since Wolf composed her book. The females' journals were calling women to diet in the nineties are the ones who are now encouraging the “body positive” tip that beauty is for everybody regardless of the size or the shape.

In fact, our concept of beauty has been the same. We've only developed the aspect of how we tackle it.

Rather than “beauty work”, as Wolf named it, the modern model woman take care of herself. Rather than diets, she makes detoxing.

Actually, in our electronic commerce, beauty may be more important than it was. On social media, beautiful faces mean social capital and social capital is easily turned into economic capital.

A quite number of women now are told to think of their looks as a bonus to their featured identity, which they need to elevate progressively to raise their production in the business. The stress of being “naturally” beautiful is trending nowadays that for numerous ladies, classical beauty doesn’t satisfy anymore. They would go to lip fillers and not to makeup and to tough fitness systems but not to shapewear. They are not after merely enhancing their faces, they’re looking after a whole improvement.

There’s no aspect explains this fascination about self-optimization better than the emergence of athleisure - rich sports clothing brand created for casual fashion, which indicates our devotion to enhancing our look by doing fitness practice.

And when we’re occupied by thinking about how we can be beautiful “on our own terms”, we neglect the more liberal choice of depreciating the notion of beauty altogether.

Chapter 4 - Women in literature are usually picturized as inexperienced kids, troubled adolescents, and cynical grownups.

If you’re a greedy reader, you recognize the feeling of recalling a beloved character’s experience better than yours.

As for teenage Jia, the protagonists of her beloved stories were such a continuation of herself. Yet, explaining their narratives later, she realized that their whole experiences supported the same strangely path.

The protagonists of children’s literature are often illustrated as curious, creative, and resilient. Jo March of Little Women compose plays for her siblings to perform; Laura Ingalls of the Kittle House series turns into a seamstress to support her parents and Hermione Granger practices witchcraft to enroll in more courses at Hogwarts.

Also, when they live horrible events, the twisted features of these young protagonists stay clear of injury. Literary girls are permitted to be “human before becoming a woman”. As the feminist philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir inscribed back in 1949.

And when they grow up fully women, marriage and motherhood are there for them. In *Little Men*, the third part of the *Little Women* trilogy, Jo March gets married and fully occupied foster mother.

Adolescent protagonists are omniscient of the destiny that the community prepared for them. They are unhappier, more frustrated, and more patient than their peers. In dystopian stories such as *The Hunger Games*, the juvenile protagonist is usually a lonely exceptionalist fighting before an unjust system at substantial own risk. In love stories such as *Twilight*, she consents the community's expectations for her and chooses a guy whose destiny writes hers.

The protagonists in adult literature have already trapped in that faith. Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, for instance, are both smart ladies clasped in traditional marriage for economic reasons. When *Anna Karenina* carried a child from a man other than her husband, she decides to resolve the problem by taking her own life.

The novels of the traditional literature protagonists - young or old, rebellious or willing - present basis for recognizing our own stories. Yet, their narratives are restrained by marriage, sex, and motherhood in methods that our narratives don't have to be.

For Jia, being the daughter of Filipino-Canadian immigrants, the boundaries of classifying with these only white characters became clear eventually. She now realizes these literary protagonists, not as her siblings, yet as mother figures: with a touch of appreciation, but a steady purpose to accomplish more than they were permitted to.

By planning her own way as a lady, not from literature, she follows a lead from the author Rebecca Solnit, who once wrote: "There is no good answer to being a woman; the art may instead lie in how we refuse the question".

Chapter 5 - Religious ecstasy is not so diverse from chemical ecstasy.

when she was young, Jia used to go to a grand church a lot that she nicknamed it "Repentagon".

It was among the huge typical churches of Texas: worth of \$97 billion campuses, she spent her preschool, kindergarten, and high school. As a kid, Jia felt at home there. She served the church duties with pleasure and lovingly knows how pure and graced the love of God could make her feel.

Yet, in middle school, Jia began having suspicions about her conventional religious pedagogy. She believed it was weird that she wasn't permitted to watch Disney movies or to have a diary with a peace icon on the cover.

She turned into a more critical of organized religion. During high school and after, she tried to stay away from the church.

However, Jia gave up on her faith in God in the whole when she experienced ecstasy for the first time at a singing performance at university.

Ecstasy, or MDMA, is a sympathy, which means it drives us to be more compassionate. On ecstasy, we turn to be more sympathetic to our own passions, are more considerate to others, and had a deep feeling of linkage between both.

During the seventies, a quite number of experts were examining the mood-boosting and prosocial impacts of MDMA in clinical trials. Yet, after eight people passed away from overdoses, the drug was outlawed by the American government and assigned dangerous just like heroin. Then, ecstasy caused its return in the nineties rave scene and is now a popular celebration drug.

