

# **Women Against Feminism: An Analysis of Anti-Feminist Comments on Tumblr**

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**Abstract: Social media has become an extremely popular media type in today's world for sharing opinions about controversial topics. Women in particular, have taken to social media to get their voices heard on a topic about which everyone seems to have an opinion. This study explores the negative discourse surrounding feminism in over 100 posts made by women on the Tumblr site, "Women Against Feminism," through qualitative content analysis. This analysis will categorize women's main critiques and arguments against feminism to better understand the logic behind their anti-feminist stance.**

*"The more I have spoken about feminism, the more I have realized that fighting for women's rights has too often become synonymous with man-hating."*

*-Emma Watson*

Even 50 years after Betty Friedan played a vital role in the rebirth of post-war feminism, sparking the second wave of American feminism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the topic remains widely contested. There is still a constant and rather heated debate around the importance of feminism, and its ultimate goal for the equality of women and men in society.<sup>1</sup> The evidence is clear in a speech given on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014, by UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson at a special event for the HeForShe campaign, at the United Nations Headquarters, where she discussed what she believes is one of the misconceptions about feminism: that feminists hate men.<sup>2</sup> Though "Feminism" has become an unpopular and uncomfortable word, many people

have no problem discussing it on the Internet. Today, feminist discourse has migrated from campaigns and protests to mass-mediated discussion on social media websites. Discourse surrounding it is prevalent on sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr. According to data from Twitter, conversation about “feminism” has increased by 300 percent on the platform over the past three years.<sup>3</sup>

My study is a part of a larger project to identify the arguments for and critiques of feminism. It focuses on one particularly provocative Tumblr page, “Women Against Feminism.” The study’s goal is to determine what types of arguments women use to oppose feminism. It examines why individuals who post to this Tumblr page don’t like feminism, why they think it’s useless and why they believe it to be detrimental to equality. It also seeks to understand the logic behind their evaluations.

For those who consider feminism beneficial and believe that it can truly help men and women achieve equality, the existence of websites such as “Women Against Feminism,” may be considered an extreme step in the wrong direction or the ultimate threat to what has already been achieved through feminist movements. For those who object to feminism, a social media website that allows negative discourse on feminism may be considered an outlet to share their take on feminism today or their thoughts on post-feminism. The way a controversial topic is talked about, discussed, and framed can influence a person’s position on this controversy. If feminism is depicted as beneficial to both men and women and as a major element in achieving equality, audiences may be more apt to support this movement. If, on the one hand, feminists are considered of man-hating, self-righteous women, it is unlikely that people will even want to consider themselves a feminist. This idea is a problem when it comes to major social media outlets because young women with no previous knowledge of the goal of feminism, may be

easily mislead or misinformed by anti-feminist images and messages that are prevalent online. The effects of this can be detrimental to the progress that has been made for women in society.<sup>4</sup>

This research will be qualitative content analysis, in an attempt to achieve theory generation. I will be looking at the website “Women Against Feminism,” and examining the month of July 2014, when there were 155 posts by women stating their take on feminism. I will be documenting the types of arguments that they make, and looking at the terms women use to understand their critiques of feminism. I am seeking to understand why some women reject feminism in their lives, even though feminism by some definitions is a movement of women’s rights.

### **The Three Waves of Feminism and Current Day Opinions:**

**This review of research examines these main focus points: the history of feminism, the common ways feminism is defined and explanations of how feminism came to be, and a description of how feminism discourse already exists on social media.**

### **History of Feminism:**

Feminism became a movement in attempt to fight for women’s rights, but its ideologies changed throughout its different waves. Depending on the period, culture and country, feminism around the world has different causes, goals and reasons for existence. Originally, the term feminism was created in the late 1800’s and appeared first in France and the Netherlands. It then moved to the United States in about 1910. Women’s studies and scholar, Marlene Gates described feminism as a movement divided in three waves throughout history, which all dealt with different aspects of feminist issues.<sup>5</sup> The first wave of feminism attempted to abolish

