

# Disrupting Students' Misunderstandings (and Misgivings) about Feminism through a Popular Press Book: A Feminist Research

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## Abstract

In response to the sustained and widespread resistance to feminism within U.S. classrooms and the underuse of undergraduate researchers in large universities, our research team experimented with a popular press book on feminism. Using our research team as a case study, we argue that the book, *Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman's Guide to Why Feminism Matters*, offered benefits including: (a) advanced understandings of feminism, (b) increased comfort with critiquing arguments, and (c) increased confidence and application of feminism. We hope the paper encourages other feminist-identified scholars to expand their use of feminist popular culture texts to cultivate interest, increase understanding of fundamental feminist sensibilities, and ultimately enhance their research projects while working with undergraduate researchers.

## Keywords

feminism; research; undergraduate engagement; teaching

## Introduction

Misperceptions, distortions, and misgivings of feminism are common in the wider U.S. culture and within U.S. universities (Budgeon, 2001; McCabe, 2005; Rich,

2005). Within universities, there are powerful barriers that discourage college students from engaging with feminism, including misunderstandings of what it means to be a feminist (Budgeon, 2001; Liss, Hoffner & Crawford, 2000; Rich, 2005) and acceptance of negative stereotypes of feminists (e.g., “feminazi,”

“bra burners,” and “man-hating”) (Aronson, 2003; Crossley, 2009; Weiss, 1998; Williams & Wittig, 1997; Horne et al., 2001; Robnett, Anderson, & Hunter, 2012; Liss, Hoffner, & Crawford, 2000). These and other misrepresentations may fuel hesitations for college students to take Women’s and Gender Studies courses (Sevelius & Stake, 2003; Stake & Malkin, 2003), and engage in feminist discussions (Webber, 2006).

In response to this widespread problem within universities across the U.S., we share how we experimented with popular culture texts and offered concrete ideas and tools for other feminist scholars to critically engage college students in feminist research. Our understanding of feminism is fluid and draws primarily on several feminist strands, including: Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 1990), post-structural feminism (St. Pierre, 2000), and queer feminisms (Marinucci, 2016). Based primarily on our use of a popular press book, *Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman’s Guide to Why Feminism Matters* (FFF), and analyses of popular movies and commercials, in this paper, we share media-related practices of encouraging feminist thought among a group of undergraduate research assistants (RAs). Because undergraduate researchers remain underutilized in many U.S. universities, we especially hope our paper encourages more feminist-identified faculty to invite undergraduate students to be part of their feminist research projects. By helping students understand feminist theory and apply feminist theory to research practices, we hope to bolster students’ sense of self-efficacy and prepare them for academics and work beyond their undergraduate degree. Training future feminist scholars is both timely and vital within the wider

political landscapes we find ourselves in (Madden, 2016).

## Feminist Thought, College Students, and Undergraduate Research Assistantships

Within the current backdrop of neoliberalism (i.e., individual, market-based focus) and post-feminist and post-racist ideologies (Current & Tillotson, 2018; Ringrose et al., 2013), the (perceived) need for understanding and applying feminism may seem irrelevant to a large number of college students (e.g., Current & Tillotson, 2018; McRobbie, 2009). Disrupting strong-held and pervasive misconceptions is not easy, especially within large classrooms. One fruitful strategy we have found is to look beyond the classroom setting and examine undergraduates’ engagement with feminist thought in their work on a research team. It goes without saying that students would be more likely to engage deeper with theoretical concepts if given the opportunity to apply the theory in the context of a research assistantship. As an example, research teams are often smaller than the enrollment size of typical college classrooms at large universities. The intimate setting allows students to engage more deeply in discussions and to receive more individualized attention from the professor. This creates conditions where students are encouraged to draw on theoretical insights from readings to analyze personal experiences and research content (Tang, 2013). Additionally, group discussions foster an atmosphere of collaboration and support among peers as

students explore new concepts (Nah, 2015).

Although a growing practice, the inclusion of undergraduate students in research remains an underutilized, yet powerful resource at many universities. This is especially the case for under-represented minority students (Ong et al., 2011). This is a cause for concern especially because including undergraduate students on research teams is a valuable experience for the students, as well as for graduate students and faculty. Undergraduates' academic experience is enhanced by gaining research experience (Madan & Teitge, 2013) and has been documented across multiple academic disciplines including psychology (Wayment & Dickson, 2008), engineering (Narayanan, 1999), biology (Reynolds et al., 2009), and physiology (Desai et al., 2008).

