

the second wave

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Volume One, Number 4

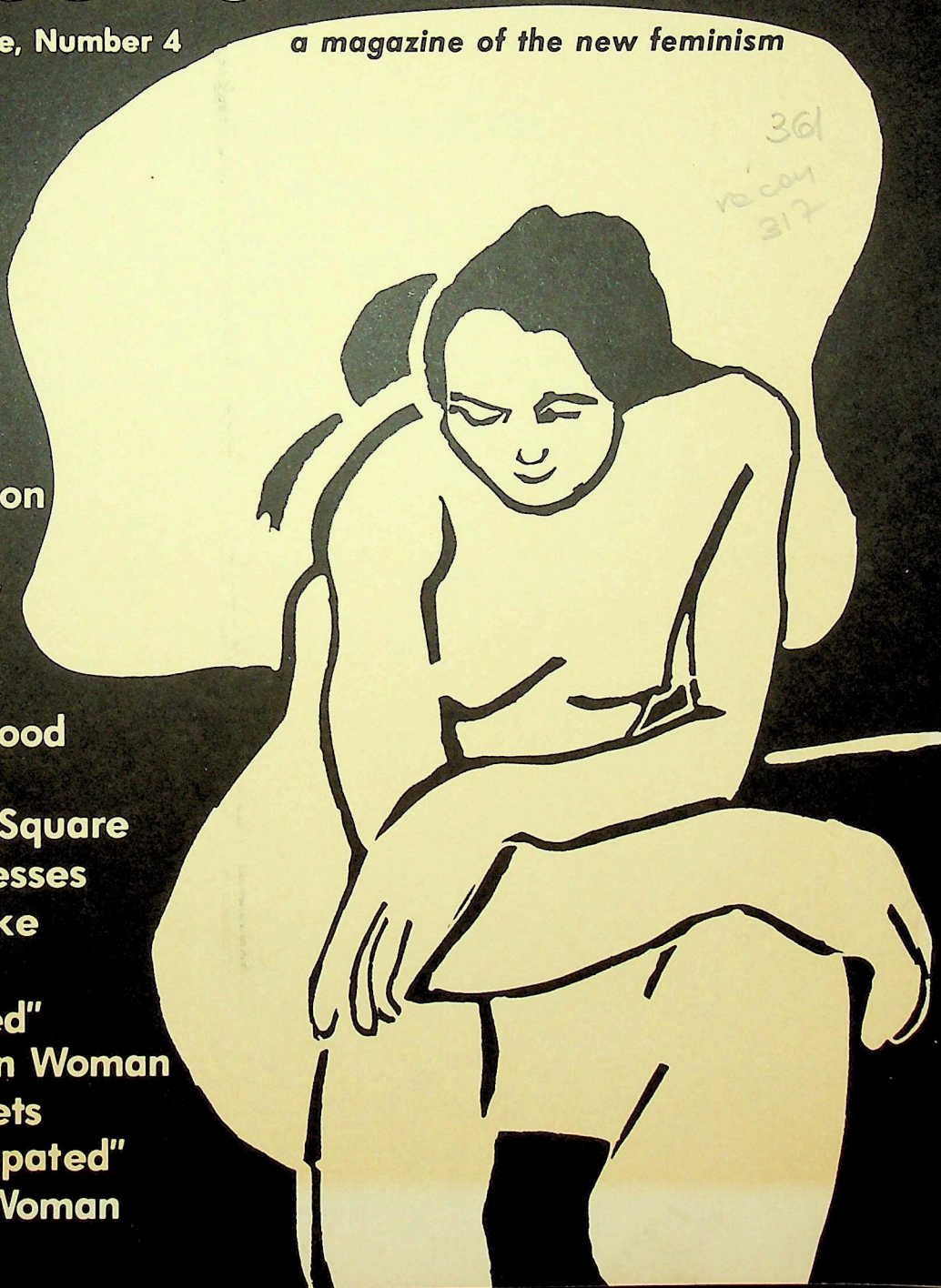
a magazine of the new feminism

Debate:
Prostitution
and
the Law

On Black
Womanhood

Harvard Square
Waitresses
Strike

"Liberated"
American Woman
Meets
"Emancipated"
Polish Woman



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front cover design by Leslie Liebesman; back cover design by Beth Newman

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"It may be that a second wave of sexual revolution might at last accomplish its aim of freeing half the race from its immemorial subordination and in the process bring us all a great deal closer to humanity."

Kate Millett - *Sexual Politics*

This publication is on file at the International Women's History Archive, 2325 Oak Street, Berkeley, California 94708 and is available on microfilm through Bell & Howell, Drawer "E," Wooster, Ohio 44691.

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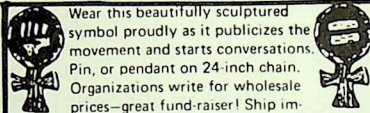
The Second Wave is published by Female Liberation in Boston, Massachusetts. The title was chosen to remind us that our movement started well over a century ago and that we are the second wave of feminists in an on-going struggle. The Second Wave is intended to present a variety of opinion from women within and without the movement on all topics of concern to women. The views expressed are not necessarily those of Female Liberation.

All readers are invited to submit contributions and letters. Submissions - photos, drawings, poetry, articles, short stories, letters, inquiries, and short reflections - should be sent to:

The Second Wave, Box 303 Kenmore Station, Boston, Mass. 02215

Please enclose a few words about yourself for the Notes on Contributors column. If you wish your original material returned, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. All Contributors will receive a complimentary copy of *The Second Wave*.

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Harvard Square Waitresses Strike

by Liza Bingham, Meredith Golden,
and Holly Newman

As a waitress, the condition of employment in any restaurant is that the employer has complete power. If you as an employee have any disagreement as to rules and regulations, or if there are any changes which you feel are needed, you must go to the boss begging. You have no way to force the employer to give in. It is you, powerless and vulnerable, against him. You will be told to leave if you don't like it, that there are many people who would gladly take your job (a situation all too real given the state of the economy and the kind of jobs that are open to women — even women college graduates). But traditionally, waitresses aren't in unions.*

It is difficult to understand why a woman whose occupation is providing service to people, often including consoling them and taking abuse from them, who is on her feet constantly while working, often under pressures of time and from the restaurant hierarchy, would have to fight for an hourly wage of \$1.35. Nor is it understandable why she should have no provisions for sick leave, health insurance, overtime pay, or any of a number of standard benefits that many other workers take for granted.

In November of 1971, eleven women working as waitresses at Cronin's Restaurant-Lounge in Cambridge, Massachusetts, found their situation intolerable, and decided to act. They held a meeting to discuss their grievances, which ended in the formation of the Harvard Square Waitresses Organizing Committee. And 75 percent of the women signed authorization slips which allowed the committee to bargain for them. The statement read:

I hereby designate the Harvard Square Waitresses Organizing Committee to represent me for the purposes of collective bargaining with the company in matters of wages, hours and other conditions of employment.

By law, when fifty-one percent of the employees sign such a statement, the employer must recognize a union and begin negotiations. The waitresses sent a letter to James E. Cronin, the restaurant's owner, informing him that their union existed and asking

that negotiations be started. The waitresses sought to bargain on the following demands: sick pay, overtime and time and one half on holidays, health insurance, one week's paid vacation for employees of a year or more, minimum wage of \$1.35, uniforms provided by employers, the breaks required by law and a place to rest; they asked that 15% of the bill be included in the check for the waitresses, that they no longer be held responsible for customers who leave without paying, that they be paid for the time scheduled if sent home, and that customers be equally distributed by number and favoritism ended.

When Cronin ignored the letter, the waitresses initiated a recognition picket; they continued to work, but picketed the restaurant before and after their shifts. During this week-long picket, Cronin's business fell from about \$600, on a bad day, to \$20 or \$30 a day. With his business so drastically



photo: Fran Taylor

affected, Cronin relented and signed a recognition agreement. A contract was drawn up by the waitresses, the Women's Legal Collective of Boston, a labor lawyer, and students from Harvard Law School.

There followed a month of negotiations with Cronin and his lawyer. Out of eight bargaining sessions, Cronin agreed only to two minor demands — the women would no longer have to clean bathrooms, and would be given a place to rest on their breaks — and those only toward the end when the negotiators became impatient. Among the demands that Cronin rejected were such requests as a leave of absence for illness or death in the family. When asked if five days was a reasonable amount of leave in the event of a death, Cronin's lawyer is quoted as saying, "Well, not if it's only in Arlington" (a town near Cambridge). As it now stands, if a waitress must stay out of work for several days, her job may be gone when she returns. The waitresses also demanded an anti-discrimination clause, providing that no person be

**On Our Way*, Vol. 1 No. 5, 12/20/71; from a statement by a waitress at Cronin's Restaurant.

Looking Back on My Career as a Waitress

by Carol Somer

From April to December, 1969, I worked a series of deaden(d)ing jobs in eating and/or drinking places, as "cocktail waitress," "waitress," "counter-girl," or "sizzle-girl" (the last at the Sizzlebord in Boston's "combat zone"). So, when two years later I see waitresses organizing at Cronin's in Harvard Square, I can't describe the excitement I feel.

My wages ranged from \$.85 to \$1.75/hour; tips went from \$.15/day to \$2/hour. As a counter-girl I was forbidden tips (we were supposed to put them in the cash register — of course we hid them in paper cups under the counter). Benefits ranged from one cheap meal a day to free drinks to 2½ meals a day plus a turkey on Thanksgiving (if I felt like poisoning myself or getting drunk). Of the five places, only one had paid holidays, none gave paid or unpaid sick-leave or vacations. None provided uniforms or laundering (as jobs changed, apron color did, too) except Sizzlebord, which provided them only for male help doing a similar job (I

offered to wear the male uniform — they laughed). Sizzlebord gave me an obnoxious little red apron and hat, and a nameplate that read, "I'm your sizzle-girl." I refused to wear it after one or two predictable remarks. The most I ever netted was \$100/week for 55 hours. I managed to save because I had no time or energy left to spend money.

Since I had given up on getting paid for doing something I liked, I thought that waitressing was the perfect job. Do my own thinking/dreaming while getting a lot of exercise plus free food and lots of tips. Then I left home and college and was told by the state employment agency in Vermont that they had one waitress job open for me. I soon found out that waitressing did involve thinking — but thinking "special: sole \$1.35, pie: apple, rhubarb, Boston, chocolate cream, custard . . ." — thinking that stuck me in that one groove for hours after finishing work. And reflexes. Like grabbing at that precious quarter before some customer grabbed it first (thinking as I had that waitresses didn't need it). Like smiling at faces/clothes that said "big tipper." Waitressing also meant stomach-aches from eating on the run. And unbelievable leg cramps, coffee burns, cut fingers, torn stockings every day (tights or socks were prohibited out on the floor); and agonies of guilt, fear, pure hatred

denied employment at Cronin's on the basis of race, sex, age, union sympathy, religion, or political belief. This was also refused. At this point, Cronin's reluctance to bargain in good faith could only be construed as refusal to take the women seriously, and they called a strike.

The strike took the form of a picket during dinner and drinking hours; sometimes there was one waitress outside the restaurant, other times up to twenty supporters. The pickets carried signs and asked potential customers to boycott the restaurant. After about a week of picketing, which severely damaged his business, Cronin went to Middlesex County Superior Court, and without providing witnesses, affidavits, or bond, obtained a temporary restraining order to halt the strike. On granting the restraining order, the court claimed that the "purpose" of the strike was "illegal," that is, in violation of phase two of the wage-price freeze. The waitresses, however, maintain that their demands do not violate the freeze for several reasons: waitresses are not covered by minimum wage laws, and so the freeze does not apply to them; it is legal to ask for increases above wage guidelines in a bargaining context; and, should an increase exceed the guidelines, the waitresses could apply to the National Labor Relations Board for exception status.

The phrasing of the temporary restraining order was vague, prohibiting only "illegal" picketing — harassment of customers. Despite the fact that the picketing, for the most part, was orderly and courteous, the waitresses were fired and sued for contempt of court.

Rendered jobless were seven of the waitresses who are financial heads of households and the sole support of their children. Due to illness or injury, several of the women support their husbands as well. In a written statement issued early in the strike, one of the waitresses said, "It is commonly believed that men support us, thus we work because we want some nice extras — that new wall-to-wall carpet, a new kitchen table, a new hat, etc. This just is not true. It is a myth to perpetuate our economic oppression — to keep us down by paying us less. We work to survive, we work not for luxuries, but for necessities — food and shelter for us and our children."*

Relying on personal savings, the waitresses continued their strike, but because of the contempt suit, did not themselves picket, as a precaution. The picket was maintained by their supporters, including many groups from the community — women's liberation groups, the local tenants organizing committee, socialist groups, gay liberation groups, the Lawyers Guild, Vietnam Veterans Against the War; a local radio station, which had covered the strike from the beginning, continued to spread the word.

After the case was removed to a federal court, the temporary restraining order ran out and the federal judge refused to renew it. (The state court no longer had jurisdiction.) As of this writing, the strike continues. The contempt of court suit against the waitresses is still pending. But despite the complications and strain of the legal fight, the waitresses' action has had a marked effect on Cronin's business. He has hired no new waitresses

and confusion over how to act towards men.

According to my father, a waitress was in the same class as a prostitute — a waitress not being much higher than a barmaid (waiters, on the other hand, didn't seem sullied by their profession). My friends and I laughed at such an idea, but I soon found that my father was not alone in his thinking. Customers and management alike dropped all the conventions they normally used with "good women." An obscenity followed by "please excuse my French," a pause with no response from me, and then another obscenity established my status as a public female. What disturbed me most was the conflict between needing that 25-cent tip and bating that particular person. I don't think I ever once told anyone to fuck off — I would just squirm out of reach and mutter "I have to run" or say I was married (it really made me feel like an adult to have to keep using my husband as an invisible policeman, and anyway these guys would just respond with "how do you like that — I'm married, too"). Most of the places I worked were the kind of greasy spoon joints with a regular clientele; refusing a customer's attentions meant chancing a loss of that regular income. But the real humiliation came with the realization that I melted right into that scene just like wax in a lock. Eighteen years of conditioning had made it possible to smile

while my stomach gritted its teeth.

Losing favor with the cook or bartender meant the other "girls" (and I worked with "girls" who were over 60) would get their food and drinks first, or you might never get a well-done steak again. And in low-class places where fast service brings a good tip before a young ass, the waitress (who is largely dependent on tips for survival) better have a good relationship going with the cook, dishwasher, busboy and bartender (who are all on fixed salary and couldn't care less what the customers think). The waitresses were friendly or hostile depending on whether or not I said I was married and how well I was dressed. When they were friendly, they were motherly, and when they were hostile they got me fired. In most cases, there was a sense of cooperation against the bosses and customers, but even this worked against us. If I were 15 minutes late, it was the other waitress who had to pour coffee, toast bagels, run up bills on the register, go into the kitchen for clean cups, etc. No one talked of strikes, unions, or even asking the boss for a raise, let alone Women's Liberation. We lived from tip to tip, accepting whatever we got. This is why I'm so excited that waitresses, the third most oppressed class of workers (after wives who get paid nothing, and maids who get next to nothing), are finally getting it together. ♀

to replace those on strike; he hasn't needed to. Staffed by two waitresses who refused to participate in the strike, the restaurant is presently serving only five percent of its regular customers. The waitresses attribute part of their success to the support they have received from the Cambridge community, and contrast this with a similar effort in a nearby town which failed for lack of community response.

In the long run, the waitresses hope that their action will be the beginning of an independent union for working women. They are already investigating the possibility of setting up child-care for working mothers, and providing free health care. When the strike at Cronin's began, the women had considered seeking help from existing unions. They decided, however, that autonomy would better serve their needs in the long run.

What we are asking seems to us so very little and the struggle that we must go through to get it so exhausting . . . Every day we must face and take on new responsibilities for this course of action to which we have made a commitment . . . What new litigation and problems tomorrow may bring for myself or any of us I don't know. But I do know that we need help if we are to have the strength to continue . . . We can accomplish changes that are real and lasting, but what we need now is just a little help from our friends.+

Contributions may be sent to H.S.W.O.C., c/o Patricia Welch, 698 Green St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139. ♀

Kitchen Poem

She let her life be bounded
By other people's needs —
Made necessary lists
And always cooked on a low flame.
For them, she measured out
Herself, three times a day:
A thousand eggs, a thousand opened cans,
A thousand puddings sprung
From cardboard boxes.
She often offered cakes
For their approval,
And perfected white sauce, but
Avoided garlic and all foods with foreign names.
(Her plans for them
Did not reach very far.)

And, when they left
(And they all left, of course,
Lured perhaps by rich, suggestive smells
Caught half-unwillingly
From other people's kitchens:
Or else, perhaps, renouncing
All formulae and recipes
For peanut butter spooned
Haphazardly from a communal jar)
When all this happened and she was alone,
She couldn't even cry —
Or scream — or burn the kitchen and the house
In one mad, final burst
Of self-assertion.
No, not enough was left
For anything except
Continuation —
More eggshells and more boxes —
But on a smaller scale.

+From a statement by Patricia Welch, waitress, 2/10/72.



drawing: Peggy Bunn

With this issue of THE SECOND WAVE we are beginning a forum series to present opposing views within the women's movement. Letters of interest in response to the forums will be printed in following issues. Readers are encouraged to submit articles and to let us know what topics would be of interest to them for subsequent forums.

In response to the heated discussions that began with last December's conference on prostitution in New York, we have chosen the topic of prostitution for this issue.

I by Karen Lindsey

Like the society at large, the Women's Liberation Movement has had some trouble coming to grips with the subject of prostitution. We recognize prostitutes as our sisters, yet there is too often an insidious, and largely unrecognized, tendency to view them as fallen sisters, an attitude that accounts for the chaos and confusion that occurred during the recent conference on prostitution that was held in New York. For years, liberals, male and female, have talked about "legalizing" prostitution — setting it up with certain rules and restrictions involving legal places of prostitution, registration of prostitutes, and regular medical examinations for the prostitutes. It has occurred to others, more recently, that in many cases such restrictions can result in harrassments more injurious to the prostitutes than those they face now, and the concept of "decriminalization" has arisen — the assertion that sexual acts willingly entered into for any reason are private acts, and that all laws regarding prostitution must therefore be repealed. It seems an absurdly evident bit of logic. But recently some feminists have come up with a new twist to the old legalization argument: they hold that prostitution should be legal for the prostitutes, but that it should be illegal for their male clients. It is one of the most dangerous ideas that we have had to face in a long time.

First of all, there is in this notion a basic

inconsistency with feminist belief. We have long held that all women sell themselves: that the only available roles of a woman — wife, secretary, girlfriend — all demand the selling of herself to one or more men. Yet no one in the movement has, to my knowledge, suggesting busting bosses and husbands — the "clients" of non-prostitutes. In the absence of such a demand, the demand to make clients subject to arrest reflects a value judgement on the life-style chosen by the prostitutes.

The law proposed would, if effected, take away the livelihood of women in the profession of prostitution — would replace a harsh repression with a kind of benevolent despotism. But despotism by its nature is not benevolent. And to substitute oppression by women for oppression by men is to accomplish nothing but the negation of a dream of liberation through sisterhood.

One valid argument that can be made against the proposal to jail the clients relates to men: that if a woman offers to sell her sex, a man has a right to buy it, no matter how repellant his exercise of that right may be. But I'm not going to labor that point here. The men will take care of themselves: they always do. More important for us is what the proposal says about how we regard those of our sisters who have chosen to become prostitutes, and our willingness to deny their right to that choice. It has been argued that they really have no choice, that it is society's sexism that has driven them into prostitution. But if this is the case, we are committing an even graver error; we are destroying their only means of survival. (The most dramatic example, of course, is the dope addict who can support her habit only through prostitution. To deny her the means to obtain drugs is to subject her to sufferings of which most of us have no comprehension.)

It is important for the women's movement to realize that while we certainly have a crusade, we are not a religion — and that to degenerate into one is to bring about the doom of our movement even while it may appear to be growing. To deny any course of action to other women is the beginning of an inquisition, no matter how innocent it may appear. The attempt to save our sisters from themselves is the denial of their selfhood. It is, further, for us to function as men: to turn sisterhood into paternalism.

At the root of it all is an unpleasant reality that must be faced: the contempt many of us have for prostitutes. Despite our "we-are-all-prostitutes" rhetoric, there is often a gut disgust at the idea of a woman selling her body. It is an attitude we are entitled to in terms of our own bodies — but to demand of someone else that she play Rebecca-at-the-parapet to conform to our notions of dignity is, at best, incredibly presumptuous. The right of women to control their bodies — a concept central to our movement — includes the right to use their

bodies in a way that may displease anyone else — even feminists who choose to treat their own perceptions as holy truth. We must face, painfully, our own prejudices against prostitutes, and eliminate those prejudices. We certainly cannot afford to act on them under the pretense of helping sisters.

The second important step, after this crucial confrontation, is a truly open, and humble, attempt to reach the prostitutes themselves — to admit our ignorance of their lives, and to ask, with a real desire to learn, what those experiences are and in what ways they believe them to relate to our experiences. Then perhaps we will be able to give them whatever we have to give them, and to accept what they have to give us. And finally, we must refrain from imposing our values, or even our presences, on them. Sisterhood cannot, by its nature, be forced; only paternalism can. And before we attempt *any* legal action (and I include decriminalization), we must know from the prostitutes themselves what is best for them; at this point we are far from any such knowledge. If and when we can discover the kinds of laws prostitutes feel will best serve to mitigate their oppression, those are the laws we can fight for. (continued on p. 15)

II

by Linda Thurston

Many women are concerned with prostitution and would like to do something about it. We are unhappy because of the harm it does to women — not only the prostitutes themselves, but all women.

... Prostitution affects ... women more thoroughly and exclusively than poverty affects blacks. It enforces a one-sided monogamy, is held as a verbal and actual threat over all women, restricts our freedom of movement, and from the first she learns of it, works to undermine the spirit of every little girl. (1)

The question, then, is what do we do about it?

Legalization, a solution favored by 59% of Republican voters (2), is clearly not the answer. It would free the woman from the threat of jail, but at what cost? She would have to face state physical inspections (but her clients wouldn't), be identified for life as a "card-carrying prostitute," and give a large portion of her income to taxes. As an example of what legalization would mean, we can look to other countries where it is legal. "Women are for sale in brightly lit windows, like yard goods, in special streets of Antwerp, Hamburg and other sea ports." (3) Questions of regulation also arise — What of "specialty sex"? Will certain classes of women be provided to meet the demand for children to fuck or women to beat up? Clearly, legalization of prostitution amounts to condoning it as an institution, something feminists are not willing to do.

Decriminalization would end harassment of working prostitutes without imposing state controls. It is not, however, much different from

legalization. For example, in Nevada, where prostitution is decriminalized, brothels are thriving business, but regulation by private businessmen is no better than state regulation. Such a situation does nothing to end prostitution, only promotes it.

A third possibility is to legally condemn, not the woman in her role as victim, but the man as exploiter. If anyone is committing a crime it is the man. Yet it is argued that he has a right to buy what society offers for sale. This argument is based on consumerism, a value system that places property rights before human rights. And while most people agree that human bondage and servitude are wrong, this principle has not yet been accepted in terms of prostitution. Perhaps it does not seem wrong because the people being bought in this case are women who are traditionally considered property — belonging either to a single man in marriage or to the public in the case of prostitutes. But slavery is wrong in all cases, not just some. Society is to blame for offering women for sale, but that does not justify the man's purchase.

In reality, imprisonment of the men would be completely impractical. In the first place, such a law would not be enforced by our male police force, even if it were passed by our male legislators and signed by our male governors or President. But even if people were willing, it would be impossible to enforce such a law because of the numbers involved. Kinsey's report showed that 70% of American men use prostitutes at least once. And of course if the principle were extended to all of men's criminal behavior towards women, we would be faced with imprisoning half the human race. Yet imprisonment is not the only alternative. Other possibilities should be explored, such as publication of the names of the offenders, fines, and so on.

The assertion has been made that laws protecting us against the oppressive acts of men would make women the oppressors. This is not true, for the success of feminism depends on our creation of a system where all are equal and none are allowed to oppress. Yet it will take time before all men give up the oppressor's role and in the meantime we must be protected.

While making purchase of women a crime would establish a principle, it would, in the short run, make things difficult for the prostitute. If her clients were arrested, she would very likely be out of work. This would mean that the ex-prostitute would have the opportunity to take another meaningless and degrading job for a great deal less money. And no matter what, she would still be in the essential position of working for and seeking always to please the men. Or maybe she could join her sisters on the welfare roles. It's not as if we wished to keep prostitution as a job opportunity for young women. Like most jobs open to women, prostitution does not promote individual development or fulfillment. Women at the top of the ladder may get an education, but it all goes to serving men. The prostitute may earn more money than other women, (4) but there is no job security

and no pension when she grows old. If we are to abolish prostitution, women must have viable and appealing alternatives.

Unlike religious reformers of the past, feminists do not base opposition to prostitution on anti-sex values. Just as with marriage, our opposition is to the economics of the situation. Sex is a fine thing when it is the free choice of the individuals involved — free of economic coercion. No one should be dependent on selling herself for her support; all love should be free love. Some people have confused our condemnation of the institution of prostitution with condemnation of prostitutes, thinking mistakenly that it is the sexual activity that disgusts us. This is not true any more than the assertion that our opposition to marriage means that we condemn wives.

Some feminists claim that by trying to do something "for the prostitute," the women's movement is behaving in a paternalistic manner and that we should do only whatever prostitutes think should be done. We are not doing favors "for sisters we have not consulted," nor are we trying to "save our sisters from themselves." We are concerned with freeing all women, including prostitutes, from the oppression of the patriarchy. We all have a right to try to end our own oppression. It is when we view the oppression as not affecting ourselves, only other sisters, that we can become paternalistic by trying to do something "for them."

When all things are considered there really is no reform of prostitution that can be made outside the context of thorough social change. There is nothing we can do to make prostitution "better" or more acceptable. The problem is the existence of prostitution itself. If we are to do away with it, we must do away with the need for it.

Prostitution has not always existed. It is a creation of patriarchal society and a necessary companion to the family. Augustine, among others, argued that, "Unless there were prostitution, the sancity of the family could not be maintained." (5) Thomas Aquinas (and Lecky in the 19th century) compared prostitution as a necessary condition of social morality to a cesspool — "necessary to a palace, if the whole palace is not to smell." (6) It is only by portioning off one group of women to be sexually indiscriminate that society can have its opposite. Thus men created the split roles for women — Mary or Eve, wife or prostitute. The function of both women remains essentially the same — to serve men. The difference lies in that one woman functions privately (and more extensively) and the other publicly. It is not love, but prostitution, that goes with marriage like a horse and carriage.

In other words, men wanted one class of women to be sexually isolated to insure their particular paternity for reasons of ego and inheritance. At the same time they do not wish to be restricted by the confines of monogamy, and so prostitutes are needed.

The stricter the provisions of family law, the

greater the urge felt by men for a free zone in which they can satisfy their sexual desires *without incurring subsequent obligations*. The woman . . . paid for her services . . . has no further claim on her visitor. (7) (Italics mine)

The money paid is as important as the sex in this relationship. This is the key that releases the man from the responsibility to support the family — a responsibility forced upon the individual by class society.

In addition to serving as a prop to the family, prostitution is a great profit maker. Sex as a commodity (not even counting sex in advertising) pours a great deal of money into the economy. In general, the prostitute keeps a small percentage of her income; much of it goes to men — to pimps, to hotel owners, to drug pushers, to police, judges, lawyers, to the fashion and cosmetics industries. Other profits are made, too. Millions of dollars are spent annually on prostitution (\$250 million per year was given as a conservative estimate in 1966) (8) to oil the machinery of government and industry *alone*. In the end the bill is footed by the U.S. Treasury in the form of "entertainment of clients" as a tax-deductible business expense.

There are psychological needs for prostitution, too. It is used to keep women in line. We are told that we must remain chaste for husbands or we will become whores — total social outcasts. It teaches us to view ourselves as property and not to strike out in the world on our own. Further, prostitutes meet the need for

. . . Objects on whom to project all the negative . . . feelings for women. Prostitutes were to the Victorians what witches were to the Medievals. It was for this reason that the Victorians allowed themselves to play so frequently with the fantasy of redeeming the prostitute, while actually making redemption as difficult as possible. (9)

In short, the only way we can get rid of prostitution is to get rid of the patriarchal society that depends upon it. Spending our energy waging battles over dubious reforms of prostitution will get us nowhere. We must understand that prostitution and marriage will live or die together. It is our job to move as rapidly as possible to build a movement that can begin to create the better world we envision. ♀

1. Pam Keardon, "The Politics of Pity: Mau-mauing the Feminists," *The Village Voice*, January 13, 1972, p. 12.
2. AP report, "Bawdy House Baron' Objects to Political Role," *Boston Globe*, September 1, 1970.
3. Lewis J. Baker, *The High Cost of Loving*, p. 44.
4. Call girls, the best paid prostitutes, earn ". . . anywhere from between \$10,000 to \$250,000 a year, although the medium income is around \$25-30,000." *Ibid*, p. 81.
5. G. Rattray Taylor, *Sex In History*, p. 206. This book is highly recommended. Published in 1954 by Ballantine Books, 101 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C.
6. Taylor, p. 24 and Baker, p. 19.
7. Baker, p. 10.
8. Baker, pp. 83-84.
9. Taylor, p. 207.

My hair's falling out.
 I've noticed it all month..
 And last night I dreamt I grew freckles
 That turned into leopard spots.
 I feel like Annie Oakley
 Trotting down some mountain path on an old horse,
 A leg or tooth coming loose at every turn,
 The sun hot on my back, pushing.

— Charlotte Kahn



i move slowly now
 not to go
 but to get out of your way

aside
 near a wall
 i take account of those beside
 slow like myself
 lame, halt or sightless
 twisted travelers
 too slow . . .

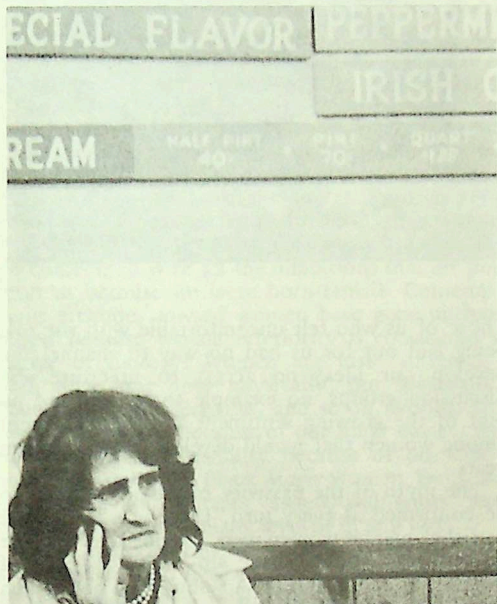
park residents,
 sitting on benches, bent into flocks of pigeons

feet and legs catching waste paper
 eyes sucking on pictures of your moon leap.

fingers sort through paper, glass and stone
 to find bread for the birds

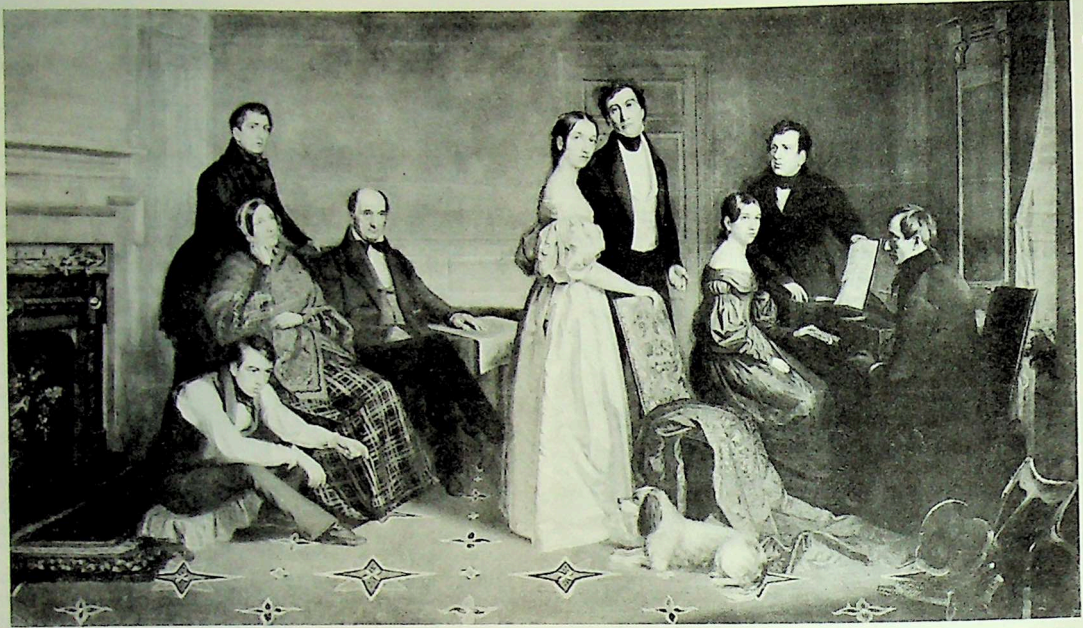
we have all that time
 you passed over
 to sort through and see . . .

— Gail King



photos: Batya Weinbaum





Hollingsworth, "The Hollingsworth Family"; courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The Family

by Jeanne Lafferty

In light of the fact that I had elected to prepare for a career as a trombone player in junior high school, it seemed to me rather strange that the school system had decided to train me (and all other females) to prepare meals, set tables, wash dishes, and sew pockets. Several times a week we were drilled in the elementary chores of house-keeping. It appeared that the school administration knew something more about our destinies than they were letting on.

All females were also enrolled in a course called "Marriage and Family Living" (there was no corresponding course for men). This class provided the philosophical justification for all the training we had had in cooking, cleaning, sewing, and caring for children (the latter was included in a class called "Home Nursing"—also compulsory for females). We discussed every aspect of the family except the concept of the family itself. This was never questioned. We learned that marriage is a 50-50 proposition. The 50-50 part escaped me, since none of our local candidates for husband were being informed of the formula. But the fact that marriage is a proposition came through loud and clear.

All this took place ten years ago, before the emergence of the new feminist movement—in fact before the emergence of any movement at all.

Those of us who felt uncomfortable with the role being laid out for us had no way to channel and develop our ideas—no access to literature and discussion groups, no example to follow, and no hint of the growing sentiment and the movement among women that would develop in the next ten years.

The myth of the passivity of women seemed to be confirmed at every turn. There was always the fear that maybe women were inferior after all. The lessons were clear: shape up or face a life of frustration and isolation. A young man posing as a rebel was tolerated within certain limits, but a rebellious female was an abomination—especially to rebellious young men. My best friend's boy friend thought that it was unfeminine for women to smoke. Later, she found that he felt it unseemly for women to drive automobiles. This "liberal and sensitive" young man was shocked when she sarcastically asked him his position on the vote.

We clung to the hope that in the outside world things would be better. All kinds of jobs were opening up to women—until we tried to get them. As boys matured they would accept us as their equals—until we began competing with them. Our illusions of independence were destroyed, and it was evident that women were not meant to fight back. We thought that in marriage there would be plenty of free time to develop ourselves in art, literature, psychology, pottery, weaving, sewing, cooking, cleaning, scrubbing, changing diapers, etc.

It was not until the late 60's that these feelings among young women took the form of the women's liberation movement. Many of us became involved in the anti-war and civil rights move-

ments—and yet another dimension was added to our understanding. Like our sisters in the abolitionist movement, we found that we had to get together as women around our own oppression in order to survive, even in these progressive movements. Not only were we up against a society that dictated our inferiority, but we also had to cope with the “New Left,” which had little or no understanding of the nature of feminism and its revolutionary potential.

Out of these experiences grew Female Liberation, a group that started in Boston in the summer of 1968. It was considered very radical because of our stand against the nuclear family. We wrote articles, held lectures, and sponsored workshops pointing to the family as the basic unit of female oppression. In the subsequent four years it has become clear that an understanding of the family is the key to understanding the feminist movement. Those groups and organizations that reject or denigrate the independent women’s movement have a lack of understanding of the nature of the nuclear family and its historical role.

Women who become involved in feminist activities quickly begin to realize the all-pervasive nature of our oppression. Everywhere we turn we are confronted with all the limitations that are put upon us because we were born female. Contemptuous attitudes toward women have gone unchallenged because female inferiority is considered a matter of biology. Women are just “different” from men, not only physically, but spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and so on. Women are not fit to govern because of our lunar cycles. We can’t handle responsibility because of our emotions. We are devils, Black Magic Women, Delilahs, temptresses and martyrs, angels and saints, but never equal to men on any level or in any way.

These attitudes can be traced back to our role within the family. A clear example is job discrimination (which is a mild way of expressing the agony many women go through, either in a career or just trying to support ourselves and our families). Not only do we have to display the correct dress and make-up, employers insist that we fit neatly into the family structure in our proper role. A friend of mine who is 29 and unmarried tried to find a job recently. The first interviewer wanted to know why she wasn’t married. The second asked if she was planning to marry soon. At this point she began telling them that she was married. Next they wondered if she was planning to have children. If she wasn’t, they asked why not, what was wrong. If she was, they didn’t want to hire her. Women who have children are warned that they will not be given time off to tend their children. This kind of humiliation is something that no man has ever had to face.

An unspoken attitude is that women don’t have to be paid the same as men because anything they do in the world is a peripheral activity compared to their real work: to find a man and raise a family. Similarly, working mothers are only supplementing the family income, and career women can’t be

given too much authority. (Everyone knows what bitches they are to work for.) A common assumption is that this system of sexism exists simply so that bosses can pay female help less money. This is partly true, but the primary threat posed by the women’s movement is not that women want equal pay, but that alternatives to the family might open up as a result of our being able to support ourselves—financially and emotionally— independently of men and the family.

Of course, the concept of dissolving the family is a purely imaginary one. Most feminists do not raise the slogan “Abolish the family.” What we are fighting for is alternatives to the family: the right of women to choose how they want to live. There is no law that says we must live in families, and feminists do not demand of women that they leave their families when there is nowhere else to go. The women’s liberation movement, however, has given many women the courage to break away from unhappy marriages. Experiments with communal living and living with other women are generally very good experiences for those of us who have had the opportunity to try them.

Some other temporary alternatives, obtainable in the short run, are child care, to relieve women of the burden of 24-hour responsibility for their children, and control of reproductive functions through more readily available birth control and abortion.

Child care, a step toward independence for many, can be as frustrating to obtain as a job. During World War II when women were needed by industry for production, child care centers accommodating over a million children were set up in the space of just a few months. Today when the government spends billions yearly on the war in Vietnam, we are told that there is no money for child care. But if we dig a little deeper, we see that all the reactionary ideas about women and the family are used to justify the government’s refusal to grant us adequate care for our children. The money could be made available if human needs were considered first, but present government priorities exclude this possibility. The family must be maintained at all costs, and free, 24-hour, community-controlled child care represents an alternative to the family.

The concept that women should be able to control their own bodies is too close to the foundations of the nuclear family to be pleasing to the people that rule this country. Ted Kennedy brags openly of his anti-abortion stand. President Nixon recently blasted the abortion repeal movement and reaffirmed his belief in the sanctity of life, a ludicrous stand considering the thousands slaughtered in Vietnam during his administration. The Roman Catholic Church has launched an all-out campaign against abortion, with billboards depicting the plight of the unborn if abortion were to be legal, disregarding those already born into impoverished lives. The state makes criminals of women who seek to terminate unwanted pregnancies, with penalties ranging from threat of

imprisonment, as in the case of Shirley Wheeler*, to death at the hands of an illegal and incompetent abortionist. That a woman might choose not to bear children, and have at her disposal the means to maintain this decision, is a threat which underlies much of the vehement opposition to repeal of abortion laws.

