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# Lesbian Voices



Volume 1  
Issue 1



“Sabiorette”

\$1.  
Winter 1974

LESBIAN VOICES is published by "Sisters of Sappha," the Lesbian-Feminist Alliance of Santa Clara County, founded in November 1973. Correspondence regarding activities or membership in "Sisters of Sappha" should be addressed to SOS c/o Kathy, P. O. Box 783, Campbell, CA 95008. SOS Phone: 378-~~7556~~.7665

## Save Our Sisters

Letters to the editor, subscriptions, manuscripts, poems, graphics, etc. should be addressed to R. Nichols, P. O. Box 3122, San Jose, CA 95116. Please enclose a stamped envelope if material is to be returned. We cannot at present pay cash for materials used, but the contributor will receive ten free copies of the issue in which her work appears.

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Cover Drawing by Ruth Hodsdon. The title "Saviorette" was suggested by Dory Previn's song "Did Jesus Have a Baby Sister?" on her new album "Dory Previn" Warner Bros BS 2811.

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I was a girl  
meek and quiet  
cowering in a man-made world.  
Now I'am a woman  
strong and loud  
growing in a new-found knowledge.  
I was a girl  
meek and quiet.  
Now I'am a woman  
never to be silenced again.

♀♀      ♀♀♀      ♀♀

I've become aware of women.  
It's as if I've never noticed them before.  
Not really.

Funny how in this world of men  
you can follow, for so long,  
the line into marriage's prison  
And never once look  
at the obvious alternative.

-- Ruth Hodsdon

# Sex as Ideology

by Rosalie Nichols

## Introduction

It is common practice to begin discussions of sex and sexism with certain implicit assumptions already taken for granted: That there are two and only two sexes; that these sexes are distinct and "opposite" in nature; that males are and should be 100% male, and females are and should be 100% female; that an individual's sex is pre-ordained by God or predetermined by Nature; that sex is immutable; that an individual's basic sense of identity is determined by sexual anatomy and reproductive capacity; that an individual's sexual behavior is determined by sexual anatomy and reproductive capacity; that the only proper or legitimate purpose of sexual behavior is reproduction; that any form of sexual behavior not leading to reproduction is "unnatural"; that any individual deviation from any of the above should be proscribed by society and/or punished by law; and so forth.

These are not isolated beliefs. They comprise a whole complex of interrelated ideas which lead logically from one to the other. They represent a sexual ideology which is deeply rooted, historically and philosophically, in Western (and particularly Christian) culture. For example, if you accept the idea that there are only two sexes, you must naturally regard hermaphrodites as unnatural freaks; if you are a Christian, you may perhaps regard them as possessed by the Devil and therefore wish to burn them at the stake. If you believe that "men are men, and women are women, and never the twain shall meet," you might quite logically vote to burn Joan of Arc at the stake for wearing men's attire -- as was done in 1431 by the Inquisition. If you believe that the purpose of sex is reproduction, you might well wish to ban any form of birth control as being immoral. And if you believe that non-reproductive sexual behavior is unnatural, you might

well agree that Lesbians and homosexuals should be burned at the stake, as was done throughout the Middle Ages, or that homosexuals should be castrated, as is now being done in California's modern and enlightened State Hospitals.

It is of no use to deplore this type of institutionalized violence against "deviant" individuals if the underlying premises for such social sanctions are never questioned, examined, or challenged. What people do is based upon what they believe. Oppression is only the symptom; the ideology is the disease.

It is for this reason that I feel that a thorough understanding of the biology of sex is necessary before one can begin to examine, question, or attempt to change its social manifestations. Not because "biology is destiny." But, on the contrary, because it is what people think and decide about their biology that conditions their social interrelationships and social institutions.

People are largely ignorant about sex. And, as is usually the case, ignorance is the seed-bed of bigotry. Much of the information that scientists can now tell us about the nature of sex has only been discovered within the last ten, fifty, or a hundred years. Ideas take a while to seep into the culture and to shift the human ballast. So it is not too late for a degree of optimism. Perhaps the world need not be torn by violent revolution. Let us do instead a little violence to ignorance and mistaken ideas, and then we shall see whether society's bigotry doesn't descend and collapse like a punctured balloon with no hot air left to keep it afloat.

The Sexual Revolution in all its manifestations -- birth control, abortion, sexual freedom, unisex, gay liberation, men's liberation, children's liberation, and most particularly the women's movement -- is a battle of ideologies. Activists, including the much-abused bra-burners, serve a purpose in drawing attention to the issues; but the battle will be fought and won by the movement's intellectuals, its revolutionary thinkers who are willing and able to check, challenge and reject the premises of the opposition.

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## Historical Background

The first topic to be taken up here is reproduction because it is through the evolution of reproduction that the phenomenon of sex arises in Nature.

Our ancestors, who lived close to Nature, were often very good observers; but they had no special tools for observation (such as the microscope), so their conclusions about reproduction were based on what they could see with the naked eye. What they observed was that the lower animals (flies, worms, rats, frogs, etc.) arose out of mud, slime, and decaying matter; birds and reptiles were observed to lay eggs from which their young were hatched; and the higher animals, including human beings, produced semen. The eggs in both the lower and the higher animals could not be seen, so their existence was either unknown or was disputed even when it was hypothesized. Indeed, in some cultures, the connection was never even made between sexual intercourse and reproduction, and all sorts of mystical explanations were invented to account for pregnancy.

