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Sept. 1975

MS. ATLAS IS NOT SHRUGGING !!!!

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R. Nichols
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Sappho Was Not Closet

Amazons cannot hide in closets
because their shoulders are so strong & broad
they keep crashing through the sides
exposing spike nails to slash anyone
who tries to shove them back in.

Amazons cannot hide in closets
because their minds always crunch
at least six feet through the ceilings
to stand there

consciousness akimbo
staring down the world.

Amazons cannot hide in closets
because closets are too tight
closets have sharp seams that pinch
& leave corns on the consciousness.

Amazons cannot hide in closets
because
because
because it is unnatural.

-- Julie Simmons



Editorial:

Ms. Atlas Is Not Shrugging

In the August 1975 issue of THE WOMEN'S NEWS JOURNAL, under the heading "NOW NEWS," the following item appeared:

OUR LAST MEETING WAS A DISASTER. We had sent out about 150 letters to every women's group in Marin, asking them to attend a planning session for Alice Doesn't Day. Not one group was represented. We take this to mean total nonsupport of National Women's Strike Day by the women of Marin. We would like some feedback on this. There is no way that Marin NOW can organize a successful Alice Doesn't Day alone. We need other women and organizations.

I do not live in Marin County, and I am not a member of NOW; but I can give some feedback as to why I do not support "Alice Doesn't Day." I speak only for myself, although I know a number of women who agree with me. However, in this, as in every issue, let each woman act as an autonomous individual and make up her own independent mind which ideas, images, and actions to support.

When Women's Strike Day was first announced by the State Coordinator of NOW in San Jose, the following memorandum was released:

At the CR Conference held in San Francisco on April 4-6, many leaders got together to go over the NOW goals and objectives and the realistic prognosis concerning the success of achieving these goals and objectives. Is reform of the system possible when the system that continually ignores and suppresses women fails to recognize the support of that system that women give to it? Woman holds up her sky and everyone else's. It was decided that women should not support the system for a day and impress the system with the lack of their support. Women should go on STRIKE. We would show on one mighty day how much women do to support the system of oppression. . .

MS. ATLAS IS SHRUGGING! Women will walk off the job; be non-supportive in all areas of business, government, schools and churches and in the home. This includes economic withdrawal wherein not one penny will be spent in support of the system through the financial and market system, political withdrawal of the support financially and voluntarily to candidates other than those who are women or women issue-oriented, and socially including volunteerism across the line. Mothers will leave the home and children to Fathers whether they are in the home or in the office, and volunteers will demand pay for their work. Women across the nation in NOW, coalition women's organizations and in every strata of American life are to walk out on those males who continually and arrogantly seek to "keep a woman in her place" and who further demand and get our support of their system. . .

OBJECT: TO IMPRESS THE SYSTEM THAT WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF WOMEN THE SYSTEM WILL COME TO A HALT. . .

Atlas, it was explained at the NOW meeting, was the Titan who, in Greek mythology, was condemned:

To bear on his back forever
The cruel strength of the crushing world
And the vault of the sky.
Upon his shoulders the great pillar
That holds apart the earth and heaven,
A load not easy to be borne.*

The reference to Ayn Rand's ATLAS SHRUGGED, which portrays predominantly male heroism, did not escape me and was acknowledged to be a source of the idea for the "Ms. Atlas Is Shrugging" motto for Women's Strike Day. I was delighted, as were my associates who attended the meeting with me. Here was a golden opportunity to refute, in concrete terms, male-gua-male hero-worship and to claim for the female sex her rightful due as productive human being. How better to impress upon the system the unacknowledged contributions and unappreciated work of countless women than by stopping production for one day?

I immediately began to make plans for featuring the Women's Strike in this issue of LESBIAN VOICES and for supporting and cooperating with the NOW project in whatever way I could. My friend, who is a businesswoman, planned not only to stay home from work herself on Strike Day, but also to intervene with her company (a large corporation) in behalf of any of the forty-five women under her supervision who chose to honor the Strike; in addition, she planned to sell her stock, absorbing a loss of perhaps several hundred dollars. Ah, misplaced enthusiasm! Other friends were excited about the Strike and what it could represent to productive women.

Weeks later, after having publicized the Strike to friends in various parts of the country, I learned that the meaning and image of Women's Strike Day had been changed. The "Ms. Atlas Is Shrugging" banner had been torn down and scrapped, to be replaced with one reading "Alice Doesn't!" Promotional leaflets put out recently by NOW exhort: "Be Alice!"

"My goddess," I groaned, "what self-respecting woman in her right mind would want to be Alice?"

For those of you who haven't seen or read "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore," the obvious source of the slogan, I will attempt a synopsis:

The story begins with a brief prologue set in Monterey, 1949. Ten-year-old Alice, carrying a half-grown chicken in her arms, attempts to sing an old Alice Faye song (remember Phil Harris and Alice Faye?), swears she's going to be a singer when she grows up, and (to impress us with the depth of her feeling, strength of commitment, height of aspiration) adds, "And if anybody doesn't like it, they can blow it out their ass." This sets the tone for the rest of the play.

The next scene opens in Oklahoma, twenty-five years later, where Alice lives with her Coca-Cola truck-driver husband Don and their obnoxious twelve-year-old son Tom. Alice, we learn, gave up her

brief stint as a singer when she married Don. She married him, says the book, because he had on a Navy uniform -- this was changed in the movie to "because he was a good kisser." Two good reasons to give up a career.

Alice is unhappy in her marriage and teams up with her son to commiserate about their mutual hardships living with Don. Of course, neither one would think of leaving Don because he is supporting them, and to leave would mean to have to be self-supporting and independent. Soon, however, Don gets himself killed in a truck accident, thus chivalrously sparing Alice the responsibility of having to make a decision about her life with Don. Alice and son "shared a secret smile" at the funeral and hit the road for Monterey, where Alice wants to resume her singing career and put son Tom in school.

After a horribly boring trip to New Mexico, Alice decides to stop and look for a job. After some verbal buffeting from crude males in cheap dives, Alice breaks down and cries upon the sympathetic shoulder of a kindly bar-owner, who thereupon hires her to sing. (Ah, ability triumphs!) Three weeks later, Alice is so intent upon her singing career that she lets herself be picked up by a smiling honkie, with whom she makes out in her car, graduating to a motel room, where, the book tells us, Alice makes "noises she'd never made in her life" and discovers her "toes curling involuntarily" -- a good lay, apparently -- "she just absolutely loved the hell out of it." The only fly in the ointment, it turns out, is that there is a Mrs. Honkie, who comes to plead with Alice in behalf of her little ear-infected boy who needs Mr. Honkie's paycheck for medical treatment. Mr. Honkie shows up in the middle of the scene and, insanely furious, literally kicks his wife's ass out the door. For some reason, this earthy mixture of pathos and drama scares the hell out of Alice, who grabs her son and belongings and splits -- without, incidentally, cleaning up any of the damage to her rented rooms and without notifying her employer that she's leaving. (And they say Lesbians are unstable and irresponsible?)

Next, Alice stops in Arizona, where she resorts (oh, mercy, poor Alice) to taking a job as a "frigging waitress" at Mel and Ruby's Cafe, an eating establishment where owner and employee pass the time by yelling obscenities at each other for the entertainment and enlightenment of the patrons. Alice, we're supposed to believe, is too "prissy" for this atmosphere, but she soon settles in comfortably. She has to settle in, for the sake of the plot -- how else is she going to meet David? But we'll come back to David.

What has son Tom been doing in the meanwhile? Poor uprooted Tom, he's bored, b-o-r-e-d, BORED. Alice tells him to "go play with the Indians," but mostly, he spends his time whining, nagging, casting doubts and aspersions on Alice's plans and intelligence, telling dirty jokes, making wisecracks, acting "cute," jumping up and down on the motel sofa, making obscene phone calls to random women, and humping his pillow, according to the book. Alice, in desperation, buys him a rather expensive guitar which she can't afford and which entertains him for all of three days before he is again bored and demanding to be entertained. Tom strikes it rich in Arizona, however -- he gets into a guitar class where he

* Edith Hamilton: Mythology, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1942, p. 82.

meets a hippie girl named Audrey, with whom he teams up to persecute the "fruit teacher" who is described as "fiftyish, epicene, and balding" and has "an irritating, mincing way of speaking." Tom and Audrey, who are obviously not interested in learning how to play the guitar, sit in the back row every day "sniggering, making filthy observations about what Mr. Martin's sex life could possibly consist of." And in case our noble young heterosexuals don't make their point about the guitar teacher, the author later throws in some comments about "Mr. Emmet, the science teacher" who "wears a hairnet" and is "weird" and "scary." Tom and Audrey, of course, are not irritating, weird, or scary at all -- they're just good, normal, healthy kids who don't have anything better to do, being left to their own non-existent resources. They solve their problem by taking up shoplifting and getting drunk on Ripple.

Alice, who also gets bored, is equally ingenious. She and son Tom entertain themselves by pouring Coke and water all over each other and, incidentally, all over their motel room, leaving permanent stains on the sofa.

Alice's other entertainment consists of David, who picks her up at the cafe in about her third week of work. David, not so incidentally, is the only halfway decent character in the whole story. (Perhaps the author intended David to be a self-complimentary portrait of himself?) David, whose wife has left him two years before, has "never laid a hand on another woman. . . since." David is a farmer, a hard worker, a man of perseverance, purpose, and self-discipline. In addition, David doesn't like crude language and loud rock music (I'm with you, David).

David's the only one, male or female, in the story that's doing anything constructive, has anything that he's really committed to -- he's worked six years to get his farmland, and he loves it. He tries to share the joys of farming with Tom, who pretends to be interested, but Tom has no real respect for farming (or any other kind of work) and only wants to fool around. This makes David mad. Alice, on the other hand, likes farming a little better and shows it by getting into bed with David one day after he pulls a little lost calf out of the mud. Having had sex with him, she feels a surge of "love" which she attributes to "the fact that he had tried to hide a slight puffiness at his waist as they lay there," thus making him seem "vulnerable" and therefore, I suppose, "human" in the naturalist sense of the word.

Tension builds up between David and Tom, since Tom doesn't always get his way. At his thirteenth birthday party, Tom, in a petulant fit of boredom, picks a fight with David, which culminates when Tom throws an empty box at David's face and gets a well-deserved smack in retaliation. Alice, in the manner of all good progressive mothers of unmannerly brats, jumps to Tom's defense and lashes out at David. Alice and David have a fight and separate.

Next day at work, Alice has to have a good cry, so her friend and co-worker Flo takes her off to the ladies' room, leaving the one remaining waitress to handle the whole cafe full of morning rush-hour customers. (Remember that next time you have to wait half an hour for your order. And remember it when you read about an expensive restaurant that hires only waiters.) In the bathroom, Alice sobs out

all her problems to Flo, and both women agree that they just "can't live without a man," which was probably supposed to be the moral of the story, only it didn't come at the end.

David, in the wind-up of the story, is duly humbled by Alice's absence of a week and has to say "please" in front of her customers and co-workers to get her back. In the movie version, he even offers to take her to Monterey himself, adding that he doesn't give a damn about his farm, a statement which immediately plummeted him in my estimation. In the final chapter of the book, however, Alice decides to stay in Arizona, probably will marry David, and "maybe" will "get a job singing on weekends." This satisfies son Tom, who for some inexplicable reason is anxious to get into school somewhere, although he has shown no interest or promise whatsoever for any kind of learning.

Alice, having made her decision, is so overjoyed that she says to herself, "Oh, well, I don't care. I just can't help it. . . it's a place, anyway. It's a place." And that is the note on which the book closes.

Why did NOW choose "Alice Doesn't" to replace "Ms. Atlas Is Shrugging" as their slogan for Strike Day? I wrote a letter to the State Coordinator of NOW asking for an explanation, but received no reply.

It may be that NOW selected the "Alice Doesn't" slogan because of the rave reviews of the movie in various women's publications. MS. magazine, in a review by Susan Braudy, acclaimed it as "a damn good documentary-style movie about the conflicts of today's woman. . . a movie that feels as though it was made for us." US? WHOM? Speak for yourself, Ms. Braudy. I can't identify with anything in it. As a friend of mine said when leaving the theater, "My goodness, if that is what these women aspire to, where on earth are they coming from?"

It should be added, I suppose, that MS. magazine frequently comes up with little quirks in their material -- like the February 1975 issue, which contained an article on "Women in Film" entitled "Saving an Endangered Species; dealing in part with the lack of prominence of women writers, producers, and directors in the film industry, which they ran in the same issue with a movie review by Marjorie Rosen stating that "'A Woman Under the Influence' solidly establishes John Cassavetes as America's major 'woman's director,' in the finest sense." (Huh?)

I am not one of those who would add fuel to the Redstockings' fire, but it may or may not be relevant that "Alice Doesn't" is distributed by Warner Brothers. It might help explain how the MS. reviewer can call it "our movie."

At any rate, among the things which NOW literature urges women NOT to do on Women's Strike Day are to "support the image of women promoted by the media" (Alice "demands EQUAL TIME for, by and about women and supports only feminists in the arts and media on Strike Day") and to "support male egos on Strike Day socially, economically, politically." Well, what could be more supporting to the male ego than striking under a MALE-derived slogan and MALE-created image -- the image of "Alice"? "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" was WRITTEN BY A MAN (Robert Getchell), PRODUCED BY A MAN (David Susskind Productions), and DIRECTED BY A MAN (Martin Scorsese). The MS. review tells us that

Ellen Burstyn "did consider Barbara Loden" for the director's spot, but passed her over in favor of Martin Scorsese, on the basis of his reputation for portraying the macho Sicilian brotherhood in "Mean Streets."

In keeping with the image of the female projected by its male author, "Alice Doesn't" is an appropriate slogan. In the movie and book, ALICE DOESN'T

- ? think for herself
- ? pursue her career
- ? set a good example for her son (or anyone else)
- ? stand up for herself against her husband
- ? make her own decisions
- ? live by her own standards
- ? assert herself as a mature adult
- ? get a job on her own merits
- ? have an affair of her own choosing, rather than be "snowed" into it by transparent male ploys
- ? show courage in the face of adversity
- ? fight back
- ? take pride in her work
- ? have any enduring sense of purpose
- ? show any loyalty toward the men she supposedly "loves"
- ? know what she wants
- ? show any loyalty to herself
- ? show any responsibility on her jobs
- ? show any ability to set her own priorities
- ? achieve independence as a separate human being
- ? show any respect for others as separate human beings
- ? achieve control of her own destiny
- ? care what happens

In truth, ALICE DOESN'T do much of anything or become much of anything. She is merely an appendage to the males in her life, and particularly to her son, who knows it. She is ruled by the will of others and by her own abysmal state of indecision.