These and other prohibitions against women's independence represent the need of class society to maintain the nuclear family as a tool to perpetuate status and property inheritance, social inequities, and male domination. At their roots is the myth of female inferiority, springing from the subtle and vicious cycle which decrees that women must stay in the home to care for children and are therefore unsuited to political, economic, social, and intellectual activity. In *The Myth of Women's Inferiority*, Evelyn Reed, a well-known feminist and Marxist anthropologist, describes the way in which society trapped women in the home:

It is not nature, but class society, which robbed women of their right to participate in the higher functions of society and placed the primary emphasis upon their animal functions of maternity. And this robbery was perpetrated through a two-fold myth. On the one side, motherhood is represented as a biological affliction arising out of the maternal organs of women. Alongside this vulgar materialism, motherhood is represented as being something almost mystical. To console women for their status as second-class citizens, mothers are sanctified, endowed with haloes and blessed with special "instincts," feelings and knowledge forever beyond the comprehension of men. Sanctity and degradation are simply two sides of the same coin of the social robbery of women under class society.

That this myth is a pernicious lie and that the system of which it is a consequence is an unnatural transplant onto human life is illustrated by a look at primitive society. In *Women and the Family*, Reed points out that savage women bore children, yet remained in the forefront of social and cultural life.

Primitive society was organized as a matriarchy which, as indicated by its very name, was a system where women, not men, were the leaders and organizers. But the distinction between the two social systems goes beyond this reversal of the leadership role of the two sexes. The leadership of women in primitive society was not founded upon the dispossession of the men. On the contrary, primitive society knew no social inequalities, inferi-

orities or discriminations of any kind. Primitive society was completely equalitarian. In fact, it was through the leadership of women that the men were brought forward out of a more backward condition into a higher social and cultural role.

If we can agree that the family is the basic unit of female oppression, then it is essential for us to understand how this unit arose. The simultaneous rise of class society and the nuclear family is discussed by Reed in this passage from *Women: Caste, Class or Oppressed Sex?*:

The key factors which brought about this reversal in women's social status came out of the transition from a hunting and food gathering economy to a far higher mode of production based upon agriculture, stock raising and urban crafts. The primitive division of labor between the sexes was replaced by a more complex social division of labor. The greater efficiency of labor gave rise to a sizable surplus product, which led first to differentiations and then to deep-going divisions among the various segments of society.

By virtue of the directing roles played by men in large scale agriculture, irrigation and construction projects, as well as in stock raising, this surplus wealth was gradually appropriated by a hierarchy of men as their private property. This, in turn, required the institution of marriage and the family to fix the legal ownership and inheritance of a man's property. Through monogamous marriage the wife was brought under the complete control of her husband who was thereby assured of legitimate sons to inherit his wealth.

In addition to enslaving women, class society removed the rearing of children from the responsibility of the community, and placed the burden of support on the family, with no guarantee that it was capable of such support. The inevitable result was the tragic discrimination between carefully tended children on one hand and neglected, deprived children on the other. The family has evolved into such a tight little unit that the income and social status of the parent or parents rigidly determines the health, education, vocational possibilities, and ultimate life style of dependent children, allowing automatic wealth and luxury for a few and misery for many.

We can see more clearly the need that class society has for the nuclear family if we try to imagine for a moment what it would be like if we woke up tomorrow and found that the family had disappeared. To begin with, all the women in this country whose role was defined primarily as mother or housewife would need jobs. Society would have to provide those jobs. All the children who are now cared for by individual families would become the responsibility of society as a whole,

(continued on p. 15)

* Shirley, an unmarried woman who was convicted of manslaughter in Florida for having an illegal abortion, received a 2-year suspended sentence and is now serving probation. The terms of her probation are that she 1) get married or live with her parents; 2) keep an 11 p.m. curfew; and 3) stay out of bars.

On Black Womanhood

by Doris Wright

The Black woman is advised by some to work only within the confines of the Black economic struggle, with the reasoning that all her problems are rooted in her economic status as a Black person. Her personal battle for self-determination is derided, and she is warned that she will "drain off" energies from the "bigger" struggle if she strikes out on her own behalf. This loaded and purposely slanted assertion never quite explains how the efforts of a woman fighting for her right to abortion on demand, quality child care for her children, and an end to discrimination against her sex (which, by the way, is over half the Black population) in any way interferes with the co-existent struggle for Black liberation. On the contrary, it logically follows that instead of draining from the common struggle, any gains made by her on behalf of her sex are automatically gains for the entire race.

The Black woman, like all women, has got to develop her own individual sense of worth. Liberation begins in the mind. First we must purge ourselves of the rubbish we have been fed as women, which has limited our scope and our expectations of ourselves. Carrying around a crippled mind that's obsessed with the trivia of pleasing and winning approval inevitably limits the possibility of all expressive growth, and is a painful experience that haunts the life of almost every woman. Once we are convinced at an early age that our human dignity is dependent on whether we become an appendage to a member of the opposite sex, our lives fall into a predictable, repetitious pattern of shuffling to please the Man.

We must next put our lives on a new track whereby we no longer work to sabotage our own development by helplessly landing in and out of destructive personal relationships with people who, because of the painful circumstances of their own lives, are incapable of being supportive to others. Black men momentarily became angry over the conclusions arrived at in studies such as Moynihan's,¹ which explored the Black family in depth. They did so only because they felt the studies "exposed" them as deficient fathers, and thereby challenged their manhood. They nonetheless quickly closed ranks with the white establishment in indicting Black women as "dominating bitches" who must abdicate their positions of authority in the family.

Whoever defined the patriarchal family system as being the most wholesome and valuable one? The Man himself, of course, because he's top cat, and one of the ways to stay on top is to cultivate a climate which equates male supremacy to godliness. Men have sent many white sisters into guilt-ridden qualms over this patriarchy rubbish.

They have also succeeded in intimidating some Black women into anxious remorse over the fact that when Sam ran out and left them with the brood, they had the courage and the moral strength to become the family's breadwinner. Black women have proven over and over again that they are capable leaders, not only as heads of families but out in the world as well. We should never allow white or Black men to shame us on that score. Shirley Chisholm says in her autobiography that women, "like the Black population, have cooperated in their own enslavement." They have "submitted to oppression, and even condoned it." She maintains that women have "to dare the sanctions that society imposes on anyone who breaks with its traditions." In terms of the waste of womanpower, she states, "The amount of talent that has been lost to our country is appalling." For example, many sisters have been unwittingly caught up in the male militant's ego trip, and energies that should be spent in furthering woman's and thereby humanity's cause have been wasted instead in playing the role of moral backstop. These male radicals look around themselves and envy those who hold the absolute power over all our lives. Although they resent being manipulated by a powerful few, they would be no more willing than the present establishment to offer an alternative society where women would be free to live outside of the institutions set up for them. What is the point of women working to do away with that much-talked-about "2% at the top," who supposedly run everything, if there's always another 2% waiting to take their place and continue their violent, anti-social policies? So long as machismo garbage is fed to the boy-child, creating an unreasoning fool who all his life harbors the fear that others will discover he's not all the man he ought to be, no change in the form of government will make any difference. No change in the set of men at the top will make any difference.

The amount of talent that can now be lost to the Black race if women do not step forward and play active leadership roles can do irreparable damage to the Black cause. A leading Black spokeswoman expressed a fantasy that if the Black woman walks behind her man today "maybe" he will fall tomorrow, and she can come to his aid as leader. We are to wait for him to "fall," whatever that means, in order to take our rightful places as leaders of our race. Never was there a moment more right than now for Black women to fully assert themselves in every area in which they can be a significant influence. We are in a position of strength because of our unique history. We must build on our past and not resent it. We should

revere our history as women instead of being shamed by it. The struggles and conquests of our grandmothers are testimony to our mental and physical endurance. We *know* what we're capable of. Remember, we are the descendants of those proud, independent Black women who for centuries spiritually carried this race and its woes on their backs.



photo: Carolyn Fischel

In our explorations of our heritage, we Black women must recognize any aspects of it that are injurious or destructive to our dignity. Let us not delude ourselves or put on blinders when encountering unpleasant truths out of fear that any questioning on our part might be taken as disloyalty to our Blackness. For the future growth and development of our race, no one segment of it can be allowed to assume exclusive power to dictate the limits and bounds of its goals. We are women, and we must look at every tradition, current or past, in light of its respect for our womanhood. In our desire to affirm our Black pride, we must be careful not to directly or indirectly condone religious or political institutions which are still oppressing the vast majority of our sisters around the world. For example, in the courts throughout Africa the case which occurs most frequently is that of the runaway wife. Polygamy is still a widely practiced, legal institution which permits one segment of the human race to be purchased like cattle and added to a herd. Polygamy fosters and perpetuates in the mind of woman her second-class status and her worthlessness, notions which she then passes on to her daughters. Those who might take the stand that one must not pass judgment on the religious or social practices of others and that

"they're used to it so they like it that way" should listen to the activities of some of our Black and Brown sisters in Africa.

In 1968, the National Conference of Women, a branch of Guinea's Democratic Party, demanded the abolition of polygamy, and President and Mrs. Sekou Touré marched with 2,000 women in support of this demand. In the same year, the Women's Society for Public Affairs in Ghana called for government legislation against polygamy. The National Council of Women in Tanzania has been holding a series of meetings designed to change the marriage laws, and in the Congo, the Union for the Emancipation of African Woman was formed. Three of its aims are: (1) "to struggle against all backward customs which shackle women," (2) "to promote the participation of women in all national endeavors," and (3) "to raise the level of awareness of woman to involve her in the economic life of the country." The United Nations, which has gone on record against polygamy, considers it "contrary to human rights," and Rebecca Reyher,² who has spent many years living among the Zulu women, calls the African woman's rebellion against polygamy "sister to women's liberation."

Moroccan feminist Fatima Mernissi³ discusses the role which the Muslim religion has played in woman's dehumanization, showing how the Koran creates a conception of woman the effect of which is "to give a divine stamp to female exploitation." (Mohammed himself, however, granted women what the Napoleonic Code did not grant French women until the late 1850's—the right to possess property and to administer it without any interference from her husband.) To underscore the intensity of the Muslim woman's predicament, the Algerian writer Fadela M'Rabet reports that the rate of suicide among young girls who refuse arranged marriages and seclusion⁴ has risen drastically since the end of the revolution.

Enlightened leaders such as former President Kwame Nkrumah and President Sekou Touré recognized early the importance of woman's emancipation. In 1959, when Nkrumah tried to hold special elections in Ghana in order to get ten women into Parliament to represent the interests of their sex, his actions were denounced by the opposition, and he was accused of attempting to "impose politics on our women."

Throughout Africa women are protesting their lack of political control over their lives and are showing that they will not accept customs that are crimes against their human dignity. Organizing women is still a dangerous activity and in some parts of Africa, a woman could pay for such insurgency with her life. These courageous Black and Arab women, who do not yet have the yoke of polygamy off their backs, are willing to take dire risks to acquire some measure of political power which will eventually lead to self-determination.

The time is past due for American Black women to unite with our sisters of every race to make profound changes in the world scene. Stop allowing yourself to be pitted against your white sister.

You have no quarrel with her. Remove Sam and Mr. Charlie from the picture and you'll find yourself at odds with no woman. When you cease to see the Man as your ultimate destiny, you'll be capable of genuine friendships you never even guessed you'd want with women of all races, backgrounds, and points of view. Most important, you'll find that you'll stop judging your sister on the basis of the Man's evaluations. All those attitudes that you've been brainwashed to believe about yourself and her will disappear. You'll begin to view other women with a new sense of dignity and see them as beings to be admired and respected in their own right. Your attitudes about yourself and your aspirations will be radically altered. Your deepest interests will come to lie in those areas most concerned with woman's emancipation, and you will see the struggle to liberate women as the struggle to liberate all humankind. ♀

1. Daniel Moynihan, *The Negro Family—The Case for National Action*, U.S. Department of Labor.

2. Rebecca Hourwich Reyher is the author of *Zulu Woman*, Signet (New American Library), New York, 1949 and 1970.

3. Fatima Mernissi is the author of the article, "Veiled Sisters" in *New World Outlook Magazine*, the Board of Missions of the United Methodist Church (in association with the Commission of Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church), 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027, April, 1971. Mernissi is a Moroccan writer currently studying sociology at Harvard.

4. Seclusion is the practice of separating woman from society as the exclusive property and chattel of her husband.

PROSTITUTION (continued from p. 6)

If it turns out that the prostitutes themselves want a law subjecting their clients to arrest, then there might be some validity in proposing such a law. But there is no way at the moment to know what most, or even a substantial number, of prostitutes want. Any law that we might propose at this point would be oppressive, since we would be doing it for sisters whom we have not consulted. It would be wise for those of us in the women's movement to direct our energies toward bridging the gulf that separates us from these sisters, to find out what they need from us and what we need from them.

Several prostitutes wrote a hurt, enraged article in the *Village Voice* about the New York conference, which was organized by feminists in the sincere hope of creating a bridge between the prostitutes' lives and our own. What emerged was a greater gap than anyone knew existed. It is shockingly clear that, to these prostitutes, it is not only men who have been standing on their necks, but women as well, and self-proclaimed sisters at that.

And that is no place for any sister to be. ♀

FAMILY (continued from p. 12)

and what's more, there would be no plausible way to discriminate among these children. There could be no rationale for some children receiving better care than others because of the parents they happened to be born to. What would it be like if babies were no longer tagged with the name of their biological father? The Kennedys, Rockefeller, Mellons, Fords, etc., would be unable to find their inheritors. No child could be born into a ghetto or welfare family. Exclusive private schools would disappear; there would be no way to decide which children should attend them. Every function of human life now performed by the family would have to be taken over by the social system. The care of the elderly would have to be taken up, and there would be no distinction in the care given Rose Kennedy and my grandmother.

The list of functions of the family could go on and on. But we can get a general idea of how inequalities are maintained under capitalism through the nuclear family by observing how all these social tasks are thrown onto individuals, who then must compete with each other for survival.

We therefore must conclude that the oppression of women is a social problem with deep roots embedded in the structure of the present system, and cannot be solved by individuals or small groups of individuals. Only by masses of women joining together and taking collective action can we be effective against a system which is well organized to prevent us from achieving our goals. Our success will depend on how many women we can reach with our ideas and convince to act with us against all forms of female oppression. The women's movement is growing and will continue to grow as long as we remain visible and show women that we can unite and win all of our demands. It will become evident that when masses of women decide to fight back, we will not be stopped. Months, years, even decades may go by before we achieve total liberation, but centuries of oppression have convinced us that the struggle for human dignity must be waged now. ♀

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Mistaking Piety for Slovenliness again, as in the case of the old man today. A cold rainy day like this one. My shoes were wet. I was pregnant, hugely, grossly, interminably pregnant. Now my child is riding outside in the shopping cart. Then she was riding inside me.

Yes, and my feet were wet. I was weary. Very weary. The Muzak was playing the love theme from *Romeo and Juliet*. I remember that very well. Yes, and I remember wondering whether more or less people shopped on Ash Wednesday. Was there a conflict between its being Ash Wednesday and its also being Double Stamp Day?—I remember wondering that. Yes, and in the Snack Aisle, someone had smashed a jar of peanut butter, just as this year it was mayonnaise.

With that last thought I am suddenly positive that there has been no time between that day and this. I even find myself looking on the floor for traces of peanut butter. No, it has been cleaned up, I remind myself. A year has passed. But what has happened in the space between the broken jar of peanut butter and the broken jar of mayonnaise?

Nothing.

I don't remember.

But nothing has happened . . .

Maybe I have never even left the Supermarket.

No, I think, terrified. That is not true. How can that be true?

For instance, look at my baby. A year ago she was not even born. Now she is a big girl. She is almost a year old. Look how nicely she sits up the shopping cart, smiling, her little hand flapping softly, waving goodbye to the Snack Foods.

Suddenly I am lost in awe at how beautiful this daughter of mine is. I wonder, is she really this beautiful, or is it only that she is mine. Yes, that is probably it. Having a child is like being in love, one loses all perspective. Who knows what one's child is really like?

Yes, but that is the difference between last Ash Wednesday and this Ash Wednesday:

I realize it. I know. I understand!

I have become a Mother. An important person—one upon whom others are dependent. An authority on the care of small children, to say nothing of countless peripheral matters, related—all of them—in some mystical but undeniable way to Mothering.

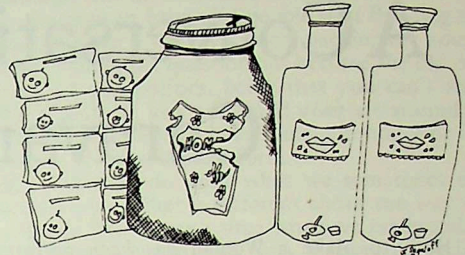
For instance, I think wildly—the old man with the unmatched eyes, would he have thought, would he have dared to ask anyone but a Mother whether honey was as good as maple syrup for pancakes? Of course not. Who else could he have trusted with such a question? A question for which there was no objective answer. Who else could have been trusted to know and judge innate differences—differences beyond the realm of science?

Who else would know because they needed to know—because they just knew?

And it was me that he asked.

Smiling to myself, I make my way down Frozen Snacks, up Party Supplies, down Health and Beauty.

It is, in fact, half way down Health and Beauty,



between Overnight Pampers and mouthwash, that I notice the discarded jar of honey.

I stare at it; can it be the same jar? It is. It is. I remember the jagged, angry price on the top. I even remember the way the label was torn.

I push my cart on down the aisle.

At the checkout counters I see him—the old man. He is standing in the Five-or-Under line, standing there with a small, a costly jar of maple syrup. It is the kind with a little handle on it, up near the top, and he has two big fingers through the handles, while with his right hand he reaches in his back pocket, under his shirt, for his wallet.

* * *

I push my cart to the same register as last year. Unloading it, I avert my eyes discreetly, as befits one who is an authority on nothing. ♀

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A Conversation With Caravan Theatre

How to Make a Woman has been performed before Boston audiences by the Caravan Theatre for five years, with increasingly enthusiastic reception. The play deals with the conditioning, both subtle and blatant, of women into roles of submission, subservience and sexual plaything. The play changed profoundly over the years; its most recent production was in the following form.

Two women, Aili and Mary, meet in a dress shop where two male dress designers and a third woman, the Mannequin, try to induce them to buy various "dresses" or feminine roles. Aili resists but Mary seems to be taken in, so Aili persuades her to make an inner journey, back to the beginning of her own life, and concurrently, of the human race. Various scenes depict the "building" of Mary as a female person who, while admiring her father's strength, is manipulated to emulate her mother's weakness and preoccupation with cleanliness and respectability.

She learns how to be a model housewife for the Hunter, reminding herself that it is important to "be good and sweet . . . to dust the phone . . . to be another's . . ." Rebellion against this leads to the trap of being a sex object for the Wolf, the other male character, who lures her then mistreats her.

These ill-conceived relationships are contrasted with two portrayed by Aili, one in which she dons the huge breasts of the Big Mama, who makes all the decisions, in response to a good-natured but irresponsible husband. A pseudo-liberated marriage also proves to be a failure. Aili must struggle to preserve a sense that her work is as important as her husband's—important enough to stay and finish, even if he moves on.

The Mannequin is transformed near the end into an old woman, forgotten by the men she had served and waited for all her life. She attempts to pass on her veil to Mary, representing the passing on of her servile role, but Mary refuses to look.

At the end, Mary has accepted the dress of plastic breasts, submitting to the role prepared for her by the dress designers. Aili asks, "Isn't there something else?" and when the answer is "No," smashes out of the dress shop into an ambiguous but less stifling outside world.

Participants in the following interview were: Joe Volpe, who played the Wolf; Bobbi Ausubel, the director; her husband Stan Edelson, who wrote the play; Aili Singer, who played the character of the same name; Peter Kover, who played the Hunter; Winky Belz, technical director; Linda, Holly, Meredith and Laura are from *Female Liberation*.

Joe: The first that I ever heard about it was that Bobbi said, "I wanted to do something, do a play about women, something based upon some of my experiences." We got together before anything was written at all, just to talk about it.

Meredith: Were you friends before, or a theatre company?

Bobbi and Joe: A theatre company.

Joe: And friends.

Linda: The idea came out of your experiences, and then talking about it as a group?

Bobbi: I remember trying to explain to people why I thought it was valuable to do a play about women, to make them feel it was relevant to them — that was my plot. It's hard to know how to make men feel it was relevant, but everybody felt good about it.

Linda: Did you feel you had to put it over more to the men?

Bobbi: No, actually, they were very, very receptive.

Meredith: Timing-wise, was that when the first stuff was coming out in the media?

[A chorus of "no's."]

Bobbi: One and a half or two years before anything was out.

Linda: The first *Journal of Female Liberation* didn't come out until 1969.

Joe: We're talking about January 1967. The first performance was in June 1967.

Meredith: What were the first reviews—"revolutionary play . . . "?

Aili: Well, the theme was "trite," they consistently said. There were good things in the play, interesting things in the play, but unfortunately it was on such a trite subject.

Linda: I don't think that's their reaction today. When did it change? Did you notice the audience reaction changing?

Aili: I personally noticed a change when women's liberation became an issue; when women stayed to talk about it, we began to have discussions. We found at first that people critiqued the play and didn't talk much about the subject, just the structure of the play and what we did with it.

Bobbi: The interesting thing is what was the play like then, because we made a lot of changes, especially about the Aili character. We tried to contrast Mary as someone who was somewhat submissive with Aili who was exactly opposite. Aili was absolutely different then than she is now; Mary was somewhat the same. Aili wore a costume with spokes—sharp—blades—and was always cutting

down the men. She wanted to get to the top.

Linda: You mean she was the castrating dyke image.

Bobbi: Not dyke, actually; we weren't even advanced enough to think about that—we had her competing with the men, wanting to become part of the men's world and taking over the power. She became queen and ran the world.

Joe: She crawled up on top of men to get there and ruled over the world. And supposedly in the process she lost something to get there, femininity or something. At that time I believed the woman really lost something to gain that. She literally climbed over men.

Aili: Over their bodies. The ending was that when she got the power and was there, no one would respond to her, she couldn't relate to anybody and no one could relate to her. The line was an operator saying, "You are disconnected. You are totally disconnected." We didn't like the ending that way so we added her groping in the dark.

Bobbi: That's interesting because it was both men and women, feeling with their hands out for each other, but not reaching each other. You had a sense that they could at some point. It was definitely a reaching, as opposed to the ending now, which is the smashing out the doors. [Aili, and sometimes Mary, concludes the play by escaping from the dress shop.]

Bobbi: What happened, I feel, in the four or five years we've been working, is that we all grew to understand what was in the play. That's the amazing thing, that it was all there: we just didn't understand it, except on a simple level. We shaped the play, added the offering of all those dresses that represented roles. Stan created the dress shop, which I think is a marvelous metaphor. We understand what all these things mean, and that's made a fantastic transformation in the play, not only on the part of the actors, but on the part of the audience. Now we understand all the levels of it . . . Joe was the one to tell us about a women's liberation group. It was our second production.

Joe: I always wanted to do it again; I really like it. I had met Marie Guillerman, who told me about women's liberation. It was the first I had ever heard about it. When I first mentioned it to the group, everyone was quite cool about it.

Bobbi: I remember saying I had heard of a woman's liberation group, and everyone in the cast laughed and said, "What do we need to be liberated from?" In other words, we understood what we were saying, but we were in the trap that we all saw it in a very personal way. This is about me. The situations were real to everyone in the cast, and I was horrified when everyone started laughing. It wasn't until a few years later that people in Caravan Theatre began to see the play and women's liberation as political. That is, the Theatre itself evolved a lot through the process of working on the play. I feel that I changed a lot, and I have a lot of respect for the women [in the play] and the effort that went into it that I didn't have at the beginning—I had a lot of questions.

Meredith: All of a sudden, when women's liberation became an issue, did people start flooding the theatre? After a while you were packing the house.

Holly: I think the question has become the old one about art and politics, being that you can't start with a political idea and build your art around it, that the two have to have some autonomy or it's going to be a real bastard form.

Aili: It has to do with what we sometimes call Caravan style, what is different about the way we do things. There was a time when we really didn't know what Caravan style was. I have the feeling that we could do any play in Caravan style. I think we started to gain audiences because when we started up the play again, it was a new play and suddenly it also became an issue to people. There was an additional reason to go see the play, other than just a play at Caravan. It was something that related to their lives directly.

Meredith: Did your publicity change at all?

Bobbi: No, at first it was a detriment to be called a women's liberation play. People didn't want to come to see propaganda. We got very bad reviews at the beginning—not one paper gave us a good review. We're still getting bad reviews. We just got a bad review in the New York Times and the Village Voice.

Joe: I see the play as three major productions—the first one we described. All the changes revolved around what the hell to do with the Aili character. The very first improvisation that we did was Little Red Riding Hood, and one of the things we did was recall our childhood image of boy and girl. This has stayed with us to this very day, in terms of the Hunter and the Wolf [the two male roles], and a lot of scenes came out of that. Little Red Riding Hood was clearly Mary.

I was very excited about doing the play, although not totally sympathetic with it, and really felt that women's situation was like the first Aili woman, where if you achieve you cut off your personal connections.

In the second version we put a chicken head on Aili, and murdered her, and I was happy that we murdered her. I was so glad that we murdered her.

Bobbi: I forgot about this second version. It was a nightmare—I used real nightmares that I had. Aili became at the end like St. Sebastian—they wrapped her in cloth and stuck needles in her. At the end they put this chicken head on her and she was transformed into a nightmare and went squawking around the stage, not out of strength, but insanity.

Poor Aili—she was really panicked; she couldn't go on; she didn't have any speeches; I kept writing her speeches. A friend said, "You know, the play's very good when it's funny, but as soon as it's serious, like at the end, it doesn't work; it's too hysterical," and I really took that seriously and cut out the ending.

Meredith: What makes you unhappy about that?

Bobbi: Not that I feel that that was necessarily the right ending, but that was what was happening in the middle stage. When people said I was taking it too seriously, that seemed a theatrical criticism.

But what it really meant was that I wasn't going to allow myself to feel that women were really that wild, because there weren't enough crazy women around.

Laura: What do you think made you feel so dissatisfied with Aili's character right from the very beginning? Do you think it was your unconscious dissatisfaction with the way women are looked at?

Bobbi: It was the whole thing, but I used it as a theatrical judgment.

Linda: How did Big Mama get developed? [A domineering role adopted by Aili in response to Joe as an irresponsible man.] Did she come out of the woman with the spears on her skirt?

Stan: I think the Big Mama was left over from the queen image.

Joe: It was left over from the first play, but that's very different from the interpretation of the Big Mama as one of the roles that entrap.

Holly: Is it fair to say that this proliferation of kinds of women reflected a growing sense that women can be a lot of things, can be strong and beautiful at the same time? Can be strong without being separated from other people?

Stan: I think a lot of it was like that, like struggling with what an independent, separate woman could be like, and I think that's what the whole struggle was, to find that that was possible and what the possibilities were.

Holly: Did it ever run through anybody's mind (it did through mine when I first saw it) that the two women were really one woman?

Bobbi: Yes, that was me. I feel I just split myself or Stan split me. I really feel I have very submissive qualities; I feel I went through the whole sexual thing, and I feel I have very independent qualities. But I don't think that's necessarily in the play. Some of the feelings I got came out of personal feelings . . . At the beginning, Joe's wife would call and say he couldn't come to rehearsal . . . "Joe can't find his socks." [Joe portrays a similar character in the play.]

Linda: Well, we did want to ask the men if this was reflected in their personal lives.

Joe: Well, the Big Mama was very close to a part of me, and I really resented it, and the first time I rehearsed it I was furious, and found it very difficult to do at first.

Linda: How do you feel about it now?

Joe: Well, now I feel it serves a good function.

Meredith: May I cite a couple of the male lines? One of them was: "We design to please—ourselves" and another was "She has teeth in her cunt." Was that meant to be a compliment?

Aili: No, the mannequin says it to her as a cut. We talked about the myth, a woman having teeth in her cunt—her vagina—and we took it as negative.

Stan: We took it from a book about men's fears of women, old taboos . . . all these mythical images having to do with cunt, castration—we explored a whole bunch of them in the first production—two men chased Aili screaming out the door.

Aili: At which point, I took his pants and he came screaming in. [Aili "rapes" the Wolf in the first production.]

Winky: I never knew that the Aili part was hard to act. Could you elaborate on that?

Aili: It was terrible. I kept asking Bobbi, "What was it with this woman?" I could only treat it as you do with any acting—you have to pull things out of yourself. But I couldn't identify that strongly because I hadn't lived through a lot of those issues, and Bobbi had. So I kept looking for a direction as to how to play it.

Bobbi: Aili kept saying over and over again: "What does she want? What does she want?" We didn't know what she wanted. It just seemed so simple—she wanted to be a person—but how do you play it? It just seemed so obvious—she wanted to be herself.

Stan: Wasn't that in the play once—"What do you want?"

Bobbi: We had Aili search—people kept asking her: "What do you want?"

Aili: After I went through that, I stopped wor-



photo: Nadine Rosenthal

The "Making" of the Mannequin

rying about what I wanted, started having the same things in my own life. I don't know what I really want for myself—I've experienced a lot of issues I hadn't experienced in the first and second productions—I hadn't really asked myself the questions. It was hair-raising, when you find things in a script or a play that are in your own life. You don't want that to be true—you want to keep it separate. But when you find out you're asking the same things, in the same dilemmas, you don't ask why anymore. Bobbi: There's another issue which I feel is part of me, which is that Aili is always doing something negative. Constantly, she's always breaking, smashing, saying something awful, cutting down other people, leaving or not finishing. I feel that is still a problem that Aili always faced. For me, femininity always had so many negative connotations and then breaking out of femininity had a lot of other negative connotations. I felt I was stuck in this bind of negative stuff.

Laura: Do you find when you break out into a freer place you can express your femininity without so many negative connotations?

Bobbi: I can, yes. I have much more positive dreams. I don't have those kinds of nightmares any more. I had a dream the other night of wearing a long gown and being carried by a man, which really shocked me, that I'd come that far, to enjoy wearing a long gown and carrying a parasol. I never could associate myself with those things—I thought they were awful images.

Meredith: The Mannequin served to reinforce the negative qualities of womankind, and at the same time was kind of sexless. One time when I saw the play I decided that all three characters were the same woman and that she was part of a woman's mind criticizing another part. Another time I realized she was myself. Could you talk about that character?

Stan: She came from the design shop scenes, having someone there who was the designer's lackey, his prototype.

Joe: She evolved as "the perfectly trained woman."

Meredith: But the scene where she was the old woman—could you talk about that, because it turned her from a castrating bitch to a tragedy in about two seconds.

Aili: It was a projection into the future of what happens to women like that, who become what men want them to become, serve men. They wait and are discarded. Mary is asked to take her place, and that's the cycle. Mary refuses to see that.

Linda: That brings up a question about the end of the play, which you changed for the last performance, making it the first time both women broke out of the shop. I would have thought that would have happened sooner, their breaking out together. I felt the whole play was like Act I and would go on to Act II. I felt they would break out and go running off together. Had you ever thought about taking it further?

Aili: It would mean doing another show. I think we all wanted to do something like that. I was



photo: Nadine Rosenthal

Aili Singer as Big Mama

particularly eager to have something like that happen. I talked to Barbara, and she said she didn't know whether she could justify that in terms of the moment, but it worked out that evening and she was able to make the transition and break out with me. And we thought maybe a year from now we can be lucky enough to have the third woman come out with us! It's a relief to have the women escape, but I'm not sure that's as true, as mind-jogging. You think, "Oh, well, here they are . . . all three of them can leave and that's happy and that's where we're at."

Linda: But there's nothing beyond the dress shop. Aili: There is, but it's not defined.

Bobbi: One thing that kept coming up in the discussions is that at the end of the play Aili normally reaches for someone in the audience to come out with her, and people are very impressed with that. There's always this breathtaking moment, sometimes nobody will go out with her, and it's so awful to see her have to go out alone. They feel it is a real moment between the audience and the actress, maybe that's why it works.

Linda: How did audience participation in the play come about?

Joe: In the very first play we did we went up and asked the audience. We did want to make that connection from the very beginning. The change of Aili asking an individual woman to go out was almost a spontaneous thing which she tried about a year ago.

Laura: Why did you say before that you didn't feel right about having two women break out together?

Aili: I don't think it's justified. The play is built so tightly that there needs to be either a new scene or



photo: Nadine Rosenthal

Mother and Father Raising Mary

a continuation to show how that happens. Right now, it's artificial. The burden is on Mary, acting-wise, to be able to make that transition.

Linda: That was what I meant about it being like Act I of a play, because where do you go out into?

Bobbi: We felt if we tried to define the outside that a lot of women could cop out by saying, "Oh, well, I do that; I have a job." Once we say something specific, we have women saying "That's easy." You don't deal with what breaking out means for you.

Aili: I sort of like the question that I'm left with, that one woman is so deeply stuck and has no hope and one woman has gone through things and chooses it without really knowing what is going to happen to her. It's like three parts of me, three choices or projections that I see.

Meredith: It really caught me up, that part about the child trying to get affection from the mother, and everyone pointing in other directions—"Go to Mommy," "Go to Daddy."

Bobbi: I feel we are so ill-prepared to be parents. Meredith: This is a part of the production I don't remember as clearly—does she end up being as fucked up as her mother?

Aili: She's been programmed regardless of what she feels and she has these restrictions on her and is all uptight inside, about things she wants to do, feels

she has to do.

Bobbi: That scene is the clearest sociological scene. It shows the conditioning—how to walk, how to talk, how to control. When we first began, I thought that was the meat of it, that this thing happens to someone—it really is "how to make a woman." We did improvisations on building a person. It isn't something we're born with. Of course, we don't have to say that now, but the little girl is "made."

Aili: I felt the child always tries to please the father and is swayed in response to the father, more so than the mother. I don't think the mother makes any demands on the daughter the way we have it. The child wants affection from the father. In the movie "The Diary of a Mad Housewife," it sort of clicked, because the woman is always shown as incompetent and is mimicked. The children look up to the father and care nothing about the mother, because it's always shown how stupid she is, how frivolous, so they have no positive feelings about the mother.

Meredith: It's so vicious, because the child is always being directed back toward the mother, who is always sending the child off in another direction. There's another scene, in which the mother and daughter are kissing, which means that Mary and Aili are kissing. The first time I looked I saw mother and daughter, then I blinked and saw what I wanted to see, which was a homosexual relationship.

Bobbi: This is one respect where the play is still years ago. I don't think what you're looking for is in the play. I feel like I've always had a personal woman friend, but I haven't really identified as a woman or been close to women. After being in a women's collective, and being close to women at the theatre, and really going out of my way to be close to women, I feel that I now have good relationships with women. But at the time of the play, I really didn't. I feel that the women in the play really don't come together and that is one of the ways in which the play is out of date. I think that in real life, as we experience ourselves every day, women are much more together in terms of friendship than the women in the play. I didn't consider when I was working on the play being in a sexual relationship with another woman—not that it was bad, I just didn't consider it. And now with all the gay women around, I really feel I have these feelings and I can express them. But I didn't then and I don't see it in the play. This is one of the good things the women's movement has given us... I think one thing the play does do is that every situation with a man doesn't work out—it's one after another of frustrating situations; I don't think we say how things should be out there.

Stan: I feel that some of this discussion is factual—it's good, but it's not personal. The times that it's best for me are when it reminds me of something that actually happened to me and I could relate it to the experience of working with the play. I feel that Aili began to almost talk about herself. I don't know if she wanted to. But maybe

we could go further into what the play means in terms of personal experiences. I guess I resist talking about it as a political experience only.

Linda: Would you like to come out with something?

Stan: I was just trying to think . . . the personal thing that happened to me as far as the play was, I feel, I was put on the spot by Bobbi by doing the play and I guess I feel it was a good spot. I feel she has become more of a person and a lot of it came through the play, and that made me feel that I had to do something in some way about myself. So about a year and a half ago some of the men at the theatre formed a men's group, and I guess with the advent of that I could relate much more to the value of the play. I always felt I had sort of a patronizing attitude toward the play in that I helped write it, but that was because Bobbi wanted me to and because I always felt women were pushed around. I really never understood what the hell that meant, and only lately I began to understand something about my mother, the first woman I knew, and how much she's been pushed around, by men, by my father.

Linda: And you?

Stan: Possibly me. A lot me. I've had some nice talks with her about that lately that I never could do before. I guess I'm beginning to re-see myself and that's why the play means something to me now, and I guess the most important part of the play to me is the discussions afterward. I see myself in the play, but I don't see myself. The men are not fully developed in the play, but in the discussions afterward, the men's groups. There is something having to do with me.

Holly: Did you start having them meet separately?

Joe: No.

Holly: Why did that evolve?

Aili: Because the men and the women couldn't talk.

Laura: Do you feel there's a better way of integrating men into the play, making them feel more comfortable with it, yourself included?

Stan: I feel it's a woman's play and that's the way it should be seen.

Laura: The discussion groups are then a really viable way of dealing with men?

Stan: Right. I think it's a shame not to have them get together again at the end, although I don't think we found that a good form because it always seems to dribble off. The men's groups, at least in my experience, start out wondering what the women are talking about.

Holly: And the women start out wondering what the men are talking about—that's what happened in the groups I went to.

Laura: Why don't you have them together at that point? Are they more inhibited?

Stan: I feel with the men, it's very hard for them to talk. I used to use real male tactics, I would be very provocative with the men and challenge them in different ways. I was all for making sure they got out their feelings because it's so hard to do that, so I got out my feelings. But I feel I was often

mechanical, manipulative, pouring out things to make sure other people poured out, put them on the spot. I don't like to do that any more. If you stay with it, they don't want to know what the women are talking about.

Laura: Have you tried to join the groups at the end?

Peter: The times I've been in that situation where people have said we could, there was a reluctance. There's a moment when all the men have set up a condition where they're going to say yes, but it seems like they really don't want to, that there's much more we want to say that we can't say with women.

Laura: What do you think that is? Are these metaphysical, philosophical, or body things?

Peter: Well, body things, shared experiences.

Laura: Dorm talk?

Peter: Almost, on a better level.

Joe: A good example was what happened at Trinity College, when Bobbi came in and said, "Do you want to mix?" And when she left one guy said, "I think it's fantastic that we're talking together. I feel relieved already." He had really had concerns about his role as a man and for the first time had talked about it with a group of men and it felt good, and that's an important thing. Of course, that didn't happen at the beginning of our discussions.

Laura: How about setting up something over a period of time—another discussion later on?

Aili: Bobbi and Stan do workshops [explorations of male-female roles and relationships] and I think that gives you another level to work with. Just talking, you get to the point of arguing—two-sided kinds of things. If the women want to know what the men are saying, I think we should respond to it, but in many groups they just don't care to. I think that if they say, "I'd like to talk to the

ANN

You were a bowstring
I tugged with my girl's arm,
bred weak. You slapped my wrist
for being ignorant — you tell me
how it is to be a woman.

The gray cat my mother
let me keep, you left five
good red stripes
across my hand — you tell me
how it is to be a woman.

The summer my body turned
plumripe, tied up in a bikini,
a bee dived hard at my breast
and stung me — you tell me
how it is to be a woman.

Now I find hardshelled, bitter animals
in your eyes and hands,
they hide under rocks at low tide.
You have no loving without claws or teeth.
Even your words are flowers that bite
and only when kept and brewed can heal.

— Miriam Palmer

men," they're really saying, "Gee, I don't think I'm going to find anything with my own group. I want to hear what the other sex has to say."

Peter: I think it's very hard since it's a woman's play for the men to find anything to talk about.

Meredith: Do men recognize the ugly way they were portrayed?

Peter: I wish they would more than they do; they don't seem to.

Joe: I feel that men have very much identified with the play and there's been a great transition, because when we first had the discussions they were angry. I remember having these horrible arguments, people screaming across at each other, because it presented too painful an image. Or they would deny: "It's not like that at all." And that was the first stage of the discussions.