Graduate students also benefit from working with undergraduate researchers. Within a research team, graduate students serve as mentors and role models for younger scholars, gain valuable experience in their own development as future faculty and mentors, and experience personal satisfaction mentoring undergraduate students (Dolan & Johnson, 2009). Faculty who mentor undergraduate student researchers also experience satisfaction from mentoring undergraduates (Lei & Chuang 2009; Potter et al., 2009), as well as increased scholarly efficiency (Brandenberger, 1990; Chapman, 2003; Cech, 2003; Coker & Davies, 2006; Dolan & Johnson, 2009). Additionally, by working with undergraduate RAs, faculty gain a better understanding of what motivates students to learn, effectively helping faculty tailor the courses they teach (Jenkins et al., 2007).

Introducing students to feminism and teaching feminist concepts also creates space for students to have opportunities to engage in discussions about diversity, oppression, and multiculturalism. In small group settings, such as a research group, students have the opportunity to more intimately apply feminist concepts and engage in difficult discussions with their peers in order to refine their knowledge of themselves, within larger social, cultural, and political contexts. Teaching feminism in this way can be considered a form of "slow activism" in which daily practices that, on the surface may seem inconsequential, actually play a large role in planting "seeds" for students as they navigate their lives both in their other courses as well as after they leave the university (Zhang, 2018).

Although benefits of undergraduate RAs are well-documented, there is little discussion in the literature about research experiences involving participation in research teams privileging feminist thought. Barriers that college students face engaging with feminism, in combination with the larger systematic discourses that frequently render feminism irrelevant or problematic, create a unique challenge for feminist researchers engaging in research with undergraduate students. These issues raise the question: Within a larger sociopolitical context that widely denounces and distorts feminism, how do feminist-identified faculty and graduate students effectively encourage undergraduate students to learn and apply feminist theories in their research projects? In the present paper, we offer possible solutions to this challenge.

## Experimenting with Full Frontal Feminism, a popular press book

On our research team, we (two PhD students and a faculty member) experimented using a popular book, *Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman's Guide to Why Feminism Matters*. The author is Jessica Valenti, a popular feminist journalist who holds a master's degree in Women's & Gender studies. She was a co-founder of the *Feminista* blog, has written four books, and taught Women's & Gender Studies courses. Additionally, Valenti worked for the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund and for the Women's Environment & Development Organization. She also wrote a blog for NARAL Pro-Choice America.

The impetus to use *FFF* grew out of conversations between the first author and the faculty member. In a conversation about how to present the concept of feminism to students joining the research team, the first author shared that she had experienced a personal transformation from reading *FFF* when she was an undergraduate student. *FFF* had been an entry to feminism for her friends and colleagues and wanted to present it as an option to more effectively engage students in feminist concepts. Given these testimonies, coupled with the challenges of introducing feminism to students, the faculty member took a risk and gave her twelve research assistants a copy of *FFF* when they joined the research team. The purpose was for RAs to engage with *FFF* as an introduction to feminism, gain experience in critical thinking about the author's arguments, and to have an accessible framework to understand feminist thought underpinning the faculty

member's ongoing research endeavors. It was the faculty member's expectation that the RAs' exposure to feminism in *FFF* would enhance their experience of conducting research.

The faculty member assigned the book with some trepidation. She deemed the book risky because she considered the book "diluted feminism" and worried about consequences of using a book written by a journalist within the context of her research. As other scholars have argued, the book may be characterized as "feminism lite," with Jessica Valenti overgeneralizing, glossing over important complexities, and moving in and out of attending to and critiquing larger structures (Hays & Butler, 2008).

Although the faculty member concurred that Valenti had important, timely feminist messages to share and appreciated her boldness, she also was weary of the ways Valenti may have reinforced the dominant status quo through lack of careful, nuanced arguments and that Valenti (at times) encouraged a neoliberalist sensibility. The premise of the book is that feminism will improve one's (middle-class) life, frequently glossing over a critique of interlocking structures, which, of course, is the crux of intersectional feminism.

This book was written to appeal to a young audience and is written at the appropriate level for contemporary young women who have little to no exposure of academic feminism (Hays & Butler, 2008). Valenti noted that, before she wrote the book, she had a realization:

*Young women don't have enough outlets teaching them and showing them how great feminism is. Of course, there are women's studies classes and books, and maybe some of us are lucky enough to have moms and*

*friends who are self-professed and proud feminists. But the majority of young women only know the total-crap stereotypes. (p. 2)*

Her stated purpose in writing this book was “to change the way you [the reader] think about feminism, and the way you think about yourself” (Valenti, 2007, p. 3). One reviewer of her book promised that, “Readers will leave this book feeling educated and inspired, not lectured” (McConnell, 2014, para. 4). The book is written for an audience of young adult women and provides an introduction to central issues commonly raised in popular feminist thought.

