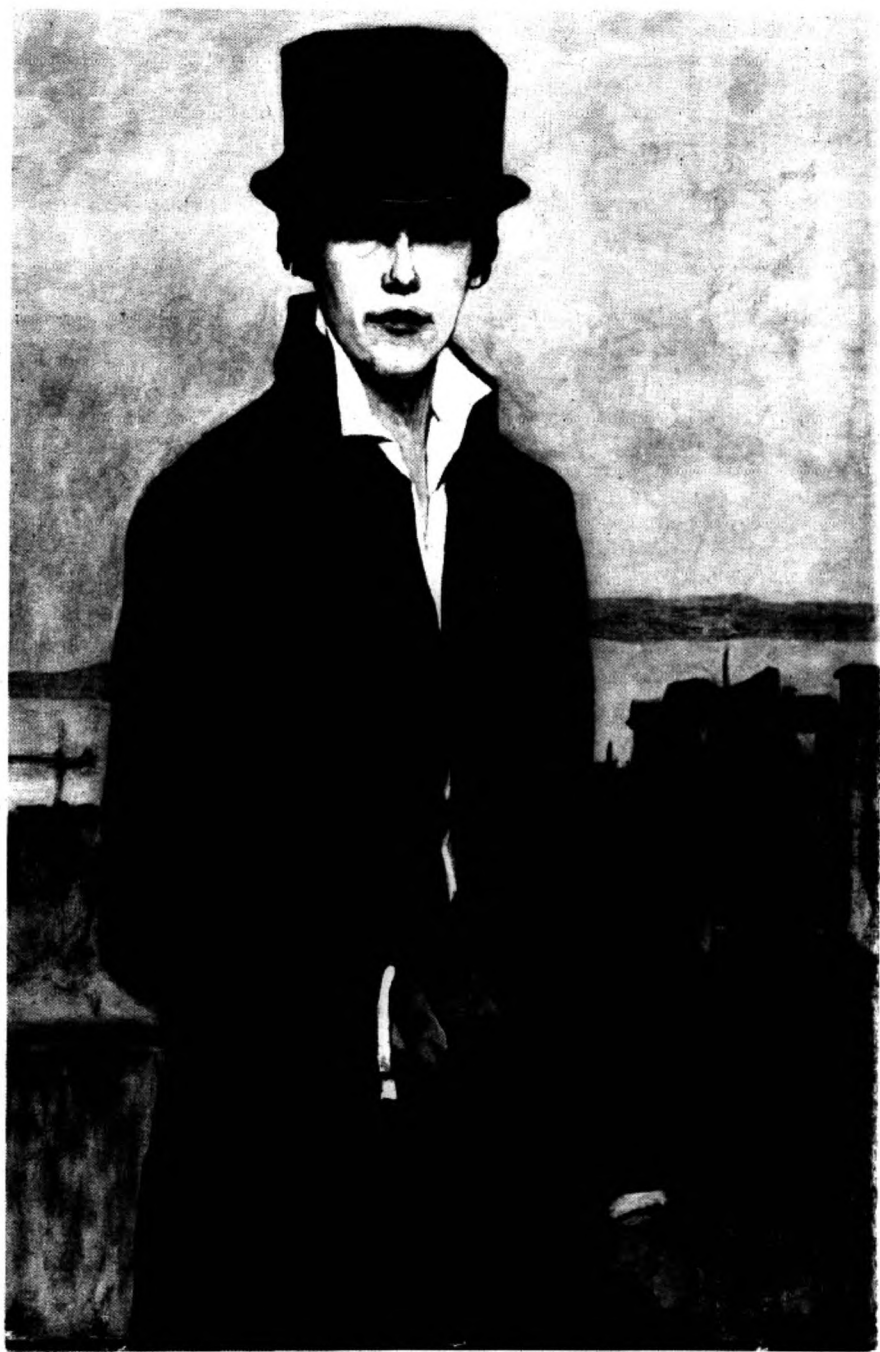


THE LADDER

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER, 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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THE LADDER

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MACHINES ARE ONLY HUMAN

By WILDA CHASE

Cast—
Diana Taylor
Rowena Kramer
Mrs. Underhill
Mrs. Hawthorne
Mrs. Parker
Dr. Potdome*
Dr. Lustgarten*
Wally*
Mr. Miller*

(prepared for an all-female theatre group;
*male parts to be played by females.)

PLACE — NEW YORK CITY
TIME — PRESENT

ACT I SCENE I

A room in a research institution. In the center of the room is a long table with stacks of papers on it. On the wall is a huge graph. Enter Diana in white laboratory coat with pencil and notebook in her hand. She examines the papers on the table, makes entries in her notebook. Enter Rowena in laboratory coat with a stack of papers, which she throws on the table.

Rowena — Well, that's the last of them.

Diana — Good. I'll just get the rest of these figures then I'm going home and take a hot bath. *(rubs her brow)* This work is making me sick.

Rowena — If you're such a prude why didn't you tell them you didn't want to get involved in sex research?

Diana — It was the only technician's job open at the time and I needed the money.

Rowena — Well, the grant for this project's just about expired. Of course, it could always be renewed . . .

Diana — That filthy creep!

Rowena — I know you don't like Dr. Lustgarten, but he is a scientist.

Diana — He's a filthy creep.

Rowena — Well, he's got to make a living, and research welfare is about the only field left open.

Diana — There's something wrong with that man. Anybody so obsessed with the female orgasm has got to be sick.

Rowena — Well, it's his hustle, and ours too. We've got to pay the rent. Maybe some good will come out of it. Bigger and better orgasms . . .

Diana — Ah, me! *(she sighs, rolls her eyes in exasperation, and continues jotting figures down in her notebook. Rowena approaches and tries to kiss her on the*

neck. She pulls sharply away.) Get away from me!

Rowena — Ok! Diana, goddess of chastity.

Diana — I thank you, Rowena, goddess of the gutter.

Rowena — There you go again, knocking my life style.

Diana — Your life style hasn't got any life to it.

Rowena — It does too. Just because I've got lots of friends . . .

Diana — Friends! You couldn't tell me the first names of any three of your dearest friends, let alone last names. Friends!

Rowena — Oh, I could too. Come along with me to Cherry's tonight and I'll prove it. Cherry's an old friend.

Diana — You've known her for less than a month. Old friend! By next month you won't even remember her name. The circus will go on but you'll be on different merry-go-rounds.

Rowena — That's ok with me a long as it keeps going around. Come along with me tonight and have a little fun for a change.

Diana — Fun! Rowena, I can get a piece of meat at a butcher shop. What I can't find is a little human companionship in a world where human beings are obsolete.

Rowena — You don't give people a chance. Now, there's Linda. She's going to be at Cherry's tonight and she's had a thing about you ever since she first saw you.

Diana — Linda goes out with men.

Rowena — So what? Lots of Lesbians do.

Diana — That's not what I call a Lesbian. *(between clenched teeth)* That's what I call a common slut.

Rowena — Diana!

Diana — I can't stand your kind, so just keep out of my way.

Rowena — *(shaking her head)* That's too bad. Linda asked for you personally. She said, "Oh, do bring that sweet, lovely anachronism."

Diana — Tell her that sweet, lovely anachronism has no use for a leftover piece of meat.

Rowena — Whew! You know, you're really out of it.

Diana — Out of what?

Rowena — Out of your time, out of the sexual revolution . . .



Diana — The sexual revolution? Oh, you mean the gutter where the heterosexual perverts and the homosexual perverts lie down together. I can just hear one of them saying to another, "Oh, pardon me, haven't we met? I don't remember your face, but your ass looks familiar."

Rowena — Just tell me one thing, how does anyone go about making friends with you?

Diana — Rowena, friendship is a *personal* relationship, and you can't have personal relationships with people who are not persons. *(picks up her notebook and turns to go)* And since I'm the world's last surviving person I can't expect to have my life enriched with a friend.

Exit Diana. Rowena sighs, shakes her head, starts walking out slowly.

CURTAIN

ACT I SCENE II

Diana's apartment. That evening. Diana, in slacks, is sitting on the sofa with a needle and thread, repairing something. The doorbell rings. She puts down her sewing and goes to the door. Enter Rowena in slacks.

Rowena — Hi!

Diana — Rowena!

Rowena — *(holding out her arms)* Kiss me!
Diana — *(stepping back)* Now, wouldn't that be a little like putting my lips on a public toilet?

Rowena — How that girl loves me! Thank you, I will drop in for awhile. *(sits down)*

Diana — *(sitting down)* Why aren't you at Cherry's?

Rowena — Aw, a bunch of spoil sports. We were going to have an orgy but nobody would take her clothes off so we all left.

Diana — Orgy! Rowena, did it ever occur to you that people have orgies because they are *under sexed* and need an excess of stimulation in order to feel something? The trouble with you people is that you're not capable of genuine passion, of really caring for a single human being. You know something? Lesbians used to be *special* people, people capable of outstanding passions and undying loyalties. Now they're as common as everybody else. *(resumes her sewing)*

Rowena — It's just that we don't believe in exclusive relationships.

Diana — Then you don't believe in relationships. A relationship is exclusive, Rowena.

Rowena — I'm faithful to love, not to lovers.

Diana — Which is to say you love love, not a person.

Rowena — It's the game that counts.

Diana — Game-playing is a substitute for genuine relationships, which you're not capable of.

Rowena — We try to love everybody.

Diana — You can't love everybody if you can't love somebody.

Rowena — I like to relate to lots of people so that I can extend myself.

Diana — You've been "extending yourself" for years, and look at you! No more content than a crumpled carton on a rubbish heap. Extend yourself! That's a cannibalistic illusion. You think you are taking bites out of people, but what you're really doing is throwing yourself away in little pieces.

Rowena — You think sex is all we've got.
 Diana — You haven't even got that.
 Rowena — Diana, we are trying to pioneer a new way of life, a kind of group affair . . .
 Diana — Without commitment or responsibility. A sort of "no strings," huh? All marginal attachments and no real relationships. Rowena, what you crumbs are after is a new kind of society that can accommodate the needs of emotionally deficient people. You are pioneering a Philosophy of Deficiency, it's as simple as that. You just haven't got the self-content it takes to form genuine relationships, that's all.
 Rowena — I like being part of a group, it's stimulating . . .
 Diana — Like blowing your noses all on the same handkerchief.
 Rowena — That's not what I mean! I have a lot of relationships with a lot of different people and each relationship is unique and involves some special part of myself . . .
 Diana — Some fragment of yourself, Rowena. When do you get it all together? Who knows you? Who loves you? Do you really think any of those sluts cares a damn about you, especially when she can pick up ass at ten pounds a penny? And, besides, if you've got so many friends, what are you doing here? I'm not your friend, I can't stand you.
 Rowena — I know you can't. (*looking down*) I guess you're the only one who can see me whole.
 Diana — Ah, ha! It helps sometimes, being with someone who can see you.
 Rowena — (*meditatively, without looking up*) Yeah, it helps sometimes.
 Diana — True companionship is a meeting of hearts and minds and souls . . .
 Rowena — A little meeting of the asses doesn't do any harm, either.
 Diana — Yes, it does. It creates the *illusion* of content and keeps you going back for more. The more you lack, the more you get, and the more you get, the less you have. It makes a sexholic out of you.
 Rowena — Sex is all most people have left.
 Diana — Then they don't have anything left, and it's better to face it out than to hit the bottle.
 Rowena — Yeah, face it out. (*after a long silence*) Would you believe it? When I was going to college I wanted to be an engineer. Build things. Do things. They wouldn't let me in — engineering school,

I mean. They said I wasn't good enough, but my brother got in and I always made higher grades than he did. Now he's got a (*gesturing*) big piece of the corruption in one of those glass and steel empires where the elite meet to cheat and my little piece of corruption won't even pay my rent. I know girls living four and five in a room. They *have* to develop a taste for orgies, or have no sex life. It's not altogether a question of choice, you know. People will be what their circumstances force them to be. (*after a long silence*) Diana, is it normal to hate your own brother?

Diana — I think you would be very sick if you didn't.
 Rowena — At least you're on my side there.
 Diana — Ouch!
 Rowena — What's the matter?
 Diana — I stabbed myself with the needle.
 Rowena — You're lucky that it wasn't loaded. (*Diana looks up, grins in spite of herself*) Diana?
 Diana — Huh?
 Rowena — You loved somebody once, didn't you?
 Diana — (*looking down*) Yes.
 Rowena — Whatever happened to her?
 Diana — She died suddenly of a heart attack.
 Rowena — I'm sorry. (*pause*) Was that a long time ago?
 Diana — Years ago. (*stares fixedly into space*)
 Rowena — (*after some moments*) Maybe you'll find someone else someday . . .
 Diana — no, I guess you won't either, since you're the world's last surviving human being.
 Rowena — Don't be facetious.
 Diana — I was only quoting you.
 Rowena — (*getting up, her face very sad and serious*) Rowena, I need to be alone, if you don't mind.
 Rowena — (*getting up*) I'm sorry I made you sad.
 Diana — Don't be sorry. I get that way all the time.
 Rowena — (*starting toward the door*) Good-night. I'll see you at work tomorrow.
 Diana — Goodnight.

Exit Rowena. Diana sits down, picks up her sewing, puts it down again, stares at the floor.

CURTAIN

ACT I SCENE III

Same room in research institution. Next day. Enter Diana in laboratory coat, with pencil and notebook. She goes to the graph on the wall, locates a point, makes an entry in her notebook. Enter Rowena with papers, which she throws on the table.