It's very important to say that the discussions were a very late addition to the experience of the play, and altered the tone of the play. The discussions helped me to change my character as the Wolf. For example, I really thought the men in the play the first time around were stupid. From the discussions I learned that the men weren't stupid, that the men in the audience reacted so strongly that there was something really, really there.

Reactions have changed since the early part of the women's movement, because the whole culture has changed, so that now, although men have a terribly hard time talking to men about themselves and would rather talk about women or men in the abstract, they are much more willing to talk about it than they were. Like yesterday, someone would say, "This is how I felt in that competitive situation" and would describe a personal situation.

It's important for the history of the play that the first discussion took place with a booking for a women's liberation group. Mary Daly and a women's liberation group had booked the play for an afternoon, and it was through her that we instituted the discussion group.

Bobbi: We had a panel after that performance which was very interesting: Roxanne Dunbar and Mary Daly and one other quiet New England woman. And Roxanne Dunbar walked out screaming, which was my first introduction to hostile women. I really got very scared when I met her and I always wanted to talk to her about that. She said we wanted to make money off of women's liberation. She didn't deal with it; she didn't stay and talk.

Mary Daly pointed out something interesting which has come up again and again. A lot of the humor in the play is still anti-woman. Now that peoples' consciousness is different I can bear the places that the women laugh and when the men laugh and when both are laughing. But it's still true that a lot of the jokes in the play are at the expense of women.

I feel that the men have tried to make living, breathing people out of the cardboard cartoons we gave them. I feel that my being in a women's group has been very helpful to Stan, that it's changed his

life. I slightly resent your saying I became more of a person. You didn't say you became more of a person. I feel it's a continuum of growing and that sort of bothered me.

Stan: I think you should go into it more.

Bobbi: I felt it was patronizing, and you were *talking* about being patronizing.

Stan: I need to be more clear about this, otherwise I don't understand.

Bobbi: I guess you felt after I had worked on the play I became more of a person, and I feel this comes up to the question of people calling women "girls" or "women." I talked to a man once who said "the three men and girl I work with had a meeting," and I said "Are the men boys?" and he said "'girl' is just a word you use." So I said okay, but I asked him how he really felt about her, and it turned out he really did think of her as immature, but I don't have a feeling that the men were that much more mature, necessarily. We talked about it and he said he didn't know women who were women, he said I was the only woman he knew, which is a lot of bullshit. If a woman doesn't meet a certain standard, she isn't there. We all have so many places to grow. I do feel I know much more of who I am.

Stan: I guess that's what I was speaking to, but I fucked up in that I put the word person in. But I'm not sure who's fucking up who right now and I think that's pretty important. What I was thinking, although it didn't come out of my mouth, was that you weren't using and relying on me anymore, like you used to.

Bobbi: And do you feel because you're dependent on me that you're less of a person now?

Stan: In some ways, yes.

Laura: You become one person when you spend a lot of time with another person, don't you? Do you feel that's a fault?

Stan: Yes. If I lose myself, it's bad for me.

Bobbi: Winky and I stayed last night and heard Betty Friedan—I'd never heard her or read her book, and she kept talking about women's liberation as part of human liberation, which is a nice way of looking at it, I think. I don't know how I'd feel about being the foil in a men's play, because I think women do a lot of awful things to men; I know I have.

Winky: I think women have very frequently been the foil. I think of *The Skin of Our Teeth* where the man has three types of women running around: the wife-mother who is fucked over in all kinds of ways—she's boring but he needs her to do the dishes; the whore; and the daughter who is really naive and innocent and pure. There are all these stereotypes, but here is a man who has all these traumas about how to gain political power and love, and all these conflicts. I just think it happens over and over again, plays in which a circle of women are running around to develop the male character.

Stan: Men have set up traps of using women as foils and I really would feel very bad if women ended up in the same trap of using men as foils.

Bobbi: Every tenth discussion, it comes up—the women say, “Oh, look how awful they depicted the men.” I always get angry when anyone else says it, but I don’t mind saying it. It’s the whole tradition . . . major playwrights in the U.S. are men, and Albee’s, O’Neill’s, and Tennessee Williams’ depictions of women are not really of women, I feel they’re of men.

Winky: The whole thing about “We don’t want to be like men,” this fear . . . I think that women have some problems that are typically problems for women, but I don’t think that if they start asserting themselves that they will then become men. I’m not afraid that by doing a few things that point out problems that women have and creating situations that point out these problems, that they’ll go head over heels and use that as their only style. I think that’s a funny way of looking at it—like saying that if you’ve never been angry and you get angry, the next thing you’ll want to do is kill people or go to war.

Holly: I think there are a lot of good things going on in women’s liberation in particular and in the counterculture in general that will prevent that from happening. I don’t want to be a man; I don’t even particularly want to be like most of the men that I know, but I would like to have enough of the privileges so that I could be more of a person.

Linda: It’s unfortunate that those things are considered privileges.

After having done this play for four years, what kind of relation does it have to the kinds of work you’re doing now and in the future? I’ve heard in your current play you have a man playing a woman’s role and a woman playing a man’s role. Did that come out of your experience with *How to Make a Woman*?

Joe: Well, I think it could never have happened without *How to Make a Woman* and without women’s liberation. It was very difficult for us to do; we had a lot of discussion about it. But the basic thing is that we did it and I think it was an important thing for us to do.

Aili: The reason we chose to do it wasn’t directly having to do with sex roles—it was out of our own needs of the theatre, our own needs of the script, and sex roles weren’t an issue. It was because it was allowed *not* to be an issue. It was unimportant to choose roles primarily due to sex roles; there were other things we had to respond to first.

Joe: And we couldn’t have done *that* without having gone through *How to Make a Woman*, to be able to get to the stage where it didn’t count.

Holly: Just to get back to neutral.

Linda: Like the Red Queen running in *Through the Looking Glass*; you’ve got to run to stay in one spot.

Bobbi: There was an innkeeper who I think normally would have been a man, but we had no trouble in making it into a woman. The merchant is what I think Joe was talking about, where having had this experience thinking about sex roles, we were able to say it doesn’t matter, we’ll just play it for the needs of the theatre, but it was a harder

role for people to decide if it should be a man or a woman.

Peter: We would have had more problems if we had cast Barbara as the judge—it would have been more controversial among all of us to have a woman as both a merchant and a judge. The innkeeper didn’t seem to matter that much. That other switch would have been quite a struggle.

Linda: Earlier in the discussion you mentioned the limitations of *How to Make a Woman*. Could you talk about that?

Winky: It doesn’t ever talk about women coming together as a group and doing anything positive or joyous on their own. That’s what I want to do next—there are very few plays that way and I think it’s time that we do it. It would be a wonderful thing to write about . . . The thing I’ve always felt about *How to Make a Woman* is that it’s a growing piece and I’ve seen some changes: I was going through an old script in which Aili is talking about this Blueberry Man she meets who does all these wonderful adventurous things. In the old script she said “I would like to be *like* the Blueberry Man,” but it was changed so that she wanted to be a *Blueberry Woman*. So I see that it changes as we come to even greater awareness, and I would hope as a theatre group we would continue to create new pieces that dealt with that, either new relationships between women and women or changes in relationships between women and men. ♪



photo: Skip Schiel

Mary is seduced by the Wolf

Do You Love Me?

by Marge Piercy

Oily night pads in. The city reeks. It is hot, too, in the room under the eaves of the townhouse, where they pitch in bed. He feels all spines. He penetrates her like a question and she responds with her hips nervously, shallowly.

"I don't know if I love you." He is sitting on the bed's edge, thinner than ever.

She shivers with sweat. "Should I leave? Go back to New York?"

"Of course not." Politely. "Don't be melodramatic."

"It's worse since we started sleeping together."

"Worse?" He shoots to his feet, reaching for his underwear. "What's worse? It's enough to make anyone nervous, tiptoeing around my parents' house."

"Why do we stay here, then? Let's go someplace else."

"You said you liked them."

"I do. 'Specially your father. He's a dear."

He snorts, misbuttoning his shirt. Waits for her to help him. In his angular face the grey eyes are set wide. They look past her, anticipating his flight down to the second floor.

Tossing on the cot after he has left, she hears dry voices, the ticking of glib apologies of the men who have borrowed and used her. Her fingers scrape the sheets. She is twenty-one and he is twenty-six, an instructor who was her section man in philosophy, but she is his instructor in bed. She shares herself with him as a winning argument. But he takes her gingerly, and afterward, it is as if sex were something he had stepped in.

At school she had gone out with him from time to time that last winter and spring, times he had taken more seriously than she had. People all said she was pretty; she danced well; there were always men. She had been astonished when he proposed she spend the summer with him in his parents' home. He said they would learn a great deal about each other without being committed to anything, that she would like Boston and find their home comfortable. He was thinking about marriage: that most astonished her. Therefore she did not say No, but Maybe. She took him home with her by way of testing, but learned little except that he settled easily into a placid boredom.

After her last finals she went off to New York, hitchhiking with her one suitcase. Her photo-

grapher boyfriend turned out to have a moneyed girlfriend he was living with. She stayed with friends, then other friends, sleeping on lumpy couches. She had imagined being an editor, making the delicate literary decisions she had been taught in school, but she was asked if she could type. She found a job so boring she would sometimes think she would die at her typewriter in the long mornings and longer afternoons. They started to talk at her about dressing differently. She called him in Boston.

Now the house encloses her, like an elbow. The house is as busy with a hundred concealed pursuits and escapes as a forest. His father talks to his mother; his mother talks to the black maid. She and the mother give each other little electric shocks. The father is okay (scotch-and-water, the Maine woods in hunting season, the local *Globe* and the *New York Times*, and a blown wistfulness in his thick face). Coming onto his territory, whether they are to marry, whether he wants to, grows every day bigger and bigger. She rests in his hands like something inert.

* * *

He lies in his ivory bedroom. He turns his cheek against his special firm pillow, drifting through his melancholy love for his married cousin Isabel—roses in waxy green paper, Limoges china. Soothing as his mother's hands in childhood fevers.

He feels her in her attic room pressing down on his head. Why did he bring her here? Often he cannot remember. Sometimes she resembles his dreams of the girl who will belong to him, but sometimes she grates. He is amused to think she was born in a Western where names are jokes, the town of Dogleg Bend where dust shimmies in the streets under a sky of mercury.

Once he went there with her, just before finals. Her waitress mother, fat and messy, greeted her without surprise. Her younger sister seized her and they remained closeted for hours. She spoke to no one on the streets. She took him around a maze of overgrown fields and swaybacked houses, playing guide as if there were anything to be seen: that's where we lived the year I was ten. That's where my sister Jeannie and I used to fish on the sandbar. There's where the Massy boys caught me when I was coming from the diner, and when I yelled,

they jumped up and down on my stomach. That's where I saw a wounded goose, in fall when they come over.

He has brought her to his family as a well-trained retriever will bring something puzzling to lay at his man's feet and wait, expectant. Do we eat it? Is it good?

* * *

By breakfast-time the heat has begun to rise, seeping into the shuttered windows. Her face, cool from sleep, across the English marmelade and muffins and yesterday's flowers, seems young again, closed into itself. He wants to touch her.

His hearty father makes a joke about their wan morning faces. His mother suggests with buttery kindness that the girl's dress is somewhat short for the street. All eyes pluck at the seams of bright (too bright?) cotton. Do they know? Their hopeful politeness enwraps him. Yes, they would be glad to spread her on that maid's cot, to serve her up to insure that he is whole and healthy. His mother has always read books on mind-repairing. "Son, I want you to feel free to bring your friends home." "Remember you have nothing to be shy about." "I've asked Nancy Bateman—you know, the Batemans' adorable younger daughter?—to dinner Friday . . ." He says, "Mother, Father, we're going to the cottage for a week. It's too hot here. It's unbearable."

Her eyes leap from their private shade, but she only takes more jam and teases his father. He knows, in deep thankfulness, that she is pleased and will reward him with an easy day. She will take his wrist in a hard grip and pull him off to play tourists in his own city. All day she will ask nothing. All day she will turn them into magic children from a story. He wants to push away from the table and hurry out with her.

* * *

Coming back from the crossroads store with groceries, she looks at him beside her. She cannot imagine marriage. But she knows it is what makes a woman real, weights her to a name and place. That safe feeling she would seek walking in the old cemetery: names and dates neatly grouped in families, even the little babies accounted for. She has wanted to get away as long as she can remember. But being typist is no better than being waitress, except that her back and feet hurt less. Bondage.

He says, "I thought you'd be more struck by the townhouse. We're proud of the wood panelling and the staircase. It dates from 1870."

But all houses impress her. All other dogs have equally big bones. Walking beside him she catches her breath as they come over a hill out of the scrub oak and the ocean yawns ahead. She is surprised again how tall it is, how much sky it uses up. That blue yawn is her future. She will drown.

The cottage squats on the last dune, facing the sea. She puts down the groceries and sits at the

white salt-blistered table. She sits still with concentration. On the table are shells and pebbles she has been collecting.

"I packed my suitcase."

"I saw you. Why? How can you leave?"

"There's a bus that stops on the highway at four ten, the woman at the crossroads store told me."

"Why? What do you want to do?"

She lays out the pebbles in circles. "You don't want me to stay, enough."

He sees himself returning to the city without her. The air will prickle with questions. Suppose after she leaves, he changes his mind and realizes he wants her? "Where will you go?" Her paper suitcase stands at the door.

She picks sand from the ribs of a scallop shell. "New York? Maybe I'll go West."

Choosing a place so idly makes him dizzy. He sees her blown off like a grasshopper. People cannot just disappear. "By yourself?"

His tedious jealousy of tedious young men. She smiles. Her heart is chipping at her ribs. Negotiating from a position of apparent strength, she tells herself. The road comes over the last dune fitted to its curved flank in a question mark. She does not dare turn from him to go inside and look at the clock. Will she really have to go? She concentrates on his bent head: want me! Want me, damn you. She is not sure how much money she has in her purse and wishes she had counted it in the bathroom.

He is staring at his knuckles, big for the thinness of his hands and bone-colored with clenching. "Do you love me?"

She turns her head. Her gaze strikes into his with a clinking, the stirring of a brittle windchime. He is thinking about girls, the difficulty, the approaching, his shyness, the awful phone calls. She is thinking what she is supposed to say. "What do you care?"

"I have to know."

His long milky face, pleading laugh, set of mismatched bones. He is gentle. "Of course I love you."

"Do you?" Once again he ducks to stare at his knuckles.

She must risk breaking it. She goes to read the clock.

"What time is it?" he calls.

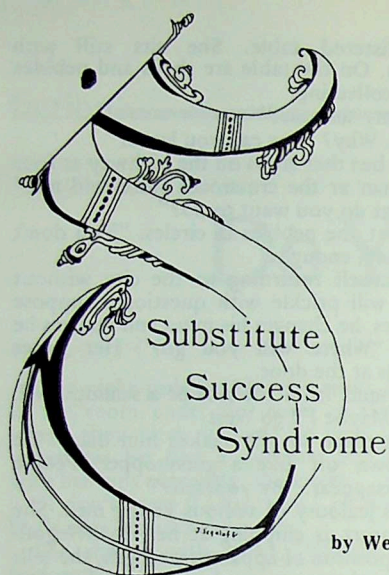
She comes back to answer. "Five to four. I hope I haven't forgotten anything."

A strand of hair in the wash basin? Steel hands press on his shoulders: decide, decide. His father's voice, rising with the effort to contain his temper. "Squeeze the trigger, boy, squeeze it. Come on, it won't wait for you all day. *Come on!*" The rabbit bolted then into tall grass. In his relief he shot. His father strode away. Be a man, be a man. Pressure of steel hands.

He has always been fastidious not to give pain. "Let's walk down to the water."

She shakes her head. "Not enough time. I can't miss the bus accidentally, don't you see?" In New

(continued on p. 40)



by Wendy Martyna

The worst thing about the saying "behind every great man stands a woman" is that it's true. Sadening statistics show that most wives of prominent, successful men are not themselves prominent and successful. And most of those same wives are intelligent women who would have achieved great individual success, had they not fallen unwitting victims to the Substitute Success Syndrome --- a disease fatal to one's personal ambitions, and curable only by heavy doses of self-assertion and concentrated identity-building.

old alike. Its victims are preponderantly female, and usually possessed of medium to high intelligence. Their intellects serve only to increase their attractiveness to men with similar I.Q.'s, thereby making them all the more susceptible to the disease. Once contracted, the S.S.S. is very powerful indeed, and only those with strong resistance are likely to survive exposure to its highly infectious influence. Most acutely affected are women's drives toward personal achievement and individual success. The S.S.S. eats slowly away at their determination to carry through with whatever career choices made as adolescents, inducing them instead to seek out spouses with similar objectives. Victims are easily recognizable -- they carry a distinct odor of martyrdom, and are usually in an advanced state of self-sacrifice. Their telltale symptoms include repetition of such characteristic phrases as, "It's your success that matters, dear," and "After your first book, I'll start to work on mine." Those suffering in the disease's earliest stages have a certain faraway look as they go about their housework, for the S.S.S. has not yet managed to root out all traces of former career ambitions. But as the disease progresses, a look of semi-satisfaction begins to appear across their faces, for by now an outlet has been provided for their previous achievement drives. The S.S.S. ultimately results in the victims' complete substitution of others' successes for their own. They must endure lifelong suffering from recurring cases of meaninglessness,

emptiness, and general malaise. Victims rarely recover.

Diagnosis of the Substitute Success Syndrome would not be complete without an inquiry into its causes and an exploration of its widespread occurrence. The American economic and social fields provide a fertile climate for its development. Plant the seeds of popular images of "femininity," fertilize with the manure of male chauvinism, and an atmosphere will grow which not only enhances, but makes virtually inevitable, contraction of the disease.

Consider the learned opinions of such authorities as Dr. Benjamin Spock -- "Biologically and temperamentally, I believe, women were made to be concerned first and foremost with child care, husband care, and home care." Or famed psychologist Bruno Bettelheim -- "We must start with the realization that, as much as women want to be good scientists or engineers, they want first and foremost to be womanly companions of men and to be mothers." Then assess the influence which such educated men have on the training and development of adolescent females. When one also takes into account the images of "femininity" propagated by women's magazines, television situation comedies, radio soap operas, educational channeling, and traditional hiring practices, the omnipresence of the S.S.S. ceases to be a matter of surprise.

Accomplishment and achievement have long been marked "For Men Only"; and even before they know how to read, females begin to get the message. But acquiescence and accession clearly are reserved for women, and their dominance in these areas goes uncontested by most men. "Success-female-style" has become a slightly different version of the definition for all mankind. In a society where female submission invariably wins the prize, the woman most rewarded and respected is the successful wife and mother. The female sets out for success, marriage and motherhood; only to find that the three are quite synonymous. And the road she inevitably travels leads her straight to the S.S.S.

While singlemindedly struggling down her path to "success," the female becomes an unconscious practitioner of a sexual double standard. Susan Brownmiller describes the subtle dictum which has become a feminine motto: "Admire individual achievement in men, but deny it for yourself. And the corollary is, by the way, marry the achiever. Either way, it is a terrible denial of self-worth." Most female life stories could be included in a volume on "Modern Vicarious Living." Women are given a trial subscriptions to "Noncommitment as a Way of Life," turn their annual renewals are adequate indication that they're suffering from the S.S.S.

Vicarious living, although a symptom of sickness, remains a popular life style because it offers certain fringe benefits -- effortless achievement and easy status. Betty Rollin, Senior Editor of *Look*, discusses the accepted image of feminine achievement: "Some women interpret birth as the biggest accomplishment of their lives, which may be interpreted as not saying much for the rest of their lives. It is really much faster and easier to make a baby than paint a painting, or

write a book, or get to the point of accomplishment in a job. It is also easier in a way to shift the focus from self-development to child development, particularly since for women, self-development is considered selfish."

"Achievement" is gained more easily than in the competitive masculine world, and the loose definition of success helps to ease the pain of self-denial. An additional pain-killer for the sorrow inseparable from the S.S.S. is the status so cheaply gained by its many sufferers. Victims invariably acquire, along with the unpleasant side-effects, a comforting illusion of superiority over other women. Although washing the diapers of a Ph.D.'s son is not qualitatively different from doing the same for a construction worker's brood... and doing the dishes of a corporate executive is not intellectually more fulfilling than doing those of a garbageman, the illusion still remains. It is possible to bask contentedly in the glories of the Substitute Self -- the achievement-oriented husband.

There is a certain arrogance detectable in those women who have "married well." The wife of a rich businessman will feel very little in common with a sewerman's spouse. This difference cannot entirely be explained away by the disparity between each woman's educational background, personality differences, etc. In a culture where a woman's identity is inextricably linked to that of her husband, she will cultivate feelings of self-worth through identification with his position in life. As a scar-carrying member of the S.S.S. society, she is entitled to feelings of superiority over those whose men are lower on the social scale. Her submergence in his existence allows his joys to become her own, his achievements to become sources of her personal pride.

Some colleges even award her a degree to show how complete the submergence has become. The Ph.T. -- "Putting Hubby Through" -- is given for "courage, endurance and devotion" and allows the wife "all rights, privileges, and honors thereunto appertaining." It is presented "as a token of appreciation for patience, guidance, and benevolent indulgence, superceded only by love and graciousness, the attributes of *our success*." (italics mine) A regular sickness certificate -- making it known to all that this woman is a bona fide victim of the Substitute Success Syndrome.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow believed self-actualization only possible for American women if one person can truly grow through another; that is, if a woman can realize her own potential through her family. He frankly didn't think it could be done. What little self-worth can be derived from such vicarious living is at best tentative and pathetic. But such is the quality of "success" in an S.S.S. - infested society.

With the nature and causes of the Substitute Success Syndrome identified, an examination of some recent case histories is in order. As researchers learn to spot its symptoms, and begin to seek them out, they can only be appalled at the frequency with which this merciless killer strikes. The various subtle ways in which the S.S.S. can operate are as deadly as any yet discovered in the annals of medical history.

There has long been an epidemic among a par-

ticular group of women -- those who are married to authors. A recovered victim, Betsy Riley, relates her experience as a sufferer of the S.S.S.: "My husband was free to write all day... It was my job to see that he had comfortable conditions, both physical and emotional, in which to create. Or at least I thought that was my job. My reward was to be the immortal stuff he wrote, knowing that I had helped to make it possible. I had tried a little writing myself, but stopped when I met him because he was better and because he was doing it for me. It is a situation not uncommon today."

Perhaps this outbreak is of no greater proportion than occurs among executive's wives, but it is much more easily diagnosed. For these victims of the S.S.S. can be identified quite clearly in the Acknowledgements of their husbands' books. The brief lines addressed to the wives -- often no more than a sentence or two -- can reveal the presence of the disease, as well as the severity of her suffering. These public case histories -- diagnoses in the form of dedications -- disclose much more than the casual reader could ever guess:

"Without the steady help and independent criticism of my wife, Jan, there would be no book." - Hugo Adam Bedeau

"Without the significant comments, patience, and support of Eva Etzioni, this book would never have been written." - Amitai Etzioni

"My wife, Barbara, served not only in routine typing chores, but above all as my literary and intellectual conscience, and the book owes much of what form it possesses to her." - Victor Ferkiss.

"Any merit this essay may have is in large measure due to my wife's efforts." - Zbigniew Bresinski

After reading countless more, all written along the same nauseating lines, I was inspired to create a dedication which more accurately and frankly describes the wives' actual contributions:

"To my wife, a highly intelligent woman who sacrificed her career ambitions and personal goals so that I might someday publish this book, and become famous enough for both of us."

The S.S.S. was described as a female disease for very good reason. There just aren't too many male sufferers around. There was only one I could think of, and when they started calling him Mr. Streisand, he decided it was time to move on. There are certainly very few in the literary field. To gain some indication that males were, in fact, susceptible to the S.S.S., we'd have to begin seeing dedications like the following fictional one:

"A word of thanks to my husband, who took care of the children, handled all the housework, did the endless typing and re-typing of the manuscript, as well as making many helpful

suggestions. Without his aid this book could never have been written."

Not too likely. This next example, hypothetical as well, seems slightly more appropriate, although it has yet to appear in print.

"To my husband -- without whose house to clean and kids to take care of, I would have finished this book 15 years earlier."

The sole acknowledgement to men usually consists of something similar to Betty Friedan's brief "To Carl Friedan" (she raised three children while researching and writing *The Feminine Mystique*). The only lengthier dedication I've come across was in Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood is Powerful*, and she clearly sees the S.S.S. as a strictly female ailment. After dedicating the book to former suffering sisters all over the country, she writes:

"Some mention, albeit brief, should also go to three men, Ken Pitchford, Blake Pitchford, and John Simon (Jane Seitz' editorial assistant at Random House). Without such men this book 'would not have been possible.' On the other hand, it would not have been necessary."

It finally becomes clear why there are so few female authors around to dedicate books to their husbands -- because women aren't married to those wives "without whose help this book could not have been written"! The varied tasks credited to their spouses by my sample of prominent authors include: editing and writing, serving as consultant on psychology, acting as research assistant, doing endless typing, making editorial suggestions, revising of manuscript, and performing routine secretarial chores. The diverse and time-consuming roles "cheerfully" performed by the wives can be classified into three "typically feminine" areas:

(1) Taking care of the family:

"My wife helped with the editing, served as consultant on social psychology, and best of all, gave birth to Michael's brother, Alexander, on September 29, 1968." - Jerome Skolnick

"I owe more than I can readily express to my wife, and to Rick and Betsy Neustadt, who spent a whole year heeding her injunction, 'Shhh...he's writing!' " - Richard Neustadt

(2) Keeping husband happy:

"Last but not least, a word of thanks and much love to my wife for her patience and encouragement during the many occasions when this effort created fatigue, impatience, and moodiness." - Gordon Lippett

"My beloved wife, Patricia, not only encouraged me to write this book but listened critically to draft chapters, and greatly contributed to my happiness and wellbeing while the work was going on." - Samuel E. Morison

"My wife, Ellen, first encouraged me to undertake this study despite my own misgivings... she endured my many physical and psychological absences made necessary by this study." Kenneth Keniston

(3) Doing secretarial chores:

"My wife has shared the pleasure and toil of writing and editing, and without her contribution these tasks would have been more tedious than they were." - Hugo Adam Bedeau

"Bertha joined in this enterprise not only as my wife but as my research assistant." - Richard Neustadt

"My wife helped with suggestions at every stage." - John Gardner

"My wife read the manuscript repeatedly and made many editorial suggestions." - Erich Fromm

"My wife has been a true partner in this venture - having provided me with original leads and with critical reaction." - Joseph Royce

But Ellen Ulliver Keniston's brilliantly ignorant husband, Kenneth, wrote the dedication most revealing of the S.S.S. No finer specimen of unintentional, yet devastating chauvinism, has yet been found. In the preface to this sociological study, *The Young Radicals*, he writes:

"My wife's largely unacknowledged help makes me the more regretful that so few of those I studied were women, for I suspect it is as true for many radicals as it is for me that *women are crucial to the work of men.*" (italics mine)

These depressing case histories suggest some of the many ways in which women suffer from the Substitute Success Syndrome. In the literary profession, specifically, we find the continued presence of the devoted wife who sacrifices self for hubby's success. She remains the Anonymous Author, to whom attribution is made only in a few brief lines, if at all. One can only wonder how many of the book's ideas are hers; to what extent she is responsible for their expansion and explanation. John Stuart Mill, in 1861, was probably the first and last male to give us the true story -- "Who can tell how many of the most original thoughts put forth by male writers, belong to a woman by suggestion, to themselves only by verifying and working out? If I may judge by my own case, a very large proportion indeed." Although the husband often acknowledges her equal contribution to completion of the book, never does her name appear next to his on the cover, and she is sometimes mentioned only as "my wife." She is tossed crumbs from the table of fame, and as June Arnold wrote, each crumb has been addressed "To A Very Special Sweetheart."

The diagnosis of the disease, as well as the individual case reports, lead us to a somewhat

pessimistic prognosis. There are no instant cures for one who suffers from S.S.S., and like most persistent ailments, it will not go away by itself. A desire to recover is a necessary first step, but the road to health is not so easily traveled as was the one which led to sickness. Victims who resist this socially-sanctioned disease aren't likely to find much encouragement. There are too many people (coincidentally all male) who benefit from the handicaps caused by the S.S.S. When half the population suffers from "tired ambition" and "nearsighted goals," those who are unafflicted relish their supposed superiority. Prescriptions for female sufferers are extremely difficult to fill -- healing jobs and opportunities are not readily obtainable. When one's sickness is encouraged, and "success" determined by the severity of suffering, prospects of recovery begin to look quite dim.

The remote chances of recovery are appreciably lessened when victims themselves are unaware of their condition. Many women see the Substitute Success Syndrome not as an affliction, but an achievement. For as long as they retain the symptoms of the S.S.S., they are treated to free "hospitalization" in a comfortable split-level home, as well as daily reassurances that they are not so sick at all. As with all psychosomatic sufferers, their illness is understandable, for it serves an important purpose: to fill the prescription society has written for "success." For many, the inevitable pain has been covered with a deceptive invisible shield, then coated with several layers of pseudo-happiness. Dr. Jessie Bernard describes the complex symptoms of the female victim: "Many women have achieved a kind of reconciliation - a conformity - that they interpret as hap-

piness. Since feminine happiness is supposed to lie in devoting oneself to one's husband, they assume they are happy, since that is what they do. And for many women, untrained for independence and processed for motherhood, they find their state far preferable to the alternatives, which really don't exist."

The S.S.S. has gained the majority of its victims by default, for they were never offered a choice between a sick and healthy life. Simone de Beauvoir reveals the many subtle invitations extended to future sufferers: "It is woman's misfortune to be surrounded by almost irresistible temptations; everything incites her to follow the easy slopes; instead of being invited to fight her own way up, she is told that she has only to let herself slide and she will attain paradises of enchantment."

But the promised paradise more closely resembles a hospital ward: where victims are placed in casts with their ambitions encased in plaster, and their goals in permanent traction.

The S.S.S. has gained quite a stronghold in the systems of American women. The only antibiotics on the market are unpleasant to the taste, and hard for many to swallow. For what is required to root out the S.S.S. is no less than a revision of life-style. Victims must have their consciousnesses raised, and their opinions overhauled. They must cancel their subscriptions to "Noncommitment as a Way of Life," turn in their identification with their Substitute Selves, and set about creating new identities of their own.

With enough "courage, endurance and devotion" women can earn a degree far more valuable than the ignominious Ph.T. -- this one signifying graduation from a lifelong study of the Substitute Success Syndrome. ♀



photo: Batya Wienbaum

Oregonizing

by Fran Taylor

I set out in early June, 1970, for the Far West - to see the country, escape summer in the city, and also to see how the Women's Revolution was faring outside the Eastern media barrage. And, of course, to try and foment a little revolution on my own. I had an evangelist's vision of hordes of angry women suddenly getting the word, throwing dinner in their husbands' faces, picketing, sitting-in, and rapping for the cause of their own liberation.

I didn't have to wait long for a terrific false start. On Wednesday, June 17, I pulled into Tillamook, Oregon: population - 4,000; industry - logging and dairy farming. Thursday I picked up a copy of the local weekly paper which announced that the annual "Miss Dairy Princess" contest was to be held that Saturday evening in a restaurant in "downtown" Tillamook.

Meanwhile, on Friday I noticed a picket line outside the Safeway store. A woman I questioned explained that one of the strike demands was equal pay for women workers, so I raced to the dime store for poster board, made a sign saying "Women's Liberation Supports Safeway Strikers!" and took my place with two sisters on the picket line. They were friendly, but within a half-hour the head of the union (male) came over somewhat anxiously and told me that, uh, it really wasn't sanctioned, er, there were legal problems, well, I shouldn't be - could I please stop? He was quite apologetic and embarrassed and obviously didn't know how else to deal with this new, unexpected development. Not wanting to hurt the strike, I said good-bye to the sisters and left. I consoled myself by going back to my room to make a sign for the beauty contest.

The idea of being a solo picket line made me nervous, but then there were only four contestants, so I really wasn't all that outnumbered. A half-hour before the show started I turned up in front of the restaurant where the big event was to take place. The door was open but after I had taken one turn, a waitress emphatically shut it. One more turn and the owner (female, but not much of a sister) stormed out. With scowls and a lot of nasty words and threats she "suggested" that I take my "ridiculous" protest across the street.

By this time I was cowed enough to slink home with my picket sign tucked between my legs, but I did go across the street to march with my placard declaring "STOP BEAUTY CONTEST EXPLOITATION WOMEN'S LIBERATION." Nobody called me a frustrated bitch, ugly old maid or dyke, mainly because nobody bothered to call me anything. One person yelled something out a passing car, but I couldn't understand what he said, so I assumed that it was "Right on! Power to the sisters!" Most of the people I had hoped to reach and talk to just sniffed past as they went in, but a few asked me questions and

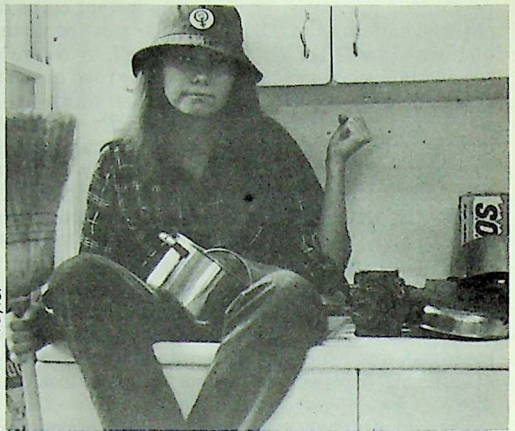


photo: Fran Taylor

The Author

were at least unhostile. I guess a one-woman demonstration wasn't threatening enough to rally their defenses. Five minutes before the start of the contest, the outgoing "Miss Dairy Princess" came out of the restaurant and headed my way. I expected her to clout me with a milk bottle, but she was as scared of me as I was of her, and said the other girls had dared her to ask me what the protest was all about. I rapped briefly about reification and manipulation and sex-role stereotypes and she left, still friendly but completely baffled. I wasn't busted or beaten or even much noticed, but I thought it was a beginning.

That week I wrote a long letter to the local paper answering all the questions that people hadn't asked me, but that I wished they had. To my surprise, the paper ran it in the next issue. The afternoon it appeared, a Tillamookian named Judy, a senior at Stanford who was appalled at the lack of political action in town, called to say she liked the letter and wanted to get something together.

The same day the paper also called and asked me to come to the office. I went, and the editor-in-chief (whose editorial policy was strictly God, Mom and Nixon - not necessarily in that order) swept me into the back room where a cub reporter lurked waiting to interview me, the newest (and only) flaming political activist to hit town. I felt like I was being co-opted by the Pig Press, but had great hopes of organizing a Women's Liberation group and thought the publicity would help. The editor was extremely obsequious, as if he expected me to start beheading his staff with karate chops; and the reporter was equally incompetent. I told him, for example, that I had sat in at the *Ladies Home Journal* and worked on the article on women's education for the Women's Liberation supplement in the magazine's August issue. His version had me sitting in at the *Woman's Home Journal* (??) and writing an article on women's education some time in the fuzzy future. The interview appeared in the next issue, complete with mistakes, bad spelling, typographical errors, and a picture of me looking the image of the mean, castrating bitch that male chauvinists love to conjure up at the mention of the word feminist.

I thought the revolution was on its way, but from the time the interview hit the stand, things went straight downhill in Tillamook. Judy called everyone she knew about forming a group and got no response (meanwhile, she started working evenings and I started working days, so even we couldn't get together); a clerk at the grocery (the other grocery; Safeway was still on strike) told me that I took a good picture, which made me think that maybe I really do look like a mean bitch; and my fan mail was less than overwhelming. I got two letters: one from a sympathetic man who had been studying the educational system for fifty years, free-lance writing for twenty-five (hadn't sold anything yet) and had collected a library of six books, which he proceeded to list; and the other from a woman who stated that she had found true liberation through Jesus Christ and wanted me to attend the Christian Women's Club luncheon and talk about it. There also appeared in the paper one Letter to the Editor from a woman who wrote:

I think Miss Taylor came to the wrong town with her liberation movement. I, for one, think that Tillamook is the kind of place where men are men and women are glad of it.

I hadn't expected her to be glad that the men were orangutans, although she did have a point about my coming to the wrong town.

But about the same time that the first front was faltering badly, I was able to open a second one at work.

After two weeks of job-hunting I found work as a chambermaid at a motel in Cannon Beach, up the coast from Tillamook. It was a choice of working as a maid or starving and the decision wasn't easy. But the motel was a big operation, and nine other girls my age worked there.

We worked in pairs and I don't bring up Women's Liberation until one day I spotted a front-page feature on the August 26 Women's Strike in a newspaper left behind by some customers. I asked the girl I cleaned rooms with if she had heard of the Strike and she said, "Does it have anything to do with the damn Women's Liberation Movement?" We got into a spirited discussion that continued off and on all summer. She was in favor of the three demands of the Strike, but against some of the basic ideas of the movement. We talked over the possibility of striking and I soon brought up the subject to the other maids, who were basically pro-strike, some of them even radically pro-Women's Liberation.

A month before August 26 we decided that we would be extremely considerate of our bosses and tell them early of our plans to strike, so that they would have time to take measures such as having boys do our work that day. A few of the girls were hesitant about striking, but with strong support from the rest I wrote a sample notice to be put in the dirty rooms on Strike day to explain the Strike and its demands to irate customers.

Meanwhile, the positive response of my co-workers started giving me visions of hordes again: angry women swarming through the streets on August 26, armed with brooms and mops. So I returned to Tillamook with renewed enthusiasm that lasted until I

typed up a petition in support of the Strike and the three demands, and went out to reach the people. A day of door-to-door canvassing resulted in eight signatures - three from men and one my own. The only encouraging incident of the whole day was the reaction of one woman whose husband answered the door, said "Women's Strike? I dunno. Hey honey!" and returned to his beer and baseball game. The wife, with two small children and a third due any day, took one look at the child care and abortion demands and said, "You bet I'll sign it!" Otherwise, the petition was a loss and I decided that the old romantic door-to-door crusade was nothing but a pain in the ass. I tried making posters about the Portland actions planned for the 26th, and they were torn down as soon as I put them up around town. Without success I tried my old friend the newspaper, offering to write (for free, no less) two stories on the Strike, the demands, the suffrage movement, and whatever propaganda I could slip past the editor. But he must have seen my magnanimous suggestion for what it really was: an attempt to publicize the Strike without buying expensive ads.

But, even as I gave up on Tillamook, things began to get hot at work. Two of the other maids and I, bearing our sample notice and a clipping about the Strike from a Portland newspaper, went to the office to explain that we were planning to observe the National Women's Strike. Instead of thanking us for our thoughtfulness in telling her three weeks in advance, the manager reacted by losing her temper, calling us "ridiculous," saying that she would "never do a thing like that" to her employer, and shrewdly trying to isolate the three of us from the other girls. She also tried to pinpoint a leader. Since I had a "National Women's Strike" sign on my car and had been made spokeswoman by default, she zeroed in on me and asked if I had cut out the clipping. I had, but felt that that was hardly incriminating, and the other two girls spoke up and insisted that the action was something we all supported. We got nowhere; any possible discussion degenerated into a scene, with all of us talking at once and the manager saying that she would show our notice to the Big Boss that night. "And I know what he'll say!" she stated, but didn't let us in on what the word from on high would be, so we left.

The Big Boss was a Howard Hughes type, reputed to be fabulously rich, whom everyone had heard of, but no one had really seen (none of us lackeys, that is). He never did condescend to confront us directly, being content to issue edicts through his hired hands - the manager and the head housekeeper. In fact, no mass confrontation ever took place. The manager and the head housekeeper were too smart to deal with us as a group, and instead approached the maids individually with dark hints of firings and withheld bonuses. The cloak-and-dagger routine went on for a few days, with everyone from the front office avoiding me like the plague while they were pouncing on all the other maids.