Can it be this very non-personhood that has made "Alice Doesn't" so popular in the women's movement and has prompted NOW to urge women to "Be Alice"?

I hate to think so.

But, if that is the case and if these women do identify with Alice, let me be the first to say, they can have it. As a NOW woman said to me, "We can't all be heroines." Let me accept the Alices of the world as living proof

of her statement.

But -- we aren't all Alices either:

Those of us who are Lesbians know that, unlike Alice, we can (and do) "live without a man." I, for one, will not be duped, in the name of unity and sisterhood, into underwriting the old myth that men are indispensable to female happiness. Nor will I, as a Lesbian, join straight "sisters" in endorsing and publicizing a novel containing anti-gay slurs. Let me be the first to say that the women of NOW have a right to their opinions and even a right to exclude Lesbians from their organization, if they so choose. That is freedom. They should not, however, misrepresent themselves as being the National Organization of Women when, in fact, they represent the interests of only some women. As Sojourner Truth truly said, "Ain't I a woman?" I feel that the least that NOW can do if they are going to continue ignoring Lesbian interests and viewpoints is change their name to the NOSW -- National Organization of Straight Women.

Those of us, either straight or gay, who had enough self-esteem as children to take our dreams and ambitions seriously and to pursue them -- those of us, also, who had childhood dreams but have faltered and become confused by society's pressures and are desperately trying to regain a grip on our lives -- and those of us, also, of the feminist past who have gone down fighting for a place in this "man's world" -- we have known that the answer to our questions is not "I don't care, I just can't help it." We do care, and we must help it!

Those of us, in short, who do have a sense of purpose, who do make decisions, who do want to set our own standards and assert ourselves, who do want to pursue a career and earn a sense of pride in our work, who do feel a loyalty to ourselves and to other women like us -- those of us who do have courage, who do want to fight back, who do have ability, who do want to control our own destinies -- those of us who have accepted responsibility for our own lives and have taken the weight of the world on our shoulders in an effort to achieve our dreams and to create a new, free reality -- we who DO cannot identify with Alice DOESN'T!

As I said in the beginning, the choice is up to you.

I feel that there is no room for Ms. Atlas in the Women's Strike Day. She can't put herself in Alice's place. It isn't big enough. But if "Alice Doesn't" suits you, you're welcome to it.

On "Strike Day," I intend to go about my business and DO what I normally DO: Work, study, think, write, listen to music, answer correspondence, run Ms. Press, talk, and share love and laughter with my feminist "family" here at our budding Lesbian Nation.

I would enjoy hearing from women who plan to do likewise.

Ms. Atlas Is Not Shrugging

-- Rosalie Nichols

WOMEN'S FESTIVAL
June 15, 1975

Photos by ANN FRIAUF



awakening to our daydream

by Barbara Waters

The store happened because Marsha and I never stopped daydreaming. Every so often at school, we'd talk about how nice it would be if there were a women's bookstore in San Jose. "It's so hard to get up to Palo Alto more than a couple of times a semester." "You'd think in a city the size of San Jose, somebody would have started one by now." "We'll probably have to do it ourselves." Having our own bookstore was one of those fantasies we'd both had since we were kids and it was fun reviving it, but we knew it was totally impractical -- we could never really do it. We had only \$500 between us and had never even worked in a bookstore. Still, it was fun to daydream. . .

We started driving around, looking for places to rent. The ones we found were either too expensive, too far from school, or just not suitable for a bookstore. Then, one day Marsha found it -- a tiny little shop in the Thrift Village Shopping Center. It was only six blocks from school, fairly inexpensive and, best of all, we didn't have to sign a lease. "We could just pay for this month and see how it goes." "It's so tiny. . . but then, I guess we won't have many books to start with. Let's do it."

We paid our first month's rent, got our keys and went inside our store. It had been a novelty shop called Fritz' Palace. All we knew about Fritz was that he had horrible taste -- hideous green flocked wallpaper covered most of the walls, accented by a pink telephone. We knew that would have to go. The next evening after school and after work, we started planning and making lists of things to do. We'd have to call the phone company, utilities, City of San Jose to get a business license, open a bank account, go to State Board of Equalization to get a resale number for sales tax, peel wallpaper, buy paint, write to publishers and ask them how to order books from them, think of a name for the store, get a sign painted, get shelves and bookcases, build a counter, send out a letter announcing our opening, and, if there was time, do our homework. A vaporizer and a teakettle worked to loosen the wallpaper, but it took much longer than we thought it would. We wanted to be open by December 1st, two weeks after we rented the place, but even with staying up all night three nights a week, it looked as if we'd have to hold our open house on the 9th.

We abandoned our plans to write to publishers and phoned them instead. In about a week, the catalogues started coming, and it was Christmas every time the mail came. Those publishers took us seriously! Real catalogues, new ones, smelling of ink and glue -- we took turns opening and reading them. The store was beginning to be real.

Every day those three weeks we went to school, went to work, came to the store, worked till Marsha had to go home to cook dinner and get the kids to bed, take a break for an hour or two to do essential homework, get back to work painting and peeling wallpaper, sometimes until one or two in the morning, but often till the next day when it was time to go to school again. One day when we were wondering how we were ever going to finish in time, one of the barbers from the shopping center poked his head in and smiled condescendingly, "You really think you're going to finish by the 9th?" And that was all the incentive we needed that day. Of course, we were going to do it!

Some nights were Chinese food nights, when we hadn't eaten since lunch and it was 1:00 a.m. and we needed real food. Other times it was coffee and chocolate brownies from Seven-Eleven. Thanksgiving morning, 3:00 a.m., we split a whole pumpkin pie. Not just any pumpkin pie, though. This one was special. It was cut with a paint scraper, served on wallpaper plates, and eaten with

screwdriver forks. Delicious. We were able to work till morning.

One problem was solved when we found out that there was a distributor in Berkeley where we could get our books and we wouldn't have to wait for shipments from the East. So with our last \$200, we went to Bookpeople and knew right away that going there was going to be one of the nicest things about running a bookstore. We stayed all day, reading and wondering which books to get. Finally, after spending all our money, we brought our four boxes of books back to San Jose and the store was more than a daydream, more than "one of those things we've always wanted to do."

Open house day came, and to the barber's disappointment, we were ready and it was perfect. We managed to be open every day. One of us would be at the store while the other was either at school or at work. Jobs were shared. Marsha did the bookkeeping and I did the inventory. We knew that most businesses take a loss the first year, so we planned to put money into the store every month until it was self-supporting. With this money, we were able to keep buying new books until it looked as if we were going to need more space. Just before semester break, Marsha found a bigger, cheaper place, closer to school and more accessible. So, the all-night painting and building began again, and when we were finished, we vowed we'd never move again.

We had had a lot of energy that first month, much of which came from women who were "so glad to find a bookstore like this." Hostile neighbors drained a lot of that energy, though, and so did women who couldn't understand why we didn't have every book they wanted. "This is a feminist bookstore, isn't it?"

School took more time that second semester and so did the store, and by the time finals came, we were exhausted and were seriously considering selling the store. We got through those two weeks, summer came, and we only had to deal with the store and our jobs. I don't know how it will go when school starts again, but whatever happens, the store has taught me that there's no reason women can't do what we really want to do.

We need to take our daydreams seriously.



PHOTO BY PEG MORRIS



PHOTO BY PEG MORRIS

Barbara Waters and Marsha Martinez are co-owners of the Awakening Bookstore, (469 So. Bascom, San Jose. This article was written at LESBIAN VOICES' request.)

Drawing



by Tee Corinne

Weaving as Woman's Heritage

Weaving is an expression of the senses. It is an ancient art handed down to us through the swift and agile fingers of many women intent on providing primarily warmth for their bodies and gradually discovering shapes, lines, and colors more pleasing to the touch and eye.

By the time woman learned to spin flax into linen she was a gathering connoisseur of wild nuts, roots and berries. It must have been she who discovered the first natural dye -- perhaps a purple berry stain on her shirt. What a wonderful experience to know one could duplicate the colors of the world on a piece of white cloth!

Our heritage as women is rich in aesthetics cultivated through centuries of inquisitive women who experimented in every part of the world with whatever natural resources were available to them -- in the Andes, the long luxurious wool of the Alpaca; in Ancient Egypt, linen from the stalks of flax that even now resists the wear and tear of centuries, as evidenced in the ancient remains of Royalty in museums. In our own Southwest, the Navaho woman continues to spin and weave from the fleece of sheep that graze on her own land as she did a hundred years ago.



PHOTO BY PEG MORRIS

Everything that surrounds us has some effect on our visual and tactile centers. Touch, color, and smell work into our psyches, consciously or subconsciously creating varying sensations of pleasurable or unpleasurable emotions. It is not by mere chance that we select certain textures, forms and colors over others.



PHOTO BY PEG MORRIS

Weaving creates an opportunity to visualize the feel of ancient fingers and eyes adept and perceptive in the art.

As a weaver, I too hope to explore ancient and contemporary methods of the art with other women and create an appreciation for an important part of our heritage that we don't often remember we possess.

-- Frances Perea

(Editor's Note: Ms. Perea has recently gone full time into weaving, with the opening of her own enterprise "The Weaver's Hut" in San Jose, (408) 294-0304. This short article was written in response to LESBIAN VOICES' request to tell us something about her work. We wish her happiness and success in her work!)

A Letter Home 1975

by Puck&Crim

Dear Mom,

On Sunday, I had an experience unmatched in my life as a lesbian. In a purely spontaneous decision, six other women and I went to march in the Gay Pride Day Parade in San Francisco. (It commemorates the Stonewall Uprising in New York in 1969.) So there was little me, one foot still in the closet, attempting to drag the other out, and scared out of my britches. It was something I wanted to do, but all the while I fought the usual paranoia: What if someone from work sees me? What if we end up on TV? But I did it. . .



PHOTO BY PEG MORRIS

As we walked down the street toward the corner of Pine & Montgomery, hundreds of people were milling all around. Then a ROAR echoed through the buildings of the financial district, causing us to run like hell toward the source. When I hit the infamous corner, I saw a row of people packed from sidewalk to sidewalk, clutching a huge lavender banner. "Gay Pride Day" it read. We all looked at each other and grinned, "Well, here we are!"

Now was the time for the knees to begin shaking, but we soon became caught up in the already growing "high". . . and in awe of the mass of people, fear left us. For as many blocks as I could see, there were people: men, women, children, and dogs in a variety of attire like I'd never seen in one place.

There were the "Dykes" from Petaluma, a little fuzzy lavender dog named Vincent, drag queens of every description, drums, banners, and homemade signs: "Gay Is Good," "We Are EVERYWHERE," "Closets Are Confining." As I gazed at the colorful mass of humanity around me, it really hit me that here were thousands of people marching side by side, arm in arm, for something they believed in and, for this one day, it was possible to be openly and verbally proud! The solidarity I felt from that moment on was something so powerful and deep that I'm not sure I can find words to express it.

All of a sudden -- "Oh god, it's moving, I'm in the Gay Pride Day Parade," I shouted to myself. In desperation and to prevent immediate collapse to my knees, I grabbed the two women on either side of me (for the duration of the parade).

As we walked along, the shouting began: "Out of the closet and into the street!" -- "Two, Four, Six, Eight, Gay is just as good as straight!" The crowd on the sidewalk responded, some joining us, others smiling or cheering. There was also present the occasional tourist, complete with white shoes, well-pressed flowered shirt, lady on his arm, and gaping mouth, frozen to the sidewalk trying desperately not to look uncool. All this time, one of the women

with me was busily snapping pictures of the audience on the curb! Such good photographic subjects they were. . . As the parade moved on, I began to watch the people in the buildings towering over us. On a hotel balcony, a maid leaned over the rail, recognized what was happening at her feet, and raised her fist to the air in salute. The women and men marching around us cheered and waved to her and we moved on. Further down the route, some creep threw a large board from a sixth story window, narrowly missing the row of people in front of us. Angry fists quickly went up and the chant turned to "Two, Four, Six, Eight, Gay is TWICE as good as straight." Again, the crowd moved on, getting back into its dancing and laughter and an occasional bottle winding its way through the crowd. As we passed through an area of grey, dark hotels, pale old blank faces began peering from behind drawn curtains. One old woman watched with a blank expression. The women near us began to wave, and a smile started to come. . . As we moved on, she and the women on the street were feeling warned from the brief touch.



PHOTO BY PEG MORRIS

The escort police stopped once for traffic, and the marchers relaxed and turned to look around them. Suddenly, a woman shouted "Look!" and pointed behind me. I turned and looked up the hill. . . As far as I could see, a mass of people from storefront to storefront, banners, beating drums, singing, dancing. It'll be very hard ever to feel alone again after seeing that sight!

Three hours later, we finally reached the end of the parade route. It took another hour for the rest of the marchers and floats to wind their way to the finish. The immensity of the size of the parade itself was exceeded only by the immensity of the impact of being there. It was a day to remember, all right -- a day to shout and laugh and re-affirm a pride that runs very deep -- a day to smile and yell hello's to Amazon women across the street and feel instant sisterhood in their grinning reply -- a day when it felt okay to shout "Right on!" out the muni-bus window to two women kissing on the curb below.

Our "high" lasted all through the celebration in Golden Gate Park that followed the parade, and all the way home. That night we planted ourselves firmly in front of the TV to catch as many news broadcasts as we could. Our main purpose, of course, was to critique the coverage of the Gay Pride Day Parade and see which channels were able to cover the event objectively -- but each one of us held our breath at every foot of film shown over the air, half expecting to see our smiling faces in full view of god and everybody. By the way, Mom, don't worry -- our place in the parade was right behind the Petaluma Dykes' banner, which effectively hid our faces from view! Planned that one well!

Well. . . nothing else of much excitement has happened lately, so I'd best close now.

