

Bad Feminist,” *VQR Online*, Roxane Gay. 2012.

### Outline of essay

Gay examines various feminist critics and critics of feminism. She decries the expectations placed on women, but that somehow excludes women of color.

- “My favorite definition of a feminist is one offered by Su, an Australian woman who, when interviewed for Kathy Bail’s 1996 anthology *DIY Feminism*, described them simply as ‘women who don’t want to be treated like shit.’”
- On being a “bad feminist”: “Essential feminism suggests anger, humorlessness, militancy, unwavering principles, and a prescribed set of rules for how to be a proper feminist woman, or at least a proper white, heterosexual, feminist woman—hate pornography, unilaterally decry the objectification of women, don’t cater to the male gaze, hate men, hate sex, focus on career, don’t shave.... The most significant problem with essential feminism is how it doesn’t allow for the complexities of human experience or individuality.”
- "As a woman of color, I find that some feminists don’t seem terribly concerned with the issues unique to women of color..."
- “Alas, poor feminism. So much responsibility keeps getting piled on the shoulders of a movement whose primary purpose is to achieve equality, in all realms, between men and women. I keep reading these articles and getting angry and tired because these articles tell me that there’s no way for women to ever get it right. These articles make it seem like there is, in fact, a right way to be a woman and a wrong way to be a woman. And the standard appears to be ever changing and unachievable. Which leads me to confess: I am failing as a woman. I am failing as a feminist. To freely accept the feminist label would not be fair to good feminists. If I am, indeed, a feminist, I am a rather bad one."
- “Pink is my favorite color.” (I love her!)
- “No matter what issues I have with feminism, I am one. I cannot nor will not deny the importance and absolute necessity of feminism. Like most people, I’m full of contradictions, but I also don’t want to be treated like shit for being a woman. I am, therefore, a bad feminist. I would rather be a bad feminist than no feminist at all.”



Roxane Gay’s writing appears in *Best American Nonrequired Reading 2018*, *Best American Mystery Stories 2014*, *Best American Short Stories 2012*, *Best Sex Writing 2012*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, *A Public Space*, *McSweeney’s*, *Tin House*, *Oxford American*, *American Short Fiction*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and many others. She is a contributing opinion writer for *The New York Times*. She is the author of the books *Ayiti*, *An Untamed State*, the *New York Times* bestselling *Bad Feminist*, the nationally bestselling *Difficult Women* and *New York Times* bestselling *Hunger: A Memoir of My Body*. She is also the author of *World of Wakanda* for Marvel and the editor of *Best American Short Stories 2018*. She is currently at work on film and television projects, a book of writing advice, an essay collection about television and culture, and a YA novel entitled *The Year I Learned Everything*. In 2018, she won a Guggenheim fellowship.