Book Review: Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader by Barbara A. Crow

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sampling, I located one organization that changed its name two years ago, several with inaccurate or disconnected phone numbers and so on. In addition, there are far too many misspellings and oversights for a reference work of this caliber otherwise. Perhaps in the next edition, the proofing and editing will be done more carefully.

The Encyclopedia is highly recommended in spite of its shortcomings. It sets forth and accomplishes the goal of providing source material not found comprehensively elsewhere in two well-researched and well-written volumes.

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Selecting writings from a variety of sources, Barbara Crow attempts to show the diversity of perspectives included within a radical feminist framework, while holding true to the unifying themes of this standpoint. The book includes 67 documents, organized around sources of oppression, manifestos, methods, lesbianism, heterosexuality, children, race, and class. The documents included range from public speeches, to articles printed in organization newsletters, to published scholarly texts. Those who are well-read in feminist writings will find many authors with whom they are familiar including Kate Millet, Susan Brownmiller, Toni Cade, Charlotte Bunch, Shulamith Firestone, Robin Morgan, and Toni Morrison. What sets this book apart from other currently-available anthologies is its specific focus on radical feminism in the United States in the mid-1960s and 70s; the resurrection of classic articles that have been
out of print for several decades; and the inclusion of less-accessible works by women active in women's groups such as The Furies, SCUM, Cell 16, and Youth Against War and Fascism.

As explained in her introduction, Dr. Crow laments her students' lack of reverence toward the ideas and individuals involved in radical feminist work and has concerns that these students are too quickly dismissing the ideas she sees as important influences on contemporary women, society, and politics. Crow notes "some of this is due to years of distorted and caricatured portrayals of radical feminism in mass culture and secondary scholarship, and some is the result of a perhaps inevitable 'taken-for-grantedness' that young women affect toward achievements of women's movements" (1). Indeed, Crow is concerned that even feminist scholars fail to understand the true scope of radical feminism, and through their post-modern lenses are rejecting, and perhaps misrepresenting, ideologies that appear to essentialize categorical identities such as "women." This book is the result of Crow's desire to remind readers of the theoretical and social contributions made by radical feminists and to correct some misperceptions of the movement that she locates in the years 1967-1975.

The first 16 articles provide a rich exploration of women "coming to know" patriarchy and developing a perspective and language that would be identified as "radical feminism." Crow asserts that radical feminism involved an assumption that women's oppression is the "first, the oldest, and the primary form of oppression...to which all other forms of oppression are related and connected" (2). The documents are carefully selected to show not only the emergence of this perspective, but also to highlight these authors' awareness that women's oppressions are inextricably linked to other oppressions and social conditions. While works by Millet, Hanisch, Brownmiller, and Firestone appear in many feminist collections, some of the most interesting documents in this volume are reproductions of previously un-
published speeches or articles printed in women's newsletters. The Jones and Brown article *Toward a Female Liberation Movement* and Cellestine Ware's *The Relationship of Black Women to the Women's Liberation Movement* are especially compelling in their focus on the relationships within and among women activists.

The next section includes the full texts of seven "manifestos" produced by a variety of women's organizations. These documents are invaluable as they express the passion, intelligence, awareness, anger, commitment, and even humor of the women involved in radical work. More satisfying than many currently popular mission statements, these manifestos provide history and context to organizational ideologies, as well as calls-to-action for social change. The direct, and often confrontational language of these works is strongly contrasted by the documents in the next section on consciousness-raising. Psychological in tone, these articles provide outlines for engaging in consciousness-raising, and stories about one's own process of political awareness. While a necessary topic in a text on radical feminism, little new is offered here given the widespread popular awareness of this first (and sometimes only) step in radical women's organizing.

Central to the book is the desire to highlight the attention radical feminists gave to issues of sexuality, family, race, and class. Barbara Crow has focused on these issues in hopes of challenging perspectives offered by feminist theorists like Andrea Jagger (1983) and Rosemarie Tong (1994) who have claimed that radical feminism involves "examining only issues of sex" (301). Crow offers the documents in the next five sections as proof that while radical feminists saw women's oppression as the most basic "root" oppression, they were clearly aware of multiple oppressions and the links between gender, race, class, and sexuality. Including works by women of color, lesbians, mothers, and women of all classes, Crow also challenges perceptions that the second wave of feminism generally, and radical
feminism specifically, was primarily a white, middle-class, heterosexual movement of "bra burners."

While most anthologies of feminist organizing include articles on lesbian organizations or issues, few have included as many as are available in Radical Feminism. Addressing a range of issues including lesbian roles within radical movements, intersections between sexual orientation and race, and "radicalesbianism," these documents explore issues that continue to challenge women's organizations in the United States. A gem is Jill Johnston's Selections from Lesbian Nation where issues of lesbian chauvinism and re-readings of popular feminist texts are offered.

Although somewhat mislabeled, the section on "heterosexuality" contains two especially strong articles, Carol Hanisch's A Critique of the Miss America Protest and Toni Cade's The Pill: Genocide or Liberation. While available elsewhere, read alongside the other documents in this reader, the self-reflexivity of the works and the call to see all sides of situations highlights the intelligence and commitment to change exhibited by radical feminists. Dana Densmore's On the Temptation to Be a Beautiful Object provides a strong example of the early awareness of the links between popular culture and self-image that permeate much contemporary work in feminist theory.

Calls for action on issues of child care and child welfare are offered in four short documents that include interesting stories, but are not nearly as strong as works in the other sections. The selections on race, in comparison, are well chosen, although they include a greater proportion of works offered elsewhere. Likely reflecting both the sensibilities of the times and the regionalism of the sources, these documents focus primarily on African-American issues. Toni Morrison's What the Black Woman Thinks About Women's Lib and Shulamith Firestone's Racism: The Sexism of the Family of Man provide the backbone of this section. The reader closes with a lengthy section on class. This section includes writings on women as a "class" as well as
the socio-economic conditions on women. Evelyn Reed’s *Women: Caste, Class, or Oppressed Sex?* provides a strong exposition of the naming of women’s status, while Nancy Myron’s *Class Beginnings* clarifies the link between patriarchy and women’s economic status.

Overall this is an extremely valuable reader for those looking to learn more about radical feminism generally, and specifically about its manifestations in the United States from 1967-1975. As Crow admits, her sources are regionally influenced, drawing primarily on works accessible in the New England region. While possibly a limitation, the breadth of depth of issues covered is impressive nonetheless. The reader includes an appendix listing radical feminist journals produced 1967-1975, as well as a list of archival sources for further research. The bibliography is a treasure-trove of feminist works, and the index is well organized and complete. The inclusion of a stronger introduction to the texts and the correction of some grammatical errors in Crow’s writing would make this a stronger book, but overall this is an excellent compilation of documents. Crow has certainly achieved her aim of educating readers about the contributions radical feminists have made to the current understanding of women’s lives and roles, and has dispelled pervasive myths that radicals failed to adequately recognize the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality. This book would be an especially interesting companion book to Bell and Klein’s *Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed*, which includes contemporary and international documents.

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References