

THE LADDER

A LESBIAN REVIEW

JUNE
'65



(for sale to adults only) .50



purpose of the

Daughters of **BILITIS**

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING
THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

- ① Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications--this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.
- ② Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.
- ③ Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.
- ④ Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

the Ladder

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The Invisible Woman

SOME NOTES ON SUBVERSION

The word "homosexual" is being thrown around as never before in the mass media, but almost always it refers to the male of the species. This is also true in the psychology textbooks. The male homosexual has become socially "visible," but the lesbian is the invisible woman.

Why this blackout on female homosexuality? The reason is that the lesbian is a dangerous subversive rebelling against the deepest injustices of our social order. Her existence brings up questions so uncomfortable that most people can't even bear to admit her existence. They even leave her out of the laws against homosexuality, while penalizing the men.

They find it possible to admit the existence of the male homosexual because they can use him as a bad example. He is made an object of ridicule so the others can form a pack and, turning against him, reaffirm their own masculinity and their identification with the o.k. guys. He is the scapegoat on whom they heap their own repressed homosexuality.

But the lesbian can't be allowed even that much existence in a male-dominated culture. To the frail male ego, the thought of a woman who has her own identity, instead of getting it from her relationship with a man, is so destructive it's unimaginable and must be ignored out of existence.

The self-determining woman is a horror whose existence drives men mad. Immediately they cry "competitive," as though it were the worst epithet, though applied to men it's one of the most complimentary words in our business-oriented culture. Let a woman move ever so slightly out from under centuries of male domination and agonized screams of "Momism" are heard throughout the land in the popular press and psychotherapists' clinical studies alike.

The modern woman has yet to emerge as a human being on her own rather than as somebody's wife and mother. The lesbian is that anomaly, a free woman, legislated out of existence by 3,000 years of patriarchal culture.

Men are very insecure in their male supremacy these days. In a century of the rebellion of the underdog, women are proving the last group to revolt. They have been subjugated the longest and are the most totally brainwashed. But the handwriting

is on the wall and all forces are marshalled for one last manly stand in defense of male supremacy. In this tense situation, the lesbian must be kept invisible because she embodies everything the male most fears.

Men's irrational behavior indicates they have an unconscious terror of women. Having been born to women, and left helpless and dependent on that giant mother, they seem compelled to spend the rest of their lives proving to themselves and everyone else how independent and manly they are. Everywhere they look they see challenges to their masculinity. They see women not as human beings, but as threats or not-threats to that apparently delicate and easily lost physiological appendage about which their whole psychic life revolves.

Psychoanalysis and the related psychological professions are particularly involved in this highly subjective and one-sided battle. Though it purports to be a science, psychoanalysis is in fact built on a superstitious, narcissistic and homoerotic overvaluation of the male appendage. The whole "scientific" machinery of the psychoanalytically-oriented professions revolves comically around "masculinity" - threats to, loss of, search for. Woman is the ultimate threat, who may cut off, swallow up in her vagina, or wither with scorn that so delicate organ. With totally un-self-critical male vanity, they even accuse her of wanting to steal it and appropriate it for herself, certain as they are that everyone finds it as infinitely desirable as they do. Woman, as in the darkest ages, must be bullied into taking the part of the Womanly Woman, who will treat that precious part with respect and offer no threat to it. Psychotherapists have invented that mythological figure, the "domineering mother," on whom can be blamed all men's failures and weaknesses. Another scapegoat is the "frigid" and "castrating" wife, who won't play her proper role in codling the male vanity.

What greater enemy could there be in this scheme than the lesbian, who not only is socially and psychically independent of the male, but also gets her sex elsewhere and, worst sacrilege, isn't interested in that male appendage. Further, she is likely to compete not only for the jobs, but for the women. Men have an awed respect for the lesbian's power to make women enjoy sex - apparently men feel inadequate on this score.

Even Albert Ellis, that dyed-in-the-wool dyke-hater, tells men in one of his how-to sex articles that it's true lesbians are better lovers than men, but that's only because the American male is so uneducated sexually. Ellis promises to teach them tricks that will make them equal any lesbian.

The revolt of the female has been temporarily set back by this male-oriented psychoanalytic counterattack. Back at the turn of the century, G. B. Shaw ridiculed the Womanly Woman as an invention of the male for his own convenience. Women are told they find their happiness in living for others as wives and mothers, he said, but the independent woman who lives for herself rather than for others is much more interesting and vital a person.

At just about that time, when the breakthrough of the New Woman was taking place, Gertrude Stein was in the first graduating class at Radcliffe. Like her, many of her classmates were lesbians, and all were determined feminists. They were among the first of a large group of American women who became leaders in their professions, never married, and lived very long and active lives. Their obituaries are still appearing in the newspapers, and as they go there are no replacements.

Today's graduating class at Radcliffe has as its chief goal marriage before graduation. The girls are worked over from early childhood to be terrified of not catching a proper husband early, and many get themselves pregnant and give up the rest of their education to do so. Even the brightest give up the idea of a career in order to fulfill the Womanly Role that Madison Avenue ad men and psychotherapists have combined to promote as the most important thing in life.

The American Association of Medical Women notes that many girls do better on the National Merit Scholarship tests than the smartest boys, and show superior talents for going into medicine. But the number of women entering the medical profession has dropped fantastically since earlier days when women were supposedly less emancipated. A sign of the times is a booklet put out by this association, encouraging girls to become doctors. The theme of the booklet is that you can be somebody's wife, somebody's mother, and somebody's doctor. It's hard, but you can be a doctor and raise a family at the same time. Aside from the fact that one would hate to be sick and be examined by a woman who was worrying about getting home on time to make dinner for the kiddies, think of what it does to the woman herself to be so fragmented. No man is told that he has to fill three primary roles at once.

