

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/daring-to-be-bad/>

This video provides a detailed narrative about the author's research into radical feminism during the early 1980s, exploring its historical context and evolution. As a graduate student, the author sought to write a dissertation on the 1960s, reflecting on their own peripheral involvement in activism, particularly in Washington D.C., around that time. Initially, there was a cultural prohibition against writing about the recent past, but this began to change as notable books on the 1960s and feminism emerged, highlighting gaps in historical understanding, particularly regarding radical feminism.

The author emphasizes that radical feminism was often misrepresented and overshadowed by liberal feminism, which dominated discussions of women's rights. The focus of radical feminists on issues like bodily autonomy, reproductive rights, and a critique of traditional gender roles presented a more comprehensive and transformative vision for feminist politics. This radical perspective emerged from the New Left and the Civil Rights Movement, challenging not only the societal norms of the time but also the frameworks within which feminism itself was discussed.

As the author conducted extensive interviews with women involved in the radical feminist movement, they recognized a tension within feminism: some sought to celebrate femininity while others aimed to reject traditional femininity altogether. The narrative captures the internal conflicts within the movement, particularly around issues like sexuality, race, and class, which led to significant debates, including the "sex wars" of the late 1970s to early 1990s.

Overall, the text reveals how radical feminism, while often marginalized, laid the groundwork for significant feminist advances and sought to address the deeper societal structures underpinning women's oppression, ultimately pushing the feminist movement toward a more inclusive and holistic understanding of gender and societal power dynamics.