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“Welcome to the FEMINIST CULT”: Building a Feminist Community of Practice on Tumblr

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“Welcome to the FEMINIST CULT”: Building a Feminist Community of Practice on Tumblr

Abstract

Over the course of the last twenty years, the internet has become a powerful tool for the mobilization of social movements because of its ease of access, its allowance for greater control of organization and communication, and its rapid spread and dissemination of ideas. Tumblr, a micro-blogging site that is comprised of 227.6 million blogs and 106.3 billion posts by March 2015, is one of the most significant locations of social activism online. In recent years, Tumblr has become a platform for highly involved feminist dialogue because of the ability for like-minded users to follow and reblog posts regarding feminist issues and content. The goal of this research is to use textual analysis to uncover how feminism is acting as a rallying point and space of community building that spans intersections of race, nationality, class, gender, sexuality, etc., and how that rallying point is being created through a live-stream collective conscious. I do not contend that Tumblr is a perfect and unproblematic feminist utopia. Instead, the purpose of this paper is to illustrate that Tumblr is ultimately a hopeful space for discussion that has the potential for real social change. Thus, although negativity towards feminism is propagated through the anonymity of the internet, Tumblr has become both a location for feminist “world building” as a feminist community of practice. Through this platform comes the reshaping of feminism for the internet generation through female-to-female positivity, education and consciousness-raising, solidarity formed through the humor of ironic misandry, the increased importance and awareness of intersectionality and community reactions against anti-feminist content.

Keywords

Tumblr, Tumblr Feminism, Internet Feminism, Social Media

Disciplines

Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Gender and Sexuality | Other Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Social Media | Women's Studies

Comments

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Introduction

Over the course of the last twenty years, the internet has become a powerful tool for the mobilization of social movements because of its ease of access, its allowance for greater control of organization and communication, and its rapid spread and dissemination of ideas. The internet has revolutionized the way in which people interact, and has heralded the creation of new platforms for social and political dialogue, expanding the social political world into a virtual space and mode of communication. Tumblr, a micro-blogging site that is comprised of 227.6 million blogs and 106.3 billion posts by March 2015, is one of the most significant locations of political commentary, activism, and community on the internet because of users' dedication to social justice and political correctness.

Tumblr is a space of free expression, allowing users to post text, photo, quote, link, chat, audio and video posts that are either original to them or reblogged from other users. A user may “like” or “reblog” posts from other blog so that it appears on their own blog, giving users the freedom to add their own comments and content to the post while source credits still given to the original post creator. In this way, Tumblr is a location in which both identity and community formation takes places; content is reblogged, transformed, and attached to a personal space (the blog) that is still connected and

relatable to the larger community (the Tumblr archive and dashboard). When a Tumblr user “follows” other blogs, all of the content being posted on the followed blogs will appear in the user’s dashboard, making it simple for users to narrow down their interests, and to reblog and comment on content they find relevant to their lives, identities, or social internet communities. Once a user is involved in a community (by following and being followed by other members of that informal interest group) anything a user blogs, reblogs, or comments on can will be seen by their followers to be reblogged. Through this transference of content, dialogue is created and communities are built.

In recent years, Tumblr has become a platform for highly involved feminist dialogue because of the ability for like-minded users to follow and reblog posts regarding feminist issues and content. Tumblr is not the only site where feminist debates are taking place; Twitter also has a vibrant and evolving feminist conversation. However, Tumblr’s structure allows for a more in-depth dialogue and therefore a stronger sense of community than the 140-word limit posts of Twitter. In an MIT Technology Review of Tumblr, Yi Chang, et al. write that:

Tumblr, though initially proposed for blogging, yields a significantly different network structure from traditional blogosphere. Tumblr’s network is much denser and better connected. Close to 29.03% of connections on Tumblr are reciprocate, while blogosphere has only 3%. The average distance between two users in Tumblr is 4.7, which is roughly half of that in blogosphere. (Chang, et al. 8)

Tumblr exists in a median space between Twitter (short, less comprehensive content that easily accessible and shareable) and conventional blogging (long, high quality posts with a smaller and insular audience), making it a perfect location for “feminist ‘world building’” (“Tumblr Feminism” 1). A recent *Washington Post* article, “Move over, Reddit: Tumblr is the new front page of the Internet,” contends that:

Tumblr is a bit of a standout in that space: It doesn’t belong to any one genre conclusively. The site began as a multimedia blogging platform — a place where users could share text, photos, songs and links. But since Tumblr is structured heavily around “following” other bloggers and sharing their work, it quickly evolved into a vast, unmapped network of niche communities. (Dewey)

The interconnectedness of Tumblr represented in both the statistical analysis of Chang, et al. and the Dewey’s article demonstrates the significance and legitimacy of Tumblr as a community building site. A large portion of political and social conversation is now occurring online, and Tumblr is a major part of that cultural discourse.

My research delves into the feminist community on Tumblr in order to understand how the site is used as both a tool for education and as a place of identity creation for a younger generation of feminists. When I refer to this “younger generation” or “internet generation,” I am referring to the largest age demographic represented on Tumblr, mostly U.S. youth from the ages 13-24. I believe that this demographic has been highly influenced by the feminist wave on the internet. Thus, this research project will provide insight for those previously unaware of the internet feminism movement and analysis on the implications of such a movement on the social climate. The rapid growth of feminism

on Tumblr is groundbreaking in that it has developed within the past three years, and therefore is an untouched area of research. Learning from a new, electronic form of feminism, we can begin to understand how feminism is being shaped for the modern day.

In the wave of feminist activism online, there are inevitable growing pains. The internet is an entirely new space to navigate, meaning that feminism is being translated into the words and experiences of the internet generation. This feminist “world-building” in turn means that feminism is being portrayed, shaped and used in revolutionary ways through Tumblr content, creating new locations for community, identity formation, and dialogue. In other words, Tumblr is a community of practice, in which the repetition of actions— on the internet, actions included shared phrases, humor, modes of communication, etc— creates a community through the process of “collective learning.” There are many examples of this community of practice and “world-building” in the evolution of an accessible feminist rhetoric being used to shape feminist thought within the Tumblr community. Also, the exaggerated anonymous backlash against the online feminist movement illustrates that feminism is significant enough to cause stirring in the larger internet community.

The goal of this research is to use textual analysis to uncover how feminism is acting as a rallying point and space of community building that spans intersections of race, nationality, class, gender, sexuality, etc., and how that rallying point is being created through a live-stream collective conscious. I do not contend that Tumblr is a perfect and unproblematic feminist utopia. Instead, the purpose of this paper is to illustrate that Tumblr is ultimately a hopeful space for discussion that has the potential

for real social change. Thus, although negativity towards feminism is propagated through the anonymity of the internet, Tumblr has become both a location for feminist “world building” as a feminist community of practice. Through this platform comes the reshaping of feminism for the internet generation through female-to-female positivity, education and consciousness-raising, solidarity formed through the humor of ironic misandry, the increased importance and awareness of intersectionality and community reactions against anti-feminist content.

Methods

The internet is a constantly evolving source of information and dialogue, and although that evolution allows for a text that is always current and relevant, this relevance means that research into Tumblr content can easily become outdated. The speed at which information is spread through the internet is especially important to Tumblr because, “[c]ompared with Twitter, Tumblr is more vibrant and faster in terms of reblog and interactions. Tumblr reblog has a strong bias toward recency. Approximately 3/4 of the first reblogs occur within the first hour and 95.84% appear within one day” (Chang et al. 9). Because of the speed at which the internet operates, it is important for research to be done in a relatively small window of time in order to have an accurate representation of the text being created at the time of my research. My methodology will reflect the necessity of capturing the Tumblr feminist community during a specific frame of time, essentially freezing the content on a separate blog to save for the textual analysis portion of my research.

The structure of Tumblr is more complicated than other social media sites because Tumblr is a creative community intended to celebrate content over personal

statuses. Tumblr is the overarching site in which I will be conducting research, however, in order to narrow down my field of observation, I will be using three “tags” within the Tumblr archives. A Tumblr tag is an electronic label that users attach to posts with the intent to sort that post into two places: a page in their personal blog dedicated to all posts the user has reblogged with that tag (*username.tumblr.com/tagged/tag_title*) and the overarching Tumblr page that contains all posts from all users with that tag (*www.tumblr.com/search/tag+title*). Within the Tumblr tag search, users have the choice to view either the most recent or the most popular posts, and to filter based on the post type (text, photo, video, etc.).

For my research, I reblogged the first 150 most popular posts from three separate Tumblr tags— feminism, sexism, and women’s rights— over the course of three days. In my initial research plan, I intended to reblog the first 250 posts in each tag in one day. However, Tumblr has a post limit of 200 reblogs per day, so in order to work around that limitation I spread out my process into three separate reblogging sessions. I felt that 150 posts per tag was a large enough sample to capture the feminist dialogue occurring online.