The unfortunate effect on the woman is depicted in a book called *THE ACADEMIC WOMAN* (1), a sociological study of educated women who have had conflicts about marriage and career. The study finds that the problems are so destructive to the woman, who in the end always returns to the career, that in all compassion sociologist David Riesman makes a most revolutionary suggestion in the preface - he says celibacy may be preferable to the problems of marriage for these women.

Psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim goes a grudging tiny step further. In an essay called "Growing Up Female" (2), he points out that women get a raw deal in our society. They are raised to a certain point with the belief that they live in a democracy in which everyone is equal - and then when they come to puberty they find out that men are just "more equal." From regarding themselves as independent, active human beings, they

(1) *THE ACADEMIC WOMAN* by Jessie Bernard, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1964.

(2) "Growing Up Female" by Bruno Bettelheim - *PSYCHOANALYSIS AND CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CULTURE*, edited by Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek, Delta (Dell Publishing), 1964.

have to switch suddenly into passive females dependent on men - or at least pretend to be. Either way it's a great indignity.

Being a psychoanalyst, Bettelheim naturally suggests better preparation for the female role from the beginning, but he does go on to say that some women who cannot make this adjustment may be better off living with another woman than with a man, in a relationship which offers them the image of themselves a man can't give them. He adds very prissily that though there's a "danger" this will turn into a sexual relationship, it needn't!

It takes a woman novelist, Mary McCarthy, to come out with the logical solution. Her novel *THE GROUP* is precisely about several young women who are educated to see themselves as human beings, rather than as women. As a result, when they go out into the world they come to grief, because men naturally treat them as women, and they are too civilized to fight back. Only the lesbian and the celibate girl in the novel make out well. The lesbian, in addition to being a character in herself, is a projection of the lesbian component in all the girls which makes them demand equality.

Miss McCarthy's *Final Solution*, the elimination of the male, is the logical outcome of the situation she describes. It is so unacceptable that the book, though on the best-seller list for a long time, received chiefly hostile reviews. Most critics, being male, just didn't understand the book. The *ESQUIRE* reviewer, in a state of shock, kept saying that only the women "who give up sex" have a good end in the novel. But it's quite clear that the lesbian is not doing without sex. He just can't bear to admit it. Men, in their inadequacy, seem to feel pushed off the edge of the world into annihilation by the thought that women don't need them. Whereas I doubt that women are nearly so deeply upset by the idea of men having sex and love without them.

Miss McCarthy's book has been out for a couple of years, and has produced no rash of imitators with lesbian heroines. Her novel has yet to be fully appreciated. The author has written an essay expressing disappointment at the way the novel has been misread, with the double-edged irony of the piled-on clichés taken as straight narrative by most readers and critics. The lesbian figure was ejected like an unassimilable foreign body from the reading public's collective psyche, even though the book has had such huge sales.

The taboos die hard. The male vanity is so strong and the male ego so weak that the social set-up conditions women to feed the one and prop up the other by pretending to be dependent and inferior to men. Many women may prefer to continue this role if given a choice, but the choice should be there for those who do not.

The lesbian wants to be self-determined as a man is, not put herself aside and live as a reflection of some man's fantasy life. It is not at all the man's penis or his muscles that

she covets, but his right to be an active, self-determining person. (Most lesbians love femininity, and, contrary to popular myth, dislike brawn in themselves or their partners.)

A lesbian living in a patriarchal male-dominated society like ours, who goes to a psychotherapist to be told she must be "cured" and force herself into the straitjacket of the Feminine Role, is like a Mississippi Negro who might be told by a therapist that he has to adjust himself into the "Nigger" role society has cut out for him.

There are times when revolt, not "adjustment to society," is the only "mature" and self-respecting course. And you can't depend on the authorities-in-power to tell you when that time is.

- L. E. E.

The Homosexual Citizen In The Great Society

is the upbeat theme of the 1965 conference of East Coast Homophile Organizations. This, the third annual conference of the ECHO affiliation, will be held in New York City on September 25 and 26, 1965. Speakers who have to date accepted invitations are:

- James Collier, author of *THE HYPOCRITICAL AMERICAN* (reviewed in *THE LADDER*, June 1964)
John Lasso, Director of Christian Social Relations, Episcopal Diocese of New York
Dr. Isadore Rubin, Managing Editor, *SEXOLOGY* Magazine
Dr. Hendrik Ruitenbeek, sociologist, psychoanalyst, author of *THE PROBLEM OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN MODERN SOCIETY* (reviewed in *THE LADDER*, April 1964) and the just-published *HOMOSEXUALITY AND CREATIVE GENIUS* (Ivan Obolensky, 1965)
Dr. Ernest van den Haag, psychoanalyst, Adjunct Professor of Social Philosophy at New York University

ECHO Conference sessions are open to the public. Hotel site, registration cost, and more details of the program will be announced in coming issues of *THE LADDER*. Reservations may be made through any of the ECHO affiliate organizations:

- Daughters of Bilitis - (see inside back cover of *THE LADDER*)
Mattachine Society of New York - 1133 Broadway, New York 10, New York
Mattachine Society of Philadelphia - P. O. Box 804, Philadelphia 5, Penna.
Mattachine Society of Washington - P. O. Box 1032, Washington 13, D. C.

Saturday Conversation

by Valerie Taylor

"You know," I said, "it's getting harder and harder to publish a decent lesbian novel."