women's suffrage of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mainly by promoting women's rights to vote. Although countries varied in how the feminist movement was organized, they were all linked to the same goals for the equality of women. During first-wave feminism, the UK and the US focused on the promotion of equality in marriage, parenting, and property rights for women. Around the same time in 1905, the Iranian Constitutional Revolution was occurring, which triggered the Iranian women's movement. This movement aimed to create equality in education, marriage, careers and legal rights for the women of Iran. Feminism was taking place all over the world, focused on similar issues.<sup>6</sup> The first wave of feminism was politically based and straightforward, fighting for freedom and democracy for most, but especially white women. At this time, Suffragists confronted stereotypes of women regarding claims of proper female behavior and talk, fighting back against domesticity or a 'true woman's place.'<sup>7</sup> Women argued that their right to vote would be advantageous to society to enfranchise women and enrich politics, and to deny women the vote was to deny them full citizenship.<sup>8</sup> Since women had so few civil liberties in the early 19th century, their main goal was to break down the first wall and gain basic human rights which the majority of women were fighting for. It was widely contested, as women were often beaten and arrested, for something as simple as wearing pants.<sup>9</sup>

The second wave, which took place in the 1960's, broadened the debate to a wide range of issues: sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, domestic violence, marital rape issues, and legal inequalities. At this time, a woman's life was still very limited in every aspect from family life to the workplace. Women were still expected to marry young, start a family, and devote their life to their husbands and homemaking. Betty Friedan's, *The Feminine Mystique*, captured the frustration and despair of housewives who felt trapped in their roles of mother and caretaker. Her work spoke to an audience of upper-white class women which largely helped

spark the second wave of the American feminist movement.<sup>10</sup> Now women weren't just focused on merely getting to vote but demanding equality beyond law into women's real lives. With the range of topics growing wider by the year, the definition of feminism started to become unclear and the lines between feminist women and the Other, men, were becoming more intense.<sup>11</sup> According to many articles and books about feminism during the 1960's and 70's, the feminist movement began making an unintentional pushback against men. These feminist movements grew strong and confident in environments where men were largely excluded. Feminist groups were for women only. They created campaigns against men and against male-dominated institutions. Their argument was that "all men oppress all women," so they framed men as the enemy.<sup>12</sup>

Third wave feminism refers to several diverse strains of feminist activity and study branching from initiatives and movements created by second-wave feminism. It moved away from politics into culture which included how feminists should live and behave, and not just the legal rights given to them. For example, popular approaches to third wave feminism often contain references to a style of dress, to looks, to ways of behaving for men and women, to what used to be called, 'manners' and often attempting to abolish gender role expectations and stereotypes.<sup>13</sup> It has become so ambiguous and divided about its themes and overall cause that no one seems to be able to pin down one common definition of feminism and what exactly it is fighting for, creating serious backlash towards the feminist movement itself.<sup>14</sup>

### **Contemporary Definitions of Feminism:**

Today, the current and most commonly used definition of feminism is this: advocacy of women's rights on the grounds of political, social and economic equality to men. However, to

many others it has different meanings. The most active position as a feminist today is a person who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change in the social, economic and political order.<sup>15</sup>

Many people tend to base their decision of whether or not to identify as a feminist on whichever definition of feminism they believe to be true. There are so many contradicting definitions that it has become difficult to pin down which feminist identity is the real one.<sup>16</sup> In a 2014 article by Emma Teitel, she explains how nobody really knows what feminism is, which may explain the large support for anti-feminist causes.<sup>17</sup> The question: “What is feminism?” doesn’t come with one simple answer. According to Rosalind Delmar, the assumption that the meaning of feminism is obvious needs to be challenged. The content of the terms ‘feminism’ and ‘feminist’ seems self-evident, something that can be taken for granted, but it is often impossible to construct a base-line definition of feminism and feminist which can be shared by feminists and non-feminists.<sup>18</sup> How feminism is defined is crucial to whether or not people advocate for feminism, or don’t. Many people, especially women who claim not to be feminists, think this way because they are using a very narrow definition of what it means to be a feminist. For example, in “What Women Want” by Deborah L. Rhode, she points out that feminism often implies activism, and that makes many women uncomfortable, believing they have to be taking action in order to be a feminist.<sup>19</sup>

Another take on feminism, written about in an article by Angharad Valdivia, explains that feminism is broadly understood as the theoretical study of women’s oppression and the strategic and political ways that all individuals can work to end that oppression.<sup>20</sup> Valdivia attempts to make it clear that feminism is connected to multiculturalism and varies across cultures. In other

words, depending on the culture you live within, there are differences in what each person believes feminism has accomplished, what it can do, and its usefulness.