Rowena — We've finished on 9 and 10.

Enter Mrs. Underhill and Mrs. Hawthorne from the back, deep in conversation as they cross the stage on their way out.

Mrs. Underhill — How that machine reads me!

Mrs. Hawthorne — It's so good to lie down and do it until there's none left.

Mrs. Underhill — (*gesturing*) It turns you on, it turns you off. I'm dying for a cigarette. I don't know why but it does that to me.

Exit Mrs. Underhill and Mrs. Hawthorne. Diana and Rowena look at each other with raised eyebrows.

Rowena — What'd I tell you? They come here because it's the best screw they can find. The machines do it better, Diana. These women are the most cooperative experimental subjects I've ever seen. I'll bet there's not one of them who wouldn't tell you a machine is worth a dozen men.

Diana — I don't doubt that.

Rowena — I'm going to try out one of those things some evening after closing hours, see if I don't. Want to join me for a piece?

Diana — Rowena!

Rowena — Well, why not? Everyone else is getting it. (*motions toward the back*) Look at all those satisfied users. The Home of the Contented Cows.

Diana — In a few days they're going to be up the creek. The data is just about all in and we won't need them anymore.

Rowena — You mean these poor women'll have to go back to using men? Plain, ordinary men?

Diana — That was good enough for them before.

Rowena — (*snapping her fingers*) Diana! Why don't we open a . . . a . . .

Diana — Rowena!

Rowena — (*with rising excitement*) You know, I'll bet we could buy these machines cheap when the study is

finished. What use would they be to anyone at the Institute anyway?

Diana — Rowena!

Rowena — (*chuckling*) We already know who our first customers . . . er . . . clients are going to be.

Diana — Why do you keep saying "we"?

Rowena — "We" means us, us, (*pointing*) you and me.

Diana — Count me out.

Rowena — Diana, I couldn't do that to you. There's a fortune in this and I'd think shame to have it all to myself. Besides, we need capital. Now, between the two of us we'll have all we need . . .

Diana — You're dreaming.

Rowena — You bet I am, baby! We're *made*, Diana, *made*. (*chuckling*) If that machine had arms . . .

Diana — Now how could we ever open a . . . a . . . What would we *call* it?

Rowena — It will be a clinic for sexual therapy, get it? We will treat women for frigidity. It's a serious disease, you know, and a public threat second only to War.

Diana — Really?

Rowena — Why, didn't you know that women who can't have orgasms are dangerous? They're responsible for traffic accidents, juvenile delinquency, organized crime, alienation, and homosexuality. I read about it in a book.

Diana — All that!

Rowena — We'll be doing so much for the public welfare that they'll be sure to award us the Nobel Peace Prize.

Diana — But the machines may make the women all the more frigid with men.

Rowena — What do *we* care? As long as we give them orgasms they'll be happy, and decent citizens can rest easier in their beds. And we'll be rich. That's the part of the story I like best, we'll be rich.

Diana — I like the plot all right, but does it have a happy ending?

Rowena — I never write a story without a happy ending. Hum, too bad we don't have a machine that can jerk off men. That would be something.

Diana — (*reluctantly*) Rowena . . .

Rowena — Ah, ha! That was a naughty thought that just crossed your mind, I can tell by the gleam in your eye. Sound off, rascal!

Diana — Suppose we *did* find a way to jerk off men. Do you think there's anything in it?

Rowena — Anything in it? There's a gold

mine in it, chum, a gold mine.

Diana — I know how to do it.

Rowena — Well, bless my soul!

Diana — Before I took this job I was working for a doctor who was doing tests on guinea pig sperm. Do you know how they collected the sperm? They inserted an electrode in the animal's rectum and stimulated it with an electric charge. It would ejaculate over and over again, as many times as they pushed the button.

Rowena — Did it hurt?

Diana — (laughing) That's what I asked the male technician who collected the specimens and he laughed at me just like I'm laughing at you.

Rowena — So! Women are not the only ones who can have multiple orgasms.

Diana — Right. I don't know why it's never been mentioned in the literature. Orgasms are so important to men.

Rowena — (troubled) It works on guinea pigs but will it work on men?

Diana — Of course. All males are brothers under the skin.

Rowena — (grabbing Diana and waltzing around the room with her) We're in business!

CURTAIN

15 minute intermission

ACT II SCENE I

A business office. Months later. A huge sign on the wall reads: SEXUAL THERAPY, INC. Diana, in laboratory coat, is sitting at the desk examining entries in a notebook. Enter Rowena in laboratory coat.

Rowena — Good morning, Madam! How's business?

Diana — (shaking her fist) I warned you not to call me that!

Rowena — (sits down on the edge of the desk, lights a cigarette) Now what are you sore about? Here we are, making money hand over fist in the world's first automated whorehouse and you gotta get a case of compunctions. We're not selling flesh, you know. We're providing a legitimate service. Scientific . . . Automated . . . Clean . . .

Diana — Then why do you call it a whorehouse? People come to us because electrical stimulation helps them to function better . . .

Rowena — Really, honey, I don't care if they come here to pray, as long as they drop something in the poor box on the way out.

Diana — Well, I suppose we are satisfying a need . . . (glancing over her book) I think we'll have to hire some part-time operators to tide us over the noon rush hour.

Rowena — That's a good idea. If we keep them standing in line today like we did yesterday we gotta do something about that partition between the men's room and the women's room. If it collapses and they get through to each other it could put us out of business.

Diana — We'll make out. The new wing will be ready by the end of the month and they won't be so close together.

Rowena — It makes me nervous to see these men come in here all loaded up while we've got women back there walking the floor waiting for a machine. They could revert to nature mighty fast. I don't think we should even have them in the same building. I told you we should have rented that store front over on Sixty-fifth.

Diana — I didn't think we would be needing it so soon. At the rate we're expanding we can afford to buy another building soon.

Rowena — Oh, by the way, I found someone to manage the new salon up in Westchester. Name's Irma. Used to run a house over on Sutton Place . . .

Diana — You know I don't like doing business with that kind of people!

Rowena — Diana! Come off your high horse. We're in this business to make money and Irma's just what we need. She's got connections. Her clientele was nothing but the best. Men of title, you know, President, Chairman of the Board . . . business aristocrats. I figure we can rig up an Executive's Room, red carpeting, and everything. (sweep of the hand) Atmosphere . . .

Diana — (closing her book sharply) I don't know why I ever let you talk me into this.

Rowena — It's no worse than what you were doing before, and the material rewards are nothing to thumb your nose at. It's money that makes the world go 'round, sweetie, money.

Diana — A lot of good that's going to do me. If I don't get out of this business I'm going to catch my death of disgust.



Rowena — (takes a bankbook out of the desk drawer and opens it ceremoniously) Well, before you yield up the ghost let me read you something out of the Holy Scriptures, our bankbook. Deposits for the month of September . . .

Diana — I know we're making money, Rowena.

Rowena — Then why aren't you happy? (Diana sighs, turns away) If you can stick it out until the end of the year you can retire a millionaire.

Diana — (turning) I suppose I could at that.

Enter Mrs. Parker, an expression of indignation on her face.

Mrs. Parker — I hate to barge in this way, Miss Taylor, but my problem is urgent and if I'm not given some satisfaction I'll be forced to see my lawyer first thing in the morning.

Diana — I'm sorry I wasn't able to see you yesterday, Mrs. Parker. Now you just sit down and tell me what's the matter.

Mrs. Parker — (crisply) No, thank you. I prefer to stand.

Rowena — (worried) What's the trouble, Mrs. Parker?

Mrs. Parker — I'm pregnant.

Diana — (relieved) Oh, you don't have to worry about that, Mrs. Parker. You can continue with your treatments right up until delivery.

Rowena — Modern science has liberated the pregnant woman from the thralls of vaginal inaccessibility. Our machines can go right over the mountain and into the valley without any difficulty.

Mrs. Parker — I know that, Miss Kramer.

Rowena — Then what's the problem?

Mrs. Parker — I told you. I'm pregnant, and you can't deny that it's *your* responsibility. I'll be perfectly willing to settle out of court if . . .

Diana and Rowena — *Our* responsibility?

Mrs. Parker — I wasn't pregnant before I started coming here.

Rowena — Well, you can't claim that one of our machines has knocked you up.

Mrs. Parker — That is *exactly* what I'm claiming. There hasn't been . . . anybody else.

Rowena — (*wide-eyed*) Now, see here, machines can't do that.

Mrs. Parker — (*superciliously*) Machines can do anything.

Diana — Your husband won't like having a machine take credit for his handiwork.

Mrs. Parker — (*coldly*) My husband hasn't been able to get it up in years.

Rowena — Aw, come on. He's been slipping it to you in your sleep. Don't be so sure the old battery's dead, especially since he's been coming here to juice up.

Mrs. Parker — He has not!

Rowena — (*opening the book, pointing*) Got his name right here in the appointment book.

Mrs. Parker — (*furious*) Why, that . . . that . . . cuckoo!

Exit Mrs. Parker in a rage. Diana and Rowena stare at each other in astonishment for some moments.

Diana — I didn't know we had a Mr. Parker on the books.

Rowena — We don't. But when somebody sticks you with a paternity suit, Diana, you gotta lie out of it.

Diana — Silly! Nobody could make a case against us for pregnancy. Machines can't do that.

Rowena — (*with a wink*) Diana, machines can do anything.

Rowena tosses the checkbook on the desk and withdraws within. Diana sits down and starts going over the book.

CURTAIN

ACT II SCENE II

Same room in research institution. The stacks of reports on the table are now in a disordered heap. The graph on the wall has come loose at one end and is hanging. Enter Dr. Lustgarten in white laboratory coat. He rips the chart off the wall, looks it over, throws it on top of the heap of papers. Enter Dr. Potdome in laboratory coat.

Dr. Lustgarten — Oh, Dr. Potdome! You're just the man I want to see. Now that our work here is done and our findings ready for publication what trail will you be following in your pursuit of truth?

Dr. Potdome — Why, whichever trail leads me to the biggest grants. How about you?

Dr. Lustgarten — (*in a confidential tone*) See here, Potty, I've got something on my mind . . .

Dr. Potdome — Why, what's nailing you down, man? Speak.

Dr. Lustgarten — Remember the two technicians who left our staff and made off with our machines?

Dr. Potdome — Yeah. We really blew it that time, didn't we?

Dr. Lustgarten — You know something, Potty? (*pointing at his head*) We got something missing up there.

Dr. Potdome — We're not businessmen, Lusty, we're scientists. We *discover* needs, they *exploit* them.

Dr. Lustgarten — Oh, we could turn a trick or two, Potty. Why should we lick asses to get research grants when lesser than we are rolling in blue chips?

Dr. Potdome — Are you suggesting we go into competition with the girls?

Dr. Lustgarten — No. I'm suggesting we put them out of business.

Dr. Potdome — That wouldn't be easy. They've got a head start.

Dr. Lustgarten — (*pointing at his head*) We've got a head start, Potty, if we would only take advantage of it.

Dr. Potdome — I'm listening.

Dr. Lustgarten — All right. Now, why have the girls been so successful?

Dr. Potdome — Because there are so many people out there in need of sex therapy.

Dr. Lustgarten — Sex therapy! They're out for a quick easy piece, that's all. Remember the old days when life was simple and sex games were easy to pull off? Well, times have changed. Alienation has set in. People are hostile and suspicious, ready to snap the head off

any poor sucker who makes an innocent pass. So?

Dr. Potdome — So they feel safer with a machine.

Dr. Lustgarten — Right! Now if we should mass-produce a small inexpensive portable machine they could use in their own home, or take to the office, we'd really be set up.

Dr. Potdome — (*taken aback*) That wouldn't be very dignified, Lusty. Is there some way we could disguise it? Maybe sell it as a backscratcher?

Dr. Lustgarten — Don't worry about its image. Our advertising campaign will take care of that.

Dr. Potdome — There are a lot of people who would use a machine at home but are too embarrassed to go into a salon.

Dr. Lustgarten — Exactly! Now you're plugged in, old man. The way I figure it, we could put out a small model that would do anything the big machines can do except measure and record, which is a little aside from the purpose.

Dr. Potdome — (*snapping his fingers*) I got a name for it. How about READI-MATE? (*gesturing*) NO HIT AND MISS, MAKE IT EVERYTIME!

Dr. Lustgarten — Smashing!

Dr. Potdome — (*gesturing*) TRY SOMETHING BETTER, or HAVE YOU HAD ANY LATELY?

Dr. Lustgarten — (*laughing*) You know, Pot, you've got talents you've never suspected.

Dr. Potdome — (*rubbing his hands together*) I'm just warming up, man. When I get myself in shape I'll really show you a thing or two.

Dr. Lustgarten — (*turning to go*) Well, let's go get those colored lights blinking. The world is waiting.

Dr. Potdome — (*waltzing around*) Say, Lusty! I'm on to something big! If we're going to sell screwing machines to alienated people, I know exactly how to get through to them. Television!

Dr. Lustgarten — Sure. We'll advertise coast to coast.

Dr. Potdome — No, that's not what I had in mind. Certainly we will advertise on TV, but we'll do more than that. We'll sell them TV sets they can screw!

Dr. Lustgarten — You lost me on the curve.

Dr. Potdome — When people can't make it with other people what's the best people-substitute they can find?

Dr. Lustgarten — Television.

Dr. Potdome — Right. The TV set is the closest thing to a human involvement they can find. Now, if it's going to be their most intimate companion, why shouldn't they screw it?