Joan sipped her diet drink. Contrary to popular fiction, many gay women don't drink or don't drink much. "You mean, a novel about decent lesbians."

"That's right. According to about ninety-five percent of the gay books on the market, we just don't have any morals. We hop from bed to bar and back to bed again, with anybody who comes along. It's wonderful."

"Oh, I don't know. Remember, we all end up as alcoholics or dope addicts or suicides."

"Or in bed with a man, after hating men for two hundred pages. In Paperback Land people switch loves the way you and I change our stockings, but they all settle for the pure love of a good man on the last page."

Joan was thoughtful. "I don't hate men. They're some of the nicest people I know."

"That's because you never slept with one. All lesbians become lesbians because they're brutally raped in Chapter One. As soon as a kind, understanding male comes along, they respond passionately to his caresses."

"Everyone in Paperback Land responds passionately, twenty-four hours a day," Joan reminded me. "Nobody ever has a head cold or a backache, or final exams coming up. Nobody's ever annoyed because her roommate leaves the cap off the toothpaste or forgets to pay the telephone bill. All they do is--"

"Unh, unh," I warned, "don't use that kind of language. You have to describe your love scenes in palpitating detail, but you can't use any of those good old basic words everybody knows. They're immoral."

Joan carried her diet pop bottle into the kitchen. "I like your apartment," she called back. "Can I use it in my book, if I decide to write one?"

"Certainly not. People in Paperback Land don't live in ordinary apartments, just penthouses or beatnik-type slums. They don't have regular jobs, either. They're actresses or dress designers, or they wear men's pants and work as bartenders or elevator operators. The ones who wear men's pants are tough butches who go around picking fights with men."

Joan, who is a librarian, said, "Gee, what am I doing living with a file clerk? And my former friend worked in a department store. Where do you meet all these glamorous actresses?"

"I once met an actress at an autographing party," I remembered helpfully. "She was about fifty and wore falsies."

"Nobody in Paperback Land is flat-chested. They all have great big bulging bosoms, and they wear black nylon underclothes and transparent blouses. We dropped in at Carlo's Castle for one beer last Saturday night," Joan said, "but nobody was there in a transparent blouse. They must not have read the books."

"Anyway," I got back to the subject in hand, "if you want to get a gay book published, you'll have to forget about real life. One or two publishers will let you have a happy ending, girl gets girl, but they have to make mad love with a dozen other people first."

"I really need to earn some extra money," Joan said. "My roommate may have to have her appendix out. Do you think if I told the editor--"

"Nope. Nobody in Paperback Land has an appendix, just a gorgeous bosom plus other basic equipment. Your girl may meet a gay gal doctor in Paperback Land, if that's any help, but the doctor will be too busy to look after her patients."

"I know. She'll be luring restless married women into a shadowland of unnatural lust."

"That's right. Women executives are even worse. They seduce secretary after secretary, while the mail piles up in the IN basket."

Joan said dryly, "Thanks for the encouragement. I'd start my novel right away, but I have to go to the laundromat. I owe my mother a letter, too."

"In Paperback Land nobody has parents," I reminded her. "And they don't get out of bed long enough to wash the sheets."

"Sounds unsanitary. By the way, when is your new book coming out?"

I winced. "It's not. They sent me a contract giving the publisher the right to make certain minor alterations - like changing the entire plot and all the characters. Good thing I have a part-time job."

Joan gathered up the books she had borrowed. "Maybe you could put on a black lace bra and seduce the editor. Then you too could end up in the arms of a good man."

"No thanks. Besides--"

But she was already halfway down the stairs.

Oh well, I thought as I went into the kitchen to drown my sorrows in diet pop, why disillusion the kid? If she doesn't know Paperback Land was invented by male authors in search of a fast buck, or compensating for their own sexual inadequacy, why should I tell her? She'll find out fast enough that being a lesbian is the easiest way to disqualify oneself from getting a gay book published.

I wonder how you get a job as an elevator operator?

SURVIVAL
(Portrait of a Woman of 40)

There a woman passes --
Gratian the grey-eyed --
with a gift of fitting silence,
with level divining gaze,
a ready shoulder for burden
and unshaken lips.

But behind her are wistful shadows...

Zoe who ran brown-footed in wet grass,
hair a flung banner,
throat and wrists curved back against the
soft gale,
fleet child's body, and eyes as secret
as dawn.

There was Nada
of restless, tempered grace,
dancing with light sure feet and pliant
shoulders,
smiling swift-hearted,
fleeing back behind wide proud eyes;
Nada with slipping whimsy voice
and a madcap's tongue.

And Ardis, who sat long in shadowy places,
drowned in books,
floating and lost in dreams,
seeing the faint rosy roofs and white towers
against cobalt sky,
breathing the musk, the jessamine,
hearing the smooth tunes, the amorous
whispers,
the cool mocking silver laughter
of the Land of Coccaigne.

But only their thin wraiths walk
when the moon is clear
and old friends call.

Gratian is growing.

- Abigail Sanford

Lesbiana by Gene Damon

308. JOURNEY TO FULFILLMENT - by Valerie Taylor. Midwood Tower, 1964.

Miss Taylor's three novels featuring Erika Frohmann as heroine have appeared in chronologically reversed order. This book takes up Erika's childhood years in a concentration camp, her adoption by an American family, her first teenage love affair, and her first serious attachment, to a much older woman. All this precedes her experiences with Kate Wood (A WORLD WITHOUT MEN) and Frances Ollenfield (RETURN TO LESBOS). This story with its emphasis on Erika's youthful years is less interesting than the other two novels about her life, but it is a welcome and nicely written piece for the overall picture of an appealing fictional lesbian character.

