

# THE LADDER

APRIL/MAY, 1971

\$1.25



THE LADDER, published by Lesbians and directed to ALL women seeking full human dignity, had its beginning in 1956. It was then the only Lesbian publication in the U.S. It is now the only women's magazine openly supporting Lesbians, a forceful minority within the women's liberation movement.

Initially THE LADDER's goal was limited to achieving the rights accorded heterosexual women, that is, full second-class citizenship. In the 1950's women as a whole were as yet unaware of their oppression. The Lesbian knew. And she wondered silently when her sisters would realize that they too share many of the Lesbian's handicaps, those that pertained to being a woman.

THE LADDER's purpose today is to raise all women to full human status, with all of the rights and responsibilities this entails; to include ALL women, whether Lesbian or heterosexual.

OCCUPATIONS have no sex and must be opened to all qualified persons for the benefit of all.

LIFE STYLES must be as numerous as human beings require for their personal happiness and fulfillment.

ABILITY, AMBITION, TALENT –  
THESE ARE HUMAN QUALITIES.

THE LADDER, though written, edited, and circulated by volunteer labor, cannot survive without money. We Lesbians are perhaps more anxious than other women to make our views known. We wish we could blanket the country and the world with free copies. But stern reality tells us that, more important even than mass distribution, is the need to keep alive the only real Lesbian magazine in the world. Therefore THE LADDER will no longer be sold at newsstands. We will survive only if there are enough of you sufficiently concerned with the rights and the liberation of ALL women to spend \$7.50 a year to subscribe. (Sample copies are always available at \$1.25.)

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Quarter Page .....	\$25	Full Page .....	\$ 80

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(ORGANIZATIONS OR GROUPS wishing to order bulk quantities of THE LADDER may do so at the rate of 10 copies for \$8.00.

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# THE LADDER

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February/March, 1971

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COVER: Pablo Picasso. *Girl Before A Mirror*. 1932. Oil on canvas. The Museum of Modern Art. New York, N.Y. Gift of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim. Women take a new look at themselves in art, see "Foundations of the Male-Chauvinist-Nude" by Jean Louise, page 22.

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## FACTS OF LIFE - Editorial

"BUT YOU CAN'T STOP PUBLISHING! YOU'VE BEEN PUBLISHING FOR FIFTEEN YEARS."

That line up there about stopping publishing is a direct quote from a conversation I had with a LADDER subscriber. Not a long time subscriber, but one who was observant about volume numbers and figured out how long we have been around. It's true, WE CAN'T stop publishing in terms of need - but we will have to if we run out of money. We are the only magazine in the country that deals honestly with the needs of the Lesbian, and the only women's liberation publication that deals honestly with all women.

Quality literary and social change magazines have an honorable and "broke" history in this country. Women's magazines concerned with their rights have an even less distinguished history since women are traditionally poor. Magazines are supported by three means: subscription, donations and advertising. The last named is the best, but we are not large enough to present an attractive market for most advertisers and things being as they are in this country, we won't accept most of the advertisements we are offered . . . and you wouldn't want to see them. This leaves us with subscriptions and donations. You can count on the former, but to rely on the latter is to leave yourself constantly open to failure.

## WHY WOMEN'S LIBERATION WOULD LIKE TO LIKE LESBIANS, AND WHY LESBIANS AREN'T SO SURE THEY LIKE WOMEN'S LIBERATION

At first we were suspicious of the overtures of the women's liberation women. They probably wish to show how liberal they are, we decided. Or else they're so hard up for help anyone will do. But we try to be cooperative, so we agreed to attend meetings and participate as the friendly Lesbian.

They wanted to know about sex, of course, but they were much more interested in us. Why did we think such and such a way? What did we believe about this and what about that? We found them energetic and idealistic, provocative at times, and at times incredibly naive. Gradually it dawned on us. They looked up to us. Even some of the ones who were afraid of us, though it took them longer.

We are delighted to beg for money, because we know how important it is to keep THE LADDER going, but we would prefer to have enough subscribers to make this unnecessary. We are fortunate in having a group of women who believe in this magazine enough to give their lives to doing it . . . and each name on the masthead is thus credited. We have no expense of any kind except the actual cost of the printing and binding and mailing of the magazine. Everything else is a labor or an expense given out of love.

Several of you have suggested we continue to spell out specific needs . . . and once again we reply with this listing. We need Lesbian and women's liberation oriented short stories . . . we always need poetry and non-fiction articles . . . we continue to need cartoonists, and women who cannot draw but have a sense of humor are asked to send captions to us for others to draw cartoons to match. We always need clippings, and we are grateful to those of you who send them regularly.

We know we need your help, and if your many letters to us are any indication, most of you feel you need us. We are at the point where we can provide an increasingly excellent magazine in terms of quality and content. We are also at the point where we can be forced to stop existing at all. Just ONE more subscription from each of you would make the difference.

Gene Damon

We thought that one over with the help of a couple of beers late one night and came to a few conclusions we think are worth sharing. We'll try not to be too lengthy, as philosophic sorts of essays are more likely to be read if they're brief, especially if the paragraphs are short too.

In the first place, there's the "ideal woman" of Women's Liberation. They'd deny any such thing, of course, but there's no question that there are some things they approve of in a woman and some things they just have no use for, like insipid types that fawn all over men. That's at the root of the drive to get rid of the bras, we suppose, and throwing away the make-up. They don't want to be insipid. Now there certainly is very little insipidity about a good

cool butch, and we suppose that predisposed them to like us from the very beginning.

But when they broke through our cool and found we were moderately successful in our career, apparently on our way up, and had our own opinions about things, they were visibly impressed. We began to feel rather like a sterling example to youth. All in all, their admiration did our ego no end of good, but we realized at the same time that they were ready to respect any woman who had made something of herself in this man's world. We think more Lesbians, either overtly or covertly, should go to these people and show them again and again that there really are no end of women who can stand on their own and think for themselves. It's our type of woman - the self-realizing, decisive woman, that these women want to be, and they are groping for patterns.

Which brings us to the second point. Women's Liberation is concerned about sex. They spend hours talking about it, but, if reports are correct, very little time indeed enjoying it. They have two types of problem here. In the first place, everyone calls them Lesbians, and this gives rise to all sorts of anguish and anxieties. And in the second place, they don't feel like liberated women when they're in bed or even living with dominating husbands who make all the important decisions. Like all women, they want sex, but unlike women outside the movement, they do not want to remake themselves into something they are not in order to please their husbands to get it. They are concerned with whether it is really possible for a woman to be a sex partner without allowing herself to be used, exploited, or subservient.

As to being called a Lesbian, we know only too well it can hurt, even when one is a Lesbian and proud of it. But they've taken a courageous way out. They've decided, many of them, that they'll find out just what being a Lesbian entails before they decide whether or not they'll deny it. They're asking questions, and there are very few Lesbians around willing to answer. Many of the Women's Liberation people are almost prepared to believe one's sexuality should be her own choice. All they need is a little more in-person evidence from a few of us. It's information we have that will enable these women to answer the charge of Lesbianism with "So what?" and, incidentally, in the process, the price of the label



HERS AND HERs by Ev Kuntsler

should go down a little for us too.

The matter of dominating husbands brings us to the third point, which has to do with human relationships that don't exploit other human beings. Our Women's Liberation people were very interested in the details of our personal life. How did we divide the work? Who made the decisions? They were gratified to find out in our house it is a joint operation.

Deep down, we suspect, many Women's Liberation women, rank and file, we mean, not leaders, wonder whether it isn't, after all, in the order of things for one person to lean on another, and, especially, for woman to lean on man. Again, as in the decisive woman image, these people are looking for patterns. They want to know about households where the adults respect, rather than use, each other. They want to see examples of people who care for each other as equals. They want to see women who can love without demeaning themselves; women who can enter lasting relationships with other human beings without becoming servants or nursemaids; women who can be themselves instead of playthings when they love. We can show them.

And lastly, we realized over the beers that night, these people need leaders. They have some; some outstanding ones come to mind: some writers, some theorists. But they need more. There is no one person so articulate, so dynamic, so convincing, she has been able to harness the indolent housewives, the college girls in communes, the welfare mothers, the Playboy Club picketers, and the women who whistle at the construction workers - all of whom are



groping at different parts of the same problem — into a coherent force that gets things done. Lesbians should help here. We have at least something of a corner on articulate, dynamic, convincing women.

A friend explained carefully to us the other night why we were wasting our time with Women's Liberation. "So you get everything you're working for," she said, "child care, abortion, equal pay, all that stuff. Where are you? They still won't like Lesbians. You have to do first things first. Better stick with the homophile orgs."

We couldn't agree with her, though. She was still back in the days when all a

defensive Lesbian could hope for was "acceptance". With the advent of the Women's Liberation movement, though, we suddenly find ourselves in demand. We are wanted to be living proof that a woman can be a self-realizing human being. We are wanted to explain the intricacies of Lesbianism as a life-style. We are wanted to provide a pattern for relationships in which woman is not exploited or demeaned. And we are needed to be leaders of the movement. If we have the courage and foresight to participate in this movement, we can earn Lesbians something far better than mere acceptance . . . Respect.

## As Dreams Are Made Of . . . by CAROL LINK

For hours and hours it seemed she had been huddled in Joy's arms, reveling in the softness through her sweater, soft, too, and black, like the night. Joy breathed above her, each long breath a sigh. The park was silent except for the leaves moving and moving against the breeze, making the unceasing sound of green young life thriving all around them, filling their small space with energies that controlled them.

Vivian lay still against her friend's chest. Joy shifted and they both sat up. "This is incredible," Joy whispered.

"In the open."

"Fresh air. Don't light a cigarette — you can see the glow."

"Who can?"

"All the rapists and muggers in the park!" Joy giggled. Vivian joined her and they hugged each other, shaking with laughter.

"But, you know," Vivian suggested hesitantly, "I was worrying some about if anyone saw us. Close enough to know we were girls."

"You mean a cop?"

"No. He'd just tell us to move on. Tell us something like, 'This park isn't safe at night for a couple of young women. All kinds of sex perverts and murderers.'"

"Yeah — 'some big dyke might rape you both!'" They stifled their laughter on each other's shoulders.

"No — that's not what I meant, Joy. Something that really frightens me. That song, 'Town Without Pity,' keeps running through my head."

"Why?"

"Well. What if . . . I don't know. I keep thinking about gangs and what they do.



Like what a white gang will do to a black kid if they catch him alone. Or stuff that happens in the South. What they did to that man in "Orpheus Descending," just because he was different."

"You mean they would treat us like that?"

"I don't know. Probably not. I just keep thinking about it."

"Stop. You're giving me the chills."

They were silent. The breeze had stopped, but now rose again into the trees.

Vivian felt a slow suffusion of the night urging strength back to her. "Oh, I guess it's okay." She looked up at the leaves of the tree they were under and took a deep breath.

"Feel the grass, Viv." They ran the palms of their hands across its tips.

"Like your hair," Vivian said, leaning to rub her face against Joy's hair, long and soft.

"Like yours. Short. Silky. Hair is nice."

Vivian began to lose herself in Joy's neck. "What was that?" Joy asked suddenly.

"What?"

"Oh — people!"

"Shit. Just cool it. Lie down slow. Fade into the ground. Look, I'm part of the tree!"

"You're not scared?"

"Yeah."

"Why did you have to talk about that stuff?"

"We've got to think about it. Where are they?"

"I don't see anyone."

"I hear them — wait — they're on the other side of the pond. Look."

"Oh, wow. They sounded real close."

"It was the water. And we're on a hill. I don't know what that has to do with it."

They laughed again, quietly. "Listen. That means they're still in the park."

"Who?"

"Anyone. You can hear them again."

"Sounds like three or four?"

"Or five or six?"

"What do you think they do here?"

"Let's split, Joy. I hate to, but this is no good."

"We didn't even eat the apple yet."

"Huh?"

"We're being expelled from the garden. For our sins."

Vivian laughed. "You're crazy."

"More people. From the other way."

The trees went on singing around them as they walked quickly toward an exit. The sound was almost eerie in its contrast to the subtle fear that urged them on. "I want to run, Joy."

"It'd attract attention."

"Okay. Be quiet." They passed along a small path beside the tennis courts, big empty boxes, open and glowing, as if they had kept some part of the day's long sun soaking within their fences. The path opened to a larger walk lined with alternating benches and dark statues and they

joined the unliving populace with relief. The street lights were nearby.

"I guess we're okay now. Joy. Are you worried?"

"I have a little more weight to carry than you."

"I know, baby, I know."

Joy laughed and took Vivian's arm. They were at the corner where their bus stopped. "Why were you so scared?"

"No real reason I guess. I didn't even know I was scared until I listened to that song going through my head."

"Why are people like that?" Joy took Vivian's hand. Cars were passing them regularly.

"Who knows? Maybe we confuse them. This isn't the way it's supposed to be. Maybe guys are afraid girls will take away all their fun. Maybe they suspect that they're not as great as they pretend to be."

A bus was coming and Vivian tried to drop Joy's hand. The bus had pulled up beside them by the time Joy let go and Vivian looked up to see a boy she had been at school with looking down. She turned to tell Joy to wait for the next bus, but Joy had already stepped into the bus and Vivian had no choice but to follow her. Inside, under the grimy lights, she felt her stomach tighten with a fear of a confrontation with the boy. It might be wordless, she hoped, as she paid their fares and began swaying with the bus down the aisle.

"Let's sit at the back, Viv."

"No, baby, stay here."

"No, I want to be able to touch you."

Joy brushed against Vivian with obvious pleasure and went toward the back. The few old men on the bus watched the pretty girl. The boy from school, Jerry, his name was, watched, too. He was blonde and fleshy, with bruised-looking lips that always sneered. Vivian kept her eyes down, but she had seen that he was not alone.

"I have to tell you something, Joy," Vivian said as they sat down. "That guy, remember him — Jerry?"

"The sexy one? Yes. He was in school with us. I thought I recognized him."

"Jerry is an old enemy of mine. Expect some trouble."

"Why? What did you do to him?"

"Existed. I think he's got a problem. I mean, he is kind of pretty, you know? And he acts very tough, shows off a lot to prove something."

"So you think we scare him? Like if those boys in the park had seen us?"



"Right. He used to call me names in school. When I was with straight friends, teachers."

"And he's moving back here. His friends, too. Viv, what are they going to do?"

"Probably nothing. Maybe talk. Just don't say anything. Look out of the window."

Jerry walked with a swagger. He was enjoying himself. His friends leered — they had been told. Jerry sat across the aisle from the girls, one of his friends sat in front of them, one in back. The older men, sitting on seats that ran sideways along the front of the bus, were watching.

Jerry began whistling the song "Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl" over and over. Vivian had been subjected to that song before and she held onto her emotions. Crying was impossible. She wondered how Joy was doing, but could not risk as much of a response as looking at her. Rage pressed from inside Vivian. Her eyes were stinging from staring at the slashed green upholstery in front of her. Jerry's friend chuckled from time to time.

Joy reached up to ring the buzzer and Jerry's friends admired her body verbally. The bus stopped at their corner and Vivian stood quickly, saw Joy was following her, and started down the aisle. From the corner of her eye she saw the hand of one of Jerry's friends shoot out and grab Joy's bare arm. Vivian turned and tore at his hand, which came loosely off Joy, while the boy asked Joy, "Why do you hang around with dykes, beautiful?" Vivian stood between Joy and the boy, flinging, at the same time, his cold and damp hand at him. Joy was running off the bus. Vivian followed her. As the bus pulled away the three boys were at the window whistling. Vivian's shame came closer to her as the bus and her anger left.

They walked without talking past the drug stores, delicatessens and candy stores that were still open to the alleyway and then the back entrance to Joy's tall brick building. "They're pigs," Joy hissed. "Just a bunch of fucking, filthy pigs. I hate them. I hate men. How could I give you up when they're like that? What's wrong with them?"

"Come on, Joy, I can't hold you or anything. You've got to stop crying."

"That's what we're supposed to fall in love with? That's what my mother's been teaching me to dress for, to walk for, to

talk for all these years? It's so wrong. You're good and gentle. I've been out with boys like that. I can picture them taunting you like that. I can see my father doing that to you. Or worse if he found out about us."

"Joy, calm down. Girls can be just as bitchy."

"I've never seen us be like that."

"This never happened to you before. I've never seen girls do it either, but what would you really think of me if we weren't going together?"

"No. Never like that. And we have to be afraid to kiss on a beautiful summer night in a park because those bastards wouldn't like it."

"What can we do, Joy? Really we're at their mercy. We just have to get used to it."

"Oh, don't be such an Uncle Tom."

"What do you want me to do, fight them? Guys like Jerry will get what they deserve. Sooner or later he'll break down in some alleyway, drunk, kneeling at some kid's feet, hating himself and finally getting the shit beat out of him because he never let himself or anyone else be gay with some humanity. Or else he'll get married and live very unhappily with a woman he hates, who repulses him, forever and ever, and have to be all uptight about his sons growing up to be homosexuals and remembering you every time he looks at his daughters."