## Procedure

The research team consisted primarily of undergraduate students in both Psychology and Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) as well as graduate students from Psychology and HDFS doctoral programs (of the 12 students, 4 were graduate students) at a large Midwestern university in the United States. The undergraduate student RAs came from varying backgrounds and experience (first-year students to seniors) and most received course credit during their tenure as RAs (some students volunteered to participate without course credit). During the 2015-2016 academic year, the research team focused on several projects including an examination of an anti-feminist Facebook groups’ images and comments about feminism; a project focusing on college students’ understanding of feminism; and a project examining the interplay of desire, romance, and eating among first-year college women transitioning to college.

A copy of *FFF* was given to RAs when they joined the research team. When introducing the book, the faculty member

provided context for the RAs. She pointed out that the book was marketed to high school students, and (partly) because of this, the book contains a heavy volume of slang and cursing. As they were reading the book, the RAs were asked to provide their reactions to the book via several structured questions. Questions included: (a) What are your reactions to the book? (b) What were the three main messages from the book? (c) What did you learn about feminism? (d) What was your favorite chapter? Why? (e) What was your least favorite chapter? Why? (f) How does the book map on to academic feminist thought? (g) Other reactions/comments you want to share?

Reaction questions such as those used as a supplement for *FFF* are often used by educators as a method to gradually introduce critical analysis of materials. For example, Calcagno (2015) and Hetzel-Riggin (2014) have reflected upon their use of open-ended inquiry and using reflection questions to elicit students’ personal experiences to engage with the material. In addition to writing reflections, students were also asked to orally discuss their thoughts and reactions to the book during weekly research meetings (which were audio recorded with RAs’ permission). The discussions were unstructured and the facilitator (either the faculty member or a graduate student) provided a supportive environment for students to process their reactions to the text and share how the text was shaping how they saw other projects. In other assignments given in the research assistantship, students were asked to forge links among other assignments they worked on and ideas from *FFF* as a way to continue their development of feminist analysis. Students provided copies of their reflections to the faculty member as part of their assistantship.

In engaging in analysis for this paper, we re-read reflection papers, assignments, re-listened to audio recordings of the discussions and re-examined our notes. Drawing on constant-comparative method (Boeije, 2002; Glaser, 1965; Kolb, 2012), we each separately created themes (i.e., threads of larger ideas running through the data) and met to discuss emerging ideas. Through our discussions, we developed three overriding themes.

## The Power of *FFF*: Corrective, Increased Comfort with Critiquing, and Increased Confidence and Engagement

This book was advantageous to our research team for several reasons. First, this book was less like a heavy academic endeavor. A few RAs finished the book very quickly because they found Valenti's writing engaging. Second, several RAs had no experience (or came with misunderstandings) of feminism and the book was accessible to RAs with varied experiences and understandings of feminism. Another appealing aspect of the book was Valenti's coverage of a wide array of topics including pop culture, health, violence, beauty standards, sex, and education as these topics relate to feminism. There was a topic that resonated with each of the RAs based on their own personal interests. Finally, the book included relevant pop culture and current events regarding feminism and its presence in everyday life. This last point was an exciting element of the book as young

college students were enticed by the, at times, shocking material. For example, Valenti discusses how "In Mississippi you can buy a gun with no background check but vibrators are outlawed" (2007, p. 38), which surprised many of the students and peaked their curiosity into other ways in which a feminist lens can be applied.

Our analysis revealed that *FFF* influenced our RAs in three distinct ways. First, the book helped students re-consider definitions and thus enhanced their existing conceptualizations of feminism(s). Second, the book helped students feel more comfortable raising critical questions and critiques. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the RAs reported that their confidence increased in working on other research tasks over the course of the semester.