The choice of the tags “feminism,” “sexism,” and “women’s rights,” was specific to my research goals. Through my own involvement in the Tumblr feminist community, I knew that the feminism tag is the most charged, active space for feminist discussion on Tumblr and therefore the most important site for my project. The sexism tag has less interference from anti-feminist blogs because it generally contains posts that cite examples of sexism in users’ everyday lives, creating a site for solidarity and community. The last tag, women’s rights, I assumed would be more activist-based

information that I thought would indicate how the internet affects change in the outside world. I intended the three tags to give a more holistic sense of the feminist movement on Tumblr, but while narrowing down which posts that I will discuss in this paper, I found that I drew mainly from the feminism tag—with exception of the consciousness-raising section of this paper, for which I pulled many of the posts from the women's rights tag. Overall, the content of the feminism tag offers a better account of the everyday interactions of feminism on Tumblr, which will be best for understanding the creation of a feminist community of practice online.

To save these posts, I created a separate research Tumblr account into which I reblogged the posts, which gave me the ability to tag and sort posts in way that aided my later analysis. The tagging system of Tumblr is similar to “coding” methods of research. Because a user can adhere multiple tags to one post, and because that post can be reblogged with the same tags from other users, there were overlapping posts within a tag and within all three tags, but I have elected to ignore this repetition because the number of “notes” (or the number of interactions Tumblr users have had with the post through likes or reblogs) will indicate the level of importance a post has had on the Tumblr sphere. Once I reblogged the posts, they are static on my blog and any derivations of that post from other users will not be shown in my archive besides the number notes. This helps to counteract the constant stream of new information by essentially freezing the content at one point in time.

Once I gathered the posts, I sorted them by thematic links including female-to-female positivity, education and consciousness-raising, solidarity through ironic misandry, intersectionality, and anti-feminist commentary. This paper will navigate the

implications these themes have on the creation of feminist community on Tumblr borrowing from Fredricka Thelandersson's theoretical framework in her master's thesis, "Tumblr Feminism: Third Wave Subjectivities in Practice," which is one of the sole scholarly works on the feminist movement on Tumblr. Thelandersson uses post-feminist and third-wave discourses to analyze the impact of the internet on individuality in identities yet cohesivity through gender, but I also want to consider poststructuralist epistemology in my work because of its emphasis on the decentralization of the author. The positionality of the author of a Tumblr post is not important for the post to be relatable to other users, creating feminist dialogue in near-anonymity. The internet offers the transnational space for which Judith Butler advocates: "[i]t is crucial to understand the workings of gender in global contexts, in transnational formations, not only to see what problems are posed for the term 'gender' but to combat false forms of universalism that service a tacit or explicit cultural imperialism" (*Undoing Gender* 8). The importance of feminist dialogue in the larger Tumblr sphere is not reliant upon the blogs or identities and nationalities of users producing that content; instead, it is the response and interaction others have to that feminist content that becomes a commentary on online feminist thought. A remarkable amount of notes on a post will most likely indicate that other users find the source to be useful, entertaining, or stimulating enough to reblog or like.

Through the themes I have identified within the sampling of feminist Tumblr content, I will analyze how the community interacts within itself through dialogue or shows of solidarity as well as the backlash to the rise of internet feminism. The reasoning behind using textual analysis is that Tumblr is a mainly content-driven site,

and all contributions to the text and dialogue created is from users themselves. It would be possible to use surveys and interviews, however, the genuine ideas and information flowing through the Tumblr community is enough for me to get a solid basis on the rise of feminism for the younger generation through new platforms of communication.

The issue of ethics in research on internet content is new, so concrete guidelines for how to deal with these ethical dilemmas do not yet exist. For my project, I will be treating posts as public statements because the content has been tagged and posted in a public forum that can be easily accessed with the intention of being seen and reblogged. I will reference the original poster and the commenters on the post through their usernames, which will allow for anonymity yet continue to give credit to the work of others. Because I am not analyzing the work of a few bloggers, instead treating the Tumblr feminist movement as a community and sphere, I will not be contacting users for permission to use their work. In the Tumblr "Terms of Service," the organization makes it clear that by posting content, a Subscriber "agree[s] that this license includes the right for Tumblr to make all publicly-posted Content available to third parties selected by Tumblr, so that those third parties can syndicate and/or analyze such Content on other media and services" ("Terms of Service"). Legally, my research is not infringing on any copyright or content laws because that content is public domain. It is important to note that any quotations taken from Tumblr posts will be quoted directly and with no change in grammar or capitalization in order to represent the Tumblr dialect produced in the content.

Female Positivity

The first theme that I traced through the Tumblr feminism tags was that of female positivity: in which women are assuring other women that their existence and feelings are valid. Also included in this theme are posts which reinforce body positivity and revalue femininity. One of the posts that I reblogged included a text post by thegeekyblonde, who writes “welcome to the FEMINIST CULT, today we’ll talk about terrifying topics such as BEING NICE TO YOURSELF and PROPER SEX EDUCATION” (thegeekyblonde). The feminist community on Tumblr is often self-aware about its nature, as exemplified in this quote. The author of this post is conscious that regardless of the “terrifying” reputation the “FEMINIST CULT” has, the content of the site is often unthreatening and should not be considered to be something revolutionary. thegeekyblonde is commenting on the positivity of the feminist movement as well as the necessity for the promotion of simple life lessons that are not taught to people (specifically women) in everyday life.

The feminist posts on Tumblr are often used to reaffirm female life experiences and to create a space without judgement. Although Tumblr has not become a perfect, non-judgmental space, Tumblr users have created a culture that celebrates the non-essentialist, individual female identity. Much like Helene Cixous’ belief that “woman must write woman” (Cixous 1877), Tumblr’s accessibility for women to project their stories fights against the idea of the “universal” woman. The feminist community of practice on Tumblr emphasizes that all women are different and experience different things. For example, Tumblr emphasizes and teaches about non-binary identities, genders, and sexualities so that other life experiences of feminists will also be

reaffirmed by feminist posts. The most notable example of this shift from binary thinking is the common use of “vagina owners” when talking about menstruation and sex issues in order to include trans and non-binary members of the community.¹

The reaffirmation of feminist experiences in Tumblr posts also creates a space for a user’s identity creation. The concept of identity creation is vital to understanding Tumblr’s use as a creative and expressive platform. Kornhaber Brown of the PBS Idea Channel applied the idea of communities of practice to the connection of internet dialects with the creation of online communities (“Are There Internet Dialects?”). Communities of practice are the foundation for identity creation within a platform like Tumblr because the repeated actions, or repeated use of language, creates an insular community of people with a common set of beliefs. The three parts of a community of practice are the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger 45). In the case of Tumblr, the domain is the website, the community includes the users who participate in feminist dialogue, and the practice is the creation and reblogging of feminist texts. The identity formation involved in a community of practice is seen specifically in the way users interact with each other as *feminists*, letting others define their feminism in self-expressive ways.

Brown argues that communities of practice explain the way in which website users create and share dialects with one another, seen in the recently popular use of terms like “vagina owners.” The existence of different internet dialects contains implications of those dialects on gender practices online. Tumblr has a dialect that promotes identity formation in a more inclusive, non-binary and non-normative

¹ I realize that these terms are problematic in that they essentialize all iterations of trans* experiences under one term, but I use “trans” for lack of a better term and its popular use on Tumblr at this time.

environment; for example, members of the Tumblr feminist community as well as other social justice groups use terms like 'cis-gender' extensively in order to de-stabilize assumptions of gender identity.

Through the practice of creating female solidarity online, communities are being forged to create a tolerant space in which people can practice their identities. In Thelandersson's thesis, she points out that the everyday feminism of "feminist self-care" is often a form of resistance against social convention, writing that:

taking care of one's needs, and developing a love for oneself, functions as resistance to a cultural norm that demands of young women to conform to body ideals and social conventions, and systematically imposes shame on the queered, colored and disabled body. By refusing to internalize the societal rejection of their identities, Tumblr feminists add many individual resistances to create a larger opposition to the hetero, capitalist, able-bodied, white patriarchy that is doing the rejection. ("Tumblr Feminism" 15-16)

The use of Tumblr feminist spaces to reject patriarchal authority, as well as other normative, hegemonic power structures, is intrinsic to the feminist community online because Tumblr attempts to be, and for the most part is, a safe-space for identity performance. Even the label as a Tumblr feminist can be considered a performance because Tumblr's feminist community is open about feminist thoughts and acts in a culture that stigmatizes the name. Being a feminist is an act of resistance that Tumblr feminists celebrate. Take for example Figure 1, a post by floralpunkskelton, formerly writing under the username soybeanbaby, along with the responses by other Tumblr

users.