In ancient Greece, however, largely due to the influence of the great naturalist and philosopher Aristotle, the theory became prevalent that in human reproduction, the male semen cooks and shapes the menstrual blood (which was observed to stop flowing during pregnancy) into a new human being. The man, consequently, was believed to play the major role in reproduction, while the woman was regarded merely as the passive incubator of his seed. Aristotle further taught that man is active, mobile, and creative, while woman is passive and domestic; woman, therefore, is matter waiting to be formed and molded by the active male principle. Robert Francoeur, the embryologist from whose book I gleaned this information, comments, "This appears to be the first time in recorded human history a scientific and philosophical argument was worked out for the natural superiority of the male. Males are larger, stronger, more handsome, etc. etc. etc." (1)

I am indebted to Kate Millett for pointing out the connection between the discovery of paternity and the institution of patriarchy in her now-famous book Sexual Politics. Of particular interest is her examination of

the play "The Furies" by the ancient Greek playwright Aeschylus. In the play, Agamemnon sacrifices the life of his daughter, and his wife Clytemnestra kills him in revenge for the daughter's death. Their son Orestes then kills Clytemnestra to avenge his father, and he is put on trial by The Furies, who are seen by Millett as representing deposed matriarchal goddesses. In his defense, Orestes asserts that he is not of his mother's blood -- at which the Furies exclaim, "Vile wretch, she nourished you in her own womb. Do you disown your mother's blood? . . . Do you deny you were born of woman?" To which question, the playwright has the god Apollo reply as follows:

The mother is not the parent of the child  
Which is called hers. She is the nurse who  
tends the growth  
Of young seed planted by its true parent,  
the male.  
So, if Fate spares the child, she keeps it,  
as one might  
Keep for some friend a growing plant. . .  
Father without mother may beget. . .  
. . . We have  
Present, as proof, the daughter of Olympian Zeus:  
One never nursed in the dark cradle of the womb. . .

The goddess Athena, who was supposed to have been born full-grown from the head of her father Zeus, then testifies:

No mother gave me birth. Therefore the  
father's claim  
And male supremacy in all things, save to give  
Myself in marriage, wins my whole heart's  
loyalty  
Therefore a woman's death, who killed her  
husband, is,  
I judge, outweighed in grievousness by his. (2)

Thus, we have a beautiful example of the sociological consequences of a biological belief. If, as it was believed, human life springs from the father's seed alone -- and some people later went so far as to claim that they could detect a tiny preformed homunculus in each sperm -- then the male alone is the creator, the bearer of life, children belong to their father, inheritance descends through the male line and the male surname, and the female is relegated to the

role of incubator and nursemaid. Then, too, Thomas Aquinas can logically write in the first book of his Summa Theologica:

Woman is misbegotten and defective, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of a woman comes from a defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence, such as a south wind which is moist. (3)

Or, since the female was a mere incubator, we can find, without surprise, that in the reign of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry II (973-1024 A.D.) a woman who miscarried, whether by design or by accident, was condemned to death at the stake -- the rationale being that the sex of the fetus could not be determined before birth, whereas the sex of the mother was undoubtedly inferiorly female, and an unformed, possibly-male fetus was considered more valuable than a living woman. (4)

Beliefs and practices like this continued for some two thousand years after Aristotle, whose writings were held as dogma by Church scholars, while any direct investigation of human anatomy and physiology was prohibited as sacrilegious. It wasn't until 1672 when Regnier de Graaf investigated the ovary (mistaking the follicle for the egg itself) and over a century later when Karl Ernst von Baer correctly identified the mammalian egg in 1820 that the true role of the female in reproduction began to come to light. (5) We now know that, contrary to the belief of the ancients, the male sperm, although biologically useful, is not at all necessary for reproduction. But that is getting ahead of the story.

#### Asexual Reproduction

The average layperson, when s/he hears the term "reproduction," probably thinks automatically of "sexual" reproduction. Yet there are many variant forms of reproduction, and "sexual" reproduction is a relatively recent form, evolutionarily speaking.

At one time, most Western people believed in the Biblical story of Creation, wherein God created all the

plants and animals and man, and finally from man, woman, all within a few days in the year 4004 B.C. -- "male and female created He them." (Some people still earnestly believe this, and they will probably get little value from the facts and ideas presented in this article.) The story of the Creation, besides being contradicted by vast archaeological evidence, does not include most of the Plant and Animal Queendom as scientists know it -- for most (and I'm tempted to say "all") of the Queendom of Life is not male and female, but rather either asexual or hermaphroditic.

The fundamental form of reproduction in life is simple cell division. This is the method of reproduction of all the simplest plants and animals, and it continues to be the method of reproduction of the body cells of more complex organisms up the evolutionary scale -- including your body cells. Nature does not discard her basic system of cell division as more complex reproductive systems evolve; rather, she retains it as her fundamental technique of biological architecture.

In mitosis (simple cell division, or fission), the "mother" cell reproduces all her components -- particularly her set of chromosomes -- by biochemical means which are still incompletely understood, and then she divides physically into two complete, new "daughter" cells. (Note that biologists do not speak of "father" and "son" cells!) When the new cells mature, each can divide again into a third generation, and so forth. Thus, a living cell is potentially immortal. The chain of Life is never broken (although it may sometimes dead-end).