## Correction: Re-thinking Feminism

A salient feature of the book is attention to the definition(s) of feminism. In her introduction, Valenti defines feminism as; (1) "belief in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes; (2) "the movement organized around this belief" (2007, p. 13). RAs revealed that, prior to reading *FFF*, their definitions of feminism were clouded by peers and the media. RAs highlighted that *FFF* helped them realize that feminism is more complex than they had previously understood. This point is particularly interesting considering one of the *FFF* critiques is that the author overgeneralizes issues and glosses over important complexities (Hays & Butler, 2008). One RA began to understand the nuances of intersectionality over the course of reading *FFF*:

*Although I had a vague understanding of the intersectionality of feminism with other unfair “isms”, I had no idea how important it is to recognize that although all women are oppressed, women are not oppressed in the same way.*

Our RAs conveyed bewilderment and astonishment with their new understanding(s) of feminism. Notably, RAs described epiphanies when they learned that “anyone can really be a feminist.” Additionally, some RAs also came to realize through reading *FFF* that they themselves were “actually feminists” [their words].

The experience of the RAs recognizing that they are feminists supports Valenti’s claim that many people do not realize they are feminists because of distorted definitions of feminism circulating in U.S. culture. This experience resonated with several RAs. For example, one RA found Valenti’s argument that feminists wanted to remove double-standards that exist for both men and women especially poignant, as the RA had previously believed that feminism was only for women. Another RA confirmed that *FFF* made her feel unashamed of identifying as a feminist, and that she felt empowered to make a difference for “women in this country.” Other RAs shared that the book was an outlet for them to express their personal concerns with cultural messages surrounding feminism, often citing how “unfair” it is that feminism has such a bad reputation. As such, at least among our small group of RAs, Valenti’s book appears to have achieved the goal of changing the way feminism is perceived and encouraged our RAs to reconsider their identities as feminists.

Generally, RAs noted that the book was “eye-opening and educational,”

emphasizing that the book was “easy to read and understand.” Perhaps one of the most powerful responses from an RA was that, although she would have not read this book otherwise, she is “thankful” that she read it because she “realized [she is] a hardcore feminist and a lot of issues that [she] was not even aware of really bother [her] about our government and mindset as a whole.” This reflection touches on the idea that, for many students, the exposure to feminist critiques is not just about feminism. This introduction to feminism may also be the first time they have examined larger sociopolitical issues that directly impact their lives. The book was a catalyst for RAs to begin engaging with feminism as well as exploring and acting on more politicized issues in culture.

## Increased Comfort with Critiquing

In addition to providing an accessible and non-threatening entry to feminist thought, the casual tone of the text was also important. The casual tone of the book allowed RAs to feel comfortable and confident in offering critiques about the book, as opposed to more academic writing which is more intimidating to evaluate. Below, we offer examples of the critiques. RAs pointed out Valenti’s unidimensional framing for certain topics and were able to identify the author’s biases, particularly in the discussion of sexuality (e.g., chapter on sex tips). One RA wrote:

*I felt the author... over exaggerated and over generalized with points and examples used. [For example], while critiquing abstinence-only teachings in schools, Valenti says, “because of abstinence-only education, we’re going to have a generation of sexual dum-*

*dums." My reaction to this statement is an over-generalization made trying to prove her point...*

A similar critique was waged by another RA:

*...I really didn't like... the reproductive chapter. I just didn't[omission] think in some cases she was very disrespectful to other side[this sentence doesn't fit the context of the quote as it connotates a double negative]... And respect is a really big thing to me so like, whether you believe you're right or wrong, instead of like calling pro-life people like they... just want to keep people from having sex, there's like other reasons they're doing it...*

Both critiques call attention to Valenti's controversial, one-dimensional framing of complex and nuanced issues. We realize that Valenti may have overgeneralized and/or over-simplified issues as a rhetorical tool to get her point across at the expense of glossing over nuances deeply entrenched in academic feminist analysis. In addition to attending to oversimplified arguments, the book lends itself to take issue with the actual arguments that are put forth and map the arguments onto the wider cultural (mis)understandings.

Students offered important and thoughtful critiques and critical analyses of the text. We praised the RAs and encouraged them to continue to critique the information they are exposed to daily, both inside and outside the classroom in addition to their work on the research team. The non-intimidating and causal writing style of *FFF*, coupled with our discussions of the text facilitated by the faculty member and graduate research assistants, are examples of how Valenti's book can facilitate undergraduate RAs confidence in discovering and writing their critiques of

the text. The RAs were able to find aspects of the book they found useful and, simultaneously, identified other parts of the text that were problematic. This book has given them valuable experience with nuanced and critical arguments/reflections. This, in turn, helped RAs formulate critiques on the other assignments and projects they worked on throughout the semester and, it is assumed, will be used in all their coursework.