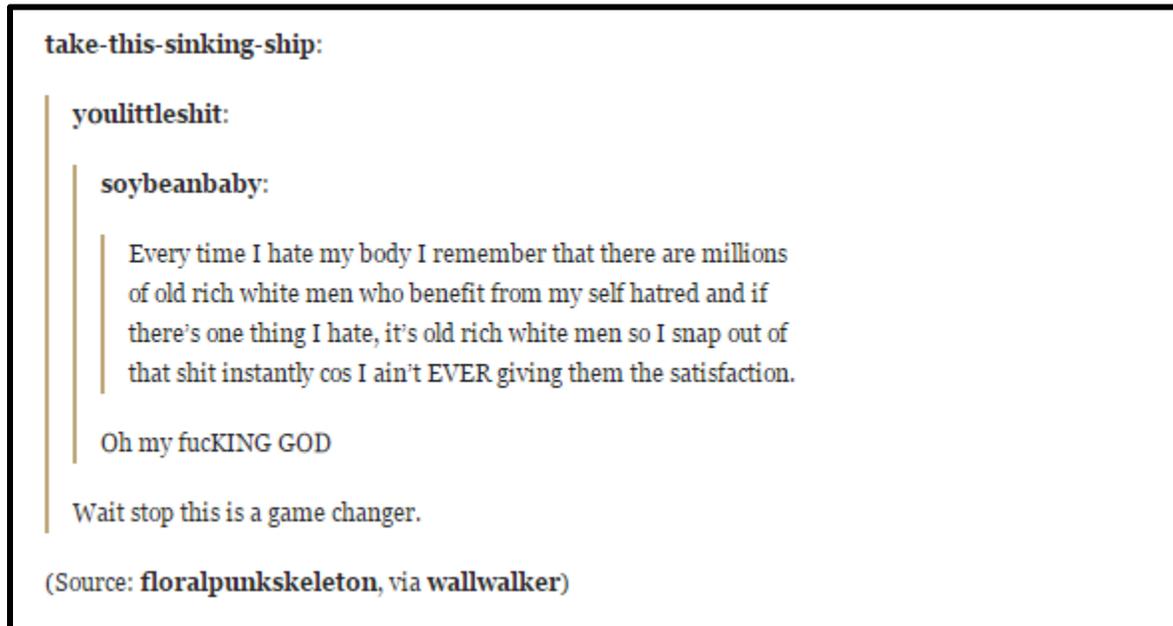


Figure 1: Screenshot of “Every time I hate my body...” Source: floralpunkskelton

This post overlaps with the theme of ironic misandry that I will analyze later in the paper, but it is useful for understanding how female empowerment and the reinforcement of female-to-female positivity can also be an act of resistance against societal power structures. Although this post was written as a personal affirmation (as first-person narrative: “Every time I hate my body I remember”) instead of as an encouragement specifically meant for another person (a second-person discussion “Every time *you* hate *your* body”), the author posted this content to be of help to other people. It is a non-patronizing statement of fact intended to call attention to the suppression of female confidence for capitalistic gains. The significant aspect of this post is that empowerment comes through education, which can be seen in the reactions of users youlittleshit and take-this-sinking-ship. Not only that, but because of the first-person address of this post, it is the responsibility of the reader to realize the depth of that resistance; users are not

being told what to think by other feminists, they are shown an alternative way of viewing body image issues that users can either accept or reject. Education through Tumblr is not mandatory, but the feminist community spreads accessible feminist thought in a way that forces readers to rethink their position on the mundane.

The feminist Tumblr trend of enacting resistance through female-to-female positivity can also be found in the rejection of stigmatized femininity and reclamation of feminism for women who fit stereotypical gender roles. In other words, Tumblr is a space for the practical application of Butler's post-structuralist writing, where the singular concept of the 'woman' is deconstructed and rejected (*Gender Trouble 2*). Instead of endorsing the ideas of female essentialism, which contends that all women have the same attributes, life experiences, and causes to fight for, Tumblr feminism seems to be breaking down the social construction of what it means to be a woman. Essentialism as an idea and also a movement building tactic was broadly used in first- and second-wave feminist activism as a means of creating female solidarity and collective action; by the third-wave of feminism, including feminist post-structuralist thought, the concept of intersectionality and a focus on the importance of individual lived experiences becomes the focal point of movement building (Crenshaw 1242).

Because Tumblr is a community of practice, the development of the feminist community relies upon the cycling and transference of ideas from one user to the next. This collective learning is applicable to many other aspects of the feminist community on Tumblr, but the trend of female-to-female positivity is one of the strongest examples of shared knowledge online. Some users are practicing feminists with educational backgrounds at the undergraduate or graduate level, as seen in Thelandersson's

research. However, due to the average age of Tumblr users, it is more likely that many of the members are learning and experiencing feminist theory through its practical application in dialogue and posts on the website. This means that while the ideas of third-wave feminism may not always be explicitly outlined in Tumblr posts, a collective understanding of the post-structuralist feminist principles exists within the content. For example, Figure 2 discusses how stereotypical femininity is not inherently linked or disconnected from the definition of feminism. The idea being rejected is that there is

only one definition of a feminist. This text also implies that there are multiple ways to be a woman and all of them are correct. Although this post navigates specifically through the bias against femininity within some feminist circles, the way in which valuing femininity and support for women's decisions of self-presentation and identity is an integral aspect of the individualism of feminist post-structuralist ideology.

Overall, the support women show each other on Tumblr demonstrates a willingness to expand normal conventions of femininity and definitions of feminism.

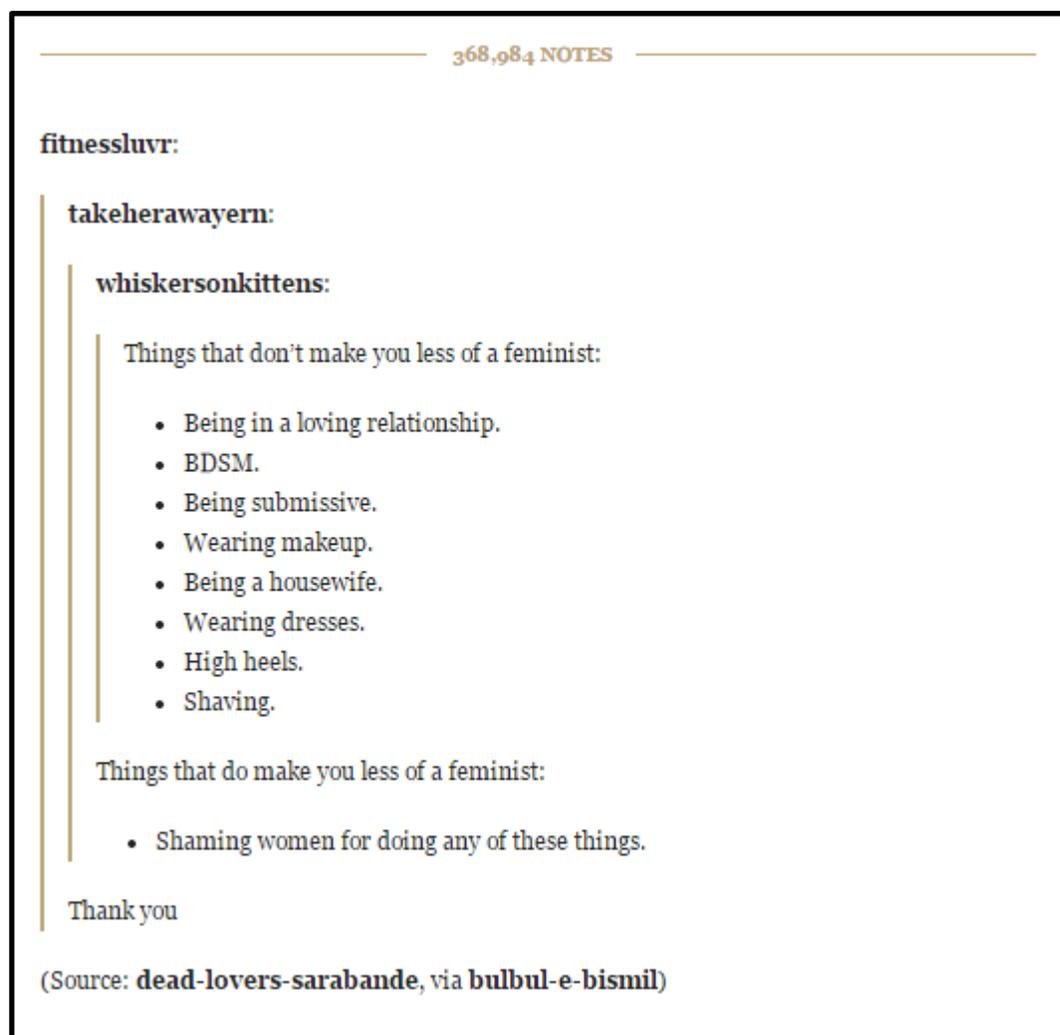


Figure 2: Screenshot of "Things that don't make you less of a feminist" Source: [dead-lovers-sarabande](#)

Tumblr users have adopted and performed the belief that women and feminists need to accept each other's differences. While these differences make it difficult for social cohesion in movement building and organizing, the practical application of feminist theories is possible on the internet. On Tumblr, a user does not have an explicit gender or sex until they forge that identity online. As a result, the community has created a practice of inclusion and consciousness-raising. The collective learning inherent in a community of practice is found in the informal education offered in the Tumblr community. Feminist members use Tumblr as a way of spreading information about the feminist movement and educating others on important information that other users should be aware of.