"And we just sit back and take it."

"You don't, Joy. I do. You can bail out anytime you want."

"Well, I don't want. I want you." She stood on her toes to kiss Vivian's forehead. "I feel better hearing about all that misery that louse is going to have to go through. And you're going to get into trouble if you don't get home."

"Okay, Joy. I know when I'm not wanted. I'll watch you inside."

"Love you, Viv."

"Shut the door, Joy," she answered, thinking, "while you can."

Vivian watched her friend disappear to the elevator inside. She turned toward the bus that would take her home, toward more people who would mentally crucify her as she passed them, a forbidden shadow on the night street. Yet the foreboding mood of the evening had passed, broken by the storm of surviving one more crisis and she remembered to listen to the few trees she passed, rooted in cement, but still humming to themselves. She smiled remembering Joy, thinking it was worth it all. Everything was worth it.

## HOUSEKEEPER

by JANE RULE

None of her friends could understand how Ruth Tedmore, an extremely competent personnel manager of a large department store, could hire, year after year, such catastrophically bad help for her own household. Ruth, on the other hand, understood it perfectly and painfully well. But it was clearly against her interests to explain herself.

Ruth had the only kind of job she seemed good at, making intelligent and perceptive decisions for other people. Her quick eye for spotting trouble on an application form was only the beginning. Once she had eliminated the bad risks, she did not look for perfection or even excellence, nor did she pay very much attention to either interest or aptitude. If she had, her days would have been full of dull disappointments. What Ruth looked for was a fault that the manager or assistant manager of a particular department could not only endure but perhaps even, in a perverse way, enjoy. What she tried to avoid was virtue which would irritate or threaten. Ruth did not think of herself as cynical so much as realistic. The most efficient and talented salesman cannot last more than a month under a threatened manager. The store did not pay enough to hire many managers who could tolerate talent; on the other hand, the clerks' salaries were discouraging enough to attract very few problems of that sort. Skillful fault-matching was Ruth's forte. Its success, however, depended on the ignorance of the people who benefited from it. Mr. Lambert, in yard goods, could never be told that he liked stupidity in his clerks; yet he pined in the stock room unless his advice was needed for almost every sale. Mrs. Caldwell in foundation garments needed an assertive vulgarity in her clerks so that she never had to come out of the stock room. Ruth knew all her managers and assistant managers well. Over the years, she had been careful with their variety so that there was some place in the store for the impudent, the slovenly, the complaining, the nervous, whose virtues might also, if they were lucky, be tolerated.

Because the store, under Ruth Tedmore's direction, had a remarkable record for permanence of staff, she had several times been asked to offer training



programs for personnel managers both in the store itself for its other branches and in the local business college. Ruth had always refused. She knew that her skill, once confessed, would neither appeal to students nor reassure those who already lived in terms of it. The store would come down around her ears.

It was as impossible to explain to her baffled friends how she came to have such remarkably bad housekeepers. Fortunately she had never been pressed to explain the failure of her marriage. As for her children, she had not been able to choose those, an important advantage in her law of averages.

"Ruth," her next door neighbor had just confided, "it just doesn't seem fair for you to have such bad luck, but you really ought to know that this one doesn't do any more work than the last. She was out in the back yard yesterday for five hours, drinking beer. Did she have references? Most people from the good agencies are checked out for things like that."

Ruth had never used a good agency, and she probably never would. Most of the help she had came from her rejects at the store, women eliminated on first glance at the application form because they were, in one

way or another, blatantly unreliable: divorcees with small children, wives of construction workers, foreigners, college graduates. What made them unsuitable as clerks in a store made them as unsuitable as housekeepers: they had too many distracting responsibilities and griefs; they were transient; they were strange in their habits; they were intelligent.

"I don't want a permanent, motherly soul who knows how to scrub a kitchen floor," Ruth might have said, for that was true; she did not want to compete with such virtues. Or she might have tried to comfort her tale-bearing friends with, "Tell me more; every terrible story is a reassurance to me."

Just as the store would come down around Ruth's ears if her managers had known how they were being handled, Ruth's house again and again did come down around her ears because she could not help knowing what she was doing to herself.

Anna Wilmott, her current beer-drinking beauty, was even more a hazard and mistake than Ruth had anticipated. Anna, too well dressed and confident of her offense, had sat amused in Ruth's office while she reread the application form, knowing that she should not have granted Anna an interview in the first place.

"I see you've been to college," Ruth said cautiously.

"Well, but I'm a drop out," Anna answered reassuringly.

"You've had a number of jobs."

"I get bored."

"You're married with three children."

"So far, but, if I can stick with this job for a year, I can save enough money to get out."

"Leave your husband?"

"That's the plan."

"And the children?"

"He thinks I won't take them. It all depends . . ."

"You haven't given a preference for the kind of job you'd like to do."

"I didn't see any place on the form for drinking or mountain climbing."

"You don't really want this job, do you?" Ruth asked, without irritation.

"Does anybody really want a job in a place like this?"

"Let me put it another way: you don't really need the job."

"Oh yes I do," Anna said with sudden intensity. "My life depends on it."

Ruth hadn't hired her, of course, but

she remembered Anna Wilmott for several reasons. She was remarkably good looking with fine, shining hair, large, dark eyes, an expression much gentler than the manner she affected. Her body was not vulgar, but it promised things naturally as a bright day promises warmth, pleasure. And Anna, though she had been aggressive, had hoped to win rather than alienate Ruth with directness. Anna's last remark had been affective, whether calculated as emotional blackmail or not. Ruth might have said the same thing when she was first interviewed for a job at the store if she hadn't had more calculating sense than that.

They did not meet again by appointment. Ruth had reluctantly given in to Sunday on the beach with her children, Jennifer, who was eight, and Tad, not quite six. Ruth didn't like the beach because it was too warm for the clothes she was willing to wear in public, because the children forced her into domestic conversations with other mothers. Still, it eased her guilt to do something she didn't like with her children during the little time she spent with them. Jennifer had learned to swim that summer; that is, she could thrash and splash enough to keep her feet off the bottom for a moment or two at a time. Tad was still really suspicious of the water. Nothing he found washed up on the beach was beneath his curiosity, but those same things floating in the water touched his imagination differently. While Jennifer plunged and spluttered, he collected and built at the edge of Ruth's grass mat. She watched in resigned, sticky, gritty discomfort from behind her sun glasses and large straw hat.

In that disguise, Ruth might have seen and then watched Anna without encountering her again. She was in a yellow bikini, playing roughly with two little boys, one a little younger and one a little older than Tad. The younger complained about the game, stamped out of the water and stood at the edge, yelling obscenities of such variety at his mother that only the adults within earshot were impressed. Anna ignored him until he wore himself out and threw himself down on the sand. Then she scooped him up suddenly to kiss or perhaps bite his ear. He pulled her hair, kissed her and scrambled free, laughing. Tad, at the shore line, had stopped his search for objects and was watching with the stunned stare of a child for any behavior he finds bewildering. Anna, giving up her chase of

her own child just as she neared Tad, spoke to him. Ruth expected him to retreat, but in a moment he was showing Anna a rusted light socket and a small piece of wood. The older son, a couple of inches taller than Tad, had joined them. Just then, Jennifer started out of the water with a new friend, a tall, angular, light-boned girl of perhaps nine. They joined Anna and the boys for a moment.

"Mom, can we have hot dogs? Sally's mother says they can," Jennifer called as she came up the sloping beach to her mother.

Anna turned to look at Ruth, probably not recognizing her, but Ruth did not want to risk rudeness.

"Hello," she called.

Anna walked up toward her, the children in her wake, and Ruth noticed the quizzical sweetness of her face.

"I'm Ruth Tedmore from . . ."

"I didn't recognize you in that get up," Anna said. "If I had, I would have run away."

"Why?"

"People like you scare me," Anna said, dropping down at once on the straw mat next to Ruth. "Now, out, the pack of you. Sally, you get the money from my purse."

"What about us?" Jennifer demanded.

"All right," Ruth said. "Be sure Tad doesn't get relish on his by mistake."

"And be sure you bring us back some," Anna added. "I'm starved."

Ruth could say, therefore, that the whole arrangement was an accident. There were also real advantages. The children liked Anna, her combination of boisterous, rough affection and mindless indifference to them. More important, they all liked each other, absorbed each other for hours at a time, and, because Anna ignored their hostilities (more for her own peace than for their good), they fought very little when they were all together.

"But, Ruth, how many times a week does she leave one of those kids with you? You do as much baby sitting for her as she does for you. Only she gets paid for it."

But that wasn't a real problem. Honestly, the children were less trouble together than apart, the girls off in Jennifer's room writing novels or cutting out free coupons from magazines, the boys on the living room floor dreaming over and crashing their cars into each other when the television program wasn't interesting enough for them. If Anna decided to go

home without one or more of her own children, she always cooked enough dinner for all of them before she left. She didn't spend more than Ruth gave her for food; she just bought cheaper cuts to accommodate more people. Ruth's children, as well as Anna's, liked hot dogs and hamburgers and spaghetti best anyway. Ruth got pretty tired of such fare, but she could have a decent, adult lunch at work.

Jennifer was no more affected by Anna's graphic vocabulary than her own daughter was. They were at a very moral, even prissy age. Tad, on the other hand, competed with his new friends in foul-mouthed joy. He could have learned the same thing at school, no doubt; and after all, he was a boy. If he'd had a father, his vocabulary wouldn't have been retarded for so long. Actually, the husband who had left Ruth would never have used such language. She was thinking of the kind of man she might have married if she had been someone else.

Anna certainly did drink beer or wine or gin or whiskey, anything Ruth left in the house. When Ruth stopped leaving it or hid it, Anna obviously got cheaper wines out of the household budget. In fact, she once or twice admitted to such a purchase, or rather announced it. She never got really drunk, but often she had a kind of blurred amusement about her, and she would have broken and spilled and gouged more if she had spent more time at the cleaning up she was also hired to do.

"Couldn't face the dishes today," she'd often say. "Just leave the whole bunch for the morning."

Ruth had a lot of china and glassware because she had to pass those counters every day, but, when she was reduced to stemware and Wedgewood for the children's supper, she did the dishes herself and was resentful.

As for house cleaning, even Ruth's own shamefully low standards were not observed. A month went by before Ruth ordered Anna to clean the children's rooms and wash the kitchen floor. For such things as washing windows and defrosting the refrigerator, even orders were useless. Anna simply did not include such activities within the range of her comprehension. Her method was to ignore a job until Ruth's temper finally flared. Then Anna would say, "Get yourself a slave if that's what you want."

Ruth didn't want a slave. She didn't



even want a competent housekeeper, but surely between these ideals and Anna, there must be a more rational compromise. Ruth would not even have to fire Anna. She offered to quit every five or six days. The children would miss each other, of course, and they'd miss the freedom since Anna obviously found it easier to discover them after the damage was done than before they had thought of it; but a little more discipline would do neither of them any harm. Anna herself, as the months passed, talked less and less about leaving her husband. She didn't need the money for anything else certainly, though Ruth had never found out what Anna's husband did. Once she asked outright.

"God knows," was Anna's reply.

She had an unnervingly good address, drove an expensive car, and she and her children were well, if sometimes oddly, dressed.

Why, then, as Ruth's friends more persistently asked, did she put up with Anna?

"Because I'd rather nag than be nagged."

"Because I didn't put up with my husband, and I feel guilty about it."

"Because I don't have to compete."

Those were the reasons, and they would have been fine reasons if Ruth hadn't known about them. Knowing about them made the relationship intolerable, as all her relationships with housekeepers had been. In the past, after a number of punishing months, everything had collapsed, just as her marriage had collapsed around the faults she had needed and knew she needed in her husband. Why did she have to know? Why couldn't she be the innocent victim of her own temperament as all her managers and assistant managers had been for years? Because she couldn't. Part of her nature was to know. So Ruth prepared for finding intolerable what really suited her relatively well.

The crisis did not come. Imperceptibly the tension lessened. Ruth was both baffled and relieved. It was not that Anna worked any harder or drank less, but she occasionally baked pies or worked in the garden, and once, when Ruth got home, the old arm chair in the living room was draped with a handsome piece of material.

"If you like that, I'll recover it for you," Anna said.

"I like it very much. How much is it?"

Anna shrugged.

"But I should pay you for it."

"Why? I cheat you every day; so I should be able to treat you once in six months."

"You don't cheat me . . ." Ruth began, but the amusement in those large, dark eyes stopped her. "Well, thanks."

Then Anna, contrite about her generosity, left at least two of her children behind every night for the next week. Ruth, instead of being irritated, was amused.

"That chair was pretty expensive after all," she said to Anna.

"I wouldn't want you to feel guilty about it," Anna said.

That night, sitting in the chair Anna had recovered, Ruth saw the name, Charles Wilmott, in the paper under a photograph of a fine-jawed, quiet-eyed man, unmistakably father of Sally, therefore Anna's husband. His appointment as director of a large company was being announced. As Ruth read a summary of his career, she felt the twinge of envy she always had for men capable of such success and free, because they were men, to enjoy it. Almost immediately she felt ashamed and then alarmed, for suddenly Anna Wilmott, incompetent housekeeper, became Mrs. Charles Wilmott, wife to this competent man. Surely he must know. Why would he allow it? Anna must have threatened him. Or perhaps having her busy, whatever she did, was preferable to having her unhappily at home. Why would a man like Charles Wilmott want such a wife? Why wouldn't he simply let her leave? The children. Ruth looked again at his face, a good face, a little complacent perhaps, but vulnerable. One of the several sorts of men Ruth would never have dared to marry, if she'd been given the opportunity. Anna had dared. Ruth understood how she could, for Anna had no intention of living up to anyone, threatening anyone. Cheat she certainly did and take advantage of and disappoint in a dozen ways a day, but she never threatened anyone else's self esteem. Thinking of Anna, Ruth was suddenly very afraid of losing her. She got up, went to the kitchen and started to defrost the refrigerator. Perhaps, if she didn't mention the newspaper article, Anna wouldn't either.

In the morning, because Anna was more than usually late, there wasn't time for any conversation at all, but, when Ruth got home that night, she entered the house with depressed apprehension.

"We made a hole in the ceiling," Tad announced with his relatively new con-

fidence in brazening things out. "With water."

"They let the tub run over," Jennifer explained, prissy with innocence.

"Where's Anna?"

"Taking a nap."

Ruth found her sound asleep on the living room couch.

"Wake up, Anna!" she commanded with a free anger. "Wake up!"

Anna smiled, but that sweetness could not touch Ruth. The expense of her drinking was one thing; finding her in an alcoholic stupor while the ceiling literally caved in was another.

"You're fired," Ruth said the moment Anna opened those dark, appealing, faintly amused eyes. "Now, this minute."

"I'll have to come back tomorrow and fix that ceiling," Anna said, rubbing her face as if it hurt. "You didn't have any plaster."

"You're not setting foot in this house again," Ruth said, her voice under control for the sake of the children, clustered and silent in the doorway.

"We can't come back anyway," Sally announced, defensive. "Daddie won't let us."

"Pack it up, Sally," Anna said.

"He said . . ." one of the boys began.

"Out, all of you," Anna ordered with the rare authority they always obeyed.

"So I'm fired," Anna said, once the children were gone, "and I quit."

"You simply haven't any sense of responsibility," Ruth said, trying to maintain an anger that was draining away as fast as it had come.

"I know."

"I've been willing to put up with a lot."

"I know."

"What if one of the children had been hurt? What if there'd been a fire?" But as Ruth proposed these catastrophes, not only they but the scene she was making seemed increasingly unreal. "Why did you do it?"

"You know perfectly well why I did it," Anna said with weary impatience. "I have to quit. You might as well know how little you're losing."

"That's stupid."

"Of course it is. But how else can you feel right about it? How else can I? That was really a good job you did on the refrigerator, you know? You might even be able to stand somebody who could clean a house and liked to."

"And what virtues do you think I've

taught you?" Ruth asked sarcastically.

"None," Anna said, helping herself to one of Ruth's cigarettes. "Except I saw you knew what you were doing, and that made me think maybe Charlie knew what he was doing, too, and didn't like it any better than you do."

"What good does it do to know?" Ruth demanded, her role as righteous employer gone. "If I can't stop?"

"I don't know. Who wants to be perfect anyway?"

"I do," Ruth said.

Anna offered again one of her quizzical, uncritical smiles, full of moral indifference and pleasure. "I like you the way you are. It's not a bad game to play once you know the way it works."

"That's not true," Ruth said. "Knowing how it works ruins it."

"Silly hole in the ceiling. Silly hang-over," Anna said and laughed. "Anyway, I am coming back to fix it in the morning. You'll just have to risk the house burning down."

"But then you can't come any more?"

"No."

"What am I going to do?"