I was completely frustrated by their evasive tactics and was spoiling for a fight, which I finally got four days after our initial announcement. The head

(continued on p. 37)

"Liberated" American Woman Meets "Emancipated" Polish Woman

by Bobbi Ausubel

Caravan Theatre left from Cambridge, Massachusetts, for the Polish International Festival of Festivals bearing women's liberation ideology and our original play, *How to Make a Woman*. We were warned by Poles that Poland had already solved its woman problem. Women had been emancipated since the Second World War. In fact, they were afraid we would be laughed at for being so serious about matters so trivial. They were right. The Poles did not understand us.

"I am a geologist," a young woman student eagerly told me, "and I'm going to take an exam at the end of the year to be an astronomer. I'm studying very hard for it." I was shocked by Maria's confidence. I don't know women geologists or astronomers. In America a geology student would not refer to herself as a geologist. Here this enthusiastic nineteen-year-old clearly knew she would hold a job that was necessary and waiting for her. "I write 'protest' poetry," she waved a notebook with poems about her mother and about the smell of fallen rose petals in the rain. She led me in her arms in a Polish polka and then taught me some movements to rock music. I found myself falling in love with her energy, her openness to all things, and wished a little that I were her. I imagined that her counterpart in America, pre-women's liberation days, might be vague about a career, wondering how it might fit together with whoever "He" might be, and spending a great deal of energy relating to a "Him." Maria seemed to take it for granted that at some point after twenty-five she would probably marry, just as she took it for granted she would travel to England, or grow wisdom teeth. But it was no concern now; the world was open at nineteen.

There were many women like Maria, and they did not recognize themselves in Caravan's play, the way enthusiastic Boston audiences do. There was often something "centered" about these women. They knew who they were. Maybe it is because girls in Poland grow up knowing it is expected of them to be productive, so the expectation is simply fulfilled. I never met a "housewife." It was ordinary and acceptable for women to be chemists, physicists, lawyers, mathematicians, milk-deliverers, and street cleaners. More than half the doctors and university professors are women. Country women also work outside the home. In their hand-woven capes of many colors they daily

gather their produce to sell in the city markets. Their daughters might be sociologists. It was just that modern times meant different job opportunities. Some women, I heard, do stay at home, but they are clearly the exception. The Poles don't have as part of their history an image of women as unproductive, unnecessary to the economy except as consumers, incapable and homebound.

I fantasized that since women related fully in work situations, their personal relations with men would also be equal and undistorted. But this was not true. My idealization of Polish women was deflated. I understood, gradually, that Maria was young and very naive. People kept telling us "Everything is equal." It was apparent that while they said "equal," they believed men and women were essentially different and that they had important separations in work areas. A woman who crossed the boundary into essentially male areas suffered isolation, like Ann.

When we arrived at the railroad station we were met by Polish TV, a bevy of helpful men to carry baggage, and Ann, their woman leader. She was head of the committee that sponsored our visit. Her face was severe, while those of most of the Polish women we met were animated, smiling. In her dark beret and her soldier-style long winter coat, she made me think of an aspiring Russian commissar in a grade-C movie. Ann appeared and disappeared in those first two days, always looking anxious. The "helpful" men, always assisting us, came to her when she arrived and bustled away into action. She smiled her tight little smile and said little to us.

After the performance, Ann came to speak with me. She had understood the play. As we walked in the soft evening rain, the efficient chief surprised me, saying she had cried herself to exhaustion that day. She revealed that our theatre props were held up at the East German border. For two days she telephoned all the possible authorities, and was told, "Impossible." So this twenty-three-year-old, responsible for the visit of the foreign performers, gave up in tears in her office, alone. Finally she took some pills, picked herself up, and went to the railroad office, again alone. She happened in at a rare meeting of East German and Polish railroad officials. Taking advantage of the opportunity, she went in and confronted them with the prop situation. Three hours later our boxes arrived.

Ann emphatically felt that she worked hard for three years to get her cultural post at Z.S.P., the big national student organization. But men who came to work at Z.S.P. seemed to get positions easily and rose up in the hierarchy rapidly. Each step up was difficult for her.

In discussions with women in other cities, when they told me how equal the work situation was, I asked about Ann. I was told many times that if my commissar hadn't risen in Z.S.P. it was because she had limitations. Maybe she didn't speak enough languages or was a poor administrator, and they went on to their list of women doctors and lawyers. I didn't know what to believe. Five cities later, the tour over, I realized that Ann had been the *only* woman Z.S.P. official we ever met.

The world was open to Maria at nineteen, but at twenty-three Ann already showed the strains. I recognized in Ann what I had often seen and not so clearly understood in some American women who unconsciously have to prove themselves in tiny ways all day long. It does make the face grow stern.

So in fact Poland has a male and a female world. Women don't "choose" to go into politics, we were told many times. That sounded the same as in the United States. Women were doctors, but men the surgeons and the heads of hospitals. Again the same pattern. Differing from us, women were clearly accepted in theoretical scientific areas, but rarely in applied areas. This meant that women were physicists but not electricians; construction engineers but not carpenters; not auto mechanics. Men predominated in the highly paid but unpleasant heavy industry work. There were the usually defined areas for men and women, with men excluded from the caring and service areas like nursing and elementary education. No conscious effort was being made to reconsider the existing work pattern.

My own field, theatre, was a highly male area. I never met a woman theatre director, lighting technician, or designer. The theatre festival itself was chiefted only by men. Almost every building we performed in had a male authority with dictums about keys and coming in and going out and hanging coats and not sitting on floors during performances. Americans would find his machismo power trip familiar.

Socially, "helpfulness" was an outstanding male area. Men everywhere met us at railroad stations, and helped us move chairs and set up lights. Never women. Men insisted on carrying our knapsacks to the absurd point that they were ashamed to walk with us if we carried our own. Winky, Caravan's lighting technician, constantly had the screwdriver taken out of her hands by these "helpful" men. She firmly took it back to resume her work. It was proper for men to protect women. But the opposite happened, too. The night of our first Polish performance, when I went out to cue the actors, the doorway was swamped with men unable to get tickets to the packed student club. "You're sexy," a student said, and grabbed at one of the

actresses as she passed to make an entrance. My blood pressure rose fast. Bodies pressed against mine as I walked through. My voice and elbows flew out to the nearest offensive male. There was silence. They cleared a path for me. Caravan women in a restaurant alone or walking at night were sometimes literally closed in by a group of men. It was scary.

I thought that such experiences would help one share the feeling of being a sex object in our discussion with the Polish women. We had brought with us to Poland the habit of having group discussions with the audience following performances of *How to Make a Woman*. But when I raised the point at one discussion, the women did not know what I meant. They explained, in terms that my mother used twenty-five years ago, that there are considered two kinds of women, the "corrupt" and the "non-corrupt." (Unknowingly the behavior of Caravan women had led men to assume we were the "corrupt" variety.) These women felt they were not treated as sex objects unless they wanted to be. No construction workers loudmouthed or truck drivers whistled. They didn't have to avert their eyes from men walking down the streets. Advertisements didn't sell women along with their products. Nevertheless, the women did resent the two rigid categories. The boundaries meant you were either put on a pedestal and protected or sexed-up and available. No image of just an independent woman. Frigid or loose, good or evil. There was, however, one big advantage to the limiting vision of women as sexy or sexless. It did allow men to relate to you totally as a "mind." I found I was playing fewer sex games.

What happens when the emancipated Polish woman actually gets to bed with her lover? The opening play of the festival done by a good Polish student group had a sex scene. The men *made* love to the women, is the best way of describing it. It was a group scene. Each man stood, his legs apart. Under him, each woman lay on the ground, her hips raised. The men's arms and bodies moved up, higher and higher. They climaxed. The women absolutely did not move. A male director's vision of reality? I asked. Women recognized that in their own lives it was risky to take the sexual initiative, and a few even felt it was wrong to be passionate. (The women identified with the part of *How to Make a Woman* where the happy, loving husband "rapes" his wife as he tells her he loves her.) Direct sexual initiative is still the man's while women are supposed to be indirect. Most women were sad because they could not talk with men, in bed, about what was happening in bed. Men claimed that women were frigid, women that men were insensitive. Nor did the women talk openly among themselves about sexual experiences. There was nowhere to turn for help, if one should need it, except occasionally to close friends. No one talked about homosexuality, because it is hidden.

Married women identified particularly with the

second half of the play, what we call the Big Mama Scene: The character, searching for her identity, becomes the domineering, always-responsible-for-everything Super Mother because "He" will be responsible for nothing. I spent a few days with a marvelous Polish Superwoman, Barbara, who lived in a five-room flat with her two small children, her husband, and a housekeeper girl from the country. This small woman of thirty-two is a physicist with a heavy teaching schedule at the university. She works six days a week, does her mother thing, and then begins a whole night life. She has deep lines around her eyes, always looks at the point of physical exhaustion, but is ever ready to move ahead to the next exciting thing.

Home from work at four, we rushed to pick up her child from the happy, ordered environment of the day-care center across the courtyard. Barbara had confidence in this school for three to seven-year-olds. The teachers were warm and firm with the children. They had the same tired-eyed, exhausted look as Barbara. At four-thirty they rushed off to their own families. On the other side of the courtyard we met Barbara's housekeeper with the two-year-old. Barbara relieved the young housekeeper of the little one. Shopping was the next daily chore. "I hate standing in lines," she said. At least three-quarters of the people in line in food shops are women. Then, home again, she made supper, and fed and bathed the children. She carefully washed the two-year-old, who had a bump on her face. She brings her to the hospital for an hour's treatment every morning at seven, before work. "Can't your husband take her?" I ask. "The treatments are painful. He can't do these things. He's very intellectual, very quiet." There was always a good reason why *she* had to do it. She could not really share with him the care for the children or the house. He never offered, and she didn't trust him. Sadly, she said she thought of leaving him because she had no close connection with him anymore. "But then he'll have to go and live with his mother, and he wouldn't like that." So Super Mother continued to take care of his physical needs and protected him emotionally as well. Though equal to men at work, at home she could not confront her husband.

I told her my husband and I lived differently, both responsible for children and house. She shook her head, "My husband is special, he's so withdrawn." Polish women were always saying their problem husbands were unique, but I remembered earlier in the day hearing Barbara instruct the housekeeper to clean her boyfriend's apartment. In the evening we sat talking with Barbara's boyfriend in the living room. They talked about their relationship. Affairs usually began at work and were not taken seriously, maybe one or two a year. Generally, lovers are secretive and husbands possessive, but Barbara's husband was unusual. He expressed no feelings of jealousy. "He never expresses his feelings about anything," she reminded me. He was now away for two weeks at a

conference, but that did not alter her living patterns. She popped up to telephone plans to see the foreign theatres that came for the festival, and plans to troop her family out to the country on Sunday—a holiday outing to which I was invited.

On our day in the country, Barbara and I sat hidden behind a haystack and talked. She left her children with her boyfriend for that hour. "They were fine for five minutes after you left," he told her when we returned. Then he turned to me, "This is the first time she's left me with the kids. See, you've influenced her already." Both smiled.

What emerged for me from talking with Polish women is the fact that unlike American women, they are not necessarily dependent upon their husbands for their social or emotional life. I didn't see them living through their husbands, or experiencing loss of identity. But "emancipation" did not mean making any demands on men for equal responsibility in the home. In many ways the women were passive. They did not directly tell men what they wanted. In my first encounter with Barbara, she and the other women in the mixed discussion rarely spoke, while the men verbalized endlessly on how equal women were. The women's silence was a sacrificing one. Why should a man give up his privileges if no one confronts him?

These snatches from the discussions illustrate some of the ways that Polish women are thinking.

From an American living three years in Poland, married to a Pole: "I never felt comfortable as a woman in America. As soon as I came here I did. I'm not blond with long legs and slender arms like the magazine women. I have a big nose and look like a peasant. Lots of women here look like me. My body fits. Everybody's body fits. When I felt my body was lovely, I felt secure about myself as a woman."

Another woman to the group: "Why do we spend half the stipend we are given for one new dress?" (Polish women are very style conscious and well-dressed. Lots of minis and midis around. No sloppy freaky clothes.)

Me: "Why are there always more men in the audience than women?"
"We never noticed that."

"We are working to increase the length of time a woman can get leave from her job after the baby is born and still not lose her job."

"Why not allow the father the right to stay home and take care of the child?"

"Never thought of that possibility."

"Why shouldn't they put us on a pedestal? We do everything for them."

"Are there any other choices for women? I don't really believe things will change."

"I get along very well with my parents. They are 'golden' people. There is no generation gap here."

"What would happen if you told them you lived with a man now?"

"I wouldn't tell them."

"What if you were a hippie?"

"I would never be a hippie."

"The man is a tyrant."

"We can't talk about that. It's too personal."

"I like fighting with my boyfriend. It's exciting when he beats me."

"I never believed women thought things like that. I am shocked to hear women talk about themselves."

"Yes, we heard about your women's liberation in our press. It always seemed ridiculous."

"Male reporters?"

"Yes."

I know what I heard and saw, but I may not understand what those Polish experiences fully meant. (I was shocked whenever I heard Poles analyze American situations.) I met a limited variety of people, mainly students and intellectuals. Nevertheless, I offer the following comments. I was often confused in Poland because my narrow American eyes had expected an integration of experiences. Though so many women are productively working, with no guilt about the double role of mother and worker, it hardly influenced the ways men and women related. Tradition is strong and did not close the gap between people's work lives and their personal lives. The audiences only superficially understood our play, and it became clearer why. It was not so much the differences in social patterns between the two countries, but rather that the Poles did not question their patterns.

Probably by male directive, and probably because of economic necessity, what has happened to Polish women is very important. They have pushed forward women's freedom in work areas. Productivity is expected, opportunities exist, and child care for children of working mothers is easily provided. We have not done so well in this country.

What women's liberation is doing, however, is challenging the basis of sex boundaries in every part of life. Freshly back from Poland where no one is thinking about these things, I was impressed with how much we have raised our consciousness in the three years of the women's movement. We are certainly a minority, but a vocal minority, and we are actively changing our lives.

"The performances are so good, why do you choose a play of so little significance?" a Polish male magazine writer asked as he prepared a big spread. Yes, they enjoyed the play. They were

enthusiastic about the style, and so on. But my "emancipated" Polish sister and her man did not understand it. I remember, with hope, that there was much that we didn't understand either, three years ago. ♀

OREGONIZING

(continued from p. 33)

housekeeper, an old gargoyle named Ethel, cornered me alone in the linen room and said, "I hear you're planning to strike." I said I was. "You realize your job is in jeopardy?" she said. I answered somewhat righteously, "I would rather lose my job than my principles."

She scoffed at my "principles" and, with obvious contempt, started to leave. I yelled after her that I had more sympathy for my sisters who had died of illegal abortions than for some customer who wouldn't get clean towels one day. She came back and said that those women who needed abortions shouldn't have gotten into that position in the first place. We then got into a heated argument in which she revealed that she was anti-abortion, anti-child care, and anti-equal pay, also that she had had four children and believed that God had made women to bear children and men to be breadwinners. She then accused me of being an outside agitator who was cramming Women's Liberation down others' throats, ordered me to stop talking feminism, and stormed out. The other maids later told me that they had explicitly denied my being an agitator when she asked them if I was "at the bottom of all this"; so, obviously the harpy was using scare tactics in order to cause distrust among the rebellious maids and divide us.

After this one run-in with Ethel the issue died down into quiet harassment. In a fit of humor and good clean fun I put a "This Exploits Women" sticker on the basket of modern cleaning miracles that we toted from room to room. A few days later the sticker disappeared. I tacked up a cartoon about Women's Liberation in the linen room, and it went the way of the sticker. And I never did get a chance to strike on Monday, August 24. After I had worked all day, I walked into the office to find Ethel and the manager waiting for me. They asked if I was still planning to strike on Wednesday. When I replied that I was, they said, "Well, we may as well terminate this now."

So they got to make their gesture and fire me for my intentions and political beliefs. But they also managed to martyrize me and radicalize the other maids, who were as angry as I was by this time. Most of them were interested in Women's Liberation and had begun to do reading on it and thinking on how they were affected, in small ways, in their own lives. But they had never been involved in any action, and the attitude of the management only turned them to a more militant, outraged feminism. The actual mass Strike did fall apart when the maids who stayed faced certain firing and couldn't afford to lose their jobs, but several of them quit anyway on August 25 to return to school. This left only a few working on August 26, so the motel got screwed anyway, much to my delight.

BOOKS

The Baby Trap

by Ellen Peck

Bernard Geis Associates, 1971, \$5.95

reviewed by Anna Syarse

Ellen Peck's book, *The Baby Trap*, is exactly what the jacket promises — "A devastating attack on the motherhood myth." With wit, statistics, and her own observations, Ms. Peck spotlights the baby oversell by manufacturers, media, and culture alike, all finding that babyhood is profitable to themselves and that childless women prove a threat. The means of escape by birth control and abortion are detailed as the most sensible though contested ways of going beyond the baby trap to an enriched enjoyment of marital fulfillment and rewarding life styles for both man and woman alike.

Based on the needs of an expanding market to continue their profit-making, businesses and advertisers cooperate in pushing for an ever-increasing population. Ms. Peck indicts all the industries rooted in the population explosion — utilities, furniture, clothing, not to mention the makers of baby foods, toys, and services that thrive on the maternity lists of hospitals. Pandering to these corporate appetites, television, news media, and magazines hustle up a glamorized aura to the maternal state. All grind out their daily spiel on the magic of the expectancy condition and how baby saves even the shakiest of marriages. Culturally, church and state alike encourage this commercialism by every means possible — from outright commands to propagate to bribes in the forms of tax and draft exemptions.

But what are the facts? Ms. Peck cites, among others, a study of 800 couples by Dr. Harold Feldman of Cornell University that showed *significantly* lower levels of marital happiness among couples with children than among childless couples. Furthermore, the father of a family is often seriously restricted professionally because his boss knows he cannot easily walk out on his job. But does this domesticity contribute to conjugal bliss or actually bind the husband and wife closer together? Hardly. Divorce lawyers and sociologists agreed almost unanimously that romance declined after the couple had children. It was evident that the extra attention and work demanded by their

children led to less responsiveness on the part of the mothers to their husbands.

Traveling men interviewed either complained their wives couldn't go on trips with them because of the children or happily announced that the whole structure of business travel from conventions to training programs grew out of a desire of the company men to get away from their families.

And what of the wives' complaints? "We never had a *conversation* after the babies came"; "No wonder Hegel said the birth of the children is the death of the parents."

It is well stated that "We all take our cues in life from environmental prompters. Put a girl in a fashion house among designers and models and she will become chic, stylish, aware of the cyclical changes of that quality called 'taste.' Put that same girl in a progressive law office, and she will become aware of the patterns of our social ethics and aware of the inequities of those ethics. Put her in a house amidst bassinet, diapers, diaper pails, etc. — Mechanical? Less interesting? Dull!" While the husband is away in a diverse and often exciting world, interacting with challenging adults, the wife-mother is preoccupied with endlessly repetitive maintenance chores, suffering "the loneliness of a person who has a limited behavioral repertoire."

"There should be creative aspects to child-raising," the author emphasizes, "but the fact that so many children grow up so troubled indicates that in most households these creative aspects are overshadowed by minutiae and routine."

The way out—Ms. Peck enumerates: abstinence, birth control, morning-after treatment, abortion — and, of these, she champions birth control. In defending the pill, she quotes Dr. Alan Guttmacher. In testimony before the 1970 Senate Subcommittee, this noted doctor compared distrust of the pill to distrust of penicillin. "A few people react negatively to both drugs; most can benefit." Furthermore, a 1967 British study indicated that in comparison to 14.1 deaths per 100,000 women (ages 20-34 years) caused by complications of pregnancy and delivery, only 1.5 occurred that were attributed to blood clots due to use of oral contraceptives, much less than the 5.6 due to abortion and 2.6 due to complications of the post-birth period.

The author also notes the changing attitudes of Third World Women, quoting from a position paper signed and distributed nationally by "Poor Black Women":

"So when Whitey put out the pill and poor black sisters spread the word, we saw how simple it was not to be a fool any more . . . for us, birth control is freedom . . . Having too many babies stops us from supporting our children, stops us from teaching the truth."

There is, however, another way out of the baby trap Ms. Peck didn't mention — free 24-hour community child care centers throughout the country. Then women may really have a choice in life styles. ♀

The Odd Women

by George Gissing
W.W. Norton and Co., 1971, \$1.95

reviewed by Karen Lindsey

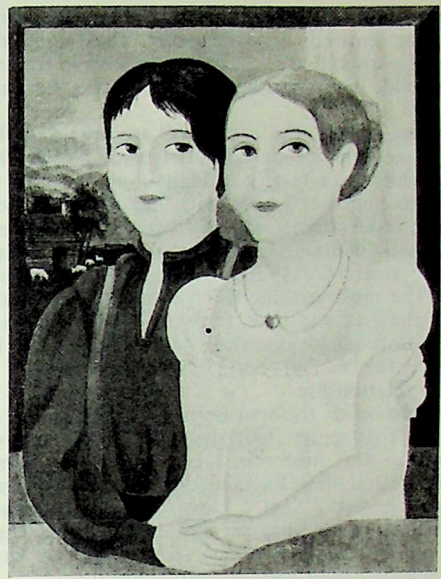
The nineteenth century, which produced so many remarkable feminist women, also produced some amazingly feminist men. Shaw, Ibsen, Mill — men like these were deeply aware of the oppression of women, and fought it. Some of their feminist works have become famous: there is no college student unfamiliar with Nora and her doll's house. Others have drifted into obscurity, but are being revived as feminist awareness spreads. Such a book is George Gissing's Victorian novel, *The Odd Women*, a novel that depicts the plight of women and condemns the male culture that has produced that plight.

There are two major characters in the book, and their stories interweave. Monica Madden, the youngest of a group of sisters whose "genteel poverty" has left them pathetic and useless spinsters, determines to escape her elder sisters' fates. She meets Rhoda Nunn and Mary Barfoot, two unmarried women who have dedicated themselves to teaching women the then-daring new profession of typist, to help them escape the traditional female jobs. But Monica fears Rhoda and Mary with their strange new ideas, and rather than join them she marries a well-to-do man whom she does not love, an insanely jealous man who represents for Gissing "the guardian-male, the wife-proprietor, who from the dawn of civilization has taken abundant care that woman shall not outgrow her nonage." She flees into a doomed love affair, and finally dies in childbirth, broken and despairing.

But Gissing was aware that woman's state was not fixed eternally, and it is Rhoda who is the book's real heroine. She represents the new woman who, growing in her own life, helps to pave the way for her sisters. Her major weakness is her denial of, and scorn for, sexual passion. This changes when she meets Mary's charming cousin Everard, and it appears at first that we are about to be taken down the familiar path of feminism-cured-by-true-love. Everard, enchanted by Rhoda's intelligence and independence, appears at first a liberated man. "In my mind you are working for the happiness of men," he tells her, in words that sound ominously familiar today. But it becomes quickly apparent that he sees her independence as a challenge, and that he wants to bend her to his will. Rhoda ends the relationship. She has confronted her own passion, and can now resume her work with compassion and humanity — and with a clear vision of the day she herself will never know: "when all women... are trained to self-respect... and marriage will be honourable."

There is one major flaw in the book: Gissing's class snobbery, which comes through in both

(continued on p. 40)



from the cover of *Patience and Sarah*

Patience and Sarah

by Isabel Miller
McGraw-Hill, 1972, \$5.95

reviewed by Linda Thurston

Patience and Sarah is a romantic novel based on the lives of Mary Ann Wilson, an American primitive painter, and her lover, who settled on a farm in upstate New York in the early nineteenth century. The book has just been released in an attractive new edition by McGraw-Hill. An earlier edition of the book, published by the author herself, won the first annual Gay Book Award of the Social Responsibility Round Table of the American Library Association.

Lesbian literature is rare in any case, but especially rare when it does not end in suicide, insanity, or unrequited love. *Patience and Sarah* is refreshing because it is not a tragedy. Rather, it is the story of successful love; yet it is not unrealistically rosy. The women face an uphill struggle to live the life they choose.

On one level they face the problem of accepting themselves. Patience shies away from coming out and by doing so loses Sarah for a time. But in a sense she is more realistic, for Sarah, who does not hide her love for Patience, is beaten daily by her father as she repeatedly tries to visit her lover.

They also face the problem of social acceptance, but this is never solved, for there is no place in society for them to live openly. They must leave society by going to live on a farm that they build themselves. Building their first fire themselves instead of bringing flint from town symbolizes their independence. This is something of a happy ending; yet Patience notes how she longs for others with whom she can talk, and share her feelings of

love for Sarah. They are together, but isolated, and dependent entirely on each other. They know no other lesbians and are, in effect, pioneers in forging a new kind of relationship for which they have no guidance.

On the surface, the characters are drawn in the stereotypic roles of butch and femme. Sarah, the largest child in a family of daughters, is raised as "boy" to help her father with the rough chores. Patience is an artist, who has been educated and raised with genteel manners. Sarah wears pants; Patience wears skirts. But this is only the framework. The most striking thing about their relationship is the give and take. Both are tender; both are strong. Both make demands and compromises. In short, Patience and Sarah have a model of a healthy relationship.

In addition to the special problems they face as lesbians, they must fight the constricted roles of women in the nineteenth century. When Sarah travels around New England she must cut her hair and call herself "Sam." Later, when they travel together in skirts, they are viewed as freaks. They are women without men and so must put up with both sexual assault and uninvited chivalry.

Patience and Sarah is written in a simple and appealing style. Some of the lines are trite, but this is minor considering the impact of the novel as a whole. The author is comfortable with her subject and deals with it fully; she does not shy away from sex scenes. The story is neither sensational nor sentimental. It is a fine novel on an important subject; it deserves to be read. ♀

DO YOU LOVE ME?

(continued from p. 27)

York it will be hot. She will call somebody. She will sleep on a couch, and the next day again she will go around to the agencies carrying a pair of borrowed gloves. Men will pester her on the street. Men will buy her supper and expect to lay her as payment. "I can't sit here any longer waiting for you to decide if you love me—can I?" She claps the sand from her palms, hating herself for having listened to his quiet voice, for having given herself into his hands like a bag of laundry.

He cradles his head, elbowing aside the shells and pebbles. They move him, the sort of treasures a child might hoard. He feels wrong, and is not sure why. He hates the carelessness of men like his father, men in the fraternity of his college years whose act of power was to give pain. He does not know what he wants, only that everything is going off crooked. She is going to walk off with that flimsy suitcase and leave him tangled here.

She reads his face—sullen, puzzled. He will let her go. Her skin crawls. One more defeat. "Well, want to walk me to the crossroads? It's time."

But he does not rise. "Stay."

Hope scalds her. She wants, wants so badly that surely she must win. "Why let it drag on?"

"You know it's hard for me to figure out what I feel sometimes. I'm slow to react. I can't just

ODD WOMEN (continued from p. 39)

Rhoda's and Mary's attitudes. Still, it is overall a radical book, and an important one from a feminist perspective. Gissing sees the future without illusion, in a sense foreshadowing the women's movement today. He sees, through Rhoda's eyes, that the liberation of women will be achieved, but only with great suffering. In the last scene, Rhoda holds in her arms the baby daughter of the dead Monica. She is explaining to Monica's sisters the progress of her work, and she is happy and exultant. But when she looks tenderly down at the child, she sighs, "Poor little child." Past and future are united in that final scene, for it is us Rhoda is holding in her arms — us, and our daughters, and their daughters: all the "odd women" who will inherit our struggle, as we have inherited Rhoda's. ♀



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decide like that."

"You can tell if you love me. You could tell you wanted me here for the summer, before."

He is afraid, but of what? Her leaving? "But I do love you!" He breaks from his chair, snatches the suitcase from her. "I do love you. I want us to stay together." The words slam like a door he is finally through. He feels weak with relief. He has done the right thing. He too will have a wife. He will have a wife and children with his name.

"Then I'll stay." She stands quite still. That blue future gathers itself in a wave and goes crashing over her. *I've won!* she tells herself. Now I'll be safe. Now I'll belong. And I'll be ever so good to him.

But her spine is water and her hands curl up remembering that vertical house, his parents with their expectant eyes, his ivory bedroom with its air of sickroom. His thin arms fold around her in a tight but formal embrace like an up-ended box. ♀



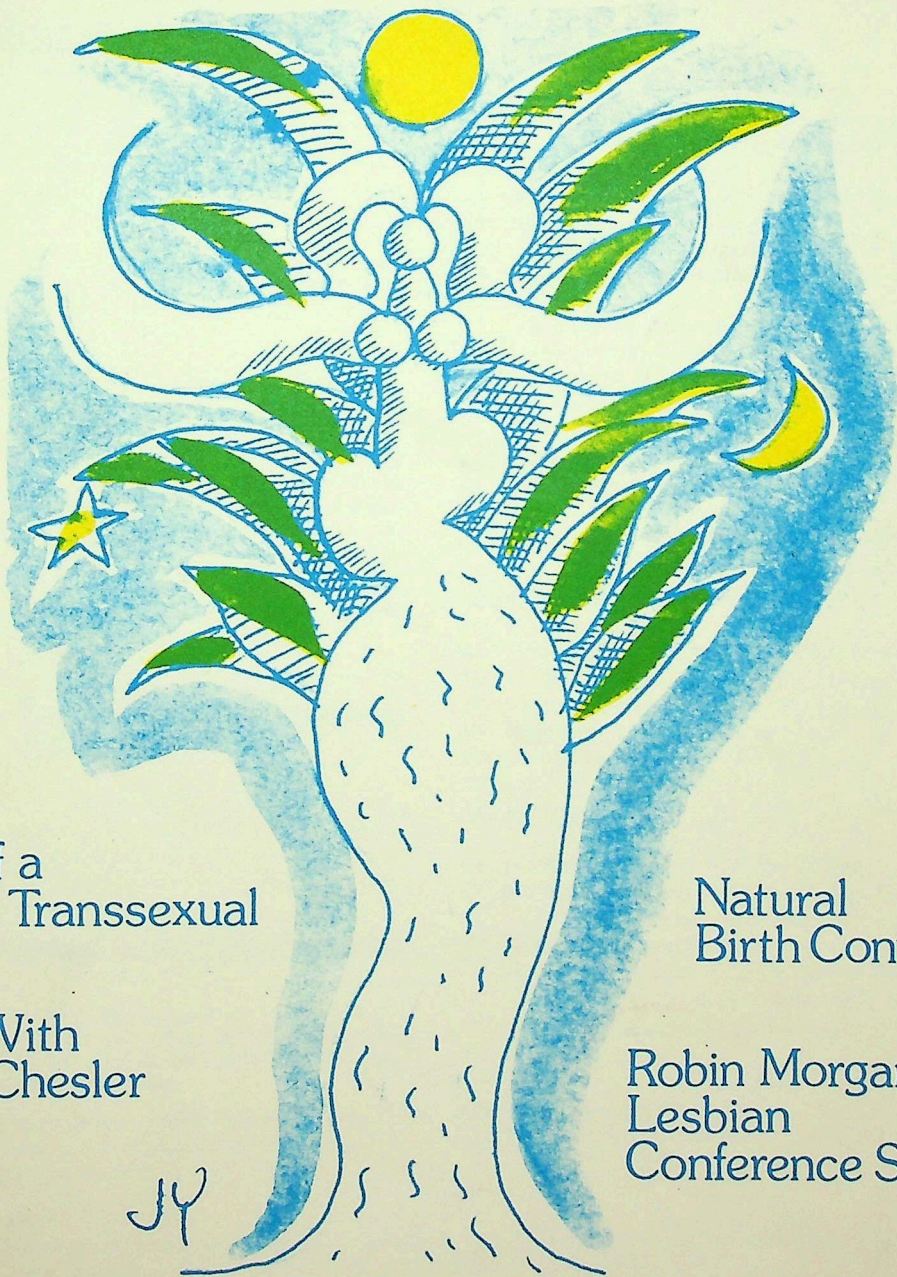
the
second wave

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Volume 2, Number 4

a magazine of the new feminism



notes of a
Radical Transsexual

A Talk With
Phyllis Chesler

Natural
Birth Control

Robin Morgan's
Lesbian
Conference Speech

JY



"It may be that a second wave of sexual revolution might at last accomplish its aim of freeing half the race from its immemorial subordination and in the process bring us all a great deal closer to humanity."

Kate Millet—*Sexual Politics*

The Second Wave is published by Female Liberation in Boston, Massachusetts. The title was chosen to remind us that our movement started over a century ago and that we are in the second wave of feminists in an ongoing struggle. *The Second Wave* is intended to present a variety of opinion from women within and without the movement on all topics of concern to women. The views expressed are not necessarily those of Female Liberation. Advertisers should write for a rate card and printing schedule.

—HELP!—

As we go to press, we are \$500 short of printing costs. You can help *Second Wave* survive by getting subs for yourself and your friends, persuading a local bookstore to carry *Second Wave* or, best of all, by sending plain old contributions. Please help—it's a real crisis.

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the second wave

a magazine of the new feminism

volume 2, number 4

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front cover by Joan Wye

back cover by Sherry Edwards

From us

We want our editorials to be a vehicle of self-evaluation with a two-fold purpose: for us within Female Liberation to assess our current situation on a regular basis and to share our analyses and resolutions with other groups that might be having similar problems.

Throughout its entire history, Female Liberation has been trying to deal with problems of balance on several levels. A major difficulty has been equalizing our desire to be a supportive group for our members, with our goal of bringing about social change in our environment, and the concurrent need to develop political analysis. We recognize that the integration of internal and external, or personal and political, is a classic problem in our schizoid society and that the attempt itself is revolutionary. Indeed, one of the documents of our organization, "On Male and Female Principle,"* explores the view that opposites, which are seen as polarized in Western intellectual tradition, are instead interdependent. Female principle qualities of inner growth and nurturing and male-principle qualities of action and outreach are only productive when they happen together. (Female and male principles must not be confused with women and men.) This integration is the very foundation of our feminism.

This winter we came together as a group for a weekend to hash through some inner power dynamics. It was a successful weekend, and we prided ourselves on our growing abilities to deal with interpersonal hassles. We thought, "Aha, we can move onward and outward into the political action arena. Time for an outreach phase." Instead, we had two months of dull, poorly attended, demoralizing meetings at which we searched for a political issue.

It happened that a few members became involved in organizing against the Nixon Administration's cutbacks for social services, which affect child care, aid to the elderly and handi-

*Linda Thurston, "On Male and Female Principle," *The Second Wave*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

capped children, and other services. Through position papers and meetings, some of the group came to agree that this was a project where our skills could be useful and which we felt justified in pursuing as a feminist issue. Many also felt that this would be a chance to break out of the cycle of responding only to intraorganizational issues.

Within two weeks there was a backlash of feelings—many women crying out that they had felt blocked in attempting to make criticisms of our focus on social services. While every member of Female Liberation felt a screaming need to discuss political goals and strategies, WE COULD NOT AS A GROUP TALK POLITICS. We were/are preventing ourselves from developing theory.

We identify some of this problem as distinctly female: because of our socialization we have the tools to cope with personal conflicts in much greater proportion than the tools for intellectual political analysis. We've evolved successful structures for dealing with inner conflicts such as orientation sessions and group weekends, but we have no structure for analysis. Again and again, we've fallen back on "personality conflict" as a description of disagreement. Anyone expressing a definite political viewpoint with theory and analysis to back it up is accused of power-tripping, being manipulative, or of exhibiting male leadership qualities. There exists a very real distrust of traditionally male-defined qualities like linear intellect, aggressiveness, competitiveness; and there is a tendency to reject outright the women who exemplify these qualities.

We've discovered as well certain structural flaws that prevent honest political discussion. When we're all together, we act as if there's a collective vision, an agreed-upon definition, of what we are, which is not true. Each of us as an individual has a different image of the group, for several reasons: we have not learned how to pass on important information and background to women when they show interest in Female Liberation; we don't have a statement of political beliefs against which new women can

check their own beliefs to determine if they want to become members; and the state of affairs at the different stages when we became members, and our perceptions of the meaning of past group actions, are very different.

We've also discovered a covert structure which undermines the semblance of unity we've convinced ourselves we must maintain. Our most influential decision-making groups are in fact social circles of people who work or live or play together, not the larger group or even necessarily committee groupings. These decisions, complete with defenses and justifications, are brought to general meetings and severely hamper collective decision-making, not to mention collective political analysis.

We are just now coming to grips with reality and with the fear of shattering our sisterhood if we uncover and make public the political differences that do exist among us.

A great deal of the problem is that many of us don't know our political differences on a theoretical basis, but we do have strong gut feelings about priorities and goals of this organization. We need to provide space for the formalization and articulation of these feelings. Having acknowledged the possibility of a split, we find it important to create a framework in which to decide whether our differences are major or minor. Recently, we've moved toward this by setting up study groups through which we intend to develop a written statement of common political principles from which we can accurately gauge our differences and disagreements. ♪

Female Liberation

WOMEN IN AMERICAN SOCIETY: AN HISTORICAL CONTRIBUTION

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by Ann Gordon, Mari So Buhle + Nancy Schron

RADICAL AMERICA
1878 Mass Ave
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Letters

Dear *Second Wave*,

I read your report on gynecological treatment at the Boston City Hospital with sadness and anger, but no surprise. I know at least six women who delivered babies by Caesarian section because their labor went "too long." A great many more women receive Caesarian sections than really need them. When you are terrified and filled with pain, you don't stop to ask how come the labor has gone on too long (or you're ready to accept any explanation as legitimate). This is especially true if you are somewhat drugged and groggy as is most often the case.

Diane Mueller

Dear Sisters—

Your "From Us" (Vol. 2, No. 3) about the whole gay-straight thing really spoke to me. I'm one of those guilt-tripped straight women who keeps running into the "more-feminist-than-thou" attitude on the part of many gay women. It's just like being the white liberal among militant blacks, and it's oppressive as hell.

At the same time, the psychiatric establishment (marriage counselors, therapists, etc.) is determined to make me "admit" that I never, no never, am attracted to women. This just isn't true. I'm tremendously attracted to women, physically, intellectually, emotionally. This doesn't mean, however, that I feel like making a political commitment every time I go to bed with someone. Sometimes I just feel attracted to him or her. Why does sex have to be a conversion experience?

If gay women and straight women would quit messing their heads up over which of us is oppressing the other, we could work on the oppression of women in general. Straight women who feel they can talk to men will help men become gentler, more loving and nurturant—all the "feminine" things they have been cut off from. And the independence, the refusal to lean on men, of our gay sisters, might be an influence for good on straight women.

Love,
Valerie Walker

Dear Female Liberation and Staff of
The Second Wave,

I have been doing illustrations for *The Second Wave* for the past two and a half years and have been pleased with the reproduction of my work, as well as with the contents of the magazine itself. However, I was quite disappointed by the latest issue due to an oversight in the placement layout of my illustrations. All the other graphics and illustrations except mine have bold signature titles. The drawing that I did on page five is larger than the other "spots," and could use a signature, particularly since the drawing was printed *backwards*, which of course left my signature backwards. If I had been informed that the drawing was to be used facing a different direction, I would have been glad to redo the signature.

Jean Segaloff

Dear Jean,

Sincere and profuse apologies for the accidental omission of credits to your illustrations which were in "how women had control of their lives and lost it" Vol. 2, no. 3.

Second Wave

Dear Sisters,

I recommend you print on cheaper paper and lower the cost of *The Second Wave*. It's a great magazine; I'd like to see it reach more women.

J. Delman
Medfield, Mass.

Editor's note: Glossy paper costs no more than matte finish and we charge now only enough to cover printing costs.

Second Wave,

I feel this is the first feminist magazine which speaks in a voice familiar to me. It caused a minor sensation when I brought it into the office where I work and one of the other women picked it up from my desk. Soon others were looking at one article or another with responses varying from shock to shock.

May your subscriptions swell with the second wave.

Ellen Link
Somerville, Mass.

