Library Instruction Session
First Year Writing
Bad Feminist: HQ1421 .G39 2004g

- **P** = Language + Literature
- **H** = Social Science:
  - HQ = “The Family, Marriage, Women”
- **G** = author’s initial.
  - # acts as a decimal
- # acts as a normal whole number
- Year of publication
Bad feminist : essays

Author Gay, Roxane.
Title Bad feminist : essays / Roxane Gay.
Copyright ©2014
Description xiv, 320 pages ; 21 cm
Subjects Gay, Roxane > Anecdotes.
Feminism.
Popular culture.
Women > Conduct of life > Anecdotes.
Race awareness in motion pictures.
African Americans in mass media.
Essays.

Summary A collection of essays spanning politics, criticism, and feminism from one of the most-watched young cultural observers of her generation, Roxane Gay. "Pink is my favorite color. I used to say my favorite color was black to be cool, but it is pink all shades of pink. If I have an accessory, it is probably pink. I read Vogue, and I'm not doing it ironically, though it might seem that way. I once live-tweeted the September issue." In these funny and insightful essays, Roxane Gay takes us through the journey of her evolution as a woman (Sweet Valley High) of color (The Help) while also taking readers on a ride through culture of the last few years (Girls, Django in Chains) and commenting on the state of feminism today (abortion, Chris Brown). The portrait that emerges is not only one of an incredibly insightful woman continually growing to understand herself and our society, but also one of our culture. Bad Feminist is a sharp, funny, and spot-on look at the ways in which the culture we consume becomes who we are, and an inspiring call-to-arms of all the ways we still need to do better.

Contents
- Feel me, see me, hear me, reach me
- Peculiar benefits
- Typical first year professor
- To scratch, claw or grope clumsily or frantically
- How to be friends with another woman
- Girls, girls, girls
- I once was Miss America
- Garish, glorious spectacles
- Not here to make friends
Evaluating Resources
Scholarly

Mothers, Mothering and Motherhood in Literature

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Scholarly

Ms.

SPECIAL 2017 ELECTION REPORT
WOMEN MADE THE DIFFERENCE

CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME
PAIN AND PREJUDICE

SMASH THE PATRIARCHY

THE ANTIDOTE TO MISOGYNY
IS A STRONG FEMINIST MOVEMENT

POPULAR
WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT PATRIARCHAL MOTHERHOOD

ANDREA O’REILLY

We Need to Talk about Patriarchal Motherhood

Essentialization, Naturalization, and Idealization in Lionel Shriver’s We Need to Talk about Kevin

This chapter considers how We Need to Talk about Kevin disturbs and deconstructs the patriarchal mandates of essentialization, naturalization, and idealization. In patriarchal motherhood, it is assumed (and expected) that all women want to be mothers (essentialization), that maternal ability and motherhood are innate to all mothers (naturalization), and that all mothers find joy and purpose in motherhood (idealization). Although feminist criticisms of the novel have examined various motherhood themes—including mother blame (Cusk), ideologies of good-bad mothering (Murphy; Muller; Robbins), maternal subjectivity and practice (Messer), and maternal ambivalence (Almond)—my reading of Kevin will seek to uncover “what lies beneath” the maternal angst discussed in the above criticism. I argue that the mother blame, “bad” mothering, and maternal ambivalence so evident in the novel and so central to discussions on the novel are the symptomatic manifestations of the essentialized, naturalized and idealized mandates and expectations of patriarchal motherhood. Eva is blamed and regarded as an ambivalent or bad mother precisely because she is seen as lacking the assumed innate desire and ability to mother as well as the happiness expected of women in and through motherhood. Kevin, thus, not only compellingly and convincingly conveys the discontents of patriarchal motherhood but, more importantly, it uncovers the cause of and reason for this patriarchal disadvantage: namely, the essentialization, naturalization and idealization of patriarchal motherhood. In moving beyond the representation of the symptoms of women’s oppression in motherhood—ambivalence, blame, guilt, judgement—as an understanding of their cause, the novel opens up the possibility for change in the novel itself and, hopefully, in the lives of the mothers reading it.

For the past twenty-five years, I have taught a women’s studies course on mothering and motherhood that examines how patriarchal motherhood is oppressive to women and how women may resist it through empowered mothering. The course opens with a discussion on how normative motherhood is informed and maintained by ten ideological assumptions that cause mothering to be oppressive to women, which I have termed essentialization, privatization, individualization, naturalization, normalization, idealization, biologicalization, expertise, intensification, and depoliticization of motherhood. Essentialization positions maternity as basic to and the basis of female identity, whereas privatization locates mother work solely in the reproductive realm of the home. Similarly, individualization causes such mothering to be the work and responsibility of one person, whereas naturalization assumes that maternity is natural to women (i.e., all women naturally know how to mother) and that the work of mothering is driven by instinct rather than intelligence and developed by habit rather than skill. In turn, normalization limits and restricts maternal identity and practice to one specific model: nuclear family. Wherein, the mother is a wife to a husband, and she assumes the role of the nurturer, whereas the husband assumes that of the provider. The expertise and intensification of motherhood—particularly as they are conveyed in what Hays has termed “intensive mothering,” and what Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels call “the new momism”—cause childrearing to be all consuming and expert driven. Idealization sets unattainable expectations of and for mothers, and depoliticization characterizes childrearing solely as a private and non-political undertaking, with no social or political import. Finally, biologicalization, in its emphasis on blood ties, positions the birth mother as the “real” and authentic mother. The students then go on to explore these normative mandates of patriarchal motherhood in various maternal theories as well as in selected women’s novels. One of the novels read by the students is Lionel Shriver’s We Need to Talk About Kevin.