"Phone an agency," Anna said, echoing the years of advice of all Ruth's responsible friends but adding, with a knowledge they didn't have, "You don't have to be afraid. The housekeeper I've got isn't all that much better than I am, and she's recommended."

"Why on earth did you take the job?"

"I told you: my life depended on it."

"And now it doesn't?"

"I hope not," Anna said.

Ruth sat in her office, her hand on the phone, thinking of Anna plastering up the hole in the ceiling before she went home to be a wife to Charlie, who needed her more than Ruth did. Or had the right to her. Did he really know as well as Ruth did how much his self esteem depended on someone else always being wrong? She dialed.

"A motherly person," she said, "who can scrub a kitchen floor and defrost a refrigerator."

After all, nobody was perfect. Anybody she hired was bound to have a small fault or two for her to fall back on. But Ruth saw Anna's large, dark, amused eyes, and she felt bereft as she had only once before in her life.

*(Jane Rule's third novel, AGAINST THE SEASON, came out in March, 1971 from McCall publishers. We hope to review this in our next issue.)*



## Beyond Desire

Review by LYNN FLOOD

Sherwood Anderson explored the theme of Lesbianism in many of his novels. I was surprised to find that perhaps his deepest expedition into the subject, the novel *BEYOND DESIRE* (N.Y.: Liveright, 1932), was omitted from both Jeannette Foster's *SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE* and Damon and Stuart's *THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE*.

The book is another of Anderson's revealing studies of himself trying to understand the workings of people. The man is eternally full of wonder at the ways of life. Relevant to us in *BEYOND DESIRE* are his observations of one important character, Ethel Long. She is confronted in Book Three with the necessity of making a decision about the course of her life. Anderson gives her three alternatives: marriage to an older man with a bad reputation in the town, an illicit affair with a man younger than herself, or a Lesbian involvement with her stepmother. She hesitates in her decision long enough to get a fair start on each road before rejecting two of them for a third.

That Ethel Long has the potential for each way of life Anderson makes clear. She is not in the old "Southern-woman tradition" of chastity and unthinking acceptance of her place as a white woman bred primarily for genteel propagation. Anderson says she is immoral and "a modern". He presents her as a woman with a "rather wild and mad passion to give . . . Herself . . . recklessly to give". Nor did she care to whom she gave herself, so great was her need. Ethel Long questions even the assumption that she must give herself to a male: "I presume a woman has to cling to something, to a belief that there is something for her, to be got through a man . . ." She is not sure.

Anderson stumbles through his portrait of Ethel Long, struggling to understand women, especially women of Ethel Long's type. She is somewhat emancipated by education and dreams of "a new freedom, separate from man's freedom." Anderson complicates his attempts to understand Ethel Long by creating a very complex relationship between her stepmother and herself. From the first, innuendoes of an attraction between them are apparent. Ethel Long's father "didn't understand it and was even ashamed . . . [the stepmoth-

er's] interest in his daughter, almost of her own age, puzzled him. It seemed to him a little strange, even unnatural."

We can see Anderson's difficulty in writing of the relationship between Ethel and her stepmother in the thoughts he gives to Ethel: "The two women did not like each other. They did. They didn't. There was a kind of understanding. There will always be something, as between women, no man will ever, perhaps, quite understand." And here Anderson gets closest to his original quest for the ways of people. He observes that women can love and hate one another because "they dare." Ethel Long and the other characters in *BEYOND DESIRE* all had a problem in daring. He believes that quality to exist, in relationships, exclusively in relationships between women. The Lesbian episode, in its differences from the two heterosexual episodes, demonstrates this. Anderson thought it out and that is what he found. He did not presume to delve deeper into the presence of daring between females and its absence between males. Nor did he try to prove the validity of his observation to the reader. Like his characters, he simply supposed things could happen that way and for the reasons he suspected.

Any reader of Anderson will recognize his ambivalence in telling a story in *BEYOND DESIRE* and his unwillingness to commit himself to anything but uncertainty in setting down his observations of human behavior. He seems to long for a less complicated world filled with people with "some new kind of understanding", particularly "between men and women, an understanding grown more general among all men and women, a sense of the oneness of human beings not realized yet". Then, he suggests, Ethel Long could respond freely to each of the people she is attracted to and could make her decision about each of them without struggling, like Anderson, through the intricacies of her socialization. He implies a question we would like to answer: of the three people, the older man who is disapproved for his immorality, the man who is too young for Ethel Long, or the woman who carries with her the stigma of Lesbianism — which one would Ethel Long choose in a freer society?

## AND NOW IT'S BACKLASH TIME!

by WINIFRED C. GANDY

Lesbians and many other women have known all along about the "real man" hiding behind the "kind, protective, considerate" male who has spent his life successfully patronizing women who sincerely believed that he was "kind, protective and considerate" as he blandly accepted their "Sir" attitude, but for those women who have never questioned their status this unmasking of the male can be a shocking experience.

The genial good humor of the indulgent male persisted right up until the time that a few token victories for women convinced him that he could be wrong about his conviction that women could always be easily discouraged.

Next came little flurries of ridicule which bounced off ever more wiley fighters and now off comes the pretense and out comes the spite.

Nobody pretends any longer — except perhaps Pat Nixon — that women are not discriminated against; the question men are debating is not *do* women have equal rights but *should* they have equal rights!

And many of them have answered their own question through backlash directed not only at women actively engaged in the movement but at any woman who can serve as a target.

I have had a bus driver deliberately try to catch me with the door and I have seen it done to other women so that they literally had to jump to get out of the way. I have been misdirected by men and I was sent on a wild-goose chase by a man in a business office who was presumably recommending another office for a service I needed. Time and time again through my life I have been punished for speaking to men as equals — not bossy, not domineering, just without a show of deference — but now women may expect any possible unpleasant treatment by a complete stranger to whom they have not even spoken.

Unfortunately, backlash has not been confined to these minor annoyances but has been actively and pointedly directed to individual women in employment, professional and political situations.

One of the first obvious and much publicized demonstrations of backlash was the walking out of 35 men at Allen Industries in Herrin, Illinois when a woman with

seniority was given a job formerly held by men. As a consequence, Allen's Sew and Trim operation was closed down. (They make cushions, cushion backs, carpet pads, door trim and door panels for Ford and Chrysler.)

More sinister and with a broader impact came Phon E. Hudkin and his report (which I first thought was meant as a joke and then realized was grimly serious) which concludes that whatever ails men can be blamed on women, and Dr. Edgar F. Beriman with his statement that women are physically unfit for administrative jobs.

Charles V. Metz of Elgin, Illinois with his divorce-reform organization is bitter about women's liberation on quite invalid points and is stupidly invective. He is *right* to oppose *alimony* and quite wrong in believing he is thereby opposing women in the liberation movement; *no woman who believes in equal rights believes in the justice of alimony*. This has nothing to do with child-care support which is an equal responsibility of both parents of any minor child.

Senator Jennings Randolph, (D-WV) who called women's liberationists a "small band of braless bubbleheads" found that a little backslashing could draw over three hundred letters and telegrams. He came through it handsomely, though, as word was circulated by his aide that he was sponsoring an amendment guaranteeing equal rights for women.

Charles Bartlett with his writhing, nebulous pronouncements under the question, "Female 'liberation': a prize — or a penalty?" simply makes me all-over nauseous. I much prefer my backlash raw and ugly rather than prettied up. And Dr. Alfred A. Messer asking "Has Women's Liberation Gone Too Far?" is another out of the same litter. Has women's liberation gone too far? It can have gone too far before it even gets here? Women are far, far from being liberated as any intelligent, well-informed person surely knows.

I do not know who designed the woman suffrage stamp that came out on August 26, but my professional feeling as a qualified stamp dealer about it is that if backlash had no part in its conception neither did a passionate interest in women's rights. Of course just plain boredom could, I suppose,

result in a completely drab and undistinguished stamp, which is what we have here.

President Nixon's consistent digs at women do not come under the heading of backlash as he has simply held true from first to last in his antagonism toward women.

I am quite sure that the object of one Mike Draper of New York City in writing a query to a question and answer column inquiring about the "renting" of a wife in Saigon where he was being sent was an effort to "put women in their place".

The city school district of San Francisco must be pointed up as having been guilty of one of the most shameful instances of backlash that have reached the media. Lowell High School which caters to the top students in the district formerly demanded from both boys and girls a 3.0 average, but now demands that girls have a 3.25 grade point average while boys will be admitted with 3.0.

According to the AP report, Ralph Kauer, assistant superintendent of the district, said the change was made because so many girls were qualifying with a 3.0 average that they threatened to overrun the school.

Can you visualize such a change taking place to keep boys from overrunning the school?

Of all the bitter rebuffs women are made to suffer, nothing has stirred me quite like that. Even Lesbians, the most vulnerable of society's victims, are not set upon at such a tender age as this. Adults who would hit young girls in the face with such an ugly experience should not escape real and public punishment; they deserve no respect as human beings.

Doubtless wherever restrictions against overtime for women have been lifted there will be employers who in resentment against women being free to compete for jobs which were formerly withheld on the basis of women's legal inability to work overtime, will pervert this new freedom into a weapon to be used against women who do not want to work overtime and whose home duties will combine with overtime work to either break them or force them to quit their jobs.

The weakness here lies not in the freedom to work overtime but in the injustice of forcing any person, man or woman, to work overtime against his or her will. Where overtime does not give men an advantage

over women employees, I fully expect them to attempt to do something about this situation. To stipulate a forty-hour work week and then leave employers free to force people to work longer hours is ridiculous. There are many people, men and women, who have no desire to give their lives to a routine job.

Any woman associated with the liberation movement, however, who balks at overtime will be hit with the taunt, "You liberation women wanted freedom from restricted hours and now you get it and now you don't want it" — the usual brand of men's logic brought to all situations involving women.

"Freedom" is the operative word here, and we certainly want it, and that is what men and women both should have — freedom to work overtime if they want to work overtime. And it does not follow logically that either men or women should be forced to work overtime if they do not want to.

It is one thing to have your ambitions centered in the job you have and quite another to be forced to work at a routine job while attempting to launch a career on the side which demands both time and money. Many writers, artists, stamp dealers and other ambitious people are in this category and to them a routine job is a necessary evil and forced overtime can constitute actual persecution and a grave handicap to their real success. There is also the possible exploitive persecution of the job-bound housewife who works "extra" simply to survive.

I should think that even men would by now be bored with the ever recurring cracks to the effect that if women want equality they should be willing to be drafted into the Army. Above and beside the fact that many millions of women are quite willing to be drafted into the Army there is the irrefutable fact that men who are not drafted into the Army — and there are many of them — do not in any degree lose their rights as first class citizens.

And let's not forget the whiplash of the "little old lady" which strangely enough is frequently heard from members of women's rights groups. This is hard to believe, and totally illogical, but it is true. There are women who fear their own potential!

There is also subtle backlash action from those who approve of the concept of equality for women; but who heartily disapprove of women who take any action to

bring this into reality.

A flagrant example of backlash which has national and possibly international significance is the attempt by William B. Macomber, deputy undersecretary of state for administration, Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Representative John Rooney (D-NY) to oust Frances Knight, director of the passport office. President Nixon clearly stands behind Ms. Knight, but cannot force the State Department to carry out his direction that Ms. Knight be promoted from a GS-17 to a GS-18 level. Harassed also by former undersecretary of State Elliott Richardson, Ms. Knight has appealed to the Civil Service Commission and what comes out of the fight could have a wide effect on the women's liberation movement. Ms. Knight states that the obstructive delays which have snarled up her office appear to be "clearly a matter of discrimination against the director of the passport office because of sex". This is according to Clark Mollenhoff in his feature story, "The Plot to Oust Frances Knight" which appeared in the Chicago Sun Times. Mr. Mollenhoff gives a broad picture of possible implication of this case of obvious discrimination against a highly capable woman because she is a woman.

It is with much sadness that I must point out that some of the most vehement backlashers are women. There have always been renegades, but usually they are not themselves victims of the forces they join. These women are victims, and their joining with the opposition to defeat women who are fighting for the freedom of all women poses a grim and bitter paradox.

There is the little New York group M.O.M. (Men Our Masters) and the Kathy Scolos who happily take second place — third place as second place is reserved for black men — and like it that way. (Kathy Scolo was featured in an article by Jane Gregory in the Chicago Sun Times, May 26, 1970. She holds a typically male job as an exhibit manager for the Singer Company, supervises men, is aware that a man holding her job would receive a far higher salary, does not resent this nor the fact that "it's a man's world" and is antagonistic to the whole concept of women's liberation.)

There is the unqualified venom of the columnist Harriet Van Horne whose insults directed at members of women's liberation groups are just short of actionable, and there is the Fascinating Womanhood League who chose Wednesday, September 30 as

Womanhood Day on which they demonstrated against women's liberation mainly by serving their husbands breakfast in bed. They received no media publicity for their demonstration.

This last truly is not backlash — it's Alice in Wonderland and good for laughs. By their own words they condemn themselves because their strongest opposition is against objectives of women's liberation which broadly affect all of society. They do (bless them) approve of equal pay for women for equal work if it "does not infringe on the rights of the majority", Sandra Pesner, reporting in the Chicago Daily News tells us, but they oppose "changing protective alimony, labor, draft and abortion laws and they are against day care centers "that would take children away from home during early growing years".

Aside from their major stupidities, they have projected a world in which single women apparently do not exist and where young couples with children and far too little money are a matter of no concern.

Mrs. Helen B. Andelin, author of "Fascinating Womanhood" published in 1965, presides over this make-believe world and claims 65,000 members.

I said of Fascinating Womanhood that it was good for laughs, but I don't really mean that; this is tragedy and not a thing to be laughed at. This is the Swan Song for a certain segment of women — very frightened women who cannot face the responsibility of doing their part in shaping the future. They prefer chains in a warm spot to freedom in a possibly cold world and in order to keep their chains they are impelled to attempt to hold back all women who by breaking their bonds threaten their position.

They cannot win; men are loyal neither to women nor to the ideals of women and they do not react well to too much tender loving care. (I can well imagine that this demonstration of feminine concentration on husbands frightened many men far worse than women's liberation ever had done.) Consequently, after public opinion has openly embraced the ideology of women's liberation men will march right over the hill with the New Woman and Fascinating Womanhood will be left behind, doubtless without alimony.

But that promises to be a long, long time from now!

Meanwhile, we have the champion backlasher of them all, Senator Sam Ervin, to



deal with.

By the time you read this Senator Ervin will have wrecked the Equal Rights Amendment, with a little help particularly from Leonor Sullivan and Edward Kennedy so any urging or exhorting I do here will be pointless.

But despite this there are facts involved which will remain stable, and one of these facts is the fact that there is something very wrong with a form of government which makes it possible for one man, and particularly a man who babbles foolishness like a wound-up doll, to play cat and mouse with the rights of the people.

Though I quarrel with the motivation of the revolutionary student factions I agree one hundred percent with their desire to wreck this government; it is bad, it is criminal.

To all those who protest change in the Constitution of the United States for sentimental reasons, I insist that you are not protecting a noble document but a shameful black mark against a country already weighed down with the guilt of having from its inception flaunted symbols of a democracy which in fact never existed for anyone except well-to-do white adult males.

And what those who say that passage of the amendment would hurt women more than it would help them are really saying is that the will to harm women, to defeat them, to ail but annihilate them is so rampant that if it is curtailed at one point it will simply break out in greater strength at another point. (Could there be a more damning indictment against men than this?)

## Book Reviews

by HOPE THOMPSON

It will come as a surprise to many in women's liberation that women in the churches take a back seat to no one in their understanding of the fundamental and crucial role of the Women's Movement to the future of society. As the cliché goes, this is a secular, post-Christian society and most WL literature reflects this. A slim (158 pp) paperback, *WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND THE CHURCH* edited by Sarah Bentley Doely, New York Association Press, N.Y. 1970 (\$2.95) might be characterized as the first intimation since the birth of Christ that we have yet to become a Christian society, let alone a post-Christian one. None

I think all women who have been active in the fight for women's rights know this to be true, but this knowledge by no means spells out a message to retreat. Free our hands now, and when they chain our feet we will cope with that, too! Women are not going to be frightened away from any legitimate rights by predictions of doom to follow if they get them.

Just give us our rights — just hand over to us what already belongs to us! We will do the rest.

Winifred Gandy writes: "I have sold one mystery novel, *THE CASE OF THE BLACK SHEEP*, under the pen name of Scott Finely and have sold to *TURF AND SPORT DIGEST* (a race track story under W.C. Gandy, and you know why!), *THE BRITISH COURIER* (no longer published), *LONDON MYSTERY*, numerous trade and semi-religious magazines, the confessions, *GLAMOUR* (Winifred Clark). My last article came out this year in the *STAMP WHOLESALER* (I run a mail-order stamps-for-collectors business) and just before that I had an article in *THE LADDER* under the pen name of Lesley Springuine. At that time I was a member of NOW but because I feel that my time is better spent in personal liberation projects than in organizational work and because I advocate revolutionary tactics contrary to NOW's policies I resigned."

of the seven individual contributors and others unnamed state this in so many words, but the conclusion is inescapable that we cannot consider our having evolved into a truly Christian society when over half of humanity — the female sex — is still in bondage. Perhaps we have become so secular a society because we never really tried a Christian one, never tried a society of persons. Men since St. Paul have dabbled at a self-serving "Christianity" that has little to do with Christ.