This view of Life is in sharp contrast not only to the Biblical story, but also to the theory mentioned earlier, the theory of "spontaneous generation." This was the belief that living things could arise spontaneously from inanimate matter, such as rotten meat producing maggots, manure producing beetles, wheat producing mice, etc. This theory was promulgated by Aristotle himself, and it was revered for two thousand years. However, with the rise of the Renaissance and the birth of scientific method, the theory of spontaneous generation was put to the test by Francisco Redi (1626-98), who proved that maggots can develop in meat only if flies are allowed to lay eggs in it, and was finally laid to rest by Louis Pasteur (1822-95), who

demonstrated that a sterilized broth would remain clear and sterile if dust from the air was meticulously excluded from contact with it. (6)

Thus, the theory of spontaneous generation was rejected in favor of the law of biogenesis, which states simply that every living creature comes from previously living creatures. If you ponder this for a moment, you will see that this means that your ancestors stretch back for millions or billions of years in an unbroken chain of life; had any one of your billions of ancestors (from protozoans to primates) not reproduced, you would not be here now. All those millenia upon millenia upon millenia of evolution are directly pertinent to you. Whatever has happened in your line of evolution is part of your biological background.

Returning, then, to simple cell division, this was the method of reproduction for billions of your ancestors and is still an integral part of your biology now. And it is by far the most prevalent form of reproduction among living things.

Simple cell division is classified by biologists as a form of "asexual" reproduction because only one parent gives rise to the offspring; there is no fusion or exchange of genetic material with another cell, and therefore the offspring are genetically identical with the parent.

Other phenomena related to simple cell division are: (a) regeneration, the ability of an organism to grow back a missing part, or the ability of one of the parts to develop into an entire organism (e.g. a lizard can grow a new tail; the popular flatworm Planaria can be cut up to produce three or more new individuals); (b) budding, a form of reproduction in which a protrusion grows out of the side of the parent organism and breaks away to become an independent organism of the same genetic composition (e.g. Protozoa, yeasts and other plants, sponges, corals, jellyfish, sea-anemones, and tunicates -- which are chordates! -- can reproduce by this method); (c) vegetative propagation, the growth of plants from bulbs, tubers, runners, rhizomes, cuttings, and grafting; and (d) sporulation, the reproduction of plants by means of a cell with a hard, protective covering that permits it to survive unfavorable conditions of the environment, such as freezing and drying.

Essentially, the foregoing are merely variations on the theme of simple cell division; they are special adaptations to meet varied circumstances. There are two other forms of "asexual" reproduction which could be included here, parthenogenesis and cloning; but they can be understood better after a discussion of sexual reproduction.

### Sexual Reproduction

As mentioned earlier, in "asexual" reproduction the offspring are genetically identical to the parent; there is no variation in the species, except that brought about by mutation (inheritable genetic change), which is essential to evolution. In "sexual" reproduction, however, there is fusion of the nuclei of two cells, resulting in an exchange of genetic materials between individuals and a greater variation in members of the species.

The advantage of sexual reproduction, according to present biological theory, is that a species with more variation has a greater chance of survival in extreme environmental conditions. As one author puts it:

The mystery of the usefulness of sex remained unsolved until biologists learned to stop thinking of evolution in terms of individuals and began to consider populations. In a stable environment, a willow tree produced from a twig that broke off and floated downstream is no better off than one produced from seed. The advantages of sexual reproduction are felt only in the long run, for it is the species as a whole that benefits, not the individual.

Each species exists in a state of balance with its environment. A species survives because it is exquisitely adapted to a particular set of conditions. . . If all individuals were alike, a single dry season, for example, might wipe out the species. But if there is variation, there will very likely be some individuals for whom the new environment is not fatal. It is these variant members of the species that carry on when the environment undergoes a change. Without them, any species is sooner or later doomed.

. . . Sex maintains the variations within the species, making the species as a whole more adaptable to new conditions. It is for this reason that the sexual process with all its complexity has become part of the reproductive cycle of most animals and plants. (8)

Now, I am in favor of variation within the species, simply because variety is interesting. Further, I agree that it is the variant members who are able to withstand environmental change and not those who rigidly adapt to their environment. And I also agree with this author that sexual reproduction is of no advantage to the individual. (For that matter, reproduction itself is of no advantage to the individual and can even be fatal.) But I do not see how his survival argument, although it sound logical, can be substantiated by the facts of Nature. All the species which now exist are the species which have survived; yet many or most of these reproduce predominantly "asexually." A whole branch of medicine has been dedicated to the control of bacteria, yet the Streptococcus or the Clostridium botulinum is probably still more of a threat to man, with his "sexual" reproduction, than vice versa.

I think it would be fair to say that no one really knows how or why "sexual" reproduction evolved. But it did.

A primitive forerunner of "sexual" reproduction is conjugation, a process which is found only in certain simple organisms such as green algae, bread mold, and the Paramecium. In conjugation, which is analogous to fertilization, two similar unicellular organisms fuse, exchange nuclear material, and then break apart; each organism then reproduces by fission (simple cell division). Occasionally, after conjugation, the participating organisms do not reproduce, the process in these instances seeming merely to revitalize the organisms.

The gametes, or "sex" cells, participating in conjugation are similar in structure -- with slight differences in function; for example, green algae has active and passive gametes, and bread mold has plus and minus strains. In fertilization, however, the gametes (termed heterogametes) differ greatly in both structure and function. In animals, these heterogametes are called the male gamete (or sperm cell) and the female gamete (or ovum). The primary

difference between the two is that the male gamete has lost its cytoplasm and grown a tail for locomotion; the female gamete is much larger than the male, containing a nutritive yolk, and is relatively stationary. The gonads are organs that produce the gametes. The testes are the gonads of the male, and the ovaries are the gonads of the female.