309. THE HORSE KNOWS THE WAY - by John O'Hara. Random House, 1963, 1964.

Three of the stories in this excellent collection have homosexual content. "The Staring Game" and "The Jet Set" concern male homosexuality. "Clayton Bunter" is a subtle and gently humorous tale about the life-long menage of Clayton, his older sister, and his wife. The story opens with Clayton's death and goes back in time to record the friendship of his wife and his sister and their happy life together.

310. A JOURNAL OF LOVE - by Edward Mannix. Dial Press, 1964.

Though the "journal" kept by an eccentric young author is primarily about his love affair with Janine, much of the story concerns the relationship between Janine and Roberta (Bobby), a neighbor of the narrator. Well handled in spots, particularly in the chapter-long account of the girls' mutual seduction, but overall it reads like an exercise rather than an experience.

311. THE OTHER GIRL - by Theodora Keogh. London, Neville Spearman, 1962.

This realistic, straightforward narrative is a departure from Keogh's usual style of obscure writing with much symbolism.

Margory Vulawski is unlike any lesbian you or I will ever know, but she is a convincing character and probably many Margorys walk the earth. Margory leaves her father's farm in the mid-1940's and, since men are scarce, she readily finds work as a mechanic in Los Angeles. She meets and falls in love with Betty, a beautiful slut. Chance and circumstance seem to afford Margory one wonderful night and part of a lovely day with Betty. But the unworthy Betty takes advantage of Margory's

devotion (and money.) Inevitably, since Betty is not a lesbian, Margory is left by the wayside. Somewhere in the back of her mind lies a "vague, throbbing tide," and at the close of a day of humiliation the tide rolls up and brings the story to its shocking end.

Early in the narrative, a man who admires Betty sexually says about her: "Yes, she was like some flower, its petals bred thicker and thicker, its colour murky with the perversion of man - like a dahlia, a black dahlia." This book is in a sense a mystery novel. It suggests a plausible answer to the famous and still unsolved California case upon which it unmistakably is based.

going on

crying inconsolate
seeking after shelter
wanting warmth
always looking through a window
face pressed
close against the glass
frozen forever
from outstretched clasp

going on

as far as yonder

lost in light
touching lamp-posts for a token
in a starry night
calling like the loon
diving into dark
lonely
upon a lake of loveliness
merely not mine
never nearing
ears with hearing
an open heart
one drop of cautious caring

and on

but only as far as yonder
as far as
well

barely beyond

- N. F. K.

Compassion is a Chinese greeting
Justice -- disappointed eyes
Mercy is the lap of judgement
Wisdom

Just the naked skies

- Elise Cowen

Cross-Currents

Some TV stations in Canada and the U. S. have shown a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation film on homosexuality which included the expected line-up of professionals giving their views: an anthropologist, psychiatrists, clergymen, and law-enforcement officers. Nonetheless the show has been judged a comparatively rational and responsible handling of the subject.

When it came to picking a catchy title for the show, the producers were obviously taken with sensation-writer Jess Stearn's slick phrase "The Sixth Man" - referring to the conjecture that statistically, one man out of six is homosexual. But apparently the CBC people couldn't quite believe it. They settled for a more conservative estimate of the gay male population and called the show "Every Tenth Man."

To the unidentified LADDER reader in Seattle, Washington, who reported seeing this show and regretted that there was no sign of a sequel called "Every Tenth Woman": See the article "The Invisible Woman" in this issue of THE LADDER!

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On the February 8, 1965 cover of ANTIQUARIAN BOOKMAN, a journal for the rare and out-of-print book trade: "The only dirty word has 10 letters: C-E-N-S-O-R-S-H-I-P."

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"Fink Foils Fascist Fomenting Fag Fest," flapped the flippant headline in the April 1965 issue of THE REALIST, a satire magazine. Below it was a write-up of the notorious Nazi incident at last year's ECHO Conference in Washington. The account quoted heavily from THE LADDER's January 1965 report, "A Nazi Stunt Fails," which was based on a tape-recording made on the spot during the homosexual-harassment visit by one of the American Nazi Party's handsome heterosexual henchmen.

In crediting THE LADDER for use of its material, THE REALIST characterized it as "a lesbian review of militant dignity."

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Our society is "trying to outlaw single people," complains a Vassar College sociology professor. Her sprightly article, "Why Get Married?", appeared appropriately in the February 13 (Valentine) issue of the SATURDAY EVENING POST. Dr. Leslie Koempel says that the all-consuming pursuit of the ideal marriage that governs our whole American culture today, makes a lot of people unhappy and wastes productive energies that could go into other equally valuable life goals. She condemns the unnatural pressures we've built up which push everyone to marry and live lockstep, and she points out that our society

is thereby depriving itself of the talents and energies of unmarried persons who don't have to give their prime attention to spouse and children. Dr. Koempel notes with concern that today's young people have become so conditioned by the overvaluation of marriage that they don't even want to have the choice to marry or not to marry. She urges reversing our conformity stampede and encouraging gifted young people "to create their own life patterns."

With the reprinting of the article in the May 1965 READER'S DIGEST, Dr. Koempel's prickly message has been well broadcast to the over-92%-married American adult public.

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Benefits of Bachelorhood Dept.: A LADDER subscriber in San Francisco spotted two unrelated newspaper accounts of never-married ladies who have celebrated their 100th birthdays.

Among those gathered for the centennial of Sarah Tomlinson was retired Justice C. J. Goodell of the State District Court of Appeals, whom Miss Tomlinson had taught when he was in kindergarten. Miss Tomlinson, born in Spain, came to San Francisco in 1879. She attributes her long life to the fact that she never married.