Many people have attempted to identify the factors that lead people to support or to oppose feminism. For example, Bolzendahl and Myers assert that when a person believes he or she will benefit from gender equality, that individual is more likely to embrace feminist attitudes.<sup>21</sup> This idea has been called an “interest-based approach” to feminism. Their research concluded that there was a range of reasons that people held certain attitudes. These included such things as their economic standing, their sexual orientation, and their social status.<sup>22</sup>

It comes down to the fact that there is no right or wrong definition necessarily, but an array of opinions and definitions that don't match up, making it difficult for anyone to truly understand this term and what it means to be a part of it.

### **Feminism and Social Media Discourse**

A huge part of how feminism is understood and processed by individuals is based on the way it is framed in mass communications. Traditionally, the gatekeepers who discuss feminism through media can frame the subject however they deem beneficial and can pick and choose the way it is portrayed, which is then consumed and understood by an audience. The way media represents feminism can represent the attitudes individuals have toward it, including whether they support it.<sup>23</sup>

A 2014 Article on Time.com describes the new virtual space that is open to all facets of Feminism discourse: the Internet.<sup>24</sup> It continues to be one of the most significant modern influences on our lives, and on feminism too, presenting new opportunities and new threats. Feminist battles are increasingly influenced by the Internet for good or for bad.<sup>25</sup>

People are taking to all sorts of websites to discuss their definitions, opinions, and arguments against feminism, through blogs, even with one-word descriptions in the form of hashtags to state their position.<sup>26</sup> Women in particular have taken to social media daily to make their voices heard and are attempting to write their way into subjective agency; act on their personal opinions about the matter of feminism.<sup>27</sup> The voice women gain from getting online has begun to show in the range of issues, communication and information about feminism appearing both online and offline.<sup>28</sup> Although a women's social media revolution began some time ago, it has reached its peak this year especially, with a flood of hashtag campaigns supporting and opposing all aspects of Feminism and women's rights. From #YesAllWomen, #HeForShe, #WomenAgasintFeminism, the list goes on.<sup>29</sup> According to data from Twitter, because of the existence of these social media websites, conversation about "feminism" has increased by 300 percent on the platform over the past three years. Specifically blog sites such as Tumblr are used to discuss social issues such as feminism because they can be created in a very personal manner, being used for creative expression, personal experiences and thoughts, and even debates.<sup>30</sup> There is no gatekeeper to receive the information and filter it and pass it on.<sup>31</sup> Jessica Bennett of Time.com points out that "women's issues are everywhere, relentlessly spread by the women they impact." But that's not all. Men feel the need to have a say on this topic as well, either supporting the movement or reasoning against it.<sup>32</sup>

Social media has often fostered a very hostile atmosphere towards feminism online. A heated debate with the hashtag #Gamergate erupted because ethics in video game journalism were questioned, as well as the treatment of women in the video game industry. This idea sparked arguments about whether Intel believed in feminism at all after they pulled its advertising from Gamasutra magazine, and women were arguing what say they have in the very

male based video game world. Overall, many felt that feminism was trying to change gaming to be too feminist-friendly.<sup>33</sup>

Feminism has become an array of clashing personal opinions on social media websites, especially in its modern form. Feminism in this form can alienate people with different opinions, which can confuse everyone else trying to understand it.<sup>34</sup> It may force people to pick a side, and worse, to choose a side for the wrong reasons or because of a misunderstanding. Emma Teitel argues, “Movements not only need conviction, but focus,” in order to achieve success. However, with social media coming from every which way you could possibly think of, confusion is inevitable.<sup>35</sup> Feminism continues to be claimed, reclaimed, expressed and lived out today, and this will continue tomorrow.<sup>36</sup>

## **Methods**

In order to discover the types of negative discourse about feminism on social media websites, I will analyze critiques and arguments against feminism on the Tumblr site “Women Against Feminism,” and will seek to categorize the logic behind these statements. Tumblr is a micro blogging platform and social networking website that allows users to post multimedia and short-form blog. It is open to anyone with Internet access. I plan on using qualitative content analysis because it allows a researcher to discover patterns and themes in bodies of text in order to find out the context or meaning behind it. After skimming through a year and a half worth of posts on “Women Against Feminism,” I chose the month of July 2014 because this is when there were an abundance of pictures with statements posted to the site. In July, there were 155 post made by different women.