Dr. Lustgarten — (*with rising excitement*) We'll put out TV sets they can have a complete relationship with!

Dr. Potdome — You got the picture! We'll even attach a marriage contract to the guarantee. This will be the biggest innovation of the century. It will transform the domestic economy.

Dr. Lustgarten — It certainly will transform domestic relationships.

Dr. Potdome — (*turning to go*) Well, let us not tarry here. A new era is born!

Exit Dr. Potdome. Dr. Lustgarten throws a contemptuous look at the papers on the table and hurries after Dr. Potdome.

CURTAIN

ACT II SCENE III

Diana's apartment. Two years later. Diana, in slacks, is sitting on the sofa going through some business records. Her face is tense and occasionally she shakes her head. The telephone rings.

Diana — (*picking up the receiver*) Hello . . . yes . . . yes, I know . . . We should never have opened that salon in Detroit . . . Well . . . It's getting late, Rowena . . . Let's talk about it tomorrow at the office . . . Oh, all right. (*she hangs up the phone and returns to the business records. The doorbell rings. She looks up inquiringly, goes to the door.*)

Enter Rowena, in slacks.

Rowena — (*seeing Diana's surprise*) I was down in the lobby.

Diana — Oh. (*they sit down*) Did you ever get hold of Irma?

Rowena — Yes. She got an offer from READI-MATE that would burn your ears to hear.

Diana — Those crooks!

Rowena — They're not crooks. We would have done the same thing to them. This is the business world, Diana, and business is war.

Diana — And Irma wants to be on the winning side.

Rowena — Wouldn't you? You've got no



room to complain. You didn't want Irma on our side in the first place, remember?

Diana — She's been a good manager.

Rowena — Yep. Now we'll have to close the Westchester salon. Maybe we should sell out and join READI-MATE. That's what they mean when they say if you can't lick 'em join 'em.

Diana — So? You're ready to sell out to the enemy.

Rowena — Diana, you don't stick with a dying enterprise merely out of loyalty. That's just the way things are. We made bushels while the sun shone. Now it's time to come in out of the rain.

Diana — Has READI-MATE made you an offer?

Rowena — No! What's got into you?

Diana — You're holding something back.

Rowena — Diana, we're losing money. The time has come to fold, that's all.

Diana — What do you plan to do if we go out of business?

Rowena — Stay home. (winking) Meet a nice television set and get married.

Diana — (angry) Rowena! You're holding something back!

Rowena — You know me like a book, don't you?

Diana — Are you going to tell me what

you've got up your sleeve or do I have to pick you up and shake it out?

Rowena — First you gotta tell me why you're hanging on to a business that you've always hated.

Diana — (looking down at her hands) Well, it has been a living for us, and for our employees too. We're too big now to take a step like this lightly, too many people are involved.

Rowena — We can't meet the payroll if we don't make a profit.

Diana — (sighs) You're right. The time has come to fold.

Rowena — Unless . . . unless we convert.

Diana — Convert into what? (looks Rowena in the face) Rowena, you're up to something!

Rowena — (hesitating) Well . . . I've been making inquiries. I didn't want to tell you until I had it all together.

Diana — What could we possibly do with those machines except . . .

Rowena — We'll sell the machines, Diana, but not the salons. We'll get some new machines and make . . .

Diana — Make what?

Rowena — Babies.

Diana — (after a long silence) Rowena, you slay me.

Rowena — I mean it. What's everybody talking about these days? The population implosion. Meetings, lectures, symposiums, Senate committees making investigations. I'll bet we could even get government contracts!

Diana — (gets up, walks around in a daze) But the machines?

Rowena — Bailey Institute has an experimental model that could easily be copied and put into commercial use.

Diana — What would we do with the . . . babies?

Rowena — We'll take orders from private customers, and if we get federal contracts we'll turn them out for public nurseries. Why should women carry babies in their bodies when they don't have to? They've known for a long time now in Women's Liberation that women can be free only when their bodies are no longer productive property.

Diana — The women would still have to undergo an operation.

Rowena — A fig! A small incision to remove a bit of ovary tissue. One tiny bit, Diana, growing in tissue culture could yield a hundred egg cells. The eggs could be frozen and stored and used only when a

woman decides she wants to "have" a baby. That's all there is to it. Ovary specimens could be taken from aged women, babies, even corpses.

Diana — (wide-eyed) Rowena, you've hit bedrock!

Rowena — I was afraid you wouldn't like the idea.

Diana — We could engineer a social revolution!

Rowena — Well, actually, I was counting on making a little money.

Diana — (runs to Rowena and hugs her) We're in business! (kisses her cheek)

Rowena — Hey, more of that and you'll have to marry me.

Diana — When do we start?

Rowena — Making love?

Diana — Making a revolution.

Rowena — (getting up) As soon as I line up the right people. Grab your coat. We're going for a ride.

Diana — At this hour?

Rowena — Honey, when one is making a revolution one doesn't ask the time. They grab their things and rush for the door.

CURTAIN

15 minute intermission

ACT III SCENE I

A business office. A huge sign on the wall reads: READI-MATE, INC. A long sales graph underneath it shows a curve that rises steadily then drops off sharply. Dr. Lustgarten, in a business suit, is pacing the floor. The telephone rings.

Dr. Lustgarten — (picking up the receiver)

Hello . . . yes . . . yes . . . Yes, we make repairs . . . Which model have you got? . . . I see . . . Keeps losing its erection? . . . Ten times a day! For Christ's sake, lady, machines are only human! . . . What! . . . Lady, watch your language . . . all right . . . all right . . . I'll have somebody come over and take a look at it . . . (writes down the address) . . . As soon as we can. (hangs up)

Enter Dr. Potdome, in business suit.

Dr. Potdome — Maybe we should go back to grants. This profit thing is so uncertain.

Dr. Lustgarten — Did you get him on the phone?

Dr. Potdome — He was out.

Dr. Lustgarten — (*grasping his brow*) Out again! Out, out, always out. What's the use of having a contact in Washington if he's always out of contact with us?

Dr. Potdome — I left a message. He's doing the best he can.

Dr. Lustgarten — He didn't keep them from passing that 20% luxury tax on us.

Dr. Potdome — No, but he did get us federal assistance to help us over the slump. The Administration is well aware that if our plants shut down there'll be widespread unemployment.

Dr. Lustgarten — What's good for READI-MATE is good for the country.

Dr. Potdome — They know that. They won't let us down.

Dr. Lustgarten — What we need is an exciting new model. That's what the public wants — something different. You've always got to tantalize them with a difference.

Dr. Potdome — I've got it! We'll put out a model with a heartbeat!

Dr. Lustgarten — You're giving off signals, Potty, and I read you. I'll get our design engineers on the job right away.

Dr. Potdome — We'll launch a new campaign that will appeal to the younger set. All hearts and roses.

Dr. Lustgarten — There's something I've been meaning to tell you, Pot. It's time we changed our agency. I knew that last campaign was all wrong. (*mimicking*) "MEN! DON'T DO IT IN YOUR PAJAMAS. JERK OFF BEFORE YOU KNOCK OFF." Was that romantic?

Dr. Potdome — Wally liked it.

Dr. Lustgarten — That's another thing. Now that you mentioned Wally I think I ought to tell you something. That man's been hitting the button a little too much lately. Coming in with rings under his eyes. Maybe we should get a new sales manager.

Dr. Potdome — But Wally's been our sales manager ever since we fired off this rocket and you've got to admit it was a successful shot.

Dr. Lustgarten — He got us off the ground all right but (*pointing to the graph on the wall*) how do you explain that?

Dr. Potdome — Our new campaign will pick us up.

Enter Wally running.

Wally — (*gasping*) Gentlemen! . . . Gentlemen! . . .

Dr. Lustgarten — Catch your breath, man, you're turning blue.

Wally — They're organizing . . .

Dr. Potdome — What's this?

Wally — (*gasping*) Campus groups . . . springing up all over the country . . .

Dr. Lustgarten — The point, man, the point.

Wally — (*gasping*) Starting a movement . . . rejecting sex . . . already spreading to the suburbs . . .

Dr. Potdome — Rejecting sex! Smart alec kids, always up to no good.

Dr. Lustgarten — Get our Washington contact on the phone! It's those damned Communists again, out to destroy private enterprise by corrupting the young. When we get HUAC on their tails they'll take off so fast they'll outrun their shadows.

Wally — (*still gasping*) Off on a new kick . . . calling it asexuality.

Dr. Potdome — Asexuality! It's just a new way of defying authority. Well, we've got the weapons. We've put down campus revolts before and we can do it again.

Dr. Lustgarten — Spreading to the suburbs!

Dr. Potdome — Don't worry, Lusty, old pal, we've got the Administration on our side.

Dr. Lustgarten — That's right. What's good for READI-MATE is good for the country. I'm going to try to get Washington again. (*hurries to the telephone, Dr. Potdome and Wally following close behind*)

CURTAIN

ACT III SCENE II

A business office. A huge sign on the wall reads: THE INCUBATOR. Underneath the sign is a banner which says: BREED BY THE BOOK AND LEAVE THE FUSS TO US. Diana, in laboratory coat, is sitting at the desk examining entries in a notebook. Enter Rowena, in laboratory coat, running.

Rowena — Guess what! READI-MATE has gone under!

Diana — (*without looking up*) Serve 'em right.

Rowena — (*hesitating*) Er . . . Diana . . . Now that Irma is available . . .

Diana — What you're trying to say is that Irma is out of work and looking for a job.

Rowena — She's proved herself, knows the ropes.

Diana — No doubt you told her about the managerial position we have open.

Rowena — I did. And she accepted. I figured it would be all right with you.

Diana — Ok, Rowena, But if she deserts us this time . . .

Rowena — She never deserted us. We folded up under her like a paper boat. Don't worry, as long as she's got a thriving enterprise to manage she'll stick with it.

Diana — I said ok.

Rowena — What a goddamned snob you are.

Diana — I know it, Rowena, and I would rather be a snob than a slob.

Rowena — (*shrugging*) Takes all kinds. Guess who's out there in the waiting room.

Diana — Not a delegation of storks, I hope. If they ever start organizing, I tell you, it's over the hill for us.

Rowena — You're a riot, Diana. (*sits down on the corner of the desk*) Remember those two women back at the research institute who always used to come and go together? (*nods toward the waiting room*) They're out there. You'll never guess what happened.

Diana — They eloped with television sets.

Rowena — They divorced their husbands and married each other. They've got a problem, though. This new marriage has not been blessed with children.

Diana — Send them in, Rowena, and we'll bless them abundantly.

Exit Rowena, returning presently with the two women.

Mrs. Underhill — (*to Diana*) Miss Taylor, is it true that we can have children of our own . . . together?

Diana — As easy as falling off a log. We take an egg cell from each of you and fertilize one egg with the nucleus of the other egg. Nothing to it.

Rowena — (*to the women*) You think you got problems. Did you see that man out their walking the floor? He wants to be a mother. There's a knotty one.

Diana — (*to the women*) If you've really made up your minds that this is what you want to do . . .

Mrs. Hawthorne — We do want children, Miss Taylor, more than anything else in the world.

Diana — Then I'll send you to the clinic for a preliminary examination. Rowena, show them the way, and while you're

out there tell that man to come in and I'll try to get the pieces together.

Exit Rowena with the two women. Enter Mr. Miller.

Mr. Miller — Miss Taylor? (*Diana nods*) I was told that you might be able to help me. You see, I want . . .

Diana — You want to be a mother. (*he nods*) Well, Mrs. Miller, you just deliver us a sperm sample and leave the fuss to us. We've not handled a case like this before but we never give up. Now, what we'll do is borrow an egg cell from one of our cultures . . .

Mr. Miller — Then some woman will be the mother and I'll be the father.

Diana — No, Mr. Miller. We'll remove the nucleus, which contains the chromosomes, and fertilize the egg with your own sperm. Then we'll suppress the first cell division to restore the chromosome number, and you will be the sole parent.

Mr. Miller — Will it look like me?

Diana — As much like you as an identical twin, except for the age difference. Actually, identical twins are never identical, they are simply more closely related than other siblings. Parthenogenetic offspring have their own identity, never fear.

Mr. Miller — I know two men who are married and childless. Would you be able to help them?

Diana — Sure. Send them in. Two men, two women, one man, one woman, a woman and a man, it's all the same to us. That's your business. One thing we can't give you, though, is a daughter. You would have to borrow a chromosome from somebody, a woman or a man.

Mr. Miller — I want a son. (*jumps around excitedly*) I can't wait to get started on this!

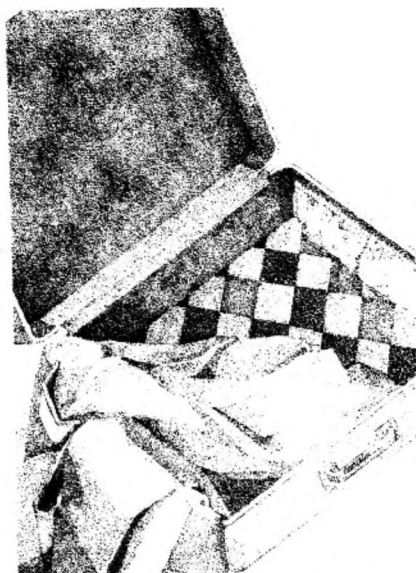
Diana — Then come along with me and I'll register you at the clinic.

Exit Diana and Mr. Miller.