In biology, male and female are defined in terms of the type of gonads and the gametes produced. A male is an animal having testes and producing sperm; a female is an animal having ovaries and producing ova. I want to emphasize this because, to the layperson, a male is an animal with a penis and a female is an animal with a vagina. This is not a scientific definition and does not hold up in scientific investigation. For one thing, the males of the lower animal species do not even have a penis, nor the females a vagina. For another thing, it is quite possible for an animal with a penis to have ovaries or for one with a vagina to have testes. The external genitals do not determine the sex of the animal, biologically.

I assume that most adults know something about the union of sperm and egg. The gametes, when they are produced in the gonads, receive half the number of chromosomes found in a body cell of the species (the haploid number). When the sperm and egg unite, each contributes its chromosomes to restore the fertilized egg to the total, or diploid, number. The fertilized egg (zygote) then proceeds to divide by -- guess what -- simple cell division and to develop into a new individual.

Fertilization is the distinctive characteristic of "sexual" reproduction. It is the process we all hear about and are so concerned with; to the layperson, fertilization becomes almost synonymous with sex and reproduction. Yet fertilization actually has very little to do with reproduction itself. As one science teacher has noted:

Fertilization is not reproduction. If anything, it is the reverse, for the result of fertilization one cell where two existed before. In all organisms reproduction is founded on the division of cells. Fertilization is actually an interruption of reproduction, an interlude in which the repeated division of cells is halted while two cells unite. . . fertilization has an important function, but a

great many organisms reproduce without it, either always or occasionally. (9)

Now, here is something to think about! "In all organisms, reproduction is founded on the division of cells." But cell division is an asexual process! "Fertilization is not reproduction." Then one must conclude that all reproduction per se is asexual; there is nothing else left. I submit that "sexual" reproduction is not reproduction at all, but a contradiction in terms!

How unnecessary fertilization is for reproduction has been known by at least some naturalists for a couple of hundred years, as they made close observations of species in which the female reproduces without fertilization by the male. They named this phenomenon parthenogenesis, or Virgin Birth.

#### Parthenogenesis

There are three classifications of naturally occurring parthenogenesis:

Occasional or accidental parthenogenesis occurs in species where an occasional egg develops without fertilization, but this is not the usual mode of reproduction. . .

Obligatory parthenogenesis is the state in which the normal mode of reproduction is by the development of unfertilized eggs; this may be constant, in some species there are no males and the whole of the population consists of females derived from the unfertilized eggs of other females. . .

Thirdly, parthenogenesis may be cyclical, sexual generations occurring at one time of year and parthenogenetic generations at others. . . (10)

Incidentally, the male doctor who authored the book from which this information is taken commented, "Parthenogenesis is well adapted to the rapid multiplication of the species as the wasteful production of males is eliminated. . ." (11) He said it, readers, I didn't.

Actually, there are some species, such as honeybees, in which the males are produced parthenogenetically, while

females develop from fertilized eggs. Among the honeybees, however, very few males are produced, and these only for breeding purposes in order to produce more females, who are, as you all learned in school, the workers while the males are the drones. The Queen Bee is fertilized only once during her lifetime and apparently stores the sperm, using it to fertilize some eggs and not others. The male who fertilizes her drops dead immediately afterward (no comment); the other males are quickly killed off by the workers. The Queen proceeds to lay several thousand eggs a day -- including eggs for drones, workers, and future queens -- while she and her eggs are tended, groomed, and fed by her workers. (12)

Natural parthenogenesis occurs in many insects, such as bees, wasps, moths, and aphids, in rotifers and some flatworms, and has been observed in turkeys. It has also been observed in a rudimentary form in several mammalian species as a spontaneous phenomenon. Cleavages of the ovum have been detected in guinea-pig ovaries with the formation of a blastocyst and a primitive cell mass. A 6-cell morula has been found in a cat ovary, and several cell masses have been found in human follicles, including a blastula of about 60 cells, corresponding to a 4-day human embryo. (13)

The male gamete, or sperm, it is explained by the scientists, serves two functions in fertilization: (1) it contributes its genetic material to the egg, and (2) the penetration of the egg by the sperm acts as the "trigger" for cell division and multiplication to take place. In parthenogenesis, however, the embryo receives no genetic material from a male parent; all the genes are received from one parent, the mother. In some cases in Nature, the sperm stimulates the egg to divide without contributing any genetic material; this is termed pseudogamy. (14) Many other methods, however, can be employed to stimulate cell division of an unfertilized egg. These include the use of inorganic salts, organic solvents and acids, temperature change, mechanical stimulation, and electric shock. Complete new frogs, rabbits, and sea urchins have been produced in the laboratory by these techniques. (15) One researcher cites 371 methods of inducing parthenogenesis. (16)

It may be that some spontaneous cases of parthenogenesis in mammals go undetected as such. Considerable interest in human spontaneous parthenogenesis was stirred

up in 1955 by a lecture on "Virgin Birth" given by a woman scientist, Dr. Helen Spurway, an expert in eugenics at London's University College. Subsequently, many alleged cases were investigated, but with no conclusive results. (17)

One of these was the case of Emmie Marie Jones, who had collapsed of extreme exhaustion during a heavy bombardment of Hanover, Germany, in 1944:

Although she denied any physical relations with men, she became pregnant and gave birth to a daughter, Monica. In 1955 some English scientists investigated her case and found no evidence of any differences in hereditary traits between mother and daughter. Genetically, the two appeared to be identical twins. However, a skin transplant, which is ordinarily successful between identical twins, failed to take between the two women. The result: a possibility of virgin birth, perhaps even a probability depending on how substantial you find the evidence, but not any degree of scientific certainty. (18)

When a child is examined after birth, there is no way to prove absolutely that reproduction has occurred through parthenogenesis, even if all the genetic tests confirm identity between the mother and daughter. Most women, even if unmarried, have had heterosexual relations, so there is no way to rule out absolutely the possibility of a father. There was one alleged case of virgin birth involving a five-year-old Peruvian girl who became pregnant and delivered a child, all parties claiming that she had not engaged in intercourse; however, no genetic investigation was carried out. (19) If genetic differences are discovered between mother and daughter, parthenogenesis can be ruled out; but if no genetic differences are found, the most that can exist is a possibility or probability. Even the skin graft test is not conclusive, for reasons explained in the book by Dr. David Ashley, from which I have drawn much of this material.