I will begin by consistently taking note of what arguments each post has against feminism based on the picture and text in the post. I will define an argument against feminism as *anybody of text that has a negative connotation toward feminism, such as a dislike of feminism, a claim that feminism is useless, or a critique of feminism*. For example, a post that reads, “I am not a feminist because I am not a delusional, disgusting, hypocritical, man-hater,” would be a strong argument as an anti-feminist. This woman is specifically stating that she is not a feminist and follows up with her reasons why. The main arguments I will choose to look at will be strong enough negative claims that it wouldn’t be considered neutral. I do however plan to take note of the existence of neutral comments depending on how many I find within my research.

I will then be analyzing the words the women who are posting use to make their arguments against feminism, and with that I will begin identify the main themes in their arguments against feminism. I will sift through the posts and develop a set of categories based on what I read. I will also take note of the terms the posters are using within their text. For example, I will track down the words that they are using to describe feminism, and I will seek to assess the strength of their opposition to feminism. I also plan to take note of demographic characteristics of the posters that are available through their pictures and their names. These would include such characteristics as gender, race and age. My intent is to see if any patterns emerge that link the arguments against feminism with the demographic characteristics of the poster. After reviewing the IRB website and determining whether or not my study needs IRB approval, I concluded that it does not in order to continue my research. My research will be based on publically available data, it is limited to course-related activities designed for education, and it does not involve vulnerable populations and does not pose risk to the participants or women posting comments.

## **Results**

The website itself displayed thousands of photographs since July 2013 when the Tumblr page first opened up. These women are creating an anti-feminism cyber platform, in which they are beginning to create new worlds through digital technologies, and created an unconventional space to join together and reveal their honest and negative feelings toward feminism.<sup>37</sup> After sifting through 155 posts from July 2014, the analysis of in-depth searching revealed 11 different main reoccurring themes as to why these particular women don't support feminism and are against it, along with a few outliers. The categories for why these women reject feminism are as follows, in order from most commonly written about reason for rejecting feminism to the least, and further explained:

1. Equality for all
  - a. Any comment made by a woman that deems feminism unfit because it
  - b. doesn't give equality to all
  - c. Women shouldn't get more rights or get away with more than men, that is not equality
  - d. Example: "Equality does not equal superiority." (Post-31)
2. Enjoys being a mother and a wife
  - a. Any comment made by a woman that states she doesn't need or want feminism because she enjoys being a mother and a wife and that feminism doesn't agree with this lifestyle
  - b. Any comment that refers to their male significant other loving them and treating them right so they don't need feminism
  - c. Example: "Being a wife and mother is the greatest source of joy in my life." (Post-2)
3. In favor of men or looking from a man's point of view/feminism is only for women
  - a. Any comment that advocates for the male, trying to prove that men are important because they believe feminists hate men/ Any comment that states that feminism only fights for women's rights, and ignores men's rights
  - b. Example: "I love men and value their human rights." (Post-37).
  - c. Example: "Focusing on only women will never bring equality." (Post-20).
4. Femininity
  - a. Any comment in which the woman states that she enjoys being feminine, and believes feminism doesn't agree with femininity
  - b. Example: "I like to be treated like a lady by a gentleman." (Post-52)
5. I am not a victim/I am not oppressed