Education and Consciousness-Raising

Tumblr, unlike some other spaces on the internet, is built in a way that encourages education and consciousness-raising because of its almost immediate ability to spread information through communities in the action of reblogging. In fact, one of the most notable advantages Tumblr has over other social media sites, specifically over Twitter, is that it allows unlimited post lengths. The flexibility of the post medium allows more dialogue, more modes of expression, and a greater ability to use the site as a location for consciousness-raising. Feminist consciousness-raising traditionally has been a grassroots-led movement, with women leading the spread of feminist ideas to other women from the ground level. In support of understanding Tumblr as a site of consciousness-raising, I will pull from Kathie Sarachild, who writes that:

From the beginning of consciousness-raising ... there has been no one method of raising consciousness. What really counts in consciousness-raising are not methods, but results. The only 'methods' of consciousness-raising are essentially principles. They are the basic radical political principles of going to the original sources, both historic and personal, going to people—women themselves, and going to experience for theory and strategy. (Sarachild 76)

Although the internet is not as legitimate of a source for education as academic institutions, the internet has become a consciousness-raising tool for feminists to return to grassroots organizing. The first step towards successful movement building is “to persuade significant numbers of people that the issues they [the organizers] care about are indeed urgent, that alternatives are possible, and that the constituencies they seek to mobilize can in fact be invested with agency” (Meyer 46-47). In other words, people need to feel a sense of urgency and efficacy before action can be taken, meaning that the constant creation of feminist posts is a staple of movement building: it gives Tumblr users the knowledge and rhetoric to face culturally ingrained sexism and also the ability to take action through advocating those posts on their blogs. Consciousness-raising, along with education, has been revolutionized through the creation of the internet; the commodification and demystification of knowledge through the internet has led a rise in grassroots organizing through the online feminist movement.

The use of Tumblr and Twitter for movement building and organization is an incredible example of how technology has changed the face of feminism in the internet generation. However, instead of considering online feminism as a fourth-wave, I

propose that the internet has molded third-wave ideologies into a new medium of communication and into a new location where all voices have equal opportunities to being heard. Tumblr specifically has become a community and culture that emphasizes the spread of information through technology. One of the posts that I found in my research, seen in Figure 3, includes a mixture of terminology taken from theoretical texts [“problematic,” “internalized [sexism],” “dismantling power systems”] and a Tumblr-specific dialect that makes the terminology commonplace and accessible [“your fave is problematic,” “unlearning internalized bullshit”].

This post is significant in understanding how information is processed through

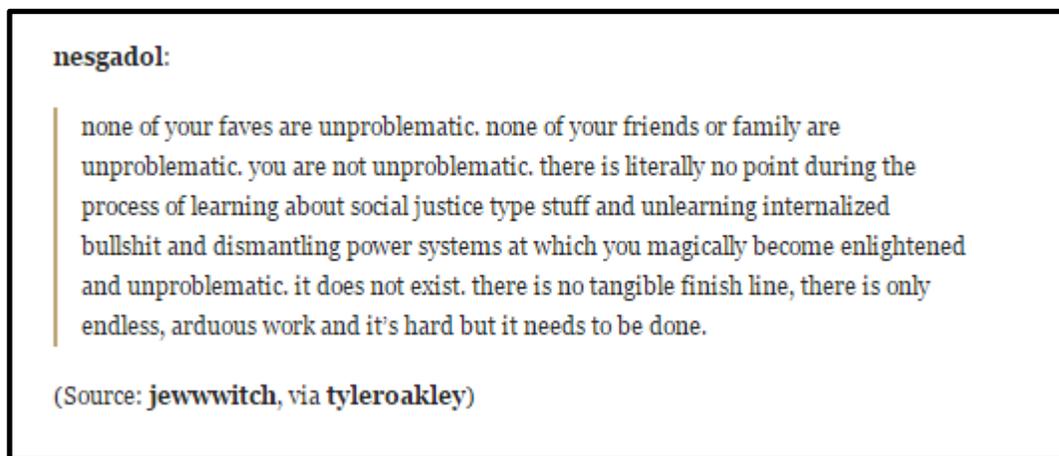


Figure 3: Screenshot of “none of your faves are unproblematic” Source: jewwwitch

everyday language on the internet in order to make the dissemination of ideas an easier process. Instead of focusing on making all posts academic in nature, Tumblr has become a space where low-quality writing can still produce high-quality ideas in a short amount of time. In Figure 3, [jewwwitch](#) is spinning a response to a popular Tumblr blog

and trend: “your fav is problematic.” This blog is dedicated to pointing out the non-inclusive or “problematic” things a celebrity has done or said publicly. The purpose of “your fav is problematic” is to counteract the glorification of celebrities who are just human, although the blog was probably created with more animosity than I credit it. In any case, jewwitch reacts against the idea that people can be “unproblematic” because being a socially aware and politically correct person is not easy; there are too many power structures and enculturated biases that we need to work through individually on a daily basis. The consciousness-raising that jewwitch advocates illustrates both a deep understanding of the feminist process and the dissemination of theoretical terminology into the Tumblr feminist dialect. There is an accessibility in Tumblr posts that they may not be present in feminist scholarship, which makes the internet a powerful consciousness-raising tool. Although, admittedly, there are issues in some posts because of the lack of a peer-review system involved in academic work, the Tumblr community itself acts as a peer-review system that checks the spread of inaccurate or harmful ideas. Moreover, the dialogue created through this community peer-review system strengthens the feminist activism online because “call-out” culture necessitates the active involvement in the feminist sphere.

The system of pseudo-peer-reviewing on Tumblr is called a “call-out culture,” where users will police the posts that they feel do not align with Tumblr’s need for inclusivity. “Call-out” culture can be positive in its system of checks and balances because it derails the spread of misinformation, but this policing is generally assumed to be negative due to the aggression from which “calling-out” stems. While “call-out”

culture is a double-edged sword, it is ultimately a practice of consciousness-raising partly because of the publicity that stems from the arguments, but mostly because the internet is made into a forum for debate and education. For example, in 2014 feminism on the internet has become a widely discussed issue in major news sources like Time.com because of large, public, and layered disputes over the “Women Against Feminism” Tumblr blog. “Women Against Feminism” is a collaborative Tumblr that posted submitted pictures of women holding signs explaining “I don’t need feminism because _____.” This blog made headway all over the internet, from social media to news websites, transforming from arguments on relevance of feminism into more detail, complex discussions on intersectionality, which I will focus on later on this paper. While these arguments take place across many internet spheres—Tumblr, Twitter, news sources— feminism is the main focus of the articles, raising awareness for the importance of feminism in the modern day and opening up new avenues of consciousness-raising through the application of feminist theories in an open and accessible way.

Man-Hating as Solidarity

One of the main tools for feminist organizing on Tumblr is humorous misandry, or man-hating. The fear of man-hating, or the belief that all feminists want to put women in a position of power over men, has been a popular reaction against feminism since the inception of the women's rights movement. The stereotype of the man-hating feminist is

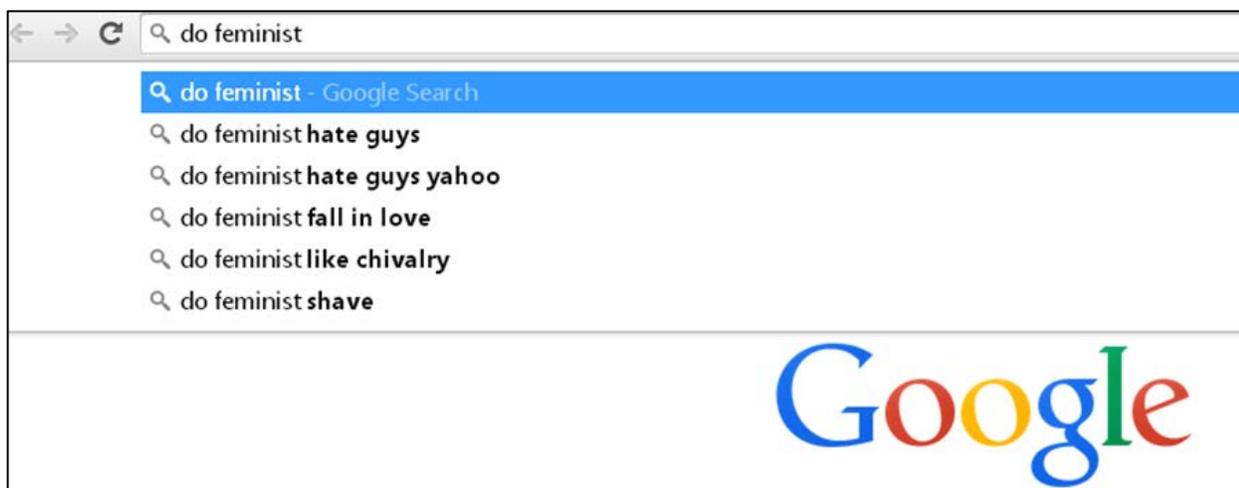


Figure 6: Screenshot of Google search "do feminist..."

still prominent today, as seen in the following Google search recommendations:

The google search bar recommends text based off of the most common phrases associated with the words used, where "[t]he search queries that you see as part of Autocomplete are a reflection of the search activity of users and the content of web pages" (support.google.com). The fact that "do feminist[s] hate guys" is the first Autocomplete recommendation on April 1st, 2015 demonstrates that the stereotype of man-hating feminists is well-known and highly discussed.