CURTAIN

ACT III SCENE III

Diana's apartment. A suitcase is open on the sofa. Enter Diana from the back with a pile of clothes which she begins folding and stacking in the suitcase. The doorbell rings. She goes to the door. Enter Rowena.



Rowena — (catching sight of the suitcase)
Well, what's this little drama on the sofa?

Diana — I'm packing.

Rowena — You didn't say anything about a trip.

Diana — The urge came over me suddenly to get away, to the mountains, the Alps maybe, away.

Rowena — Away from what?

Diana — Everything, the machines, you, what we've made of ourselves.

Rowena — What are you talking about, Diana? The shit is passed. We've got something worthwhile going now. The war between the sexes is over, women are liberated from men, children are liberated from women, the person is liberated from functions, love is liberated from sex, women no longer hate and fear their bodies, people are learning to love one another again with purity of heart. We've brought about the only genuine social revolution in history.

Diana — I know that. I'm not complaining, I just want to get away.

Rowena — To the Swiss mountains where you can watch the goats copulating on the hillsides. You know what you are, Diana? You're a radical thinker with old-fashioned sentiments.

Diana — (grinning) You know me like a book, don't you?

Rowena — We've been through a lot together, D.

Diana — Yes, we have.

Rowena — What'll I do while you're away?

Diana — You've got lots of friends, Rowena, you don't need me.

Rowena — It's not like you think it is. The scene's changed. We've all joined Sex-holics Anonymous.

Diana — I don't believe it!

Rowena — Yep. We've decided that assing around is no way to get through to people. This is no joke, Diana. People are changing. That campus revolt that the authorities couldn't put down, that's only a symptom of a much deeper transformation. People are tired of sex, tired of being mechanical toys, sexual automatons. They're remembering that they've got souls.

Diana — That sounds funny, coming from you.

Rowena — I'm not the rag you think I am. Really, Diana, I've got feelings.

Diana — I'm glad, for your sake.

Rowena — Someday you may be able to see the good side of me. I'm going through a process of purification to wash away the grime that hides my true luster. (Diana chuckles) Don't laugh at me, Diana, I'm serious.

Diana — (staring at Rowena fixedly) I do believe you are.

Rowena — Strike me dead, if I'm not. In SA we're trying to restore in ourselves the capacity for innocent and spontaneous affection, for genuine friendship. We repudiate sex and are sworn to celibacy until we are able to invest our sexuality purely in loving and lasting relationships without illusion, exploitation, or power plays. I know it sounds silly, but in our way we're seeking after righteousness.

Diana — (amazed) Rowena, why didn't you tell me this before?

Rowena — (shrugging) I knew you'd just laugh at me.

Diana — I'm not laughing.

Rowena — Maybe you'll even get to like me someday.

Diana — Maybe I will.

Rowena — I've always loved you, Diana.

Diana — I guess I've always known it.

Rowena — How long do you expect to be away?

Diana — A month, two months, I don't know.

Rowena — That's a long time. Who'll water the plants?

Diana — I'm not worried about them. It's my own thirst that's killing me. I'm a

desert inside, dust where I should be green, winter where I should be spring, I can't hear my own music anymore.

Rowena — That's what's wrong with everybody, Diana. They can't hear their own music anymore. When you can't enjoy being yourself, you haven't got anything. I guess that's why people chase around so much.

Diana — (fastening the suitcase) I guess so.

Rowena — I'll see you to the station.

Diana — I'd rather go alone, if you don't mind. (picking up the suitcase) I'll drop you a line from time to time. Goodbye, Rowena.

Rowena.

Rowena — Take care of yourself.

Diana — (tossing Rowena her keys) Look

after things while I'm gone. (goes to the door, turns around) I'll be back. (goes out the door)

Rowena looks at the keys in her hand, tosses them into the air and catches them, smiles to herself.

FINAL CURTAIN

(Wilda Chase is a New York based feminist and writer. She has appeared in THE LADDER in the past. This is the first appearance of her play. We are honored to be able to bring it to you.)

Political Theology or Practical Government

By RITA LAPORTE

I

It is definitely IN to be a revolutionary. (Though, now that Nixon has preempted the word, perhaps it has lost some of its glow.) The revolutionary's dream indeed, bringing to mind the brave defense of the barricades and aristocratic heads rolling off the guillotine into a basket. Even the cold and starvation of Valley Forge evoke glamorous reveries. With no worthy war in sight, the revolutionary can still dream of surrounding Washington, of taking over the Pentagon after a glorious battle, and finally of sitting before the three network television cameras and proclaiming the victory of the people to 200 million adoring masses. There he is, lord and ruler of a great and powerful country. It is best to end the dream of glory right here and begin over again, for after victory he will be faced with the miserable and unglamorous task of reform.

Revolutionaries will keep such dreams to themselves. But what we hear is almost as absurd. We must destroy capitalism, engage in the class war, support the people of North Vietnam (why not South Vietnam too is never explained). We are given to understand that the revolutionary is unselfishly for the people, meaning the working class, e.g., blue collar auto workers who earn \$20,000 or more a year. Private property must go, where, we are not told. Nothing is really explained, but it all sounds great if one avoids thinking. We are led by a series of clichés and slogans to envision a

utopia wherein everyone is properly fed and housed, everyone is educated, and no one is oppressed. How can one be against this?

It is difficult to argue with the purveyors of this dreamy utopian amalgam, for it is a faith, a faith of religious dimensions, a faith that I shall call Marxianity. And I do not mean merely by way of analogy with Christianity, for Marxianity is a fully religious phenomenon, complete with hierarchy, warring sects and Inquisition. Two centuries ago the war between Christians was still in full force, with the Protestants in France persecuted and under heavy civil disabilities and the Catholics in England similarly persecuted. During that century, the 18th, the voice of Voltaire reached throughout Europe and the American colonies to win the battle for religious tolerance. Unforeseen by him or the many others who championed religious tolerance, was the vacuum left behind in the minds and hearts of people, a vacuum now being filled by political intolerance. Atheism is difficult, for human nature has a strong urge to worship. Marx now takes the place of Jesus; Lenin and others are the new disciples; perhaps Stalin is the new St. Paul, at least for women who embrace Marxianity. Russian Communism is "Roman Catholic"; Maoism is perhaps the "Lutheranism" of the Reformation; maybe Socialism is "Baptist." Russia, China, and Cuba are theocracies, with their Popes, dogmas, theologians, and the believing masses. And, as with the Catholic Church from the beginning of its rule, there are the inevitable

heretics. The Soviet purges of the '30's are history's greatest Inquisition, Stalin overshadowing Torquemada. The Church for centuries discouraged the education of the masses and proscribed the Bible to laymen. The Soviet Curia today persecutes its heretical authors as dangerous to the purity of the creed. And of course it is right to do so. The success of Voltaire is ample evidence that thought and reason in time destroy the bigotries of faith.

Let us look more closely at Marxianity in the year 153 AM (Anno Marxi) or 1971 AD. First, the destruction of capitalism. True believers never define this word. It is, we gather, evil incarnate — the Devil. Pure capitalism began to take on meaning during the rise, in 18th century England, of the Industrial Revolution when one or a few men could gather together capital, machines, and labor at a cost determined by a laissez-faire approach to the demands of the market place. It was great for the small and growing middle classes. The horror of it all was not generally apparent until the 19th century when Socialist thinkers, building upon 18th century thought, bestirred governments into reform. Gradually, all too gradually it seems in retrospect, pure Capitalism disappeared. England today is in many ways a Socialist country and it got there without the misery and destitution every violent revolution causes. Sweden is so Socialist today that its little Socialist party is at loose ends. The United States is still lagging in Socialist reforms, but it is a far cry from pure capitalism. When even Nixon is forced to propose some form of universal medical care and tiptoes around a guaranteed annual income for all, the old swashbuckling capitalism Adam Smith had in mind and our 19th Century robber barons so enjoyed, is a puny capitalism indeed. So much for that bugaboo.

Now, what about private property? Once upon a time bishops and feudal lords owned vast tracts of land. Later, when capitalist enterprises were still relatively small, individuals or small groups of individuals owned factories outright. And then these corporations grew and grew. Who owns General Motors today? I do not really know. Legally it is owned by its stockholders, but a small stockholder owns only a right to dividends if some are declared. A large stockholder or consortium of stockholders holds power in the company, the power to place its man (it's always a man, and recently a black one) on the governing

board. This board hires a president, who, even if he owns no GM stock, wields much power. He hires other top management employees who acquire considerable power too. But they do not own the company. The union has power in the company, not only through its power to strike, but through its ownership of company stock. It gets very complicated, with no one owning GM in the sense that one owns one's toothbrush. The government too has a measure of power over GM through corporation law, labor law, and its contracts. If the "people," i.e., the government, were to "own" GM, all this power would be more concentrated. But the government itself borrows money from bankers as well as from ordinary citizens and it would find itself a partial owner of GM at best. GM would still have to be run by some kind of management and it is questionable whether a government bureaucracy would be an improvement. And what would this redistribution of "ownership" mean to the lowly janitor who sweeps the floor?

Let us look at a less complicated form of private property, one's car. Many corporations and some individuals have come to the conclusion that it is no more costly and far less bother to rent one's car. The annoying responsibilities of outright ownership remain in the hands of the company that rents it out: insurance, licensing, servicing, and repairing. Or take homeownership. The typical homeowner has a small equity in a house and lot. He has, let us say, a principle of \$20,000 yet to pay off, which will actually amount to more like \$30,000 when the interest is included. Even when, in 25 years or so, he has it all paid off, he must still pay "rent" (taxes) to the state or county or lose the place. In the meantime things fall apart, the plumbing fails, the roof leaks, the paint peels and our happy homeowner gets further in debt. He has little control over property taxes and he may find himself assessed for sidewalk improvement or he may find his little plot condemned by eminent domain proceedings. Nor can he do what he wishes with his own land. He is hemmed in by a host of zoning laws. He may decide that renting has its virtues after all, especially if his heavily mortgaged house was in the path of the Los Angeles earthquake. Well, we can still own our furniture, our pots and pans, and our books. But even these items can become burdensome when one has to move. Perhaps the only real private property a

man has left is his wife. Why are there still women interested in Marxianity, so dated and male an approach to social problems? Unfortunately women have always been great supporters of male faiths and male gods.

II

I came by a small pamphlet, *THE POLITICS OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION TODAY*, put out by Pathfinder Press, N.Y. 1970, which is the press of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). It is by Mary-Alice Waters, now Editor of *MILITANT*, an SWP organ. The Young Socialist Alliance is a branch or an arm of SWP and it is the young women in this organization who have been causing heated controversy in various women's liberation groups in Boston, Los Angeles, and Vancouver, etc. These controversies aroused my curiosity as to exactly what it was all about. Mary-Alice Waters has cleared up the matter. She is what is called, in the women's movement, a Politico. That is, she sees the women's movement as a useful tool in promoting her faith, in this case, Socialism or that sect of Marxianity that split off from the Communist Party in the '30's. Throughout her pamphlet she speaks of "We" and "Our" as against women's liberation. "The potential exists for the development of a mass women's liberation movement, and one of our key responsibilities . . ." and, "Our job is to be part of the vanguard of the women's liberation struggle . . ." and, "We want the women's liberation movement to fight for basic demands . . ." and, "We support these organizations [i.e., separate women's organizations] and we help to build them. We are in favor of them restricting their membership to women . . ." (Italics mine) Who is this "We?" The Socialist Workers Party, of course.

I am less kind to Politicos than most women for I call them "Kapos." "Kapo" is the name given to those inmates of Hitler's concentration camps who became trustees and put the SS officers in charge of the camps to shame in the matter of cruelty and brutality. The Kapos were extremely useful to the SS in providing discipline and greatly reducing the number of SS deployed to the rear lines of the concentration camps. Bruno Bettelheim, in *THE INFORMED HEART; AUTONOMY* in a *MASS AGE*, 1960, studied Kapos at first hand, finding the phenomenon at first

curious. These were men who were initially prisoners like the rest, but who found identity and a means of survival not only in imitating the SS, but in outdoing them. Needless to say the Kapos were more hated than the SS by the other prisoners.

This is an extreme analogy but I feel that psychologically it is appropriate. There are many Kapo women: all those women who in one way or another are in league with men and who embrace their slavery with fervor. There are degrees of Kapo-ism and much of it is in no way vicious. There are many women who have made it in the man's world and then wonder why all the rest of us cannot. There are also Kapo women who come out squarely against women's liberation. And there are Kapo women who to some extent do recognize the oppression of women, but who do not see themselves as part of that group. They are generally Marxists of some sort and see women as just another underdog group that they can exploit in the furtherance of their faith. Ms. Waters is such a one. Let us look at what she has to say.

As many of you know, Marxianity is based on the not-to-be questioned dogma that capitalism is static and unchangeable or unreformable and that it must be overthrown via a class war before a more just society is possible. All facts must be fit into this article of faith, however weird the resulting logic. Women's liberation "is potentially as important to the American revolution as the radicalization of Afro-American and other national minorities and the youth." (Italics mine) Damn nice of Ms. Waters to think that 53% of the population may be as important as 9% (black males). She is happy that women's liberation is free of "established leaderships which must be bypassed, few conservative 'authorities' to be exposed." I see in her a conservative authority. Marxianity has been around a long time and so far has done no more for women than has orthodox Christianity and perhaps less. All male movements are in one sense conservative for they mean to conserve the supremacy of the male. No male can be as truly revolutionary as a woman, for he can find no inspiration in becoming an auxiliary to the women's revolution. Only as he sees himself leading can he find the thrill needed to spur him on. And so with his Kapo women.