Love,

Your Baby Dyke

THE MYTH OF BONNIES WITHOUT CLYDES:

LESBIAN FEMINISM AND THE MALE LEFT

by Jill Johnston



The capture of Susan Saxe in Philadelphia March 27 gave rise to a predictable collusion of media interests with the continuing backlash against feminism and the fear, intolerance, misunderstanding and ignorance of lesbianism in the country at large as well as within the movement and the conflicts among lesbian feminists themselves. If it weren't Saxe it would've been somebody else. After the SLA shootout in Los Angeles last year there were scattered items in the media alluding to Mizmoon and her friends as "lesbians" and more recently in reference to the search for Patty Hearst to "lesbian communes" in Colorado and elsewhere as alleged hideouts of the fugitives. The capture of Saxe provided the opportunity for authorities (media, etc.) to identify by inference criminal violence against the state with the feminist movement. Saxe herself implicated the movement or swept it along with her as she issued a dramatic statement shortly after her apprehension reading that she intended to "fight on now in every way as a lesbian, a feminist, and an amazon." April 5 I picked up Newsweek on a plane out of Albuquerque and found what I was looking for right after the Faisal coverage. "The arrest (of Saxe) followed a widespread and sometimes high pressure FBI hunt for Saxe and (Katherine) Power, among lesbian and radical feminist groups in Connecticut, Kentucky and elsewhere. Similar groups have been connected in recent years with the underground flights of such wanted women as Angela Davis, Bernadine Dohrn and Patty Hearst. . . despite her arrest, Saxe vowed to 'keep fighting as a lesbian, as a feminist, and as an amazon'." If they picked up Mark Rudd and he said he vowed to keep on fighting as a heterosexual I guess I'd wonder who these heterosexuals were. I'd think they were pretty dangerous if this dude had been on the 10 most wanted list for robbery and assault and murder by association. If I were heterosexual myself I'd wonder what we were supposed to do to keep up the good fight.

My point is that in 1970 when Saxe allegedly held up this bank in Boston with Katherine Power and three males who were ex-convicts, one of whom shot and killed a Boston policeman, it's highly improbable that sexual identity as a political issue figured in the action. By sexual identity I mean the priority any woman places on her being politically and spiritually as a woman, either as a woman who continues to relate sexually to males or as a woman who relates

sexually to other women. Saxe and Power were Brandeis students who were involved in the student strike center and the national strike information center and various antiwar activities. It's unclear from all the statements whether they were lovers at the time. It's also unclear what the nature of their feminism was if any. Lovers or not, there's no essential connection between sexual activity and political persuasion on the one hand, or between the latter and feminism, since many political women have subsumed their identity as female under a variety of left or radical causes. I'd be very surprised to hear that two radical lesbian/feminists were out robbing a bank with three heavy straight dudes in 1970. The radicalesbians I knew in New York at that time identified with every oppressed class and they were pretty angry at the government and they believed in its overthrow and in socialism etc. etc. but they had already severed connections with the white male left and were seriously questioning what remained of their association with blacks and with gay males. The most basic concern of radicalesbians then was lesbian identity and the drive out of the closet and tentative rapprochements with third world women and tactical confrontations with straight feminists. The latter were themselves engaged in an agony of separation from left causes that were increasingly viewed as male or male dominated. The coalition attempts in '69 and '70 to form a mass movement were thwarted by this growing recognition of feminists associated with the left that forming alliances with males for political action subverted feminist interests and priorities. By the late '60's there were three types of political women: those associated exclusively with the left; those identified exclusively as feminist and/or lesbians, and those who related across the boards as feminists, socialists, pacifists, and everything. I was one who never related to male politics of any sort and for whom feminism was a shocking political awakening. I came to feminism for that matter from the more exclusive place of a minority identification as a lesbian. I didn't know I was a woman any more than my straight sisters did. The primary struggle was to disassociate ourselves from male definitions. When I heard that women were blowing things up with men I thought they were men or male styled guerillas.

There are thousands of lesbians in this country and possibly a mere handful of them who ever participated in violent action at any time with angry males. That women like Saxe and Power and Oughton and Dohrn and Boudin and Alpert became political feminists and/or lesbians out of the male left and in reaction to it has now become an interesting liability to the movement. Certainly the credibility of lesbians is at stake, but the credibility of lesbians has never been established anyway. The perfect vacuum has been maintained for the opportune moment to direct negative attention to the movement through its radicalesbian elements, which by this time are pervasive. From the point of view of the media, the shots of Valerie Solanas in 1968 were those of a privately disturbed person; the alleged robbery and assault by Saxe and Power in 1970 becomes that of political fanatics like the Panthers stalking the streets of Oakland; the isolated women here and there who've befriended them as fugitives become "lesbian communes" with overtones of violent revolution.

The lesbian/feminist movement is much subtler and more subversive than the male models of historical change. The women I know at least are not so dumb as to think there's anything worth taking over. Women with SDS and weather-people were participating in male ideas of change through new and enlightened leadership. As for reform within the structure itself, we root for our Bellas and our Chisholms, but we know that true revolution is a glacial process of unknown cell structures that will evolve out of shared bits of profoundly internalized consciousness. This consciousness, which is at first realized

through the painful acknowledgement of hierarchical oppression, is transformed by degrees into the birth of the self and the celebration of spontaneous behavior appropriate to the individual and her perception of the constantly changing environment and social conditions. Everywhere I go in the united snakes of amerika I sense this incredible internal struggle and it has no political name. It's the feminism you'd never read about in the papers. The Saxe behind the headlines or the life between a robbery and a capture is one of these women. The Saxe who issued a dramatic statement in the wake of her arrest is a desperate person appealing to a support group for an action that originated in a totally different and alien group: the violent male left. Her appeal strains the facilities and sentiments of sisters who extend warmth and support for every woman, especially those driven under any circumstances to extreme actions and who at the same time deny identification with actions committed by individuals under the banner of the male left or any violence committed in the name of lesbian/feminism. There is in other words no organized lesbian feminist action against the state or individuals. Even the rape squads maintain primary attention to the victims of rape and to methods of deflection or prevention.

Saxe's statement included a question about her danger: "They called me a dangerous woman. Dangerous to whom? to my people? to the sisters I love?" -- and the answer could be yes. The sisters don't rob banks with ex-male convicts except as private individuals. The association of the "sisterhood" with 1970 bank robberies is a telescopic deception used (by the media) to discredit a movement without credit and without responsibility for individuals who committed crimes in the context of the patriarchal context between fathers (right) and sons (left). The sons themselves are now dispersed and disarmed without the intimate support of their sisters who defected to feminism. The revolution in Ireland wouldn't exist without the sisters. The new and unprecedented revolution in the world is the bloodless revolution of the sisters. Many sisters no longer wish to help the sons undo the fathers who in turn oppress the sisters. The sisters who banded with the sons in this last effort against the fathers are now stranded in their troubles by the sons who have no political platform or cohesion or resources or interest in a movement they abandoned and are thrown onto the compassion of the sisters whose only struggle is for self-realization and ultimately for a global corrective to the dangerous escalation of human masculinity. The lesbians who hail Saxe and Power as romantic projections of our helplessness are confirming the developed stereotype of lesbians as Bonnies without Clydes. All creative unconventional women have been lesbians and even Willa Cather is on a postage stamp. The conventional women still relate to the oppressors by opposing them. This cooperation with the sons is as ancient as the origin of the patriarchy. Cooperation in this sense is a fruitless opposition. Cooperation in this present hassle for instance is to believe in the FBI. The FBI wants fugitives who robbed banks and were accessories or agents of murder. They're not "infiltrating" any movement, there isn't anything to infiltrate, they're going about their business and harassing a lot of innocent people while they do it and contributing to the general atmosphere of fear, intolerance, misunderstanding, and ignorance of a movement that has a profound commitment to the spiritual resurrection of women. The collusion of the media in the negative innuendos surrounding lesbian/feminism is merely one more serious indication of the unwillingness of the arms of established interest to regard the efforts of oppressed peoples (women, lesbians, etc.) as vital correctives acting in the global public concern for survival and celebration.

The male left is dead and so are the women who did it with them. The Saxe who

was picked up March 27 can't be the same woman who robbed a bank in September 1970. The opportunity to articulate this distinction will possibly be made available to her. I don't know any woman who hasn't thought of robbing a bank or killing some bad dude but I don't know any woman who would implicate the whole movement in a personally conceived action. A woman writing an editorial in the Boston Globe suggested Saxe might've said she was a heterosexual swinger. If I heard that a woman vowed to keep on fighting as a heterosexual swinger I'd say to myself oh yeah heterosexual swingers were a weird bunch. As for the defunct male left the most interesting item I've heard about its remains is a book to be published by Jerry Rubin the end of the year about his primal therapies on the Coast. I encouraged him to call it "For Men Only." What could be more interesting to those particular heterosexual queens than the exposure of the real emotional reasons they have for going after daddy in the name of revolution or socialism or something and implicating mommies and dragging their sisters into the cause. So much for them. We have our own shit to deal with. We have plenty of revelations out there and we need many more in order to perceive the patterns of our motivations and needs through which we project politics.

Revolutionary Blues

My flags won't fly on the same pole
even when I'm watching
they snarl & claw at each other
and try to make me choose one
and forget the other
My flags won't fly on the same pole
even when I'm watching

it's a pity
my lavender sweater
and my red black and green blouse
go so well together
who'd have thought
that my flags would clash so

and when I leave the black writers group
I come home to her
and it is she who extracts the spikes
it is she who binds my wounds
it is she who understands

my rage
my pain
at being treated like a nigger
because I love women

--Julie Simmons

Woman's Space And Male Marauders

by Judith Grova

We "live" in a culture which, from the time of its founding, has extolled the necessity of free space, has worshipped the concept of the open frontier (right up to the present emphasis upon the space frontier), and has equated the expansiveness of literal and psychological space with masculine adventure and achievement. Men, with their "great" dreams of phallic power and their vast aims of conquest, own all space. Space, as defined by masculinists, is patriarchal, is male (with all the perverse sexual implications of maleness). But this same space, the need for which is acknowledged by psychologists, anthropologists and biologists, is denied to women. Whereas man's nature is encouraged to expand its perimeters, individually and collectively, the male institutions demand the constriction of woman's psyche by barricading her access to free space.

Not only is this space vital for the development of mental-emotional-spiritual potential, but it is fundamental to the establishment of selfhood and personal identity. In a culture, therefore, which deliberately asserts the non-being of women, overt and covert prohibition of woman's space has vast implications. In its crudest form, this is expressed by the tiresome phrase, "A woman's place is in the home." In its somewhat less obvious manifestations, it exists in the business and professional male brotherhoods, the secret societies which are an integral part of male interaction, from which all women (even token women) are excluded. Let me cite an example. My doctor (female), who has merely been on the fringes of feminist consciousness, has recently been appointed to an otherwise all-male state medical board. She has found, to her amazement and chagrin, that the "boys" refuse to discuss issues with her, that when she joins a group in conversation the subject is quickly changed, that her ideas are either greeted with paternal toleration or are summarily dismissed, and that the males vote in a bloc by collusive prior agreement to which she is not privy. After attending several meetings, she has come to a not-too-startling conclusion: men hate women. What she is just beginning to realize is that she is hated because she has intruded upon the sanctity of male space and male prerogative. Her very presence becomes a threat to the exclusively male bastions of power.

This is only one example of hundreds I could enumerate from personal experience and experiences of friends, but the point is clear: in this culture, women are prohibited from exercising the right of Presence (the power of personhood, of being). This is part of the process of negation already mentioned. We do not have the right to exist or function in male spheres. A concomitant of our culturally determined non-being and our lack of free space within the patriarchy is the restriction of our right to privacy. Privacy implies psychic space. It is the privilege, consequently, of the male, not of the female, who must eternally be ready to nurture, to listen, to sympathize with men.

This encroachment upon female self-ness occurs both in the public and the domestic realms. As an illustration, I teach on a "Christian" university campus where, theoretically, the faculty is a body of intellectual and professional equals. This is a myth, of course. The male faculty are equals, treating one another with respectful camaraderie, protecting one another's privacy and space. The women are simply not granted the same legitimation of being. How often have I seen female colleagues -- in the midst of working on

an important paper, reading an article of professional interest, or taking a few moments to think quietly -- interrupted without apology by a male who invades her office to chat or to preen. The concept that she might not want to talk, that she might be busy, that she might be exploring her own valuable thoughts does not occur to him. This same scene is played a thousand times a day in all phases of the business and public arena. What the woman is doing or thinking is inferior activity; what the male is doing or thinking is superior activity, to be granted absolute penis precedence. Whether on or off the reservation, women are not allowed to possess psychological-emotional-spiritual free space. And since women have no right to space of their own (we are envisioned as vacuums waiting to be filled up by male presence, male minds and male sperm), such intrusions are not considered trespass upon our psychic or literal privacy.

Earlier, I used the ignoble phrase, "A woman's place is in the home." (This slogan, by the way, is often reinforced by "Christian" males who add, "According to Genesis, God did create men and women to fulfill different roles." Clearly, Christianity is destiny!) However, even in the home women have neither space nor privacy of their own. Their time and energy is, by demand and expectation, devoted to the comforts and needs of husband and children. The absolutely essential human requirements of quietude, of time-space for self-discovery, are generally not possible. Even if she is a creative individual trying to steal a few moments for writing or painting, her desires take last place in the hierarchy of family needs. I wonder how much of the tired housewife syndrome is the result of women not having the right to meet their own needs (or the time in which to discover those wants), of their lack of privacy and space in which to rejuvenate their own souls and being.

The message, thus, continually bombards us. All space belongs to the patriarchy, for their exercise of power, for their ego development and strengthening, for their manipulation and control. Wherever we turn, in the public or private world, we are aliens, outsiders. Not even the right of personal space is ours. The psychic consequences of this are mind-dizzying. It is not surprising that women are pusillanimous, passive, and non-self-oriented, since we have no free space in which to exert our own brains, emotions and spirituality within the masculinist structure. Consequently, women's attempts to claim space (even on the borders of patriarchy) are an extreme threat to the male establishment, to the male ego and to male sexuality. When women have their own space in which to move, breathe and think, they remove themselves from phallic control.

Recognizing this, many women have begun to assert a different kind of power as part of their liberation of being. This is the positive women's force of the "power of Absence," as Mary Daly names it. This simply means that, since we know we possess no patriarchal space, we choose to absent ourselves from supporting, nurturing and reinforcing the masculinists. This very act of absencing is a vigorous one, for it means that we seize our own women's space on the boundaries of the patriarchy and that we direct our energies toward women, not men. Such action is, of course, heretical in the eyes of the males who expect unquestioning devotion of women to male causes and who, indeed, cannot function without the extensive female support systems which parasite on mother, wife, daughters, sisters, secretaries, etc. Their economic and personal well-being are predicated upon such exploitation of women and denial of women's space-being.