While some feminist content on Tumblr is created to dispel harmful conceptions of feminism, the Tumblr feminist community also participates in an ironic exaggeration of those stereotypes. Users actually bond over a shared antagonism towards men, fully

playing into the man-hating stereotype. Sarah Begley argues that “ironic misandry”—a term coined by Amanda Hess from Slate.com— is counterproductive for the acceptance of feminism online, yet Begley does not address the community involvement and solidarity created through a shared emotional response to hegemonic masculinity. The idea that feminism should appeal to men in order to gain public opinion and support is logical; for the movement to be a success, it is not practical to alienate half of the nation from your cause, especially when men need to change the most for social change to happen. But the humor of ironic misandry actually acts as a practice of female solidarity. In Verta Taylor’s, “Bringing Emotions into the Study of Feminist Organizations,” she argues that emotions are a powerful aspect of feminist organizing because feminism brings recognition and affirmation of emotion and lived experiences. Taylor writes that “[m]an-hating, which J. Levine (1992) defines as the ‘volatile admixture of pity, contempt, disgust, envy, alienation, fear and rage at men’ that women feel, is a powerful motivation for feminist protest” (Taylor 228) but also that “[t]o suggest that emotions play a part in mobilizing women to participate in feminist organizations does not negate the body of scholarship on the women’s movement that emphasizes the instrumental and strategic nature of feminist activism” (Taylor 228). There is legitimacy in the misandry women utilize online to express their anger at structural inequalities not only because it is a tool for activism but because feminism is based on female expression against oppression. Taylor’s argument that feminism turns woman’s fear into anger to mobilize a movement sheds light on the practical use of humor against men; ironic misandry subverts masculine power and ridicules gender roles. Although man-hating may seem

juvenile or counter-productive, we can also understand the use of humor and ironic misandry online as a rebellious act and one that creates solidarity between women.

In Amanda Hess' 2014 Slate.com article, "The Rise of the Ironic Man-Hater," she argues that ironic misandry is more of an expression of the ridiculousness of female oppression in the modern day than it is an expression of actual hate. The clear difference between ironic man-hating and the man-hating of the 1960s radical feminists² is that the misandry of Tumblr is written without any intention of actual harm. Hess argues that ironic misandry is a new trend online because:

[it] is more than just a sarcastic retort to the haters; it's an in-joke that like-minded feminists tell even when their critics aren't looking, as a way to build solidarity within the group. 'A lot of young feminists who I follow on Instagram and love this shit are teenagers,' Valenti says... 'The feminism they grew up with was the feminism of snarky blog posts, and this is a natural extension of that'" (Hess).

The snarky blog posts that Hess refers to are most likely the Tumblr posts that started the ironic misandry that fuels the Tumblr feminist community, considering the widespread use of Tumblr posts on BuzzFeed and other humor websites online. What Tumblr offers to that ironic misandry that other sites do not provide is the ability to quickly add to a post and reaffirm the dialogue and solidarity happening in the thousands of reblogs.

² Such as the writings of Valeria Solanas:
Solanas, Valerie. SCUM Manifesto. N.p.: Phoenix, 1988. SCUM Manifesto by Valerie Solanas. Web. 7 May 2015.

For example, Figure 7 illustrates an openly antagonist critique of “straight boys” because of their inability to show women respect as compared to queer girls faced with the same situation. The author of the post connects masculinity with being “weak and pathetic” because of their inability to control themselves in situations where women can easily maintain control which is a direct attack on gender norms and an inversion of power. floozys reblogs herself and comments on the outrageous response the internet

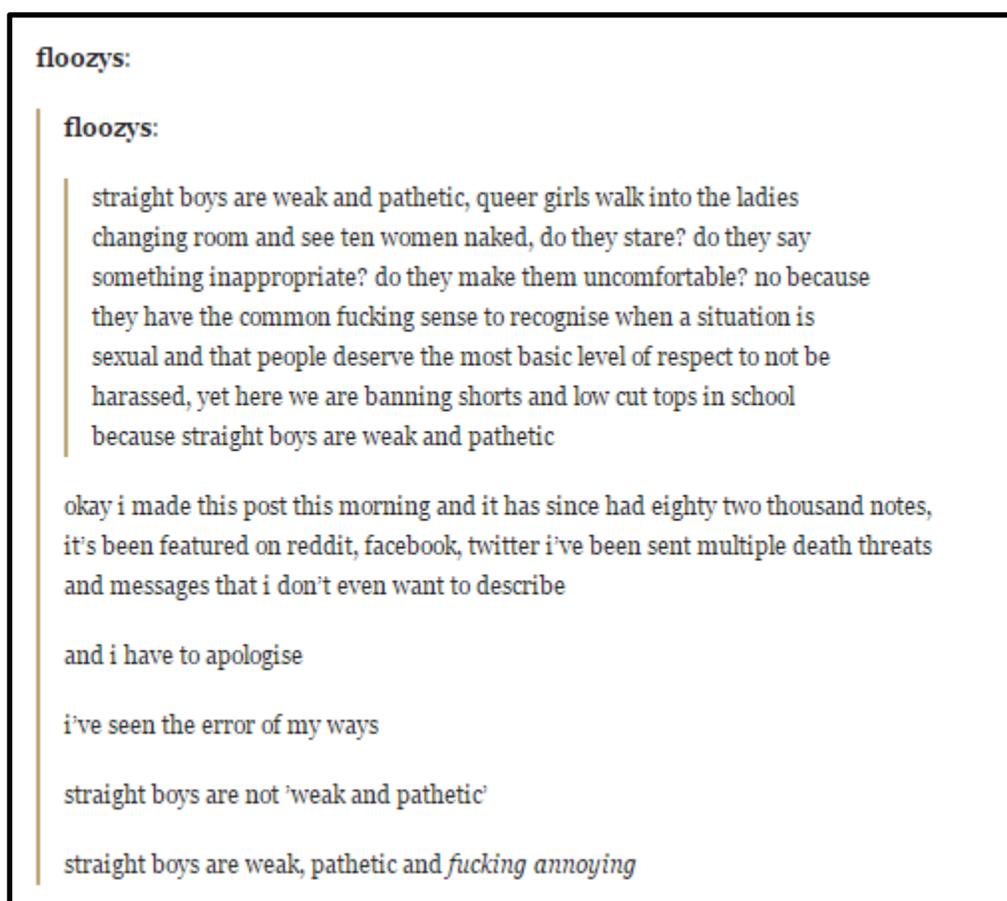


Figure 7: Screenshot of “straight boys are weak and pathetic.” Source: floozys

had to her post overnight, but instead of letting the internet correct her statement, floozys adds more sarcasm and humor to the initial post. Turning the death threats and backlash into a commentary that illustrates the original meaning of her post, floozys

equates the inability to handle criticism to having weakness. To a certain extent, the dismissal of male emotions in this post is disturbing; calling the uproar against her misandry “annoying” parallels the trope that feminists’ objections are only the complaints of “annoying” and “nagging” women. Dismissing male emotion is harmful because of cultural constraints on masculinity, but the use of male voices to cover up a legitimate criticism of respect for women is not acceptable either. By inverting the stereotype of the nagging woman into the nagging man, floozys calls into attention the hypocrisy involved in male criticisms of women. The institutionalized sexism that floozys ridicules in this post (school dress codes for girls to avoid distracting ‘straight boys’) is a valid concern and by handling it with humor, the author rejects patriarchal norms by rejecting the masculine “plight.”

Not all of the posts featuring ironic misandry are as aggressive in their diction as floozys’ post. In fact, according to Jillian Horowitz of Digital America, many of these posts are written from a position that weaponizes femininity. Citing the example of a “Feminist Makeup Tutorial” parody video (retitled “Misandry Makeup Tutorial” on Jezebel) that states that a woman’s eyeliner should be “so sharp they could kill a man” (tadelesmith), Horowitz argues that:

All of these sites of misandry trade on the bizarre assumption that women who hate men are necessarily unfeminine; thus, the consciously cartoonish expressions of femininity function as both an in-joke and a strategic maneuver. When paired with articulations of ironic violence or earnest rage (or something in between), “misandry” is not only emptied of the meaning ascribed to it by men’s rights activists, but simultaneously

weaponizes feminist anger and the devalued trappings of femininity. It turns objects coded as feminine into threats. Misandry becomes potentially dangerous, and liberatory, in its re-direction. (Horowitz)

The revaluing of femininity seen in the female-to-female positivity of Tumblr is also seen in the collective ridicule of men. Humor is simultaneously oppressive and subversive, with the power of a social corrective that can be wielded either way. But laughter can also bring communities together against a point of derision, which is the process ironic and humorous misandry has in the Tumblr feminist community.