Since most women who bear children are married, it would probably not even occur to them that any of their children might be the result of "virgin birth"; but if some of these women are curious about the phenomenon, they may want to participate in investigation of parthenogenesis. Certainly, it seems to be a field which has been little

studied. It has been suggested by some researchers that ectopic pregnancies (in which the embryo begins to develop elsewhere than in the uterus) may be cases of parthenogenesis. There also may be some relationship between parthenogenesis and the tendency to produce identical twins.

As a result of the research carried out in laboratory parthenogenesis, some researchers became interested in the next logical step: If an egg could be stimulated to reproduce by artificial stimulation, as by pricking it with a glass needle, why couldn't this be done using the nucleus of a body cell instead of a sex cell? And so that is what they did. They removed the nucleus from an egg, then removed the nucleus from a body cell and transplanted it into the cytoplasm of the egg and stimulated it to reproduce. By this means, termed cloning, a new individual of identical genetic composition can be grown from the body cell of either a female or a male. By this means, a male can potentially father his own child without any genetic contribution from a mother. With the development of artificial wombs, he may even be able to raise it to maturity. Nonetheless, cloning still, so far, requires the use of an egg derivable only from the female. So, for the time being, it remains true that females can reproduce without males, but not vice versa.

In summary, then, we see that while methods of reproduction may vary in their details and that different species may employ a range of reproductive forms, both "sexual" and "asexual," the essence of reproduction is simple cell division. In the lower species, the mother cell simply divides into daughter cells. In the higher species which employ sexual fertilization, it is the egg, the female gamete, which carries on reproduction -- whether fertilized or not.

Remembering, then, how the paternity theory of reproduction was employed by the gentlemen I quoted at the beginning, why may not some modern-day female Aristotle arise and proclaim that woman is the prime mover, the creative force of life, while man is expendable, a drone?

Why may not some contemporary Athena proclaim: "No father gave me birth. Therefore the mother's claim and female supremacy in all things wins my whole heart's loyalty"?

Why may not some female Aquinas, equipped with the biological theory that the distinctively male Y chromosome is a degenerated X chromosome, logically write:

Man is misbegotten and defective, for the active force in the female ovum tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the feminine sex; while the production of a man comes from a defect in the active force or from some material indisposition. . .

Does this sound fantastic? Ah, but consider the opening words of the SCUM Manifesto written by Valeri Solanis, who has gone down in newspaper history as the attempted assassin of Andy Warhol:

Life in this society being, at best, an utter bore and no aspect of society being at all relevant to women, there remains to civic-minded, responsible, thrill-seeking females only to overthrow the government, eliminate the money system, institute complete automation and destroy the male sex.

It is now technically possible to reproduce without the aid of males. . .and to produce only females. We must begin immediately to do so. The male is a biological accident: the Y (male) chromosome is an incomplete X (female) chromosome, that is, has an incomplete set of genes. In other words, the male is an incomplete female, a walking abortion, aborted at the gene stage. To be male is to be deficient, emotionally limited; maleness is a deficiency disease and males are emotional cripples. . . (20)

After several thousand years of patriarchy supported by male chauvinist theory propounded from distinguished seats of learning, who can blame her for her sentiments?

QQQ  
†††

(This concludes the first part of what will ultimately be a four- or five-part paper exploring Sex as Ideology.)

QQQ  
†††

Caesar wollte mit dem Swerb regieren, doch das Messer hat ihn selbst gefällt.



In a brief article, "Dirty Words Can Harm You" -- which lesbian-feminist readers may have missed, because it appeared in Redbook (May 1974) -- Barbara Lawrence, former editor and an associate professor of humanities, took issue with the currently "in" use of obscene sex terms, on the grounds that, "In their origins and imagery these words carry undeniably painful, if not sadistic, implications, the object of which is almost always female."

She is referring to a particularly male school of "naturalist" writers, epitomized by Norman Mailer, who are regarded as "strong, earthy, gut-honest" or "rich, liberating, existential" by (probably male) critics and students. But I wonder whether some of us (lesbian-feminists) haven't been taken in, likewise, in our efforts to be "liberal" or "hip."

Ms. Lawrence points out that one problem in revealing the anti-woman nature of obscenity is that "many of the people in the best position to do this (critics, teachers, writers) are so reluctant today to admit that they are angered or shocked by obscenity. Bored, maybe, unimpressed, aesthetically displeased, but -- no matter how brutal or denigrating the material -- never angered, never shocked." Are we, as lesbian-feminists, willing to express our shock, anger, and disapproval of obscenity? Even -- or especially -- when used by women writers and artists? Or are we afraid of being accused of prudery, moral self-righteousness, or conservatism?

She concludes her article, "No one that I know, least of all my students, would fail to question the values of a society whose literature and entertainment rested heavily on racial or ethnic pejoratives. Are the values of a society whose literature and entertainment rest as heavily as ours on sexual pejoratives any less questionable?"