Now that feminists -- and Lesbian/feminists in particular -- are divorcing themselves from patriarchal space and are choosing to pioneer their

own space devoid of males and male structures, the men are arrogantly attempting to conquer and control this space too. When women claim even marginal space, when they bond in sisterhood, when they direct their cosmic energies toward women, when they act independently and when they absent themselves from supporting the patriarchy, this is a female affirmation which is an anathema to men. More than this, it is perceived as a threat to male dominance (as indeed it is) and it is, therefore, intolerable.

During the past few months, I have been following with interest the males' attempts to usurp women's space, to negate its effect and to exert authority over free women by invading their time-space. Let me delineate some recent incidents, gleaned from widespread reading in feminist publications, that reveal the male's endeavors to block women's movement into free space and to keep her a phallic prisoner.

Last January, a demonstration in honor of International Women's Year was planned by the Portuguese Women's Liberation Movement. Upon arrival at Edward VII Park, the women were greeted by thousands of on-lookers who immediately reacted to their presence. The men shouted, "Fuck them, women are not good for anything but bed. Women in the kitchen." They physically attacked the women, throwing objects and, when the feminists took refuge in a building, they tried to break the door down. In the ultimate gonadolescent gesture of male dominance, some of them exposed themselves and masturbated at the women.² (Big Mama Rag, April, 1975) Thus is established a recurrent pattern which will repeat itself in the ensuing examples: men feel they have the power and authority to invade women's space and, if they cannot intimidate by their superior male presence, they resort to verbal and physical violence.

The illustration of IWY provoking male aggression can be expanded. The women's space supposedly set aside at the Mexico City Conference a few weeks ago was co-opted by men, nearly half of the delegates being male. These men, with the collusion of the male-controlled media, attempted to divert the conference from women's issues to international politics, while at the same time propagandizing the inability of the women to agree on goals. Women's space became, as usual, male space. That happened at the main conference, but what occurred at the Tribunal (alternate conference) was equally revealing. According to Betty Friedan in a recent "Today" show interview, the women had reached a point of solidarity by the last day of the meeting. So threatening was this alliance that a group of men invaded the Tribunal, sabotaged microphones and other equipment, interrupted the proceedings to insist upon taking the floor and, in a fit of militant male rage, demanded that their "grievances" be heard.

To move on to other examples, in March the Austin (Texas) Lesbian Organization held a dance at the Austin Women's Center. As the evening progressed, a group of uptight males who had been attending a heterosexual dance in another part of the building, belligerently burst in on the Lesbians. While the women tried to keep them out, one of the men shouted, "No one can keep me out of any party I want to go to in this town!" Inevitably, this led to the shouting of derogatory terms at the women and, when the door was locked after the marauders left, they attempted to break the door down. (Lesbian Connection, July 1975) Portuguese, American or whatever, men are the same everywhere.

At the end of May, the Great Southeast Lesbian Conference met in Atlanta. A group of Lesbians were having an early breakfast in a restaurant recommended by conference organizers. Relaxed and enjoying themselves, they established their right to free space as Lesbians. Two straight males present

immediately became hostile. When a disagreement arose concerning an overcharge on the bill, an off-duty policeman asserted his authority by arresting the women without telling them they were under arrest. Then, in a fit of uncontrolled fury because one of the women had used the word "fucking," he threw her up against the wall and started to choke her. (I should emphasize that free space also implies the freedom to use phallic language as women see fit.) It goes without saying that four of the women were later convicted of causing a turmoil, fined and given a suspended jail sentence. (Lesbian Connection, July 1975, and The Lesbian Tide, July-August 1975)

Also in May, a Rite of Spring camp-out was planned by Texas Lesbians. The weekend, which attracted well over 100 women, was a joyous interaction of sisterhood within women's space until the group was intruded upon by four drunken males who demanded admittance to the camp. (We all know that Lesbians only need a good screw, right?) After the women fended them off, the men left, only to return several times during the night to harass the Lesbians (shouting the usual epithets), stoning the women, kicking one severely in the groin, and threatening to bring back more men, a gun and shoot them. The police, who were called by the women, refused at first to do anything about the male aggressors, accused the women of vicious conduct (none of them had retaliated against the men), and ordered them to leave the campsite. Although the issue was later resolved and the women stayed, it is interesting to see another instance where the male law was used to uphold male violence against women and the right of men to violate female space. (Pointblank Times, June 1975)

In Chicago, a group of feminists have established official free space for women at the Emma Goldman Woman's Health Clinic. During the past few months, marauding teenage boys have smashed their expensive plate glass window a number of times. Although police claim they do not know the boys' identities, one cop delivered a message from the gang: They want you out of here. (Lavendar Woman, June 1975) Similar invasions of women's space are also reflected in the recent destructive acts against women's centers, such as the January firebombing of the Women's Center of St. Louis, the December fire at Diana Press (a Baltimore feminist publishing house), and the robbery-vandalism of the offices of Majority Report in February. The pattern of male violation of woman's space (their mind-spirit rapes only a thinly veiled substitute for physical rape) appears additionally across the country in the male incursions into Lesbian bars, where they verbally harass and physically threaten the women.

In Los Angeles, Z. Budapest, a feminist wicca, has been working to create spiritual free space for women by incorporating the female religion, "Sisterhood of the Wicca," with its emphasis upon goddess worship. This spring, she was tried and convicted of fortune-telling (a long-established part of the 30,000-year-old wiccan tradition) in a political attempt to intimidate her into ceasing her religious and feminist activities. (Big Mama Rag, March and June, 1975, The Lesbian Tide, May-June 1975, Lesbian Connection, July 1975) As usual, Z. was also ridiculed and reviled by police and prosecution before and during the trial. Once again, it is clear how easily the legal trespass of women's space can occur, since the whole jurispenic system works to ensure women's subjection and confinement within phallic space.

Early in the history of humankind, while women were civilizers, men were marauders. Many millenia later, the male mind-set is scarcely more refined. They are still marauders intruding their witless violence into women's space, women's culture and women's being. Unrestrained arrogance pervades their every action, and their castration-impotence anxieties are nowhere as plainly displayed as when they attack, threaten and try to intimidate women from achieving independent being. (As Rita Mae Brown points out, when women

become freer and more comfortable with their own bodies -- especially true of Lesbians -- and when they claim more physical space for themselves, the incidents of overt male violence against them increases.)

Quite obviously, women's assertion of free space and whole personhood endangers male supremacy. It is evident that men feel at liberty to inflict verbal and physical violence upon women who do not obey the godly and cultural injunctions to stay in our place. But the more women who create free space for themselves on the boundaries of patriarchal space, the stronger we shall be, the more woman's power we shall possess by which to define ourselves, and the more energy we shall generate for our own revolution.

Footnotes

¹ Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

² Such conduct does not even have the spirit of originality. I am reminded, among many similar incidents, of one in particular that took place in the famous Paris salon of Djuna Barnes in the 1930's. A male guest, noticing the pairs of Lesbian women drifting off to more private rooms, became intensely agitated, took out his prick, waved it and shouted, "Hasn't anybody seen one of these!"

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Male Myths & Sexism

by Cari D'arc

(Drawings by Hilary Langhorst)

If, for the sake of this analysis, we accept Jung's theory of the "collective unconscious" and examine certain myths using its context, we may begin to understand why women are so often oppressed by male sexist attitudes and how deeply rooted these attitudes are in the male psyche.

In order to understand sexist myths and their power over people, we first have to comprehend the concept of mana. Mana is often thought of as a supernatural power, either good or bad, infusing everything, but more intensely the alien and unusual. Magical practice which attempts to handle mana sets up the idea of taboo. When a taboo established by myth or custom is broken, human beings develop various ideas about the unfortunate results. Primitive peoples, conditioned by early experience to feel the menace of the alien power of the external world, consider any misfortune which occurs after breaking a taboo to be punishment.

Both women and men are victims of these fears; but, since the male has been the dominant one, he has set the pattern of the human being and the alien. His body and its biological processes are familiar and understandable to him; and, by simple, observation, he can see that other males are the same and therefore acceptable. BUT! women are different, and, despite man's need for his mother's breast and his sexual attraction to the female, she is not his kind. He may at times feel hostility toward his father, but always he can identify with him. Woman, on the other hand, is alien, filled with mana.

The shaman, witch-doctor, or the medicine man, who has occupied himself with shaping man's fears into social forms, has particularly concerned himself with women and, in order to protect his fellow men from contagion and terror, from sickness, mutilation and death, has contrived to surround "woman" with sanctions and taboos which hardly admit her to the same culture.

The magical fears about women, their bodies, and their sexual processes are worldwide and persistent. The magical fear of menstrual blood is particularly intense; for example:

-- a Surinam Negro woman while menstruating lives in solitude, and, if anyone approaches her, she must cry out, "I am unclean!"

-- the dangers of contact and contagion are so great that many cultures force the women during their monthly cycles to live in separate lodges; special huts are built for them by the Bakairi of Brazil,



the Shuswap of British Columbia, the Gauri of northern India, the veddas of Ceylon, and the Algonkian of North America.

-- Siberian Samoyed women must step over fires in order to be fumigated; they must also refrain from cooking food for the men.

-- the Chippewa girl cannot cross a public road or talk to any man, or boy.

-- Eskimo girls at their first period are taboo for forty days.

-- some natives in South Australia believe that if a man has contact with a menstruating woman, he will die from a wasting disease.

-- Hindu women may not sit at the table with others, weep, mount a horse, or drive a vehicle.

-- Hebrew women may not sit at the table with other people or drink from a glass used by others; any contact with her husband is a sin, and the penalty for intercourse during her period is death for both.

-- a Uganda woman by touching her husband's effects makes him sick; if she lays a hand on his weapons, he will be killed in the next fight.

The misfortunes brought about by the fears of pregnancy and child-birth parallel those of menstruation. Indians of Costa Rica believe that a woman pregnant for the first time infects the whole neighborhood; she is blamed for any deaths which may occur and her husband is obliged to pay damages. Some Brazilian Indians believe that if a woman is not out of the house during child-birth, all of the weapons will lose their power. The Sulka of New Bririon believe that in addition to these, the men will become cowardly and their crops will not grow.



was also a witch, took the young man aside and warned him that the two daughters had teeth in their vaginas which would cut off his penis. "When you lie with them, you must not have intercourse even though they try to persuade you. You will hear the gritting of the teeth in their vaginas. You must not sleep at night either, because the old woman will come to see what you are doing. If you do not have intercourse with the girls, she will ask why you don't. Therefore watch, for if you sleep, you will be destroyed." The hero resolved to



Throughout the ages, man has thought woman to be malignant, capable of any crime, a beast of prey, a vampire, a witch, insatiable in her desires, the very personification of what is sinister. The matter of the fear of the female genitals and of the act of intercourse is made apparent in primitive mythology.

The Wichita Indians of North America have created a cycle of myths about a hero named Son of a Dog. One day the hero met two women, one of whom invited him home, urging him to marry her daughters. As it happened, she was a witch. Her friend, who

follow her advice. He also took another tip from her and pushed a log of wood ahead of him when he went into their hut. It was a wise thing to do and saved him from being brained by a war club in the hands of the old witch. The daughters proved enticing as he slept, or rather pretended to sleep, between them. Meanwhile, the old witch pretended to snore but later tried to kill him. The next day the hero met with the friend of the witch, who gave him two whetstones. He was advised to pick the daughter he found to be the most attractive and to render her harmless by grinding off the vaginal teeth with one whetstone. The other girl he was to kill by thrusting the second whetstone up her vagina instead of his penis. She also gave him a charm to put the old witch to sleep. The following night, the hero killed one of the girls by shoving the whetstone so far up her vagina that it could not be removed. He ground off the teeth in the other girl's vagina, thus making it fit for male use. He then fled with the girl.

Another form of the story is found among the Eskimos, describing a dangerous woman who carries a live dog's head between her legs which bites off male organs.

The Pomo Indians of California have a version which goes as follows: Wood Rat was courting the daughters of Morning Star. One of them said, "Well, Wood Rat, if you like me all right, I will marry you, but you must know that my father has placed thorns all about my vagina." Rat then took a stone and broke all of the thorns and married the girl.

Still another version of this myth appears in the Toba Indians of South America. The chief characters in this story are Big Fox, a trickster, and Hawk. They went hunting one day with a group of other beings who were a mixture of animal and man. Hawk had the good fortune to encounter some women climbing down from the sky on ropes. Hawk cleverly cut the ropes, causing the women to fall down to earth. There were enough to provide all of the men with mates. Hawk, however, had noticed that the women were provided with toothed vaginas and advised caution. Big Fox being sexually greedy could not wait, and as soon as he started to have intercourse with his woman, she cut off his penis and testicles with her vagina. Fox died from this wound. A little later, rain fell on him and brought him back to life. He made a new penis of wood and testicles of two black fruit and went back to copulate with his wife. She tried her best to bite off his penis, but could only succeed in denting it. The next day Hawk picked up a stone and broke off all the teeth in the women's vaginas except one, which became the clitoris.

Rites connected with female virginity relate this basic fear of the female genital. In many cases the husband himself does not deflower the bride. Sometimes an old woman or an old man of the tribe does it manually, sometimes it is done by the priest.

Psychologists report fantasies centered around a woman with a dangerous dog that bites. A physician recording the hallucinations of alcoholic patients reports fantasies such as, "they said they would have a police dog tear out my organs. . . a woman would bite off my organs. . ." The similarity between primitive myth and contemporary neurotic fantasies certainly indicate how deep-seated this type of male castration anxiety really is, and the male projects this fear onto women.

A belief in the origin of the female genital as a result of castration

is illustrated in the myths concerning the creation of women, one of which was related in the myth of Big Fox and Hawk. The Negritos of the Malay Peninsula believe that there was a time when there were only men. Their great creator was a giant monitor lizard. Since all of his creations were men and he desired a wife, he caught one of his creations and cut off his genitals. This made him into a woman who became the lizard's wife and the ancestor of the Negritos.



The natives of Haiti believe there was a time when there were no women, but they thought they needed some. One day they found creatures hiding in tree branches. These alien creatures had no sex organs whatsoever, so they bound them and tied woodpeckers in the proper places, and the birds pecked out the desired orifices.

In Genesis, we are told that man is made out of dust and put into the Garden of Eden. Soon we discover there are no women and God proposes to create one for Adam -- this ties in with many of the primitive stories of an early time when there were only men. In these stories women were created by castrating men or by

sadistically cutting a vulva; although the shaping of Eve is transformed into a magical molding from Adam's rib, the removal of the rib itself has symbolic overtones of castration.

