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# Radical Feminism

edited by Anne Koedt • Ellen Levine • Anita Rapone



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.

# The Selling of a Feminist

by Claudia Dreifus

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(Review of *THE FEMALE EUNUCH* by Germaine Greer)

Early last year, when the high priests of publishing began to discover that their female readers were insatiably curious about the women's liberation idea, there was much discussion as to which of the bountiful crop of feminist authors would become the big femme lib superstar. Betty Friedan had no appeal for the literary lions—she was too old, too bourgeoisie, too organization-conscious. Shulamith Firestone, the author of *The Dialectic of Sex* and organizer of New York Radical Feminists, was strikingly attractive; but alas, anti-love, perhaps even anti-men. Ti-Grace Atkinson, an advocate of extra-uterine birth, was considered too far out for a whirl through the major networks. For a while it seemed as if the brilliant and beautiful Kate Millett, whose *Sexual Politics* was for a short time on the best-seller list, might be star material. But she made the mistake of openly asserting her bisexuality. *Time* took due note of this state of affairs, and that finished Millett. So who was left to launch on the Dick Cavett-Johnny Carson-Virginia Graham-*Time-Life* circuit? American feminists, with their dogged determination to be themselves, were a publicity man's nightmare. Someone more palatable would have to be found.

Or even imported. On a warm spring day, Germaine Greer, the

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author of the English best seller, *The Female Eunuch*, jetted into New York from London. Miss Greer was everything those messy American feminists were not: pretty, predictable, aggressively heterosexual, media-wise, clever, foreign, and exotic. Her background was fascinating. At thirty-two, she was an accomplished actress, a Ph.D. who lectured in Shakespeare at Warwick University, editor of the European pornographic journal, *Suck*, and contributor to various London underground newspapers. Her philosophy, as outlined in *The Female Eunuch*, could be expected to appeal to men: women's liberation means that women will be sexually liberated; feminism equals free love. Here was a libbie a man could like.

Full-page ads announced that Miss Greer had written the women's liberation book of the year, and that despite this achievement, she was "a feminist leader who admittedly loves men." Six feet tall, fashion-model beautiful, Miss Greer was the toast of *The Tonight Show*. Dick Cavett was enthusiastic about her. Norman Mailer suggested that her book was worth reading.

There is a catch to this fairy tale. Germaine Greer is not the feminist leader she is advertised to be. Back home in London she has no active connections with any women's liberation group. And the book she has written is hardly feminist. True, *The Female Eunuch* does contain an obligatory enumeration of the many economic and psychological horrors that women are subjected to. But Miss Greer's information is hardly new, and could be gleaned from a half-dozen other books. What's more, the whole tone of *The Female Eunuch* is shallow, anti-woman, regressive, three steps backward to the world of false sexual liberation from which so many young women have fled.

Miss Greer quite rightly asks women to abandon the institution of marriage, but she means to replace it simply with the dehumanizing, anonymous, and spiritually debilitating thrusting that men call sex. In her view, sex is something to be collected—like money. The more of it you get, the richer you are. The difficulty is that many feminists have been to that movie before. Many of the younger women in the movement recall a period, four or five years ago, when in order to qualify as hip, emancipated females, their alternate-culture brothers insisted they perform as sexual gymnasts. Resentment at this treatment is one powerful motive for the current women's movement.

The author's insistence that "sexual liberation" is the prerequisite