

Feminism an ever evolving cause essay examples

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



More than forty-five years ago, when NOW (National Organisation for Women) released its statement of purpose, it did so with the objective of increasing the numbers as well as status of women in a male-driven society, especially with regards to the political and economic environment. A few years later, Radicalesbians, published the article 'The Woman Identified Woman' questioning the very roles of the sexes society so rigidly defines, thwarting the possibility of liberation for women every step of the way. In the current day, the role of women in professional fields has greatly improved when compared with the numbers (if not statuses) presented in NOW's statement of purpose. On the other hand, the disparity in sex roles - namely men as the superior and women as supporting/serving caste - still persists greatly, the gap ever-widening even with the grudgingly accepting attitude towards homosexuality. Both texts question societies and its perception of women through different perspectives, giving us a unified view of the problem of the sexes as it presents itself today. There are still fewer women doctors and lawyers, fewer female candidates in Ph. D. programs or politics, 'dyke' is still a derogatory word and 'true love' is a term still permitted mainly to describe heterosexual love. But few can deny the fact that society is now listening. Lesbians now have rights and they have put them to quite a bit of use and no man can really think of his wife as a mere child-bearer. Which ultimately brings us to the question: where do sexes really stand in shaping society and where should they stand? If NOW and Radicalesbians were to paint the picture of a utopian society, sexes should be completely equal or in other words indistinguishable in their roles, stance and the society's perception of sexes. How can being indistinguishable from one

another aid in our independent expression of ourselves? If we are born different, why strive to be the same?

Both the texts are prudent in describing the 'fullest potential' or the essential self of a woman, while also providing emphasis on the role of partnership in life, whether it is heterosexual marriage or a long-term lesbian relationship. Radicalesbians, in fact, takes quite a plunge in this direction hinting at the said utopia where women alone can free and accept other women in a complete and final divide between the sexes - "Our energies must flow toward our sisters, not backward toward our oppressors". In this context, Radicalesbians also mentions the conditioning the society binds us to, consigning the very definition of being female to non-profit-making functions of the society. This statement indeed compliments a part of NOW's own, where NOW points out that men are (at that point in time) taking over the higher positions in social service and primary/secondary school education systems which were thought to be female territory until then. In deference to this point of view, we must remember that the 70's and 80's saw several turning points in corporate evolution as well as other modes of organisation such as non-profit, small-scale and individualised businesses. And in the current day and age, we are witnessing global enterprises, originating not just in America but from every part of the world, in every size and scale. And today, even the smallest of enterprises, the start-ups, the web businesses, what have you, speak of being socially responsible with emphasis on environment, female empowerment and abolishment of poverty, if only in their doctrines and not their actions. This evolving global consciousness cannot be attributed to merely one of the sexes, because

NOW's definitions of fully empowered woman - "as part of the decision-making mainstream of American political, economic and social life" - is yet to be accomplished and neither did women suddenly fall into support groups made of their own sex and started to fully accept another woman as she is, thereby supporting the liberation of the 'weaker sex', the way Radicalesbians puts it - "For this we must be available and supportive to one another, give our commitment and our love, give the emotional support necessary to sustain this movement."

In one of its beginning statements, Radicalesbians mentions that we live in a sexist society, which is of course true, but the group falsely attributes the reason behind sexism to sexual orientation, which I completely disagree with. It is true that we are conditioned to think of ourselves as female first and person later. But as no rule is without exception, I believe there are some of us who are conditioned in a different way - say American first and person later. Or American first, younger-sibling next, female and then person. Whether your cause is one of feminism or of nationalism or even spirituality and religion, the way society conditions you will always play a part in who you are, individually. It might as well be the sexual liberation of the west that put so much weightage over the role of sexes in society and especially sexual orientation. Sure, history is abundant with stories of female oppression, which is why we tend to believe that the problem of female liberation dates back to the beginning of civilization. But maybe it is our understanding of today's society that led us to such reflections of history in the first place. Maybe there was more to the role that women played in society than we can see now. After all, we don't believe in gods and sorcery

anymore, we do not follow myths and superstitions and we discard religions or even try them out one by one like clothes in a showroom. Our detailed understanding of women's role in society begins less than a hundred and fifty years ago as the age of Imperialism rose to its peak. And we find it easy to discard the accomplishments of our female ancestors because their stories do not appeal to our oppressed sensibilities. Alexander the Great, for example, sought the destiny his mother carved for him out of myths unto the ends of the world discarding his father's limited vision of a united Greece on a whim. If we deem that the society is conditioning us to play a certain role, we must fight the society on a whole while standing alone, for women are no more capable of love and sacrifice and all those other ideals we hold dear, than men can be. 'An active, self-respecting partnership with men,' says NOW simply, about the new role women must create for themselves and I can accept it in that very simplicity as self-respect begins with the self and not society as a whole.

Works Cited

- "The National Organization for Women's 1966 Statement of Purpose". Now. org. National Organisation for Women. 29 Oct. 1966. Web. 6 Feb. 2012.
- "The Woman Identified Woman". Library. duke. edu. Know, Inc. 1970. Web. 6 Feb 2012.