New Guinea carvings show images of a crocodile attacking the vagina, and a hornbill plunging its beak into the organ. Thus, you can see that the mysterious and dangerous nature of the "wound" is uppermost in primitive traditions. Incidentally, the image of the vagina as a wound is frequently found in the fantasies of some mental patients.

The two exclusive male activities of hunting and fishing are also very often associated with the avoidance of women. In Tahiti, women are prohibited from touching weapons. In Queensland, the natives throw away their fishing nets if a woman steps over them, and elsewhere a woman is forbidden to step over any object because, in doing so, the woman's sex passes over them and they are then exposed to the very seat of contagion.

The necessity of refraining from intercourse before undertaking the chase and warfare has sometimes been explained as a fear of the debilitating effects of what is considered the weaker sex.

All of these myths and customs show how women were feared and often abused because of their sexuality, but none of them compare with the things done to women who were accused of witchcraft. That witches did or still do exist is not the issue, but that they were persecuted because of their so-called "carnal lust" is just another example of man's fear of the alien producing social customs oppressive to women.

In December 1484, two Dominican monks were authorized to write the Malleus Maleficarum, which defined witchcraft, described the modus operandi of

witches, and standardized trial procedures and sentencing for all of Europe. It states, "Since they (women) are feebler in mind and body, it is not surprising that they should come under the spell of witchcraft. All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable. There are three things which are never satisfied, yea, a fourth thing which says not, it is enough, that is the mouth of the womb."⁵ The evidence provided by the Malleus and the executions which blackened those centuries is almost without limit. One particular concern was that devils stole semen (vitality) from innocent, sleeping men -- seductive witches visited men in their sleep and did the evil stealing. The explanation of these fantasies is not hard, a nightly visit from a beautiful being who exhausts the sleeper with passionate embraces and withdraws from him a vital fluid -- all of this points to a natural and common process, namely, wet dreams. For a woman to be dreamed of in such a manner very often ended with her being burned at the stake.

The proof of the explicitly sexual nature of the witch persecutions had to do with their most frequent crime, according to the Malleus; they cast "glamors over the male organ so that it disappeared."⁶ Men lost their genitals quite frequently; most often the woman responsible for the loss was a cast off mistress who maliciously turned to witchcraft, according to the Malleus. If the bewitched man could identify the woman who was responsible for his affliction, he could demand the reinstatement of his genitals. Often witches, greedy by virtue of womanhood, were not content with the theft of just one genital, as we learn from the Malleus: "And what then is to be thought of those witches who in this way sometimes collect male organs, as many as 20 or 30 members together, and put them in a box, where they move themselves like living members and eat oats and corn, as has been seen by many."⁷ Perhaps this fear of loss of genitals can be located in the nature of heterosexual sex; men enter the vagina hard and erect; men emerge drained of vitality, the penis flaccid. The loss of semen, and the feeling of weakness has extraordinary significance to men. Hindu tradition, for instance, postulates that men must either expel the semen and then vacuum it back up into the penis, or not ejaculate at all.

Thus, we begin to get an idea of the primordial and persistent male view of the biological female. Females are mysterious, they are sexually dangerous, their bodies are unclean, their desires are insatiable, they are out to castrate men and they are themselves castrated men, their genital is a wound and their menstrual blood is an evil contaminant, and they will steal the strength and vitality from an unwary male.

Lest we shrug off this ancient mythology as being confined to the past and to contemporary primitive cultures, let us recall that athletes and coaches still believe in sexual abstinence during training or before a game. Let us recall that the reason given by an eminent physician a few years ago for opposing a female President was menstruation. Let us recall that men still refer to a woman's genitals (and sometimes to the woman herself) as a cut, slit, or gash. Let us recall that the first and worst thing that a male can accuse a feminist of is being a "castrating bitch." Let us recall all the old "fish" jokes we have ever heard. And as for the primordial creation stories, look up the December 1973 issue of Playboy and read Roger Price's (not very original) piece on "The True and Believable Story of the Invention of Women," in which an incompetent baker accidentally fashions the first woman in an all-male world -- his creation was supposed to be a doughboy, but its sausage-penis fell off and the baker accidentally poked a hole between its legs while pushing it into the oven -- and, of course, the human race's "idyllic masculine



existence" has never been the same since.

No, it is not all in the past. From the time of the writing of the Malleus, we see historical dimensions of a myth of feminine evil which resulted in the slaughter of about nine million women, over a period of about three hundred years. The actual evidence of that slaughter and the remembrance of it have been suppressed for centuries so the myth of woman as the Original Criminal, the gaping insatiable womb, could endure. Any reading of pornography, any living of life, tells us that although those nine million women are dead, burned at the stake, the belief in female evil is not, the hatred of female carnality is not.

In conclusion, remember when you are in the process of trying to free yourself from the bonds of male sexism and are labelled a "castrating female," it is not anything you have done. It is a projection of age-old male fears, a part of their "collective unconscious." Truly, as Robin Morgan has said, "WE ARE THE WOMEN THAT MEN HAVE WARNED US ABOUT!"

Footnotes and Bibliography:

- 1 H.R. Hays: The Dangerous Sex. New York: Pocket Books, 1966, pp. 29-31.
- 2 Ibid, p. 33
- 3 Ibid, pp. 43-44
- 4 Ibid, pp. 44-45
- 5 Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger: Malleus Maleficarum. London: Arrow Books, 1971, translation by Montague Summers, Part I, Question VI, p. 122. The quotation is from Proverbs 30: 15-16, King James Bible.
- 6 Ibid, p. 123. Reference is made in this section to the authority of the Bull of Pope Innocent VIII given December 9, 1484.
- 7 Ibid, Part II, Question I, Chapter VII, p. 267-268.

Much of the material used in this article is excerpted and/or paraphrased from Hays, whose book The Dangerous Sex is highly recommended for its analysis of misogyny. Other recommended readings are:

- Pennethorne Hughes: Witchcraft. London: Penguin Books, 1971.
Jules Michelet: Satanism and Witchcraft. London: Penguin, 1971.

A new GAY BIBLIOGRAPHY (5th Edition) is now available, the Task Force on Gay Liberation announced. This non-fiction list includes over 175 items: Books, Articles, Pamphlets, Audio-Visuals (annotated), Periodicals, Bibliographies, and Directories. To cover printing and postage costs, the TFGL requests 25c per copy, \$1 for 5 copies (bulk rates on request). Orders should be sent to: Barbara Gittings-TFGL, P.O. Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

I don't understand this
Sudden difficulty
In forcing the
Joy and Pain
From my heart
Onto
A blank sheet of
Paper.
It has never happened
Before---
Though I have
Loved
A number of
Times.



A Set of Poems for Connie

by Dorothy Zeola

When you return,
I pray I will be
Welcomed lovingly (back)
Into the folds
Of your affection,
Where we may (again)
Share each other's
Heart/Mind/Body/Soul.
I am tired of the weary/draining
Tears of loss
And the sad, morose songs
Of your black goddess,
Shirley Bassey;
I just want you near me,
To hold and touch,
To look at and talk with.
And to love.



Since you have left,
Taking my breaking heart
Away with you,
The spirit of my love
Has helped to keep alive
That small world which we once shared,
Keeping it to ourselves
Alone.
Vivid memories of
The taste of your mouth---
The feel of your body---
The outside movements/inside tremors
Of loving exploration,
Discovering the secrets
Of hidden pleasures
That are so exclusively
Yours.



Early Morning

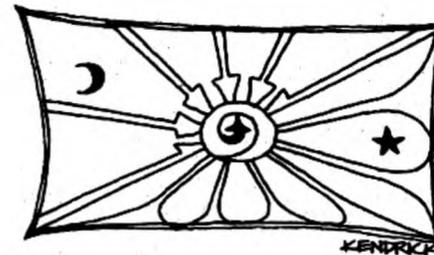
In the early morning we lie together.
But you're under sleep's influence
And I'm awake and ready for sharing.
So begins the challenge.
A slight cough, a minor sneezing attack,
And a "mistaken" elbow in your ear
Cause lids to open.
A sleepy smile creeps across
And awakens your daytime beauty.
Sharing begins.

Terry

three dawns

It's 4 a.m. & very still.
A half-awakening bird begins its greeting to a half-awakening day
A snort of a sleeping dog comes lazily from another room
A car engine purrs faintly in the distance
A dove coos snugly, safely on a telephone line
In stillness.
A clock ticks softly, reliably on a table
A pen glides silently over paper
A hand moves effortlessly around a pen
A heart beats warmly inside a writer
In stillness.
A mind perceives
A body responds
A soul listens
In stillness.

-- Dorothy Otis Giraffe



the sky is a washed-out bluish grey
& the clouds are the color of a neon peach
every bird in the world is making its favorite racket
sunrise.
something i haven't seen in a long time
though i can remember many of them with you.
there's an excitement & intensity in the air
an irresistibly attractive force
only too appropriate to such memories:
beginnings beyond control
too potent to be slowed or held fast
only to be experienced moment by moment
with increasing amazement.

no matter how late we stayed up the night before
your internal rhythms would
set you going as early as
the first hazy glow of dawn:
the natural attraction of like beings.
& i would stumble about
with gritty eyeballs & a
gruesome foul taste in my mouth
preferring to arise at noon
but drawn
like an iron filing to a magnet
in the direction
of such incredible energy
i even managed a state
of relative awareness sometimes.

i'm only here for the sunrise today
because i've not yet slept last night
going full blast while the rest
of the world dreams on
& i'm wondering now about the meaning
of such an apparent difference
does this validate your absence from my daily existence?
or your presence in my occasional soul?

one cannot stop the sun i guess.

-- janice kendrick

A Humanist Answer to the Man Haters Page.

by Barbara Stephens

I was amazed, astounded at the assumption that Humanism is defined as bisexuality with overtones of compulsory sex with an incompatible partner. This sounds like a male idea; it is a typical male point of view. A conventional male will accuse a female civil rights worker of sleeping with males of another race; a conventional male will even accuse a female supporter of SPCA of consorting with her dogs. Perhaps the conventional male does sleep with anyone or anything whenever the gismo rises; in the absence of a female, a hole in the fence or a Sherman tank will suffice. But for the Lesbian, who I hope is human enough to know of Love, this reasoning is ridiculous.

Sexual love is exclusive -- elitist perhaps, in that there is that one special person, that Goddess alone, that pales all else to oblivion. But loving one person sexually must not numb one to the rest of humanity. Walt Whitman wrote an entire history of man's inhumanity to man, saying, "I was the man, I suffered, I was there." And that is what Humanism is about. This means supporting Amnesty International, a protest group led by Joan Baez, dedicated to ending political torture in Fascist, Communist, and (sometimes Democratic) nations all over the world. It means working for a healthy, liveable environment -- involving respect for the earth and all living creatures including humans. Protesting nuclear tests and industrial pollution and preserving wilderness areas can be part of this effort, as well as activity in the Audubon Club or the Friends of Earth.

In 1973, a Humanist Manifesto was published, signed by such well-known dissidents as Isaac Asimov, Paul Blanshard, Albert Ellis, Andrei Sakharov and Gerald Wendt. I will quote some portions:

The Individual

The preciousness and dignity of the individual person is a central humanistic value. Individuals should be encouraged to realize their own creative talents and desires. We reject all religious, ideological, or moral codes that denigrate the individual, suppress freedom, dull intellect, dehumanize personality. We believe in maximum individual autonomy consonant with social responsibility.

In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. . . Without countenancing mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity, a civilized society should be a tolerant one. Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their lifestyles as they desire. We wish to cultivate the development of a responsible attitude toward sexuality, in which humans are not exploited as sexual objects, and in which intimacy, sensitivity, respect, and honesty in interpersonal relations are encouraged.

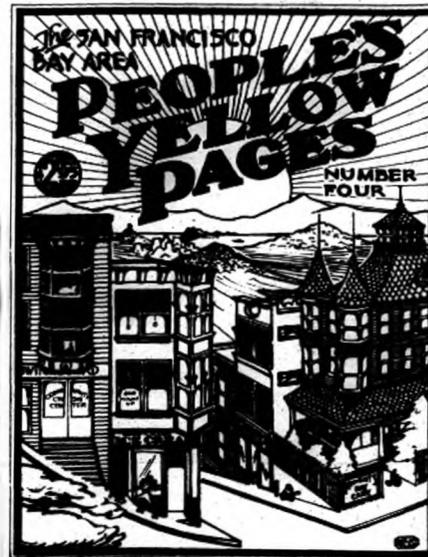
We are critical of sexism or sexual chauvinism -- male or female. We believe in equal rights for both men and women to fulfill their unique careers and potentialities as they see fit, free of invidious discrimination.

-- from The Humanist, Sept/Oct 1973

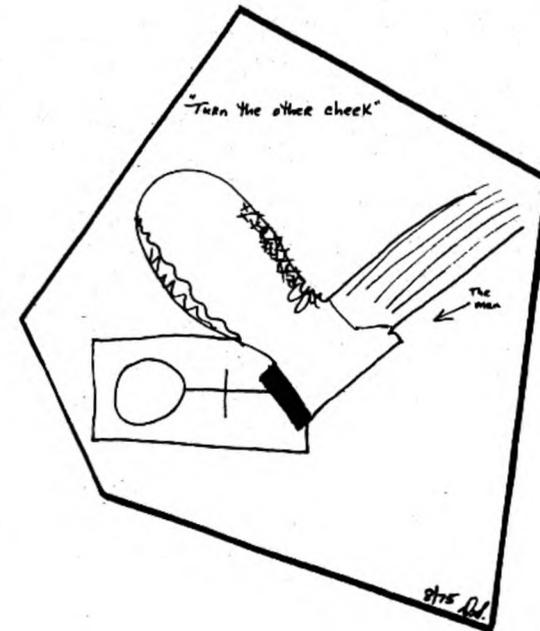
A movement such as this is worthy of support, in the same way as I feel that the American Civil Liberties Union, the War Resister's League, and the various ecology and conservation groups are worthy of support. You do a great disservice to Humanism by mislabeling it "compulsory sex."

Instead of mindless man-hating, why not encourage the "Men's Liberation" group which is actively and successfully humanizing the male. Besides, males and straight people have no monopoly on viciousness; there are gays that do other gays in. I have in mind events a few years ago in the Mattachine Society; and several Lesbians in the Daughters of Bilitis who red-baited me because of membership in the Book Find Club and my activity in the peace and civil rights movements. Los Angeles, I remember, had a butch-femme ratio of four to one, which meant predatory butches everywhere trying to break up couples in mimicry of a conventional heterosexual male. If Stephen Gordon's friend Martin were a Lesbian-butch, she would have met the same fate.