Dear Sisters,

Ingrid Bengis, in *Combat in the Erogenous Zone*, challenges us to believe as she does in love, stability, and marriage. We *are* afraid of Love's power—but for good reasons. Too often "Love's power to create and destroy" has been *his* power to create and destroy *us*. Love's power has always been dangerous to women because men have rarely let themselves be defined by love, while women have rarely been defined by anything else.

Marriage hasn't worked for women in the past, but Bengis believes that since women have now been "liberated," marriage is more of a possibility. Our question is: if we weren't the problem, how can we be the solution?

Bengis claims to have experienced liberation within the present social system, but in fact what she has experienced is isolation. Separation may be a stage in the process of liberation, but no one said it was liberation. We can't be free in isolation, especially in the isolation of marriage. Bengis' solution is too facile: if separation is painful, then reduce the number of separations. Commitment and marriage would keep him from leaving and love from ending. But commitment does not solve the problem that being together created. Why commit ourselves to the problem?

Bengis assumes that, having developed her own capacities and creativity, she will find a man who mirrors her own good qualities—an "equivalent humanity." The mystery is how and where she expects to find this man in our society. Believing the myth that men are independent, secure, and undemanding convinced Bengis that taking on these qualities would create an equal relationship. In fact, men still take and use our creative and emotional energies to avoid dealing with their own inadequacies.

Bengis' needs will never be satisfied until she discards her superstitions (love is an all-pervading, mystical force to which we must submit, not understand) and refuses to give up control of her life to the fates. Getting in touch with your emotions does not mean being ruled by them.

D. Sue Cobble, Lucy Rideout,
Azi Ellowitch

San Francisco

Natural Birth Control

by Leah Jackson



graphics: Sofrah

All women who, like myself, have despaired over the failure or hassles of birth control methods, take heart! There is a natural system of birth control that has no hormones or chemicals or alien devices to interfere with normal physiological functioning.

When I first heard of this system, I had almost reached the brink of hysterectomy. For nearly 10 years I had run the gamut of birth control methods. First, because I was young and foolish, I took the 10 mg. Enovid, then two other brands of birth control pills. I got dark blotches on my face, gained several pounds and lost some hair. One day after being on the pill for over three years, I was driving along with my husband, and when he stopped at a stop sign, I burst out crying. I never figured out why, but after recovering then, I declared that to be my last day on the pill. It was.

Next came the foam. It was a mess. Then I got pregnant. After giving birth, I decided, on the advice of a friend, to try the IUD. My gynecologist readily agreed, but he did not warn me about any possible side effects. I bled profusely during my next two periods, each one lasting over two weeks, and suffered extraordinary cramps until in the third month I finally had the little beast taken out, and none too soon. It had embedded itself in my cervix and caused an acute infection in my tubes and right ovary. (The infection still flares up about every six months.)

The only thing left for me to try was the diaphragm. However, using a combination of that and the renowned rhythm method, I became pregnant again. I decided to have an abortion and during my recovery came across the concept of cosmic birth control. This method, which refutes all contemporary standards for preventing con-

ception, was the answer to my dilemma.

Until this point, I had been walking down the proverbial blind alley. I couldn't figure out why, when a woman very rarely engages in sexual relations deliberately to conceive a child, conception appeared random. Was this woman's fate, to be the victim of an unordered physical body? The universe itself is ordered; more and more evidence in the natural sciences attests to a galactic system. Rising interest in ancient disciplines like astrology, Eastern philosophies, and yoga is returning us to the concept that all things in the universe are part of a unity, that processes of the cosmos reflect themselves in and influence physical life on earth. As Aristotle wrote 2,000 years ago, "The world is inescapably linked to the motions of the world above."

In the search for my identity as a woman, I have come to realize that I should be attuned to the order of the universe and live my life in harmony with the spirit of all existence. I want to acknowledge through my actions that, despite the myths, my sex is the stronger of the species: we deal with childbirth, live longer, and so on. We need not be oppressed by insecure husbands and bosses, nor have our energies sapped by such chores as housekeeping and babysitting. Nor should we let ourselves continue to be victimized by sacrificing our bodies to the alien devices of narrow-minded gynecologists and obstetricians. Here, then, is a method that can get us past the stalemate. Astrological or cosmic birth control, or the Jonas-Rechnitz method, as it is also called, was "discovered" in the mid-1950's by a young Czechoslovakian psychiatrist named Eugen Jonas. He and many of his countrymen and women were Catholic, proponents of the relatively ineffective

rhythm system. Since he was concerned about the negative emotional effects that abortions, just legalized in the adjacent country of Hungary, would have on his female patients, he sought a more natural method of birth control.

Jonas turned to the "As above, so below" dictate of astrology. An ordered universe, he felt, had to mean that the creation of a human being was based on more than mere chance. After considerable study, he uncovered a constantly repeating cycle that correlated the angles of the moon and sun to periods of fertility.

The system first met with a great degree of skepticism, astrology being viewed as pseudo-science, but in 1958, a Budapest gynecologist, Kurt Rechnitz, verified Jonas' laws with material from the Budapest Maternity Clinic, and added the technique of using the system with the rhythm method to achieve greater reliability. The two systems combined became the Jonas-Rechnitz method.

In 1968, a full-time birth control research center named Astra was begun under Jonas in Nitra, Czechoslovakia. At the end of January in 1969, Astra's Scientific Board evaluated the experience of 1,600 women who had used the Jonas-Rechnitz method for four months. They recorded a 98.5 effectiveness. In 1970 the Board reported: "We . . . have examined 1,252 appraisable cases which occurred between July and December 1968 and which participated in the test for 12 months. We have found that out of the 1,252 cases examined, 1,224 could be positively appraised, and only 28 cases proved negative."² That's a reliability of nearly 98 percent, about the same effectiveness as the pill. Because of the method's proven dependability, it has taken hold solidly in Eastern Europe and Germany; in Czechoslovakia it has been accepted by the Catholic Church as a morally acceptable method of birth control.

How It Works

Astrological birth control is based on Jonas' discovery that every woman has a recurring fertile period related to the hour of her birth and the relative positions of the sun and moon at that point. If a woman was born at the time of the month when the moon is at an angle of 270 degrees with the sun, the times in her adult life when she will be the most fertile are when that angle recurs within the lunar cycle, no matter when ovulation occurs within her menstrual cycle. The angle lasts for 24 hours, so that on one day out of every 29½ days of the lunar cycle, the woman has about an 85 percent chance of conceiving. Therefore, a woman has only 12 or 13 days of

maximum fertility per year.

Birth control can be practiced by abstinence or by diaphragm, foam, jelly, or condom on the day of maximum fertility, as well as for 3 days preceding this time. The sperm live for a minimum of 36 hours in the woman's body, depending on conditions, and could therefore still be alive at the time the moon angle occurs; the one and a half day tacked on is simply a safety margin. The entire cosmic fertility period lasts for 96 hours or four days. Abstaining from intercourse (or using a diaphragm, etc.) during this period would comprise a system that is about 70 to 85 percent effective.

The Other Fertility Period

Failure of the rhythm method by itself as a form of contraception has been relegated to the dead-letter box of feminist conversation. In fact, the fertility time relative to the ovulation cycle (based on the fact that a woman ovulated monthly at about midpoint between her menstrual periods) is responsible for only about 13 to 30 percent of all pregnancies, according to Jonas' book, *Determination of a Woman's Period of Fertility*. Other research shows similar findings. For example, in tests performed by Dr. Franklin Brayer, a Canadian, on 2,300 American and Canadian women using the rhythm method, this method was found to be successful in preventing pregnancy in only 3 out of 10 cases.³ In other words, 70 percent of the women did conceive even though they had avoided intercourse on the most fertile days of the menstrual-ovulation cycle.

Although, according to the Jonas theory, the ovulation cycle is the cycle of least fertility, pregnancy *can* occur then. Therefore, to achieve the highest effectiveness, women should observe the menstrual-ovulation cycle together with the moon-phase cycle, as Rechnitz suggested. It should be noted that the cosmic fertility period changes slightly every month, so at some time in a woman's life it will occur at every possible point in her menstrual cycle. (This explains why some women, including myself, have conceived as a result of intercourse during their menstrual period, a fact previously unexplained in the framework of the ovulation cycle.) It is possible, therefore, that at certain times the cosmic fertility period will coincide with the period of the menstrual-ovulation cycle, thus cutting down the total time of abstinence. *For the rest of the month no contraception is needed.* What freedom! So there might be a month when a woman only needs a diaphragm for 10 days out of 31 to prevent conception—and this without subjecting her body to chemicals, hormone imbalances, etc. It is *natural* birth control.

Fortunately, another far more effective method of determining time of ovulation is now coming into prominence to replace the rhythm and temperature methods. By using the *ovulation method*, a woman can, through observation of her body, be trained to isolate fertility symptoms indicating the onset of ovulation. The method's essential ingredient is the study of the cervical mucus pattern, or what most women think of as the normal vaginal discharge. Each month, a woman has an obvious mucus pattern which she can recognize easily after she knows what to look for. (Gynecological self-help, the use of a plastic speculum to examine your own cervix, can be very helpful here. See *Second Wave*, Vol 2, No. 3.) Generally, it follows this course: right after the menstrual period ends, the woman observes no discharge for a number of days; these are the "dry days." The interior of the vagina is, of course, always moist, but externally there is a sensation of dryness.

The start of the mucus is recognized when this sensation disappears. Within a day or two the amount of mucus increases so that it becomes visible and is cloudy in appearance. This is an early signal that ovulation is beginning and conception can occur. The peak of the mucus symptom is reached when the discharge resembles raw egg white—clear, stringy and slippery with a distinctive lubricative quality. (This mucus symptom indicates the concentration of estrogens in the circulation and marks the point of maximum fertility.) Following ovulation, the mucus may become cloudy and tacky in its consistency and then may stop. The next menstrual period follows approximately two weeks after the peak symptom. Intercourse should be discontinued (or a contraceptive device used) at the first appearance of the mucus and not resumed until the fourth day after the ovulation mucus has been recognized.

The method is discussed in a book *The Ovulation Method* by John Billings, a Roman Catholic Australian doctor. As he points out:

The ovulation method eliminates the difficulties and weaknesses of both the rhythm method and the temperature method. It is not concerned with the length of menstrual cycles, nor their regularity, nor with counting days from the time of the period; it is concerned only with the current cycle, and determines each day, from the reliable natural indications, whether the day is infertile or possibly fertile.⁴

Furthermore, the method is universally applicable, with no complicated instructions (other than an initial explanation) and is especially reliable at times when women have irregular periods, such as during great stress, after childbirth, and during menopause.

One question I had when I first learned about Jonas' theory was that if conception could occur outside the period of ovulation, how could that phenomenon be explained physiologically? In other words, was more than one ovum released during a month?

Rechnitz gave one explanation: the ovaries are controlled by the pituitary gland in their activities, including the ripening of the follicle, its rupture, and its metamorphosis into a "yellow body" (*corpus luteum*) whose hormone conditions the uterus for pregnancy. Because it is the ruptured follicle that prepares the uterus for the fertilized egg, it would logically follow that conception can only occur near the time when the follicle ruptures. Rechnitz points out that while this is true for most mammals, there are some exceptions: "In the ovary of the cat or hare, for instance, mature follicles are always present, ready to burst. Nevertheless, these follicles do not burst of their own accord. The rupture always takes place during copulation. This means that for such mammals, conception can occur at any time [that sexual contact is made]. For humans as well, both methods are possible.

"In the case of an adult woman," he continues, "one ovum is liberated from the mature follicle on the fourteenth or fifteenth day of her cycle, unless she is already pregnant. However, this process—and hence conception—can also take place at any time during the menstrual cycle. Biologically, there is a possibility that tension, due to the effects of certain moon phases, builds up in the woman's nervous and hormone systems, which, in the event of sexual intercourse, leads to rupture of the follicle and thus conception."

While this explanation is only hypothetical at this point, Rechnitz's theory that sexual contact can stimulate ovulation outside the regular cycle has been supported in studies by Masters and

(continued on p. 24)

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power failure

a
talk
with

Phyllis Chesler

by Marsha Feldman, Emily Jean Gabel, Fran Taylor

*On April 27, Phyllis Chesler, author of *Women and Madness*, addressed a group of psychologists-psychiatrists attending the Eastern Massachusetts Psychological Association's conference at the Copley Plaza Hotel in downtown Boston.*

Following her speech, a group of women gathered in her hotel room to talk about women and power. Those of us assembled came from a variety of backgrounds: students, secretaries, educators, writers, the unemployed, from both the East and West coasts. A feeling of solidarity pervaded Chesler's hotel room. Flopped about on the floor, the beds, and the chairs, we were women of varied personal histories and active feminist consciousness. Our discussion was permeated with this incomparable, dynamic, common denominator. Energy and analysis exploded as we concentrated on issues central to Chesler's position as a female academician. The subject of female ways to female power was relentlessly pursued well into the evening.

What emerged was the result of a single-minded effort to explore the magnitude of the political questions before us. It was articulated by women who were now deeply committed to creating active feminist alternatives to an aging and jaundiced patriarchal social structure.

All quotes are from Phyllis Chesler.

Thinking about madness is like thinking about rape. The tendency to romanticize the Sylvia Plath-Zelda Fitzgerald-martyr resembles the glamorization of rape as the expression of a Stanley Kowalski animal magnetism. Feminists are rejecting this image of rape, seeing it for what it is—an extreme extension of “normal” male-female sexual relations, and an act of violence and hate. And slowly, feminists are seeing madness for what it is—an exaggerated manifestation of the actual powerlessness of women and the programmed worthlessness we are taught to feel.

But madness continues to attract, both within and without the women's movement. Perhaps because women who go mad are seen as rebels; perhaps because we have so much trouble reinforcing a strong woman that feminists only get attention from their sisters when they break down. But madwomen are still essentially powerless women, and women who only receive strokes for their weakness will not find it easy to break out of their role-conditioning.



photos by Marsha Feldman

Women and Madness brings some realism to the concept of madness. Besides debunking the romanticization of the madwoman as a basically ineffectual revolutionary, Phyllis Chesler digs at the roots of madness and reaches the same conclusions that feminists have reached about rape. Madness is often simply one reaction to the conditioning all women receive. By taking this attitude in her book and in her discussion with members of the *Second Wave*, Chesler is able to branch off, using the madness conditioning principle as a starting point for theories of power and leadership.

She also exposes the male bias in defining madness, articulating the damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't dilemma that women must deal with in psychiatry and, to a less obvious degree, in society at large.

Since clinicians and researchers, as well as their patients and subjects, adhere to a masculine standard of mental health, women, by definition, are viewed as psychiatrically impaired—whether they accept or reject the female role—simply because they are women.¹ Men are not usually seen as “sick” if they act out the male role fully—unless, of course, they are relatively powerless contenders for “masculinity” [black, poor, etc.]. Women are seen as “sick” when they act out the female role (are depressed, incompetent, frigid, and anxious) and when they reject the female role (are hostile, successful, sexually active, and especially with other women).²

Chesler's verbalization of the definitions by

which women grow up helps explain the often crippling impotency women encounter by their own internalization of those definitions. The problems within the women's movement of anti-leadership feelings so strong as to stifle any initiative and creativity which may be labelled power-tripping; the uncertainty women outside the movement try to quell by categorically rejecting women who step out of their role; and the resistance that women who succeed in male-dominated institutions encounter from their colleagues—these are all outgrowths of the same conditioning that allows the psychiatric profession to call us mad.

Chesler's theory of conditioning reveals the enormity of the task women face, no matter what path to power they seek.

I don't have power. I have awareness and I speak. I have no power. I can't help any woman in a concrete way. I really can't. But even having this much visibility has made my life much more difficult. I am not getting the rewards I would get if I were a man. I'm getting punished in a way that men would never get punished. And it hurts for me not to be able to do things . . . it really hurts, you know, because I feel responsible. Part of the punishment is that some of the women in my position who I talk to about it say, "Well, it'll be on our bones, we're just martyrs and that's that. It's going to have to be that way."

Chesler will not be rehired as a teacher at Richmond College in New York and is uncertain that she will find a job.

Chesler's inability to gain positive reinforcement points up some of the predicaments encountered by women who have attempted to succeed in male-defined areas. While tokenism is gaining creeping acceptance, the inclusion of one or two women in a previously all-male field does not grant them license to criticize areas they invade. The woman who, by government threats or employee pressure, reaches an executive position in a male corporation, loses acceptance, however superficial to begin with, if she begins recognizing and pointing out the flaws of corporate capitalism. So Phyllis Chesler, perched precariously enough on the structure of psychology/psychiatry, can expect little recognition for examining harmful practices within that profession. The dangers of powerless women attacking from within a powerful male hierarchy are evident—the eye blinks until the cinder is washed out.

Chesler also exemplifies what she defines as one of the problems of psychology/psychiatry in *Women and Madness*. The woman who steps out of the appointed female role is called insane. What would be hailed as healthy aggression and insight in

a man is regarded as compensation for some lack in a woman. Perhaps in Chesler's case her book is brushed off as a child substitute. In case after case cited in *Women and Madness*, assertiveness in women is seen as latent Lesbianism, fear of men, penis envy.

The women's movement is reaching the stage that follows tokenism. While efforts to get two women tokens where there is now one continue, the focus must turn to the concept of power itself and the problem of where that power will come from. The process of change by plugging women one by one into higher positions proceeds at glacial pace. And those women who are plugged in cannot speed the process when their source of power is still male dominated.

The creation of autonomous female structures is one alternative. But again, these structures are at the mercy of ever larger, stronger male structures. A women's self-help collective vs. the U.S. Army?

Possibly the only solution lies in the vigorous coordination of efforts on many levels: education and consciousness-raising to open minds to change; self-sufficient women's collectives in health and self-defense to provide support and strength; action by women's groups to change institutions that thwart their freedom and mobility; and the continued influx of women into male-power areas. The recognition of this interrelationship, however, has not been evident in the movement. The tendency has been to divide along lines of age, class, and aspiration, to put down female achievers as "male-oriented" and self-helpers as "apolitical."

Again, Phyllis Chesler speaks clearly to the problem. While women's groups may avoid some of the troubles found in groups containing men (ego-tripping, extensive rhetorical bullshitting, etc.), our conditioning gives us other difficulties, including a reaction against female leadership. A divinity student present at the interview recalled that when a woman from her collective began to emerge as a leader, other women tried to bring her down. The problem seemed to operate on two levels: (1) a woman leader became a threat to other women ("that *could* be me") in a way that male leadership does not threaten women ("that couldn't *possibly* be me"), and (2) that as leaders women tended to lead as we were taught, i.e., to derive our concept of leadership from male models, and act as authority figures.

Chesler connects the reaction against leaders to an upbringing that precludes the possibility of leadership. Denied avenues to power throughout their growth, many women adopt a sour-grapes attitude without ever examining the roots of power and its possible uses:

For example, women who eschew "leadership" and/or power are probably doing so because
(continued on next page)

the
dark
Lady
of the
sonnets

i am the dark lady of the sonnets, hiding
under the bold striped awnings
of a thousand lovers, their muscled, working arms
waving like flags whose colors
amaze me; i wear my dresses cut low
and my skirts high
in honor of the colors. everyone knows
my turf, the parked car, and each flag
salutes my dark beret as i ride with the guerrillas
carry a pistol and
grow my own garden with the help
of those who say:

that lady
has black lashes
that glitter like whips of rain. like rain
striking pavement.

and:

that guerrilla
can persuade with her dark hair.
she is, she most truly is,
wonderful.

yes i am the dark lady of the sonnets, slipping
back into my secret populations
once the mission is done. i know all
the fords and chevies
and ghias on the
block, they won't betray me
to one another. the headlights of men cruising
down my street wink at me:
they will not betray me.

when the black boots come kicking
down the doors
and ask:

who is
this woman who grows
her own garden?

the pavement will collapse beneath them, the earth
will not betray me.

look:

haven't you been frantic, puzzling
and guessing about me for
centuries and centuries to come? yet
the poets will never betray me.

i am the dark lady of the sonnets, working
hard at the revolution, hard at the wheel,
hard at the turning of a man's head,
the revolution of the heart.

—Joyce Peseroff

their valueless conditioning forces them to, rather than because they recognize the ruthless aspects of "leadership" in our culture. As we shall see, this is similar to women eschewing violence or self-defense on "principle"—when they can't perform such acts anyway. Such avoidance is not based on choice or morality, but on necessity. Women are no more to be congratulated on their "pacifism" than men are to be congratulated for their "violence."³

Conditioning also breeds distrust among women. In a male-controlled world, girls are taught to please those with power in order to survive. Even within the movement these reflexes are hard to root out, or even understand. Some women

Think how you feel if you've been knocking around the movement for a long enough time. You feel very much on the firing line all the time. Often the guns are aimed at you by women because you're not seeing men anymore. [And yet] the movement is not able to provide for you so you say "Here, I gave up all that other stuff and what has it got me. Nothing, I mean nothing." Sometimes when I feel very bitter I make a joke: What does feminism mean to me? I used to have a long list of who I was going to murder. And now there are female names on that shit list. Well, this is important because it means that before women didn't matter that much and now they matter most of all.



channel their energies into electing sympathetic male legislators; some, having learned only to nurture men and now being cut off from them, are unable to make the transference to other women. Possibly support of a woman leader smacks too much of self-love, self-confidence, *selfishness*; and women are taught above all to be selfless, to put everyone else's happiness first.

One thing that's important is that women have to learn to trust other women as leaders. Not as stars and celebrities, but as leaders. We do not have leaders yet. And that is partly because women will not allow other women to lead them. I don't have a constituency. I can't say to anyone and neither can any other women I can think of say: "Listen, motherfuckers, if you don't do X, Y, and Z, we'll..." That's a leader.

The fact that women do not have power creates a situation in the women's movement outside the usual system of reward. Women who work for men as employees, wives, mistresses, etc., at least are able to reap the benefits of male power—a raise or promotion, big house or car, financial support, status. Women who work for other women usually receive only ideological satisfaction and psychological support. When these are withheld, the efforts often seem meaningless.

Phyllis Chesler's prescription for change is psychological, a pre-action self-examination. Though supportive of political actions, she offers no strategy as the "one way," be it separatist commune, legislative lobbying, street demonstrations, or self-help. Basically, she tells us that we must first know where we're coming from before we can decide where we're going; that concrete solutions to the problems facing women who seek power must rest upon a thorough understanding of those problems. She also provides strong argument for the necessity of support among women as a basis for power:

[Women] need only transfer the primary force of their "supportiveness" to themselves and to each other—and never to the point of self-sacrifice. Women need not stop being tender, compassionate, or concerned with the feelings of others. They must start being tender and compassionate with themselves and other women. Women must begin to "save" themselves and their daughters before they can "save" the whole world.⁴ ♀

1. Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness* (Garden City: 1972), p. 115.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 280.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 301.

ABORTIONS -

STILL OUT OF REACH

by Sarita Cordell

The women who can't get abortions easily, safely, and cheaply are the same women who do not get contraceptive instruction and supplies. They are also the women who, if they want to bear and keep their children, have the greatest trouble supporting them and caring for them in a decent fashion. They are the poor, and they are the true measure of our health-care system. For that reason, what follows in this survey of the abortion situation in the Boston area emphasizes the unpleasant features rather than the positive ones that apply to women with the money, education, and contacts to get safe abortions when they want them.

Take hospitals. Last year about 450 abortions were performed in Massachusetts, the vast majority of them for women who could afford the expensive procedures that qualified them for "therapeutic" abortions. There are other drawbacks in addition to high cost: the impersonality of hospital service, its frightening aura of power and mystery, are psychologically devastating to women in an already strained state; racism and class bias determine the kind of attention given a patient; and many of the personnel are opposed to abortion and express that opposition as hostility to the patient. Furthermore, hospital funds are being slashed, so that even if people there wanted to expand abortion facilities, they would not be able to, certainly not to an adequate degree. Except for the small percentage of abortions in the second and third trimesters, with their much greater risk, hospitals are not the place to go.

One alternative is the freestanding clinic. At present there is only one in Boston, Crittenton Hastings House, but since the Crit's modest facility serves only a small fraction of women who want abortions, its drawbacks are in some cases unique. It serves a carefully screened clientele, usually married women with children whose husbands approve the operation and often accompany them to the clinic. The fee is \$200. And the limitation to pregnancies of no more than eleven weeks duration is an unusually conservative restriction. All these features mean that the many women who can't meet these restrictive standards are not among those who are so delighted that the Crit's notably harrowing struggle for a license has been won.

Two other clinics are in the offing, Preterm and the Charles Street Clinic, both sponsored by groups with extensive experience in the operation of

abortion clinics in Washington, D.C., and New York. Since these two clinics, if licensed to proceed as planned, will provide abortions for from twelve to fourteen thousand women a year, the drawbacks of similar clinics elsewhere have relevance here. Such clinics, while at least as safe as hospitals, considerably cheaper, and commendable in their quality of supportive counseling and contraceptive instruction, do not meet the needs of the most neglected women. In the first place, \$150 to \$200 is a lot of money for a procedure that takes about ten minutes; it is certainly more than the women I'm focussing on can afford. Granted, patients stay longer than ten minutes; they are counseled, relax for a while afterward, and most importantly get thorough instruction in all approved methods of birth control. Still, a lot of money is being made. As Ellen Frankfort says in *Vaginal Politics*, "Doctors and clinic owners have been able to make abortions one of the biggest rip-offs of women's bodies ever known." Even so-called non-profit clinics, and both Preterm and Charles Street Clinic are in that category, yield something like profit in everything but name to the doctors who work in them: from \$280 a day to \$75 per abortion are the doctors' fees common in New York. Nurses and counselors who work just as hard earn far less. They are ripped off too.

Secondly, there is a drying up of warm concern for every patient, an inevitable consequence of doing the operation hour after hour. A liberating event for the individual patient, the mass production of abortions is psychologically draining for the others at the scene.

Thirdly, there is the feature that is a defect of the clinics' virtues: their specialization, which enables them to be more efficient and economical than hospitals, promotes and perpetuates the separation of women from the institutions created to serve them. Patients are passive recipients, not

active participants. (I'll have more to say on that score after I comment about another presently available source of abortions.)

That source is the one so brusquely dismissed in the Massachusetts Medical Society's abortion guidelines distributed to doctors: "Abortions

WOMEN WHO LOVE MEN

*women who love men
enjoy the company of gay men.
there is not fulfillment here; there is
a space for the closing of eyes.*

*women who love men
rest their heads in the laps of unicorns.*

*women who love men
stare through glass walls
at the miracle of woman and woman,
the richness of possibility.
they long
for that most sensible longing,
and touch their bodies
only in themselves.*

*women who love men
live in gray rooms above bars,
with no hot water, and the night
filled with alien sounds.*

*women who love men
lust after secrecy,
hide behind bathroom doors
to smile at the blood weaving down their legs,
the smell of their cunts on their hands.*

*women who love men
know diogenes was a woman,
they shelter her sad little lamp,
letting themselves quiver at the sight of shadows
they know are shadows.*

*women who love men
learn to love solitude more.*

—Karen Lindsey

should not be performed in doctors' offices." Aside from the fact that the Supreme Court has expressly limited decision-making power in the first trimester to a woman and her doctor—"Required acquiescence by co-practitioners has no rational connection with a patient's needs and unduly infringes on the physician's right to practice" (*Doe v. Bolton*)—the ban can be challenged on other grounds. The specter of unscrupulous doctors doing hatchet jobs, charging exhorbi-

tant fees, and leaving the victims of their sloppy work and filthy equipment to suffer, often to die, is a legacy of anti-abortion laws. Such tragedies are the results of women's ignorance and powerlessness to determine standards of medical care. The answer is for them, particularly for the most exploited and poorest, to get more knowledge and more power to hold doctors accountable, not to concentrate control even further in the hands of medical associations. Women should know what a good office must contain; they should know what a doctor's experience in the field has been; they should know what women who have been treated by a particular doctor have to say, and they should be able to inspect an office before being treated in it. Women's groups are already collecting and disseminating information about doctors in the area. The trend is growing.

I visited an office where a woman can get an abortion plus the supportive and contraceptive services, tests, and examinations provided at clinics. The fee is \$150. The attractive suite of rooms includes an operating room with vacuum aspirator, defibrillator, and ancillary equipment as at Crittenton House. The staff consists of two licensed, experienced gynecologists, two registered nurses, and two experienced counselors. The day before I visited, the office had provided nine women with its services, one of whom paid only a small part of the regular fee.

Drawbacks here include the same economic exploitation of women's bodies noted elsewhere, the same passive role of the patients, and two features unique to offices: their freedom from inspection to ensure proper standards of safety and their vulnerability to power plays by the medical establishment, which means the threat of losing hospital affiliation. Although early abortions utilizing vacuum aspiration are among the safest surgical procedures known—far more so than tonsillectomies, for example—hospital backup is essential for unexpected complications. Medical-society and hospital pressures against doctors who perform office abortions may have to be fought in the courts to eliminate the threat.

Up to this point the stress has been more on the institutions that determine abortion care than on the unwillingly pregnant women who are the reason for it all. The sad fact is that they have been fought over and profited from but have had little to say in the matter. For most women with the money, education, and contacts to get abortions easily, this has not been an issue, but for the rest it is the reason for a groundswell of anger. They are beginning to do something about it, something far beyond the struggle to make abortion legal, for they know that a right is meaningless until all can exercise it. They are beginning to take matters into

their own hands. The development of self-help clinics and the movement to test and perfect menstrual extraction go to the heart of our free-enterprise medical business—indeed, to the heart of our whole inequitable social structure. The awe, the helplessness, the carefully fostered ignorance that have made women pawns of the legal and medical establishments are being slowly but surely dispelled.

From consciousness-raising, where they revealed to each other how they had been treated, patronized, demeaned, and overcharged; to reading what others were saying about the medical business (a bibliography such as *The Politics of Health Care* put out by the Boston Medical Committee for Human Rights suggests the hundreds of books, articles, pamphlets, and abstracts available); to writing their own analyses, as in *Our Bodies, Ourselves*; to observing the example of the Chinese, who with far fewer resources have managed to provide quality medical care for eight hundred million people and whose “barefoot doctors,” many of them women, are performing abortions successfully after six months’ training—the impetus growing from this process of education has led to increasing determination to put the knowledge to use in the service of women. The collective that conducts the Women’s Night at the Cambridgeport Clinic and the Somerville Women’s Health Project are a fine beginning. Although they don’t provide abortion service, their experience in other gynecological self-help is bound to have a bearing on the way women evaluate their roles in the health care system.

If we compare the support given to research in prostaglandins (drugs which make it possible for women to induce menstruation whether they are simply late getting their period or are pregnant), to the support given to self-help clinics, we see very clearly whose benefit is best promoted. The drug companies, which stand to make millions, are able to carry on the most extensive experimentation of any drug heretofore tested; the self-help clinics operate on a shoestring. The results of prostaglandin research may give women more freedom to control fertility, but no greater freedom from their ultimate dependence on others for health care in general; the self-help clinics, on the other hand, will not only enable women to share with one another their knowledge of reproduction control but will eventually break down once and for all the mystique of the medical establishment.

Until unequivocally safe drugs and self-help facilities are available to all women, the fortunate will continue to avail themselves of the hospitals, clinics, and doctors’ offices either here or in New York, while all other unwillingly pregnant women will be the victims of determined and powerful

efforts to deny them the right to choose. The efforts come not only from those members of the medical profession who don’t approve of abortion or of changes in the power structure. The Catholic Church, the state legislature, the welfare bureaucracy, Medicaid, Blue Cross, private insurance companies—all the authoritarian, patriarchal institutions in the state are directly or indirectly engaged in the fight to prevent equitable implementation of the Supreme Court abortion ruling and the development of women-controlled medical services to women. The key word is equitable; some people in these institutions are willing to expand abortion facilities, but until the poor have equal access to such facilities their efforts will not solve the problem.

The inescapable facts are that race and class bias have a great deal to do with what decisions are made. Even religious convictions are not as great a factor in preventing women from exercising choice. Catholic women, regardless of pressures on them, take advantage of available abortion services in numbers closely related to their numbers in the population as a whole. (In Syracuse, New York, for example, 44 percent of the women getting abortions in 1972 were Catholic in an area where 45 percent of the citizens are of that faith.) Poor Catholic women, just as poor black women, are the ones who get the raw deal. The unwillingness to grant autonomy to women, while it cuts across class and race lines, is *manifested* in class- and race-biased ways. It is the reality of that unequally imposed sexism that must be faced. Many of the courageous doctors, legislators, clergymen, and other feminists who have put their careers and personal freedom on the line throughout the struggle have recognized this right along. In 1969 Judge Arnold Gesell, in a decision for the United States District Court of the District of Columbia, said, “It is legally proper and indeed imperative that uniform medical abortion services be provided all segments of the population, the poor as well as the rich.” He was right. ♀

WOMEN, MEN AND
POETRY an essay
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Lesbianism & Feminism Synonyms or Contradictions?

by Robin Morgan

About 1,500 Lesbians got together in Los Angeles on April 13-15 for a conference which promised joyful meetings and good discussions. What in fact arose was a conflict between the desires of women who came to meet and discuss politics, and the structure of the conference which allowed only short workshops and resolution-making assemblies. Both the conference structure and the position paper in the registration packet reflected unmistakably the politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

Against the wishes of more than half of the women, a pre-operative transsexual man was permitted to perform at the Friday night cultural event, after the conference had voted to bar all men. Some women left the conference in rage, and did not return; others left and returned after the performance.

Much of the rest of the conference was spent in trying to discuss the politics of this event and other negative happenings, such as the unspeakably bad child care provided. Again the structures worked against good explanations and discussions of women's reactions and politics. Women in a workshop on "Liberalism" managed to have what they felt to be a useful exchange on the conference's politics, but they had difficulty finding a way to report their discussion to the rest of the conference.

Women also wanted to discuss the keynote speech by Robin Morgan, but were hassled in finding a time and place to do that. Since then, both gay and straight "underground" media have distorted her speech to the extent that both she and the editors of Second Wave thought it important that the entire text of that speech appear here.

The only resolution the conference passed was that no resolutions be passed in its name. The Lesbian mothers provided the main positive input to the conference by emerging from their workshop feeling good and strong, and with a proposal for a Lesbian mothers' conference. Some women returned home feeling glad at least to know the national nature of what they'd thought to be regional problems, and satisfied that the lack of unity was so honestly displayed that no resolutions could take place.

Very Dear Sisters:

It seems important to begin by affirming who, how, and why, we are. We all know the male mass media stereotype of the Women's Movement: "If you've seen one Women's Libber, you've seen 'em all—they each have two heads, a pair of horns, and are fire-spouting, man-hating, neurotic, crazy, frigid, castrating-bitch, aggressive, Lesbian, broom-riding Witches." So I want to start by saying that this shocking stereotype is absolutely true. The days of women asking politely for a crumb of human dignity are over. Most men say, "But you've become so *hostile*," to which one good retort is a quote from a nineteenth-century Feminist who said, "First men put us in chains, and then, when we writhe in agony, they deplore our not behaving prettily." Well, enough of that. We are the women that men have warned us about.

That settled, I want to talk about a number of difficult and dangerous themes relating to what others have variously called "The Lesbian-Straight Split," "Lesbian Separatism from Straight Women," and even "The Lesbian-Feminist Split." This is the first speech, talk, what-have-you, that I have ever written down and then read—and it may be the last. I have done so because the content can so easily be misunderstood or willfully distorted, because misquoting is a common occurrence, because the risks I will take today are too vital for me to chance such misrepresentation. If there are disagreements with what I have to say, at least let them be based on what I *do say*, and not on some people's out-of-context mis-memory of what they thought I meant. So, for the record, one copy of this talk is lodged at the offices of *The Lesbian Tide*, another with sisters from *Amazon Quarterly*, and still another in a secret safe-deposit box guarded night and day by the spirits of Stanton and Anthony, Joan and Haiviette, and a full collective of Labyris-wielding Amazons. I also want to add that the lack of a question-discussion scene when I finish was decided upon not by me but by the Conference organizers, for lack of time and in light of the necessity to get on with the Agenda.

Before I go any further, I feel it is also necessary to deal with who, how, and why I am here. As far

back as a month ago, I began hearing a few rumbles of confusion or criticism about my “keynoting” this conference—all from predictable people, and none, of course, expressed directly to my face. “Is she or isn’t she?” was their main thrust. “Know anyone who’s been to bed with her lately? Well, if we can’t *prove* she’s a Lesbian, then what right has she to address a Lesbian-Feminist Conference?” Now, such charges hardly devastate me, having been straight-baited before. So. It is credential time once again.

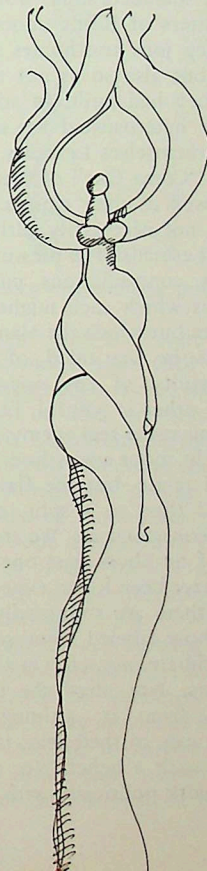
I am a woman. I am a Feminist, a radical Feminist, yea, a militant Feminist. I am a Witch. I identify as a Lesbian because I love the People of Women and certain individual women with my life’s blood. Yes, I live with a man—as does my sister Kate Millett. Yes, I am a Mother—as is my sister Del Martin. The man is a Faggot-Effeminate, and we are together the biological as well as the nurturant parents of our child. This confuses a lot of people—it not infrequently confuses us. But there it is. Most of all, I am a Monster—and I am proud.

Now all of the above credentials qualify me, I feel, to speak from concrete experience on: Feminism, Lesbianism, Motherhood, “Gay Male Movements” *versus* Faggot-Effeminate consciousness about women, Tactics for the Women’s Revolution, and a Vision of the Female Cosmos. I am an expert with the scars to prove it, having been, in my time, not only straight-baited, but also dyke-baited, red-baited, violence-baited, mother-baited, and artist-baited. As you can see, the above credentials further qualify me for being an excellent target, available not only to the male rulers but also to any women just dying to practice—even on a sister.

But, finally, to the subject. In order to talk intelligently about the so-called “Split,” it is necessary to recap history a little. In the early days of the current Women’s Movement, many of us were a bit schizoid. The very first consciousness-raising session I ever went to, for example, gave me the warning. We were talking about sexuality, and I described myself as a bisexual (this was even before the birth of the first Gay Liberation Front, and long before bisexual became a naughty or cop-out word—besides, it did seem an accurate way of describing my situation). Every woman in the room moved, almost imperceptibly, an inch or so away from me. Wow, I thought. It was not the last time I was to have such an articulate reaction.

Later, with the creation of GLF, a few of us Jewish Mother types spent a lot of time running back and forth between the two movements, telling the straight women that the Lesbians weren’t ogres and telling the Lesbians that the straight women weren’t creeps. Simultaneously,

the intense misogyny coming against Lesbians from gay men drove many women out of the “gay movement” and into the Women’s Movement. There was a brief and glorious sisterhood-glazed honeymoon period among all women in our Movement. Then, those contradictions began. For example, a personal one: I had announced my Lesbian identification in *The New York Times* (which is a fairly public place, after all) in 1968, before the first GLF had been founded. Then, in 1970, one group of Radicalesbians in New York said to me, “Don’t you dare call yourself a Lesbian—you live with a man and you have a child.” Now, while I might (defensively) argue the low-consciousness logic of this, since statistically most Lesbians are married to men and have children, I had nonetheless learned one important thing from all my previous years in the Left: *guilt*. So all my knee-jerk reflexes went into action, and I obeyed. Six months later, another group of Radicalesbians confronted me. “We notice you’ve stopped calling yourself a Lesbian,” they said. “What’s the matter—you gone back in the closet? You afraid?” Meanwhile, the monosexual straight women were still inching away from my presence. Wow, I thought, repeatedly.