Hear, hear!

-- JLS

# THE FEMINIST PRESS: an annotated directory

*This directory is current as of October 1974, and lists all the feminist periodicals we know of in the U.S., as well as some English-language periodicals from other countries. Newsletters are not included unless they have a definitely more-than-local scope. We encourage feminist groups to reprint this directory, with credit given to AQ. If you know of additions or corrections, please tell us.* --Gina

AIN'T I A WOMAN? Box 1169, Iowa City, Iowa 52240. The lesbian collective that makes up the AIAW staff no longer publishes a newspaper--they are printing provocative pamphlets and booklets at irregular intervals (the latest was a new look at the issue of lesbians and childcare). Contact AIAW for prices and subjects.

AMAZING GRACE Box 6013, Tallahassee, Florida 32304. \$4/yr., \$1/copy. --a new quarterly magazine of poetry, songs, interviews, articles, photography, by Tallahassee women.

AMAZON 2211 E. Kenwood, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211. \$3/yr., \$10/inst., 35¢/copy. This monthly journal features interviews with Milwaukee women, plus fine poetry and fiction, satire and some local news.

AMAZON QUARTERLY Box 434, W. Somerville, Massachusetts 02144. \$4/yr., \$5/in sealed wrapper or outside U.S., \$6/inst., \$1/copy. --national lesbian feminist magazine with fiction, philosophy, poetry, visual art, reviews, interviews; \$\$ for contributing authors and artists. Also sponsors "Connections" newsletter for isolated sisters.

APHRA Box 893, Ansonia Station, New York City 10023. \$4.50/yr., \$1.25/copy; in Canada and Mexico--\$5/yr., \$1.50/copy; overseas--\$6/yr., \$1.75/copy; inst.--\$7.50/yr. In its 5th year of publication, Aphra is the oldest feminist literary magazine--it shows a distinct bent toward academia and heterosexual (male-identified) values, but does publish some very good (true, validating, woman-centered) fiction, poetry and essays.

AURORA 24 DeBaun Ave., Suffern, New York 10901. \$4/yr., \$8/inst., \$1/copy. --a quarterly journal of fiction, poetry, and a wide variety of thoughtful articles (the latest issue included "Feminism as Anarchism," "Women in Communes," "An Alternative to Therapy," and more).

BLACK MARIA 815 Wrightwood Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60614. \$4.50/yr., \$1.25/copy. Black Maria is publishing again after almost a year of staff reorganization--each issue has short stories, poetry,

and interviews and/or articles pointing out directions the women's movement is taking.

CHOMO-URI 506 Goodell Hall, University of Mass., Amherst, MA 01002. \$4/3 issues, \$1.50/copy. --a new magazine of women's writing and visual art, published by the Feminist Arts Program of Everywoman's Center.

COUNTRY WOMEN Box 51, Albion, California 95410. \$4/yr. (6 issues), \$7/inst., 75¢/copy. Each issue of this fine magazine has articles, personal views and experiences, photographs and letters, organized around a theme (recent ones have been Older Women, Spirituality, Structures, The Women's Movement in the Country, Children's Liberation)--along with a large section of practical information (bee-keeping, barn-building, self-defense, tips on chicken feed and goats, etc.)

DESPERATE LIVING Box 7124, Baltimore, Maryland 21218. \$3/6 issues in plain wrapper. --a newsletter published by Baltimore lesbians.

DETROIT WOMEN'S PRESS Box 27004, Detroit, Michigan 48227. \$4/yr., 25¢/copy. --a monthly newspaper with sketchy news coverage, lots of personal views and reviews, and interesting interviews with community women (a recent issue had one interview with a local midwife and one with a Detroit woman wrestler). Lesbians don't seem to exist in this publication.

DISTAFF Box 15639, New Orleans, Louisiana 70175. \$3/yr. Distaff is a monthly paper providing thorough coverage of women in Louisiana politics, women's health issues and information on the women's movement in the South. One article each issue is printed in Spanish.

FEMINIST ART JOURNAL 41 Montgomery Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215. \$4/yr., \$5/inst., \$1/copy. The Feminist Art Journal is a valuable resource in bringing to print the lives of many unknown women artists--coverage of current events, though, tends to be reaction to the male art establishment more than attention to women's alternative structures.

FEMINIST STUDIES 417 Riverside Dr., New York City 10025. \$6/yr. --a quarterly journal of academic papers relating to feminism.

FOCUS 419 Boylston St., Rm. 406, Boston, Massachusetts 02116. --news and poetry published monthly by Boston Daughters of Bilitis.

GRAVIDA Box 76, Hartsdale, New York 10530. \$3/yr., \$5/2 yrs. --a quarterly poetry magazine published by the Women's Poetry Collective of Westchester County, N.Y.

HER-SELF 225 E. Liberty St., Suite 200, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108. \$5/yr., \$10/inst. --a monthly newspaper for Ann Arbor area women.

LAVENDER WOMAN Box 60206, Chicago, Illinois 60660. \$4/yr. (6 is-

sues), \$8/inst., 65¢/copy. Lavender Woman is a lesbian/feminist newspaper, now in its 3rd year, growing out of Chicago but now including all the Midwest in its scope. Each issue contains 1st-hand reports on midwest lesbian events, news and comments on national issues as well as Chicago information, music and book reviews, poetry.

LESBIAN CONNECTION c/o Ambitious Amazons, Box 811, E. Lansing, MI 48823. Free subscriptions. --a new continent-wide newsletter, for, by and about lesbians, Lesbian Connection promises to provide a great improvement to the grapevine--send your news and ideas.