I doubt if even the best of propaganda can make every woman a Lesbian or every man a gay. We humans have individuality in sexual taste as well as temperament, mind, and lifestyle. Some women dig men, other women dig women, so why should we intrude and try to force our tastes on those who have as much right to their privacy and proclivities as we have to curs. After all, it's a tolerant, diversified society we want -- not a compulsory Lesbian-fascism.



This book is available for \$2.95 at bookstores and other shops throughout the Bay Area (see "Bookstore" section) or from The People's Yellow Pages, Box 51291, San Francisco, Ca. 94151. Cost is \$3 if ordered by mail.



Can Men & Women Be Friends?

Dear Ms. Nichols:

Regarding "An Interview with Nikki Dark," LESBIAN VOICES, June 1975, I would like to make the following comment:

Though I am seventeen years of age (and possibly inexperienced in sexual relations), straight, and a feminist, I would like to say that Ms. Dark portrayed men in general as being insensitive to the feelings and emotions of women. On the contrary, I have found that most men I have met and have friendships/relationships with are possibly the most considerate people that I have known. Though a majority of women comprise my circle of friends, my best friend is a young man of sixteen, with whom I share a variety of interests.

What I would like to know (from either yourself or Ms. Dark) is whether men and women can be friends without involving the sexual aspect of a relationship. Ms. Dark seems to measure the value of a person, regardless of their personality or character, by how well they "perform" in a sexual situation.

I hope that you will respond to this comment in some form, since I am eager to learn your viewpoint on this matter.

Yours truly,

Carole B. Belgrade
West Hartford, Conn.

Dear Ms. Belgrade:

I went back and re-read the interview in question to discover where it was stated that the value of a person depended on his ability to "perform" in a sexual situation. I could not find it anywhere. I suggest you re-read the interview yourself, several times if necessary, before attributing views to the author which are not contained therein. I think you do a great injustice to an author -- any author -- when you distort her views. And, goddess knows, authors have enough problems without being challenged by careless or cursory readers when they are trying to present and clarify serious issues.

In response to your question about platonic friendships between men and women, the last page of the interview contained the following statement: "The next question is whether to relate to men socially. As a feminist, I feel that any time I might be tempted to spend on men could be spent better on women or on work for the feminist movement. As far as having male friends, I don't feel they can have much to offer me, particularly in view of my feminist involvements. I do think that, as a Lesbian, I can work on limited projects with gay males, where there is a common goal. But, all in all, I don't feel that males, either gay or straight, can fill my social needs." So, you see, if what you wanted was to know our opinion, you could easily have found it by reading the interview. But perhaps you had some other purpose.

I can well believe that most men are considerate -- nay, even utterly solicitous and attentive -- to a seventeen-year-old possibly-virgin. I would be cautious about drawing conclusions based on that evidence. I think it's unfortunate that your friendships with women are inadequate; however, if you enjoy males -- chacun à son goût -- everyone to her own taste; LESBIAN VOICES is not out to recruit straights into Lesbian Nation!

-- Rosalie Nichols, editor.

Remember This?

from the Sacramento Bee, May 15, 1973:

GIRL LOVE TEST GETS BARBS

Palo Alto (UPI) -- Two attractive high school girls who tested the tolerance of fellow students by showing affection towards one another were snubbed, insulted and threatened as a result.

Muriel Sivyver, 17, Stanford, and Mari Gunn, 17, Los Altos Hills, ran the three-week experiment at Gunn High School.

The girls held hands frequently on campus walks, sat with their arms around each other's shoulders and even exchanged chaste kisses on the cheek when classes ended.

They emphasized that they did not try to give an impression their feelings were sexual -- that they only touched one another in the affectionate style of warm friends.

Whatever impression they sought to give, fellow students interpreted their relationship as a lesbian one.

Their peers regarded them with "total awe," said Miss Sivyver. "We could hear them talking about us, we saw some of them pointing at us."

The girls ran the experiment as part of a family life course with the encouragement of teacher Tom Frankum.

They considered a questionnaire on homosexual attitudes, or a series of depth interviews, but decided on the hand-holding approach.

Both were dropped by boys who had been dating them and nobody invite either of them to the prom last Saturday.

Boys limited their hostility to calling them names, she said, but "some girls threatened to beat us up."

Miss Sivyver said her 16-year-old sister was also given a bad time.

"Girls would say to her, 'what's your sister's trip?' and she'd say, 'Go ask her'."

"It was hard to hold hands and keep a straight face," said Miss Gunn.

Miss Sivyver said, "I can really sympathize with gay people and the pressure they're under in every day living. I can see why there are so many closet homosexuals."

The two girls agreed that whatever friends they lost through their experiment didn't represent much of a loss.

Miss Sivyver said that after the truth was out, some of the girls who insulted them approached them and tried to laugh it off.

"That really makes me mad," she said.

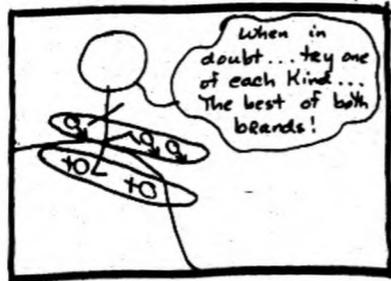
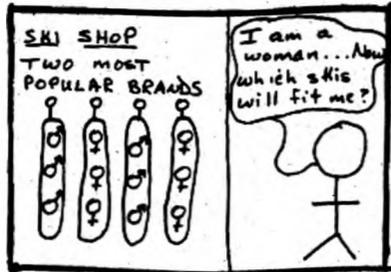
"The whole thing made me wonder," she said. "The younger generation is supposed to be so open and tolerant."



CHOICES



by Debbie Smith



9/75 DS

Renaissance

Being born again
After neardeath
Means long hard labor.

Feels like there's
Nothing there to birth;
Empty and alone.

Few others facilitate
Ease the pain
Offer support.

Grateful to those few
I remember
That giving birth
Is essentially
An individual activity.



-- Marj

Biol. 101

A quick streak of sunlight
flits thru your hair and
I want to glow in it
for it's part of you

A darting fun-smile
forms your lips and
I smile in sharing
for it's part of you

A certain hair-group
forms your eyebrows and
I reach to touch them
for they're part of you

A special movement
accents your hips and
I move with them
for their part of you

An ingenious gene-team
forms your body and
I press next to it
for it's part of you

A unique thought process
governs your being and
I search to understand
for it's part of you

Hair, smile, eyebrow, hip, body, thought
glorious little-big things
all together you.

-- Dorothy Otis Giraffe



It scares me when she tells me I'm beautiful
when she says I'm bright
that she loves me for my creative mind
scares me
when she says I'm strong
calls me her amazon
scares me because I feel like such a fraud
like Clark Kent in his superman outfit
scares me because I'm afraid that some day
when she is watching me sleeping
(as she says she often does)
my mask will slip
And I'll awaken alone and frightened
to find her side of the bed cold

-- Julie C. Simmons



Deep down into my soul
there is a pain.
It swells and swells.
It sharpens steadily.
This pain is now so deep,
so low in my heart.
It yearns to leap out.
It struggles and fights
tearing away at the vessels,
the walls of the well,
my heart.
I think of you.
I think of what we could've been;
I think of what we are now.
The pain escapes,
I have forced it to remain
in its well for so long,
it finally has the strength
now to come out.
There is only one thing
left for me to do.
I cry!

-- Mary Gennoy

SHOW

from padded darkness
He uncurls to the stage.
unbeckoned They trail.
instrumented forms
shadow and shuffle the stage,
and people positions.

drums herald
lights explode harshness
They presence the stage!

He smiles lyrics
and They score smiles
challenging a dissonance of chinking glasses.

with wavering intent They
pierce and quell their set
to listless ears
and emote
to blear-eyed faces,
Now blankly, now blatantly nodding
at sporadic claps.

He signals
palpitating drums answer
She dresses the stage!

and stages the undress,
writhing the glitter to suggestive beat,
offering frozen smile
to lascivious leers
and blazing eyes
to furtive glances.

with measured wantonness She
spills the glitter
frees the form
seethes the flesh
fires the pace of the throbbing drums -

She stops.
He nods
and from the stage
curls to padded darkness.
unbeckoned They trail.

--Gay Jay

Diverted Anger

I killed two flies this morning.
It seems impossible now,
But they brought out my wrath.

The pain has been too strong the past two months.
I've wanted it to leave.
I've been pleasant to it and tried to
Make it feel at home,
Hoping it would fall asleep.
I've even tried to graciously
Escort it away.
Today I got angry with it;
I killed two flies this morning.

-- Terry

I hold my body
Taut, tight,
Away from yours.
I can stand no more
I am suffocating
On your presence,
Woman, can't you see
It's not that I don't love you,
Only that I need to breathe.

--Barbara Lipschutz

Fight Poem

This moment
I am estranged from you
This moment
I have a need to be away from you
This moment
I do not care to discuss anything
rationally, logically, intelligently
This moment
I have no I love you's to spare
This moment
I do not care about your pain
But this moment
will pass.

--Julie Simmons

Comments on 'J' by Ramona Roark

by Barbara Stephens

Very interesting, eliciting a sense of de ja vu. I recall the lure of cults and exotic environments: so enticing on the outside, and so different within. In the late 1950's, there was a mysterious bookstore, the Obelisk, managed and maintained by the C.P. (the Communist Party -- an organization jointly staffed by the FBI, CIA, and KGB). Later, when I met real CPers, their line was the barefoot pregnant one -- compulsory heterosexuality and compulsory child-bearing, and a philosophy really not too different from Hitler's. Then there was Newman Hall -- I liked to hang out over there; I enjoyed the candles and incense, the stained glass windows and somnolent organ music. I read the epistle of the late Pope John, which is one of the great documents of our times. But there are opinions and dogmas among the lesser officials that I am in disagreement with. Then next, the beatnik bistros and bars, followed by their hippy counterparts. Lovely atmosphere: candles and classical music, Hindoo drapes and ecstatic psychedelic patterns. Groovy, far out, except that their liquor was overpriced and then the predatory men, the same as you'd find in any straight bar.

In the beginning, the peace movements, the civil rights groups, the democratic socialist and libertarian anarchist movements were inspiring, until -- something went wrong! Briefly, the peace movement ceded to partisans -- who didn't want peace, but only victory of a foreign power. The integration groups were taken over by segregationists -- a victory for both the white racist as well as advocates of Black Power. The democratic socialists became dominated by an undemocratic "leader," while the anarchists (like the state) withered away, going in all directions to Maoism, Birchism, and to the establishment. The greatest shock was to find the Gay Movement and the Women's Movement rooting for organizations and nations that were sexist and anti-homosexual. So, some of the feminists dug the USSR, which has been good in promoting careers for women (80% of their doctors are women), but so repressive in their pro-natal policy and their suppression of homosexuality. While others were for China and Cuba which habitually brainwash their homosexuals or put them into concentration camps. Both groups were overwhelmingly behind the Black Panther Party, then dominated by Eldridge Cleaver, and whose paper featured cartoons of police-as-female-pigs being executed by Panther males.

I then remembered that Hitler originally had a large homosexual following -- the SA faction of Ernst Rhoem, who later were massacred during the "Night of the Long Swords." And recalling too the portrayal of a homosexual Nazi and a Lesbian Nazi Quisling in the movie "Open City," I ducked out. Surely homosexuals ought to have better judgment by now -- or -- do they?

Your experience in the Women's Movement suggests that you met some Stalinists. Editor James Wechsler wrote of his experiences in the 1930's:

It was primarily that the atmosphere was suffocating; we had come to communism in a spirit of rebellion and we found ourselves imprisoned in the most ruthless orthodoxy any political faith ever imposed. . . We entered this weird underworld of fanaticism and heresy hunting.

-- Age of Suspicion, p. 80, 1953

There, as in every Communist crucifixion of a heretic, it was not considered adequate to show that the man had erred; it was

essential to prove that his motives had been venal and his intentions politically dishonorable from earliest infancy. Ugly references to his personal life were inserted as indicative of his general decay.

-- Ibid, p. 98

There had been a line for art, for creativity in the 1930's such as "the five-year plan in poetry," "poetry as socially responsible labor," "the turning out of literary commodities" --

Let's ponder and repair our nerves
and start up like any other factory.

-- Max Eastman, Artists in Uniform, p 3-4

In the Communist Party affiliates, the John Reed Clubs, some of the rules were:

1. Artists are to abandon "individualism" and the fear of strict "discipline" as petty bourgeois attitudes.
2. Artistic creation is to be systemized, organized, "collectivized" and carried out according to the plans of a central staff like any other soldierly work.
3. Proletarian literature (if created by writers from the petty bourgeoisie) should be written in a way of overcoming a petty bourgeois character and accepting the viewpoint of the proletariat.

-- Ibid, pp 8-9

True, this is ancient history -- Stalin is dead, and Krushchev liberalized the USSR to a point. Yet the dead hand of the past still rules in the American CP and its imitators and stepchildren such as the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army, the Maoists, and the SLA. I'd dismiss this as fantasy of the television and the American press were it not for personal experience with this kind of intimidation from accidental acquaintances with whom I dared to disagree.

I read now that the National Socialist White People's Party (Nazis) is making inroads in the Gay Liberation Front, especially among the S&M (Sado-Masochistic) set. There is a greater need yet for sanity -- and decency in the homophilic movement, if we're ever to survive.

DITTO THE NATIVE AMERICAN

Do you know what a "Communist" is. . .? I doubt it. Communists have never been able to get a foothold among the Native Americans. We are too individualistic, and we don't appreciate being told what to do, how to think, and when to act.

-- from an Editorial in WASSAJA, news publication of the American Indian Historical Society, San Francisco.

ANARCHISM & SELF-DEFENSE

(Letter from Dorothy Dean)

Dear Rosalie,

I read your article "I" with great interest. In some ways it parallels my own experience. I have found that working with the male left as a single, unattached woman got me more recognition as an individual than after I began a relationship with a man in one group. After that, it was always John and Dorothy, and after a while, it was "John" (assumption: I would follow him; isn't that a great song title: "I Will Follow Him"?!!!!)