Another centenary, Frances Tarpy, gave what the newspaper guilelessly called "a variant in answer to the question, 'What is the secret of your longevity?'. 'I never married'," was Miss Tarpy's reply. And she displayed her ringless left hand as she celebrated at a small party given by friends.

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Homosexuality is the most serious minority problem in Sweden, says Henning Pallesen, a Swedish journalist who felt the need to write a book calling for greater acceptance of homosexuals. "The problem is not being homosexual, but being allowed to be one," he claims. To gain insight into the lives of homosexuals, Pallesen decided to identify himself with them - whereupon some of his old friendships ended abruptly.

Pallesen questions the notion that one can be seduced into homosexuality. He quotes a Swedish sex specialist who points out that if heterosexuality were "natural" and homosexuality "unnatural," then exposing homosexuals to the "natural" heterosexual experience should pull them around to heterosexuality, while a homosexual experience should have little influence on a heterosexual's "natural" drives.

Homosexuals in Sweden have it easier than most other persons with divergent sexual drives, claims Swedish psychiatrist Lars Ullerstam in his book THE EROTIC MINORITIES, which followed the Pallesen Book. Dr. Ullerstam feels that Christianity got its power through sexual taboos and is heavily to blame for "poisoning the sexual attitudes" of Western culture. With the loosening of Christianity's grip in Sweden, there has been a superficial shift in attitude toward persons with divergent

sexual drives: while no longer "punished" in prisons, they are "treated" in mental institutions, with the same goal of correcting the disapproved behavior. Dr. Ullerstam notes that the welfare state benevolently fosters conventional heterosexual expression but cuts everything else out of the official picture. He says he would encourage divergent sexual outlets.

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There are strange undercurrents in the mass-produced greeting cards. One "studio" card shows two girls enthusiastically gabbing, and the message goes: "We have a lot in common... we're both Americans...both like to spend money...adore dogs...jazz...cheeseburgers...so you see, we could have a pretty good thing going for us...if one of us were a fella."

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The homosexual-dance cause celebre (see "After the Ball" in the February/March LADDER) closed on a technicality in court.

On New Year's Day in San Francisco, police had harassed a benefit costume ball organized by the Council on Religion and the Homosexual to raise funds for its work. Three attorneys and a woman ticket-taker had been arrested. The Council hoped that the trial might pave the way to a substantive decision concerning homosexuals' rights of legal assembly and privacy. But the court hearing was cut short when the judge ordered a not-guilty verdict because of confusion in the State's formal complaint that the lawyers and the woman had interfered with police entry to the ball.

Before the premature close of the trial, however, the court heard some colorful explanations from the testifying chief of the police department's sex-crimes detail. When asked why police photographers had snapped pictures of guests arriving at the hall where the dance was held, Inspector Nieto replied that police "wanted pictures of these people because some of them might be connected to national security." Nieto was also asked why he took along to the ball more than a dozen officers and a policewoman plus the two photographers. He side-stepped with the assertion, "We went just to inspect the premises."

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A UPI item from England notes that there are three doors in a corridor of a factory in a London suburb. Between the doors labeled "Ladies" and "Gentlemen" is one marked "Experimental."

SEND CURRENT NEWS

THE LADDER does not subscribe to a news clipping service. We get ours fresh from the field! You are our only source. Next time you see a news item that might interest LADDER readers, won't you pluck it for us? Please give the name and date of the publication. Dispatch to the Editor, c/o DOB headquarters.

New World A' Comin'?



or, How Can You Tell
the Girls from the Boys?

Clothing fashions reveal on the outside the inner life of an era. The avant-garde fashions of this moment, which like everything else today are fast moving down to the mass level, have a startling story to tell.

In Paris, there has been a revolution in fashion design equivalent in significance to the storming of the Bastille in 1789. The leader of the revolution is the designer Courreges, whose new "Look" has already begun to spread over the world. In our fast-moving era, fashion ideas take hold as fast as they are born, and hip women in the cities of Siam, Argentina, Sweden and South Africa, as well as in Paris and New York, are decked out in the new international style.

What is the Look? According to the yells of protest issuing from the old guard of the design world, who have been deposed by the revolution, its chief characteristic is that it's Unfeminine. "The Courreges Look is hard as steel," protests American designer Donald Brooks. "I don't think women with taste will wear them...a sadist might," shudders English designer Geoffrey Beene.

What do these clothes look like? Characterizing the Look as "tough chic," Women's Wear Daily reports that the cowboy theme dominates Courreges's controversial collection. Women's Wear Daily's woman reporter in Paris gives an orgasmic description of "those erotic pants, cut cigarette slim, high in the crotch, low on the hips" and delights in the "welt seams forming bold stripes running up the inside leg, crisscrossing at the vital parts front and back" and repeats: "the most erotic thing in years." Also producing sexual ecstasy in the reporter are the "cowboy leather belts slotted below the bare navel and on the buttocks - it all moves to the beat of the music."

Cowgirl suspender dresses, pants suits with tattersall jackets for wearing in town or to business, cowboy straw hats, boots and big motorcycle goggles are also part of the Look, which replaces female curves with a hard square architectural look.

Yet, as the Women's Wear reporter enthusiastically points out, "the body is always there - sex must out." Not the old-style femininity. "Tough chic" is the new look.

A New York Times fashion supplement had a Courreges theme running throughout. Girls were shown on motorcycles or in high-powered sports cars wearing helmets, goggles and boots along with the boyish clothes.