If anger and man-hating can be used as the common ground for feminist organizing, then it follows that the dialogue taking place around negative female experiences with men is a critical part for feminist community building on Tumblr. For example, in Figure 8, women online commiserate and share ways with dealing with angry men: by inverting gender stereotypes and watching men's outrage at being connected with feminine traits. The original poster, ms-kawesome, turns the tables on yelling men by saying that he is too emotional to talk to—a stereotypical male argument against the instability of women—but she is backed up by other posters giving their spin

on the original idea. The collaboration of women against men in this post represents the community of practice that Tumblr feminism has become; even if solidarity is coming from a place of anger and frustration with “straight white boys,” the act of supporting one another is more important than the frustration from which it stems because these posts act as an affirmation of female experience. Horowitz goes on to say that while feminist misandry may center on “cute” feminine displays (ex. Glitter, makeup, hearts), the “individual and collective articulations of women’s anger toward men and transforms them [the female artifacts] into something that, by turns, makes affective demands,



Figure 8: Screenshot of “The next time a man starts yelling at you” Source: ms-kawesome

grounds new political spaces, and aggressively re-directs focus toward the validity of feminist articulations of negative emotions” (Horowitz). The weaponization of femininity is a powerful form of self expression and also a linking thread among the feminist community on Tumblr. The value of shared experiences is the connection it draws between people, and it is one of the most important aspects of community building—the “practice” of a community of practice. The shared anger at sexism that can be seen throughout posts of ironic misandry acts as a expression of collective emotion, solidifying the community of users online.

Intersectionality

The internet is, in many ways, a great equalizer of voices, meaning that any one has a chance to be heard as long as they have the ability to sign online.³ Because of this reason, the internet offers feminism a true chance at understanding, working with and utilizing intersectionality. Intersectionality is a concept coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw that points out that “the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, and... these experiences tend not to be represented within the discourse of either feminism or antiracism” (Crenshaw 1243-1244). Although Tumblr posts can fall into essentialist mindsets, especially in the case of posters who do not have a background in feminist theory and are not mindful of the difference female experiences across a broad spectrum of intersectional identities, there is a large presence of women of color (WOC) online that makes intersectionality a

³ There are obvious limitations to this statement, such as language barriers and celebrity status outside of the internet, but for the common person everyone starts out without an internet presence and must work to gain followers or people who are willing to read or watch their online content.

focal point of the movement.⁴ The use of the term intersectionality in feminist dialogue online already shows a large step forward for the feminist movement in identifying racial issues— however, the use of the term “intersectionality” often becomes interchangeable with “race,” making the term a diminutive attempt to avoid being racist while sometimes avoiding legitimate discussion on the subject. There are obvious areas of improvement within the movement on- and offline, but pressing issues like trans acceptance, inclusion, and advocacy within feminism are represented in real time on Tumblr. Some notable examples from 2015 were #BlackoutDay and the International Transgender Day of Visibility, which were awareness events promoted on Tumblr that did not stem from the feminist movement but were also promoted through the feminist tag. Both of these events were shows of solidarity, community and empowerment through posting pictures and content that celebrated the identities of oppressed groups. The promotion of these days through the feminist tag shows how the online movement is aware of the importance of intersectional identities, yet the necessity of these events shows the deficiency of solid intersectional politics in Tumblr feminism.

The dissemination of feminist ideas throughout Tumblr and other feminist spheres online has allowed for rapid advancements in rhetoric around intersectional issues. To illustrate the elevated use of the term “intersectionality” online, I used Google Trends to search how often “intersectionality” was searched and trended on Google since 2004 (See Figure 9). The graph shows the upward trend of the use and search of the term “intersectionality” and its direct relationship with the term “feminist tumblr.” Of course, awareness of the existence and internet presence of “feminist tumblr” may not

⁴ The prominence of “Black Twitter” illustrates the sociopolitical activism happening along racial lines online. See The Washington Post’s 2014 article “Black Twitter: A virtual community ready to hashtag out a response to cultural issues,” written by Soraya Nadia McDonald.

be the causation of the growing use of “intersectionality,” but the correlation is significant enough to be noted. It would be difficult to argue that Tumblr was the only reason for the growth of understanding intersectional feminism because of the interconnectedness of the internet, where people can share content across many platforms. Yet, the growth of “intersectionality” correlates strongly with the growing popularity of the Tumblr feminist community, meaning that there is most likely a connection between the two.

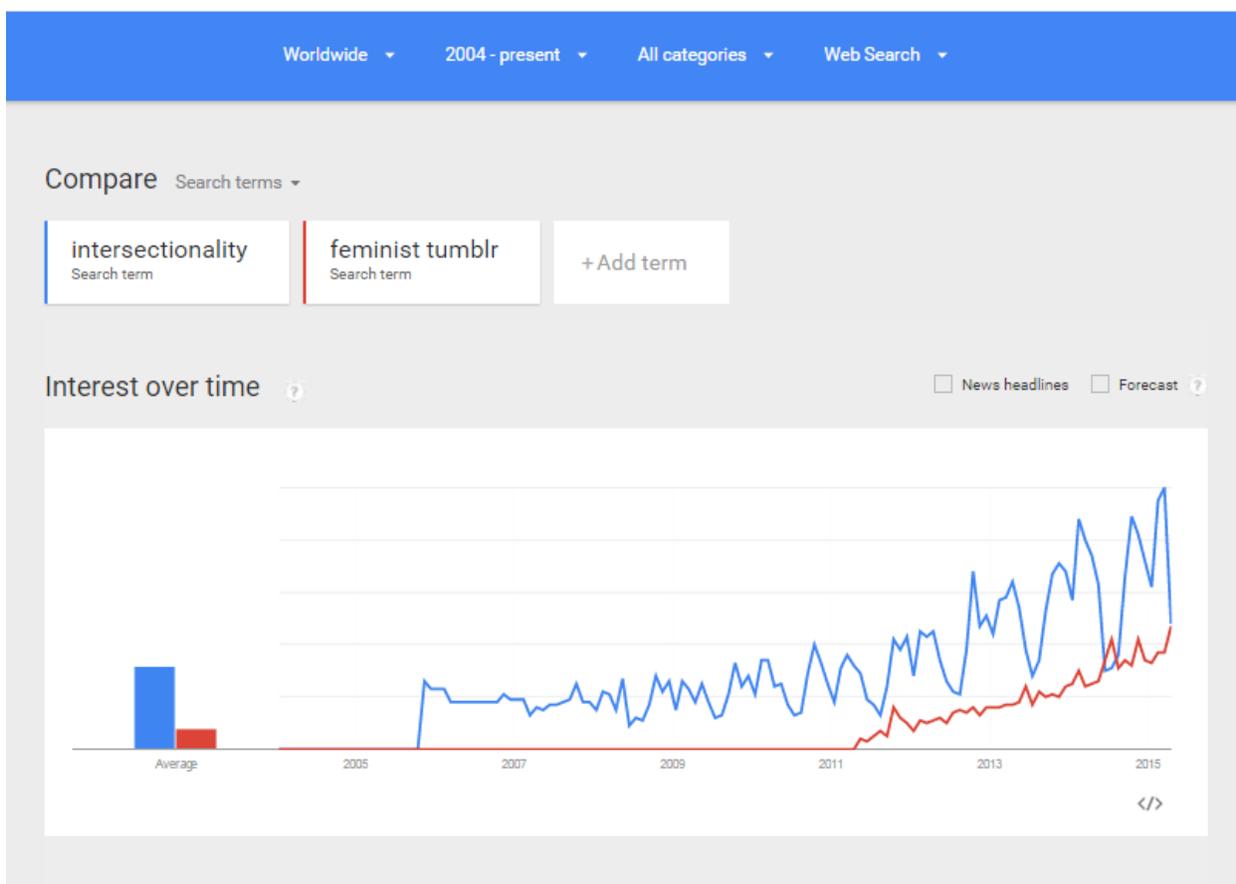


Figure 9: Screenshot of Google Trends Search of “intersectionality” and “feminist tumblr”

To illustrate the awareness of racial politics within the feminist movement, there was an “attack” on internet feminism by anti-feminists on 4chan—an anonymous

imageboard (forum centered on images) website infamous for its lack of virtue⁵— through the use of intersectional politics. A handful of men from 4chan went uncover on Twitter and Tumblr “masquerading as women of color online, in a concerted effort to discredit the entire online feminist movement, or at least make feminists look bad” (Eordogh). The men impersonating women of color gained respect in the internet feminist sphere by researching and using feminist theory in dialogue online. Over the course of 2013 and into 2014, they became more and more radical, making up movements like #EndFathersDay and #WhitesCantBeRaped to create in fighting within the feminist community (Alfonso). Fruzsina Eordogh explains that although this scheme is outrageous, it is actually valuable to feminists because it shows that “[f]eminists of color had very publicly become such an integral part of the feminist movement that trolls⁶ thought they were the vehicle to end all feminism online” (Eordogh). Intersectional