For Jia, both religion and ecstasy give her an opportunity to exceed herself - to sense that she belongs to a greater thing. Both trials have a little guilt and salvation; to sensing "pure" and "naughty" at one moment.

Actually, during history, people have inscribed mood highs and drug highs as one thing - also the fall. The anchorite Julian of Norwich fourteenth-century inscribed her religious images as "waves of luminous color" that consumed her with "a strange peace and joy", then, came a sense that made her "oppressed, weary of [herself], and so disgusted with [...] life that [she] could hardly bear to live".

For Jia, the relationship makes sense as well. As a child in the church, God was everything to her. As an adult on ecstasy, everything in whole became as God to her.

Chapter 6 - Scamming is the ideal character of the moment.

It was meant to be the most unique music carnival in history. Rather, eventually, it turned out to be the most amusing failure so far.

We're speaking of, surely, about Fyre Festival. This elite music carnival was programmed to be on an isle in the Bahamas in April 2017. Yet, when the audience came to the place, there wasn't any unique performance as ensured before.

Fyre Festival was produced by self-declared businessman Billy McFarland, whose former firm Magnises had just gone belly-up. Such an elite club for the rich generation of the millennium ensured to its members an exceptional passage to a clubhouse, recitals, and networking events - which most of them haven't happen.

It rapidly turned obvious that MacFarland was an expert con man. The notion "con man" came from "confidence man", the bold headline that presses associated with the unlawful William Thomson in the 1990s. Thomson would articulately persuade people to trust him with their watches for one day - and they never get it back. Yet, MacFarland too diverse from the common con man such as Thomson deeply.

Of course, Fyre Festival was a very greater fraud. Yet, not as Thomson, McFarland too sounds to have thought of important pieces of his own nonsense. Also, when the carnival fall went beyond the line of no return, he directed the operators to continue, saying that he knew that they could make it work.

McFarland's capacity to deceive himself - and by expansion his employees and his clients - was the why he managed to have the Fyre Festival fraud as much as he did. Furthermore, his confidence in "fake it 'til you make it" is common by a quite number of individuals now. Consequently, we are now at the time of the scam.

Few scams are so plain and popular that we've taken them for granted for their fraud. Facebook, for example, is basically a worldly defrauder process for drilling people's personal information - and it's barely a secret. Yet, Facebook is so indelible in our routine that it's simple to neglect how it really functions.

Else frauds are so profoundly rooted at the heart of our economy that it's difficult to extract them out of it and survive. Think of the financial depression in 2008, which happened because of gloomy loans to hardly real property traders. Or think of the fraud of student loans, which dive people into smashing debt.

At the current time, there appear to be lesser and lesser chances to bear in an ethically justifiable manner. Defrauders such as Zuckerberg or Donald Trump represent the adage that you need to get an advantage of others in anyhow you would think of - and community repays them with excessive riches and power.

Chapter 7 - Notwithstanding feminism's several achievements, sexual abuse remains profoundly indelible in our community.

Jia wasn't preparing for going to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville when she paid it a visit in her last year of high school. Yet, when she found the landscape, sun-lit campus, she admired that and realized it would be a perfect place to start her writing career.

Then, after she completed her MFA and flying to New York, Jia didn't keep UVA in mind. Yet, then, in 2014, Rolling Stone released a narrative that contributed to list her university the first in the news reports.

The report, edited by journalist Sabrina Erderly, was a graphic account about the details of UVA brotherhood members who had raped a junior student called Jackie during a party. Based on what Erderly wrote, the press release stood for what Jackie told her side of what happened.

Jia realized that UVA is familiar with sexual abuse - and a record of neglecting such issues, as it happened during her study there. In 1984, for example, Liz Secura, a 17-year-old first-year student had been gang-raped by a brotherhood. When she told the dean about the attack, he concluded her story as just a "rough night". Actually, before Jackie's experience was released, the UVA hadn't dismissed one student for sexual abuse.

The issue was, Jackie's narrative was a false one.

Shortly after it was released, the public began to see deviations. Jackie and Erderly didn't approve to explain more, such as the identities of the abusers. Then, it was shown that no party took place by the brotherhood that evening of the issue.

No matter the narrative's factual fallacies, the prevalence of the story implied that people were prepared to debate about sexual abuse. Shortly, reports about rapes on university campuses showed up. A horrible fact started to appear: sexual abuse wasn't an exception, but a regular experience for so many girls at the university.

Several universities were accused in the crack between reputable features and a history of sexual assault - which, as for brotherhoods, they regularly checked.