The lines began to be drawn, thick, heavy. Friedan trained her cannon on "the Lesbian Menace." (In a show of consistent terror and hatred of Lesbians, and indeed of women, one might say, she only recently announced in *The New York Times* that the Lesbians and radical feminists in the Movement were CIA infiltrators. We met her attack with a firm *political* counter-attack in the press, never descending to a level of personal vilification or giving the media the cat-fight which they were trying to foment.) In 1970, backlash began, starting in NOW and infecting radical feminist groups as well. The bigotry was intense and wore many faces: outright hatred and revulsion of Lesbian women; "experimentation"—using a Lesbian for an interesting experiment and then dumping her afterward; curiosity about the freaks; dismissal of another woman's particular pain if it did not fall within the "common" experience, and many other examples.

Meanwhile, Lesbians, reeling from the hatred expressed by the gay male movement and the fear expressed by the Women's Liberation Movement, began to organize separately. Of course, a great many Lesbians had been in the Women's Movement since its beginning—a great many had, in fact, begun it. These included some women who were active in Daughters of Bilitis under other names, not only to keep jobs and homes and custody of their children, but also so as not to "embarrass" NOW, which they had built. In addition, a great many formerly heterosexual or asexual women were declaring themselves Lesbians, as they found the support to "Come Out" of their kitchens and communes as well as their closets. Some women *were* pressured, not necessarily, although certainly sometimes, by Lesbians. The pressure came mostly from confusion, contradictions, pulls in different directions, paths which each might have led to a united Feminism but which the Man exploited into warring factions; he was aided, of course, by the internecine hostility of any oppressed people—tearing at each other is painful, but it is after all safer than tearing at the real enemy. Oh, people *did* struggle sincerely, hour upon hour of struggle to understand and relate—but the flaw still widened to a crack and then to a split, created by our collective false consciousness. We are now teetering on the brink of an abyss, but one very different from what we have been led to expect.

At present, there are supposedly two factions. On one side, those labeled heterosexual, bisexual, asexual, and celibate women. On the other, those labeled Lesbians. Not that the latter group is monolithic—far from it, although monosexual straight women can, in their fear, try to hide their bigotry behind such a belief. No, there are some Lesbians who work politically with gay men; some

work politically with straight men; some work politically with other Lesbians; some work politically only with *certain* other Lesbians (age, race, class distinctions); some work politically with *all* Feminists—(Lesbians, heterosexuals, etc.); and some, of course, don't work politically at all. As Laurel has pointed out in an incisive and witty article in the current *Amazon Quarterly*, there are sub-sub-sub-divisions, between gay women, Lesbians, Lesbian-Feminists, dykes, dyke-feminists, dyke-separatists, Old Dykes, butch dykes, bar dykes, and killer dykes. In New York, there were divisions between Political Lesbians and Real Lesbians and Nouveau Lesbians. Hera help a woman who is unaware of these fine political distinctions and who wanders into a meeting for the first time, thinking she maybe has a right to be there because she likes women.

Still, the same energy which created *The Ladder* almost twenty years ago (and we mourn its demise last year and we all hope for its resurrection this summer)—that same energy is now evident in the dynamism of *The Lesbian Tide*, the dedication to the fine points of struggle and contradiction in *Ain't I A Woman?*, in the analytical attempts of *The Furies*, and in the aesthetic excellence and serious political probings of the new *Amazon Quarterly*, to name only a few such publications. That energy, contorted into hiding and working under false pretenses for so long, has exploded in the beautiful and organized anger of groups like Lesbian Mothers (begun in San Francisco and now spreading across the country), to defend and protect the rights of the Lesbian and her children, and, by extension, to stand as guardian for all women who, the moment we embrace our own strength, rage, and politics, face the danger of having our children seized from us physically by the patriarchy which daily attempts to kidnap their minds and souls. The development of this consciousness, so tied in with ancient Mother-Right, is, I think, of profound importance to Lesbian Mothers, all Mothers, indeed all women—it is one of the basic building blocks in our creation of a Feminist Revolution. And again, that energy, which drove my sister Ivy Bottini to almost single-handedly keep the New York NOW chapter afloat for several years (despite the ministrations of Betty Friedan) has now impelled her and other sisters to create Wollstonecraft, Inc., here in Los Angeles, the first major overground national women's publishing house. And again, that energy, in Shameless Hussy Press, Diana Press, Momma, and other small radical Lesbian-Feminist presses. That woman-loving-woman energy, freed into open expression and in fact into totally new forms of relationship *by the existence of the Feminist Movement*, has exploded in marches and demon-

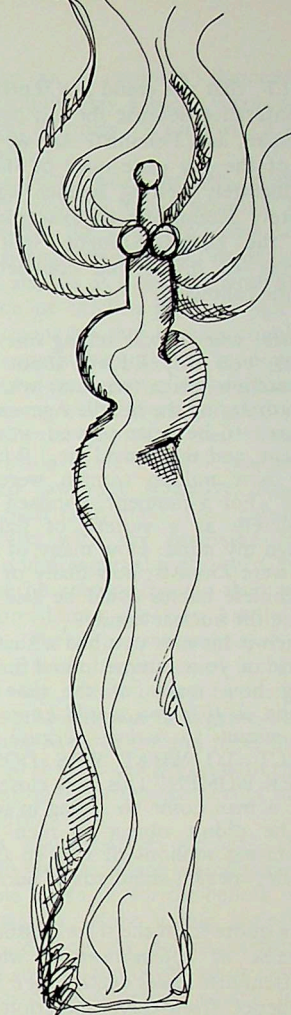
strations and dances and films and theater groups and crisis centers and so on and on—a whole affirmative new world within the world of women.

And yet.

A funny thing happened to me on the way to the Feminist Revolution: both Betty Friedan and Rita Mae Brown condemned me for being a “man-hater.” Both *Ms.* magazine and *The Furies* began to call for alliances with men, *The Furies* at one point implying that Lesbians should band together with gay and straight males (preferably working-class) in a coalition against the enemy: straight women. Indeed, in one by now infamous statement, Rita Mae declared that Lesbians were the only women capable of really loving men. Now of course this did come as a shock to many a Lesbian who was obviously under the misguided impression that one had become a Lesbian because she in fact loved *women*, and was indifferent-to-enraged on the subject of men. But now that the “correct line” had fallen from heaven, one was supposed to penitently dismiss such counter-revolutionary attitudes, learning to look at them and other women who still clung to them with contempt. One was also supposed to place issues such as the Vietnam War, political coalition with men, warmed-over Marxian class analyses, life-style differences, and other such un-lavender herrings in the path, in order to divide and polarize women. While doing all this, one was further supposed to hoist the new banner of the vanguard. You know, the vanguard—Lenin leading the shlemiels.

Before we get into vanguarditis, we have to backtrack a little, take some Dramamine for our nausea, and talk about men—and male influence, and male attempts to destroy the united Women’s Movement. This is such an old subject that it bores and depresses me to once more have to wade through it. I feel that “man-hating” is an honorable and viable *political* act, that the oppressed have a right to a class-hatred against the *class* that is oppressing them. And although there are exceptions (as in everything), i.e., men who are trying to be traitors to their own male class, most men cheerfully affirm their deadly class privileges and power. And I *hate* that *class*. I wrote my “Good-bye To All That” to the male Left in 1970—and thought I was done with it. Del Martin wrote her now classic article “If That’s All There Is” as a farewell to the male gay movement soon after—and said it all again. We were both touchingly naive if we thought that sufficient.

Because there is now upon us yet another massive wave of male interference, and it is coming, this time, from *both* gay men and their straight brothers. Boys will be boys, the old saying goes—and boys *will* indulge in that little thing called male bonding—and all boys in a patriarchal



culture have more options and power than do any women.

Gay men first, since they were the ones we all thought were incipient allies with women, because of their own oppression under sexism. I won’t go into the facts or the manners of the male-dominated Gay Liberation Movement, since Del did all that superbly and since most women have left the “Gay Movement” a long time ago. But I will, for the sake of those sisters still locked into indentured servitude there, run through a few more recent examples of the “new changing high consciousness about male supremacy” among gay organizations and gay male heavies. Are we to forgive and forget the Gay Activist Alliance dances only a few months ago (with, as usual, a token ten percent attendance by women), at which New York GAA showed stag movies of nude men raping nude women? Are we to forgive and forget the remark of gay leader and “martyr” Jim Fouratt, who told Susan Silverwoman, a founder of New

York GLF, that she could not represent GLF at a press conference because she saw herself too much as a woman, as a Feminist? Are we to forgive the editors of the gay male issue of *Motive* magazine for deliberately setting women against women, deliberately attempting to exacerbate what they see as the Lesbian-Straight Split, deliberately attempting to divide and conquer? Are we to forgive the following:

Once, when I was telling one of the *Motive* editors, you Roy Eddey, about the estimated nine million Wicca (witches) who were burned to death during the Middle Ages—something that appeared to be news to you—you paused for a moment, and then asked me, “But how many of those nine million women were actually lesbians?” For a moment, I missed your meaning completely as a variety of sick jokes raced through my mind: How many of the six million Jews were Zionists; how many of the napalmed Indochinese babies could be said to have lived outside the nuclear family?

Then it hit me: you had actually expressed a particle of your intense hatred for *all* women by asking how many of the nine million were lesbians, *so that you would know how many of these victims to mourn, because YOU DIDN'T OBJECT TO WHAT WAS DONE TO THE OTHER WOMEN!* This is as close as I have ever heard a man come to saying in so many words that he didn't object to men torturing and incinerating millions of women (provided only that they met his standards of burnability).

—this is a quote from the second issue of *Double-F, A Magazine of Effeminism*, in which even the faggot-effeminate *males* declare *their* Declaration of Independence from Gay Liberation and all other Male Ideologies.

Or are we, out of the compassion in which we have been positively forced to *drown* as women, are we yet again going to defend the male, supremacist, yes obscenity of male transvestitism? How many of us will try to explain away—or permit into our organizations, even—men who deliberately *re-emphasize* gender roles, and who parody female oppression and suffering as “camp”? Maybe it seems that we, in our “liberated” combat boots and jeans aren't being mocked. No? Then is it “merely” our mothers, and *their* mothers, who had no other choice, who wore hobbling dresses and torture stiletto heels to survive, to keep jobs, or to keep husbands because *they* themselves could *get* no jobs? No, I will not call a male “she”; thirty-two years of suffering in this androcentric society, and of surviving, have earned me the name “woman”; one walk down the street by a male transvestite, five minutes of his being hassled (which *he* may enjoy), and then he

dares, he *dares* to think he understands our pain? No, in our mothers' names and in our own, we must not call him sister. We know what's at work when whites wear blackface; the same thing is at work when men wear drag.

Last night, at this Conference's *first* session, women let a man divide us, pit woman against woman and, in the process, exploit the entire Lesbian Conference to become the center of attention and boost his opportunistic career.

The same man who, four years ago, tried to pressure a San Francisco Lesbian into letting him rape her; the same man who singlehandedly divided and almost destroyed the San Francisco Daughters of Bilitis Chapter; the same man who, when personally begged by women *not* to attend this Conference, replied that if he were kept out he would bring Federal suit against these women on the charges of “discrimination and criminal conspiracy to discriminate”—this is the same man some women defended last night.

Kate Millett pled for peace. What about the women who had a right to a peaceful conference for *women*, Kate, with no past *or* present male here? A true pacifist should be consistent, and preferably on the side of her own people.

The organizers of the Conference pled ignorance: that they didn't realize the issue would be “divisive” of women when they *invited* him! Yet they *knew* his San Francisco history. And it is too late for such ignorance. The same fine sisters who have for months worked day and night to create and organize this event, have—in one stroke, inviting this man—*directly* insulted their San Francisco sisters he previously tried to destroy, and indirectly insulted every woman here. I'm afraid they owe us a public apology on the grounds of divisiveness alone.

My point is that if even *one* woman last night felt that he should go, that should have been sufficient. Where The Man is concerned, we must not be separate fingers but one fist.

If transvestite or transsexual males are oppressed, then let them band together and organize against that oppression, instead of leeching off women who have spent entire lives *as women* in women's bodies.

And I will not name this man who claims to be a Feminist and then threatens women with Federal criminal charges; I will not give him the publicity he and his straight male theatrical manager are so greedy for, at our expense. But let him sue *me* if he dare, for *I* charge *him* as an opportunist, an infiltrator, and a destroyer—with the mentality of a rapist. And you women at this Conference know who he is. Now. You can let him into your workshops—or you can *deal* with him.

And what of the straight men, the rulers, the

rapists, the right-on radicals? What of the men of the Socialist Workers' Party, for example, who a short two years ago refused membership to all homosexual people on the grounds that homosexuality was a decadent sickness, an evil of capitalism, a perversion that must be rooted out in all "correct socialist thinking"—who now, upon opportunistically seeing a large movement out there with a lot of bodies to organize like pawns into their purposes, speedily change their official line (but not their central-committee attitude on homosexuality), and send "their" women out to teach these poor sheep some real politics? Are we to forgive, forget, ignore? Or struggle endlessly through precious energy-robbing hours with these women, because they *are* after all *women, sisters*, even if they're collaborating with a politics and a party based on straight white male rule? We must save our struggle for elsewhere. But it hurts—*because* they are women.

And this is the tragedy. That the straight men, the gay men, the transvestite men, the male *politics*, the male styles, the male attitudes toward sexuality are being arrayed once more against us, and they are, in fact, making new headway this time, using women as their standard-bearers.

Every woman here knows in her gut the vast differences between her sexuality and that of any patriarchally trained male's—gay or straight. That has, in fact, always been a source of *pride* to the Lesbian community, even in its greatest suffering. That the emphasis on genital sexuality, objectification, promiscuity, non-emotional involvement, and tough invulnerability, were the *male* style, and that we, as women, placed greater trust in love, sensuality, humor, tenderness, strength, commitment. Then what but male style is happening when we accept the male transvestite who chooses to wear women's dresses and makeup, but sneer at the female who is still forced to wear them for survival? What is happening when "Street Fighting Woman," a New York *all-woman* bar band, dresses in black leather and motorcycle chains, and sings and plays a lot of Rolling Stones, including the high priest of sadistic cock-rock Jagger's racist, sexist song "Brown Sugar"—with lines like, "Old slaver knows he's doin' all right/hear him whip the women just about midnight/Hey, Brown Sugar, how come you taste so good?". What is happening when, in a mid-west city with a strong Lesbian-Feminist community, men raped a woman in the university dormitory, and murdered her by the repeated ramming of a broom-handle into her vagina until she died of massive internal hemorrhage—and the Lesbian activists there can't relate to taking any political action pertaining to the crime because, according to one of them, there was no evidence that the victim was a Lesbian? But the

same community can, at a women's dance less than a week later, proudly play Jagger's recorded voice singing "Midnight Rambler"—a song which glorifies the Boston Strangler.

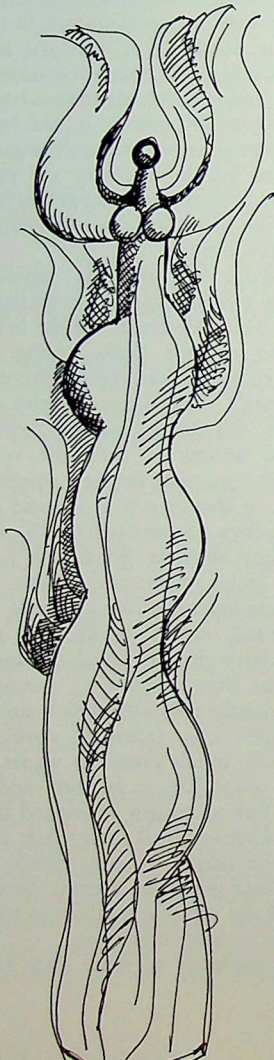
What has happened when women, in escaping the patriarchally enforced role of noxious "femininity" adopt instead the patriarch's *own* style, to get drunk and swaggering just like one of the boys, to write of tits and ass as if a sister were no more than a collection of chicken parts, to spit at the lifetime commitment of other Lesbian couples, and refer to them contemptuously as "monogs"? For the record, the anti-monogamy line originated with men, Leftist men, Weathermen in particular, in order to guilt-trip the women in their "alternative culture" into being more available victims of a dominance-based gang-rape sexuality. And from where but the male Left, male "hip" culture have we been infected with the obsession to anti-intellectualism and downward mobility? Genuinely poor people see no romanticism in their poverty; those really forced into illiteracy hardly glorify their condition. The oppressed want *out* of that condition—and it is contemptuous of real people's pain to parasitically imitate it, and hypocritical to play the more-oppressed-than-thou game instead of ordering our lives so as to try and meet our basic and just needs, so that we can get on with the more important but often forgotten business of making a Feminist Revolution.

What *about* the life-style cop-out? The one invented by two straight white young males, Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, for the benefit of other unoppressed straight white young males? What about the elite isolation, the incestuous preoccupation with one's own clique or group or commune, one's own bar/dance/tripping, which led one Lesbian to announce that the revolution has already been won, that she isn't compelled, like the rest of us, to live in a man's world anymore? As Jeanne Cordova has written in *The Lesbian Tide*, "An example of these politics is Jill Johnston's calling for tribes of women capable of sustaining themselves independent of the male species. How very beautiful! Truth, justice, and the womanly way! How very unreal." And Cordova is right in pointing out that this is the "personal solution" error—the deadly trap into which so many heterosexual women have fallen. It should be obvious how painfully much everyone wants even a little happiness, peace, joy, in her life—and should have that right. But to remain convinced that your own personal mirage is a real oasis while a sandstorm is rising in the desert is both selfish and suicidal. There is a war going on, sisters. Women are being killed. And the rapist doesn't stop to ask whether his victim is straight or Lesbian.

But the epidemic of male style among women

doesn't stop there. No, it is driving its *reformist* wedge through our ranks as well: women breaking their backs working for McGovern (only to have him laugh in their faces); women in the Lesbian community especially breaking their backs to elect almost invariably *male* gay legislators, or lobbying to pass bills which will, in practice, primarily profit *men*. Myself, I have never been able to get excited over tokenism, whether it was Margaret Chase Smith in the Senate or Bernadine Dohrn in the Weather Underground, let alone a few women to give GAA a good front (which women, by the way, are finally getting wise to, and leaving), or to serve as periodic good niggers for the cheap porn reportage of *The Advocate*, *Gay*, *Gay Sunshine*, and the like.

Susan Silverwoman, a New York-based Lesbian Feminist active for years in the Women's Movement, and at one time in GLF, has written a



moving and courageous paper called "Finding Allies: The Lesbian Dilemma" which is available for \$.25 by writing to Labyris Books, 33 Barrow Street, New York City 10014. In it she writes, "Men have traditionally maintained power over women by keeping us separated. Gay men capitalized on the split between feminists and lesbians by suggesting and insisting that we [Lesbians] were somehow better, basically different from straight women . . . Gay men preferred to think of us not as women, but as female gay men." She goes on to say, "It is imperative that we identify with the total feminist issue . . . if we continue to define straight women as the enemy, rather than sisters . . . we rob from ourselves a movement which must be part of ourselves. We are choosing false allies when we align politically with gay men who can never understand the female experience and who, as men, have a great deal of privilege to lose by a complete liberation of women. Whether or not straight feminists come out, as potential lesbians they are far more likely to understand our experience."

Language itself is one powerful barometer of influence. More and more women use Lesbian proudly in self-description, calling on the history of that word, dating from an age and an island where women were great artists and political figures. Why do *any* of us still use "gay" to describe ourselves at all—that trivializing, male-invented, and male-defining term? If we are serious about our politics, then we must be responsible about the ways in which we communicate them to others, creating new language when necessary to express new concepts. But the sloppy thinking and lazy rhetoric of the straight and gay male movements pollutes our speech, and when Jill Johnston in one column claims Betty Friedan as a Lesbian and then, a few months later, after Friedan's attack in *The New York Times*, calls Friedan a man—I, for one, get confused. And angry. Because the soggy sentimentality of the first statement and the rank stupidity of the second *mean nothing politically*. The point is, very regrettably, that Friedan *is* a woman. And can stand as one of many examples of the insidious and devastating effect of male *politics*.

There *is* a war going on. And people get damaged in a war, badly damaged. Our casualties are rising. To say that any woman has escaped—or can escape—damage in this day on this planet is to march under the self-satisfied flags of smug false consciousness. And get gunned down anyway for one's pains.

Personally, I detest "vanguarditis." I never liked it in the Left, and I find it especially distasteful weaseling its way into the Women's Movement. I think that if anything like a "vanguard" exists at

all, it continually shifts and changes from group to group within a movement, depending on the specific strategies and contradictions that arise at given times, and on which groups are best equipped and placed to meet and deal with them—when and if called for by the movement as a *whole*. The responsibility of a vanguard, by the way, is to speak from, for, and to *all* of the people who gave it birth. Lesbian Nation cannot be the Feminist solution, much less a vanguard, when it ignores these facts. And it won't do to blame the straight women who wouldn't cooperate—after all, it is the *vanguard's* responsibility as leadership to hear messages in the silence or even hostility of *all* its people, and to reply creatively, no matter how lengthy or painful that dialogue is. A willingness to do this—and that to *act* on the message—is what *makes* the vanguard the vanguard.

I don't like more-radical-than-thou games any better than more-oppressed-than-thou games. I don't like credentials games, intimidation-between-women games, or "you are who you sleep with" games. I don't like people being judged by their class background, their sexual preference, their race, choice of religion, marital status, motherhood or rejection of it, or any other vicious standard of categorization. I hate such judgments in the male power system, and I hate them in the Women's Movement. If there must be judgments at all, let them be not on where a woman is coming *from*, but on what she is moving *toward*; let them be based on her seriousness, her level of risk, her commitment, her endurance.

And by those standards, yes, there could be a Lesbian vanguard. I think it would be women like Barbara Grier and Phyllis Lyons and Del Martin and Sten Russell, and others like them who, at the height of the fifties' McCarthyism, stood up and formed a Lesbian civil-rights movement, and whose courage, commitment, and staying power are ignored by the vulgar minds of certain younger women, newly Lesbian from two months or two years back, who presume to dismiss such brave women as "oldies" or "life-style straights" or, again, "hopeless monogs."

There is a new smell of fear in the Women's Movement. It is in the air when groups calling themselves killer-dyke-separatists trash Lesbian Feminists who work with that anathema, straight women—trash these Lesbian Feminists as "pawns, dupes, and suckers-up to the enemy." It is in the air when Peggy Allegro writes in *Amazon Quarterly* that "at a certain point, flags can begin to dominate people. For instance, women are oppressed by the flag of the freak feminist dyke. There are all kinds of rules, shoulds and shouldn'ts, in this community, that result because of the image's power. We must beware the tendency to

merely impose a new hierarchy . . . a new ideal ego image to persecute people." It is in the air when ultra-egalitarianism usurps organic collectivity, or when one woman is genuinely scared to confront another about the latter's use of "chick" to describe her lover. It was in the air when I trembled to wrench the Stones' record from a phonograph at a women's dance, and when I was accused of being up-tight, a bring-down, puritanical, draggy, and, of course, doubtless, a hung-up man-hating "straight" *for doing that*. The words are familiar, but the voices used to be male. And the smell of fear was in my gut, writing this talk, and is in my nostrils now, risking the saying of these things, taking a crazy leap of faith that our own shared and potentially ecstatic womanhood will bind us across all criticism—and that a lot more Feminists in the Lesbian Movement will come out of their closets today.

Because polarization does exist. Already. And when I first thought about this talk, I wanted to call for unity. But I cannot. I am struck dumb before the dead body of a broomhandle-raped and murdered woman, and anyway, my voice wouldn't dent the rape-sound of the Rolling Stones. So instead, my purpose in this talk here today is to call for further polarization, but on different grounds.

Not the Lesbian-Straight Split, nor the Lesbian-Feminist Split, but the Feminist-Collaborator Split.

The war outside, between women and male power, is getting murderous; they are trying to kill us, literally, spiritually, infiltratively. It is time, past time, we drew new lines and knew which women were serious, which women were really committed to loving women (whether that included sexual credentials or not), and, on the other side, which women thought Feminism meant pure fun, or a chance to bring back a body count to their male Trot party leaders, or those who saw Feminist Revolution as any particular life-style, correct class line, pacifist-change-your-head-love-daisy-chain, or easy lay. We know that the personal is political. But if the political is *solely* personal, then those of us at the barricades will be in big trouble. And if a woman isn't there when the crunch comes—and it is coming—then I for one won't give a damn whether she is at home in bed with a woman, a man, or her own wise fingers. If she's in bed at all at that moment, others of us are in our coffins. I'd appreciate the polarization now instead of then.

I am talking about the rise of attempted gynocide. I am talking about survival. Susan Stein, a Lesbian Feminist with a genius for coining aphorisms, has said, "Lesbianism is in danger of being co-opted by Lesbians." Lesbians are a minority. Women are a majority. And since it is

awfully hard to be a Lesbian without being a woman first, the choice seems pretty clear to me.

There are a lot of women involved in that war out there, most of them not even active in the Women's Movement yet. They include the hundreds of thousands of housewives who created and sustained the meat boycott in the most formidable show of women's strength in recent years. Those women, Feminists or not, were moving *because* of Feminism—such a nationwide women's action would have been thought impossible five years ago. They are mostly housewives, and mothers, and heterosexuals. There are asexual and celibate women out there, too, who are tired of being told that they are sick. Because this society has said that everybody should fuck a lot, and too many people in the Women's Movement have echoed, "Yeah, fuck with women or even with men, but for god's sake *fuck* or you're *really* perverted." And there are also genuine functioning bisexuals out there. I'm not referring to people who have used the word as a coward's way to avoid dealing honestly with homosexuality, or to avoid commitment. We all know *that* ploy. I agree with Kate Millett when she says that she "believes that all people are inherently bisexual"—and I also know that to fight a system one must dare to identify with the *most* vulnerable aspect of one's oppression—and women are put in prison for being Lesbians, not bisexuals or heterosexuals *per se*. So that is why I have identified myself as I have—in the *Times* in 1968 and here today, although the Man will probably want to get *me* for hating *men* before he gets me for loving *women*.

We have enough trouble on our hands. Isn't it way past time that we stopped *settling* for blaming each other, stopped blaming heterosexual women and middle-class women and married women and Lesbian women and white women and *any* women for the structure of sexism, racism, classism, and ageism, that *no* woman is to blame for because we have none of us had the *power* to *create* those structures. They are patriarchal creations, not ours. And if we are collaborating with *any* of them for *any* reason, we must begin to stop. The time is short, and the self-indulgence is getting dangerous. We must stop settling for anything less than we deserve.

All women have a right to each other as women. All women have a right to our sense of ourselves as a People. All women have a right to live with and make love with *whom we choose when we choose*. We have a right to bear and raise children if we choose, and *not* to if we don't. We have a right to freedom and yes, power. Power to change our entire species into something that might for the first time approach being human. We have a right, each of us, to a Great Love.

And this is the final risk I will take here today. By the right to a great love I don't mean romanticism in the Hollywood sense, and I don't mean a cheap joke or cynical satire. *I mean a great love*—a committed, secure, nurturing, sensual, aesthetic, revolutionary, holy, ecstatic love. That need, *that right*, is at the heart of our revolution. It is in the heart of the woman stereotyped by others as being a butch bar dyke who cruises for a cute piece, however much she herself might laugh at the Lesbian couple who have lived together for decades. It is in their hearts, too. It is in the heart of the woman who jet-sets from one desperate heterosexual affair to another. It is in the heart of a woman who wants to find—or stay with—a man she can love and be loved by in what she has a right to demand are non-oppressive ways. It is in the heart of every woman here today, if we dare admit it to ourselves and *recognize* it in each other, and in *all* women. It is each her right. Let no one, female or male, of whatever sexual or political choice, dare deny that, for to deny it is to *settle*. To deny it is to speak with the words of the real enemy.

If we can open ourselves *to ourselves* and each other, as women, only then can we begin to fight for and create, in fact *reclaim*, not Lesbian Nation or Amazon Nation—let alone some false State of equality—but a real Feminist Revolution, a proud gynocratic *world* that runs on the power of women. Not in the male sense of power, but in the sense of a power plant—producing energy. And to each, that longing for, the right to, great love, filled-in reality, for all women, and children, and men and animals and trees and water and all life, an exquisite diversity in unity. That world breathed and exulted on this planet some twelve thousand years ago, before the patriarchy arose to crush it.

If we risk this task then, our pride, our history, our culture, our past, our future, all vibrate before us. Let those who will dare, begin.

In the spirit of that task, I want to end this talk in a strange and new, although time-out-of-mind-ancient manner. Earlier, I "came out" in this talk as a Witch, and I did not mean that as a solely political affiliation. I affirm the past and the present spirit of the Wicca (the Anglo-Saxon word for witch, or wise woman), affirm it not only in the smoke of our nine million martyrs, but also in the thread of *real* woman-power and *real* Goddess-worship dating back beyond Crete to the dawn of the planet. In the ruling male culture, they have degraded our ritual by beginning conferences and conventions with a black-coated male, sometimes in full priestly drag, nasally droning his stultifying pronouncements to the assemblage. Let us reclaim our own for ourselves, then, and in that

process, also extend an embrace to those Lesbians who, because they go to church, are held in disrepute by counterculture Lesbians. And to those women of *whatever* sexual identification who kneel in novenas or murmur in quiet moments to, oh irony, a male god for alleviation of the agony caused by male supremacy.

The short passage I am about to read is from The Charge of the Goddess, still used reverently in living Wiccan Covens, usually spoken by the High Priestess at the initiation of a new member. I ask that each woman join hands with those next to her.

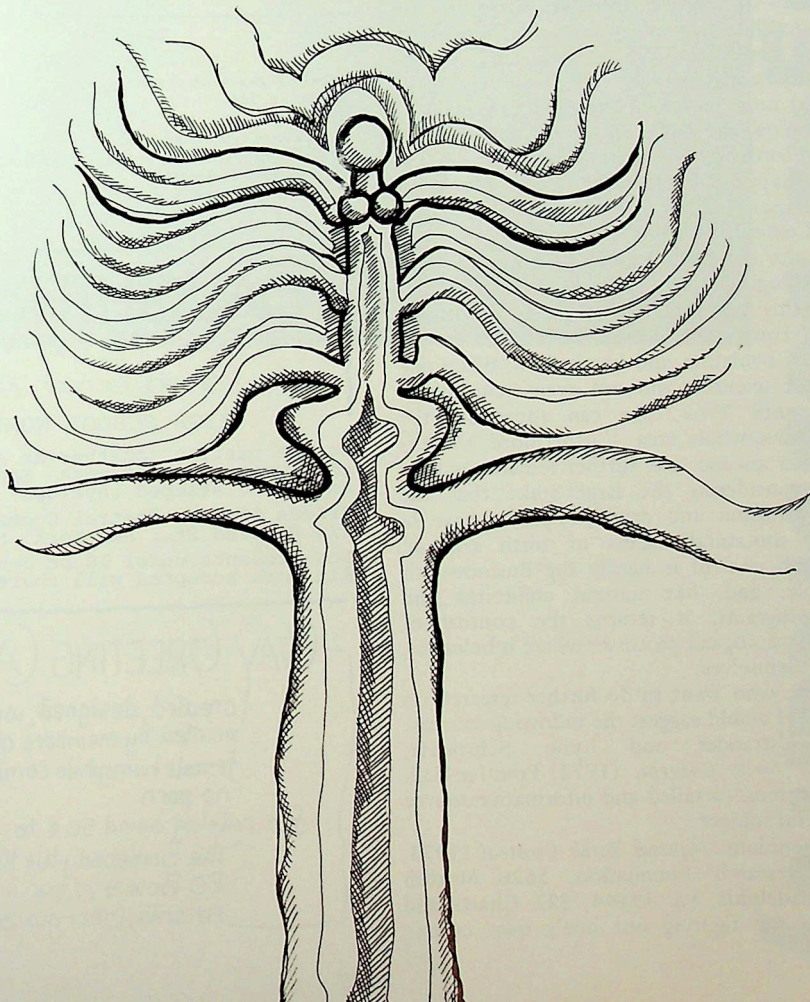
I ask your respect for the oldest faith known to human beings, and for the ecstatic vision of freedom that lies hidden in each of your own precious, miraculous brains.

Listen to the words of the Great Mother. She says:

"Whenever ye have need of anything, once in the month, and better it be when the moon is full, then shall ye assemble in some secret place . . . to

these I will teach things that are yet unknown. AND YE SHALL BE FREE FROM ALL SLAVERY . . . Keep pure your highest ideal; strive ever toward it. LET NAUGHT STOP YOU NOR TURN YOU ASIDE . . . Mine is the cup of the wine of life and the cauldron of Cerridwen . . . I am the Mother of all living, and my love is poured out upon the Earth . . . I am the beauty of the Green Earth, and the White Moon among the stars, and the Mystery of the Waters, AND THE DESIRE IN THE HEART OF WOMAN . . . Before my face, let thine innermost divine self be enfolded in the raptures of the Infinite . . . Know the Mystery, that if that which thou seekest thou findest not within thee, thou wilt never find it without thee . . . For behold, I HAVE BEEN WITH THEE FROM THE BEGINNING. And I await you now."

Dear Sisters,
As We in the Craft say, Blessed Be. ♀



Natural Birth Control

Johnson, who observed in their laboratory that "the very occasional woman ovulates out of cycle, after orgasm."⁵ This is an area of female physiology that needs exploration.

Some women might also be curious about the 97.7 percentage of reliability—who are the 2.3 percent who lose out? Theoretically, reliability should be 100 percent. Astra International gives three reasons for practical failure: either the appropriate dates of abstinence were not strictly adhered to, or the given date and hour of birth turned out to be incorrect, or the menstrual cycle and ovulation were irregular. Rechnitz has said that if the combined methods were applied only to women with regular cycles, effectiveness against pregnancy would be increased considerably. (At that time, however, Rechnitz knew only about the Knaus-Ogino—or rhythm—method; word of the ovulation method had not yet reached him. If it had, the percentage of effectiveness would undoubtedly be higher.)

I should note that with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Astra center was closed down and its records confiscated; Jonas himself has virtually disappeared. However, there is now an Astra International in Vienna and an Astra Research Center in Rosslyn, Virginia.

All of the questions I and other women have about astrological birth control cannot be answered at this time, because there is a pathetic scarcity of complete and accurate research on the processes of ovulation and conception. When one realizes that scientists did not even view human ovulation until 1962, one can appreciate the novelty of this whole area. Furthermore, there is no reason to assume that further research will be hastened, considering the large stake that the medical profession and drug companies have in developing *unnatural* means of birth control. Natural birth control is hardly Big Business: it's free, simple, and, like natural childbirth and self-help programs, it returns the control of women's physiological processes where it belongs—to women themselves.

For those who want to do further research on the method, I would suggest the following sources:

Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, *Astrological Birth Control*, (1972, Prentice-Hall, \$6.95). The most detailed and informative source on the general subject.

Art Rosenblum, *Natural Birth Control* (1973, Aquarian Research Foundation, 5620 Morton Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19144, \$2). Charts and instructions for figuring out one's own cosmic

fertility period are included in this book. Also, a woman knowing the hour, date, and place of birth can obtain a birth control chart, called a cosmogram, from ARF for \$2.

John Billings, *The Ovulation Method* (Borromeo Guild, 1530 West Ninth Street, Los Angeles, Calif. 90015, 1972, \$2.65). This book was published under the auspices of the Department of Health and Hospitals of the Catholic Welfare Bureau of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

As for the validity of the system itself, I am in no position to make medical claims since I am not a doctor. As a woman, I can only say that for me, natural birth control has worked for over a year now, and among the women I know personally who practice it, all have so far found it completely unailing. Most important, though, is that this method of birth control has offered me a more enlightened framework from which to view myself and all women. ♀

1. *Astrological Birth Control*, p. 85.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
4. *The Ovulation Method*, p. 24.
5. Alan Guttmacher, W. Best, and F. Jaffe, *Birth Control and Love*, Bantam, New York, 1970.

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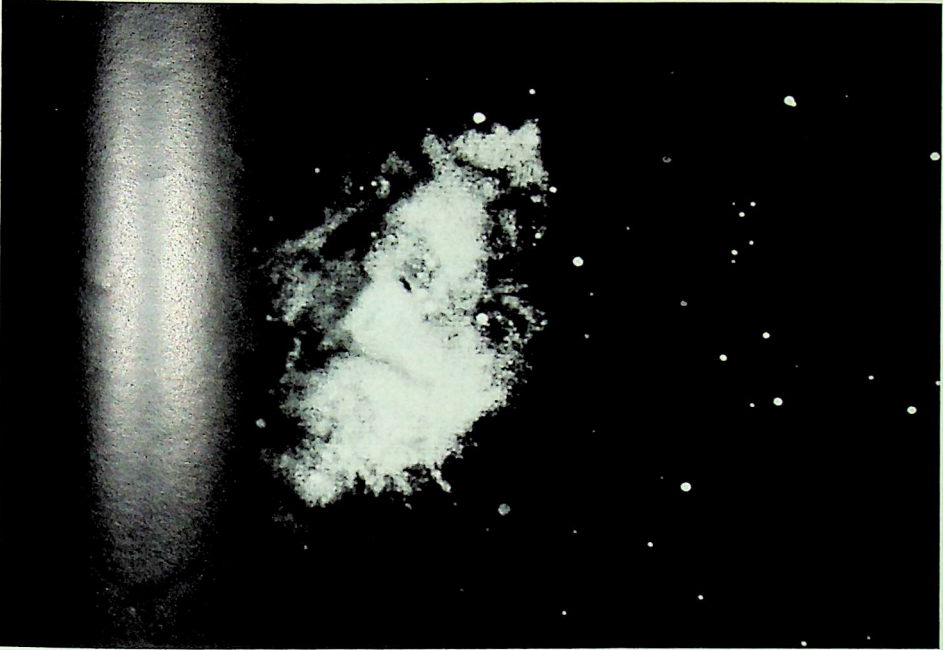
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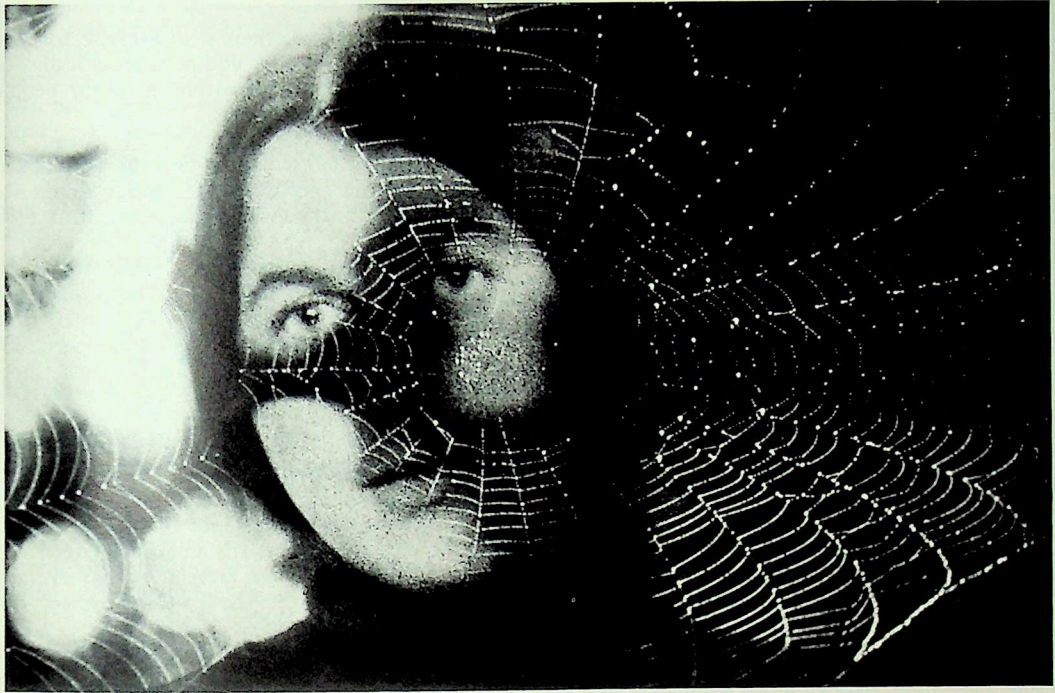
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SHOTPUT CHAMPION

by Jacquie Parker and Fran Taylor

Maren Seidler is the National Women's Shot Put Champion, and represented the U.S. in the 1968 and 1972 Olympics. In April we spoke with her in her dorm room at Tufts University, from which she graduated in June, and later at the Tufts outdoor track.