This book is too important for all of us, atheists as well as believers, to be skimmed over lightly. Like all anthologies, some of its contributors are more appealing than others, but all are active in one way or another in the churches. To relieve the suspense of *LADDER* readers, let me say at the outset that nowhere does the word

'Lesbian' appear. This is just what we would expect, but there is a surprise in the last and best article, one by Peggy Ann Way. (I take the liberty of rearranging her words.)

"Blacks and browns, the gay community, reds, the poor, women and others . . . have an assortment of experiences with human existence and structures that moves them closely toward the possibility of grasping the absurdities of the Christian Faith." (Italics mine).

The rest of the book, it is true, has come only half the distance. While these women offer a wealth of much needed intelligent and sober analysis, beyond anger, of the male consciousness and its rendering of organized religion irrelevant or worse to the future of humankind, they are almost as blind to their heterosexual chauvinism as the churchmen they criticize are to their male chauvinism. And yet, Ms. Way is not blind and some of the others seem to leave the door open for Lesbians and homosexuals as part of the Kingdom of God.

Ms. Crabtree (Protestant) points out that the problem is not just one of freedom from oppression, but "freedom for new ways of living and new views of ourselves as full persons." Does this include the age-old Lesbian way of living? She should have added, "and new views of each other." More hopeful is, "the success of our [women's liberation] movement will result in a radical transformation of every aspect of our personal and collective lives . . . The principal aim is provision of a variety of options from which women can choose." She probably meant "a variety of heterosexual options." But at least she is aware of the church's desperate clinging to male supremacy, which may lead women "to the conclusion that [they] should leave the present church structures and form their own church which would be more faithful to the true intent of Christ's life and teachings." Ms. Ruether (Roman Catholic) also knows "that the liberation of women is the most profound of all liberation movements, the most far-reaching revolution, because it gets to the roots of the impulse of domination." But then she quotes Eldridge Cleaver about "the primary thrust of life, the fusion of male and female." Perhaps the primary thrust of an animal is to breed, though it might be simply to survive, while the primary thrust of the children of God may well be something other than either to breed or to survive.

I suppose an anthology of this nature must include the "happy housewife" type and it does, Ms. Callahan (Roman Catholic). She has a section entitled *Overcoming the "Feminine Mystique"*, but she doesn't. Singles are out; women must above all remain "feminine" and avoid aggressiveness, competitiveness and anger, though we should be allowed a little more independence and initiative. "The culture as a whole needs to be more feminine." How about more human? . . . And worst of all, "The control of childbearing through abortion seems a most horrible negation of life and love." Presumably, the bearing of children doomed to malnutrition and starvation is the affirmation of "life and love." This is predictable for a Catholic wife and mother, but what I find sad is, "I guess in the end my feminism must be finally subordinated to the demands of Christian faith." If I thought there was a conflict between my right to full humanity and my Christianity, I would hurry back to atheism.

Ms. Barrabee (Methodist) tackles the problem of women in seminaries in a very interesting and entertaining article. Her conclusion is that "women's liberation will either hit the church and seminary very hard and affect it very fast or give those institutions up as not worth the time and energy." She concludes with, "we may discover the energy spent in looking around for access to a place in a sinking ship [the church] would have been better spent in building a new one." This article, like the book as a whole, exhibits a spirit of true religion that is not in the least dampened by the mess men have made of THE CHURCH. Ms. Jones (Presbyterian) says cheerfully, "Although the church has long since gotten over debating about whether or not women have souls [they have!], there still appears to be considerable confusion as to whether or not they possess minds . . ." In a delightful aside she speaks of the nuns she has met as evincing "a kind of gentle contempt for the men who run the church" and "their unbeatable confidence that women do not need to depend upon men for anything in the performance of a Christian duty."

And now to the last and best article, *An Authority of Possibility for Women in the Church*, by Ms. Way (Church of Christ). She is rather fond of the Missouri Synod Lutheran men for their bluntly stated conviction that women are beyond the pale. "They embody with honesty what almost every



churchman I know believes anyway." To churchmen "any consideration of the ordination of women must threaten the very nature of historical revelation." And she adds in parenthesis, "I must admit that this gives me a great sense of power!" Later on she says, "I consider the Divinity School very fortunate to have me on its faculty, rather than myself being honored by my presence here. It is important for women to learn how to make such statements." Elsewhere, in commenting on theology's emphasis on the sin of pride, a typically masculine shortcoming, she suggests the reverse for women; "sinfulness might be more appropriately related to lack of pride and self-affirmation, and unquestioning acceptance of roles . . ." Here is food for thought. Demure resignation to one's inferior status, far from being virtuous, may be sinful or unethical. Lesbians, take heed. Living in closets and cleverly "passing" may put you on the side of evil.

Ms. Way passes lightly over St. Paul for she does not really care whether "he was once in love with a temple prostitute who rejected him." All theology provides a rich mine for the study of men. What, for example, "does the Adamic myth tell us about the strength of men who are so easily seducible?" And what of the 'virgin queen,' 'tender tyrant,' and 'menopausal mystery' myths? "Whose emotions do these myths suggest that we should really fear?" Having looked long and hard at the church, Ms. Way concludes: "the degree of confinement by myth and culture among men in the church is frightening to me, and I experience an almost complete lack of free men among the creators of the present church." This state of affairs is hardly confined to the institution of the church, though perhaps it is most blatantly visible there.

An extensive appendix contains a number of statements drawn up by various women's caucuses in the churches, one of the earliest being the caucus at the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches of Christ, held at Detroit in December, 1969. Included also is a fine study of *Sex Role Stereotyping in the United Methodist Nursery Curriculum*, a sort of Sunday School Sesame Street. The most exciting report in this appendix is a *Rationale for the Proposed Institute on Women*, to be initiated within the Boston Theological Institute. (There are seven seminaries in the Boston area). To quote from this proposal: "As the whole women's

liberation movement has tried to emphasize, the women's revolution is not just another revolution among others, but rather strikes at the heart of the other forms of revolution (race, poverty, war) . . . These clues [e.g., Simone de Beauvoir's suggestion that sex oppression may be the oldest and most universal] suggests that the oppression of women as the most universal form of exploitation supports and perpetuates the other forms of exploitation . . . We refuse to consider our movement as one among others." The women who drew up this Rationale feel that pressure on the seminaries is crucial, as these are at the heart of the church, and "as female Christians we see the church as a potential revolutionary force in society, if only it can foster authentic 'sexual relationships' and full personhood for women." (Italics mine). Again, I suspect these women meant 'authentic hetero-sexual relationships.' Under Field Education, it is recommended that women seminarians be provided opportunities to work with "groups of women such as divorcees, welfare mothers, prostitutes, etc." Are Lesbians included in 'etc.'? A requirement of the Field Work Director and the women supervisors under her is "a sensitivity to the problems of women," the problems listed being the usual ones of birth control, abortion, sex roles, etc. 20,000,000 Lesbians are left to shift for themselves. The last paragraph of this lengthy Rationale trumpets proudly with, "what cause could be more essential than the humanizing of the man-woman relationship in and through the agency of the church?" The question is rhetorical and presumably unanswerable, so I answer, "the person-person relationship," the man-woman one being but one sort among many. Let us not despair of our church sisters for these women have a fine sense of humor — the Institute's steering committee is to be composed of six women and one man, and this may yet save them from their heterosexual limitations.

I may be over-optimistic about the ideas and plans for action expounded in this little book, but I never would have thought, even five years ago, that churchwomen would come so far so fast. They may well overtake the secular side of women's liberation in welcoming their Lesbian sisters (some of whom are even now students, incognito of course, in the seminaries). "We want to approach this problem [the oppression of women] on the most radical theological

level." THE LADDER stands ready to help them.

† † †

Mrs. Lisa Hobbs, judging from her book, *LOVE AND LIBERATION*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, N.Y. 1970 (\$5.95), could be characterized as a "feminist misogynist", which sounds like a contradiction in terms. She breezes through the women's liberation line in the reportorial style of the irresponsible school of journalism while the undertone is that of a boy-crazy school girl who has no use for females. "Woman's failure to participate in the production of the goods she consumes is the fruit of her lack of imagination" (p 69); "It has become imperative that we speak before woman, kept in ignorance by man for so long, destroys the world" (p 87); and "I have no doubt this [her discussion of women's sexual ineptitude] will raise the hackles of anger among women who hate and fear men, for what they hate is not so much man but humanity in general" (p 117). Toward the end of the book she discusses women's need for male friendships that hopefully stop short of the bed. "I am not speaking of persistent adultery or a lengthy affair . . ." (p 137). Apparently there is a happy medium, just the correct amount of adultery, for " . . . an adulterous liaison can bring new life into a sagging relationship." I get the impression that the successful heterosexual marriage requires the woman to walk a sexual tightrope between her official husband and her boy friends. Mrs. Hobbs maintains total silence on the possibility that women friends might add to the richness and fullness of her life. But then, she is super-heterosexual, "for within each individual's sexuality there is an incompleteness that depends on the opposite sex for completeness." Ho hum.

The book is full of statements for the uninformed to swallow as gospel. "It has been man, not woman, who has written all the romantic literature and poetry in all civilizations" (p 25). She claims to have read the ancient Greeks, but learned only that they oppressed women, not that they held homosexuality in equal esteem with heterosexuality. She wonders how Freud's mind could be so "hermetically sealed" by the Greek view of women, when her own is so hermetically sealed by heterosexual chauvinism. I was left, at the end of the book, with a fervent hope that she would ever be popular with the boys. She does have flashes of humor and is especially

funny when discussing the latest deodorants for "the most girl part." In the ads "there is a clear acknowledgement that [this] part is at once unreliable, leaky, and likely to stink up the room" (p 71).

Mrs. Hobbs begins one chapter with "It seems some things cannot be said too often, particularly when the saying of them has fallen on stone ears" (p 59). She is a fine example of the stone eared. Not only has she not heard that there are happy Lesbian couples everywhere, but she brushes aside serious studies like those of Masters and Johnson on sexual response. Yes, Virginia, there is a vaginal orgasm! Though many women live attenuated, orgasmless lives, many more are little better off in that they know only the clitoral orgasm. Mrs. Hobbs is living proof that a fortunate few experience that "extraordinary phenomenon of the vaginal orgasm." It then occurs to her that it is not quite fair for women to have two sorts of orgasm while men have only one, but fortunately this is not true. The normal male orgasm she describes as "a head-of-the-dick" orgasm as compared to the totality of the "male 'vaginal' orgasm" (p 126). Then she drops 'vaginal' and substitutes 'total.'

After reading Ann Koedt's famous article, *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm*, she arrives at some confused logic. "A Lesbian relationship is posited as being . . . perhaps even more sexually satisfying than a love relationship can ever be between man and woman. This may be the case for a limited number of women who have an abnormal hormonal or psychological background" (p 123). Does she pursue this logic and suggest hormonal treatment for those women who desire that "more sexually satisfying" relationship? Heaven's No! That would be "grossly pathological." As one nears the end of the book, it becomes evident that the "LOVE" of the title is a euphemism for sex, heterosexual style, for "*The total orgasm is the reality of her existence as a woman.*" (p 130 and the italics are Mrs. Hobbs').

We may expect future Civil Service and other employment questionnaires to contain the following:

8. Have you ever experienced orgasm? Yes\_\_\_No\_\_\_.
- (a) Head-of-the-dick [ ] or clitoral [ ] only? Check one.
- (b) Vaginal or total only? Yes\_\_\_No\_\_\_.
- (c) Both? Yes\_\_\_No\_\_\_.
- (d) Other? (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Foundations of the Male-Chauvinist-Nude

It is necessary to preface this article by stating that a work of art should not be judged by its content alone. Although one may be in complete opposition to the subject matter of a male-chauvinist-nude, the same work can also be sincerely beautiful in terms of its rendering, that is, composition, line, color or texture.

Shame and honest practicality have formed the dictate that 90% of our bodies be clothed. We have, thereby, come to distinguish one another by the only part of the anatomy always left viewable, the face. Nevertheless, we each also possess body features that are just as characteristic and recognizable as our individual selves as are our facial features. Advertising, however, which seeks to create a perpetual state of avarice in the consumer, promotes body-types and facial-types that are carefully depersonalized and thus impossible to achieve. The theory behind these tactics is the hope that consumers will feel so continually dissatisfied with their appearance, clothes or even social enjoyment, they will be persuaded to spend more and more money in order to obtain an impossible ideal.

Depersonalization functions also in art when a woman is ceremoniously stripped not only of her outer garments but of her outer physical uniqueness as well. The archetype which results from this divestment was originally designed and has for millenia been regenerated by the male-chauvinist-artist. His interpretation of a woman's body was and is dependent upon his concept of the female role in relation to himself.

The term, "Venus," has been applied by art historians to a group of prehistoric (upper Paleolithic) female figurines; the most famous of which are the Venus of Laussel, the Venus of Lespugue, the Venus of Vestonice and the Venus of Willendorf, 15,000-10,000 B.C. They are considered to be symbols of fertility and are characterized by an exaggeration of those parts of the female form necessary for procreation — the breasts, buttocks, abdomen, hips and thighs as well as the diminution of unimportant procreative characteristics such as the head, feet, hands, arms and lower legs. The

Paleolithic concept of "woman" reflected in the "Venuses" is cast solely in terms of her ability to reproduce and nurture offspring.

Even the much later prehistoric clay figure, 3,000-4,000 B.C., reproduced here shows a continuity with the Paleolithic female fertility concept. The breasts, hips, thighs, and buttocks are very pronounced while the head, lower legs, and feet are without delineation. Since this is a funerary gift, the arms have been interpreted as wing-like appendages in order that the figure might transcend the mortal world and carry forth fertility to a life beyond death.

The needs of the Paleolithic community were naturally far different from the needs of a 20th century society. There are also many phallic images from prehistoric and primitive tribes which demonstrate that both males and females were artistically defined in sexual terms. Fertility was a vital necessity in order that the community might maintain enough in their numbers to protect one another and survive. However, one would logically conclude then that in a civilization such as ours (where fertility in terms of overpopulation is actually detrimental to the survival of the society) "woman" would be reflected not as a sexual archetype but as a unique, thinking, breathing, creating individual.

Unfortunately, the very opposite is true as is illustrated by a comparison of Henry Moore's *Seated Woman* and the 4th millennium funerary figure. In his monograph written with John Hedgecoe, Mr. Moore describes one of his own works entitled *Woman*, a sculpture similar to *Seated Woman*: " 'Woman' has that startling fullness of the stomach and breasts. The smallness of the head is necessary to emphasize the massiveness of the body. If the head had been any larger, it would have ruined the whole idea of the sculpture. Instead the face and particularly the neck are more like a hard column than a soft goitered female neck . . . 'Woman' emphasizes fertility like the Paleolithic Venuses in which the roundness and fullness of form is exaggerated."

It is not accidental then, that contemporary art has faithfully maintained the male-



Small female figure of painted clay. 4th millennium B.C. Height 29 cm. Courtesy of The Brooklyn Museum.



Henry Moore. *Seated Woman*. 1956-57. Bronze. 57" Height. The Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection.

chauvinist archetype. In the over-all push of 20th century artists toward complete abstraction, the "individual" has been scrapped in favor of the "conceptual". The nude woman has been essentialized, refined and finally re-essentialized into the cliché forms of the figure "8" where the head, arms and legs have actually been removed from the body leaving what is generally referred to as the "torso". Sculptures of the female torso present women literally as sexual (sculptural) objects and are the epitome of the depersonalized, male-chauvinist nude.

The copying and reproduction of Greek and Roman sculpture has helped to promote the atrocity of the "torso". Although the works were originally created in their full form, legs, arms and heads have broken off with age, leaving strange, dismembered statues behind. Because of their famed "classical beauty", the damaged works have, rightly or wrongly, continued to be applauded and copied just as they stand with arms and legs missing. In fact, many of the works are often considered beautiful just because of the unfinished feeling resulting from their damaged state.

The theory of "classical beauty" is in itself a male-chauvinist one and presents the nude as a symbol of ideal beauty. In art history, beauty is in the eye of the male

chauvinist beholder. In Titian's *Venus and the Lute Player*, Venus finds herself again presented not as an individual woman but as the non-existent ideal. Although her body is voluptuous and lusty, she casts her eyes up and away from the viewer telling us that she is untouchable, unreachable, godly, ideal. The lute player is not permitted involvement either and is portrayed as an admirer, not a lover.