Ms. Waters approves the independence of women's liberation and says "its fate is not directly (Italics hers) dependent on the

evolution of other struggles." The implication is that women's liberation is indirectly dependent on her dogma. And she is worried because she knows that the Democratic and Republican parties will try to "capture its [women's liberation] resources and energies, and divert the movement from an independent, mass action." "We can be sure, for instance, that the Communist Party will try to turn the movement in this direction." No wonder she can be sure; she is out to capture the women's movement for the SWP. Many women now coming into women's liberation are coming directly and not via SDS or Civil Rights groups. So far, she says, the Communist Party does not seem "to be turning any real forces toward the vanguard women's liberation movement." But "we orient our work towards the independent forces in the movement, those who . . . are not yet attached to any of the different political tendencies . . . We try to reach them at their present level of comprehension and understanding. . . . Our orientation . . . is guided by the same concepts that are fundamental to our work in every developing arena of struggle." (Italics mine). This explains clearly what the women of SWP/YSA are up to and why they infiltrate women's liberation groups, causing them to split apart into those who accept the Faith and those who know that the women's revolution is the only truly radical revolution the world has yet seen. And notice Ms. Waters' patronizing tone. The vast numbers of us women in all walks of life who do not look to Moscow or Peking or Havana or Hanoi for salvation must be coaxed gently out of our naiveté and ignorance.

Ms. Waters uses a time-honored rhetorical ploy to put us idiots on the spot. She gives us two and only two choices: "whether the struggle is to abolish capitalism as a precondition to women's liberation, or whether the goal is to reform men." Since we know that women's liberation is not organized to set up schools for men, that presumably leaves us with no choice but to join the class struggle. The dogma is, of course, that "women's oppression is rooted in class society." Then Ms. Waters begins to falter. She admits that "male chauvinism and the oppression of women have very deep historical roots that are nurtured [not caused, you will note] and sustained by the capitalist system." From this it follows in her mind that "the

abolition of capitalism is a *precondition* (Italics hers) for the total emancipation of women." A few sentences later she says, "The oppression of women is older than virtually every other form of exploitation and bondage. It is older than slavery, racism, national oppression." How can the abolition of something that had nothing to do with something else cause that something else to disappear? How can the abolition of a capitalism that postdates the oppression of women by thousands of years magically end that oppression?

The trouble of course is the dogma of class society, an oversimplified, single-layered view of class. Whatever the class set-up of a particular society, however great the disparity between the top, wealthy, oppressive aristocracy and the bottom, half starved, miserable workers, the women at every level are oppressed. Society cannot be pictured in single layers, for every layer is a double one; underneath every layer of men is a layer of women. The women at the very bottom of all are so occupied with a miserable struggle to keep themselves and their children alive that they can hardly be expected to concern themselves with, or even notice, that they are still lower than the men just above them. The difference between women and men at so crushed a level is more theoretical than real. When one is starving one has no time for the niceties of psychological oppression. This is one reason why the women's movement is powered so much by middle class women and college graduates. But to think that women at the very top, the wealthy wives of corporation executives, do not suffer oppression exhibits an ignorance I cannot fathom. Mental oppression can be more destructive of a person, of sanity, than the physical kind. The lower class husband who slugs his wife may do her less harm than the upper class husband who daily and slyly undermines his wife's personhood. This is not to say that many women would not choose wealthy concubinage to the miseries of poverty.

I have tried to discover what lies behind the notion that, though the oppression of women far anti-dates capitalism, the destruction of capitalism will do away with male supremacy. Capitalism, as it no longer exists, i.e., in its pure state, permitted the wealthy few to exploit with unbelievable cruelty the mass of workers it required to produce goods. But side by side with this exploitation of the poor by the wealthy,

there existed the exploitation of women by men in *all* classes. The wealthy female lived in gilded, idle splendor — a plaything of conspicuous consumption, proof of the lordly male's success. The poor woman not only had to slave long hours for less pay than her man, but was the only property he could knock around and exploit. I can imagine a society where the distribution of wealth is hopelessly unjust, but male supremacy is non-existent; I can imagine a utopia of sorts where all *men* are treated with justice, but women are hopelessly oppressed. I have tried to see what connection there might be between the oppression of the worker and the oppression of woman. My conclusion is that unconsciously Marxists apply male supremacy no less than all other men. In reasoning that the means of production should be in the hands of The People, they conclude that women, as one means of production — the production of babies — must likewise be in the hands of The People. No longer is one man to be allowed to own one woman. The People, that is, the State, are to own this particular means of production, along with the others. I venture that most women will not find this much of an improvement. On the contrary, women today are fighting hard for their private capitalism — the ownership of their own bodies, their own means of production. They do not want any man, The People, or the State managing their bodies. Women are basically capitalists in this very personal sense. Each woman wants and should have the right to do with her body as she wishes. She does not want to be a means of production regulated by the State nor a means of sexual relief for the men who run the State.

It is part of the Leftist credo that our present society must be destroyed. What is all this 'destroy' about? Saturation H-bombing of the United States would do it. But then what would we use for people to establish Socialist utopia? The growth of our technological society has pretty well destroyed the rural, agricultural society of yore, but without revolution. Medical advances, contraceptive devices, and the Pill have freed women from endless pregnancies. And no revolution. But what do we mean by 'revolution'? Either we mean the good old barricades violence, a male coup d'état, or we mean evolution speeded up well beyond the creeping pace of biological evolution. This latter type of revolution is and has been going on for a few hundred

years at an accelerating rate. The old, static dogmatic principles of Marxianity no longer fit as the static categories of old time Christian theology no longer apply. The Left, Old and New, all those groups vaguely denominated *The Movement*, are living in the past. To be a respected member of this youthful, revolutionary mystique one must hate the middle and upper classes and wear one's slum background like a badge. One must engage in old-fashioned prejudice based on grouping according to the circumstances of their birth and not upon any characteristics they have as individuals. That is, if one's parents were and are well off, one is the enemy and without further ado one must be hated. If one has a poor background, poor enough to qualify one as a member of the elect revolutionaries, but one is no longer young and has made it into a profession, one must be hated. It is all so ridiculously male, all a matter of underdog males against males with more power. Women can scurry around in this web of male power plays as best they can, as token Kapo women, or as groupies. "The women's liberation movement as a whole . . . can and will be an ally of the working class in the [good old] struggle to abolish the capitalist system." (Ms. Waters again). So, my fellow Lesbians and all you women who either do not work for pay or who are in the professions, your place in society is to help the working man. A woman teacher who earns \$10,000 a year and who, at the age of 30 can hope for no further advancement must apply herself to furthering the fortunes of a male plumber who now earns \$20,000 a year but who is not yet top man.

There is a callousness and opportunism in all this raving about class warfare and the destruction of our present society. "The abortion issue has a built-in appeal to millions of men and women, which makes it possible to build an action-oriented mass movement." I get the impression that *The Movement* is the be-all and end-all, rather than the alleviation of suffering and poverty and the building of a pluralistic society where individuals find an ever widening choice of belief, expression and life style. The self-styled leaders of *The Movement* (which, in my disgust, I call *The Bowel Movement*) are Caesar types who envision themselves as rulers of the world. It is to this end that they must scheme to harness the energy of the masses. From Alexander the Great to Augustus Caesar to Napoleon to Hitler to today's puny *Movement* leaders

runs an unchanging thread.

Now, let us assume that capitalism is destroyed and Socialism rules supreme and we have just one class (which takes considerable imagination in view of the vast differences of intelligence, creativity, ambition and good will among human beings). What is to cause the double layer, the male layer with the female layer underneath, to merge into one layer? No one has explained this to me. And so I imagine the classless society under Socialism to consist of just two layers, the merging of all the other double layers that exist under wicked capitalism. And, though this may be a considerable improvement — at least in the abolition of poverty — as a woman and particularly as a Lesbian, I cannot throw my heart into a revolution that leaves me just where I started. What I can throw my heart into is a women's revolution that abolishes the fundamental oppression, from which all the others derive their justification, and a revolution that will co-opt and make possible the reforms advocated by Socialism.

Our Kapo lady, Ms. Waters, has things upside down. It is not capitalism that must go first, but male supremacy. It is not "our party . . . which is responsible for and must lead our work in the women's liberation movement", but the women's movement which must lead in the creation of a new society, one that can and does incorporate the visions of both Christianity and Marxianity. But let us not fall into the error of thinking that the women's revolution is in any way a religious movement. It is not a matter of religion, however religious individual women may be. It is a most practical, down to earth, revolution to be carried out in many ways and at the human level. There are no articles of faith to guide us, other than a firm belief that women are human beings, every bit as much so as men. There is no political party today that can possibly preempt or co-opt those of us who are real feminists, those of us who are tired of supporting male games of musical power chairs and see that women's time has come to lead humanity. It is not simply a question of throwing off our chains, of acquiring our rights, but of taking our responsibility for a society that men alone can no longer govern.

III

If women's liberation is not to be just

another pawn in the age-old male power game, what should it be? It must be something altogether new, a sharp break in the course of history. Every individual feminist is a little revolution in herself. In her refusal to kow-tow to the master sex, she is upsetting, destroying, if you will, a bit of our society. The Lesbian knows all about this, has for thousands of years, but, without the help of her sisters, she could carry on only in private. Now more and more women, gaining strength and courage from each other, are moving in the direction of a real change in society, one at least as important as the change from nomadic hunting and gathering societies to agricultural ones. This is not a violent revolution in the usual sense of bloodshed, but it makes use of a kind of sneaky violence as it chips away at male power, at the relation between the sexes, at the most fundamental warp and woof of society. The male is ultimately helpless in the face of this thorough erosion of the present power structure. He will have to follow us and eventually join us. An example may help. Imagine one of those immense, open office building floors where 100 women sit at their desks in front of typewriters and calculating machines and where 4 or 5 men up front in their translucent glass enclosed cubicles have charge of all those women. Imagine that, not only the Lesbians but all the women on that floor treat those men as equals, refuse to play the asinine games of "femininity," refuse to giggle when their behinds are pinched, refuse to flirt when the men leer and make their tiresome sexual putdown jokes. Imagine the men's frustration and fear and the vicious small boy behavior to which they will stoop. "You're all a bunch of Lesbians". And the women ignore this or smile condescendingly. It is a sad picture in some ways. The men may have mental breakdowns before they learn the hard lesson.

This is one aspect of women's liberation, but there are many others. For all the while reform — that dirty word — is going on. Individual feminists must fight from where they stand and with the talents and skills they possess. Some fight for the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. Whether we win it or not, many women are forced to think. Whether we even want it or not, we can all point to the fact that so far none of us is protected by the American males' constitution. Some women fight for our rights through the courts, gaining back

pay and pay raises for thousands of working women. Others concentrate on the repeal of abortion laws, for the right of women to control their own bodies (apparently all Marxian sects still permit one to own one's body, a property right that disappears only after the revolution when it becomes clear that citizens exist for the sake of the State only). There are hundreds of arenas for the joint action of feminists, all reform activity, and for any of us to think we should postpone all these battles until some nebulous revolution is won, until Ms. Waters and her cohorts are in power, is to live in a dreamworld of theory and rhetoric. An under-paid working woman wants her just pay now, not in the future; a domestic worker wants today a minimum wage and the same protection the government gives male workers. Women workers want today a decent maternity leave without loss of seniority, etc. College women want today equal opportunities with college men. And Lesbians want today an end to the foolishness that we are sick. We women are alive now. We can envision a future far better for coming generations, but we must work for it now, before we are dead. I have no patience to wait around for some violent revolution that I am told to have faith in. The Church taught for centuries that we living ones should wait for our reward in Heaven. Now Marxists tell us we should wait for their victory. Women's liberation cannot wait.

IV

Socialist, as well as Christian, thought anti-dated Christ by many centuries, but both have been more honored in the breach. Empires came and went, maintained always by some form of despotism and by a priestly class that enforced morality of sorts via a punishing and rewarding religion based upon myth and superstition. These empires crumbled mainly because outside their boundaries existed vigorous "barbarians" who sooner or later swept into the empire to expropriate its wealth. Only in our own time has it become possible to view the world as one — there are no barbarous peoples left to challenge the existing nations (or empires). We have instant communication with every part of the globe and some nations can destroy it overnight. The pollution caused by one industrial complex spreads everywhere. The world is a very different place from what it

was when the great Egyptian, Persian, and Roman Empires held sway. The world is now, in effect, just one empire. But politics or the art of governing is still little advanced from the days of those ancient empires. We have talked a lot in the last two centuries of the separation of Church and State, but all government is still a miserable mixture of religious myth and secular power. Often a government is more concerned about enforcing some religious precept than in tackling the urgent needs of its people. This is clear in the debate over the repeal of abortion laws, for example. The Churches are permitted to lobby against such repeal, as though government should have the right to curtail abortion. The Churches may preach to their hearts' content against abortion and anyone is free to listen and concur, but this is no business of government. More pervasive is the government's regulation of marriage and of its basing so much of its activity upon marital status. An example is AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) in Welfare which Nixon would change to Family Assistance. While young men are given job training so that these dependent male children can look forward at least a little to self support, the female children of families on Welfare under whatever name, can look forward only to marrying Uncle Sam and breeding for him as a means of earning money. Nixon's guaranteed income for a family of four is apt to be a family of one mother and three children.