- a. Any comment by a woman that states feminism makes women into victims, and they don't feel victimized/Any comment by a woman that states feminism tries to fight for women who are oppressed but isn't helping or they aren't feeling oppressed
  - b. Example: "I am not a 'victim' there is no war against me." (Post-140)
  - c. "We don't need feminism because oppression is universal and has far more to do with how wealthy your parents are rather than whether or not you have a Y chromosome." (Post-33).
6. I am too self-confident and responsible of my actions
    - a. Any comment made by a woman that states that a woman rejects feminism because she doesn't need an excuse or wants to shift blame on anyone else and believes that's what feminism does
    - b. Example: "I don't need feminism b/c I can take responsibility for my insecurities and I don't need to blame other people for my problems!" (Post-119)
  7. Feminist groups are a negative group
    - a. Any comment that suggests they don't need feminism because it is a very negative group (angry women, misogynists, a cult, etc.)
    - b. "Feminist culture has become cannibalistic....a cult rejecting free-thinking." (Post-44).
  8. There is a significant difference between men and women we must acknowledge
    - a. Any comment that states women and men are treated differently because they are different and we must accept and embrace that and feminism doesn't
    - b. "Men and women are inherently different, and that's great!" (Post-17)
  9. My future or current children won't need feminism/I won't teach it to them
    - a. Any comment in which the woman doesn't believe that feminism will be useful for her children in the future
    - b. "I don't need feminism because I want my boys to grow up knowing what TRUE equality is." (Post-26)
  10. Rape related issue
    - a. Any comment that claims feminism tries to shift the blame in a situation involving rape
    - b. Example: "My rapist was a woman!" (Post-8)
  11. I am against modern feminism
    - a. Any comment where a woman states that she doesn't need modern feminism in her life specifically for various reasons
    - b. "I don't need modern 'feminism' because I don't need others to fight my battles for me." (Post-116).

I have chosen to focus on the four, most reoccurring and significant themes that these women have displayed among the Tumblr posts: "Equality for all," with 27 comments, "I enjoy being a mother and a wife," with 19 comments, "Feminism is only for women and it hates men,"

with 30 comments, and “I enjoy being feminine,” with 24 comments. I decided to focus on four themes mainly because the number of comments made about the other themes I found during my research didn’t compare as closely with these four groups. For example, the arguments made about the differences between men and women only had 11 specific comments, or not feeling oppressed and rejecting feminism only had 14 comments. Arguments for not feeling like a victim and having enough self-confidence to not need feminism came close with 18 and 17 comments, but the four main themes I am discussing were all very much related to these and were the core base arguments behind all of their comments.

### Equality for All:

Although feminism is often referred to as the social, economic, and political equality of the SEXES, many people don’t see it that way. The women claimed they didn’t want feminism in their lives because they considered feminism as a movement that doesn’t actually bring equality, and that feminists have put themselves above men. One woman’s piece of paper which states her main argument on this site reads, “Equality does not equal superiority.” (Post-31). They also claimed that feminism allows women to receive more rights, and that “Women get away with more than men whether we like it or not, there is always an excuse to be used and THAT IS NOT EQUALITY.” (Post-26). The logic behind their stance is that feminism isn’t actually doing its job for equality because they believe it only focuses on female rights, which is stated in this comment, “We need to advocate for the rights of all people regardless of gender,” (Post-114). In other words, to them, feminism doesn’t actually mean equality between the sexes, or else it would be considered humanism, or how one woman puts it, “If it is about equality, shouldn’t it be called people-ism?” (Post-64). Even Angela McRobbie’s piece on Post-feminism and Popular Culture suggests that women no longer feel the need to embrace feminism anymore

because we have reached a point of gender equality.<sup>38</sup> This idea is grounded in the term “post-feminism” or the idea that feminism is no longer needed in our society. Post-feminists often seek to convince women and girls to abandon the original principles, ideas, beliefs and commitments of third-wave feminism. They argue that women can achieve meaningful freedom and independence without becoming part of a feminist group. Feminism gets cast into the shadows as a movement that has passed away, and that it has done its job in giving men and women equal opportunities in society.<sup>39</sup> The belief of “post-feminism” could easily diminish the feminist movement altogether. That is why this argument is very significant to pay attention to. Although the movement does have a very female oriented background and name for that matter, the ultimate goal is to create equality between the sexes, not just equality for one side of the gender line. Therefore, if feminism doesn’t equate to equality in their eyes, or equality has already been reached, then why should they stand by it?

