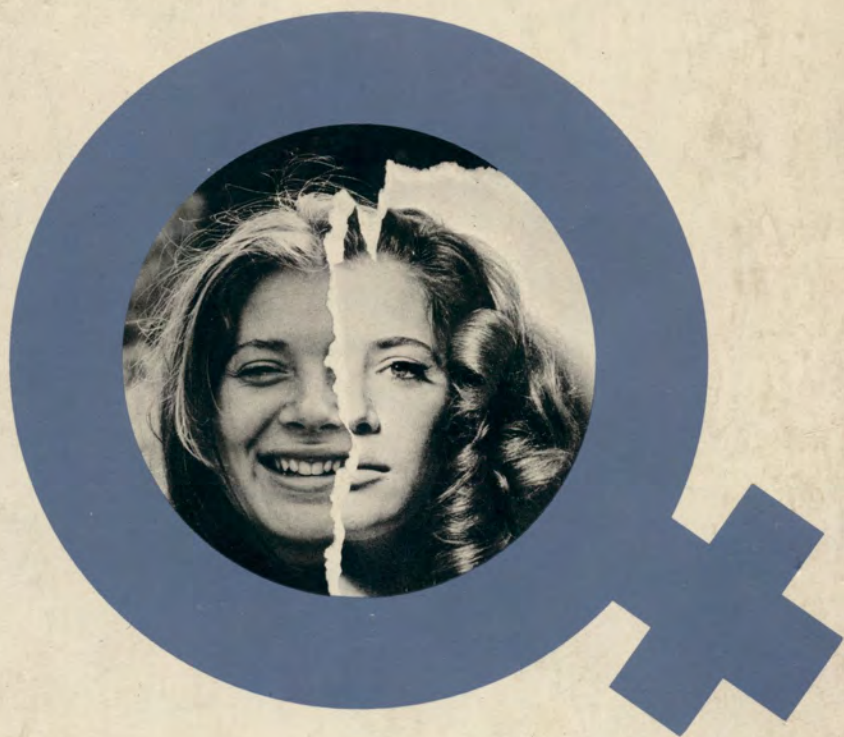


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# Radical Feminism

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An anthology of radical feminist writings from the current women's movement. Forty-five articles ranging from the personal to the theoretical and drawn largely from the feminist annual NOTES.

## Editorial: Notes From the Third Year

In its few years of existence, the feminist movement has grown at an extraordinary rate. We are no longer only a small collection of organized groups; the "women's movement" today is found as well in the myriad new women's studies programs; in job actions for better pay; in child care and abortion projects; in the wealth of new writing by feminist journalists and writers; in the speak-outs and teach-ins; in the legal suits challenging sexist laws; and in the changing consciousness of literally millions of individual women.

This explosion, rather than being a sign of disorganization or failure, is a sign of our success as a grass roots movement. The women's movement is thus not only an organized political force but a state of mind as well. The contents of *Notes From the Third Year* reflect this expansion. This year has seen fewer manifestoes and more work on specific issues such as prostitution, women's literature, rape, and lesbianism. It has been a period of intensive rather than extensive analysis.

But there are problems to solve if the feminist movement is to achieve its end of eliminating sex roles. A euphoric period of consciousness-raising has come to an end, and a more sober evaluation has replaced it. Women are beginning to see that consciousness-raising is meant as a stage of growth, not the ultimate stage of growth. It is limited as a tool. If we don't move on from consciousness-raising both as individuals and as groups, we face the danger of stagnation. Instead we must begin to use the knowledge gained to make both internal and external changes. Groups must move to analysis, small group actions and, most difficult, large collective actions and organization.

In moving from the small amorphous rap group toward a more outward-directed group, the problem of "structure" arises. The



women's movement will need to work out for itself a satisfactory form which can avoid the typical pitfalls of authoritarian leadership or inflexible ideology which so many other movements have experienced. With so many women's present dislike for authoritarianism, perhaps one of the major achievements of feminism will be to work out new ways of organizing ourselves that will encourage responsibility in all members, but discourage elitism—a form which can encourage strength in all women rather than create followers. Our success in accomplishing this goal will in no small part depend upon our ability to be as actively supportive of each other's new strengths and achievements as before (especially during consciousness-raising) we have been supportive and compassionate of each other's failures.

Another important development in the women's movement over the past year has been the increased cross-fertilization between the so-called "women's rights" sector and the "women's liberation" sector. Feminists are discovering not only that moderate and radical feminists can be found in both camps (coming from the Left, for example, does not guarantee radical feminism), but also that they have a great deal more in common than was originally thought. Each sector makes important contributions to the larger feminist struggle; the "rights" sector's strong emphasis on legal changes, for example, must be united with the "liberation" sector's stress on internal changes. Together we can win important victories, always with the understanding that no one issue wins the whole fight, and that the final victory lies both in destroying the institutions of sexism and in the changed consciousness of all women.

December, 1971