Furthermore, Venus is painted in a manner which removes her from the action of the painting. This is evidenced by the rendering of her feet which are unsupported and seem to float in mid-air. Finally, her body features do not belong to a particular woman but are statements of flesh in general. The artist has set himself the task of recreating the male-chauvinist concept of what a woman should look like (young, de-haired, unbruised and all parts in perfect symmetrical proportion) rather than the more difficult achievement of portraying the imperfect loveliness that can be honestly found in a real, human woman.

<sup>1</sup>Venus, of course, was the Roman name for Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty, not fertility. The misnomer results from the male-chauvinist concept that love and procreation are interchangeable.



Titian (Tiziano Vecelli). *Venus and the Lute Player*. 16th century. Oil on canvas. 65"x82½". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Munsey Fund, 1936.



# Lesbiana

By GENE DAMON

It is difficult to review DAUGHTERS OF THE PROMISED LAND, by Page Smith, Boston, Little, Brown, 1970, because it is such a two-sided book. Page Smith is a man, and right there we have a problem. If I review this book honestly, on the one hand I am going to be called a man-hater, and on the other, the women's liberation women won't like it. But fair is fair, and about 90% of this book is marvelous.

Covering three hundred years of American history, Page Smith has outlined in quite a bit of detail the activities of women in this country. When he is dealing with the historical aspects of the subject, he is apparently without sexist prejudice; and for these chapters (all but 4 in the book) the book must be recommended, because there is virtually nothing available that covers as much in as little space as clearly and as beautifully and as accurately indexed. The other 4 chapters are his personal view of women, now and in the future. Disregarding everything he has said himself up until that time, he goes right back to the same degrading view of women held, apparently, by all men, however well they may couch it.

I mentioned the fine book WOMAN TO WOMAN in the last issue. This is a collection of poetry . . . quite a good bit of it Lesbian and all of it intended for the liberated (or to be liberated) woman. Most of it is very good; some of it is very very bad. I have no way of judging the drawings . . . they fit the text, which is important; and they are mainly attractive or "telling." The collection is physically beautiful despite its admittedly having been done in the cheapest printing method. It costs \$1.00 and comes from Free Women's Press, 2828 Benvenue Avenue, Berkeley, California. They do not request postage but it would be a kindness to add a quarter at least to that fantastically low cost to save them the added burden of sending it to you. Every effort is made in the collection to keep you from putting the name of the poet on the poems in question . . . which is very very frustrating and reminiscent of studying Anglo-Saxon literature, where most of the authors are unknown. Some well-known (despite their every effort) poets are included . . . Diane Di Prima, Anne Sexton, Alta, Judy Cahn, Marge Piercy and

Valerie Solanis. For those of you keeping up, identifying some will be easy. Buy this, whatever the reason. It's a wonderful effort and it's closer to succeeding than anything else you are likely to find anywhere for ten times as much.

BORN FEMALE, by Caroline Bird, has been expanded and slightly rewritten with some added historical information on the women's liberation movement. Out from David McKay Co., N.Y., 1970, it is worth getting if you do not have the earlier edition. If you do, the additions here are of use to you only if you are not reading all the material flowing from all the presses on women's liberation. The major plus in this book is that it gets into ALL libraries and thus is available to myriads of women who will never never see a copy of this magazine or anything else related to it.

Also briefly mentioned in the last issue was THE RED CLAY READER 7, a literary magazine in book form published by the Southern Review, 6366 Sharon Hills Road, Charlotte, North Carolina 28210. The Southern Review bills itself as a non-profit corporation formed to support Southern writing. The editor and associate editor are both women, most of the staff is also female, and this shows in this issue anyway. Though disclaiming women's liberation intentions, almost all of the issue is certainly a specific for that audience. Most of the items run here are very well written; and although some newcomers are featured, mostly established writers are in evidence. Most interesting is a pseudo-fiction item called "South Again" by Kate Millett, which will surprise those of you who have only read SEXUAL POLITICS. Kate in a gentle loving guise will probably be more pleasing at that. An article on women in science fiction is excellent. Done by science fiction author Joanna Russ, it is flawed only by dreadfully imperfect bibliographic references. No Lesbians in evidence, naturally, except as contributors . . . not writers per se. Recommended to the audience that reads literary magazines. Contributors include, besides those mentioned, May Sarton, Denise Levertov, Doris Betts, Vassar Miller and Joyce Carol Oates.

THE RIPENING TIME, by Alistair Mair, London, Heinemann, 1970, is by a well established routine novelist. It is reasonably well written but comes out sounding curiously flat. "Here" Tom Dawson marries Mary Muldoon and lives out his life with her until near the end, when he decides to

kill her without cause . . . he does so, with a garden spade. Sounds like women's liberation material and indeed, Mary — with her pointless view of herself and Tom and her marriage to him, determined to succeed in nothing but marrying him, the fact accomplished — is a fit heroine for the field. But as a matter of fact, Tom is also wronged in the sense that he is unfit to marry Mary (or anyone else, for that matter), being both slow footed and dim witted. Mary, in a surrealistic middle section of the novel which seems wholly unrelated to the rest of it, is picked up in a bar by a very attractive young woman and satyr like young man, spirited off to their digs, and treated to a unisexual sexual initiation which increases her unhappiness with her nothing marriage. But the after events are unrelated to this portion, so we can assume it was tossed in for some unspecified fantasy in the male author's mind. Jacket cover is lovely . . . beyond that . . . forget it.

Two paperback reprints are out of 1969 hardcover novels with some minor Lesbian content: FAT CITY, by Leonard Gardner, out from Dell, 1970, and MILE HIGH, by Richard Condon, also from Dell, 1970.

Hope Thompson kindly provided the following brief review of a current women's liberation paperback original. The HAND-BOOK OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION, by Joan Robbins, Now Library Press, Hollywood, California, 1970, is less successful than SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL and costs more . . . \$2.95. Though it has no table of contents, it does list newspapers and journals, omitting, of course, the precursor of them all, THE LADDER. The book is reviewed briefly here because of its excellent introduction by Judith Brown, an editor of RADICAL THERAPIST. She sums up the short history of the current women's liberation movement through late 1970. It began with the desertion by leftist women of the mixed, hence male dominated, groups, finding, among other things, that "the rhetoric of the left and the haranguing style of left men is nearly meaningless to most people and is disagreeable to all women". I find this statement heartening, as I was beginning to think that only I hated leftist harangues. Heartening too is the fact that some WL groups, notably in New York, Florida, and California, define male supremacy as "active behavior of men which hurts women" and that these groups have come to the conclusion, hardly new to Lesbians, that "all men

gain from the domination of women." This is a welcome change from the old saw that it's all a 'Kapitalist' plot.

Judith Brown touches on the unfortunate anti-leader orientation among many feminists, a miserably foolish stance taken by a few anti-leader leaders and dutifully swallowed by the timid. As she says, "Too many women are now holding back from doing any movement work at all to save themselves from being called 'stars.'" It is a sorry state of affairs when the hardest-working women, those most dedicated to freedom for all women, are also the most damned by women.

Ms. Brown is a feminist who earlier than most realized the importance of Lesbianism in the movement. But this book "has skirted the question by omission." Joan Robbins uses the time-honored male tactics of rendering the female invisible . . . in this case, of rendering the Lesbian invisible. Ms. Brown discusses the role of the "radical" Lesbian, that "radical" Lesbians are informing us that Lesbianism is a positive response to another woman, not merely a negative response to men." I put "radical" in quotes for I fail to see what the word adds to the word "Lesbian." The phrase strikes me as redundant, like "conservative Bircher" or "leftist Marxist." The lifestyle and social significance of the Lesbian is utterly radical today. Perhaps she means Marxist Lesbians, but why should only the small handful of Lesbians who embrace Marxist politics (I don't recall Marx championing Lesbianism) have something to say and not the vast numbers of us whose politics are less extreme? Be that as it may, I rejoice to find a voice in the women's liberation movement that fearlessly says: "unless we embrace all women, we cannot defeat all men, and male

## CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

If you are planning to move, please let us know six weeks before changing your address. Please send your old address and your new address, clearly marked. You MUST include BOTH your old and your new zip codes. REMEMBER, third class mail is not forwardable. Send to CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT, P.O. Box 5025, Washington Station, Reno, Nevada 89503.

supremacy . . . will continue to brutalize women."

Two readers less than a week apart brought THE MANUSCRIPTS OF PAULINE ARCHANGE, by Marie-Claire Blais, to my attention. This will be reviewed next column, along with Marguerite Duras's DESTROY, SHE SAID. Both titles I missed during the regular year last year.

**A VERY IMPORTANT BIBLIOGRAPHY IS OUT AND NOW AVAILABLE THAT EVERYONE WHO IS EVEN PRETENDING TO BE A PART OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION, LESBIAN LIBERATION, SHOULD BUY. This is WOMEN: A BIBLIOGRAPHY, compiled by, and available from, Lucinda Cisler, 102 West 80th Street,**

## Lesbian in Literature in 1970

An Annual Report by Gene Damon

In 1970 the subject of the Lesbian as woman, first, Lesbian second, was discussed and written about more than in the prior fourteen years of THE LADDER'S existence. On the other hand, 1970 was the first year in seven years where the total Lesbian literature picture lost in both quantity and quality. However, it must be added that the decreased amount of time I can spend on this one area accounts surely for the loss of some titles . . . as I write this I am informed by readers of two novels I missed and which I will talk about in a future Lesbiana column.

Only 33 titles passed through my hands worth recording, 27 of these as hardbacks or quality paperback originals. Some 250 pornographic paperbacks were spotted, best left forgotten.

Many Women's Liberation publications dealt to a greater or lesser degree with Lesbianism on three levels (see IT AIN'T ME BABE, AIN'T I A WOMAN, EVERY-WOMAN and RAT, newspapers from Berkeley, California, Iowa City, Iowa, Los Angeles, California, and New York City . . . to cite only a few). The first level most familiar to readers of THE LADDER, is the view of Lesbianism as a fixed, permanent, joyous, total way of life. The second as a "political" choice to avert the necessary diminishing of the human rights of the female in any relationship involving men. The third as a "new discovery" which translates for most of us into "late coming out". Many nationally known women's

New York, N.Y., 10024. COST IS 50c. We are emphasizing the price of 50c since this used to be only 30c. IT IS more than worth its price.

Lastly, I'd appreciate hearing from the woman in the Rochester, N.Y., area who signed her letter "Kane Kelly". She asked questions but provided no mailing address. She also took me to task for using "Miss" and "Mrs." in the column . . . and I will make every effort not to lapse again. However, she added "we in the movement are more conscious of these things". I wish only to point out to her that I have been in the MOVEMENT for 15 years and am fully conscious.

liberation spokeswomen made public statements of solidarity with Lesbians, further spurring on articles on the subject. The unwelcome and unnecessary coupling of Lesbianism with chosen political behavior is the hardest to accept for those of us who understand at the gut level that one is, or is not, a Lesbian, period.

In the interest of conserving space I am only listing those titles most highly recommended from the past year's discoveries. Every title found in hardcover or quality paperback is reviewed in the regular Lesbiana column during the year and new readers who are interested are invited to purchase back issues of THE LADDER. Well over 2,500 books have been reviewed in THE LADDER since October, 1956. In addition to covering all Lesbian material we have always reviewed all books with the slightest bit of feminist or women's liberation interest as well as biographical works concerning prominent women.

Early December each year is the cutoff date of the yearly report to give me time to put it together. Each year's group includes late discoveries with copyrights up to two years back (thus 1970 includes 1968 and 1969 titles if found in 1970).

1970's best Lesbian novel is Jane Rule's THIS IS NOT FOR YOU, N.Y., McCall's, 1970, though it requires an attentive and serious reader. In terms of popular appeal, the mystery novel, A TERRIBLE THING HAS HAPPENED TO MISS DUPONT, by Polly Hobson, N.Y., McCall's, 1970, takes

the honors. As a friend put it, "good gothics for gay girls".

Janice Elliott's excellent novel, ANGELS FALLING, N.Y., Knopf, 1969, though not totally devoted to Lesbianism, is a major study and very good. It is romantic in the best sense of the word, those who miss it cheat themselves. The underlying structure of England's early suffragist movement makes up the background of the early part of the novel and adds to the interest here.

A much less serious novel, indeed an intended spoof, Alec Waugh's, A SPY IN THE FAMILY, N.Y., Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1970, is wildly popular, very overt and rotten propaganda. With all, however, delightful reading.

For short story readers there were two good titles appealing in widely different ways. The first, "Paper Poppy", by Miriam Rugel, in BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES, 1969, Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1969, is wildly romantic in the youthful memory style, even a bit weepy. The second, "Changed", by Norma Meacock, in STORIES FROM THE TRANSATLANTIC REVIEW, N.Y., Holt, 1970, is a crudely believable view of misery and lost love among lower class English Lesbians. It's an excellent story, albeit miserable.

And for poetry lovers there were several

individual title entries discussed in prior columns. The book of the year, though, in the poetry field is the sensitive experimental collection, WOMAN TO WOMAN, published without imprinted author, publisher or date entries, in San Francisco, by Free Women's Press, 1970. Substantially Lesbian in tone, this collection of women's liberation poetry is a milestone in experimental publishing.

Biography fans will enjoy BRIGHT PARTICULAR STAR, by Joseph Leach, Yale University Press, 1970. The life of 19th century American actress, Charlotte Cushman, is fascinating. Mr. Leach is confused by her love of women, but he records accurately enough even though you can see him shaking his head from time to time.

I haven't asked recently but those of you who read in the field of Lesbian literature are begged to send to me each and every new title you find. Your help helps me to make sure that everyone interested finds the books they want to read. If the misused, misunderstood and damned term, "sisterhood", has any meaning at all it must be that we must begin to assist one another or we will surely perish. And for those of you still hung on the "I did it all myself" school, remember that everyone cannot. Help, for the sake of helping.



## Viewing Sexism

By RITA MAE BROWN

Sex is used to sell everything in our country. If you packaged shit, called it "Fabulous Feces" and utilized a woman in the advertising campaign, it would sell. All this rampant commercial sexuality with the focus on women as walking sperm receptacles is incredibly destructive. Damned if I want my body to send a movement male on his butch ego trip. It's one thing if plastic people relate to each other as automatic genitalia but it's a whole other scene if Lesbians are seen as a distorted version of the mass culture. Sexuality is the same whether you are a Maoist, anarchist or reconditioned Goldwaterite. The male seeks to conquer through sex while the woman seeks to communicate. Put the two together and you breed hate . . . neither can break through the preconceived role pattern of the other. If each accepts her or his sexual role, even in hip terms, a cold war develops.

But despite mutual discontent with the opposite sex the male still comes out on

"top." His ego can swell up like a bloated tick, gorged on his various conquests. He can parade in front of other males (whether at IBM or the SDS office) holding his much used prick as proof of his manhood, the locus of his identity as a male. Whoever heard of abortion mentioned in these circumstances? Notice that this parading with the typical ignorance of consequences is done for the benefit of other males. This arid homosexuality which uses the heterosexual act as the basis for its male supremacist structure is America's answer to the carnage of the Colosseum — we do it in bed spiritually instead of in the arena bodily.

To define yourself by your genitals is to fall into the trap our sexist society has set for you. It will take men much longer to see this, to discover that sexism is political, than it will for women. Aside from the already mentioned reason that sexism is in his favor, a man can ignore sexism because his entire identity does not depend on



sexual function. The boasting of conquest is demanded but he can also expect a life outside of sex — he can be a senator, a pig or a big time movement leader. Women are defined by sexual function alone . . . in or out of the movement. The usual insensitive male response to Women's Liberation is "All those chicks need is a good lay." We have no other identity in society or in revolutionary counter-society. Our fulfillment is still to mysteriously come via the erect penis.

For a woman to accept this definition of herself is to accept spiritual lobotomy, self amputated before it can grow. For a woman — especially in the Women's Movement — to vocally assert her heterosexuality is to emphasize her "goodness" by her sexual activity with men. That old sexist brainwashing runs deep even into the consciousness of the most ardent feminist who will quickly tell you she loves sleeping with men. In fact, the worst thing you can call a woman in our society (again this also applies to counter-society) is a Lesbian. Most women are so male identified that they quake at the mention of this three-syllable word. The Lesbian is, of course, the woman who has no need of men. When you think about it, what is so terrible about two women loving each other? To the insecure male, this is the supreme offense, the most outrageous blasphemy committed against the sacred scrotum.

After all, just what would happen if we all wound up loving each other? Good things for us but it would mean each man would lose his personal "nigger" . . . a real and great loss if you are a man.

Our sexist culture destroys everyone, male and female. It prevents men from really loving anything other than themselves and what brings them pleasure (the female) and it prevents women from the exercise of self. At the root of this sexist culture is intense woman hatred and intense hatred of sexual activity. Our American emphasis on sex is a sad illustration of how false sex is and how commercial. Part of this hatred probably springs from male jealousy over female life-giving functions. Maybe some of it is due to the fact that we have more sexual staying power, especially as we mature. I can't pretend to know where it all comes from but I do know it is there. The male experience of sex is diametrically opposed to the female experience. All of our literature (male literature, they won't publish ours yet) from Melville to Mailer,

shows us this inability to enjoy sex as communication, as joy. It is either evil or an ego trip.