The Rolling Stone report was the first main journal release to accuse the terrible fact about campus sexual abuse. Yet, it raised the pressure on journalists as well to be more careful, and fact-check more accurately, than Erderly did with Jackie's story. The perfect, correct reporting on the charges against Bill Cosby, for instance, was proof of this lesson in journalism. Notwithstanding its imperfections, Jackie's narrative may have triggered the opportunities for coming reporting that will develop the course through time.

Chapter 8 - Our recent fascination with “difficult” female celebrities is reducing the broader feminist project.

If you trust feminine journals from the latest years, public figures are our new feminist superheroes. Britney Spears is a sensitive antiheroine revealed by her reputation. Kim Kardashian is a canny businesswoman who relays on her body lust to dispute the patriarchy. Caitlyn Jenner is a courageous LGBTQ activist.

We admire these ladies for being “difficult” and “complicated”, and we narrate their stories in a feminist view.

Yet, the barrier for turning into a sophisticated she-ro is less than before. Now, any lady who has made it in front of gender critique is praised as an innovative feminist. The fact is this; any lady who has made it totally has done so before gender critique - since no lady has experienced a life totally clear of gender bias.

The meaning of feminism we use for flourishing women is seriously unreliable. Beneath it, any critique of a lady can be named anti-feminist, and any lady who faces critique turns into a feminist.

As a result, anyone could simply apply this sense to explain the women in Trump’s cabinet as feminist symbols - still when they agree to his male-chauvinist office. Surely, the public is sick of doing precisely that. In 2017, the New Yorker released an article titled “Kelley Conway Is a Star”, and the New York Times published a column on Melania Trump’s “quiet radicalism”.

What happened for it to end like this?

Alright, feminism is a grand, sophisticated project. When we confront a regularity as immense as patriarchy, we seldom finish up ventriloquizing its male-chauvinist reasoning and losing ours. For instance, when Hillary Clinton encountered rough gender basis attacks while she was running for elections 2016, her proponents regularly protected her with fairly rough reasoning - saying that her state as a female was the thing and the sole cause to choose her.

We, as well, favor overlooking those female celebrities have one vast asset aloft all womanhood: wealth. Caitlyn Jenner’s appears like a trans lady, for instance, was quietened terrifically by her wealth, white skin, and fame. Too much so that, actually, she has no worries defending Trump and his anti-LGBTQ schemes.

We should remember that when our feminism revolves around a few singular exceptionalists, the obstacles of a normal woman step aside from the center. This is the reason, rather than studying the assumed feminism of female celebrities, we'd better off studying our feminism.

Chapter 9 - Marriage nowadays is a huge business with gender-basis roots.

Like it or not, at a certain level you'll come to the age when all your fellows are being wedded.

For Jia and her partner Andrew, this issue occurred before nine years - and hasn't finished since then. As a couple, they received no less than 49 invitations for weddings.

It's simple for Jia to know why people wed. yet, when she says before them that she doesn't wish to wed, she sometimes gets the same knowledge by them. "But it's such a beautiful tradition!" they assert.

Predict it's not.

Marriage parties as common - with bridal showers, receptions, and rings switching - were created by intelligence sectors over the progression of the last century.

It all began with Queen Victoria's white wedding dress. Since ever, weddings had been modest, small intimate ceremonies. Yet, after Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's wedding in 1840, the presses hadn't ceased posts about her gorgeous dress and elegant ceremony. The Victorian aristocrats began to mimic her. And with the appearance of the social middle class in the early 1990s, the wedding industries flattened out.

In 1924, Marshall Field created the wedding registry. And when ad writer France Gerety minted the catchword "A Diamond is Forever" in the 1940s, diamond engagement rings turned to be nothing but obligatory.

Now, weddings worth \$11 billion as a business. The ordinary ceremony requires a total of \$30,000, with \$3,000 as the wedding planner expenses. You can now reserve a wedding hall, a bridal photographer, and also social media experts to post your important day.

All the bright and charm wraps the real traditional aim of marriage. Before the industry started selling marriage like a ceremony of love, it was a wholly economical transaction. For years, it was unexpected for females to be financially free without getting married. Actually, until 1974, women in the US were still in need of their husbands to sign their application for a credit card.

For sure, the community has done some steps since then. Marriage now is too different and more identical. However, when the case is financial uncertainty, women still have to endure an unfair part. Normally, they gave up a fifth of their wealth when divorce occurs, while men profit more.

All that infers the absurd weddings are only a cover to enforce women to submit to norms - women are supposed to suppress all their dreams into one day, thus, it won't disturb their new marriage life as morally obliged wives.

Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion by Jia Tolentino Book Review

Regardless of how minor they might look, traditional trends as our social media cravings, fame obsession, and adoring excessive weddings can assist us better to realize our social, political, and economic systems. They are trick mirrors that reveal not just our personal features and connections - but also our common views that develop the world where we live.

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