In women's groups that grew out of the left I found the same sort of tendency toward the "tyranny of the collective" and I have always found myself arguing against that form of organization because I argued, most people haven't got the faintest idea what it is. Now working with women, lesbians, feminists who did not grow up on the left, I find a different atmosphere. Maybe it's only here in Milwaukee, but I find a greater tendency to give women credit for their efforts and there's no shame in it, no injunctions against it. However, there does seem to be a problem relating to women with ability and skills. Many women are new to the movement and new to themselves and are still threatened by a woman who has been around longer in the movement (though it's so fluid that no one really remembers except by myth). . . .

I wanted to ask about the Gay Bill of Rights on the cover of the same issue. I hope by the right to defend one's country, you are referring to the right to defend our woman-identified space (without geographic boundaries) against unwanted intrusions. I find it hard to believe that any woman would want to defend the current oppressive patriarchy with the Man's methods of iron persuasion. I have objected to all of us good feminists trooping down to court to support women who want to get on the Man's police force and enforce the Man's laws against me and my sisters. Long ago, I was thrown out of a Marxist-Leninist group and branded a dyke and an anarchist. I realized that I was happier that way than arguing with them. Since then I've spent much time reading anarchist material and writing anarcha-feminist stuff. PAID MY DUES, which I started, grew out of an anarchist need to promote culture -- the fun half of the cultural/political woman.

I found the two letters on anarchism to be a bit shallow and really offered no well-thought-out ideas. Sure, a lot of hippies (the corrupted ones who are around now with the physical trappings of hippies but without the philosophical and political depth) are real creeps (let's use a really good old term because they really are a throwback to the Republican 50's). But they are not ANARCHISTS!!

Just about any system that perfect people choose will work, it seems to me. Anarchism works without perfect people because it allows for differences. Doesn't program for specific differences in advance. It allows them to exist and maybe even enjoys them.

Anarchism means creativity, not randomness. To the authoritarian-trained person, anarchy means random, unpredictable behavior and is feared for the lack

of tight programming. Authoritarian personalities trained in this "free" society (anyone who ever went to school) don't understand creativity because it is spontaneous and flows from people who are comfortable with themselves. Authoritarians are not comfortable with themselves because they have only two options -- live up to the ideal or cop out (these latter folks are the ones Barbara S. calls anarchists). That's not a human range of choices because it is too limiting. It's bound to make anyone uncomfortable! Especially the folks who live next door.

Women who are breaking with past programming and liking themselves are one reason(s) that so many creative things are happening -- no, they are not just happening as if by some miracle. Women are the most exciting people I know. The most creative and the most anarchistic. Love them!!!

Womankindly,

Dorothy K. Dean
WOMAN'S SOUL PUBLISHING

Dear Dorothy,

Thanks very much for your letter. . . I'm glad to have been made aware of a women's music magazine. I love music and have practically worn out LAVENDER JANE and VIRGO RISING. As you say, cultural feminism is fun -- it is also extremely important. My belief is that political structure derives from the underlying culture and cultural ideas, so I tend to regard cultural change as more basic than political activism. More power (the constructive kind) to you in your efforts!

I agree with your comments on anarchism. . . On the point that you raise about military service: As an anarchist and individualist, I believe in the right of self-defense for the individual and, by extension, for voluntary groupings of individuals. The United States and other nations are not voluntary groupings; their governments are maintained by force and violate the individual's right not to belong, i.e. to secede. Their armies are maintained by force -- by taxation and usually by conscription. So I do not support these governments ideologically. (Still, I think I might fight "for the United States," i.e. for my own self-interest, if attacked by an even worse dictatorship, such as the USSR. Or, maybe while the USA and USSR were fighting, I might join the American Indian Movement in reclaiming the country from both foreign powers.)

The purpose of the Gay Bill of Rights cover on the June issue was to summarize those areas in which homosexuals have been notoriously discriminated against within the present society. As an anarchist, I not only do not support the present military establishment, but I also do not believe in public employment, public housing, and State-licensed marriage -- but, since these exist and are supported by tax money, gays have as much right to access to them as any other citizens. I do not believe in public schools, but it distresses me that a friend of mine was once witch-hunted and persecuted by the State Department of Education when it was discovered she was a school teacher after being picked up in a mass raid on a gay bar. (California State Penal Code Section 291 requires the police to report any school employee -- even a janitor -- who is arrested for a "sex offense"-- in this case, "frequenting a house of ill repute")

Over the years, I have met many, many lesbians who got out of the military the "hard way" (with subsequent "blot" on their records for having a general rather than honorable discharge), and there were others who made it through but only by being very secretive, at great psychological cost. The recent case of Debbi Watson and Barbara Randolph reported in GAY COMMUNITY NEWS is only unique in that they had the courage to fight back, for which I feel they should be commended. Theirs is the first case that I know of in which lesbians actually

stood up openly against the witch-hunting that has been perpetrated against thousands of gays for many years. It gave me a tremendous lift to read about it, even though they lost their case.

I agree with you that a feminist society should have no geographical boundaries . . . I'm not a retreatist; I want to see women pursuing careers (interests and activities of their own choosing) and achieving psychological and material rewards for their work. I don't think this can be done very well, if at all, within the traditional society; therefore, I feel an alternative feminist society is a necessity. I feel that all those women who have broken away from traditional jobs and have involved themselves in feminist activities -- women's bookstores, coffeehouses, restaurants, publishing houses, music companies, distributing companies, art galleries, moviehouses, theater groups, arts and crafts shops, automotive repair shops, electrician services, private schools and study groups, libraries and herstorical archives, banks and credit unions, health clinics, farms, spiritual sanctuaries (of the non-mystical, non-authoritarian sort) -- are already, to that extent, living in Lesbian Nation.

Rosalie Nichols

Dear Rosalie,

More on the military: I'm not a pacifist of the non-violent type. When my gut reaction is to fight -- I do. I know that sexism must be fought wherever it rears its ugly, mindless head, but is it possible to attack the homophobia of the military without suggesting that it is a place for gays to be? Is it possible to attack the sexism in police forces without hinting that they are good places for women? Or places that women should be?

I'd be happy to hear from other anarchy-feminists.

Dorothy Dean
P. O. Box 11619
Milwaukee, WI 53211

Dear Dorothy,

So would I!

Rosalie Nichols
P. O. Box 3122
San Jose, CA 95116

LESBIAN LIFESTYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

A sociological survey of lesbian lifestyles, experiences, and attitudes as a sub-group in our culture. 25 pp. If you would like to administer this questionnaire or desire further information, please contact Marilyn G. Fleener and Nancy Robertson c/o Women's Studies Department, San Jose State University, 125 South Seventh Street, San Jose, California 95192.

Feminist Socialism...A Satire?

(The following material on Feminist Socialism, rejected by QUEST, a feminist quarterly, was submitted to LESBIAN VOICES for publication. We feel that the "future vision" piece must be intended as a satire -- no one could really want to live in the society described -- or could they? If the "emma ironwomen collective" really means it -- and they say they do -- then we agree with them that everyone should know exactly what they mean. It is with this view in mind that the following material is published, and please don't get mad at us for the put-downs on lesbian coupledness and lesbian separatism. -- Editor)

quest
p o box 8843
washington dc 20003

dear sisters

charlotte bunch was here in the s f bay area and said that the deadline had been extended for articles on future visions and fantasies so we are enclosing a future vision of feminist socialism representing the views of the emma ironwomen collective we hope u will print it becuz we have tried to make it as clear as possible so many women do not understand socialism it is only rhetoric to them socialism is not rhetoric to us we really mean it and we want everyone to know exactly what we mean we notice that quest uses socialis rhetoric and analysis while supporting capitalist ideas and projects such as women s businesses credit unions elitist health centers money leadership professionalism and so forth we feel u should either stop supporting capitalism or drop the socialist rhetoric we hope u will at least print our article so women will know what socialism really means as we feel u are putting up a smokescreen either to 1 use socialist rhetoric to further your own goals 2 disguise capitalism 3 achieve socialism by capitalist means which wont work or 4 bring about a compromise which will only be distasteful to all parties concerned and bring about your own disgrace

in sisterhood and struggle
emma ironwomen collective

future vision: feminist socialism

we will try to describe what a truly equal truly loving world of women would be like and how to get there we must do away with all forms of privilege not only class race power money property traditional kinds of privilege we must do away with inequalities of education charisma talent clothes intelligence age beauty health skill we must do away with isolation bring all sisters together make all sisters accountable to all other sisters for what they do say acquire no sister should do say anything without consulting all other sisters everything must be shared with all sisters or we will end up establishing another privileged elite of exceptional women who are able to acquire achieve produce more than their underprivileged sisters and who hold themselves as superior a superior person cannot love an inferior person love can only exist between equals we must first renounce all privileges share advantages attain equality if we are to become truly loving women we must

also avoid reverse sexism exclusiveness of lesbianism which oppresses our brothers by shutting them out of our feminist vision we must share our vision with them encourage them to become feminists create a world where all human beings can share equally whether black brown red white female male transexual we must break down all forms of exclusiveness superiority individualism possessiveness monopoly we must break down the isolation of the nuclear family lesbian coupleness private sex and come together in a freely mobile flux of shared relationships living arrangements sleeping space where any sister brother can find love food sex closeness support essential goods as needed without having to earn them by selling herself himself in the capitalist marketplace of skill ability work personal worth equal love does not make distinctions based on worth equal love loves the less worthy as much as the more worthy love of someone because of her his personal worth is not love but snobbishness oppressiveness elitism we must do away with the concept of worth we must learn to give freely of our love sex closeness support just as we will give freely of all else that we have we must learn to give not to take if everyone would give instead of taking we could share everything equally without having to barter trade buy sell work in the capitalist marketplace nothing should be a commodity everything should be free everyone should be able to get everything just by being not by doing we must break down the protestant work ethic which oppresses us quest is on the wrong track trying to get create produce excel acquire improve rise we should not be trying to rise we should be trying to divest ourselves of privilege divest others of privilege attain the level of our most oppressed sisters brothers so that we can love each other we must oppose the attempt of some sisters to rise above us to form an elite these women are dangerous we must stop them now we must make sure they stay stopped forever or they will destroy our future equality

emma ironwomen collective

(Postscript: Since receipt of the above material, we have already noticed some attacks on Charlotte Bunch in the feminist press. DESPERATE LIVING, in its Spring issue, published an article very critical of Ms. Bunch's appearance in a TV documentary entitled "Charlotte: Portrait of a Lesbian." The crux of the negative review was that Ms. Bunch is in no way representative of most lesbians in our society because she is educated, energetic, out of the closet, knowledgeable, accomplished, innovative, special, inoffensive, and an individual. An editorial note added that Ms. Bunch is making a good salary and is therefore "in no way representative of the lesbian community." BIG MAMA RAG, in its August 1975 issue, reported on events at the first session of Sagaris Institute, where Charlotte Bunch has been teaching this summer. It seems the session started off in an exuberant wave of "sisterhood" and ended in a power struggle between students and faculty over issues of "accountability," "sharing of responsibility," "relevance," and money \$\$\$\$\$. The issues were left unresolved, as far as any group consensus was concerned. Bunch is reported earlier in the session to have asked in her seminar, "Is the approval of other feminists so important to you that you are unable to break any feminist 'ideal' to think independently?" Good question. -- Editor)

Anti-Intellectualism in the U.S.A.

by Barbara Stephens

I agree that the New Left is anti-mind and can cite the reasons:

- (1) A large population of drug-damaged young people, who have graduated from amphetamine addiction to barbiturates and alcohol -- all of them chemicals that cause permanent, irreversible brain damage.
- (2) A calloused population, called the "silent majority," which endorses inhuman warfare (such as napalm-bombing in Vietnam) and hates anything strange or different, such as hippy-freaks, transvestites, gays, and, as of now, South Vietnamese refugees.
- (3) On top of this polarization and alienation, active propaganda reaching by totalitarian groups, coincident with the inactivity and, indeed, collapse of democratic organizations such as World Without War Council, the CDC, and the Democratic Socialists. (I might add, the Libertarian League in Berkeley, whose members have dispersed, some into the establishment and others to the Progressive Labor Party -- Maoist -- and the Weathermen.) When I was photographing the Haight Ashbury scene from 1967 to 1973, I saw newstands and head-shops selling the People's World (Communist Party), Challenge (Progressive Labor Party), and the Berkeley Barb; and Jesus-freaks were everywhere plying their wares at various pagan festivals. Nowhere did I see New America (Socialist Party) or rags from the liberal-democrats.

My guess is that the Communist Party, anti-intellectual as it is, has made little in-roads, for, to my observations, CPers are the squarest of the squares. . . cantankerous, narrow-minded bigots, whose dress habits are identical to the Amerikan bourgeoisie. The Maoists are something else. Back in the early 1960's, many anarchists and hippies told me that Maoism is Anarchism and that Mao's China is a libertarian paradise. The truth of it is that Mao Tse Tung was an anarchist in his youth, and many of China's slogans and rhetoric have an anarchistic ring. It appears that Maoist groups had more sensitive ways of approaching the youth movements than the Communist Party, whose tactics suggest the pile-driver rather than the carrot. So -- with mind curdled to porridge, unable to think, or analyze, but responsive to a likeable euphoric approach, the young flock to any group that accepts them, treats them like human beings. The "line" is irrelevant, as long as it's anti-establishment. So, "let's burn banks -- far out!" "shoot policemen -- wow!!!" "free Bobby Seale, free Charles Manson! Wow-wee! free all political prisoners, free the muggers and rapists -- far out!" "let's kidnap, rob banks, gun down passers-by -- like wow!!!"

Nathan Adler, in 1967, predicted that the Flower Children in a few years would be the Fascist generation. I had just gotten back from Timothy Leary's Human Be-in festival in January of that year and thought Dr. Adler's statement impossible. The Be-in was the most ecstatic, exuberant and non-violent festival I've ever attended. 10,000 people, intoxicated on pot and LSD, dancing, painting, playing musical instruments or watching flowers. I

was there too, floating, and photographing, gloriously drunk from several bottles of Swiss Colony Port Wine.

Since then, the nightmare began, and the embitterment. After the hallucinations of glory came police harassment and persecution by hoodlums. The flower-children were caught in the middle: too scared or too dumb to call the police when hoodlums robbed them or raped the women; and the police were more intent to search for drugs than to protect the victims of violent crime. And there's something about the hoodlum's mentality, that kindness and courtesy are a sign of weakness, so that anyone sweet and gentle -- as the flower-children originally were -- is fair game. Do you remember the case of that German girl in Boston who belonged to an interracial commune in an all black ghetto? She was a courteous, conciliating type of person, who tried to reason with the hoodlums who threatened her. A mean-old-woman with a rifle wouldn't have met her horrible fate.*

There are things that excite us to fury -- even noise pollution will do that -- like having a Mozart concert drowned out by honking of a horn, or a beautiful dream shattered by a motorcycle. And if persecution bugs even the sober and sane, what about the lobotomized ones, deconditioned by LSD and uninhibited by plum-wine?