In this chapter, I will consider how We Need to Talk about Kevin disturbs and deconstructs the patriarchal mandates of essentialization, naturalization, and idealization. Again, in patriarchal motherhood it is assumed (and expected) that all women want to be mothers (essentialization), that maternal ability and motherhood are innate to all mothers (naturalization), and that all mothers find joy and purpose in motherhood (idealization). Although feminist criticism of the novel has examined various motherhood themes—including mother blame (Cusk), ideologies of good-bad mothering (Murphy; Muller; Robbins), maternal subjectivity and practice (Messer), and maternal ambivalence (Almond)—my reading of Kevin will seek to uncover “what lies beneath” the maternal angst discussed in the above criticism. As Eva herself comments: “I feared what lay beneath. I feared at the bottom I hated my life and hated being a mother” (188). I will argue that the mother blame, “bad"
In 2017’s elections, women—as candidates and voters—repudiated Trump’s agenda and delivered big wins for Democrats

BY KATHERINE SPILLAR

EXACTLY ONE YEAR AFTER THE DISASTROUS 2016 PRESIDENTIAL election, the Democratic Party swept statewide races in New Jersey and Virginia, making significant gains among voters in suburban communities that traditionally favor Republicans. Democrats’ election victories were driven by women, young people, people of color and LGBTQ people galvanized in opposition to President Donald Trump’s agenda.

In exit polls in the Virginia gubernatorial race, 39 percent of voters said health care mattered most in how they decided to vote—and 77 percent of them voted for the Democrat. Thirty-four percent said they voted to express their opposition to Trump; only 37 percent of Virginia voters wanted to support him.

In New Jersey and Washington state, Democratic victories secured full control of both the legislature and the governorship. Among those newly elected was New Jersey’s first African American lieutenant governor, Sheila Oliver. In special elections in Georgia, two state legislative seats long held by Republicans were won by Democrats. There was a surge of women in mayoral races across the country, with Charlotte, N.C.; Topeka, Kans.; and New Orleans electing their first women of color. Voters in Seattle elected the city’s first openly lesbian mayor, and in Manchester, N.H., a woman will be mayor for the first time. Immigrants and refugees won seats in the Virginia House, and in city council and mayor’s races across the country.

In Virginia, women’s votes were decisive in Democrat Ralph Northam’s victory in the governor’s race. Although men comprised a slightly larger portion of the electorate (51 percent), an overwhelming percentage of votes cast for Northam—61 percent—were cast by 44 percent of men, a 13-point gender gap. If only men had been allowed to vote, Republican Ed Gillespie would have been governor. Some 91 percent of African American women voted for Northam, along with 58 percent of white women with college degrees and 54 percent of married women. Democrats swept all three statewide offices, with Justin Fairfax becoming only the second African American lieutenant governor in the state’s history.

All across the country, the key was Democrats—many of them women—who challenged long-entrenched Republican incumbents in tough districts gerrymandered to favor Republicans. “We saw feminist women, many running for office for the first time, win local races and state races,” says Eleanor Smeal, president of Feminist Majority. “We saw our political pipelines being flooded with feminist women who could soon become our next senators, our next governors and even our next president.”

Going into the 2018 elections in Virginia, Republicans outnumbered Democrats in the House of Delegates by a margin of 66 to 44...
Evaluating Resources

In groups of 4, evaluate the resource I have given you. Ask the following questions:

- What kind of resource do you have?
- How do you know?
- Why was it created?
- How might you use it?
(Re)search
CLIO VIDEO KEYWORDS

- **Hurston** - author of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

- **Voice** - idea in her writing

- **Feminist** - theoretical approach to the topic (lens, method)
SAMPLE TOPIC KEYWORDS

- Author: Virginia Woolf
- Text: To the Lighthouse
- Ideas:
- Lenses:
ADVANCED SEARCHING TIPS

● "Virginia Wolf" = searches as a phrase

● Feminis* = searches feminist, feminists, feminism

● wom*n = woman, women, womyn ...
ADVANCED SEARCHING TIPS

● Use **AND** to connect two words or phrases:
  ○ “Virginia Woolf” **AND** Feminis*

● Use **NOT** to eliminate results from your search
  ○ “Virginia Woolf” **NOT** Film

● Use **OR** with parenthesis to increase results
  ○ “To the Lighthouse” **AND** (Gender **OR** Wom*n)
“To the Lighthouse” AND (Gender OR Wom*n)
Databases - Targeted Searching

Get into groups of 2 - using your own research...

- Use CLIO Databases to find your database
- Take 2 minutes to research your own topic
- Evaluate and discuss what you found with your partner
- Share out with the class the pros and cons of your databases
Appointment: https://library.barnard.edu/profiles/meredith-wisner

Feedback: https://tinyurl.com/feedbackMW