THE LESBIAN TIDE 373 N. Western, Rm. 202, Los Angeles, CA 90004 \$7.50/yr., \$10/inst., 65¢/copy. --monthly magazine with news and views of lesbians in the Los Angeles area, and some national news as well--also poetry, occasional fiction, humor.

LESBIAN VISIONS c/o the Lesbian Collective, Box 8265, Stanford, California 94305. Free. --Palo Alto area lesbian newsletter.

LIBERA Eshleman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. \$1.50/copy--no subscriptions. --an irregularly published journal of women's writing and art.

MAJORITY REPORT 74 Grove St., New York City 10014. \$5/yr., 25¢/copy. --a bi-weekly newspaper primarily covering events and news of interest to N.Y.C. area women.

MARIN WOMEN'S NEWS JOURNAL Box 1412, San Rafael, CA 94902. \$4/yr. --a monthly offering of news, reviews, etc. by Marin County women--with a decidedly heterosexual emphasis.

MEDIA REPORT TO WOMEN 3306 Ross Pl. NW, Washington, D.C. 20008. \$10/yr., \$15/yr. for men and inst. --a monthly newsletter of "what women are doing and thinking about the communications media" --focuses more often on women in male-controlled media than on women's alternatives.

MOMMA Box 567, Venice, California 90291. \$3/yr., \$4/inst. --a monthly newspaper for single mothers--heterosexual orientation.

OFF OUR BACKS 1724 20th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. \$6/yr., \$7/Canada, \$13/overseas, \$15/inst., 45¢/copy. One of the oldest feminist newspapers still publishing, off our backs provides thorough and honest coverage of national feminist issues and events--a good example of the beginnings of a distinctly feminist journalism.

PAID MY DUES c/o Woman's Soul Publishing, Inc., Box 5476, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211. \$4/yr. in U.S., \$4.50/beyond. --a quarterly magazine of songs, musical herstory, news and articles on women in music.

PLEXUS Box 3119, S. Berkeley Station, Berkeley, CA 94703. \$5/yr., \$2.50/6 months, 50¢/copy. This Bay Area newspaper carries a fine

cultural-political blend of news, reviews, articles, poetry--gives an accurate and exciting sense of the many alternative structures--music, businesses, healing arts, etc.--that women in Northern California are developing.

PRIME TIME 232 E. 6th St., Apt. 5C, New York City 10003. \$5/12 issues, 50¢/copy. --monthly newspaper by and for older women.

QUEST Box 8843, Washington, D.C. 20003. \$7/yr., \$12/inst., \$8/Canada and Mexico, \$10/overseas, \$2/copy. --a new quarterly journal of political analysis; emphasizes the (questionable) value of building formal structures and hierarchies, and official ideological positions, within the women's movement.

THE SECOND WAVE Box 344, Cambridge A, Cambridge, Mass. 02139. \$3/yr., add 50¢ outside U.S. and \$4.50 airmail overseas, \$1/copy. The Second Wave publishes consistently intriguing and informative topical articles, as well as fiction and poetry, for a national audience. It's an especially good magazine for women just coming to feminism as it gives an overview of general feminist issues.

SISTER Box 597, Venice, California 90291. \$5/yr., \$12/inst., 35¢/copy. Sister newspaper is published monthly by the Los Angeles Women's Center, and includes national as well as local news of the women's movement, reviews and general articles, most written with awareness of lesbianism as an integral part of feminism.

SISTERS 1005 Market St., Suite 402, San Francisco, CA 94101. \$5/yr., 50¢/copy. Sisters is the monthly magazine of San Francisco Daughters of Bilitis. They print articles, poetry and reviews by their members and other area women, as well as some local news and a calendar of events.

SO'S YOUR OLD LADY c/o Lesbian Resource Center, 710 W. 22nd St., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55405. \$4.50/yr., 75¢/copy. --poetry and commentary by Minneapolis lesbians.

THE SPOKESWOMAN 5464 S. Shore Dr., Chicago, Illinois 60615. \$7/yr., \$12/inst. --monthly newsletter focused mainly on national legislative issues and opportunities for women in business.

THE SPORTSWOMAN Box 7771, Long Beach, California 90807. \$3/yr. --quarterly magazine about women athletes.

THIRTEENTH MOON Writing Organization for Women, Rm. 152, Finley Hall, City College of N.Y., 138th St. and Convent Ave., New York City 10031. \$2.50/yr., \$3/foreign, \$1.25/copy. "13th Moon is a women's literary magazine publishing work by women--whoever and whatever those women choose to be. We hope that by making conscious the special relationship women have to themselves and to the world we will discover literature that is unique, that is female, that is ours." --embissert, editor.

TRIPLE JEOPARDY from Third World Women's Alliance, 26 W. 20th St., New York City 10011. \$3.50/yr., \$8/inst., \$2.50 additional out-

side U.S., 30¢/copy. --a bi-monthly paper with news by and about Third World women's struggles around the world--some articles in Spanish.

UNION W.A.G.E. 2137 Oregon St., Berkely, CA 94705. \$2/yr., \$5/inst., 25¢/copy. --monthly newspaper of Union Women's Alliance to Gain Equality.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PAPERS IN WOMEN'S STUDIES Women's Studies Program, 1058 LSA Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. \$8/yr., \$15/inst., \$2.25/copy. --a quarterly selection (about 175 pages) of academic papers by women and about feminism, in areas from sociology to herstory to science to art.