⁵ It is difficult to sum up in words what 4chan represents for those who do not interact with internet cultures, but it is safe to say that like Tumblr, 4chan is a community of practice with its own guidelines (or lack thereof). “Anonymous” originates from 4chan, and is a decentralized vigilante group of hackers (hacktivists) that has made headlines for performing acts of unsanctioned online “justice” on those who they collectively deem need to be punished. Examples of their work includes everything from threatening and hacking the Klu Klux Klan to stealing nude celebrity photos and distributing them online. In order to get a better understanding of the comic-book style performativity of 4chan, I have included the definition of 4chan written by Anonymousdoesnotforgive found on Urban Dictionary, a glossary of modern terms:

you have just entered the very heart, soul, and life force of the internet. this is a place beyond sanity, wild and untamed. there is nothing new here. "new" content on 4chan is not found; it is created from old material. every interesting, offensive, shocking, or debate inspiring topic youve seen elsewhere has been posted here ad infinitum. we are the reason for "not safe for work". we are the anonymous army. cross us and you will fail. anonymous is everywhere. you depend on us every day. we bag your groceries, we fix your computers. anonymous sees you before you see him. sitting at desks around the world right now is a nameless, faceless, unforgiving mafia composed of the best of the best. we are 4channers. the people devoid of any type of soul or conscience. products of cynicism and apathy, spreading those very sentiments daily. anonymous is the hardened war veteran of the internet.... this is a place where taboos do not exist. 4chan cannot simply be regarded as a simple website or imageboard. it is so much more than code. 4chan is alive and constantly changing. this is a subculture, a self-governing sect of the world. rich in history and foundation. to become a 4chan user is to speak a different language. to leave behind any methods of conventional thinking you once knew.

(Anonymousdoesnotforgive)

⁶ Urban Dictionary defines a “troll” as “[o]ne who posts a deliberately provocative message to a newsgroup or message board with the intention of causing maximum disruption and argument.” Urban

identities are visible enough and understood as powerful enough that naysayers used women of color as their ruse. Ann Oakley and Juliet Mitchell argue in their work *Who's Afraid of Feminism: Seeing Through the Backlash* that, "rather than viewing backlash as a threat to feminism, it can be considered in a positive light as highlighting precisely the *power of feminism*" (Prokhovnik 162). Eordough follows Oakley and Mitchell's logic in her argument that intersectionality is accepted as an important aspect of feminism online because of the form 4chan's backlash took.

By understanding that race is ingrained in the online culture of feminism, we can understand Tumblr users' deliberate movement towards "call-out" culture; even though "calling-out" can be harmful, its intent is to create an inclusive space for all identities. In Figures 10 and 11, we can see the awareness of intersectionality and racial politics in Tumblr posts. Figure 10 calls out "White Feminists" from the beginning, establishing a target audience to imply that white feminists need to keep white privilege in mind when they discuss the wage gap. The second comment in this post, by quietbang, adds on the post by arguing that the wage gap for disabled people needs to be represented as well as racial identities. The next figure demonstrates how feminists use Tumblr to express their support for those who are oppressed. Both of these posts indicate a level of knowledge about racial politics that is nuanced and practiced online, but they also demonstrate the practice of (and avoidance of) the "call-out culture" on Tumblr.

Dictionary is not an academic source, instead uses crowd-sourced information like Wikipedia. I used this definition because the colloquial use of an internet "troll" is not well-known enough to be defined in a legitimate source.



Figure 10: Screenshot of "White Feminists" Source: split-the-coast

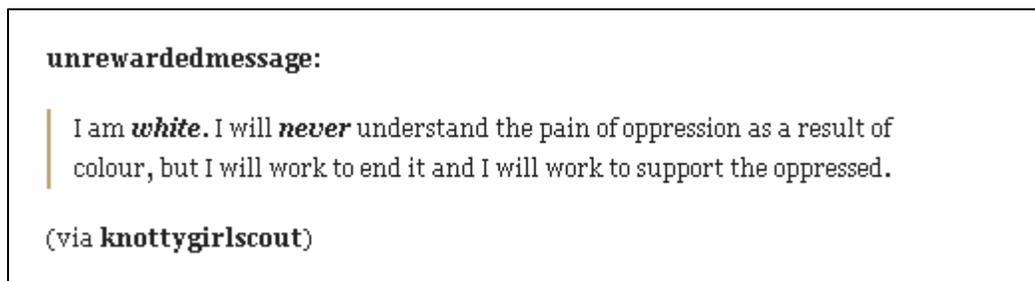


Figure 11: Screenshot of "I am white." Source: unrewardedmessage

In Fredrika Thelandersson's article "A Less Toxic Feminism: Can the Internet Solve the Age Old Question of How to Put Intersectional Theory into Practice?" she writes that, "[o]n the site, feminist debates often turn into seemingly never-ending processes of calling out and blaming users for offensive terminology and ignorance of

various groups.... Much of the discussion is based around ‘policing’ other participants about what they’re doing wrong instead of encouraging them for what is being done right” (“A Less Toxic Feminism” 528). In an attempt to appease every oppressed group and to be as inclusive as possible, Tumblr feminism sometimes twists into an almost hostile environment. The correction in Figure 10 by quietbang is an example of Thelandersson’s observation that although the original poster was trying to call attention to difference of racial wage gaps, quietbang consistently calls out the lack of inclusion for disabled people. While the wage gap for disabled people is important as well, quietbang’s comment connotes a passive-aggressive “policing” of the original post instead of support for changing racial erasure in feminist debates.

Although Tumblr feminism can be hostile—as mentioned previously, feminism is a movement dependent on emotion and anger at oppressive institutions— it is still an important location for consciousness-raising and community building. The in-fighting that occurs because of a lack of intersectionality implies that intersectionality is visible enough for there to be contention over it. As Thelandersson argues:

An inherent and large part of privilege is the unawareness of experiences other than one’s own, and a belief that everyone lives under the same material, social, and cultural conditions, with the same opportunities available to them. The internet provides a space where feminists can learn from each other about why things some feminists see as harmless can be hurtful and offensive to others. Most feminists know about intersectionality, but not all of us knows every way in which intersectional oppression works. (“A Less Toxic Feminism” 529)

Because the internet allows people to vocalize their experiences of oppression in a

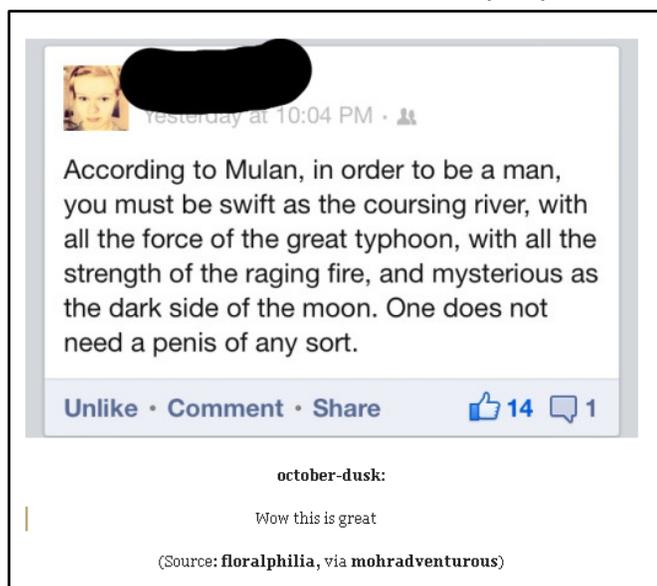


Figure 12: Screenshot of "According to Mulan..."
Source: floralphilia

globalized world, active and present forms of intersectionality is a real possibility in internet feminism. Tumblr's "call-out" culture is a response fueled by anger at being historically disregarded, but as people are more aware of intersectionality, posts like Figure 11 come about, in which the author recognizes their privilege and steps back to support the lived experiences of other



Figure 13: Screenshot of "'feminists' who exclude..."
Source: thebisexualblogger (Tumblr), @cutequeer96 (Twitter)

people. One of the more recent ventures of the Tumblr feminist community is the vocal support and inclusion of trans women into their dialogue, which is a major advancement from the trans women exclusion seen in the second wave of feminism. For example, Janice Raymond's belief that only women who were assigned female at birth understand the sexism inherent in Western patriarchal society because they "share female history" (Heyes). However, Tumblr has made an explicit effort to become inclusive of all non-

normative identities, seen in Figures 12 and 13. These posts, both taken from different forms of social media and shared through Tumblr as photos, describe inclusive ways of understanding gender and tackling transphobia. The poster of Figure 13 calls into question the definition of a “feminist” by comparing non-inclusive feminists to misogynists. Although the logic may be generalizing, both these posts emphasize the importance of trans inclusion in online feminism. There is an underlying policing occurring in these posts, but the ability to use the internet as a tool to make ideas of trans inclusion known and heard in the Tumblr feminist community is a remarkable new facet of feminist dialogue.