Religion today is still unfamiliar with the idea that women are people. And government obeys Religion meekly. Though Socialism, the idea that wealth should be distributed for the benefit of all, is a very old idea, history, up to the 18th century, has no record of anyone speaking of equality between the sexes. The earliest mention of this I know of is in 1789 when François Boissel in *Catechism du genre humain* said that [to quote Will and Ariel Durant in *Rousseau and Revolution*,] "Property, marriage, and religion have been invented to legitimize usurpation, violence and deceit . . . Marriage is private property in women." Yes, this anti-dates Marx and Engels by quite a few years. The 18th century, in Europe, was the first one in history to question religion on a grand scale and to make its questioning felt. But it was still only a beginning and we are today very much bogged down in our religious heritage. Our whole legal structure is an expres-

sion of religion, of heterosexual relations, of man's property in woman and what he likes to call his children. But what has all this to do with government? Government should concern itself with individuals, with providing them with the necessities of life and those luxuries the people's industry is able to provide. The many and varied relationships that individuals engage in is none of the government's business. Our Constitution and laws should concern themselves with persons. That it must also concern itself with groups of persons based upon meaningful classification is no counter-argument. We now give special consideration to the blind and the elderly and to children. Either a person qualifies for inclusion in one of these groups or she (he) does not. Whether she lives with a man or men and her children, or someone else's children, or with a woman and their children, or alone should be no concern to government.

Many women in women's liberation today are endeavoring to politicize everything. I think they have the matter upside down. They are, rightly, pointing out the political nature of marriage, family and the relations between the sexes, but what they are pointing out is what has been the situation since time immemorial. Human relations have been political for so long that this sorry state of affairs has gone unnoticed. The first step is to point out how political the suffering of every woman is. But the goal, I submit, is eventually to remove personal relations from the province of politics, from government. Adults, whether living heterosexually, homosexually, or singly, should receive the same treatment.

In primitive societies the concept of the individual did not exist. One was part of one's tribe or clan. Property, including one's property in oneself, was communally owned. With the advance of civilization certain individuals desired more. They desired an area of privacy, an inner life of their own. The time is now come when the area of privacy allotted to persons must be expanded. Government must be forced out of many areas. Whether one thinks of this as political activity or a sort of political anti-political activity, makes little difference. It is activity that women must engage in together. And here we have a wide spectrum of thought. There are those women who would use Lesbians as political pawns, as the expendable front line troops

with which to confront male government and there are those who would, at all cost, sweep Lesbians under the carpet.

Betty Friedan and NOW fit the latter category. Despite Aileen Hernandez' recent statement of support for "homosexuality", she too prefers to say that one's sexual orientation (as though it were merely a matter of sex) should not exclude one from NOW and that closes the matter, sweeps it back under the carpet. Poor Betty Friedan — if she only knew how closely she has worked with Lesbians to make of NOW a political force. For NOW consists of straight women scared to death of Lesbians and Lesbians scared to death that Betty may find out. Betty herself is fighting for all she is worth for the continuing triumph of heterosexuality. As long as the heterosexual way of life is touted as superior, we will have to contend with male supremacy and the oppression of women.

This has led some women, including misguided Lesbians, to think that the old homophile movement or the newer Gay Liberation Movement is important. They do not realize that the male homosexual is fighting for his place among male heterosexuals. He wants the same respect and status that The Man now has. By and large, male homosexuals are the most backward element in the fight for human rights. And Lesbians are the most forward element. Women's liberation cannot proceed very far if limited by the ancient religious belief that only heterosexuality is to be condoned. Heterosexuality was raised to divine proportions in pre-history so that men could have ownership in the children that sprang from the ova they fertilized. The male is going to have to face, as he did in the dim past, that it is women who give birth to children and that his part in the affair, from a psychological point of view, is sexual rather than procreative. The insistence upon heterosexuality as the only valid life style will effectively keep women tied to men, though organizations such as NOW will help to alleviate the grosser injustices against women. But, no matter how much progress will be made by NOW's reform measures, ultimately women will need men to affirm their personhood if they insist upon the sacredness of heterosexuality. Only by accepting Lesbianism as a fully valid way of life can all women free themselves from male definition. Once so freed, they can then enter into a heterosexual relationship, if they so choose, as authentically inde-

pendent persons. The recognition of Lesbianism as every bit as valid as heterosexuality is crucial to the women's movement, not because all women may harbor the seeds of Lesbianism deep within (as some theories have it), but to make it clear to all women that they are fully human without reference to men. Few women today have any choice in the matter. They are forced into heterosexuality, marriage, and subjection to the male. The male is still the only recognized measure of humanity; the Lesbian too is a measure of humanity, though as yet unrecognized. Women, like poor Betty, who fear the male and must constantly appease him by assuring him she cannot live a full life without him, are pathetic. Only when a woman realizes she is not dependent upon a male for authentication can she choose one freely if she finds her nature to be heterosexual. Women who fear Lesbianism are in prison. They can free themselves from their incarceration only if they see nothing superior in heterosexuality. It is the compulsively heterosexual woman today who suffers a terrible psychological constriction. We must move to a society that cares not whether its children grow up to be heterosexual or homosexual, whether they have blue eyes or brown. There is no freedom in heterosexuality unless there is freedom to be Lesbian.

V

Unlike a primitive hunting and gathering society, our civilized, technological society requires many skills, some very advanced. Human beings are not interchangeable, we are not clay that can be molded into any machine part. Some of us are better than others at particular jobs or professions. Some of us are better able to manage the means of production, the finances, the legal intricacies necessary to run our complex society than are others. Some of us will continue to garner a greater share of the gross national product than others. A society that tries to give equal material reward for unequal contribution will not last long. The trouble is we human beings. I can imagine a perfectly functioning world of machines and computers, where the streams and the air are pure, where the production of power, oil and electricity take place without contamination, where the manufacture of autos, refrigerators, washing machines, etc., runs without error,

where the animals and plants of the world flourish in their natural habitat, where the earth is a veritable Garden of Eden. I can imagine this if I remove from the earth all human beings. At the peak of our technological development, we all commit harakiri, and the earth will be beautiful.

What we have now is a planet full of human beings. We have produced a few saints, but most of us are riddled with faults. We had better be practical and proceed on the theory that these faults will be with us for a long time to come. Indulging in games of political theology will not solve our problems. To theorize about humanity is an enjoyable armchair occupation for some intellectual types, but to take it seriously is to dehumanize us all. We are not little atoms of life to be manipulated by philosophical chess players. While millions of Chinese may worship, or appear to worship, Chairman Mao, millions will never do so. In the United States we have an abundance of divergent religions, including Maoism. We are a lucky country in that we contain a vast pluralism — all the ideas that humanity has as yet developed. We have the best opportunity to divorce theology from government. If government is not to impose upon all what some powerful segment of the population believes, what is to be the function of government?

Housekeeping. There is nothing left on our planet to conquer. Humanity has spread itself everywhere. There are a few corners left that may in time be turned to good use, such as Antarctica, but in the main the world has shrunk into a finite and not very large home for us all. His-story is for all practical purposes over. Armies of men since the dawn of recorded history have conquered, killed, and pillaged, to the glory of the likes of Alexander, Attila, Genghis and Kubla Khan, and Napoleon. The serendipitous result of all this male vigor and female exhaustion in pregnancy has been the spread of humanity and civilization over the entire globe. In their unchecked march to glory men have invented "better and better" weapons and we now face the possibility of almost instant destruction of our home, the earth. It is time now that women curb male destructiveness. Women know a great deal more about homemaking than do men and what is the proper province of government except homemaking on a vast scale?

Government as it must be in the future,

as it should be now, is better run by women than by men. Government's task should be to provide all its citizens with a minimum standard of living and the means to develop to their maximum potential. This requires constant vigilance to provide equal opportunity, since human beings are NOT equal in endowment and talent and the stronger are forever trying to take advantage of the weaker. Government is no place for glory seekers. It requires people dedicated to keeping the home clean and peaceful, and to providing the privacy wherein its citizens can find surcease from the day's harassments. Men must not be allowed to abuse women, heterosexuals must not be allowed to persecute Lesbians and homosexuals, whites must not be allowed to exploit blacks, and on and on. It is no part of government to tell us what we may think and believe or with whom we should live, but it is a part of government to see that no segment of society attempt to prevent another from practicing its life style. If the United States cannot learn to live with pluralism, how will the world, our home, ever manage to do so? Men can no longer be trusted with their war toys. It is not that men are any worse but that their toys are now too destructive. Men must begin to learn from women. They have been telling us for eons that our place is to run the home and so we will. We will take the reins of governments and together begin the great task of housecleaning the earth, eliminating war, and redistributing the wealth of our home more equitably.

This is a grand dream, but one we should keep in the backs of our minds. In the meantime we must be practical. We women, taken all together, have all the abilities and knowledge that men have and beyond that we have a wider viewpoint of human life. Men can see only themselves and each other; we can see both women and men. Women are not blinded by superiority myths and are not driven to prove the impossible. The slave is potentially more human than the master for the latter is busy maintaining his overlordship. Men do not understand how devastating it is to one's humanity (as opposed to one's manhood) to find oneself blocked by virtue of some extraneous feature. If men understood this, the men of the various minority movements would not continue to oppress their own women. The minority male has only the limited vision that, as a male, he should have equality with the majority male.

Every woman who is dissatisfied with the inferior status of women will have to decide for herself how and where she can best help herself and other women. Each woman must begin where she finds herself and with the talent and skills she has. We cannot lay down priorities for others. We cannot be expected to agree on political theologies, nor does this matter if we are doing something to help some particular women. There are those, like Betty Friedan, who keep telling us that we are really in the women's movement to free men, that we wish only to walk two steps behind our men, rather than 10 steps behind. Maybe this is a clever tactic, part of age-old female dissimulation, but it certainly does not express my reason for being part of the women's movement. But then, I am a Lesbian and my personal priority is simple — the liberation of Lesbians. It would be terrible if this were every woman's priority for women are oppressed in so many ways. I can do my bit for Lesbians with a clear conscience because I know other women are working in other areas. Even all the women who today are working for oppressed males are accomplishing something. The less males oppress each other, the more will women come to see their own oppression. If there is a priority to which we women should address ourselves, it is simply to help more and more women understand that beneath all other oppressions lies their own.

Women's liberation will be nothing if it does not recognize that it must lead, that the oppression of women is fundamental to all other oppressions, and that, until this oppression is abolished, no others can be effectively cured. But we must not confuse our purpose by imagining that the primary goal of the women's revolution is to fight poverty or minority oppression, or war. Nor must we imagine that the wiping out of the oppression of women everywhere and in all classes will automatically wipe out other oppressions. To paraphrase Ms. Waters, the abolition of women's second class status is the *pre-condition* to the abolition of all other injustices.

Women who, like our Ms. Waters, require a political theology to give them courage, are women who deep down accept the myth of the inferiority of women. They are unable to see, to feel, to know that the inner liberation of women IS the revolution. As more and more women learn to laugh at the ludicrous spectacle of men

worshipping their own and other men's nonexistent superiority, social changes beyond the imagination of political and theological bigots will take place at all levels of society, from heterosexual bedroom farce to world government.

I have my personal definitions of revolutionaries and radicals: a Revolutionary is one who dedicates his (her) life to justice for all men; a Radical is one who dedicates her (his) life to justice for all human beings. Also, I find that the phrase "women's liberation" is often a sloppy one, for what the speaker or writer has in mind is "heterosexual women's liberation" or HWL. Perhaps the most difficult attitude for



The Lesbian as heroine . . . in the full sense of the word, romantic, superlative . . . We see little enough of this, and it's a special pleasure to review *THE BIRD OF PARADISE*, by Lily Powell, N.Y., Knopf, 1970. For some odd reason no one is reviewing this book or talking about it at all, and it is unusually good plotting and excellent writing. No accounting for taste and that includes reviewers. The narrator-author is the daughter of an American diplomat, George, married to a French woman, Marguerite, who is *THE BIRD OF PARADISE* . . . Before women's liberation made "bitch" into a lovely word, one would have to have called Marguerite a bitch. Surely the narrator tries hard not to do so . . . but the miserable childhood of this young woman speaks for itself. Setting is Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Washington in the years between the "wars" (WWI and WWII). A sub-plot concerns us most. Jacques, a family friend aristocrat without money, "fallen on evil days," inadvertently provides a destructive catalyst to the romance of Madeleine, a cousin of the narrator, and her young American Lesbian lover. Mad is the most interesting character in the book . . . Jacques is a close second, and surely he is among the most sympathetic male characters in literature in too many years to count. Most exemplary though is the por-

human beings to acquire and to live by is that attitude that welcomes human diversity. We do not have to approve of others' modes of life, let alone love them, to recognize that their right to live is as great as ours. Lesbians are given a head start in acquiring this all important attitude for they are born (usually) of heterosexual parents and learn early on to accept the right of heterosexuals to live their life. We Lesbians must not despair of teaching our heterosexual sisters to accept our right to live our life, for what we were able to learn, they too can learn — a tolerance for diversity.

trait of Mad, carried passim throughout . . . her quiet nobility, competence and caring. Very good novel . . . low-keyed but compelling, with one of the most tasteful erotic love scenes in Lesbian literature. Highly recommended.