Parker: We should start at the beginning and ask how you got started.

Seidler: Well, I've always been in athletics; I started officially in track and field when I was thirteen. My father taught me how to throw the shot—he did everything in sports and I toddled along. I went to a meet in South Carolina where I broke the national record by six feet (a six pound shot for little kids). It was completely accidental, the way everything is for women athletes. I was lucky and kept on going.

Parker: So your family definitely encouraged you?

Seidler: Yeah, everybody—my father especially: he poured a concrete shot put circle in the back. At first the little kids used to come and stare. Consciousness about women's athletics—it's bad everywhere, but in Georgia? People have always been surprisingly positive, though; maybe it's because I've always felt real good about it. To come down on me for doing it wouldn't make any difference. I started just when people began saying

maybe it isn't so bad if my daughter sweats a little, so I haven't had bad experiences, although I can see how it could easily happen.

Parker: What kind of training do you do?

Seidler: Weight lifting is a big part of what I do.

There's a gym in Pembroke, Massachusetts where I'm on a blitz program right now; I'm going down every other day.

Parker: Do you have a coach?

Seidler: His name is Bob Backus. He knows a lot about weight training, especially the kind I need to do. A good half of my program involves weight lifting—weight training is a better word—I lift weights to gain specific power for my event.

Taylor: Are there special exercises for you to do for shot-putting?

Seidler: Yes, people have studied it for years. If

you're a shot-putter, there's an exercise for you designed for the muscles you need specifically for that event, though even within an event people have their own idiosyncrasies.

Parker: Does Bob really coach you?

Seidler: Yeah, he set up a program; we talked about what my needs are and what things we should work on. He always takes time out to work with me.

Other training is technique work—trying to perfect it, trying to work out all the major flaws I've picked up—and sprint work—shot-putters have to be very fast and are usually good sprinters. Size is important—you don't see many good shot-putters who are little—but you can't be big and slow; it's an explosive sport.

Taylor: You said it was just an accident that you got started. Is that typical for women?

Seidler: I think so. I don't think it's ever given consideration that girls have the potential to become serious athletes. It's an accident for girls: it's either because their fathers or mothers got them interested, or they have older brothers. It's always chance.

In East Germany and Russia a program starts a child at age five. They have charts on every kid—an academic chart with an IQ, a physical fitness chart—and by the time a child is about eight or ten,

"I don't think it's ever given consideration that girls can become serious athletes. It's an accident for girls: it's either because their fathers or mothers got them interested, or they have older brothers."

they know how fast she can run the fifty and how high she can jump. If she's very good, she gets put into special schedules and goes to school half the day and trains half the day. Compared to that, we have zero system. It's changing a little

bit, but always outside of school, and it still takes an interested parent.

Taylor: And money.

Seidler: Money—oh, definitely. It's a little different in track because track doesn't attract only rich people, whereas swimming does, but it's still a club system—the Amateur Athletic Union. You still have to go through that system which doesn't draw on a tremendous part of the population. It's unsatisfactory.

Parker: What do you do about the pressure of competition? Are you nervous?

Seidler: Not if it's a smaller meet, or a meet where I feel pretty confident that I can win, but the pressure's not always the same. I always get up—I don't know how to describe it—I know I'm going and I prepare for it mentally. If it's not a totally fly-by-night little meet, I take a day or two off from training and just rest. Before a very big meet I will stop lifting weights five or six days before the day of competition and totally rest—just throw the shot under the bed and don't do anything except stretch and maybe jog a little for three days before.

In the Olympics—that transcended nervousness. I don't ever remember totally blowing it, feeling so horrible that I threw up or couldn't cope with it. I'm basically a pretty calm person. On the swimming team at Tufts, I was highly nervous—sometimes more nervous than at a track meet, where I feel pretty secure and know what I'm about.

Taylor: Does being on a team increase the pressure?

Seidler: A little bit, especially on the relays. I said to myself, I have to swim my ass off, I can't let these people down. But I like it. My sister was in competitive swimming and she hated it with a passion. It has to do with your personality; either you can take to it and work within that competitive sphere, or you can't.

Parker: What do you think about when you're actually shot-putting? Do you think about the distance or where you're placing your feet?

Seidler: Usually I think about one or two points that I'm trying to do—it goes too quickly to think about everything. There's a ritual I perform: I usually step to the front of the circle, look out to where I would like to throw, step to the back, and put it in one hand up in the air and back down; it's become a habit. I do that in practice as well. If you do things very differently in a meet, it throws you off balance.

Parker: How many throws do you get?

Seidler: Three. There are trials and finals. Everybody gets three chances in the trials, and then the top seven usually advance to the finals and get three more. They pick your best put out of the total six.

Taylor: Do you put your all into the first throw or build up to the final throw?

Seidler: I like to really blast one my first try to put the onus on everybody else. Some people feel that they'd rather get a good safe throw in, so they're not in danger of fouling, of flying out of the circle. That helps them relax—then they can get down to seriously trying to get one out there.

Taylor: Shot-putting is an individual sport, but there are other women in track events. I'm interested in the camaraderie that you have. The best times I had in high school were on the softball and basketball teams. Do you get to meet a lot of

people in the Olympics?

Seidler: Yeah, even on a much more local level than that. People are in club situations—I'm from a bigger club—there may not be other people in my event but there are runners. That helps facilitate friendships because it's difficult to have close friends in your specific event. You get less intimate with somebody whom you have to beat out next weekend for a chance to get to Europe, but I'm reasonably close to everybody in my event whom I see regularly year after year. That is important to me about being in track; I doubt if I'd have stayed as long as I have if it hadn't been for the people I meet.

In my event I train mostly with men. It's not advantageous to train with other women shot-putters unless I'm with somebody who's right at my level: I'm the national champion and supposedly one of the best in the country. I work with women in teaching situations, but if I have to learn something—and there's plenty I still have to learn—I have to go where the men are and train with them. But in meets, especially in the nationals where it's strictly an all-woman meet, there are many good friends. We stay together and communicate all during the year.

Taylor: Do you have a goal? How far are you from the world record?

Seidler: There's a tremendous difference. My goal for myself—my best put is 53 feet, 5 inches—is to break the American record of 54 feet, 9 inches. Then I'd like to throw 60 feet.

The world record is 69 feet, if you can believe that! A Russian woman did it on her very first put in the finals in the Olympics last September, and it was just a mind-blower. I mean, 69 feet—that was it. Everybody else was just fighting for second place. The world record before—it was hers—had been 63 or 64 feet, which was a tremendous breakthrough.

The problem is, most of the East European women, all of them who get that far, take steroids, male hormones, which is a hard thing for me to reconcile. It's something I don't do, so it puts me at a real disadvantage. Steroids make muscle fibers stronger, enabling you to gain weight—mostly muscle mass—really fast. The larger the muscle, the stronger you are, and there goes the shot.

Taylor: What about the testing you have to pass?

Seidler: That doesn't matter: you can stop taking steroids two weeks before you know you have to take the test, and they won't show up, but the effects are good for longer than that.

I take extra protein and vitamins, and I'm not saying that I can't do it without steroids, I just know it's harder. It's hard for women because of our structure; it's not within our easy capability to get as strong as a man as quickly and as easily as he

does.

I've never been in a position to train the way I ought to. The most weight training I ever did in one stretch was last year—I lived in California for eight months before the Olympics—I did the proper kind of training for eight months. I'm moving to California and I'd like to see what I can do if I train hard and have good coaching for two or three years. I'm not satisfied—I think I can do a lot more. It's hard work, but I'm willing to try it for a couple of years, because it's fun. I like what I do—if I can be the best here or do as well as I think I can do—that's okay.

Parker: Are you planning to do anything other than shot-putting next year?

Seidler: I'm going to have to work, and I'm not prepared to do anything. I've been getting so excited doing my workouts: I'd love to be an instructor in a gym—not one of those horrible places where they put you in those machines and pretend to jiggle away your fat—but someplace where women could learn exercising and good things to do for themselves. But I don't have academic credentials for it; I have a vision of working as a waitress.

Parker: Are we asking you the same old questions?

Seidler: Some of the things you've asked are different—this year I've had many more interesting interviews. Women and sports is becoming a thing that people can talk about now. Always before it's been a guy for the sports page of whatever paper, and he'd ask really half-assed questions. I used to put up with it and answer the questions, but now I get irritated—I tell him when it's a stupid question, and I refuse to answer it. When men ask me questions, they say, "Well, how does it feel to be a girl and do that?" and "Do you have trouble finding a place to get dressed?" When they write, they say things like—

Taylor:—a blue-eyed coed.

Seidler: Yes, and "Surprise! She's not a monster." They always point out that she has lots of boyfriends, and she's a regular average girly. You get so tired.

Taylor: It sounds as if they treat you as a human-interest story rather than as a sports story.

Seidler: That's the way it always is: I look forward to the day when it will be treated as a straight sports story. It doesn't often happen. A guy who writes sports for the *Globe* came to speak to a college course last year. I was the only woman in the course—it was about sport and society—and I asked him the attitude of sports reporters when they covered women's sporting events. He said that it didn't happen very often, and that it was usually given to the lesser-known people—it was treated like a joke. I grimaced, but I realized it was true.

Taylor: That seems really stupid because a lot of

the major coed sports in the past few years have been dominated by women. Like tennis—Billy Jean King, Evonne Goolagong, and Chris Evert—and the Russian gymnast, Olga Korbut.

Seidler: It's happening to some degree in track too. We have to beg meet promoters to put in women's events. They say, "Ah, no. We have to put in what people will pay to see, and they don't want to come in and see women's events." Often they have people in the crowd vote on the outstanding athlete or the thing they most liked watching; often it's the women who provide the excitement they enjoy seeing. Meet promoters are blind to that.

Parker: You don't feel stigmatized?

Seidler: No, I don't—but sometimes I feel as if I should have a few more sad stories to tell because women are shat on so much. I felt very strongly about it for so long, right from the beginning; I never really had a chance to feel bad. I don't think my parents would tolerate that.

Parker: Do you think your confidence and accomplishments in athletics have helped your confidence in your regular life?

Seidler: Oh, yeah!

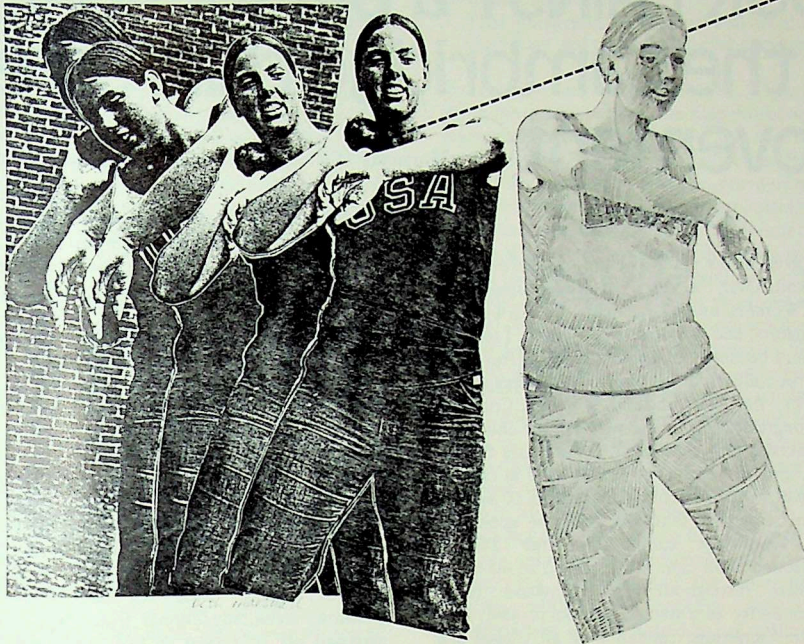
Taylor: That's something that so many women miss—I never felt like I could be a helpless young thing after I'd slugged a baseball once.

Seidler: Yeah, that's true. I feel like my personality would be totally different if I hadn't been in some kind of sport where you learn to depend on yourself and on your body, that your body can produce good results.

As tall as I am, I had parents who said that it was perfectly all right to be in sport—and that's how I grew up looking at it. I found out quickly that a lot of other tall women had to put up with wishing they were four foot three. I'm sure that if that approval hadn't existed, I wouldn't be self-confident in other things that I do. Sport does that for a lot of people, and it's been denied to women for a long time. Just to feel that power, to slug a baseball—just watch it go—I hit that, I did it. I got to know some women in the movement in San Francisco last year and they talked to me about a lot of things, asked questions about what it feels like to be in sports. Some of them told me afterwards, "I took off a tire today," or "I ache all over, I used all my muscles." That was a real important thing for them. I felt good: they thought that it was important to stick with that thing long enough to be able to yank whatever it was off, to twist things, and to lift heavy things. You don't need to do that all the time, but just know that you're capable.

Taylor: We're doing an article on self-defense—a lot of women who learn self-defense don't have to use it because they project a certain air of self-confi-

graphic: Beth Marshall



from photos by Marsha Feldman

dence when they walk down a street.

Seidler: I know that's true. I'm not an aggressive person, but I don't walk nervously down the street. I don't ever have problems.

Taylor: One of the things that upsets me is the warping of sports in general into something very fascist: Our Team, Our Team, Kill, Kill, Kill.

Seidler: That happens a lot. But sports is basically something that everybody could enjoy, and that fanaticism turns a lot of people away. That's why I think team sports should be eliminated from the Olympics; team sports foster all sorts of excess nationalism.

Taylor: You mean in general?

Seidler: Oh, no—you can't disband the NBA [National Basketball Association]—I mean like the U.S.-U.S.S.R. basketball. Oh God, what a mess, and it was obviously hopeless. Those situations are going to exist as long as there's hostility between countries on the governmental level; it drifts down to sports. The only thing you can do is get rid of it. You used to see horrible things. India and Pakistan would play field hockey—tremendous, bloody, ughek! It was like a little war surrounded by the five Olympic rings.

Parker: The natural theme that emerges here is that with a non-sexist upbringing a woman can avoid a lot of the problems of a sexist society. You said that your attitude was good, so people treated you well. You gained confidence from your participation in sports and you were encouraged to fulfill your potential without regard to societal sex roles.

Is the way we raise our children going to be the critical factor in changing the role of women in our society?

Seidler: In my opinion, yes. It seems like a very difficult thing to do, to raise children without sex-role stereotypes. Some creeps in—I certainly had it; I was not devoid of sex role. But there was enough other input that I could escape, or at least change my attitude myself as I grew up. I was raised as a little girl, no question about that—I was just given more freedom than the average little girl.

Parker: The whole question of women in strength events as an oddity or human interest story emerges. What can average women do to encourage other women to look upon sports as a natural activity? Nobody would think I was crazy if I took up tennis or swimming, but if I started lifting weights, people would think I was crazy.

Seidler: Yeah, they obviously would. So what can women who are already in sports do to convince other women that it's perfectly okay and desirable. Just by example: I can't really go out and proselytize and say, okay, everybody sign up. One of the things I would like to do when I get settled someplace is to set up a course for weight training for women—there are women who train with weights and do it very effectively, and it's good for them. I helped out with Vietnam relief in California. They had lifters come and sponsored us a penny a pound, however much money the sponsor wanted to give. They had me lift, and it was

(continued on p. 42)

LABOR PAINS I · a personal view of the Cambridge child care movement

by Marnette O'Brien and the Labor Pains Collective

Beginnings

I became involved in the issue of child care through the women's movement. Over the years I had been involved in Young Christian Workers, union organizing, the Civil Rights and peace movements, and the poverty programs. I am also a single parent, and because the issues directly affect me, I wanted to work for children in the women's movement.

In March 1971, the New England Women's Coalition sponsored the Congress to Unite Women. At the child care workshop we talked about legislation, a child care facility begun by NOW, and the problems people have in causing political change when they run child care centers 10 hours a day. One woman suggested that the Congress sponsor a referendum in Cambridge calling for free 24-hour community controlled child care. This seemed to me a fine strategy; women throughout New England could concentrate on one city as a demonstration project; here was a chance for Cambridge residents of all classes and organized feminists to unite around an issue important to us all. I remember one woman arguing against the strategy; she said a referendum creates more problems than it solves. She was democratically voted down. I left the workshop with a sense of purpose.

On May 1, about 25 women met and became the Cambridge Child Care Referendum Committee. We organized to do legal research, publicity, fundraising, and a survey of child care available in Cambridge. We chose three co-ordinators who worked full time (at no pay) to organize the petitioning, the campaign and the day-to-day work. I was one of the co-ordinators. Our structure was a very efficient one which turned out high quality work in enormous quantities. We borrowed money from the New England Women's Coalition and opened a one-room office next to Female Liberation.

Within a few weeks, I found out that the other two co-ordinators, much of the Cambridge Child Care Referendum Committee and the woman who suggested the referendum at the workshop all belonged to the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) and its parent group, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). On the surface, there was little philosophical dispute between YSA members and "independents" on the Referendum Committee. The YSA had an issue around which to build support for SWP members running for local offices. I and the other independents had discovered a milieu in which to begin work for publicly supported child care.

There were, however, some very emotional arguments about tactics. The independents wanted to provide child care for people collecting signatures and to hold a children's fair for fundraising, signature collection and fun. In each case, the idea was to organize co-operatively on a small scale to provide good services for children; political preparation meant developing skills and affecting people's

attitudes, not just collecting signatures on a petition. The YSA women felt such amenities cost money and resulted in very few signatures. But because they needed us to get liberal support, they let us have what they thought were frills.

But without the YSA and the SWP we would not have collected enough signatures to get on the ballot. We needed signatures from 8% of Cambridge residents, and had few people to do the work. We failed to attract neighborhood people to the Referendum Committee. Our hold on non-party people in the movement was precarious; often because of their involvement in other issues, the demands of their personal lives, and friction with SWP members, they drifted away. But on Saturday mornings 20 or 30 SWP and YSA members appeared dutifully at our office. They put away their abortion and socialist buttons, and clipped on ones saying "Vote Yes for Child Care." Taking a petition, some educational flyers, a precinct map, they marched off to return at five, tired, but with 50 to 75 signatures each. By August 31, we were clearly on the ballot for the November election.

The Referendum Committee next waged a campaign for a "yes" vote by door-to-door canvassing, extensive use of the local media, and lobbying for support from local candidates. Sandra Graham, a black welfare recipient known as a "radical," endorsed the Referendum in her campaign for City Council; Barbara Ackermann, a liberal who was to become mayor, indicated strong interest; the Cambridge Civic Association, a coalition of liberal candidates, endorsed the child-care concept.

On November 2, 1971, the Referendum passed with a majority in every ward. The total vote of 16,504 in favor was a 60% majority. The Referendum read:

BE IT RESOLVED: It is the policy of the City of Cambridge, to make available child care without cost to all Cambridge residents who feel they have need of this service. The City Manager is hereby directed to take all steps to ensure that such care is available on a twenty-four hour basis, and he may establish centers under the direction of parents and members of the community for this purpose.

The Cambridge Civic Association candidates also won a majority on the School Committee and the City Council. The Referendum Committee bought champagne and drank it from paper cups. I said to one of my sister co-ordinators, "Well, we've done it. Now we'll certainly get child care because the people voted for it and our CCA friends won, too." She replied, "But how do you know they're our friends?"

The Cambridge Coalition for Child Care

The independents on the Committee took the vote for the Referendum very seriously. To us it was a mandate

which removed any doubt about the need and will for child care, and we were ready to move with it. But the Young Socialist Alliance members saw it differently. For them, the Referendum had served to draw liberal support for SWP candidates (although none won office). Now they wanted it to stand unfulfilled as a symbol of the ineffectiveness of the government. We felt that dropping the issue amounted to duping the people. And this seemed to us the right moment to organize to demand the kind of child care neighborhoods wanted. On December 5, we held a city-wide meeting attended by about 50 people where the Cambridge Coalition for Child Care was formed. We then set out to translate the Referendum into reality.

The Coalition had three co-ordinators and a steering committee with open membership which met weekly. This working structure was carried over from the Referendum Committee. We produced brochures, publicity, mailings, position papers and research in great quantities. Because of the failure of neighborhood organizing during the Referendum, the steering committee was white and mostly middle class. We were feminists, child care professionals, aspiring politicians and refugees from betrayed community-controlled programs. We were easily embarrassed by who we were. We did not confront each other to develop a coherent theory of what we were about. There were bitter arguments about tactics. Some people wanted to work out co-operative agreements with established child care agencies; some wanted to spend time working with the city councillors, and some wanted to concentrate on organizing the neighborhood. The only philosophy we shared was an undefined belief in "community control." Any stand could be undercut by saying, "But is that what the community wants?"

The Catch of Community Control

The Coalition first concentrated on work with the neighborhood and common interest groups to find out what child care they needed. We sponsored about 20 meetings with Community Schools Councils, poverty planning teams, food co-ops, Spanish and Portuguese Councils, co-operative nurseries, Head Start parents and other groups concerned with children. But the meetings failed: no concrete data on needed services was returned; no network of neighborhood groups developed to work for their own child care and with the Coalition on a city-wide plan.

We thought the meetings failed because we lacked sufficient staff to work with the groups. Not realizing, at that time, that a coherent philosophy was more important than a staff, we sought to solve our problems by developing a Child Care Ordinance. The Ordinance proposed a Child Care Department of the City, and carried elaborate insurance of parent, rather than political or professional, control. Its most important points included:

1. That the City appropriate funds for the establishment of an office with three staff persons receiving equal pay (\$6500/yr), equal status, and equal responsibility to child care needs, neighborhood organizing and making applications for federal child care funding.
2. That the City provide funds for child care and transportation costs for staff and neighborhood volunteers to ensure that those most in need of the services would not be excluded from the work of the

Child Care Department.

3. That parents in the Department would set priorities on child care issues and have real decision-making powers.

We thought an institutionalized Department would be taken more seriously by the neighborhood groups. And we attempted to set up a structure that would spend money in ways dictated by the people affected. Had we been more cynical we could have used the record of our meetings with community groups to write an uncontroversial proposal to be returned to the community for minor changes—much as the local poverty program does. However, we wanted people to develop their own proposals with assistance from the Child Care Department. In short, we wanted people to support and participate in a process. Of course, the catch was that we couldn't generate support for the Ordinance without grassroots participation, and the purpose of the Ordinance was to develop that very participation.

We fell into the trap of using our limited time and energy to supply research and background material to the City in order to get support for the Ordinance. We probably did more work than a full time staff. But no amount of statistics or research satisfied the liberals on the Council. Barbara Ackermann (holding the office of "weak mayor" in a strong city manager system) tried to act as mediator between the Coalition and the other liberals. She held meetings with the Coalition and state and city representatives of established social welfare agencies. They all had their favored ways to expand child care and the Coalition disturbed those plans. But their expertise impressed Ackermann. When we found equivalent expertise to back the Ordinance, the liberal councillors switched to a new tack. They asked who in the city supported us. We then produced a list of 600 agency-affiliated and individual supporters. The councillors asked why these supporters did not come in person to City Council meetings. We pointed out that people need child care to get to Council meetings, even when the meetings are about child care.

We simply were not winning by playing the liberals' game. But they carried on this ping-pong match with us because they had good reason to stall. At first the Ordinance appeared no more threatening than Model Cities, Community Schools and the poverty program. However, the other so-called community controlled, or citizen participation programs relied on "experts" on the staff and professionals (even if only professional community representatives) on the boards. The Ordinance on the other hand, asked the city to relinquish some of its power; its structure would have allowed people to organize strong neighborhood groups that relied little on the vitiating influence of the educated middle class. Not even the liberals wanted to take a chance on developing such unchecked power. They had, however, supported child care in the election, and they had to find a way to appear to implement the Referendum without rocking the boat. So the Ordinance was left in committee.

While the council shuffled and stalled, the Coalition was in confusion over its next move. Several of us had been "radicalized" by disenchantment with protest politics in a liberal atmosphere. Others still wanted to be pragmatic in order to get what child care they could in the current political framework. We did not confront each other, probably because the Coalition would have broken up. And

we were an uneasy and vulnerable Coalition as we organized the Child-In to demonstrate our discontent with the Council.

Practical Politics

The Child-In was held outside City Hall before the City Council meeting on June 26, 1972. The steps were filled with children, parents, music and balloons. As we crowded into the Council Chamber, the children wandered among the councillors. The liberals played with them; the "independents" or conservatives were red with anger and embarrassment.

Of the councillors present, Al Vellucci, a populist, was our strongest supporter. His own children had been in child care; the referendum won a large majority in his neighborhood. But of the liberals, Saundra Graham was in Washington at the Democratic Credentials Committee; Frank Duehay was addressing the school principals of Vermont; Bob Montcreiff looked tired; Barbara Ackermann looked grim; and Henry Owens was late.

As spokeswoman for the Coalition, I talked about the long and difficult road that had led to the Child-In. I asked for a vote to move the Ordinance out of committee to the

Council floor. We could have had, at most, three liberal votes and Velucci's, a majority of those present. But Montcreiff and Ackermann made it clear that they felt the Ordinance was not the answer to the Referendum. We were tired and depleted. But if we were going to be defeated, I thought, at least this vote would teach us something about the inadequacy of protest politics and put the liberals on record as voting against Child Care. But, cannily, Mayor Ackermann asked the crowd to stand if they too demanded the vote. We were unprepared for her tactic. There was confusion in the crowd and only a few people stood. There was no vote. We were truly defeated; we had gained nothing, not even insight into ourselves. The Ordinance is still "in committee."

Looking back, I feel the Referendum was an effective device to make child care an issue. However, it was very time-consuming, and resulted in little for child care but a promise easily broken. A city-wide campaign without grass roots support inevitably becomes involved in the morass of city politics. Jonathan Kozol warned me early in the history of the Child Care Referendum: "When early childhood education becomes part of the federal, state or city monolith, we are truly on our way to achieving the perfect fascist state."

LABOR PAINS II - a collective evaluation of child care politics

by Marnette O'Brien, Mav Pardee, Marie Schachter, Sheli Wortis

Child Care may be the most important issue of the next few years. People are realizing that if women were to win legal and social equality, if racism were abolished, if people were to win the rights to free health care and decent food and housing, if the war were truly over, even if we had workers' control, there could be no long-term change in society unless children were a community responsibility, too. Children cannot be brought up as the responsibility of one adult and be expected to understand and participate in a society which attempts to share all other needs. Feminists who have been the major activists in the child care movement feel strongly about the need for child care. It is not that we want to dump our children on others, but because the lack of child care prevents us from providing for the fullest development of ourselves and our children. Important as child care is, the issue is complicated by the fact that everyone in our society professes to be pro-children. With other issues such as tenants' rights it is fairly easy to identify those who are working against the best interests of all people. But who can be called anti-children?

The lack of good child care services is serious for many reasons. Most of us do not have homes large enough to provide good opportunities for play and creative expression for children; most of us do not have decent health care for ourselves and our children; most of us cannot purchase basic foods at prices which we can afford. Many of us have to work to support our families. And mothers who do work have no adequate care for our children. If neighbors or friends help with child care, we have to fit our working

time to the time they have to give. If we pay babysitters, we have little money left from our salaries. And our time to work for improvements in school and community conditions is limited, because we are too tired at the end of the day to attend the meetings, or we have no sitter to watch the children.

This paper will consider several interrelated issues which we regard as important for developing a political perspective that is more comprehensive than merely a demand for services. The issues are: the ideology of the family with its emphasis on private child rearing; the role of professionals and experts; the relationship of child care to working people; and community control.

The Ideology of the Family

The family, the main source of economic support and security in this society, has traditionally placed restrictions on women's freedom of choice. Women, regardless of level of education or job status, are expected to be responsible for housekeeping, cooking and care of children. Public officials, educators and psychologists all tell us that the best way to raise children is for mothers to stay home and take care of them.

The acceptance of the ideology of child rearing as a private function prevents people from working out social solutions to problems which are perceived as private ones, but which are in fact socially created. Many parents hold to the belief that they have complete control over raising their children; they accept the idea that if they do a good job



their children's secure future is ensured. (Anybody's kid can become president, right?) But, in fact, the standards we follow and the values we adopt when we raise our children are determined by forces outside ourselves, such as Dr. Spock, social welfare agencies, schools and television.

Conditioned to accept the privacy of child rearing, parents have no means to talk about common problems; and thus, no mechanism to develop social and political solutions to those problems. Furthermore, because we believe that child rearing involves only personal values and individualized loving care, we are suspicious of efforts to organize unified programs that would express our views about the goals of child rearing.

The women's movement has attempted to develop an ideology that deals with the dilemma of privacy. Possessiveness in many forms has been criticized—and rightly so. Some women in the movement who support child care feel that children should not be “ours.” In the sense of ownership this is true. But most parents do not feel that they own their children as property; rather, in our special concern for our children, we want to share our knowledge and know that they can grow happily. It is romantic, whimsical and probably unwise to suggest that parents give up identifying with their children; the relationship is too close. But if it can be freer and more creative if there is more shared responsibility in the home, schools, community and workplace. Working together, we can begin to develop collective ideas about child rearing, and need no longer rely on the professional educators and mass media who now create the standards we often unconsciously accept and follow.

The Role of the Experts and Professionals

Who are the professionals whose expertise we have

learned to respect and accept? Sometimes they are our children's teachers who are overworked and concerned about crowded classrooms, who have insufficient time for teaching preparation, and have little voice in policy decisions which affect their lives. Like parents, teachers with grievances usually have no opportunity to work out effective solutions among themselves.

It is the child development researchers and practitioners who exert the strongest influence over our attitudes and ideas. Frequently they make important contributions to our knowledge. But however much social scientists believe themselves to be doing “pure” research, their approach to their work unavoidably reflects the prevailing prejudices, politics and ideology of society. Parents and children from poverty areas are made the subjects of study, rather than the conditions which produce that poverty. The stake social scientists have in the system cannot be overemphasized; their own job security and the status their training has led them to expect depends on the survival of the system. So a wide communications gap exists between them and the people they study. The professionals live in suburbs; they work in offices or universities outside the core cities. Their loyalties are to the people who pay them, whether it be universities, private corporations, or the federal government, which supports most of the research done today. Established people want change to come about in a predictable way—a way which does not challenge their status and power.

Predictably, child care is especially vulnerable to expertise. Both government and business have begun to see the failure of the socialization process: public schools are failing to produce obedient, dependable workers; factory workers don't care; GI's frag their officers; people would rather be idle than work at menial jobs. Therefore, it becomes axiomatic that the first five years of life are the most important. Seeking ways to intervene, the experts place two contradictory pressures on parents, depending on their place in society.

If we are white and middle class, we are urged to remain at home with our children during their early years. There, our concerns are private. If our children have difficulties, we tend to believe it is entirely our own fault, and the child psychologists and early childhood education specialists reinforce feelings of individual responsibility.

On the other hand, if we are black, Chicana, Puerto Rican or welfare women, the government feels it must intervene to make “productive” adults of our children. The poor are offered compensatory programs like Head Start or day care for welfare mothers forced to work at menial jobs. In these programs, the experts are there to counteract the “bad” influences parents have on their children.

Both pressures are part of an effort to maintain the status quo, that is, to maintain a passive public school enrollment and then a productive, obedient work force.

It was the experts and city officials who consulted among themselves about whether to accept the Child Care Ordinance, drawn up by the Cambridge Child Care Coalition in the spring of 1972. Had our plans for the future of children in Cambridge been consistent with theirs, the Ordinance would have been adopted. To understand why the liberals on the Cambridge City Council advocated child care while opposing the Child Care Ordinance, we have to go beyond the demands of parents and look at the economic and political structure of a city in transition.

The Relationship of Child Care to Working People: Cambridge as an Example

Cambridge is a city of 100,000 just across the Charles River from Boston. It contains two major universities—Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It used to have many small factories and plants. But in 1970-71 alone it lost 4353 jobs, 4115 of

consultants, telephone services, cleaning companies, and photo-reproduction and copying services. The Cambridge Directory of Establishments for 1972 cites 6,884 jobs in these services. It also cites the phenomenal figure of 19,676 jobs in educational services in the City.³

In Cambridge as in other cities, more and more women and mothers of young children are working and relying on their jobs for economic security and some degree of social independence.⁴ Thus, child care is becoming a basic need for many more women. Women students and employees at Harvard and MIT have won day care programs responsive to the needs of those parents and children. But tuition at these centers runs from \$30 to \$50 a week, a lot to pay, even for middle-income families. Head Start and Model Cities have provided free pre-school care for some working and welfare families, but as federal cutbacks are increasingly felt, these programs may be phased out. Working women will have to accept private child care or lose their jobs. Welfare women will have to accept menial jobs from the government, or lose their grants.

With the expansion of research and development firms in Cambridge, skilled women workers will be indispensable, as will women to fill the numerous service and clerical jobs throughout the city. To make it attractive for women to stay in these jobs, which pay them as little as possible so companies can maintain profits, a liberal city government has to provide services that make it worthwhile for women to work here. Child care, like high-rise apartments, the cosmopolitan atmosphere, and the "youth culture" is necessary to the image of Cambridge that the Chamber of Commerce wants to promote.

The shift in the job market inevitably affects housing. The 1970 census showed a drop in population in two-thirds of the Cambridge census tracts. Only four showed an increase, and in each case the growth was due to construction of high-density apartment complexes or dormitories.⁵ Four major new construction projects are already on the drawing boards. The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority has plans for three apartment and commercial complexes in wide ranging areas of the City. Private developers, including MIT, are involved in planning projects "to enhance the skyline and tax base of the community."⁶ As might be expected, the areas cited for the new programs encompass some of the major working-class neighborhoods in Cambridge. As the City Assessor, himself a realtor, said in a recent article in *Cambridge*, the Chamber of Commerce magazine, "It appears that we have reached the height of the demand for low-income housing."⁷

Cambridge is moving toward a two-class city in job opportunities, housing and cultural patterns: the privileged, academic, research and business people on one hand, and white- and blue-collar working and welfare and working people on the other. While we appreciate that this is not a standard definition of class, historically there has existed a cultural and political antagonism between people associated with the universities and people working in factories, shops and service jobs. With new city programs aggravating the antagonism, the two groups will become more divergent and the working and welfare people will undoubtedly take more political action. The professionals would do well to recognize that the amenities and services they demand are dependent on business and government exploitation of their discontented neighbors.

these in manufacturing. There have been several studies of the changing nature of Cambridge,¹ but let's look at a recent statement by Malcolm Fryer, Executive Vice President of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce:

The Chamber has been studying the jobs lost, the trends in employment and the makeup of the Cambridge workforce. The jobs leaving Cambridge are the blue collar jobs. . . . the trend in employment was toward the research and development firms. . . . Cambridge should assist in the creation of space for the professional and research oriented firms. Firms which can make full use of the assets of MIT and Harvard and the tremendous resources of professional and technical talent already available in the city.²

The increasing number of miscellaneous business services that support the research and development experts include advertising, employment agencies, systems experts, R & D consultants, engineering, education and management



graphic: Liz Schweber

Community Control and a Critique of the Cambridge Child Care Ordinance

The politics required to develop a winning strategy for social change of any sort are very different from defensive or "protest" politics. When things get tough enough anywhere, people get angry and protest, thereby forcing the powers-that-be to change policy. However, it is not enough to win one concession from the social group that continues to oppress us in other ways. The balance of power remains unchanged: people protest, but they don't have control, they don't have power.

In child care as in other movements, community control is a demand that the people themselves make the decisions affecting their freedom of choice in the workplace, school, clinic, home and community. But before there can be community control, there must be a sense of community. Community can be many things. It may be geographic; it may be based on common interest, problems, or ethnic background; or it may be ideological. But because communities and people are fragmented and isolated from each other, the balance of power in our society remains in the hands of a small unrepresentative social class. Some popular movements have succeeded in uniting differing groups in short-term struggles to confront the power structure. But these movements falter when the groups within them disagree on what they are fighting for, who they are fighting against, and the strategy and tactics of how to continue the fight. At this point the power structure regains control; and professionals and bureaucrats can move into the vacuum that people's confusion leaves behind.

The 1972 campaign of the Cambridge Coalition for Child Care is an example of an attempt to institutionalize community controlled child care through the approval of those in power in Cambridge. It appeared before people who needed child care had developed their sense of common interest or saw themselves as a coherent social group with a clear vision of the possible alternatives.

Despite its attempt to set up a working structure for community control, the Child Care Ordinance had no firm grassroots base to work from. This problem still exists. Many child care organizations have become conservative; their self interest locks them into separate and static units. Head Start parents, for example, are trapped by dependence on government money which can be withdrawn on whim (as Nixon is now doing). Although one set of Federal guidelines designates a Policy Board dominated by parents to determine program content and staff, another set effectively limits the Board's real decision making power. And parents are frustrated because they were promised so much, but have to fight to maintain what they have.

The same problems would exist with the Federal Comprehensive Child Care Bill, were it passed again over Nixon's veto. There would be more money for child care. But to get funding, facilities would have to please federal, state and regional bureaucracies, and local control would be guided to death. The one advantage of the Comprehensive Bill is that many more women would be free to work or organize to change the quality of their lives. The threat of creating this army of committed women is one of the reasons that a strong and well funded child care bill will never be passed.

In their own ways, the many co-operative play groups and nurseries which grew from the women's movement are as unlikely a base for a child care movement as are the Federal programs. The most obvious problem is that the parents' time is tied to running the co-operative center itself. Money for staff, space and supplies is scarce, so that keeping the center open, rather than political change, naturally becomes the priority. These co-ops appeal to a movement and "freak" population, rather than a broad spectrum of people of different values, incomes and education. And they are not organized to get power; they are not political.



graphic: Liz Schweber

The Child Care Ordinance failed for lack of grass roots support and involvement. But at least this prevented us from repeating the mistakes other well-intentioned community representatives in the anti-poverty program make again and again.

The Cambridge Model Cities Ordinance, for instance, set up a structure very similar to the one we proposed. But Model Cities today is a farce. City, state and federal guidelines restrict Model Cities from obtaining many of its stated goals. It provides some services, but, like other anti-poverty programs, spends most of its money on professional salaries and office expenses. Another major problem of the poverty programs, and one which we now realize would have afflicted the Ordinance, is the fate of the citizen representatives elected or hired to staff them. Often these representatives are members of conflicting interest groups. Or, they are earnest, sincere individuals, representing no group, who believe they can do something for the neighborhood. Individuals too isolated within the bureaucracy to be an effective voice or power usually find themselves compromising their principles and, therefore, the people they represent. Those who come to depend on the program for their income become entrenched in the bureaucracy. They sell themselves to the program for a living wage and hope that they can do some good; but they won't rock the boat too much because they might lose their jobs—that is, they sell out.

(continued on p. 43)



photo: Shulee Ong

International Women's Day, Boston, 1973

SELF Confidence Defense

by Sarita Cordell

"I used to feel as though I became public property whenever I walked in the city. Now I feel a private space around myself."

"My fantasies are changing since I joined the class. When I think about situations that make me angry, I visualize the kinds of things we've learned to do, not just a vague blur of wanting to struggle."

"It's especially mind-blowing for a short person like me. I've always felt totally helpless and walked around as if waiting to be victimized. Not any more."

"One of the things I notice is how good I feel about the women in the class, and how much prouder I am to be a woman."