In line with this, the traditional male explanation for Lesbianism is a patronizing use of our deepest emotions to explain their needs and fears. Men always explain Lesbianism as a woman turning to another woman because either she can't get a man or because she has been treated badly by men. They can't seem to cope with the fact that it is a positive response to another human being. To love another woman is an acceptance of sex which is a severe violation of the male culture (sex as exploitation) and therefore carries severe penalties. To really love another woman is to communicate at its best, but, even at its worst (erotic exercise), the idea of conquest is absurd. But the problem is more varied than that. Women have been taught to abdicate the power of their bodies, both physically in athletics and self-defense, and sexually. To sleep with another woman is to confront the beauty and power of your own body as well as hers. You confront the experience of your sexual self knowledge. You also confront another human being without the protective device of role. This may be too painful for most women as many have been so brutalized by heterosexual role play that they cannot begin to comprehend this real power. It is an overwhelming experience. I vulgarize it when I call it a freedom high. No wonder there is such resistance to Lesbianism.

For a man to engage in a homosexual act is not the assertion of self. It may even be a negation of self. For a man in America to love another man and express that love physically is to lose cock privilege — to become a woman in the eyes of that society (again counter-society also) and he is likely to be the only male who has some idea of what it is like to be despised as a woman. Our culture is so sexist, so narrowminded, so frightened that it can only function in terms of roles. These roles are simplified: Male = power and dominance; Female = nurturance and passivity. There is no such thing as human.

The man who wants to sleep with another man has to be a woman — it's the only way mini-minds can handle him. Those men that do manage to break through their fear of confronting their sexual experience and sleeping with other men usually find themselves torn as to who they are. It is a negation of self for many. They have been

so brainwashed by sexist culture that they give us the phenomenon of male homosexual promiscuity or the sadist/masochist bars with the "masters" and "slaves" — the logic of our sexist culture carried to its ultimate end. Most male homosexuals I know are desperately clinging to the externals of cock privilege while secretly fearing they aren't really men. One of the ironies that clearly demonstrates this exists within some of the political homosexual groups — they are often male supremacists. The Lesbians are not taken seriously. The more they look like traditional female sex objects, the more accepted they are.

What a pitiable comment on our generation, the males in our society closest to renouncing cock privilege, closest to breaking out of role, retreat to more restrictive roles and still cannot deal with the reality of independent womanhood of the self-directed non-male identified woman. She is as much of a threat to him as to his straight brother. There are a few courageous women fighting this one out with these men but, once again, women's energies are being wasted trying to educate males. Men must educate themselves, Mommy or Queen Chick isn't going to nurture anymore.

And so our sexist culture humps on its exhausted way with the Sexual Ku Klux Klan burning out the beauty in all of us. I

do believe women are breaking out and through to each other in fighting sexism. I do believe this will force the culture to examine itself and the backlash will be enormous. This kind of re-examination has to be done in the gut and that means concrete pain. It is a lot easier for men and male-identified women to avoid that pain by hurting the people who are jeopardizing their world axis. Our very lives force people to ask those questions of themselves. I wish I could say something encouraging. I wish I could say that the irrelevant aspects of our beings (color and sex) will fade away in the future. I wish I could say we'd forget black and white and male and female and concentrate on being human, on being beautiful, on being alive. I wish I could say that I didn't receive a phone call from a male that said, "You're Rita Mae Brown, aren't you?" "Yes," . . . I answered. "I hear you don't like men, you're a dyke, and I've put a bomb under your stairway." Click. I wish I could say that it didn't hurt.

*(Rita Mae Brown is an active spokeswoman in Women's Liberation. Her poetry and essays have appeared in many Movement publications, including a number of prior appearances in THE LADDER.)*



## Whipped Cream

By Geoffrey Moss, N.Y., Geo. Doran, 1926  
REVIEW by Jeanette H. Foster, Ph.D

To learn in 1970, at third hand, of a 'significant' novel published in 1926 is one more proof of how stringently reviewers earlier in this century avoided any implication of Lesbianism. Strictly speaking, WHIPPED CREAM does not deal with outright Lesbianism — its theme is the passionate and selfless devotion of one woman, Vera, to another, Lindy, who cares only for men.

The story opens when Lindy is 23, and five years married to a man more than twice her age. Although his devotion is also passionate, he is at best a dull and dreary fellow. The action begins at a houseparty where by pure chance at 4:30 one morning he sees his adored young wife (they are not quartered in the same room) leaving the bedroom of a handsome male fellow guest of her own age. This is such a shattering blow to his masculine ego that he feels he can never resume marital relations with her.

Divorce is his only recourse, but in

consideration of his hostess, a very old friend whose house he does not wish to involve in scandal, he requests the young couple to provide adequate evidence in other circumstances. The young man (who was apparently never serious anyhow) delays this business for reasons which seem to Lindy purely selfish. Disillusioned and bored, she persuades Vera to travel abroad with her, and in a succession of European pleasure-resorts she drifts from one violent flirtation to another, each less savory than the last.

Vera, the real heroine of the tale, is some eight years Lindy's senior. The latter, apparently motherless and allowed to drift by a thoroughly selfish and shallow father, has for some years before her marriage lived with Vera, who tried to dissuade her from the match. Vera is half Hungarian (the Lesbian of foreign extraction was a popular dodge in 1920-30 novels) and wholly unable to respond to men. Since the death of



her mother, Lindy is the only person she has ever loved, but she has never allowed that love more expression than 'maternal' caresses.

Through a handful of 'engagements' Lindy descends to a final trite rape-seduction by a Rumanian *soi-disant* Prince. Vera, foreseeing for her darling only a future completely déclassée, persuades the still unconsolated and undivorced husband to re-accept the (momentarily?) chastened and near-suicidal Lindy. Vera herself will retire in cloistered loneliness to her hereditary Hungarian estate.

The main comment on this over-long (382p.) narrative is its faithful reproduction of the frivolous 1920's. [An opinion here offered by one who lived through them as a sentient young adult!] The title, I think, purposely suggests the frothy pursuit of 'thrills' then current. But more specifically, it is symbolic of Lindy's personality — delicious when freshly stirred, flat and unpleasant once the froth has collapsed.

Two final comments: 1) Vera's unrequited devotion had fictional predecessors and successors; perhaps the most noteworthy being "Elizabeth" in Radclyffe Hall's UNLIT LAMP (1924) and "Christina" in V. Sackvill-West's DARK ISLAND (1934). 2) Geoffrey Moss — surely a woman, though as yet unidentified — wrote another novel of similar theme a little later: THAT OTHER LOVE (Doubleday Doran, 1930; English copyright 1929). This latter is quite different from WHIPPED CREAM, faster moving, more varied, and in at least one section strongly suggesting (though never specifying) overt Lesbianism. Its title, of course, made discovery and inspection of it relatively simple several decades ago.

(Editor's Note: We are delighted to have a review from Jeannette H. Foster, author of SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE, the 1956 classic annotated bibliography of Lesbian and variant literature. Dr. Foster is retired and lives in the middle west.)

## THE SUN MOVES ACROSS THE SKY IN A SERIES OF DAYS

& it may not care  
it has seen everything i do  
somewhere before & since &  
does not flinch at slavery/  
it was shining when Mercedes  
cut her wrists: careless sun.  
i heard once it hid from us in anger  
but that's a myth — crucifixions  
are constant: still we  
warm our bodies in its light.  
every morning we see it, scientists say.  
as if this will go on forever go on  
forever the sun moves across the  
sky in a series of days . . .

ALTA

hands on my yearning belly,  
i watch you walk away  
holding your daughter's hand.  
you don't let me touch you  
when others can see.  
i don't turn away, i  
just get sadder.  
it's true  
those men might harm us  
if they knew.

ALTA

## Poetry

as summer's sun-touched skins begin  
to tell us of each moment's tingle,  
our senses dance a saraband  
saluting lovers hand-in-hand  
and seize our unsuspecting lips  
to celebrate the season.

Sander Reid

You and I  
are One,  
as the voice of Astrud Gilberto —  
anodyne wine,  
each anima  
a sun darkened asteroid  
eclipsed in love.

Sander Reid

The feminists are up-in-arms  
En masse they flock to drop their charms —  
Cultivated beguiling ways  
Fit only for subservient days.

They seek reforms and cry "Unite,"  
Some with patience, others spite,  
"Reshape your life the meaningful way  
With equal jobs for equal pay."

The male imposed limitations  
When stopped create new situations —  
These women must confront themselves  
When men are put away on shelves.

Thus acceptance comes, of late,  
Of sisters having strayed from straight,  
Who challenged the system long ago,  
We who could have told them so.

Sander Reid

### The Vow for Anne Hutchinson

sister,  
your name is not a household word.  
maybe you had a 2 line description  
in 8th grade history.  
more likely you were left out,  
as i am when men converse in my presence.  
Anne Hutchinson:  
"a woman of haughty and fierce carriage."  
my shoulders straighten.  
you are dead, but not as dead as you  
have been, we will avenge you.  
you and all the nameless brave spirits,  
my mother, my grandmothers,  
great grandmothers (Breen Northcott, butcher's wife,  
the others forgotten.) who bore me?  
generations of denial and misuse  
who bore those years of waste? sisters and mothers  
it is too late for all of you. waste  
and waste again, life after life,  
shot to hell. it will take more  
than a husband with a nation behind him  
to stop me now.

ALTA

I have known it from the beginning  
 As though by fate  
 Disbelieving fate.  
 I have known our blood was mixed before  
 Blood fell on Troy.  
 We as One  
 Were divided by some awful hand  
 And I have searched the centuries for her face,  
 Hearing eons echo her name,  
 A muffled refrain drenched in longing.  
 Long have I yearned  
 As Age tread upon the heels of Age  
 I have tread upon the sharp silver peaks  
 of loneliness and isolation,  
 Spurning women  
 All women save the one I knew once.  
 In thick clouds of prehistory.  
 Outraged at her imperfection,  
 Even Helen was a bone  
 I threw to Paris  
 I toiled, a plaything of Cronos  
 From Genesis through each silly flock of years  
 Herding decades into the pen of my penumbrial brain  
 Looking in the shadows of bleating days for her face.  
 And seeing black sheep.  
 The years slipped by  
 And I alone  
 Felt them go  
 No longer counting sheep  
 Too tired for counting sheep.  
 But I will know her when she comes  
 I will know her as she knows me  
 And she will call me, "woman."

Rita Mae Brown

my heart opened to you when you woke.  
 we are real; we have real faces,  
 freckles and lines and our hair turning grey.  
 look in my eyes and don't turn away:  
 i am not afraid to be seen by you.

ALTA

Love me  
 Love my insanity.  
 Forgive me my  
 teeming brain.

My madness,  
 The terrifying  
 insecurity of me.

When I tell you  
 my creativity, is  
 discerned  
 from day to day  
 handwriting,  
 Believe it.

Time ticks away,  
 and, only in the  
 holocaust  
 of this awareness,  
 is my sanity saved.

Kathryn Szydlowski

March is a mad month  
 butting like a ram  
 A windy spirit  
 lending choppy foam

A time of inky cotton  
 playing havoc with the sky  
 Of dirty steamers  
 jogging into port

March is a hillspend day  
 above a wrinkled sea

An early part of year  
 when dreams still breathe

Maybe you and I  
 will find a hearth  
 by which to dine

Remembering:  
 March nights  
 often bleed wine . . .

Kathryn Szydlowski

*Rosemary McDermott writes that she is attending a local college in New York (state) and hopes someday to get a degree. She is active in Women's Liberation and has just helped organize a group on campus. She has had poetry published in PROLOGUE and THE HUMAN FACTOR and has just completed work on a collection of poetry.*

The flesh that is myself,  
 Own,  
 Growing like wild sunflowers  
 In that dream  
 That is my brain.  
 Wide-open-buds,  
 A continuity of limbs, white,  
 Revolving in the three bright image boxes  
 Of my life-fire,  
 Erogenous encephalon.  
 Waves of undulating union  
 Move like transparent fingers  
 In the aperture of mind,  
 Self-transcendence.  
 Sister-pouncer,  
 Woman-lover,  
 Drooping with topaz eyes  
 Like wan Narcissus,  
 Echo-spurner,  
 Over the inverse waters of Lesbos,  
 Reflecting on the fetish that is woman,  
 Reflecting in the other that is same.

Rosemary McDermott

This love that is so strange,  
 Lips on lips,  
 Woman configuration;  
 Breath that falls like question notes  
 Through the puzzled air.  
 Are these eyes  
 Mine or yours,  
 So perfect is their sameness?

Rosemary McDermott

# THE LESBIAN MAKER

Now that the drunk is gone,  
 Fled in a wake of twelve-proof screams  
 To a beer-can bed,  
 Who will be your victim?  
 Perhaps the blonde daughter,  
 The one that sleeps with men.  
 Never the lesbian.  
 There is something in her  
 That lies in wait,  
 Perchance a heart,  
 A gently armed humanity  
 That might forgive, or even understand.  
 Better to use your Catalani voice  
 Against the gold, psychotic child  
 Of your womb,  
 The gold, psychotic child  
 Of your aberration;  
 Until she kills herself,  
 Or slaughters you  
 In indignation.  
 Now that the drunk is gone,  
 And the lesbian's too cool to care,  
 Too dark of mind.

Rosemary McDermott

## Waterfall

We live in the crown of the Queen's desire,  
aloft the swirling currents of her hair,  
half-drowning on our perch of flowing beauty.

Our work is to twine the strands to patterns,  
while wild as water they resist  
the struggle of the taming crews.

Our joy is in feeling we're going over,  
helpless in the water fall, caressing  
the last life pleasure on our way.

In the big swells we spend our days,  
bobbing up and under the Queen's vast  
waves, exulting in the great life surge.

We handmaidens of desire know our need,  
and give ourselves to serve the throne,  
to plait, or to offer our bodies to the flow.

Carol Lynk

One huge blossom of moisture  
weighed above the earth,  
bending trees already hung  
with burden, turning  
the light greens to light  
laden with cloud-darkness.

The air choked with anticipation  
in the overload, and fought  
our breath and steps with thickness.  
The task of living spring  
worsened on the soaking day,  
from days when airiness  
loosed the pollen dream dust.

We walked in that heavy bag  
of suspended water drops,  
roused with the wildness  
of impending storm, and sought,  
it seemed, ourselves to rain,  
to burst with the air's promise.

Carol Lynk

## Violinists

A miracle of hands,  
playing from ourselves the self,  
persuades the patterns  
of my mind to mix  
with yours and to create,  
in both our ecstasies,  
a singing substance merged from us.

We make substanceless song,  
free of tones we always hear,  
and even now it hovers, waiting  
an assignment into form  
that will envelope us in  
pitches we have sought:  
our music of the spheres.

Carol Lynk

## Hibernation

In winter's warm and holy fur  
we juxtapose our fetal limbs:  
my body sends the heat of yours  
to you, and our wills interlock to share  
the long and sleeplike warmth we've made.

Within this cave our consciousness  
has built beside the world, our lips  
find nurture deep in the milk of flesh,  
sustaining us in our animal time  
of sleep before the births of spring.

And when ascension starts from up  
the peaceful bed, when spring sends scents  
to buoy us through unwilling morns,  
I'll hope to find again in you  
the path that led us to this cave.

Carol Lynk

There's acid though  
and  
there's  
acid indigestion

In Nomine Deo

Your thought is my inspiration  
and this paper's too good  
for anything less than the pen

... Empty edifice

Lesbia peaks out at the shabby  
other  
peering in on the unmade bed  
smiling a dandelion smile

Sunny and two-footed  
gaping  
and snatching at roots  
from above the earth

Kathryn Szydlowski

## BEING

Should she leave me  
I, as a bee  
Stepped on and stinging  
Try to fly  
Spinning out my entrails  
To sputter and die  
Soft guts superimposed  
Upon the uninterested sky.  
A brief plate  
Smashed as all images must be  
And the bee  
Falls back to earth  
Not far from her sting  
A tiny black and yellow bundle  
Her transparent wings  
Nervously beating life's last pulses  
Wings on which life and love etched  
Opposing answers  
To the question outlined by the soft coil  
Of her insides  
Spread along the ground.

Rita Mae Brown

## THE NEW LITANY

Compounded in confusion  
A mute, prosaic Sappho, I pray —  
"Oh let me dumb be blessed with song  
to fling at the metaphors of darkness  
Cemented in silence of swift time  
On this side of morning;  
To bring the dawn and rein Time's  
ravenous mouth,  
To spend the sacraments on sheets  
Redeemed in a kiss,  
To proclaim New Christmas, the carol  
chanted by her eyes."  
All this splendor, I pray —  
A groundling with face upturned  
To the snow fallen down  
In the night of her hair  
Above me.  
Deaf to my song?  
Would she feign deafness?  
Or wave me away?  
Ah, I'm left to pray,  
As Venus in her ascendancy  
Draws triangulations on reality.