In answer to questions about how come some of the things we list addresses and prices for turn out not to be available . . . well, some of the new publishing houses are hand-to-mouth all women's organizations, and they don't always operate efficiently, but there is no fraud implied or intended. Incidentally, those of you shy of ordering Elsa Gidlow's fine collection of Lesbian poetry, *MOODS OF EROS*, should go ahead and do so . . . the book is available; cost is \$2.25 including postage. Write Druid Heights Press, 685 Camino del Canyon, Mill Valley, California 94941.

HELL HOUSE, by Richard Matheson, N.Y., Viking, 1971, is limited to those who enjoy very fast moving adventure fiction. Primary appeal to mystery, occult and science fiction fans. It's a poor copying of the basic premise of Shirley Jackson's magnificent *THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE*, to which it owes many debts. A bunch of scientists (real "nuts") stay in a haunted house to prove it isn't haunted. Alas, it is haunted . . . but mainly by pulp fiction of the 1930s, etc. Matheson is fun to read, never to be taken seriously, and the Lesbian elements are a male version of that *fine tension* in the Jackson book so aptly created later by Julie Harris and Claire Bloom in the movie version. No comparison, but worth a trip to the local library.

THE LADDER staff is an army, really . . . we are everywhere . . . for coming to us via a New York City woman who is not a subscriber and cannot be for personal rea-

sons, and via a staff member who lives in Connecticut, we get to read "Glimpses," a short story by Jane DeLynn in the PARIS REVIEW, Number 51, winter, 1971, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1971. We have never had time to watch the wonderful proliferation of literary little magazines . . . and we periodically beg for someone addicted to them to provide us with data on pertinent titles. This one is a gem . . . a marvelous story about a woman in love with a woman who settles, albeit sadly, for yet another woman . . . nice, under-developed in all the right ways . . . just "glimpses" of some lives. Recommended . . . and libraries will have this.

Maybe by the time you read this, New York and area readers will be able to go and see Harold Pinter's new play, OLD TIMES. The distinguished English playwright's first in 6 years is receiving rave reviews in this country already, though it is showing in London presently. Plot would indicate more than a little interest. Kate and Deeley, a middle-aged couple, are living in a converted farmhouse by the sea, awaiting a visit from Kate's former roommate, Anna. As soon as Anna arrives, she and Deeley begin an introspective battle over the "possession" of Kate . . . and by the end of the first act it would appear that Anna and Kate are to be reunited. In the second act it develops that, indeed, Deeley has also known Anna, separate altogether from his relationship with Kate and separate, too, from Kate's with Anna. There is a triangular relationship . . . but less in the sexual than in the sense of time. Some of the reviews would indicate that the male is not the victor in the philosophical sense (and that will be a change if it is true . . . for this is not a new theme in drama or literature).

Several readers have mentioned the movie, DAUGHTER OF DARKNESS, a U.S./French production. Once again the Lesbian as vampire is the theme. This is currently showing around the country. Reviews would indicate it's a large cut above the usual camp in this sort of thing, but we aren't recommending because we haven't seen . . .

Isabel Miller's lovely novel, A PLACE FOR US (see THE LADDER, December 69/January 70 for review), was 1969's most popular Lesbian title. It is being reprinted by McGraw-Hill, 1971, in hardcover for the first time. If you haven't seen this, do do buy it. The novel has also won the first annual award of the Gay Liberation Task

Force, division of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association (June, 1971). Unfortunately, this is going to confuse a lot of readers and may well lead to some disgruntled male homosexual purchasers, for the award states it is the first annual "Gay Book Award" and that it was chosen because it is a "book which presents a positive image of homosexuals." However, it's not about homosexuals at all but about Lesbians, and it's a must book for that audience.

The French write novels in a style all their own . . . obscure, charming, and defiant. Suzanne Prou's Mlle. SAVELLI?, N.Y., Harper and Row, 1971, first came out in France in 1967, and it has won acclaim for the writer (as have her other novels). It is a sort of novel of suspense . . . without the proper denouement. We never really know what happened to Mlle. Savelli, and the ? in the title indicates that we aren't really even sure she exists. We do know, or we are told, that she is supposed to lose her job in a business through an obscure power struggle with another woman . . . with strongly erotic overtones. She is then off to live in a weird pension (a sort of boarding house for tourists) presided over by Solange, who is beautiful, suitably mysterious and very sensual. Mlle. Savelli apparently evades a single pass tentatively thrown in her direction by Solange, and thereafter is witness to the events that unfold in the pension. Maybe . . . not for the impatient, that's for certain, but if you are pleased by good writing for its own sake . . . good.

Brief mention of another very run-of-the-mill women's liberation anthology. This one is called UP AGAINST THE WALL, MOTHER, edited by Elsie Adams and Mary Louise Briscoe, and published by Glencoe Press of Beverly Hills, California (a division of Macmillan Company), 1971. Very briefly, this is (sadly) directed towards a college audience and contains at least 75% unnecessary material. The good sections are to be found in the reprints in Parts Two, Three and Four . . . and most of these have been reprinted to death already. The editorial stance of the book can best be described by commenting that the co-editors have written one section to end the book entitled "Man's Role in Women's Liberation." The bibliography is disgracefully out of date and inadequate in view of what is available. Not unless you are desperate do you need this one.

Having based some of my lifework on

the rock of bibliography, I hate having to damn anyone engaged in the work. There is, however, a bibliography out which falls so far short of being a useful tool, while encompassing masses of material, that it is irritating. The book, HOMOSEXUALITY: A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY, by Umesh D. Sharma and Wilfrid C. Rudy, is published by the Waterloo Lutheran University at Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. The copyright is 1970. To add to the irritation, Mr. Sharma and Mr. Rudy bill themselves as librarians. The work contains a mish-mash of material seemingly derived from early Donald Webster Cory and MATTACHINE REVIEW works . . . with a smattering of checking in the indexes for periodical material. It includes at least 50% of the known male homosexual works and probably 35% of the Lesbian titles in every possible area . . . fiction, drama, poetry, non-fiction of every possible discipline, etc. However, there are errors in listing (including listings of books under both pseudonyms and real names without cross reference) that clearly indicate the compilers haven't read the material (or much of it) that they are listing . . . and, apparently, that they performed their function without giving much of a damn about the outcome. The book is available for only \$4 and is in large, easy to read print. If you have no other work in the field, it is o-k. But that's about all that can be said for it, for you have no way of knowing in looking through it what kind of book you are reading about (not even the general field) and no way of determining whether it deals with Lesbians or male homosexuals or both unless you are already very very well versed in the field.

NETOCHKA NEZVANOV, by Feodor Dostoevsky, is an early novel just now available in English. Ann Dunnigan is the translator and Prentice-Hall is to be thanked for publishing it (1970). Dostoevsky did not finish this early work, which he began in 1846, possibly because his career was interrupted by internment in Siberia for 10 years. At age 10 Netochka is left an orphan and is taken in by a prince and made a member of his family. She is quite taken with the young princess Katya. At first Katya is unkind to Netochka, but soon the girls become intimate, sneaking into each other's beds at night. When this relationship is learned of, the Princess is taken away and Netochka is sent to live with Katya's older half sister. The novel stops with Netochka just reaching early womanhood, so we have



AND NOW, GIRLS, FOR THIS EVENING'S ENTERTAINMENT. OUR CHAMPION COOKY-CUTTER WILL SAW ANOTHER WOMAN IN HALF.

no way of knowing what her later life might have been like. Libraries will have this one.

Missing pertinent short stories seems to be inevitable until we find some way of reading them all. Various suspicious reviews of ON BEING TOLD HER SECOND HUSBAND HAS TAKEN HIS FIRST LOVER AND OTHER STORIES, by Tess Slesinger, N.Y., Quadrangle Books, 1971, sent one LADDER reader back to this book's first appearance, as TIME: THE PRESENT, N.Y., Simon and Schuster, 1935, there to discover the story, "The Answer on the Magnolia Tree." She writes: "This reeks with sexual tension. Set in an exclusive girls' school, where any sexuality is forbidden, the girls and teachers alike live in worlds of fantasy. Plot basically concerns a girl who stays out all night with a boy on a golf course. As faculty and students discuss the event, we are shown touches of their lives. The Lesbian characters include Miss Whitson, the housekeeper, described as 'neither servant nor teacher,' who each year chooses a girl to love from afar. But the strongest scene in the story takes place between two faculty members who have been roommates for seven years and on this day become aware of their attraction to each other, though admitting it remains

impossible."

I KNEW DAISY SMUTEN, edited by Hunter Davies, N.Y., Coward-McCann, 1970, is patterned after the multi-authored sexy best seller, *NAKED CAME THE STRANGER*. Supposedly seventeen writers from the staff of the London *TIMES* did the writing. It is announced that Daisy is to marry someone in the royal household, presumably Charles. Having led the sort of life that would make it unlikely at best that Daisy would be going to marry anyone in the royal household, the plot revolves around the efforts of many to keep all who knew her (literally and figuratively) quiet. The Lesbian episode is the predictable type . . . Daisy is pursued by a man, she in turn is pursuing the man's wife. The obligatory bedroom scene (Colette did this first and best years and years ago) where the man is cuckolded is included. Daisy is rather rotten and worse, she is a bore. (This review also contributed by a *LADDER* reader.)

Everything about the Bloomsbury circle is of some interest in this column. *CARRINGTON: LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM HER DIARIES*, edited by David Garnett, N.Y., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, will be must reading for those of you who have followed the glimpses we have so far been allowed by the various living watchdog survivors of the celebrated early 1900s literary group. *CARRINGTON*, primarily known for having lived with Lytton Strachey in a sort of loving brother/sister relationship, was one of the legion of women who fight their natural Lesbianism by tumbling into bed with every man they meet. She did also have affairs with women but lived a miserable and unhappy life, ending in a pointless and self-pitying suicide after Strachey's death. Various reviewers have pointed out that to read and understand about *CARRINGTON*, one must first read Michael Holroyd's biography of *LYTTON STRACHEY*. We agree, strongly. The Holroyd book is, incidentally, a gold mine of information on famous Lesbians (see *THE LADDER*, October/November, 1968), including the history of Dorothy Bussy, author of *OLIVIA*.

There are a substantial number of Lesbians who see themselves as adjuncts to male homosexuals . . . a sub genre of that particular underprivileged group who do not realize their primary alliance is with all other women. A book to bring this home so strongly that it shocks the reader is *THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN HOMOPHILE*

NOVELS, by Varda One, Los Angeles, Everywoman Publishing Co., 1971 (1970). This is available from Everywoman Publishing Co., 1043B West Washington Blvd., Venice, California 90291, for \$1.10 postpaid. But it. Varda One has read about 50 of the more major male homosexual titles, and she has reviewed them in terms of how the authors look at women in the novels. Reading this was, for me, a bit like being slapped in the face with wet mackerel. I have read and, in fact, own these novels . . . and hundreds more like them. I reviewed many of them in years past for the *MATTACHINE REVIEW* and later for *TANGENTS* (male homosexual magazines). I doubt I noticed the treatment of women . . . in fact, I am sure I did not. It's a whole new ball game, to use the only possible male image that fits. You just do not see that you are oppressed until someone sticks your oppression under your nose . . . and makes you smell it. The book, as a book, is cursory, incomplete, and prefaced with an apologia to that effect. But the point is made . . . and that, for now, is enough.

If you have not read *SEXUAL POLITICS* by Kate Millett, you can pick it up for \$2.95, an Avon paperback reprint. It's really not to be missed. It has been reviewed and discussed at length, but it is a classic "first" sort of thing and ought to be slowly and thoroughly read by every literate woman in the world.

IS GAY GOOD?, a collection of articles slanted towards the subtitle, "Ethics, Theology and Homosexuality," edited by W. Dwight Oberholtzer, has been published by Westminster Press in Philadelphia, 1971. As one might expect, it is 99% male homosexuals and 1% Lesbians. The Lesbians are tacked on in some of the material but are primarily left out except for Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon's article, "A Lesbian Approach to Theology." As would also be expected, Del and Phyl do a good job on the basics. The book, however, is very limited to its prime audience, the male homosexual and those dealing with them.

GERTRUDE STEIN IN PIECES, by Richard Bridgman, N.Y., Oxford University Press, 1970, 1971, is a must book for those seriously interested in the Lesbian aspects of Stein's writing and of her personal life. It is also probably a must for anyone hereafter who attempts to write about her. Professor Bridgman's faithful examination of her every word, her day by day existence, is a

labor of love, obviously, though he allows no personal commentary to creep into his book. Many critics, including Edmund Wilson and Jeannette H. Foster, have indicated that they felt Gertrude Stein's use of obscure language was a deliberate disguise and that to do otherwise would have led to personal ruin in view of her open Lesbianism. Professor Bridgman's book would tend to prove this beyond a reasonable doubt. Moreover, his examining eye will make her work more easily readable, which is a blessing. Though familiar with something like 7 of her works, including her major Lesbian novel, *THINGS AS THEY ARE*, and her short stories that are explicit to some extent, I readily admit that reading her requires a discipline I've seldom felt like using. But using this man's keys, it will be fun to go back through her work. An interesting point made is that Alice Toklas was a much more important factor in her work than is widely known. It is even likely that Alice wrote much of her own autobiography, *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOKLAS*, though she herself vehemently denied this until her death. More interesting, and probably not intended, is the fact that in recreating their life together, Professor Bridgman has shown that this was, in the best possible sense, a marriage. They were always separate and individual but they were always one, too. Dr. Bridgman does persist in using "heterosexual imagery" in her relationship with Alice, but this is his bias, not hers . . . and readers who chance upon the real meanings of her more or less famous phrases . . . "Lifting Belly" and "Toasted Susie Is My Ice Cream" (the latter is a reference to a "honeymoon" in a cottage with an open fireplace) . . . will be more delighted than educated.