Radio commentator Jean Shepherd spent hours protesting the "masculinization" of today's hip young woman. There are no girls anymore, a new sex has emerged and the last thing it's interested in is men, he reports, hysteria lurking in his voice.

Agreeing with him, but much less alarmed about it, Harper's Bazaar's April issue featured girls in the new "look" accompanied by young men who also had a new look. "Frankly Beautiful New Young Gentlemen" is the way they are described, with their "long, extremely tossable hair" which they brush with "absorption." This newly discovered creature "chooses his shampoos with the gravity of a connoisseur and scents himself with enormous care...seriously collects colognes, perfumes, powders, shave creams and shampoos." And, the magazine predicts, tomorrow he'll be frankly using makeup.

Harper's Bazaar notes: "How you feel about this Frankly Beautiful New Young Gentleman is, frankly, your own business. But this much is certain. You must reckon with him. He is here - and now."

Obviously, if nothing else, this young man is here to stay because he's such a marvellous consumer.

In a rather defeatist mood, columnist Russell Baker observes on the New York Times' editorial page that Harper's Bazaar has stacked the cards against anyone who objects to the way the world is moving. It has outmoded the common garden-variety male, describing him as "Old Mr. Muscles" and calling him "as square and wiped-out as the Hupmobile." No one wants to be square and wiped-out, so they have to go with the trend, Baker complains. Bazaar has planted the idea "that among the modern young, feminine is masculine" and the older fellows don't want to be left behind. But, he observes, "There are consolations. The clothes those fashion models wear can finally be worn by men, for whom they seem to be designed, anyhow. And it may very well end the population explosion."

One of Bazaar's Frankly Beautiful New Young Gentlemen is Nicky Haslam, a 25-year-old Englishman who works on magazines in New York. "Within a decade," Nicky tells Women's Wear Daily's interviewer, "love rather than marriage will be the thing." He goes on coolly, "And all sorts of sexual behavior will become less curious." He talks about his friends as "serious people with a strong feeling for gaiety." Photographer David Bailey, he says, is "absolutely my closest friend. I think he's a genius." Photos show Nicky in tight jeans and sweater and Mod haircut, sprawling on an exotic Indian bedspread.

And in Rome they're doing as everyone else is doing. Women's Wear's Italian bureau reports on another day that in the new Mod fashion sweeping over the sophisticated young, "the boys prefer to look Edwardian...The girls go for tweed skirts, with men's shirts and ties...sturdy shoes, mostly black with thick heels and wide straps."

While New York was assimilating Bazaar's bringing into the light what everyone has known for some time, and the official, if satirical, acknowledgement on the august Times' editorial page, the San Francisco Ballet came to town. One reviewer objected righteously to the homosexual character of a ballet called "Life," with its black-leather-jacketed boys with HATE spelled out on their backs and S and M, representing Sadism and Masochism, lettered in a skull above them and on a set of lapels.

A few days later the New York Times reviewer described without comment, but without enthusiasm, another of the company's ballets, "Shadows," in which "the girls are dressed in yellow, the boys in gray. At the end of the work, one of the girls gets transformed into a gray-wearing girl and walks off into shadowland with one of the boys."

But the new era was officially ushered in when the Royal Ballet of England arrived in New York the following week and "the beautiful" Rudolf Nureyev took over the city. (He was also TIME magazine's cover boy.) On the front page of Women's Wear Daily appeared a photo of long-haired Nureyev (there were snide rumors that those dramatic tossing locks were really a wig) along with a drawing of a girl in a checked suit, with skirt, shirt and tie. The caption gloated, "Rudolf has been seen all over New York in HIS LOOK - the tight little checked jacket, the tight little pants...very St. Laurent (a women's designer) with its little glimpse of white collar and black tie."

"It's a look for the ladies with a certain something...and if you really follow the Nureyev Look, your skirt will be very tight, very tight in the back."

"BOYS AND GIRLS TOGETHER? LOOK ALIKES? WHY NOT?"

- Georgette

CONTRIBUTORS!

THE LADDER wants articles, book reviews, news clippings, stories, humor, poetry, and other pertinent materials. Send to Editor Barbara Gittings, c/o DOB National. All submissions will be acknowledged promptly.

LIVING PROPAGANDA

1.

(society's accusations)

they call it defiance of the
laws of nature.
you as a woman cannot love
another woman

for it is immoral, and you would
abuse your body, distort your mind,
and
we cannot accept you then as
a human being.

rebuke motherhood and marriage
and you would be less of a woman.

2.

(in response)

who determines the laws of nature?
is it not the nature of
man who sees and interprets
what should be.
should it be immoral to
love from the depth of one's being
or break the boundaries of
sex, race, and age
or feel that your love
is pure and sincere?

you are a woman even without
the need of a man or marriage.
you are a woman, though not being
a mother.
so, let us not speak of what
should be, and speak of what is.

3.

(of what is...)

yes, in you darling I find the
fragrance of orange blossoms
delicate, fresh, and pure.
and when you are away you remain
in my thoughts and presence.
when we touch nothing could
be more right for there is
no reflective image of me
in you.
there is the mystery, the delights,
and the joys of being mother,
child, and lover.

- Kim S.

I've become an old hand at confiding my gay nature to straight folk. My attempts at Living Propaganda have been improving over the years and I haven't had a real failure for some time. Perhaps that's because I'm wiser now in choosing my victims. But my first attempt was a failure. It was like this:

The year was 1943. I was in the Army, and I was young. I had previously had my suspicions about myself, but the college library had given me no help. I thought of myself as unique, uniquely criminal. Not a word must I breathe to anyone.