We were sitting in the living room at the Y after a Tuesday class in Tai Kwan Do. The class meets three times a week, and as we began to know one another better, we found ourselves wanting to share more than class time. The Tuesday rap session was one result.

Self-defense has done a lot more for us than to get us into better physical condition. We are concerned about being stronger, but our growing control of our bodies is an exciting and prideful

thing, too. What I want to try to describe is what's happening to our self-images and our understanding of what powerlessness has done to us.

My experience the first time we sparred in class is an example of the consciousness raising that occurs as an unplanned but important benefit. It was time to go beyond individual practice and to feel what it's like to have something more than air at the end of a punch or kick. We lined up in facing pairs and listened intently as Carole, our instructor, explained what to do and how to prevent accidents. *Go!* Mady and I looked at each other, grinning a bit uncertainly; out shot her arm. I froze. An extraordinary rush of images and feelings flooded me. *Stop that! Ladies do not hit!* said my mother. *Did you see the muscles on Susan? Ugh!* said a high school classmate. *The woman who tries to be self-sufficient is an affront to her sex and must be neurotic,* said the psychology professor. Most immobilizing of all, my gut reaction was undiluted fear. What if she hit me? I'd never known what it's like to be hit since my mother slapped me when I was thirteen; the memory of that slap had festered for years. The thought that hitting could be other than traumatic hadn't entered me head until I stood there looking at Mady, feeling utterly confused.

Suddenly I saw in my mind an incident in a playground many years ago. My son was about five; I was wiping the blood from his cheek after his tussle with another boy, and he pulled away from me to return to the fray. "I actually think he's *enjoying* it," I had thought, perplexed. I hadn't remembered that incident until it jumped into my head in the class and set off a mind-blowing explosion of awareness. He *did* enjoy it! He was getting stronger; that's how he tested himself. The other boy needed and wanted that play-practice, too. If an arm shoots out at *him*, he's got a set of well-practiced reflexes. I turned to Mady, and I felt myself grinning with excitement as I told her it would be OK, I was ready to try again. And spar we did; grunts and laughter punctuated the atmosphere all over the gym. I began to remember what I had done in previous classes, and to notice what changes I needed to make, what I was doing right. It felt great, even the blows I didn't block. I wasn't destroyed by a hit! Mady and I, like all the other sparring pairs, were helping each other, commenting and trying out different moves, telling each other what we felt, where the punches seemed more or less effective. When we had to quit because our hour and a half was over, I was stunned that the time had gone so fast. I wanted to keep it up.

More than once since then, I've compared notes with other women who are learning ways to stop considering themselves potential victims. We talk about the strange paradox of feeling more womanly, happier about ourselves and each other, and of feeling less dependent on a man to escort us and protect us. We exchange anecdotes relating to self-defense. And we talk of the fear some of us felt before joining the class, fear that we would become aggressive, violence-prone, "unwomanly." That fear is the sexist society's best device to keep women passive and helpless. In class, it is easy to see that nothing can keep us from being women, and the fear that we could become anything else is as absurd as the belief that we'll be healthier and safer if we leave our protection to men.

I've watched a number of self-defense demonstrations and felt an exhilaration that makes me break out in goose-bumps. When I look at the faces of other women who are watching, I see the same remarkably intense response. Something pretty deep is being touched in us. I think of the times my children shouted *I want to do it myself!* when they were little, and I feel the same demand welling up in me. I want to undo all the built-in dependency that my conditioning as a woman has wrapped around me like ropes; it's those ropes that are being broken by the demonstrators, not the boards they are using.

Few women who learn self-defense are attacked.

There is something about the aura of a confident woman, an air of calm recognition of her right to walk in a public place, which is apparently sensed by others. When I hear footsteps behind me on the pavement, I turn to *see* who's behind, instead of scurrying faster and announcing by my demeanor that I feel myself a potential victim. I don't know if any of the men I've turned to see had an expectation of mugging me, I just know they didn't try. And I know that despite the fear that tightened my stomach muscles, I wanted to assess the situation and decide whether I could handle it rather than feeling paralyzed. After I've determined that I'm not being stalked, I feel terrific elation that I reacted with more than fear; that does something for a person. As Susan Brownmiller said in the *New York Times* of April 18, 1973, "Up against the wall, feminity, I've seen through your ruse. I'm going to be a Street Fighting Woman." Right on, sister. ♪

US - A FLORIDA FEMINIST MONTHLY

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BEYOND

TWO~GENDERISM

notes of a radical transsexual

by Margo

Over the past few years, both the feminist and gay movements have been challenging some basic assumptions about human sexual identity and expression. There is a growing group of people who refuse to see women as inferior to men, and who also refuse to see love between people of the same sex as inferior or less "moral" than love between people of different sexes. More and more questions are being asked about sex roles and relationships, ranging from why there is not equal pay for equal work to why a fulfilling sexual experience cannot involve less or more than two people. In brief, the feminist movement has challenged male chauvinism, and the gay movement has challenged heterosexual chauvinism. Of course, these are not separate issues. As one who views herself as a feminist bisexual woman, I think and feel them to be very intimately related indeed.

Two-Genderism: Unfinished Business

However, if I am to find a life as a full human being, I must challenge yet a third aspect of sexism which has not yet been challenged, at least not on a large scale. I call this aspect two-genderism, a rather clumsy term upon which I hope someone will improve.

Two-genderism can be summed up in the following assumptions: (1) human beings are divided into two distinct and mutually exclusive biological pigeonholes, male and female; (2) human beings are divided into two distinct and mutually exclusive psychological and social pigeonholes, men and women; (3) biological sex, subjective identity, and social assignment always coincide, and (4) none of these facts can change as a person grows and develops.

Perhaps these assumptions become clearer when we see exactly who gets hurt by them. While it is true that everyone is affected to some extent, and that without these assumptions it would be much harder to maintain or justify a sexist society, still there are two overlapping groups that are particularly damaged by two-genderism. First,

there are *intersexuals*, people who combine some elements of both sexes in their bodies. Secondly, there are *transsexuals*, people who develop gender identities which are preponderantly opposite to the ones which society demands.

Most transsexuals have perfectly "normal" female or male bodies, as the case may be. Most intersexuals tend to adopt whatever sex they are reared to be, no matter how confusing from a two-sex viewpoint their biological condition is. And there are some people who combine aspects of both these groups: I am one of them.

A Personal Account

As I have learned from the feminist and gay movements, theory is not enough. Now women are beginning to feel free to discuss their rapes without shame or euphemism, and gay people openly discuss the joys and terrors of coming out. In the same way, I feel that an account of my past may give a better picture of what two-genderism means.

I am a genitally male person who has wanted to be female since about the age of four and a half. I have some female breast development and gonads which produce virtually no sperm for a reason which has not yet been medically determined. At present, I am taking female hormones and look forward to eventual sex reassignment surgery to make me as biologically female as is possible. At the same time, I must admit that 21 years of living as a male, however unrelished a role it has been, has made my sense of femaleness different than it is for someone born into that status.

Rather than write an autobiographical case history, I would like to relate moments which may give a better feeling of what my transsexuality has meant in my life. My technique is borrowed directly from an article entitled "Barbarous Rituals," which is in *Sisterhood is Powerful*.

Excerpts From A Diary

I am walking around in male clothing, and a

child refers to me as a "funny-looking lady." Teenagers ask me if I am a boy or a girl. I am not sure if they are affirming my female identity or merely considering me as a hippy. I think of many replies, respond with silence, and walk on.

In a crowd watching a building demolition (do I see the bring-down of a sixteen-story building as symbolic transsexuality?), being asked by some teenage boys if I use silicone, and being warned by a hardhat not to lift my sweatshirt lest I be "lewd and luscious." Being told by one boy that I would probably be busted for "impersonating a chick" even though I am in male attire.

Being told by a feminist friend that I am masculine in being more idea-oriented than people-oriented, and wondering when people would ever give me a chance to be my real self to them.

Openly cross-dressing, wearing women's clothing on a university campus, and being correctly associated with the gay movement but incorrectly identified as a male homosexual rather than as what I consider myself, a female bisexual.

Being called a faggot by some fraternity types at school. The humor was that a faggot is the derogatory term for a male who enjoys sleeping with males, while I was and am in a situation where I can go to bed only with myself.

Finding some genuine beauty and humanness in my own subjectively female sexuality, in spite of all the confusion and ambivalence, but being unable to express a shadow of it to anyone else.

Talking to a friendly gay male who tells me, "I'm a very tolerant faggot, but I can't understand you. You've gone three steps beyond me and another two in reverse."

Talking to a gay sister who can understand me as a "cross-gender Lesbian" but cannot understand why I find myself talking in a very different tone of voice, an affirmation of my emerging identity.

Being excluded from feminist groups because of my genitals and required male social role, and being excluded from male society because of almost everything else.

Talking with some genuinely kind organizers of a women's center at my undergraduate school who tried to comfort me by telling me that what with nonsexist child rearing I should have company in fifteen or twenty years.

After a demonstration against fraternity prostitution, going to a local newspaper and saying "Women's liberation frees men too," rather than, "I am what I feel, a woman who supports both her sisters and her brothers in ending dehumanization."

Going to a campus meeting for a feminist organization where it is proposed to hold a women's party, hearing that there can also be a

men's party, and realizing that I can fit into neither; going outside and having a good cry.

Having a radical male friend question whether my transsexuality is a personal distraction from "worthwhile" political work because "how many transsexuals are there, anyway?"

Leaving early from a radical literature distribution meeting and hearing that I had missed an excellent discussion of the unity of the personal and the political. Later the same night being asked, at a party of the same people, not to discuss my intersexuality since I might be overheard. Knowing that natural-born women could discuss birth control or abortion at this party without fear.

Telling myself that I am where a female was in 1950 or a gay person in 1960. Then thinking about a woman or gay person raped, murdered, or driven to suicide, and feeling guilty for playing the game of "more oppressed than thou."

Reading about a women's project in Vietnam, and getting my priorities straight by hoping that the war will be over before I will be eligible to join.

Wondering if I will ever be able to pass as a female, and deciding that if not, I would rather live in a body and wear clothes that I can enjoy, even if it is on a desert island.

Reading feminist literature which claims that "men sure of their masculinity support equality" and gay literature which says that those who cross-identify or cross-dress are expressing masochism, are a small minority of the upright homophile world, and should not make you doubt that "you can be gay and normal too." As a Lesbian who considers female transsexuals her sisters, experiencing the special pain of seeing these people apologized for and put down.

Arranging for hormone tests, and wondering what they can really prove. Realizing that to learn I "really" have breasts, that I "really" am partly female, would make me feel much more legitimate.

Enjoying medieval music, which has scales in between major and minor. Reflecting that even in classical music you are permitted to modulate, to change key.

Conclusion

This article is intended neither as a scholarly discussion of transsexual and intersexual states nor as a blueprint for ideal societies. There are a number of articles now available on transsexuals and intersexuals, although many have a sexist bias. As far as utopias are concerned, many anti-sexist people have shown a great interest in writing about androgynous societies yet small tolerance for actual androgynous people. I can, however, make some suggestions to both the feminist and gay movements.

To The Feminist Movement:

1. Do not assume that people who are confident about their sexual identities are for equality. Many people are either confident sexists or unsure people who question the old givens. It is also an insult to all who do not fit the stereotype of a confident person of any sex.

2. Understand that because of psychological and social pressures many transsexuals seek extreme versions of their desired sex roles. Feminism can best reach these people by example and by understanding the uncertainty which sex identity shift can bring and which extreme role-playing can mask.

3. In writing, recognize that there are intersexuals and transsexuals who may be trapped in a no-person's-land and who need solidarity from anti-sexist people. Literature which insists that there are only women and men is conspiring unconsciously with sexist forces to crush those in between.

4. In exclusively female groups, redefine what it means to be female so that male transsexuals may have at least partial membership before surgery. It is just at this transitional point, when the transsexual is beginning to live in her new identity, that communication with her sisters may be important in shaping her life-style and in getting a wider perspective on what it means to be a woman.

5. Become involved in current gender research and treatment programs so that the feminist view may be represented.

To The Gay Movement:

1. Do not put down transsexuals, intersexuals, or other unusual people (e.g., transvestites) or apologize or express condescending pity for them.

2. Explain that gay people are those who wish to love a member of their own sex, while transsexuals wish to *change* sex. This is the difference between sexual preference and gender identity, and it should be known in order to confront the confusion and needless conflict between transsexuals and gay people.

3. Recognize that some female transsexuals will have male homosexual feelings and some male transsexuals will have female homosexual feelings. Such people should be welcomed to their respective groups.

In general:

Although transsexuals and intersexuals can organize themselves, they cannot make progress without help since they are such a small minority. Recognizing the problems of intermediate people

would be a humane step for anti-sexist groups and a move toward a freer view of sex and gender for everyone. It would help bring to an end the two-genderism which is being challenged in genetic research but not yet in social reality.

I should say something about my obligations as a transsexual to the larger movement. First of all, I feel committed to such issues as child-care and abortion, even though I shall never be able to bear or father a child. I shall always try to be sensitive to the ways in which I have profited by male status, however much I have lost emotionally: for school and job simply being male was an automatic bonus. Of course, I will be renouncing this status, but I cannot renounce the very unjust benefits I have received and which are now unerasable history. I shall join with the Lesbian movement, while as a bisexual female I shall try to have the strict dichotomy between gay and straight removed (as Kate Millett has tried to do). My main feeling is that I want to love *human beings*; sex and gender should not be determining factors. At the same time, I do not put down those who happen to prefer one sex or the other. It is a question of taste, becoming a problem when one taste is almost forced and another is repressed. ♀

continued from p. 31

Maren Seidler

obviously because I was an oddity; I was a woman going to the Olympics. "Gosh, she's gonna lift weights"—there was a tremendous number of people there, it was on television, there were pictured in the paper—I hope I projected a balanced image. They don't look at me and say, "My God, I just know she's a weight lifter," because people don't know unless I tell them. It's not going to make a whole lot of women spring to weight lifting, but it may help them to think of it less as a totally male sport. Maybe the sports will begin to lose their sex definitions of shot-putting and weight lifting as male sports, gymnastics as female sports. Everybody can do anything as far as I'm concerned; that's what women should work for.

Parker: It seems like it's going to be hard.
Seidler: Yeah, that's a strong stereotype—lifting weights, lifting heavy things—women have just not done that.

When I was starting to get into lifting weights, I'd go into different weight rooms with two friends, guys that I lifted with all the time. It was a lot of fun breaking in a new crowd in a new place. First the men thought that I might just look, but, no, I had all my equipment, and I was getting ready to lift. There's all sorts of etiquette, like, "Do you mind if I work in with you?"—you take

Labor Pains

A people's organization that wants to make change must be independent of government, business and agencies. This independence enables it to look honestly at programs and push to make it meet people's needs. This is true of all programs: health, income maintenance and housing, as well as child care. The organization must be able to monitor programs and their professional managers. It should be a watch-dog, able to pull together people at the neighborhood level. And it should be able to coordinate with sympathetic workers in the programs.

After the Coalition

It should be clear from this article that hard work in a political vacuum was not enough. We needed facts, theory and a clear political perspective to make future work meaningful. We are now able to focus on certain principles consistent with the kind of child care each of us and all of us are working toward.

We support child care which is

- non-racist, non-sexist, and non-authoritarian
- free and available to anyone who wants it
- parent, worker, and when possible, child controlled
- attempting to break down staff hierarchies

turns at a station. I met some people who were very sure of themselves, were pleased with you if you could do it, and would be encouraging to you and supportive and say, "C'mon, you can really get this lift." I feel good about those people because their heads are in the right place. But there are other guys who say things like, "If she gets that lift, I swear I'll quit,"—I try damn hard. If this guy can't deal with the fact that I can come in here and lift these weights and be perfectly all right and it bothers him, well I'm gonna really bother him.

Parker: The main purpose of weight lifting is to become stronger?

Seidler: Not static strength, for my event, but I work on lifting quickly and with a lot of explosion—that's how I should be doing the shot.

Parker: How much weight do you lift? What did you start at?

Seidler: Well, when I lifted weights the first time, I was fourteen; I could do about 100 then. My best bench press now is 205. I've done half-squats with about 500.

Parker: That's quite an improvement.

Seidler: My coach thinks eventually I should be able to bench press 300 and squat 350 full, and dead lift around 400. I know I can improve. I don't think there's any special point where I can go and not go any further. ♀

— defending the rights of child care workers to make a decent living and receive health, employment and social security benefits.

We support child care politics which help low-income and working families struggle to attain decent living and working conditions. Our child care fight is part of the struggle for a society which is non-exploitative and in which wealth and services are distributed equally.

We do not support franchise and corporate child care. Child care should not be used by employers as justification for refusing equal pay for equal work—it is not a fringe benefit to replace a salary. Nor can we support present Federal policy which will force welfare mothers to place their children in day care programs against their will and take menial low-paying jobs in order to feed their children.

Family day care—day care services provided in homes—is another kind of child care we have evaluated. We feel that family day care can offer both high quality care for infants and children with special needs and give parents another choice in the type of care they select for their children. However, we oppose family day care which pays low wages to its workers. The family day care worker suffers from isolated working conditions and little possibility for raises or recognition of her status as a valuable worker. Finally, an adequate family day care system must encourage parent and worker involvement in decision-making and control of the program.

In order to work in a direction which both supports the principles outlined above and remains consistent with the analysis in the previous section, we have set some immediate goals for ourselves. We are concentrating now on information and education related to the politics of child care. We feel that we still have a lot to learn about the relationship of child care struggles to other struggles for a decent society. And we are starting the "Labor Pains Newsletter" as a vehicle for educating ourselves and others about local and national issues that affect children and their parents.

Whether child care will be run by corporations and government or by parents and workers will be decided in the next several years. The child care movement must be developed by the people who need it. ♀

1. *Cambridge, the Transformation of a Working Class City*, New England Free Press. "Boardwalk and Park Place: Property Ownership, Political Structure, and Housing Policy in Cambridge," John Mollenkopf and John Pynoos, *Upstart*, Dec. 1971.

2. *The Cambridge Chronicle*, Feb. 8, 1973, pg. 2.

3. *1972 Directory of Establishment*, Department of Planning and Development, City of Cambridge, Mass.

4. In 1940, 37% of the women in Cambridge worked; in 1970, 54% of Cambridge women were in the workforce. In 1970, 46% of married women with husband present were working; 26% of married women with husband present and children under six were working as well. Data from "Those Working Women," Carol Pineo, *Cambridge*, 1973, vol. 3, no. 3, and from 1970 Census Summary Statistics for Cambridge, Massachusetts.

5. *Social Characteristics of Cambridge*, 1971, pg. 8.

6. "What Happened to Cambridge?" in *Cambridge*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1973, pg. 23.

7. *Ibid.*

Reviews

AMAZON QUARTERLY
A Lesbian-Feminist Arts Journal
edited by Gina and Laurel
reviewed by Gail Ruthchild

The *AQ* comes on strong, a hard thing to do if one is aiming for innovation and excellence in the arts. Tenuously perched on the title of "Lesbian-Feminist Arts Journal," the *Amazon Quarterly* has succeeded in transcending the usual pitfalls of politics and perspective.

The *AQ* speaks from the cultural perspective of woman-identified-woman. It is unfortunate that the term "Lesbian" is often interpreted (even by Lesbians) as meaning "emulating that which is male," and the term "feminist" by some feminists as meaning "anti-male." The editors and contributors of this journal waste no energy with anti-male rhetoric or emulation of the male. Page 1, Issue 1, offers a flowing warm drawing by Gina of two women obviously enjoying an embrace, balanced with wise words from Anais Nin: "There is no mockery between women. One lies down at peace as on one's own breast."

The editors have titled their first printed page "Frontiers" and use it to explain their intentions simply and clearly:

We want to explore through the pages of *Amazon Quarterly* just what might be the female sensibility in the arts. Freed from male identification, lesbians are obviously in a very good position to be the ones to cross the frontier Doris Lessing has told us the "free woman" stands at... We are calling this an arts journal in the sense that art is communication. The standard we want to maintain is not arbitrary; we simply want the best of communication from lesbians who are consciously exploring new patterns in their lives.

The *AQ* is as exciting to this suburban Lesbian as the Sears Roebuck catalogue must have been to my pioneer sisters a century ago. Sears had everything, so does the *Quarterly*.

AQ offers the finest short fiction and poetry that this reader has seen—strong authors and strong characters. The poetry crackles with a new kind

of energy that so challenges the traditional limitations of the form that it seems to have rediscovered the potential of poetry, especially "Eat Rice Have Faith in Women" by Fran Winant and "A Geology Lesson" by Judy Grahn. I offer special thanks to Gina for her drawings; I have sought them out as moments of enlightenment.



However, *AQ* offers much more than basic requirements. "Explorations" provide many hours of material for thoughts on "lesbians who are consciously exploring new patterns in their lives." A section called "Tools" contains the kind of book list I wish I had received freshman year. The section called "Lives" is beautiful. We all need to know that such women as Emily Carr and Nelly Ptashkina are not just fantasy people we wish we could have been, but real women who paved the way for us and our ideas.

Truly the *Amazon Quarterly* has opened up my head as no other publication of late has been able to do, possibly because it does not put forth rhetoric to be swallowed up, nor does it claim to know "The Way." Revolution is a personal thing that can only occur within a single thinking person. Cultural evolution is what happens when revolutionary thinkers get together. The *AQ* is an irreversible step forward in the Lesbian-feminist cultural evolution which is so necessary to us all.

Available from 554 Valle Vista, Oakland, California 94610. Subscription is \$4 a year; \$5 out of U.S. or in plain brown wrapper.

SUDDENLY THUNDER
by Ruth Lisa Schechter
Barlenmir House, \$4.95

A CHANGING SEASON
by Ruth Lechlitner
Branden Press, \$3.95

THE WOMEN POETS IN ENGLISH
Ed. by Ann Stanford
McGraw-Hill, \$9.50

reviewed by Karen Lindsey

Suddenly Thunder and *A Changing Season* are both fine books, fascinating to read side by side because they are essentially so different, and each contains the element the other lacks. Lechlitner's is technically the better book. She has magnificently mastered her craft: there is in her work that absolute precision and skill that is the best of what the male tradition has given us. Schechter is less skillful: her choice of words is less well-molded, and the poems sometimes suffer for it. But there is an immediacy to her poems, a kind of frantic passion that involves the reader in a way Lechlitner's work does not. Perhaps the contrast is best illustrated in the most overtly feminist poems of each writer. In "Flick," Schechter describes the lot of woman in a nursery rhyme rhythm, transmuted into ferocious irony:

This is the woman who transplanted her heart
running to homicides/working
for the medical examiner
this woman went to school/to
market/to medical school
this woman was so nice
she turned into ice
this woman believed marriage
was a flick
at Loew's 175th . . .

Lechlitner, in "Inside and Outside," looks coolly at her own desperation: There are no more spaces to turn around in with comfort, to let me breathe when my ribs are paren-

theses
enclosing too much

The image is perfect, but its presentation is almost too perfect, too exact: the rough edges of emotion are neatly sanded away. Yet it is impossible not to admire how well she handles her art. The poems in the first section of the book are especially good. The precision of detail, the unerring gift of description, so that the smallest objects are transmitted firmly from the poet's vision to the reader's, is exquisitely evident in poems like "In Praise of Round," "Persimmon," and, later in the book, "Buzzard."

Some of Schechter's emotion seems to come from her life in New York. There is a wonderful picture of the Bronx, presented in the quick, dizzy rhythms of a car ride through the streets, and a joyful description of a Jewish slum in Brooklyn called "Kiss the Torah, It's a Festival!" Even apart from these poems, the book *feels* like New York—the choppy, hectic rhythms of that city fill every page, pulsing through the anger at seal hunting in "Sea Lion" and the tenderness of friendship in "A Day Below Zero" and even the mockery of the American South in "Along Missouri."

The evocative power of Schechter and the technical mastery of Lechlitter represent almost polar aspects of poetic skill; it is fascinating to conjecture what a synthesis of their two talents would produce. But both are

fine contributions to the growing women's poetry.

The Women Poets in English is one of the most exciting books I've read in a long while. Anyone who teaches a women's course should immediately make it required reading. It is a long collection of women's poems, from the ninth century through the present, and to read it is to begin to reclaim our place in the history of English poetry.

It is a pure joy to read through the book, to try to commit to memory the names of these women, to compare their poems, to revel in their very existence. "For the first ten centuries of our era," says Ann Stanford in her excellent introduction, "only a few names of women who recited or wrote their poems have come down to us. But we may be sure that wherever poetry was part of a culture, some of its women were composing and helping to preserve its songs and legends." Stanford traces our history through the centuries, beginning with poems whose authorship has not been established (supporting Virginia Woolf's claim that "anonymous" was frequently a woman).

Some of our poets have been relatives of more famous male poets; most notable perhaps is Mary Sidney Herbert, who with her brother Philip Sidney translated the Psalms of David and whose translations scholars con-

sider better than his. Some are themselves familiar names—those few women who did achieve, and maintain, fame: Anne Bradstreet, the Brontës, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti. But there are many other poets whose names I, at least, had not known, and discovering them is exhilarating. And there are poems by women better known in other contexts: Queen Elizabeth I and her mother, Anne Boleyn (who wrote the sad, haunting "Death, Rock Me to Sleep"); and Anne Askew, the Protestant martyr burned at the stake by Henry VIII.

There are a few anti-woman poems, which I wish Stanford had decided to leave out, but overall a gently feminist theme threads through the book. Several of the poets complain bitterly that their work is ignored or ridiculed because of their sex. In the 17th century, Anne Killigrew writes against the men who deny her authorship of her work, and ends:

But let them rage, and 'gainst a
maid conspire . . .

I willingly accept Cassandra's
fate,

To speak the truth, although
believed too late.

Her contemporary, Mary Lee, Lady Chudleigh, warns women against marriage in "To the Ladies," which declares that "Wife and servant are the same," and ends with a warning to "Value your selves, and men despise."

Poem for Jessie

Jessie, last night I read that women give birth easier standing up,
that peasant women used to do it in their fields that way
and go on planting,
that being delivered on a table was thought up by the doctors
so they wouldn't have to squat underneath.

Tonight, getting your diaper, I think of your cries
when you're flat on your back
my large hand on your belly.
And then I watch you,
standing up,
holding onto the bathtub,
playing with the soap.

Jessie, I am willing to kneel next to you
and get a little powder on the floor.

—Ellen Bass

Demeter's song

Kore is back, my daughter returns
the rapist sleeps
in his gutted lands
through dead men the narcissus vaults and the wheat
and my child walks triumphant

Kore, oh Kore give me your hands!

—Mary Winfrey

The pro-woman theme is reinforced in the introduction, particularly in the accounts of women forced to write under male pseudonyms (among them, the fascinating aunt and niece who wrote together under the name of Michael Field). It is there in the many poems written to women: love poems to mothers, grandmothers, friends.

I have some minor complaints, of course, but they are based largely on personal taste: I am disappointed that the editor mentions Dorothy Parker's satiric verse in the introduction and does not include any of it; I am sorry not to see Diane Wakoski. I wish she had not included Phyllis McGinley. And, except for "To Inez Milholland," I would have used a different selection of Millay's work. But in a book of this kind the choice of modern poets matters less than the presence of their predecessors—and hopefully there will be other such volumes to include all the poets and poems one book cannot possibly encompass.

Meanwhile, we owe Ann Stanford a tremendous debt. She tells us that she had begun work on the book 15 years ago, but "its time had not yet come around." It is heartening to think that we have made that time come around, and gratifying that, with her book, Ann Stanford has given us back a piece of our history. ♀

LIVES OF GIRLS AND WOMEN
by Alice Munro
McGraw-Hill, \$6.95
reviewed by Mary Damon Peltier



Alice Munro remembers all the pain and absurdity of growing up female in a small town, and reveals it in this novel about the childhood and adolescence of Del Jordan in Jubilee, Ontario.

Munro is aware that women are frustrated, trapped, and blocked, but

she has not limited her characterizations to Woman the Victim or the Crazy. I have enormous respect for my pain, and for the pain of my sisters, but I do not trust one-sided definitions of women. If we are nothing but miserable victims, then how am I to account for the strength, joy, and eccentricity of the women I've been meeting all my life? We are oppressed but we are not all the same—and no one of us is always the same. I like to read that women exist in the world, not just in a series of dark, twisted corridors of the mind.

Each of the novel's major female characters is a full, thick personality. Munro is true to the feelings and reactions of these women, but she is not owned by them. When she writes about Del's relationship with her mother or with her friends, she includes the contradictory elements that are present in such closeness between people. One sees shared femaleness and humanness as well as tension, pain, and guilt. She consistently accepts ambivalence and refuses to deny any aspect of reality or to edit her characters to fit into a system of myths or symbols. She respects people and their modes of survival, as in this description of Del's aunts after the death of their brother:

They told the same stories, they played their same jokes, which now seemed dried out, brittle with us; in time every word, every expression of the face, every flutter of the hands came to seem something learned long ago, perfectly remembered, and each of their two selves was seen to be constructed with terrible care; the older they got the more frail and admirable and inhuman this construction appeared... but they were not radically exposed or damaged or changed; with so much effort, with a final sense of obligation, they kept their outlines intact.

Rigorous and loving attention is paid to her subjects and the textures of their world; her language is very sensual and exact. Del's first love affair is described in a chapter called "Baptizing." Many of us who are tempted to write ideology when we deal with sex: we seem to want to bring our bodies under mental control and to disclaim whatever feelings do not fit our definitions. Munro simply tells what happened, what was felt, in a

careful, graceful language. I felt as if I were seeing sex clearly, in light, for the first time in reading a novel. (I did not feel that her perceptions applied only to heterosexuality, although that is the context of Del's experiences.)

Sex seemed to me all surrender—not the women's to the man but the person's to the body, an act of pure faith, freedom in humility. I would lie washed in these implications, discoveries, like somebody suspended in clear and warm and irresistibly moving water, all night.

Lives of Girls and Women is a novel of hope. There is no Woman, just girls and women. There are possibilities. There is life, painful and funny as it is.

People's lives, in Jubilee as elsewhere, were dull, simple, amazing, and unfathomable—deep caves paved with kitchen linoleum... ♀

I'M RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME, BUT I'M NOW ALLOWED TO CROSS THE STREET
A Primer for Women's Liberation
by Gabrielle Burton
Know, Inc., \$4.50
reviewed by Holly Newman

As anyone can tell you who has been in the women's movement long enough to get some analysis and articulation, there comes a baffling moment when you can't explain yourself because you know too much. Gabrielle Burton transcends this problem engagingly by showing the roots of her ideas and the experiences that led to their formation.

Gabrielle is a wife, mother of five, and chatelaine of a suburban Maryland house. She and *Know, Inc.*, a women's press in Pittsburgh, Pa., went through unending hassles to write and publish this book, and it should be acclaimed just for its existence. But it is much better than that.

The book is a primer in the best sense—it begins at the beginning, and in an inviting, humorous way examines how feminism connects with the realities of the author's life and the lives of the women she knows. She describes with great sensibility how she came to feel differently about abortion, childcare, equal pay, the family, monogamy, karate—the whole range of loaded topics which are the source of pained and heated arguments between



husbands and wives, mothers and daughters, bosses and secretaries everywhere. Her brevity and wit, not to mention levelheadedness, are such that one immediately wants to present the book to a mother, aunt, or reluctant friend. Most women, I think, can relate to her chapter entitled "You May Not Think Much of My Suffering but It's the Best One I Got":

The middle class woman has a particular cross to bear because her suffering is subtle enough to be trivialized. Enough affluence to buy a surrogate life to sublimate her aches only adds to her confusion and guilt. But simply because she does not like to think about her pain and others continue to scoff at it does not mean that she does not have it.

Of course, jetting through this many ideas in 206 pages is liable to be a bit of an overview, without the depth of coverage one might want. But there are plenty of sources dealing with each of these areas in depth, and in fact few that bring them together in an interesting, readable form.

One small quibble—the accompanying drawings really don't match the realistic and graceful tone of the text and sometimes are so whimsical as to trivialize the subject matter.

The publisher is hoping to bring the book out in paperback through a distributor some time in the future, but in the meantime it is available from Know, Inc., P.O. Box 86031, Pittsburgh, Pa., 15221, for \$3.50 a copy. Women's groups can sell it for the dustjacket price of \$4.50 as a fundraiser. ♀

TOWARD A RECOGNITION OF ANDROGYNY

by Carolyn G. Heilbrun
Alfred A. Knopf, \$6.95
reviewed by Mary Rice

If Simone de Beauvoir had written a book on androgyny, it would have been the definitive study: massive, exhaustive, meticulously organized—

and a little ponderous. In *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, Carolyn Heilbrun has chosen another approach. Instead of such a monumental edifice, inspiring but tiring to walk through, she has constructed a spacious and durable frame—a basic, open structure. Much of it is left to be filled in or added to by others, but some areas she has impressively finished and furnished herself.

This open form is especially good for exploring as elusive a concept as androgyny. While defining it basically as the absence of sex-role stereotyping, Heilbrun emphasizes that androgyny is "unbounded and hence fundamentally undefinable." She considers it an ideal toward which we are evolving and must continue to evolve. The idea of personal freedom, of release from the strictures of convention and from repressive expectation, is the theme of the book.

Its focus is literature. Part I is an excellent compendium of the androgynous element in the myth and literature of Western civilization. This survey provides a broad context for the development of Heilbrun's own theories in the rest of the book. Part II examines the novel as a highly androgynous literary form. Part III presents Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury group of writers, artists, and friends that she was part of, as the modern-day people who best realized the androgynous ideal, in their works and in their lives as a community.

Toward a Recognition of Androgyny presents revolutionary and scholarly insight with a total lack of pretension. Heilbrun has the scholarly virtues of clarity, directness, fairness, impassioned reasonableness, and broad vision, without the pedantic vices of ostentation or stridency in pushing a thesis. Her major fault is an excess of modesty—some diffidence in presenting her own interpretations and a slight over-use of secondary sources. Yet this absence of verbal aggression and her calm, low-key style can reach people threatened by the idea of androgyny, and may help them to think of it in a new, positive way. And for those who welcome the universal realization of androgyny, the book has something to else to teach: the potential revolutionary value of literature.

The institutional propagation of literature is usually appalling. Most secondary schools present literature as

so much required data, to be simplified, memorized, and played back on command. Colleges sometimes continue this approach, or else encourage the veneration of literary works as monuments of a cultural tradition whose values are not to be questioned. Either way, students get little idea of the splendid arrays of imagination or of the concern with the human condition present in the best literature. It is no wonder that many people concerned with radical social change today view the study of "great books" as irrelevant, if not counterrevolutionary, and either reject that study or feel guilty about indulging in it.

Heilbrun's book is a revitalizing influence. Here great literature is not a fixed canon agreed on by critics of certain measurable academic status, who keep themselves carefully remote from the ugliness of the outside world. Rather, it is "unconventional": it does "not accept as eternal principles what are merely agreed-upon modes of action and belief." It consists of works that may help people in a social context whose nature the authors could not have imagined in their own times. Heilbrun's stated goal in writing her book was "to suggest new ways of responding to the circumstances of our own lives and the literature of our own times."

With this approach to literature, Heilbrun adds to a new kind of literary criticism that Kate Millett began with *Sexual Politics*. In the furor over Millett's radical analysis, the fact that it was in large part literary was easily overlooked or dismissed. But Millett described her work in the preface:

This essay, composed of equal parts of literary and cultural criticism, is something of an anomaly, a hybrid, possibly a new mutation altogether. I have operated on the premise that there is room for a criticism which takes into account the larger cultural contest in which literature is conceived and produced.

This is the concern of *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*.

Heilbrun's delivery is milder than Millett's, and her role as a teacher is not so obviously radical. But she has an equally clear vision of a better humankind, where each individual is free to be her/his own kind of person, regardless of gender. Her book is an important step in the realization of that vision. ♀

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Alta is founder and director of the Shameless Hussy Press in Oakland, California, which publishes women's writing, and has written several books of poems herself.

Ellen Bass has recently co-edited an anthology of poems by women entitled *No More Masks!* Her first book of poetry, *I'm Not Your Laughing Daughter*, will be published in November.

Bobbi Carrey is a photographer who spends her time in darkrooms, auto-photo booths at Woolworths, and photographic flea markets.

Sarita Cordell is a feminist, teacher, and writer now investigating women's liberation groups in Europe.

Sherry Edwards is a graduate school drop-out and works in a factory.

Marsha Feldman looks forward to reuniting with her spirit in Arizona. In the meantime, she is wearing a pink shirt with green and orange desert flowers on it and learning to take responsibility for her life. She says, "Soon each woman will be her own person and we will all live a bright, new, revolutionary way!"

Emily Jean Gabel, from Los Angeles, loves women, writing, Japanese wood block prints and landscape architecture. She is currently tutoring Japanese and producing the "I Am Woman" radio show for WBZ-FM in Boston.

Leah Jackson is a freelance writer and editor from Washington, D.C., who lives in Cambridge and studies T'ai-Chi Ch'uan and astrology.

Karen Lindsey is a poet, a freelance writer, copy editor and proofreader, and a sometime Tad girl. She coordinates a series of women's poetry readings at Female Liberation, and watches a lot of television.

Margo is studying for an M.A. in sociology at a major Boston university, is very involved in the feminist movement in terms of experience as a woman, which is developing, and of past experience as a transsexual.

Beth Marshall spends half her time working on Second Wave, half her time rassing a three year old daughter, half her time doing freelance graphic design, and half her time traveling among all these activities on her magic carpet.

Robin Morgan is the editor of *Sisterhood is Powerful* and author of a book of poetry *Monster*. She has been active in the women's movement for five years.

Holly Newman is looking forward to spending the summer at beaches and forests across the country.

Shulee Ong is a student at Mass. College of Art and hopes to incorporate photography and feminism in her life.

Jacquie Parker is a member of Female Liberation, mother of one two-year old and part-time mother of another. She runs three miles a day at the Tufts track, and looks forward to doing some backpacking in the Sierras this summer. She hopes to attend law school next fall and do work in women's rights.

Mary Damon Peltier is a feminist-poet.

Joyce Peseroff is a writing Fellow at the University of Michigan Society of Fellows.

Mary Rice has sun, moon, and several planets in Gemini, and wants to learn more about what that means.

Gail Ruthchild is a happy, healthy college drop-out currently hiding in West Newton.

Liz Schweber is a freelance artist in Cambridge who studied at Art Students' League in N.Y., likes figure drawing, studies karate, and has green eyes.

Sorah occasionally works on the *Second Wave*.

Fran Taylor divides her time between working for money, working for the women's movement, going to movies, and placating her Irish Setter who gets annoyed at being left alone while she does the above.

Mary Winfrey was a member of a writer's workshop at the Los Angeles Women's Center and is presently working with the Rio Hondo Women's Liberation Group. She is married and is the mother of three teenage daughters.

Sheli Wortis, Marie Schachter, Mav Pardee and Marnette O'Brien formed the Labor Pains Collective after working together for several years in the Child Care Movement in Cambridge. They are now putting out a newsletter on the politics of child care.

Joan Wye is a sculptor and artist. She does sketches of monuments to women, "these monuments to be built in public places to give joy and confidence to women and to counteract all the monuments of generals on horseback and other such glorious shit."

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NOT FEEL LIKE THE WORLD
WE'RE LIVING IN USELESS
SUICIDE LOOKS LIKE ONEWAY
BUT PLEASE DON'T DO IT

there is a down
that doesn't get back up every time
if you get there +
don't see anybody else you
forget the way out if you
let go the string + the maze
is all around you, you can
let yourself die of it
we must all be very careful
not to destroy ourselves,
for specially in the lonely place
of tragic vision, we need each other
or maybe we can't go on.

-ALTA-

ps. we have learned to turn our anger
against ourselves, Virginia Woolf could
have shoved an oppressor into the sea,
but she didn't. next time you touch the
razor to your wrist, consider whether
your anger is that legitimate.