Anti-Feminism

Unlike the other themes that I found in analyzing Tumblr feminist content, anti-feminist posts are not surprising nor revolutionary. Backlash is commonplace for social movements because creating change disrupts power structures, making those with power fight back to maintain control. As mentioned previously, backlash can also be viewed as a cornerstone of a social movement because it marks the power and foothold the movement is gaining. When searching through the feminism tag, there was a notable amount of posts that were cross-tagged as “feminism” and “anti-feminism.” Most likely, the cross-tagging of these posts was intended to attract the largest audience as well as to “troll” and create fighting between the two tags. I would not go as far as to argue that the anti-feminist groups on Tumblr have a community like the feminist organizing, but there are definitive practices shared among the anti-feminist posts that reflect the sharing of arguments and information. The anti-feminist tag exists only in

relation to the feminist tag which severely limits its capability to organize as a community, although its presence is another point of unification for feminists.

I have included some of the anti-feminist posts to illustrate the arguments that are happening online. Something important to note is the use of popular Tumblr-feminist rhetoric as a rebuttal to the online feminist movement. This appropriation of feminist terminology shows that anti-feminists, in their opposition, are adopting and learning the language of critical feminist thought (ex. privilege, entitlement, sexualization). For example, in Figure 14, Tumblr user hacksin is reacting against the “demonization” of men by feminists online, more specifically, the author speaks directly to “tumblr” as a whole, generalizing the location as one that views “ALL men” as the enemy. This post calls into attention the anti-feminist belief that the entirety of Tumblr is feminist and that the people who comprise its user-base are prejudiced against privileged identities.

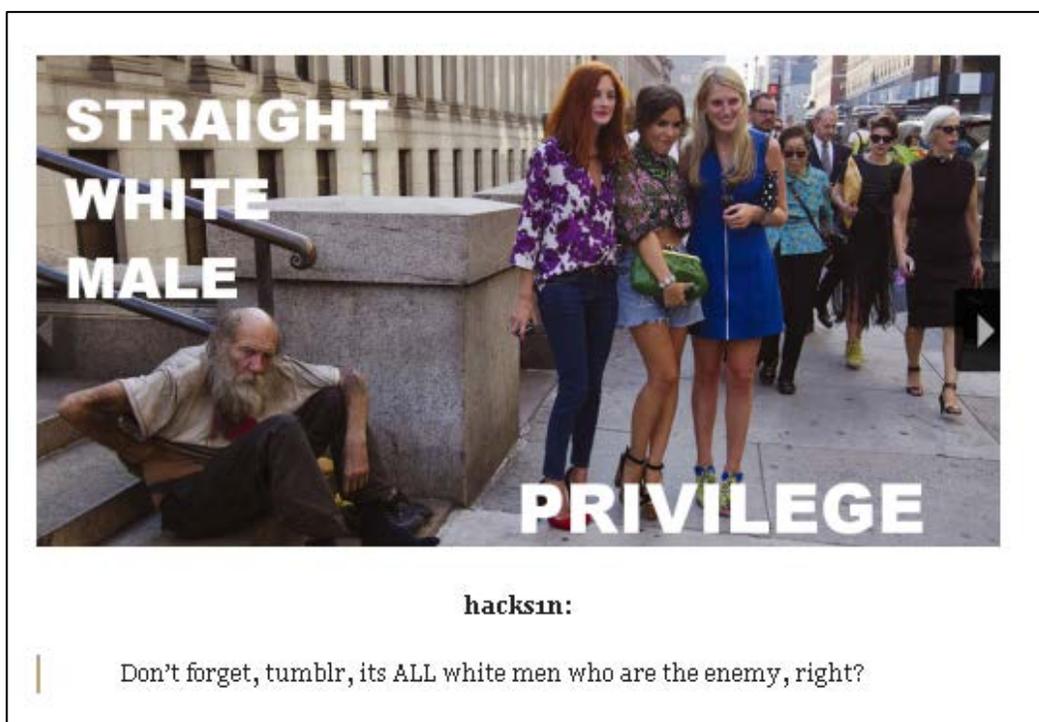


Figure 13: Screenshot of “Don’t forget, tumblr...” Source: hacksin

In this essay, I will not take the time to debunk or argue against the anti-feminist content that I am including because it does not pertain directly to the purpose of this work. There are obvious logical issues with Figure 13 and a misunderstanding of what privilege entails and presupposes, but more important are the implications that come along with the existence of posts like this. Men are reacting against feminist posts on Tumblr because they feel as if they are being outnumbered (implied in the address to “tumblr” as a whole) and misrepresented as the enemy. While ironic misandry is an important rallying point for women online, the definition of misandry implies that male participants on Tumblr will feel attacked—understandable because misandry is directed at all men even though it pertains to a certain kind of masculine performance— but the direct response of anti-feminists is aggressive and not intended to create a dialogue. This is not to say that all feminist posters want to create a dialogue, but the act of tagging derisive posts in the “feminist” tag is antagonistic in itself. In the next post, Figure 14, we can see that the user feels as if feminism is not inclusive of problems facing men, yet the text is formatted as a picture, taking away the ability to edit and add to the post from other posters. The format of the picture is a direct avoidance of discussion that implies that this post is either aimed solely at stirring emotional responses or the poster is convinced of the validity of their content. Either way, there is no attempt at communicating in a productive way in Figure 14, which seems to be common among naysaying posts in the feminist tag.

The main purpose of this post is to argue that women do not face actual examples of oppression, and that when men try to legitimize their feelings, feminists disregard male issues as being insignificant in comparison. While I agree that certain aspects of the Tumblr Feminist community is aggressive towards men, such as the humorous use of ironic misandry, this post only proves its own point. The argument that women do not pay attention to the needs of men because they are focused on their own

Feminism, here to throw real
problems that men face so that
everyone can focus the
inconveniences and fake oppression
that women face

Men and anti-fems: Men are sentenced to more jail ti-

Feminist: FUCKING MANSREADING

Men and anti-fems: women win 90% of custody cases even when they're the abusi-

Feminists: GTA IS MISOGYNIST CAUSE YOU KILL WOMEN

Men and anti-fems: men are objectif-

Feminists: FUCKING DRESS CODE TELLING ME I CANT WALK AROUND HALF-NAKED! STOP SEXUALIZING WOMEN!

Men and anti-fems: men face just as much domestic abuse as wome-

Feminists: SAYING HI TO ME ON THE STREET IS CATCALLING AND IM AFRAID TO WALK HOME AT NIGHT

Men and anti-fems: men are rape-

Feminists: FAT WOMEN ARE PRETTY TOO

Men and anti-fems: women are hired when they don't qualify because equality quotas while men ha-

Feminists: THE WORD SNOWMAN IS SEXIST BECAUSE WHAT ABOUT SNOWWOMEN

I could go on and on

issues is reflected in the masculine need to have the focus be solely trained on men. In all, the anti-feminist posts that argue the unfairness of feminism against men seem to demonstrate a fear that men no longer have the power to dictate conversation because the conversation of Tumblr does not belong to them: it is a location for the expression of many identities and therefore male voices do not have the privilege tied to them in the real world.

Figure 14: Screenshot of "Feminism, here to throw real problems...." Source: xzebrasfortuna

Conclusion

Unless one is highly involved in the internet and all the cultures that have originated from its technology, the idea of Tumblr as a community of practice might seem foreign. In fact, many of the inside jokes in separate areas of the internet (Tumblr, 4chan, Reddit) can be foreign to other communities involved online, even though jokes and ideas regularly transfer over to different platforms. Yet, it is important that we recognize the legitimacy of the Tumblr feminist community because although it is not a source of academic and theoretical work, it is a location for feminist movement organizing to take place and to take root. The involvement of feminist community building into Tumblr's identity as a social justice platform demonstrates how much the movement has shaped its own space online.

Tumblr was not intended to be a location for feminist dialogue, but its structure as a micro-blogging platform is well-suited to entertaining both meaningful, deep dialogue and short quips of humor used to belittle and undermine patriarchal ideology. The atmosphere of Tumblr is not always healthy due to the culture of "policing" posts that are not as inclusive as they could have been, but there are many facets to the different communities on Tumblr and the interactions that happen within those communities. I believe that, in all, Tumblr is a positive space for community and identity building, that people can use its platform to express themselves in a healthy way and that Tumblr represents the social changes that are taking place in the internet generation.

Of all the posts that I came across in my research, the different themes that I found echoed my claim that Tumblr feminism is a community of practice that has created a space for collective learning and expression. The interactions of female-to-

female positivity show real growth in the “catfighting” stereotype and culture surrounding women. The use of the platform for consciousness-raising of social issues and education about feminist theories and politics illustrates how Tumblr is not only for humor, but a tool for building movements. Users are also performing acts of solidarity through ironic misandry, uniting in a way that is not dismissive of women but criticizes our cultural constructions of masculinity while giving credence to lived female experiences. Not only that, but the importance of intersectionality and the inclusion of non-normative identities into the feminist sphere predicts a more open-minded feminist movement in the future. If the Tumblr user-base is comprised mainly by young people, then Tumblr itself becomes a feminist site of education for the next wave of feminists. While Tumblr embodies and puts into practice many third-wave feminist ideologies, there is growth promised in the social movements beginning online. Tumblr may be the starting point for the next generation of social justice organizing, meaning that while feminism online still has areas for growth, ultimately the feminists active on the Tumblr feminist sphere indicate that feminism is not dead, only adapting to fit a new era.

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