The WAC was more helpful than the college library. In the WAC, I fell in love. Not the awkward, inept sort of thing of the past, but my first great love. I learned then that I was not unique, but the inordinate fear of detection stayed with me. Otherwise all was bliss.

And then she was transferred to another base.

She was sensitive and gifted, and she had been hurt by life. She needed me; I had to get to her. That meant my getting out of the Army. Not so easy in wartime. I plotted and thought, and time passed.

Then I came across an AR (Army Regulation) buried in the old Section VIII, the "psycho" section. It was brief and no doubt written long before WACs were thought of. Its message was that a homosexual could be honorably discharged if there were no aggravating circumstances. Well, I hadn't seduced any little children.

Suddenly the solution to my problem was very simple. It only entailed my confessing to the proper authority. I thought some more. My life would be ruined, my family would disown me.... But SHE needed me. It was a time for courage and for action. I made an appointment with the personnel officer, a young (but old to me) major.

The morning of the fatal day I dressed to look especially smart. I rehearsed my speech again and again. I should say my speeches, for no two were alike. They all tended to be lengthy, forceful, articulate - and of course, courageous.

Precisely at 10 a.m., with my chin up and my tummy tucked in, and clutching my little AR, I walked into the Star Chamber. I have no recollection of my real speech. Did I even salute? I do remember thrusting that AR over the desk at the handsome and terrifying major, and uttering perhaps half a small sentence.

Ages passed and my mind whirled. I had burned my bridges. I had sacrificed all on the altar of love. I trembled; I froze;

I awaited my fate. Then the major smiled. In a kindly voice he said, "You're kidding. I don't believe you."

I was stunned. Naturally I had rehearsed all the major's possible answers. I was ready to hang my head in deepest shame, to bear up under all insults, to weep or not weep, as might be necessary. Something was terribly wrong.

At last I blurted out, "But I AM one!"

We argued. I pleaded. But it was useless; I could not convince him.

It was at least fifteen years before I could see how funny my failure was. Well, that was wartime and - c'est la guerre.

- Rita Laporte

Golden Rule *by Gene Damon*

To say Sandra had a calculating mind would be an understatement. Ordinarily Jerri and I avoid seeing much of Sandra. Oh, we like her, but her coldly analytical treatment of people and the world in general is unbearable after a short period. But that day, when Jerri was on her way home to me after a trip to Chicago, the three weeks of unrelieved boredom became too much for me.

Sandra's apartment expresses her personality. It is simple and expensive and beautiful, but the overall impression is that she really lives somewhere else and slips into her showcase just before you arrive. This showcase is on the ground floor of a three-sided building and the best part of it is the large front window that overlooks the court.

When I got to Sandra's it was only four in the afternoon but already nearly dark. A wind had risen to the north and clouds were closing over, blotting out the receding February sun. Sandra took my coat and led me to the comfortable chairs near the front window. She seemed edgy. We talked in fits and starts, of this person and that book. Her mind seemed outside and dark, like the wind-swept court.

Suddenly she stopped talking and leaned close to me, taking my hand. I drew back, startled, and she smiled.

"Beth, do you remember that married couple across the court I pointed out to you when you were here in December?"

"Oh yes, the little blonde girl with golden eyes and that elfin husband dancing beside her. What about them?"

"Do you remember what I said about them?"

"Not exactly," I replied. "Something about he was a fairy for sure and you ought to take that lovely girl away from him." I blushed, for that wasn't exactly the way she had phrased it.

"Well, Beth, I've been seeing her a lot since then. Her name is Darlene Clay, and Bill, her husband, is the manager at Carter's and Sons. Darlene is lovely, and he is nice but all wrong for her, of course."

"So what have you done, unmatched them to suit yourself?" The edge of sarcasm was in my voice.

She ignored me a moment and then went on. "We've gone everywhere together - sometimes all three of us, but usually just she and I alone. Darlene seemed to fall in love with me at once, almost at sight, and..."

Furious at Sandra's complete indifference to her victims, I cut her off with "Don't you think you carry your joke on mankind a bit far?"

Sandra got up and walked slowly to the window and then turned to face me, outlined against the last trace of light. "You don't understand, Beth. They were doing it together as a joke on me. Darlene told me. Bill saw me watching Darlene right after they moved in, and they thought it would be fun to, as they put it, lead a dyke on. I love her, Beth. I never loved any of the others. But she was only playing a trick..."

I got my coat and walked back to her at the window. I kissed her cheek. "Jerri and I will be over tomorrow night, Sandra."

She nodded but didn't speak, and I left the showcase knowing that when I came again, a different Sandra would live there.

SPECIAL NOTICES

- The rate for FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTION to THE LADDER (outside the U. S., Canada and Mexico) is \$6 for a year. It's a bargain! Send orders and payments to THE LADDER's Circulation Manager at DOB headquarters in San Francisco.
- ATTENTION PHOTOGRAPHERS! Pictures in black and white are wanted for possible use on front and back covers of THE LADDER. Write to the Editor (c/o DOB headquarters) for information on submitting photographs.
- WHEN YOU MOVE, please notify our Circulation Manager. The postage rate used for the magazine does not permit forwarding even though your former post office may have your new address. Avoid missing any issues! Send your new address promptly to the Circulation Manager in San Francisco.

READERS RESPOND

The April edition of THE LADDER tops them all, in my opinion. Both what is said, and how it is said, seem to me to be of special quality.