Rita Mae Brown

In autumn, when leaves, curl  
Crisp brown yellow,  
And sun fuled skies  
Are fluffy grey.

You and I will roam  
Through paths  
That lead nowhere.

We won't talk,  
Of thoughts  
That sail our minds,

For doubt, in her  
Armoured get-up,  
Will intervene.

We will smile at  
Each other,  
And turn our heads,  
To see

That sky is frank.

Kathryn Szydlowski



# Cross Currents

**CHASE MANHATTAN BANK REPORT ON WOMEN AND WAGES:** New York City, October 8, 1970. Chase Manhattan reports the median wage of women employed full-time in 1970 was 58 percent of the median male income in 1968. In 1955 the percentage was 64. This means that women are paid scarcely half as much as men. What would happen if males were 53 percent of the population and females 47 — sex war?

**PHILADELPHIA, PA.:** November 1970. The Homophile Action League, originally a chapter of Daughters of Bilitis, celebrated its third year. HAL has become a participant in the Philadelphia Women's Center, formed to encourage and assist local women's liberation organizations. HAL has also set up a speaker's bureau. For free information or its \$2 monthly newsletter, write: HAL, 928 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19107.

Also from Philadelphia comes word that the Pennsylvania American Civil Liberties Union has announced it will begin legal action to secure anti-discrimination legislation for homosexuals.

**DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?** *Far Eastern Economic Review:* November 14, 1970. An article suggests that Japan has achieved economic miracles because the Japanese male "is still the master in industrial and commercial houses." However, the economic growth of India and Ceylon is said to be lagging because both are ruled by women! We are reminded of the treatise by 17th Century Lutheran Priest, Benedict Carpzov, which claimed that homosexual expression resulted in earthquakes, famine, pestilence, *Saracens* (a nomadic tribe in Roman times), floods, and very fat, voracious field mice.

Women, token political figures or not, are now responsible for economic growth or its lack. Who will be blamed next — unborn children?

**AILEEN HERNANDEZ REALLY KNOWS WHERE IT'S AT:** New York, November 17, 1970. Aileen Hernandez, National President of NOW, spoke to the Women's National Book Association. Over 200 attended. An excellent write-up of the entire meeting is in *Publisher's Weekly* for January 4, 1971 (any library will have this). Briefly, Ms. Hernandez pointed out the "changes" in children's literature:



by LYNNE

"All those books they give you before you go to school teach you all the proper little fairy tales. Textbooks in school were about that stimulating non-family Dick and Jane and their dog Spot.

"Dick did all sorts of wonderful things while Jane stood around and watched." A change was made in the California educational system's textbooks, she said, and Dick and Jane emerged as Mark and Janet, and Mark gained a black friend. "Now, while Mark and his friend have all the fun, Janet stands around and watches."

**WE OUTNUMBER YOU — A PRIMER TO WOMEN'S LIBERATION,** *Los Angeles Times*, November 29, 1970. Maggie Savoy, a staff writer for the Times, provides a good look at the reasons for women's liberation.

**MORE AND MORE DRAMAS ON WOMEN:** Washington, D.C., December 1970. The Back Alley Theatre ran a play, *Focus on Women*, in December. While not outstandingly successful as drama, because of the diversity of material, it was fine consciousness raising.

**GAY IS GOOD FOR US ALL:** *Washington Monthly*, December 1970. This article, by Suzannah Lessard, is a good view of why most Lesbians are active in women's liberation rather than gay liberation. Ms. Lessard apparently advocates the gathering of all oppressed, while we recognize that the

women of the world have to "get it together" first; but this article is excellent. *Washington Monthly* is at 1150 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, and the issue is \$1.

**JAPANESE WOMEN:** Various sources, December 1970. Women's liberation groups in Japan are forming, and many are taking "fighting" names. There is even a **FIGHTING WOMEN'S GROUP**. Chauvinism in Japan is purportedly more rampant than in the U.S. But women are obviously no longer bowing and smiling.

**MERCHANTS AND MANUFACTURERS STUDY SUPPORTS WOMEN:** Los Angeles, December 5, 1970. A study of 664,000 California workers shows that men are less stable workers, quit more often and are fired more often than women. So all that crud you have read is proved, once again, to be male propaganda. Men do not hire women in some jobs because women can't do them or are likely to quit, but because men do not like women.

**BITCH IS BEAUTIFUL:** Plainfield, New Jersey, December 3, 1970. Special to *The Ladder*: Four women spoke to over 100 women at the Jewish Community Center. Dolores Alexander, once a reporter, executive director of NOW, and now a member of New York NOW's advisory council, said, "The media says we're nuts, kooks, frustrated bitches or Lesbians. It's funny they say this because I have never known a sexually frustrated Lesbian."

**WOMEN WIN AT LIBBEY-OWENS-FORD,** December 7, 1970. Toledo, Ohio. The first Justice Department's suit for equal employment rights for women ended in an agreement providing these rights. Without admitting guilt, the co-defendants, Libbey-Owens-Ford, Inc., and the United Glass and Ceramic Workers of North America in a consent decree agreed to all of the women's basic demands. These included transfer and seniority rights and that, of the next eight supervisory promotions, four will be women.

**WOMEN AND THE LAW:** *New York Times*, December 9, 1970, and *Newsweek*, December 7, 1970. Two widely different articles on women lawyers, at the same time. The article in *New York Times* reports how women feel about the prejudice against them in law. *Newsweek* dealt with how unhappy and frightened male Harvard law students are about women in the field. Elisse Walter scored 773 out of a possible 800 on a law school aptitude test.

An unidentified male Harvard senior found this "demoralizing".

**THE LIGHT OF LIBERATION CAN BE BLINDING:** *Village Voice*, December 10, 1970. In another excellent article on women's liberation, Vivian Gornick expresses the views of a threatened male. Good, though limited in appeal.

**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY SEES MORE HIRING:** Chicago, December 11, 1970. A survey by Northwestern of 191 businesses across the country showed that more will hire fewer men and more women in 1971, with salaries for women taking a 4 percent jump as male salaries increase only 2 percent. Again, tokenism, but we didn't have that much a year ago.

**WOMAN POWER:** New York, December 13, 1970. Some 500 women braved bad weather and marched up Fifth Avenue from 59th Street to Gracie Mansion to demand free abortions and child care centers. Naturally, the women had been denied a parade permit (fancy NYC getting away with that with a male group). Everyone you expected to be there was — we won't list the names again. Groups represented were from *Church Women United* to *Radical Nuns* and *Radical Lesbians*.

**BACKLASH BARKING AND BACKFIRE:** *Time*, December 14, 1970. In the Behavior section, an unnamed writer for *Time* wrote, "Ironically, Kate Millett herself contributed to the growing skepticism about the movement (women's liberation) by acknowledging at a recent meeting that she is bisexual. The disclosure is bound to discredit her as a spokeswoman for her cause, cast further doubt on her theories, and reinforce the views of skeptics who routinely dismiss all liberationists as Lesbians." This unnamed male writer (we feel we can safely venture that a man wrote that) didn't know he would spur the first significant public solidarity with Lesbians by eastern women's liberation spokeswomen. We also wonder what would happen in women's liberation if all women in the movement were Lesbians. That would surely make Lesbians a political force to watch closely, wouldn't it?

**REALLY, IT IS ABOUT TIME, BUT THANK YOU, ANYWAY:** *New York Times*, December 13, 1970. The December 14, 1970 issue of *Time* was, of course, out almost a week before that date, and its attack on Kate Millett sparked the first national solidarity between Lesbians and women's liberation. One hundred demonstrators

cheered the major speakers at the meeting held at Washington Square Methodist Church in NYC. All the demonstrators wore lavender arm bands (just as all the people of Holland wore yellow arm bands during the occupation by Germany in WW II to express common cause with Jews who were compelled to wear yellow arm bands or be shot). Many spoke up for solidarity with Lesbians. Nine prominent workers for women's liberation were identified as present in the protest: Kate Millett, Gloria Steinem, Florence Kennedy, Sally Kempton, Susan Brownmiller, Ivy Bottini, Dolores Alexander, Ti-Grace Atkinson and Ruth Simpson. Caroline Bird, Bella Abzug and Aileen Hernandez sent supportive statements to the meeting. Kate Millett read a statement which said, "Lesbian is a label used as a psychic weapon to keep women locked in their male-defined 'feminine role'. The essence of that role is that a woman is defined in terms of her relationship to men. A woman is called a Lesbian when she functions autonomously. Women's autonomy is what women's liberation is all about . . ."

Other parts of her statement saw women's liberation and Lesbians fighting toward the same goals.

**GAY LIBERATION:** *Guardian*, December 19, 1970. In the Radical Forum section, writer Allen Young provides an excellent view of gay liberation, notable for its lack of male chauvinism and constant emphasis on the very different world of Lesbians and their extreme differences from male homosexuals. He slips only once and says "female homosexuals" instead of Lesbians, but this is an excellent article, highly recommended. *Guardian* is beginning to do some tentative work in women's liberation. Allen Young recommends the reader begin his education with Kate Millett's **SEXUAL POLITICS**. I recommend you read this article.

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA STARTS MARCHING:** December 18, 1970. *Philadelphia Enquirer*. U.S. Department of HEW made recent attacks on schools, charging sex discrimination is resulting in the University of Pennsylvania's frantically trying to drum up proof of fair employment practices. This won't do at all, but it will help, because each "token" woman is one more educated woman with a job almost as good as the job she deserves.

**BARBARA ANDREWS IS A MINISTER:** Minneapolis, December 21, 1970. For the first time, the American Lutheran de-

nomination has called a woman to the ministry. Ms. Andrews, 24, will serve as pastor to the Edina Community Lutheran Church, a congregation of some 130 families. In November the larger Lutheran Church in America ordained its first woman pastor, Elizabeth Platz. Ms. Platz is pastor at the University of Maryland.

**DAMN IT, ROBIN, DID YOU HAVE TO LEAVE US OUT?** *New York Times*, December 22, 1970. In *The Media and Male Chauvinism*, Robin Morgan records the general media's inhospitable approach to women's liberation and the growth of new women's magazines and newspapers. She cites every national newspaper and magazine except *The Ladder* and *Aphra*. Growl, Robin, or should we burn down the editorial desk on all our behalves?

**WOMEN ARTISTS DEMONSTRATE AT WHITNEY:** New York City, December 11, 1970. Armed with a giant sign, **WOMEN NOW**, and red armbands, a small group of women artists invaded the invitation-only opening of the Whitney Museum's 1970 annual sculpture exhibition. Waving their placard, they circulated among guests and staged a sit-in in front of a giant piece of sculpture. Their protest was over the low percentage of women exhibitors in the Whitney annual shows. Founded by a woman, the museum has a lousy record with regard to the exhibition and encouragement of the work of women artists. The administrator of the museum seemed to feel that since this year's exhibit contained a far larger proportion of work by women (22 percent as opposed to 5 or 10 in the past annuals), women should be very pleased. They didn't appear to be, as they went about the building making the figures "50 percent" with tampons, eggs and other materials.

**MORE WOMEN AT THE WHITNEY:** *New York Times*, December 19, 1970. Right on the heels of the demonstration by women artists at the Whitney Museum, the *New York Times* ran an article by Grace Glueck pointing out that of the 3,000 artists in the permanent collection of the museum, 450 are women, or 15 percent. In a token effort to soothe the savage women, a brief show opened late in December in the second floor galleries, featuring some 52 women artists from the permanent collection.

**FATHER, MAY I? or THE BOOM IN WOMEN'S STUDIES:** *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 29, 1970. An article by

Beverly Koch on the handful of universities and colleges in California teaching a few rudimentary courses on women, is titled, believe it or not, "The Boom in Women's Studies."

**THE AMERICAN FAMILY:** *Time*, December 28, 1970. The Behavior section of *Time* is devoted to a cursory but well thought-out look at the probable life styles of the next 20-30 years. Included are surprisingly reasoned statements on why women's liberation is not a threat to society but clearly essential to its growth. Good, for *Time*, and hopefully, read by many.

**WINTER BABIES AND THEIR MOTHERS BATTLE THE AIR FORCE:** December 1970 and January 1971. Airman 1st Class Gloria Robinson, 19, gave birth to a baby on December 30th in Colorado Springs, Colorado. On December 3, Captain Susan Struck, 26, of Louisville, Kentucky, an Air Force nurse, gave birth to a daughter. Both women are fighting the Air Force to keep from being discharged without cause. Both are unmarried, have given their babies up for adoption, and both intend to make the Air Force their careers.

**LESBIAN CENTERS OPEN - BOTH COASTS:** December 1970 and January 1971. Los Angeles DOB has purchased property toward establishing a Lesbian center and plans are under way to move into it about the first of the new year. New York DOB also has a new center for Lesbians and moved into it in January.

**BILLY GRAHAM IS PICKETED, BUT MILLIONS WATCHING DID NOT KNOW IT:** Pasadena, California, New Year's Day 1971. Parade Grand Marshall Billy Graham, having demonstrated his contempt for women in an article in *Ladies Home Journal* (December 1970) with almost unbelievable statements relegating women to the house and childbearing, and a secondary role in the home (stating they have no right to hold a job outside of the home), was the object of 50-60 women's contempt. They carried signs such as "Billy Graham Is a Sexist" and "Thank the Lord, She will Provide." TV managed to avoid covering the picketing, because, no doubt, the Rose Parade is a "family affair."

**NATIONAL PRESS CLUB WELCOMES WOMEN:** Washington, D.C., January 1971. After 63 years of being all male, the National Press Club voted to allow women in. Veteran bartender Harry Kelly, serving drinks to four women reporters for the first time, set the tone of the "breakthrough"

with this remark: "Here you are, and I hope you choke on it."

**PERMANENT LOVING RELATIONSHIPS DEFENDED:** King's Lynn, England, January 1971. Michael De-La-Noy, former press officer to the Archbishop of Canterbury, appealed to Anglican church officials to consider granting their blessing to homosexuals who wish to establish a permanent loving relationship. De-La-Noy, unlike many spokesmen for homophile causes, specified that he was speaking of *homosexual male and Lesbian female* pairs who wish to marry one another. De-La-Noy is director of the Sexual Law Reform Society in England.

**GUIDE TO WOMEN:** New York, January 1971. Women workers, unskilled to professional, living in New York City, will be listed in a directory compiled by a women's liberation group. This will provide a reference guide to women for use in supporting other women in work efforts. Recommendations and suggestions can be sent to **WOMAN POWER**, P.O. Box 4261, Grand Central Station, NY, NY 10017.

**BELLA ABZUG GOES TO CONGRESS:** NYC, January 1971. The 19th District in Manhattan may well go down in history for many reasons, but in "her story" Bella Abzug will lead the way. Commenting on the "scrappy militants" she is expected to join in Congress, she said, "They come from agony, honey. I won't be alone up there." It doesn't really matter, though, for as former Attorney General Ramsey Clark said early in the campaign, "We need 50 new voices in Congress and if Bella Abzug is elected, we've got 10 of them."

**WOMEN'S LIBERATION LIBERATES A BUILDING:** New York City, January 3, 1971. Over 75 women took over a vacant city-owned building at 330 East Fifth Street and began establishing a women's center which will include a health clinic, a Lesbian center, child care center, art workshop, feminist school, etc.

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF WOMEN'S STUDIES:** *Washington Post*, January 3, 1971. In an article about Professor Barbet Blackington, of American University, by Elizabeth Shelton, support for the recent women's liberation stance supporting Lesbians is strongly endorsed by Professor Blackington. However, she also spells out the reasons this logical step has taken so long, and unconsciously demonstrates just how deep-rooted repression



really is for women in this society. This [Lesbianism] "is a natural part of us. In our society it is condoned at certain ages. Then suddenly you are told this is evil and you must be totally heterosexual. The process represses what is a part of all of us. . . . We don't hate them. We fear them. It is like fearing murder because you fear you may be a murderer yourself some day." Presently Dr. Blackington is founding the International Institute of Women's Studies. She hopes to raise \$2 million for the non-profit tax-exempt institute to be patterned after the Institute of Policy Studies. She plans to be its director.

**PROMISES TO PUSH FOR EQUAL JOB RIGHTS:** Washington, D.C., January 11, 1971. William H. Brown, Chairman of the EEOC, says that though lower pay and slower promotion persist almost everywhere for women, despite "efforts" to change that, the future will be better. He promises that EEOC will put pressure on labor unions, private employment agencies, public agencies, and corporations. So far Brown is primarily limited to raising vocal hell and encouraging some of the wronged women to bring law suits.