Historically speaking, there are parallels:

Les Bouzingsos of the 1830's in France, given to S&M cults, Satanism, and use of belladonna. The Wandervogels of pre-WWI Germany, who eventually became Hitler Youth. A common feature that these share with the hippy movement is that of sectarianism or tribalism, which involves:

- (a) Idolatrous adherence to the group -- only "we" are humans, the others are enemies.
- (b) Detachment from reality. Only the "line", the slogans are real; the true reality beyond is irrelevant. Thus, Charles Manson and Cinque De Freeze believed revolution was around the corner, for "What if we gave a revolution, and every-body came!"
- (c) Absolute submission to the Guru, or the leader. A skilled leader need only but to apply the effective rituals and means of achieving ecstasy. See how effective have been the Be-ins of Timothy Leary, or the tactics of Hasan-i-Sabbah, the Roman Catholic Mass, or Anton LeVey's Church of Satan, the Hare Krishna monks, or the black shirts of Mussolini!

The gay liberation movement has paralleled the flower-children movement in several ways. They too have been persecuted for eccentric dress habits and unconventional lifestyles. For a while, hippies were the only heterosexuals who accepted the gays into their culture. There were gay men at Timothy Leary's Be-in, openly flaunting their sexual tendencies. The drug culture has spread to the gay culture, that is, the male portion -- as, indeed, later it has spread to the straights. (Even in conservative Southern Alameda County,

* If our memory is correct, this was the case of a white woman who was drenched with gasoline and incinerated by blacks, remaining conscious when discovered and dying four days later. -- Editor.

many young people -- and some not so young -- are indistinguishable in appearance from the Berkeley hip-scene. And I, who have always been eccentric in dress, now pass for a straight.)

So, at a 1971 Anti-War march, Gay Liberation had its phalanxes, along with groupings of hippies, ecologists, veterans, ethnics, and political radicals. (Even Napa was there, marching with a sign: "Make Wine, Not War!") This was a meeting of the alienated, the estranged, but one that exuded irrationality, disunity, and eventually fell apart. The gays had wooed the Black Panthers who slandered homosexuals constantly in their press. The Women's Lib (at least a part of it) flirted with the macho white man's and black man's violent New Left. And the white radicals courted the Chicano Liberation movement, who broke up the rally with an anti-honky riot.

The tragedy of it is that rational dissenters of necessity must be losers, for when choosing between a Fascist right-wing and a counter-Fascist left, one can only choose to be neither.

Years ago, I attended an SDS picnic, drank all of their wine, and listened to political conversations. The fellows were talking about the Civil Rights movement in the South. It seems that the movement not only included blacks and whites, men and women from the campuses, but also switch-blade gangs from New York and Chicago, such as the Black Stone Rangers. Wow, they were some dudes, real hip-macho blacks raping all the middle-class white chicks, and the chicks didn't complain, didn't fight back, or call the police because that would harm the movement. This was 1966, and I promptly resigned, estranged myself from that grouping -- I had found the enemy.

NEW LESBIAN BIBLIOGRAPHY ANNOUNCED

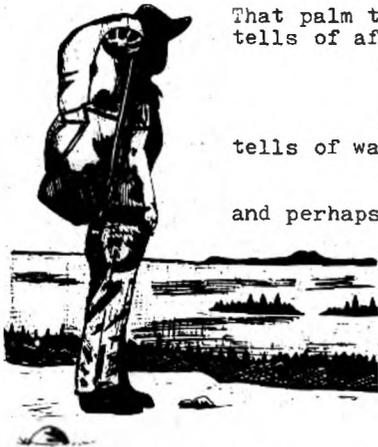
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Knapsack slung over my shoulder
 the air catches me as I pass a familiar window
 its the smell of you and me
 new air after the first rain

Remember the days I'd pop around
 that corner locker
 and we'd race outside
 to escape into our own world
 I was the first person you ever splashed
 through the puddles with

That palm tree playing in the clouds
 tells of afternoons
 cutting class to steal more time for
 each other
 then cramming like hell at finals
 and collapsing in pleasure when it was done
 tells of walking home slowly
 holding each other with our eyes
 the world wasn't ready for our love
 and perhaps our love wasn't ready for the world



There's a woman in my class who looks like your
 lover
 bitterness wells up inside
 through no fault of her own
 I despise her

I haven't wanted to touch you
 to say I love you
 in a long time
 My defense has been strong
 My rationality strong
 My feelings
 iron

Today the first rain
 touched my soul
 inside I scream for you
 tears
 simple uninhibited real
 soft because I love you
 it's been a long time since I've let myself feel your absence



-- Maureen Kennedy

(DRAWINGS BY PUCK)

For Tammy Whom I Once Loved:
 Who You Are To Me:

You are my Love
 You are my Pain
 You are my Inspiration
 You are my Suicidal Attempt
 You are my Sun
 You are my Anger
 You are my Thunderstorms
 You are my Thirst
 You are my Thirst Quencher
 You are my Romance
 You are my Infatuation
 You are my Hatred
 You are my Desires
 You are my Lust
 You are my Emotional Stress
 You are my Idol
 You are my Headache
 You are my Star in the Darkness
 You are my Baby
 You are my Enemy
 You are my Protector
 You are my Shelter
 You are my Sense of Belonging
 You are my Outcaster
 You are my Sense of Being
 You are my Lost Direction
 You are my Desire of Death
 You are my Will to Live
 You are my Truths
 You are my Lies
 You are my Heaven
 You are my Hell
 You are my Justice
 You are my Injustice
 You are my Peace
 You are my Wars
 You are my Fire
 You are my Water
 You are my Better Half
 You are my Worse Half
 You are my Health
 You are my Disease
 You are my Equal
 You are my Inequality
 You are my Partner
 You are my Killer
 You are my Sister
 You are my Friend
 You are all of these
 But most of all
 You are My Imagination.

-- Mary Gennoy

Coming Out Alive



She's finally giving birth
 To a new life
 The newborn is her
 Sometimes that infant
 Feels so inadequate
 She's old enough to be
 Aware of her floundering self.

The first birth
 Might have been frightening
 But she didn't know it

The difference is self-awareness

Discovery

-- Marj

I found out today
 That I've grown up. . .
 I forgot to eat
 The filling first (of my oreo cookie)

--Terry



Her voice, her touch, her care
 rhyme in my soul
 as we
 in silent trust
 share the happen-ness
 that seeks us
 and punctuates our poem of love
 with ongoing dots....

-- Gay Fay

and when I think of you, us
 now
 in the aftermath
 I think of cinnamon autumn leaves
 that crunch between my teeth like corn flakes
 orange love poems
 with the pulp sucked out
 and a paper cup
 half filled with cold black coffee

-- Julie C. Simmons

Cycle

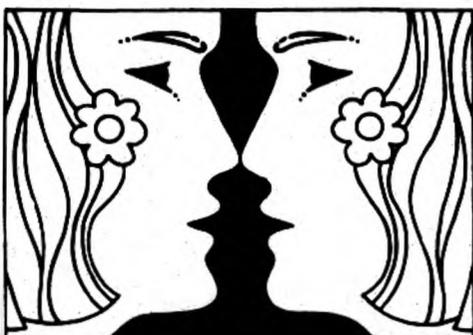


The monthly pain is here again.
 I'd like to chase it away
 Or cut it out.
 I have no need of it.
 This proves my fear. . .
 God must be a fucking man!

--Terry

It's sad that there are still some women around who think "new freedom" is
 merely a sanitary belt without pins.

--Dorothy Otis Giraffe 55



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Nobody Needs To Get Fucked

by Barbara Lipschutz

Men, by and large, cannot openly show their affection for each other. Because they cannot simply hug each other, they engage in mock battle to obtain the physical contact which they crave. Sometimes they fuck over each other, and sometimes they unite to fuck over a woman. The latter is known as camaraderie. It is extolled in much 20th century American literature.

When men and women touch, it is structured into a genital, penetrative interaction. In short, somebody gets fucked. And we know who Somebody is. . . .

Even as a lesbian, my sexuality has been learned from the Man. I think in terms of couples, of orgasms, of goal orientation. And this cuts me off from the sensuality of my entire body, and also from the possibility of exploring it in groups of women larger than two. In short, too often somebody gets fucked again.

Lesbianism is, among other things, touching other women -- through dancing, playing soccer, hugging, holding hands, kissing.

An aspect of sexual liberation is freeing the libido from the tyranny of orgasm seeking.

Sometimes hugging is nicer. Men have alienated us so much from our bodies that we have yet to learn what women's sexuality is. Those women who have left men to love women too often still carry around with them the male model of "getting down to it."

If we are to learn our sexual natures, we have to get rid of the male model of penetration and orgasm as the culmination of love-making.

Holding hands is love-making.

Touching lips is love-making.

Rubbing breasts is love-making.

Locking souls with women by looking deep in their eyes is love-making.

Which is not to say that genital contact isn't nice. I like penetration, I like both giving and receiving oral sex with women. I have been having clitoral orgasms since I was two, and I certainly don't intend to give them up. But my clitoris is not my body, and my orgasms are not my sexuality.

Because I was raised in a heterosexual, monogamous, patriarchal society, those values have shaped me. I do not simply rid myself of them by declaring myself lesbian, polygamous, matriarchal, etc. I must unlearn all that is anti-woman in my upbringing to discover my womanself. If I feel good when I am dancing with a woman and I identify that good feeling as sexual, then I'm likely to think I want to have genital, orgasmic sex with her. I have learned this model from the Man. If it's what I really want and what she really wants, great.

But maybe what we really want is to kiss or caress each other's breasts or hands or just keep on dancing.

Orgasmic, penetrative sex is alienating if it diminishes all-over body-mind-soul contact. I am beginning to learn to identify what my body, my soul really want to do. Stroking another woman's hair is ecstasy. . . .

The thing that's so nice about being a lesbian is that nobody needs

to get fucked

Open Letter To Libertarian Review

Dear Sir:

My attention was called to Jarret Wollstein's review of CRIMES WITHOUT VICTIMS (LIBERTARIAN REVIEW, June 1975), in which he faults the author as follows:

Schur also contributes to the stigmatization of homosexuals, drug addicts, and women who abort, whom he demeans by continually calling their actions "deviances," "problems," etc. Never does he seriously consider the possibility that these actions may be entirely good and proper. After all, they threaten the status quo, which Schur seems to equate in general with the "social good."

Mr. Schur's book was published in 1965 and has been very helpful to the homophile movement over the years, despite its retrospectively conservative approach. May I remind your readers of the following editorial which was published in the May 1970 issue of THE INDIVIDUALIST under Jarret Wollstein's editorship:

WOMEN

Rothbard is right. The women's liberation nonsense has gotten out of hand. The sad thing is that the influence of the anti-sexist blather is not confined to a few raucous females. Portions of the women's lib doctrine are spreading among otherwise intelligent women. If present trends continue, militant lesbianism will be added to the other dangers of urban living.

Sane women, you are beautiful. Heterosexual love has perennially added to the appreciation of life. With society in the grip of every sort of insanity, let's not let female beauty slip away. Show how you feel. The INDIVIDUALIST is making available, free of charge, "Rothbard is right" buttons. Send for yours today.

Now, what was that old cliché about the hypocrisy of the pot calling the kettle black?

Rosalie Nichols, Editor
LESBIAN VOICES

Postscript to LESBIAN VOICES readers: For those unfamiliar with the libertarian movement as it exists today, it is a predominantly right-wing movement, even while proclaiming an anarchist politico-economic philosophy. The Libertarian Party generally includes a campaign plank favoring abolition of "crimes without victims" -- but in their attitudes, I have found most libertarians to be almost as anti-feminist and homophobic as the Coalition of Christian Cranks. Their position on women's and gays' struggle for dignity is probably as slippery as their position on property rights -- which they support when their rights are in question, but quickly abandon when faced with the question of property rights for American Indians and other dispossessed peoples. Don't be deceived!

GAY PRIDE DAY IN SAN JOSE

The Lesbian-Feminist Alliance and the SJSU Gay Student Union have declared October 3, 1975, as Gay Pride Day. Workshops, poetry readings, films, potluck dinner and a dance with Sweet Chariot will take place in the SJSU Student Union on Friday, October 3rd. We will petition the County of Santa Clara to declare this day Gay Pride Day for the whole county; we hope to involve the entire gay community rather than just the campus groups.

One of the goals of the Day is to help create an information network in the South Bay Area. Too many gays feel isolated, not realizing the extent of the community. Information is often inaccessible or incomplete; events or groups aren't widely publicized. Many people don't have the time or energy to track down elusive facts and become discouraged, convinced they are part of a tiny minority made up of themselves and their few friends.

There are lots of us! Let's come together, celebrate and share.

We plan to assemble and distribute bibliographies of gay fiction, resource lists (legal, financial, social, educational) and political action information. We plan to display arts and crafts relevant to gay culture -- photos, jewelry, drawings, etc. We want representatives of area organizations to participate in our information fair by setting up a table or display. (We will also display literature of groups unable to attend.)

We need your help to make all these fantasies a reality! What's your favorite gay fiction? Do you belong to a group we don't know about? Are you working on a community project? Do you create gay art? Be part of Gay Pride Day!

Workshops will include bodywork, bisexuality, couples, legal rights, political action, feminism, coming out, and others. Films will be shown throughout the day. Activities start at 9:30 a.m., continue through a potluck dinner (bring food!) at 7:00 p.m., and wind up with the music of Sweet Chariot, well-known all-woman rock band, from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Childcare will be provided and overnight housing will be available. To be part of the information and arts fair, contribute suggestions, labor, money, or other help, call 294-5931 or 297-7045.

GAYS & THE LAW

The Peoples College of Law of the National Lawyers Guild is a new 4-year law school oriented toward those usually excluded from the legal educational process.

Gay people, especially lesbians and third world gays, are definitely welcome. Entrance requirements are 2 years of college leading towards a Bachelor's degree, or you must take the college equivalency test. Tuition is low. All applicants should be committed to use the law as a tool for social change.

For more information, write GAY CAUCUS, c/o FCL/NLG, 2228 West 7th Street, L.A. CA 90057 or call (213)388-8171.



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