I was very favorably impressed by "A Practical Platform," and when this was followed by that excellent analysis, "The Heterosexual Obsession," I was increasingly gratified. Of course, this article could have been titled "The Heterosexual and the Homosexual Obsession," because too many homosexuals share the prevalent, albeit mistaken, belief that they are sexually mal-adjusted and need psychotherapy to become "normal." One tends to become tainted by the cultural myths, even when the myths militate against one's own beliefs, deepest feelings, and emotional health.

For years I have been decrying the insulting notion that homosexuality is something to be "cured." I continue to believe that it is as normal a type of sexual adjustment - or perhaps I should say, more cautiously, that it can be as normal a type of adjustment - as heterosexuality. And let us not pretend that heterosexuality does not go off the deep end here and there, because we know that it does.

It was also gratifying to read L. E. E.'s comments about research on homosexuality. The very diligence with which studies are directed toward finding out "why" people are homosexual often contributes to the feeling that somehow it must be wrong to be homosexual. After all, nobody is trying to find out why people are heterosexual. Nobody wants to discover the causes of heterosexuality in order to learn what might be done to change a heterosexual into something presumably more desirable.

There are more and more homosexuals who do not want to be harried with the "Why are we this way?" approach; who are coming into the happy realization that their sexual pattern of living has much to be said in its favor and that they do not want to change it; who are beginning to realize that homosexuality, given an environment free from the ignorant and painful criticisms and disapprovals of a backward society (and not all our researchers can be excluded from this group), could be as normal and desirable a way of life as heterosexuality, which also is scarcely without its flaws.

I am currently taking graduate work at _____ College, and my observations there support L. E. E.'s contention that the younger generation is breaking with many of the traditional attitudes toward sexuality - not only in the matters of dress

and of acceptance of non-heterosexuals, but also in the areas of speech and body management. More power to the younger generation!

In general it looks as if better times are on the way. And when they come, you will probably lose me. I am only interested in causes where the people directly involved cannot speak for themselves. And you are certainly learning how to do that quickly - and well!

- F. I. B., California

+ + + + +

May I congratulate you on a much improved magazine which has been put together with a great deal of taste. I hope you will be able to keep it on the level evidenced by the last few issues.

- B. B., Massachusetts

+ + + + +

I was greatly impressed by the challenging article, "I Hate Women," in the February/March LADDER. It seems to me that the biggest contribution a lesbian magazine can now make to both lesbians and society in general is to explore the murky area of the feminine identity and the changed and changing relations between the sexes in our time.

Two years ago Betty Friedan's book, THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE, brought to general attention the fact that a "snow" job had been done on the modern woman - that she had been shoved back into her old "place" at the very point in history when she was ready to emerge as a fully individuated human being.

I am beginning to feel, however, that Mrs. Friedan's solution - that modern woman add a career to her family responsibilities - will only result in more trouble for everyone concerned.

The kind of influence Mrs. Friedan's book is having was brought home to me recently when a friend, the 32-year-old mother of three youngsters, aged two, four, and seven, told me that she was planning to start work on her doctorate.

"Everyone is doing it," she said. "Motherhood is not enough."

She didn't say enough of what, but from the tenor of her remarks I gathered it wasn't enough to keep up with the other girls. This woman had eight years before cut short her graduate work because all her girl friends were finding "fulfillment" and "self-realization" in marriage and motherhood.

The most articulate feminist of all time, Bernard Shaw, had something to say about this matter more than a quarter of a century ago in a play called "Getting Married." The heroine, named, interestingly enough, Lesbia Grantham, is violently anti-marriage. On the other hand, she says that she would

like to be a mother and believes that she would make an excellent mother if the state would subsidize her to do the job.

"If I am to be a mother," she says, "I really cannot have a man bothering me to be a wife at the same time."

Lesbia is well above the average woman in mind and energy. Yet she believes that combining even wifehood and motherhood on the high level of her own standards is just too much. But Mrs. Friedan and her followers tell the average woman that it would be good for both her and her family to be a career gal as well as a wife and mother!

What has all this to do with lesbianism? A great deal, I think. Lesbians are a very special breed of the homosexual species. They share in the life and problems of all women. It seems to me that they can do something more and better than provide a grotesque mirror of the most ludicrous aspects of present-day heterosexual relations. They do not have to play a game in which one girl has a chance to take on the idiotically outmoded role allotted to men in our society. Lesbianism offers unique opportunity for two women to develop their best potentials without sacrificing their right to the basic satisfactions of love and companionship.

Not until quite recently, under the pressures of the population explosion, has anyone dared to speak up in behalf of the totally committed career woman. The voices that do speak for her are, at present, few and weak. And they do insist officially upon celibacy and unofficially are willing to let her engage in casual extra-marital heterosexual affairs.

In other words, our social patterns will tolerate a minute number of unmarried females, but they demand that these creatures be hard and cold as nails. In our world today, the woman who wants to commit herself totally to a career accepts this condemnation as an essential fact about her personality.

Is this necessarily so, however? I don't think so. I think many women who prefer commitment to a career without the responsibilities of wifehood and motherhood would also like to find the kind of emotional satisfaction that is possible only on a sustained basis between equal partners. In today's world this kind of life is open only to the lesbian, but I think it may well serve as an ideal example for many heterosexual couples.

I, personally, look forward to the time when society sees lesbianism in a new light - as a possible road to health rather than a symptom of "sickness." I hope that lesbians will stop asking "What is wrong with us?" and will become concerned about what is wrong with society. At that time, I believe that psychologists and social scientists will turn to THE LADDER for fresh ideas and insights on improving social patterns rather than for "sick" material to support the decrepit structure of their theories.

- Mrs. J. I., New York

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LOOK AHEAD



TO E.C.H.O. '65

(SEE PAGE 8)