**24 WOMEN ARRESTED IN END OF FEMINIST DEMONSTRATION:** NYC, January 14, 1971. Over 50 women were forcibly evicted by the city from an abandoned building they had taken over to use as a women's liberation activities building. The building was declared unsafe and was to be torn down. Women in the group, however, had already cleared the building of rats and taken steps to rehabilitate the premises. Apparently no reason exists for refusing use of the building except the fun of hassling the women. The 24 arrested were charged with criminal trespass, assault, resisting arrest and harassment. Who was doing the harassing when the police moved in to clear a building the city had abandoned two years ago and was so enamored of the plan to tear it down?

**HOT UNDER THE COLLAR OVER TIME MAGAZINE:** January 16, 1971. Responding to *Time's* implication that Kate Millet's work was undermined by her admission of Lesbian experience, two readers wrote in: "Your comments about Kate Millet's sexual preferences . . . were unnecessary and irrelevant. Her ideas and theories ought to be judged on their own merits and not in terms of someone's prejudices with regard to proper sexual practices. The suggestion of a direct connec-

tion between her sexual orientation and the validity of her ideology is an *ad hominem* argument. Further, her bisexuality is simply a facet of her experiences as a woman and does not alter the fact that she is a woman." (Lorraine Sexton, Philadelphia.)

And, "Men hate an 'uppity' woman; they also hate an 'aggressive' woman . . . Is it likely . . . that women will become the chief breadwinners while men perform domestic chores? Will women become the executives, men the stenographers and clerks? Will men be denied equality under the law, prohibited from voting or managing their own property, kept illiterate, excluded from the professions as well as the most important functions of religion . . . while their wives flaunt their gigolos and patronize male prostitutes?" (Margaret Bernard, East Chicago, Ind.)

**WOMEN IN RELIGION: A SURGING MOVEMENT IN ITSELF:** Many sources, January and February 1971. Articles in papers and magazines from coast to coast keep coming about women who are working toward the hierarchy of church leadership. There are even signs, in a few denominations, that they will not suffer as much as their few predecessors did, those brave women who went through seminary only to find there were no congregations that would have them, and either left the work or wound up as chaplains in YWCA positions or other young people's work. The final holdout, of course, will be the Roman Catholic Church, but it seems clear that someday there will be women in top positions in every other church.

**WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HOMO-SEXUAL:** *New York Times Magazine*, January 17, 1971. Novelist Merle Miller wrote a cover story which is destined to become classic male homosexual literature. Now that the spokeswomen of women's liberation are speaking out on Lesbianism, men are also, admitting that, in some ways, they too have lived a "lesser" life.

**SEXISM ON THE RESERVATION:** *Akwesasne Notes*, January and February 1971. This paper ran an article on the suit of Jeanette Lavell against the government of Canada. Mrs. Lavell is suing to retain her Indian status which she is in danger of losing because she married a white man. Indian males, however, who marry white women keep their Indian status. Various rights and privileges are attendant on this status.



## Readers Respond

Dear Gene:

The following are situations, comments, etc. which you or a member of your staff might wish to cite in an article on the belittling of the female by the male in the professional world. They all occurred recently in the high school at which I teach.

- 1) An administrator remarked to three female teachers that he felt that the men on the faculty owed the women a vote of thanks for the ten sick days they enjoyed each year since those days were awarded because women are subject to " . . . how should I say it, certain disabling effects one day each month." I found most insulting the fact that he was not being sarcastic but was in earnest.
- 2) The Guidance Office ran a survey on our top-ranking seniors. It was found that, with very few exceptions, their teachers in all four of the major disciplines had been females (over half our faculty is male). The all-male administration had this portion of the survey deleted from the report when it was presented to the faculty.
- 3) An admitted affair between a male teacher and a female student was tolerated . . . but a female teacher was quizzed insultingly by the principal for giving rides to and from school to a female student.
- 4) Female teachers on our faculty are assigned to nearly all the time-consuming, effort-wasting intraschool committees . . . but the male teachers are assigned to the county committees where policy, curriculum, textbooks, etc. are determined.
- 5) A male student, gifted both mentally and physically, withdrew from athletics at the end of his junior year because he

could no longer tolerate what he called the "jock-strap mentality of the locker room." Coaches and boys retaliated by ridiculing him as "an old woman" and "a boy bitch" and by suggesting that he wear a skirt to go along with his long hair (slightly past his ears). Those same coaches permitted the cheer leaders to become members of the Lettermen's Club so they could decorate for their banquets, handle their correspondence, etc.

- 6) The only administrator who was not originally a coach or an extremely poor classroom teacher is our Dean of Women who was for several years an excellent instructor. It is pathetically obvious that she is the only administrator who is honestly admired and respected by the student body (and this despite the fact that she is firm and demanding).
- 7) The women on our faculty are overloaded with extra-curricular responsibilities because they accept the responsibility seriously . . . the males are permitted to escape such duties because they have proved themselves to be untrustworthy in such positions.

Though there are more female teachers in public education, women are hampered in their efforts to achieve equality by male-dominated administrations and school boards. They are also hampered by those females whose jobs are simply secondary means of adding to the family income — who do not see themselves as professionals. In the ten years I have spent at this school I have witnessed the pressuring out of those female teachers who too openly challenged the male hierarchy. Frankly, I have survived this long by establishing myself unquestionably as a good teacher before speaking out and by concentrating more on trying to eliminate the sexual prejudices of my students. However, I find myself now wishing to be more aggressive in my efforts. I hope the above may prove of some use to you.

C.M., Florida

Dear Gene Damon:

LADDER readers may be interested in the film "Five Easy Pieces," a 1970 Columbia Pictures release, produced by Robert Rafelson and Richard Wechsler and directed by Robert Rafelson. Almost as a reward for suffering its enormous male chauvinism the picture gives us two obvious Lesbians to



add to variant cinema history.

The hero and his girlfriend are driving to Washington and pass Palm, Terri and their upturned car on a roadside. The two women are fighting, blaming one another and the man who sold them their car for the car's incapacity. When the hero jumps out of his car to help them Palm gives him a very adamant finger. Nevertheless, the four journey on together for a good part of the trip. At first it is possible to believe the segment was designed as a bit of comic relief, but it lasts too long to be only that and makes some good points. The relationship between Palm and Terri is, by the way, never mentioned beyond the hero's initial unspoken surprise when he realizes that Terri is a woman. They are accepted as a matter of fact.

Palm, it turns out, is an ecology enthusiast to the point of obsession. She goes on interminably through the trip about all the "crap", "junk", and "garbage" in the world. This is all that she talks about while insisting that she is so disgusted she does not even want to talk about it. Even Terri pays no attention to Palm and they are all frankly bored. This is why their appearance seems like comedy.

When I tried to figure out what two seemingly irrelevant Lesbians were doing in the film I realized they provided not merely comedy, but encapsulated its theme metaphorically. The two women are going to Alaska to escape all the garbage. As Terri says, "She thinks Alaska is cleaner." And Palm does think that because she once saw a picture of Alaska. The hero is doing exactly the same thing in the movie. He later tells his paralyzed, possibly uncomprehending and mute father that he is always on the move, not exactly looking for something, but trying to get away from a lot of things that are getting bad. As a matter of fact, that is what the whole film is about. The hero, in telling his father about his life, is speaking to an audience whose equivalent is in the three car-imprisoned, unlistening and uninterested people to whom Palm speaks. And, as Palm says that she does not want to talk about her flight, the hero explains that he is talking to his father only at his sister's insistence.

Terri and Palm, their movement and their reasons for it are symbols of the film's theme and assist the filmmakers in making their point. They are not, however, contrived. Their performances are so authentic

that I got the feeling, though I am undoubtedly underestimating the filmmakers' abilities, that they somehow just happened by some lucky chance. That the hero was driving during the shooting and did stop, or was directed to stop, because someone in the crew had a feeling on seeing the women that they would add something to the picture. Further, the two women were not stereotyped, but had personalities which allowed their portrayals to be of two people and not simply of two Lesbians.

Em Lyndall  
Boston, Mass.

Editor:

In the Toni Cade anthology, THE BLACK WOMAN, which you cited in the February/March, 1971 issue of THE LADDER, the article "The Black Woman as a Woman" by Kay Lindsey begins with these words:

*"As the movement toward the liberation of women grows, the black woman will find herself, if she is at all sensitive to the issues of feminism, in a serious dilemma. For the black movement is primarily concerned with the liberation of blacks as a class and does not promote women's liberation as a priority. Indeed, the movement is for the most part spearheaded by males. The feminist movement, on the other hand, is concerned with the oppression of women as a class, but is almost totally composed of white females. Thus the Black woman finds herself on the outside of both political entities, in spite of the fact that she is the object of both forms of oppression."*

Reading THE LADDER as long as I have, it dawns on me that in the Lesbian mind this paragraph could very well be written:

*As the movement toward the liberation of homosexuals grows, the Lesbian will find herself, if she is at all sensitive to the issues of feminism, in a serious dilemma. For the homosexual movement is primarily concerned with the liberation of male homosexuals as a class and does not promote Lesbian or women's liberation as a priority. Indeed, the movement is for the most part spearheaded by males. The feminist movement, on the other hand, is concerned with the oppression of women as a class, but is almost totally*

*composed of heterosexual females. Thus the Lesbian finds herself on the outside of both political entities, in spite of the fact that she is the object of both forms of oppression.*

I do realize that my statement concerning women's liberation being primarily composed of heterosexual females is not true . . . it should be heterosexual females and "passin" Lesbians, but a "passin" Lesbian is no better than no Lesbian at all in terms of worth in the movement as far as other Lesbians are concerned.

Where do we go from here?

Name Withheld  
Washington, D.C.

(Editor's Note: To Women's Liberation in ever increasing numbers.)

Dear Gene:

In the December/January issue, you mentioned some things about the August 26th rally here (Kansas City, Missouri). Rather than 100 women, we estimated between 400 and 500 women attended. We know this from the amount of literature we passed out to women. The reason it looked like so many men attended was probably because they had time to stand around, while most of the women were rushing back to the office with their take-out lunches in little bags!

One of the Women's Liberation women, Linda Phelps, and I wrote a letter to the Kansas City Star complaining about the terribly biased coverage of the whole thing, but it wasn't printed.

Jeanette Silveira  
President, NOW, K.C. Chapter

(Editor's Note: Ms. Silveira is no longer NOW, K.C. Chapter President, but was at the time of writing. We suspect that this local distortion existed coast to coast, not to mention the known distortion in national media.)

Dear Gene Damon:

On reading the letter to you on Laura Nyro's song "Emmie" (THE LADDER October/November 1970), I was reminded of another rock song still played and newly recorded by many groups which always had the same connotations as the Nyro piece. The song is called "Sally Go 'Round the Roses" and was made popular by the

Janettes in 1963. It was written by Zel Sanders and Lona Stevens (COPYRIGHT 1963, Winlyn Music, Inc., New York, N.Y.). Although I always felt the implications of the song in its presentation more than heard them in the lyrics, the rock critic Richard Goldstein in his anthology, THE POETRY OF ROCK, suggests, "Those who like to ponder meaning can choose between a gaggle of interpretations, including one which alleges that Sally experiences a religious epiphany, and another which asserts that the whole thing is about a Lesbian affair." Any readers who have not heard the record would do well to purchase it, for it is a musical classic even aside from its possible meanings.

THE LADDER must have many readers who have noted significant rock, folk or even pop songs. It would be fun to share theories. I hope you get more input on the subject.

L.F., New York

Dear Editor:

KARATE RATIONALE: A COLLAGE

"Miss Leary, of Okoboji, Iowa, was graduated last June from Smith College, where she was a classmate of Julie Nixon Eisenhower. She came to New York in September. She began graduate studies at New School for Research and the Bank Street School for Education, and two weeks ago began teaching at the fashionable Brearley private school for girls, where Caroline Kennedy is a student."<sup>1</sup>

"It's got to stop, just as the man-hating has to stop, and the karate."<sup>2</sup>

"New medical evidence indicated that the slayer may have been so mentally unbalanced or deranged by drugs that the suddenness and ferocity of his attack gave the victim no chance to struggle for her life."<sup>1</sup>

"Karate? These guys are still into breaking bottles over each other's heads, with an adventuresome avant-garde carrying guns. They wouldn't be caught dead in white cotton pjs making foolish-sounding noises at each other."<sup>2</sup>

"He mangled her face and breasts with a kitchen knife."<sup>1</sup>

"Cosmo, he said, sadly shaking his head, women aren't what they used to be."<sup>2</sup>

"He crushed her skull with a hammer."<sup>1</sup>

"Things have got to change for the better, or else there's going to be real trouble between the sexes."<sup>2</sup>

"Patrice was a marvelous person with the most beautiful blue eyes you've ever seen, he said. She would never hurt another creature on earth."<sup>1</sup>

"Cosmo agreed, while fiercely maintaining that the least women's liberation could do was agree to act a little nicer."<sup>2</sup>

"Miss Leary apparently clung to her midwestern image afterward at Smith College, where she made the dean's list and dressed in the conservative fashion of a well-known classmate Julie Nixon Eisenhower."<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Leary is presently awaiting the return of her daughter's body —

<sup>1</sup>Marc Kalech and Cy Egan, "New Clues in Girl's Slaying," *New York Post*, Vol. 169, No. 282 (October 31, 1970) p. 1-2. also: Barry Cunningham, "City Had Changed for Patrice," *New York Post*, Vol. 169, No. 282 (October 31, 1970), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Richard R. Szathmary, "Cosmo and Women's Lib: Missing the Message," *The Village Voice*, Vol. XV, No. 43 (October 22, 1970), p. 9-10.

(Editor's Note: Karate Rationale was written in tribute to the anonymous author of "Getting Ripped Off" in the Dec./Jan. 70-71 issue of *The Ladder*.)

Dear Ms. Damon:

I have noticed two phenomena emerge from my TV viewing. One is that I much prefer movies that do not even bother with female characters. This means mostly war epics and Westerns, the good old blood and thunder stuff. It is not that I am warlike or suffer some unconscious need for violence (most of my violence is quite conscious and directed at the men who run this world and bring it nearer the brink every day), but I have found that the characters in all male movies are more "human" as they go about their righteous warfare. Introduce a "love interest," as we used to call it, and the characters become absolutely idiotic. The females, of course, have no resemblance to real women whatsoever and the males act so absurd that I wonder that any heterosexuals can take this stuff seriously.

The other phenomenon that crept silently into my ken was the need to insert just enough female to assure us that the heroes were 150% heterosexual. The clearest example of this is the series, *The Senator*, with Hal Holbrook. Hal has his pal with him

during all his working hours, not just as advisor in his senatorial work, but to listen to his doubts and fears, his inner quest for right and justice. This has a dangerously homosexual aura about it, but never fear. There is the little woman in the background for night work. Beyond this she also fears for his life and pleads tearfully for his abandoning his principles, as she cannot possibly understand his highminded goals. She senses vaguely that he is a Great Man, but all she wants is his live body to warm her bed. I haven't watched *The Senator* in some time.

Peggy Crawford  
Greenwich, Connecticut

Dear Ms. Damon:

You and your readers may be interested in some very recent, as yet unpublished, research it was my good fortune to come upon, research that should once and for all settle the much disputed matter of the cause of homosexuality. This PhD thesis was carried out under the guidance of that well-known Professor of Abnormal Psychology, Herr Doktor von Socar-Bieberides of Entwighofen University. The statistical and scientific methodology of this research is faultless — its conclusion is beyond attack. I will summarize briefly.

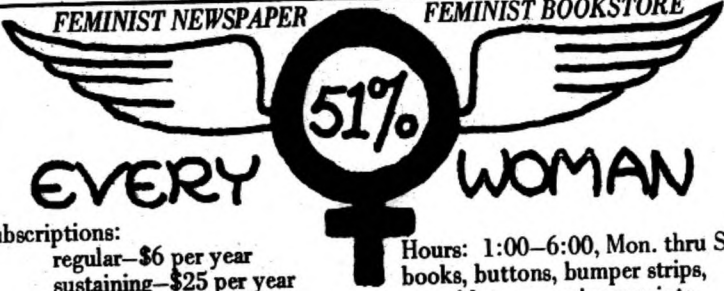
100 heterosexuals, representing exactly the total West German heterosexual population (48 men and 52 women) were selected first and given intensive study. This group is hereinafter referred to as the H group. Then a control group, hereinafter referred to as the C group, of 100 homosexuals, matching the West German homosexual population exactly (37 male homosexuals and 63 Lesbians) was given the same intensive study. The significant findings (at the .05 level of significance) are given below.

All one hundred subjects in the H group were found to have parents. And, to the astonishment of the research team, it was found that all subjects in the C group also had parents. The conclusion is incontestable. Parents are the cause! This is a scientific breakthrough whose enormous consequences can hardly be grasped. But we know that, once the cause is established, the cure is not far behind.

My only criticism of this landmark experiment, due soon to electrify the whole social-scientific world, is that it is not clear which group is to be cured.

Melanie Burnside  
Berlin

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# MOODS OF EROS

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