## Increased Confidence and Engagement with other Tasks

The undergraduate RAs' ability to offer a nuanced critique in their first assignment on the research team (i.e., reading and critiquing *FFF*) helped lay a foundation that fostered their critical analysis in other assignments over the semester. Most of the RAs described a shift in how they viewed feminists and defined feminism. These RAs' shifting definitions of feminism helped them notice larger themes related to women's objectification in the media. This was especially the case for RAs who were given the task to critically examine images and content of anti-feminist social media sites. The increased consciousness of inaccurate media-definitions/framings of feminism helped the RAs engage in more critical analysis when coding. One example from a reflection around this project:

*[The people posting have a] preoccupation with a made-up assumption that feminists body shame, double standards, attractive vs. unattractive women, what feminists are doing wrong/should be doing. Again, it seems that most people that identify as "anti-feminist" have misunderstood feminism*

*completely. A majority of these people claim that they are not feminist but promote equal rights. Another subgroup seems to believe that unattractive women use feminism to make them feel better about themselves.*

FFF provided a simple framework of understanding feminism which helped RAs identify themes of misunderstanding feminism while also endorsing values of feminism (e.g., promoting equality between men and women) in this other project.

We also used the analysis of FFF as a springboard to promote critical perspectives while broaching different topics. As one example, RAs read an academic journal article about Nike's *Girl Effect* (Switzer, 2013). Students were able to examine their reactions to readings as well as utilize logic and complex reasoning to address major concerns associated with different topics related to feminist thought and theory. For example, one RA explained:

*The [Nike] girl effect... objectifies girls and makes them "targets of consumption, intervention and remediation" (Switzer, 2013, p. 349) ... I see how objectified and sexualized the girls are, especially in the "The clock is ticking" video; the only feature on the graphic of the girl was her breasts! The girls in question are not treated as humans but as commodities in need of rescue.*

Notably, the *Girl Effect* campaign was meant to promote a sense of empowerment, however, our RAs were able to look past this façade and problematize the methods in which Nike objectified girls in the context of neoliberal politics and consumerism.

By starting each of the semesters with reading FFF and gaining experience in the critical examination of ideas, RAs reported that they were more confident in their critiques of other conceptual and

empirical readings and articles. FFF provided a form of scaffolding over the semester – RAs were able to learn strategies to critique a book that was easily accessible and full of critique-able concepts and then apply those skills to more nuanced and complicated concepts.

## Discussion

Our paper ventured to offer solutions to a couple of separate and widespread problems: (a) undervaluing and misunderstanding of feminism(s) among college students and (b) under-utilization of undergraduate students as participants in research teams, especially at large research universities. Using our research team as a site of analysis, we suggest that the use of a feminist popular press book can be a useful tool for feminist-identified faculty to reach and recruit undergraduate students to their research teams.

As mentioned previously, the book served as a way to help RAs understand the "basics" of feminist thought and to gain experience in critical analysis. The book was also beneficial for RAs who came in with a prior understanding of feminism. As one RA indicated:

*...It [The book, Full Frontal Feminism] was just a validation of things that I already believed ... But making them more cohesive. You know, giving me a cause to fight for that I never really felt... (long pause). I never felt drawn to any causes, any political causes before. It gives me kinda a purpose...*

FFF helped other RAs reignite a sense of direction within feminism or finding a cause that most resonates with their values and passions. Remarking on FFF's accessibility, another RA said:

*... it's a really good starting point for girls who like never like experienced [feminism]*

*at all like to just like dip their toes in and see like what exactly is feminism like it's not as scary as what people think it is...*

Several RAs shared their copies of *FFF* with their friends and family members. One RA provided the following response to the prompt, “Other reactions/comments you want to share?”:

*I did have a question about the FFF book...How long do we have to keep those? I have been discussing it with my roommate, who I definitely, although she doesn't know it yet, believe is a feminist! She mentioned she would like to read after I was through. May I let her read it as well?*

Students would frequently discuss their experiences of sharing their book and discussions with others to process during research meetings. Many RAs shared how they felt more confident in disrupting misunderstandings of feminism among their peers in classes and with their friends and family. Peer-to-peer mentoring can be powerful. A recent article indicated the value of feminist graduate students mentoring other feminists in their teaching (Madden, 2016). In addition to peers, some RAs shared the book with older family members. One RA told us: “I enjoyed this book so much and will be sharing it with my mother!”