#### Enjoy Being a Mother and a Wife:

The second theme that had many of the women buzzing and eager to post on this site was that they simply enjoyed being a mother and a wife, and believed feminism looked down upon traditional female roles. Very much of the connotation behind feminism is that you have to be an independent female fighting for higher pay and breaking through the standard of housewife and child bearer. Time and time again in my results, women stated, “I love my husband and daughter,” (Post-4, 8, 32, 44 etc.) and “Being a stay at home wife is MY CHOICE!” (Post-9). In their eyes, to be a feminist, you have to reject the idea of being happily married with children, in order to fight against the conventional female expectations. One women even clearly stated, “I will not be bullied for choosing traditional values,” (Post-56). Marriage and producing children is still the most common life choice across cultures, and for women to equate feminism with the

rejection of having a husband and children can only lead to a large portion of women giving up on feminism altogether as they won't be able to identify with a single woman who doesn't want a family. This idea represents a very wide spread belief about feminism that has been a long term contention within the feminist movement. In *What is Feminism?* written by Rosalind Delmar, she explains that, "In the writing of feminist history, it is the broad view which predominates: feminism is usually defined as an active desire to change women's position in society."<sup>40</sup>

Feminism is so closely tied to the act of uprooting women from their position as homemaker and turning them into strong and independent working women. Many women don't believe or want this type of lifestyle, therefore reject what feminism stands for believing they can't have a family and identify with feminism at the same time. She describes how women have a hard time finding the "true feminist image," or attempting to abide by the "proper way" to be a feminist, and that it is too difficult.<sup>41</sup> This disagreement between feminists and anti-feminist comes from the rigid intolerance of difference that has driven too many women away from identifying as feminists: women who choose motherhood over high-powered careers, many religious women, conservative women, and so on.<sup>42</sup> The more feminism is directly linked with the rejection of motherhood and marriage, the more women will push away from this identity.

#### Feminism is Only for Women and Hates Men:

The next theme is similar to the idea that feminism doesn't create equality of the sexes: "Feminism is a movement only for women, and it hates men." This theme has two very prominent arguments within it. First of all, the very popular idea that all feminists are connected to misandry, or the literal hatred of men. Many people who attempt to relate to feminism can't get past the idea that it is a group against men, or a man-hating mass, and often don't want to be a part of it.<sup>43</sup> Mike Adams, writer of "Feminists Say the Darndest Things," who is very clearly

anti-feminist, claims that feminists “are among the most hateful creatures on the planet,” “don’t really want equality,” and that they, “don’t just hate men, but women too.” He goes on to explain that feminists just want to tear down the walls of male dominance.<sup>44</sup> This idea was obvious in the women’s posts with comments such as, “I don’t need to vilify men to get what I want,” (Post-18) or that “Men are not idiotic simpletons who lack creativity or complexity,” (Post-106). The very extreme cases but often common examples of angry feminists who reject males and blame them for their inequality becomes all too often the representative of what a feminist is. According to the women making these posts, in order to agree with feminism or identify as a feminist you must not believe in men’s human rights and believe that men are more disposable than women. In turn, this type of thinking that the women are revealing is the same thoughts that create groups of anti-feminist men who are not shy about sharing their opposition on feminism either. For example, a well-known actress from the Harry Potter series, Emma Watson made a speech for the solidarity movement on gender equality, backing up the #HeForShe campaign. In order to spread a positive light on feminism in hopes to gain support from men in order to get both sexes to work toward a common goal. An abundance of men, didn’t agree with her. They claimed what she had to say was just another “stupid feminist speech” that they were tired of hearing.<sup>45</sup> There is a very distinct negative connotation attached with the word feminism, that to be one automatically means that you are an angry, sex-hating, often lesbian, man-hater. The idea that not only doesn’t feminism hate or reject men, but that is only useful if you are a woman came up just as often in the women’s posts. For example, they made comments such as “I don’t deserve anything on a silver platter because I was born with a uterus” (Post-56). Rosalind Delmar explains that the belief that feminism is only about what women want and need comes from the idea that “Feminists were, and still are, imagined as confined to the narrow world of women, the

marginal world of women's issues, cut off from the general field of human endeavor."<sup>46</sup> The term feminist is also believed to be directly linked to the word woman, and that is in large part why other people don't find themselves identifying with the word. Delmar explains, "Feminism's fascination with women is also the condition of the easy slippage from 'feminist' to 'woman' and back: the feminist becomes the representative of woman' just as 'feminist history' becomes the same as 'women's history' and so on."<sup>47</sup> The women posting comments on this Tumblr site have formed the idea that this movement can only benefit women, and shuts men out.