UP FROM UNDER 339 Lafayette St., New York City 10012. \$3/5 issues, \$5/inst., 60¢/copy. --a quarterly magazine of practical articles, letters and personal accounts of work, poverty, racism, in women's lives.

US (UNITED SISTERS) 4213 W. Bay Ave., Tampa, Florida 33616. Us has changed from a monthly magazine format to an irregularly timed variety of publications. For 1974 they offer The Odyssey of Katinou Kalokovich, a novel by Natalie Petesch (\$3.95), The Best of Us, a collection of poetry (\$1.50), "Motherhood, a Tribute and an Expose" (75¢), and "Rape, Guilt, and the American Way" (\$1). United Sisters also runs a typesetting service.

WOMAN BECOMING 6664 Woodwell St., Pittsburgh, Penn. 15217. \$1.25/copy. --a semi-annual feminist literary journal with poetry, fiction, drawings, occasional non-fiction, by women of Pittsburgh.

WOMANSPRIT Box 263, Wolf Creek, Oregon 97497. \$6/yr., \$7/Canada, \$10/overseas and inst., \$2/copy. WomanSpirit is a new quarterly magazine of women's spiritual explorations. The 1st issue (Fall Equinox 1974) contains poems, stories, personal accounts, journals, letters, drawings and visions from more than 40 women.

WOMEN: A JOURNAL OF LIBERATION 3028 Greenmount Ave., Baltimore, Maryland 21218. \$4/4 issues, \$6/Canada, \$7/overseas, \$10/inst., \$1.25/copy. One of the oldest feminist magazines, Women: a Journal has lost some momentum and is currently publishing at a rate of a new issue every 6 to 10 months. Each issue has a theme, the most recent one being "International Women" (vol.3 #4). The current issue presents women in different parts of the world in the context of national liberation struggles rather than in the context of a feminist movement--a direction that's followed every issue.

WOMEN AND FILM Box 4501, Berkeley, CA 94704. \$3/yr., \$5.50/inst., \$3.50/yr. outside U.S., \$6/inst. outside U.S. --seldom published (the last 2 issues have been double ones, \$1.50 each) but packed full when it does appear with interviews, criticism, analysis and reviews on feminist films and filmmakers throughout the world. (Some editors and contributing authors are men.)

WOMEN'S FREE EXPRESS 1929 21st Ave. S., Nashville, Tennessee 37212.

\$5/12 issues, 50¢/copy. Each issue of this magazine has reviews, poems and articles around a theme (the August-September issue's was "Women and Religion") as well as lots of information for women in the Nashville area.

WOMEN'S PRESS Box 562, Eugene, Oregon 97401. \$3/yr., \$3.50/Canada, \$4/other foreign, \$7/inst., 25¢/copy. --news of women's events and concerns in Eugene and the Northwest, along with poetry, reviews, personal experiences, interviews, etc., every month. Momma, a novel by Alta, is carried in the paper serially (now in its 7th installment).

WOMEN STUDIES ABSTRACTS Box 1, Rush, N.Y. 14543. \$7/yr., \$12/inst., \$3/copy. --a quarterly compilation of abstracts of articles about women from journals of history, psychology, sociology, etc. and an occasional feminist publication--a useful resource for libraries.

WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWSLETTER from The Feminist Press, Box 334, Old Westbury, N.Y. 11568. \$5/yr. --quarterly newsletter of current developments in women's studies courses and programs.

WOMEN WRITING c/o Polly Joan, Dandelion Hill, Newfield, N.Y. 14867. Women Writing is a newsletter grown out of the 1st National Women's Poetry Festival held this spring in Amherst, Mass. Though still in planning now, the newsletter is meant to become a national "clearinghouse of support and information for women who are writing."

#### ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PERIODICALS OUTSIDE THE U.S.:

BROADSHEET 48 St. Andrews Rd., Epsom, Auckland 3, New Zealand. \$4/yr. --monthly feminist magazine.

THE CIRCLE Box 427, Waterloo Quay, Wellington, New Zealand. \$4/yr. --lesbian/feminist magazine.

THE OTHER WOMAN Box 928, Station Q, Toronto 7, Ontario, Canada. \$2/yr., \$3/U.S., \$10/inst., \$12/U.S. inst. --bi-monthly feminist newspaper.

REFRACTORY GIRL 25 Alberta St., Sydney, New South Wales 2001, Australia. \$3.50/yr. overseas, \$7/overseas air mail. --feminist quarterly.

SHREW 38 Earlham St., London, W.C. 2, England. --newspaper.

VASHTI'S VOICE 16 Little La Trobe St., Melbourne 3000, Victoria, Australia. \$2/yr. --bi-monthly newspaper.

WOMEN CAN. 804 Richards, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. \$3/yr., \$3.50/U.S. (in Canadian funds), \$4/overseas, \$10/inst. --Canada's oldest feminist newspaper (formerly called The Pedestal).

WOMEN'S LIBERATION REVIEW 14 Argyll Mansions, London, W.14, Eng. --erratically published journal. 26

When I'am alone

I am a Lesbian.

When I'am with my friends

I am a Lesbian.

When I'am at the ocean or mountains

I am a Lesbian.

When I'am at the bars

I am a Lesbian.

When I'am at work

I am a

I am a

When I'am alone

I am a Lesbian.

When I'am with. . .

-- Ruth Hodsdon

## Lesbian Blessing

May you never lead  
the life I've led

May you have the vision  
to see the wrong in this man's world

May you have the wisdom  
to plan a future  
as you know it should be

May you have the strength  
to fight your oppressors  
both male and female

And be a Lesbian  
eternally free!

-- Ruth Hodsdon

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