Additionally, the ways in which RAs described sharing this book with their friends, roommates, and family members, might distantly map onto the initial purpose of consciousness-raising groups from the early second wave of the feminist movement. Historically, consciousness-raising groups allowed members of oppressed groups to connect with others of similar experiences and discuss how aspects of personal dissatisfactions and difficulties are attributable to social forces (Firestone & Koedt, 1970). The phenomena of

wanting to share the book is important considering misconceptions surrounding feminism – and something as simple as this text can be used as a catalyst for spreading awareness of feminist ideology and diminishing false or distorted understandings of feminism. Coupled with reflections, guidance, and other feminist readings, *FFF* may assist college students in gaining a more intricate and dynamic perspective of feminism and its history. Engaging in provocative discussions pertaining to feminism are necessary as college students are overexposed to negative and damaging media espousing misunderstandings of feminist thought. Popular texts, such as *FFF*, may provide an accessible starting point.

Based on our experiences, feminist educators who wish to use this book for their own students would not have to assign the entire book to be effective. Using specific chapters from the text would likely have a similar effect while also highlighting particular issues educators want to focus on. For example, the chapter “Beauty Cult” identifies issues of women’s bodies and larger social structures that promote the “thin ideal” in a way that is accessible to readers not familiar with these concepts. Some RAs found the chapter on pop culture especially compelling:

*My favorite chapter was chapter three: “Pop Culture Gone Wild.” It was extremely relatable because I knew exactly what Valenti was talking about – how important it is to be attractive, the lengths women will go to achieve this perceived attractiveness, and all of the insane contradictions women are supposed to adhere to (such as “be a virgin, but be sexy”). All of these standards are an unquestioned part of society. Some people believe that it's just the way things are. What I loved about this chapter is that*

*Valenti described it as what it really is: unattainable, completely unfair, and nonsense! A woman can't live her life if she's so worried about being what she's "supposed" to be.*

For two men on the research team, both expressed that their favorite chapter was "Boys Do Cry." As one RA reflected:

*My favorite chapter was chapter ten "Boys Do Cry." I liked that the author pointed out how men suffer from sexism too and that men are needed/welcome in most feminist circles. I appreciated her pointing out the groups of men who are fighting for equality for both sexes.*

## Limitations

Despite our overwhelmingly positive experience in using this text with our RAs, using *FFF* as an educational tool within a feminist research context does have its limitations. First, our RAs were self-selected to engage in gender research. This may predispose this particular group to be more receptive to feminist analysis, even without prior knowledge or experience with feminism. Students may have also been "feminist curious" when beginning their work with us. Additionally, RAs wrote reflections that they knew would be reviewed by the faculty member and graduate student researchers. Undoubtedly, this impacted how students wrote their reflections, even though RAs did not receive an evaluation based on their specific reflections (they received credit for completing the assignment).

## Conclusion

As feminist educators, we hope that by exposing students to feminism in intimate, hands-on learning environments,

students might be willing to claim a feminist identity for themselves and find ways to incorporate a feminist understanding in their academic and personal lives. Our "experiment" in utilizing a feminist popular press book to engage undergraduate RAs was successful for our feminist research team. We were able to engage our RAs with feminist thought and foster critical analysis of feminist texts. As we discussed throughout this article, as a team we were able to use the book as a tool for helping students reconsider their understandings of feminism and raise important questions and critiques about the book itself. This, in turn, helped students gain confidence in their abilities to engage in critical thinking which promoted critical thought in other assignments. As educators, our contribution remains in the hope that other feminist educators consider utilizing and experimenting with *FFF* as a method of introducing undergraduate students and research assistants to feminist thought and providing opportunities for students to engage in critical analysis.

We leave the readers with two more excerpts from our RAs in hopes that other feminist scholars will consider using this text to help their own students and undergraduate research assistants critically engage with feminism:

*I am really glad you gave us this book to read. I feel I would not have picked it up and read it otherwise, so I am extremely thankful that I did. I also realized I am a hardcore feminist and a lot of issues that I was not even aware of really bother me about our government and mindset as a whole. I realized I need to work on my way of thinking as well. I am a part of the path of least resistance because I was raised in a world that is man-centered, but the more I become aware of the situation the more I can*

try to change it to equality for all genders and sexes.

*The more someone knows and understands...feminism, the more they realize how unfair our culture is (and other cultures around the world) and (to be honest) it makes me upset, and angry...I feel like I'm being cheated in life... Ignorance can be bliss, but then I have to remind myself that nothing will change for future generations if we live in our bliss ignorance.*

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