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# Editorial

Johanna H. Stuckey

Somehow, whenever I try to think about the future, I find myself thinking about my past fifteen years as a radical feminist; clearly it is from that vantage point that I contemplate the future.

I began calling myself a feminist in 1969 when I joined Toronto-based New Feminists. As a member of that group I shared in the anger, the frustration, the enthusiasm of those first heady days when we planned to change the world. Most of us passed through a period of action to a period of consciousness-raising; then we began to "put our own houses in order," to attempt to change our ways and places of work. For me that has meant Women's Studies scholarship and teaching, perhaps the most exciting and rewarding endeavour I have ever engaged in. Women's Studies, whatever its particular focus, has its attention firmly fixed on the future.

So, from 1985, when I look back, I realize that the last fifteen years have been productive, stimulating, and also a little frustrating, for the high hopes with which I began my feminist years were, I realize now, a bit too high. That is not to say that I do not see accomplishments – far from it! As feminists we have affected our world immeasurably and irreversibly. Yet on some important and basic issues we have achieved little. Saddest of all, we have had little real effect on changing our society's sex-role system.

As I see it, the world is still suffering from what Nellie McClung in *In Times Like These* isolated as the disease of "much masculinity and not enough humanity." Violence against women is still endemic. Women still do not have control over our own bodies. The rape of nature continues. And we are still threatened by war and nuclear holocaust.

Yet when I consider the future – provided I can, for the moment, put aside fear of imminent planetary annihilation – I find myself still marginally optimistic. Not only have we made recognizable improvements in the last fifteen years through our feminist efforts, but there are now many young feminists ready to continue the work. Slowly (too slowly) we seem to be edging toward a future that *could* be better for women.

I will not be here to see the world in 2085 (if there is one), but I trust that feminists will be fully and completely involved in that world.

Feminism, the major Western social movement of the twentieth century, is, in my opinion, the only solution to the problems and dangers the beset us today, *all* of which result from the political distribution of human traits along sex lines and the masculine sex role so produced.

It is crucial then that feminists remember that the goal is the elimination of sex roles and male domination, and not get sidetracked into pursuing other issues, however important, at the expense of the larger struggle. It is necessary for us to remember at all times that our present danger and our present evils are symptoms of, and stem from, a societal ideology and structure that prize masculinity above all else, including life.

As to my predictions for the future, I think that if we as a species manage to avoid global suicide, feminists will, whatever the odds, remain at the thin edge of the wedge of social change and will realize with Adrienne Rich that change usually occurs "not as a leap/but a succession of brief, amazing movements/each one making possible the next." Most important of all, in sisterhood lies strength.

Sisterhood is powerful!