### Enjoy Being Feminine:

Finally, and ironically, the idea that being a feminist means that you aren't allowed to be feminine or enjoy anything too girly. Over the years, a caricature of a woman feminist has become engrained in the mind as a bra-burning, pink-hating protester. For this reason, women are instantly put off by the idea of labeling themselves as this distinct character or being related to feminism assuming that it is an insult.<sup>48</sup> Even though bras were never actually burned at the 1968 Miss America protest, this image of women rejecting femininity and the programs which put femininity in the spotlight, persists as a myth of the Women's Liberation movement. The image of feminists as bra burners and women who don't shave their legs continues to this day. Some comments that the women made on the Tumblr page stated, "I reject feminism because I enjoy being feminine," (Post-75) and "I still like a man to pay the tab, hold the door, take out the trash, and ogle me whilst I make muffins in an apron and pearls," (Post-13). Clearly, they believe that in order to consider yourself a feminist, you can't partake in anything womanly or ladylike such as wearing heels and cooking. This is a very common misconception and so women tend to

distance themselves from the word believing that there is a certain ‘look’ or ‘demeanor’ you must have to be a feminist.

Roxanne Gay specifically states in her book, *Bad Feminist Essays*, “We don’t all believe in the same feminism” and that couldn’t be more accurate when it comes to the results of this research.<sup>49</sup> It became obvious that every woman latched onto a different definition of feminism and were specifically fighting back against their negative connotation they had about feminism. Each woman had their own individual thoughts about what they thought feminism was and why it was detrimental to their own lives and society, and so many were completely different themes and ideas. This meant, that there wasn’t one particular definition of feminism that women don’t agree with, but an array of reasons for why women reject feminism and these women didn’t want to be associated with what it represents.

Although these anti-feminists have seemingly logical reasons behind their arguments, they are basing their rejection of this movement off of one story they heard or one negative image of feminism saying, bottom-line ‘this is what feminism is.’ For example, they are using the idea that some feminists hate men, and translating that into the idea that all feminists hate men and are misandrists, therefore they don’t want any part in that. It is all part of the huge melting pot that is current day feminism, and that many people don’t actually know what feminism is fighting for anymore so they have created their own definitions, very often negative. These women have forgotten what the point of feminism originally was, a way to fight for the equality of women and men, and place women in positions of power and independence and allowing them the same rights as everyone else. Women who consider themselves anti-feminist routinely ignore the contributions already made by feminists.<sup>50</sup> The women who participate in

the Tumblr site “Women Against Feminism,” aren’t all wrong in their arguments. It seems feminism has lost its way and its direction toward a common goal that women can be fighting for together. The abundance of different definitions have women’s opinions clashing, and separating women instead of bringing them together. Not only does this mean a daunting foreseeable future for feminism, but the existence of these websites online will only further poison the well. Social media is available to almost everyone imaginable. The constant spewing of negative comments about feminism and anti-feminist opinions will only cause society in the future to truly believe this is what feminism is about, and ignore the progress it has actually made for women thus far. Feminism and women’s liberation’s movement have helped women to gain equality everywhere from the right to vote, opening up universities to female students, and overall proving that women’s rights are human rights.

I wanted to bring light to this subject in order for people to see what feminism has become and why women believe the things they do and the logic behind their arguments. Instead of instantly rejecting these women and casting them aside as naïve or incompetent, we must get to the bottom of why women reject feminism the way they do. We as a society can’t assume that we all believe in the same successful, ground-breaking feminism that fights for the equality of all humans, but that it is often defined as a group of misandrists and bra-burners. That way, we can begin to fight against these definitions and possibly recommit to a future common goal for feminism moving forward, and abolish the extremely negative connotations that exist in this modern day, hopefully getting rid of any websites who are AGAINST the feminist movement.

## Notes:

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