THE GAY MILITANTS, by Donn Teal, N.Y., Stein and Day, 1971, is a well done history of the events primarily in New York City in the male homosexual movement which were sparked by the June 28, 1969, Stonewall riot (see *THE LADDER*, October/November, 1969, for a complete write up on the event). In terms of historical coverage of the East Coast male movement, there is no question that this book is invaluable. Only one chapter has any bearing on Lesbians and this was (Donn deserves thanks here) at least partially done by several women in gay liberation or women's liberation. We haven't been told but detect a heavy editorial hand in the chapter. Large

sections of other chapters deal with the walkouts by various women from gay liberation to women's liberation and the sexist attitudes of most of the male homosexual workers. For its intended audience, this is a must book. Donn's meticulous care in citing sources is to be complimented, though he erroneously calls *THE LADDER* "A Lesbian Journal," which is a subtitle it hasn't had since August, 1968. Also, he is guilty of not citing first sources in many of the articles. One example is the Elsa Gidlow report on the Bay Area Women's Coalition, which was written for *THE LADDER* and appeared in the April/May, 1970, issue, before any subsequent appearance. There are at least four other similar cases I noted casually, which leads me to suspect there are possibly others. Little or no credit is given to the groups and publications who made possible the change in public opinion that allowed the gay liberation movement to flourish. If *MATTACHINE* and *ONE* and *D.O.B.* and *TANGENTS* and *SIR* and *WEST SIDE DISCUSSION GROUP* (N.Y.C.) and their ilk had not been around years and years ago, the slogan "Out of the Closets and into the Streets" most likely would have changed to "Out of the Closets and into your Graves."

A reader points out that in listing the short story, "Changed," by Norma Meacock (*THE LADDER*, February/March, 1971), from the collection, *STORIES FROM THE TRANSATLANTIC REVIEW*, edited by Joseph P. McCrindle, N.Y., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970, I neglected to list another in the same collection. Ironically, "At Home with the Colonel," by Frank Tuohy, is the second pertinent story by this author to be recently discovered, since his "A Reprieve" was reviewed last issue. Possibly "At Home with the Colonel" was best left undiscovered, since it is one of those brittle looks at unpleasant people. The Colonel is dowdy and dreams of young men for his daughter. The Lesbian daughter and her friend are cruelly selfish, and the young man who comes to call is a dolt. Enough said.

There is no way to keep up with the proliferating women's liberation and allied newspapers. A good new one, *WOMAN-KIND*, published at 4200 Cass Avenue, Detroit, Michigan 48201, is \$4 a year . . . first issue is May/June 1971. Unlike most of the newspapers, this one is edited along traditional lines, though it combines viewpoints ranging from NOW to the outer

edges.

A journal out from Ann Arbor, Michigan, PURPLE STAR, is published by the Ann Arbor Radicalesbians. Cost is 45c including postage for Spring, 1971, issue. Write c/o Women's Liberation Office, Student Activities Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. Most of the material has been done before with slight change, and the personal contents deal mainly with the "struggle" to come out and the various views the women involved have of their present relationships and their (mainly highly inaccurate) views of "old Lesbian" relationships. One or two very good statements . . . including an article on vicious treatment in a public restaurant and a good one on WHY women are mostly through with all the male radical groups.

An untitled paperback anthology is out from the Easter Day Press, 224 "C" Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. Cost is 50c, copyright 1971. No editor is listed (though one strongly suspects Rita Mae Brown is the editor). The cover is best left unmentioned, but if you buy it, go beyond the cover to read the contents. Included are some unbelievably horrible poems . . . but there is some very good material too. Right now the big thing is "everyone" expresses herself regardless of what it might do to the next person. It's a good idea, at least in theory. Ironically, while the book trumpets revolution, the best poem in it is "For Queen Christina" by Rita Mae Brown, which celebrates a woman who gave up her throne for love of another woman, which seems politically very very intelligent indeed.

Obviously we are missing a good many new pertinent items despite the apparent proliferation of them. We do not see everything because another concomitant feature of the new women's liberation and Lesbian liberation movement is a lack of order and simple things like attending to distribution and publicity and even order filling. Material is written and published under extraordinary circumstances with no one apparently caring thereafter whether anyone else gets to see the material.

Most of you will want to get WATCH OUT, BROTHER, I'M HERE!, subtitled "A Book of Women's Liberation Poems," by Heather, Berkeley, California, Shameless Hussy Press, 1971. Despite the title and subtitle, the poetry in this book is about late coming out. It is about a woman who

has always been a Lesbian . . . has been openly Lesbian in her younger days . . . has strayed away and, via women's liberation, come back openly to a Lesbian posture. Some of it is very good; some of it is very bad. All of it is very interesting, and we recommend it. The cost is 60c plus 10c postage . . . from Heather, 2624 Regent Street, Berkeley, California 94704.

PLEASE send us things you see that we might miss . . . or at least tell us about them. An enormous amount of literature by and about Lesbians, mostly in connection with women's liberation, is now being written and published. We need to see it all if we are to share it with all the readers.

A major study on Lesbianism, LOVE BETWEEN WOMEN, by Charlotte Wolff, M.D., London, Duckworth, 1971, was requested for review purposes. It turned out to be of such substantial importance that it is being reviewed in conjunction with a major article by Hope Thompson, to be in the next issue of THE LADDER (tentatively).

That women have been battling for rights for a long time (however ineffectually) is not news, but seemingly few women of today bother to do their homework and examine what happened in the past to make possible today's movement. Aileen S. Kraditor's THE IDEAS OF THE WOMAN SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT, 1890-1920, which first was published by Columbia University Press, 1965, has been issued as an Anchor Book by Doubleday, 1971, and it is well worth the \$1.95 price tag. History, no . . . her story really . . . and some very brave women are included. Kraditor is an excellent, fascinating writer, as those who have read her "bible," UP FROM THE PEDESTAL, already know.

We also have on hand a marvelous definitive biography of THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN, by Elizabeth Mavor, London, Michael Joseph, 1971. This will be reviewed in a coming issue . . . probably the next one . . . by a "guest" reviewer. It's a must for the serious collectors and a marvelous view of the over-50-year marriage of two unusual women a long long time ago in a valley in Wales called Llangollen.

Next issue will also feature a handful of new Lesbian novels from England. They are away being reviewed for us by one of the many librarians now helping with the Lesbiana column.

(Editor's Note: This is a poor way to

put in an editorial, but we are still in need of certain things. We need ideas for cartoons. You don't have to be able to draw . . . all we need is the idea . . . the possible vision and the possible caption for anything humor-

ous related to the Lesbian and women's liberation movement. We also need a one-arm, balance type, one pound, postage scale. We also need to hear from you about what you like or don't like in the magazine, and why.)

Open Letter to a Black Sister

WOMEN'S LIBERATION IS OUR THING TOO!

By ANITA R. CORNWELL

It's really amazing when you come right down to the nub of the thing that some of us can't seem to see just who it is that's standing very flat-footedly on our broken-down backs.

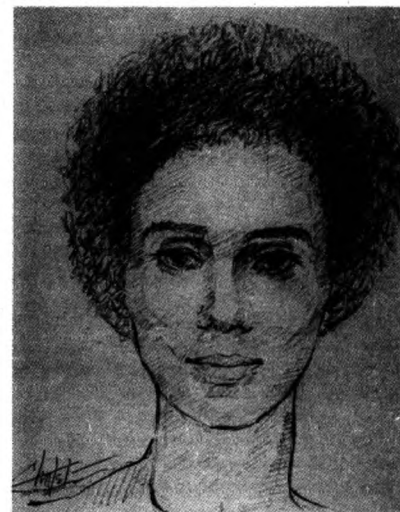
Yes, I know all about Whitey and how he's sold us down the river and up the creek back in slavery time, and in modern times too. But, my dear Sister, didn't it ever occur to you that if one of our good old voodoo men from "Dear Mother Africa" could make Whitey disappear from the face of the earth this precise moment, that we would still be in the black man's trick bag?

If you want a quick world's eye view on this business, look at what happened to our Sisters in Algeria. During their war with France our Algerian Sisters really did their thing up good and got blowed up and knocked down on all sides the way all of our Sisters have always been ripped up since men invented Eve. And our good Algerian Brothers patted them on the head for pitching in to win "our" fight for freedom.

So, where're our Algerian Sisters now that "freedom" has come? Yeah! You guessed it, they're stuck right back behind the veil and still in that ancient Arab trick bag than which there is none trickier.

But to come back closer to home in these good old non-United States of male supremacy, didn't you ever wonder why you have to come home every evening after putting in ten feet-killing hours and then put in at least five more of back-breaking toil getting dinner and seeing to the kids and waiting on him hand and foot while he sits on his rusty-dusty giving orders and complaining up a blue streak because you don't do things to suit him?

Do you for one cotton picking moment think that Whitey has a gun on Blackey's back making him turn you into a stone workhorse while he sits there making like



king of the blabber-mouths?

Well, if you want to blame Whitey for your trick bag, you go right ahead, but, in the meanwhile, you're getting mighty broken down with all that weight on your aching back. And hitting the bottle ain't going to do a damn bit of good because when you wake up tomorrow morning, at five a.m. so you can start getting the kids' things together, and his things too, all that misery is still going to be standing right there waiting for you just the way it was waiting for your Momma and her Momma and her Momma's Momma on back to the time we crawled out of the sea if that's where we're supposed to have come from.

And once you really get into hitting the bottle every day, you're on a fast train to hell with no side stops. Because after all the kids you've had (because he doesn't believe in birth control and he's got you so screwed up until you think that having a hysterectomy, which you need in the worst sort of way, is going to take away some of your

femininity — and Lord, will I ever be glad to hear the last of that slave-producing word?—), well, there you are already messed up with a bushel of kids, and hitting the bottle when you should be hitting the sack and blaming your troubles on Whitey who is somewhere living it up and having forgot you ever existed, while your true oppressor is sitting right there at your kitchen table, sucking your blood like the only leech alive, laughing his head off and resting himself so's he can be looking good when he sees his *other woman* tomorrow night.

What's that? You don't believe he's got another woman? Well, I wouldn't believe it either except as a matter of fact, I *know* damn well he has at least *two* other women.

You know the two he rides to work with every morning in your Ford that you should be driving and would be driving except that (a) he won't let you, and (b) even if he would let you, you're too damn tired and nervous and *cowed down* now until you really feel as though you'd just as soon walk the ocean as face that terrifying traffic every morning.

And speaking of *terrifying*, didn't you ever wonder when everything started terrifying you? Was it Whitey who started terrifying you back there say six or seven years ago after you married Blackey? Or was it Blackey himself?

Let's look at the record:

You were a swinging, goodlooking twenty-two when you first met Blackey. You had known most of your life that Whitey was around with his foot on your back, but you were still swinging and still looking good. You had a trim figure (which now looks like a barrel with no hoops); you had a new car and money in the bank. Whitey's bank to be sure, *but it was in your name!* Remember?

Now where's it at?

Well, you know damn well where it's at. Blackey took your car, he took your identity, he took your figure (six kids in seven years sounds like a duplicating machine), and he took your money and spent it on that *other woman*.

And what did you do about that? Oh yeah, you remember all right. Blackey had got you so tricked up just that quick until you went gunning for that woman who all the time had been believing his lies when he said he was a single man getting ready to marry her.

Now, my dear misguided Sister, aren't

we ever going to stop and try to get our heads together? Aren't we ever going to stop cutting each other up while Blackey sits back whooping it up with *The Boys* and bragging about how *his* women fight over him?

And speaking of *The Boys*, aren't we ever going to try to put it together as to just why he likes being with them better than he likes being with us?

But even more important, aren't we ever going to get it together as to just why he's so afraid of our getting together with *The Girls*? And especially with the white girls? Which brings me right square to where I want to be which is with our white, brown and black Sisters in Women's Liberation which *The Boys* call Women's Lib and which they also hate like homemade sin because they know *Women's Liberation* is going to set our heads free.

For once you realize that Miss Ann is Whitey's doormat (just as we are Blackey's lackeys), and that she is really getting her head together and is now into consciousness-raising, Gay Liberation, Lesbian Liberation, free child-care and abortions — well, once you realize that the Miss Ann that Blackey rants about and the clear-eyed Sister who sits next to you at a rap session which has been closed and barred to Whitey and Blackey, is the same woman, then you can bet your boots that we are *really* into something. And Blackey knows it and is scared stiff-necking blue, just like Whitey.

So don't get turned off when Blackey starts coming on with all that weird crap about Women's Liberation dividing the black community. Like when were we ever all together with *him* sitting on top of us and Whitey on top of him and everybody giving us black Sisters hell going and coming?

Now that we've got a chance to really get into the freedom bag, Blackey starts trying to snow us with that bit about we ought to stand behind him in *our* fight for black nationalism. Well, my dear Sister, just where do you think *his* black nationalism is going to leave us? Yep, you guessed it. Right where we are now, except worse off.

Did you ever take a good look at our Black Muslim Sisters? Well, you can see where it's at there, can't you? And what about "Dear Mother Africa"? Did you know that we black Sisters aren't even welcome over there if we've got more than a grade school education? For if we know our head from a hole in the ground, they

say we're over-educated and they don't want us over there putting strange ideas in the heads of *their* women who have been accorded about the same status as the water buffalo.

Quite frankly, I was both surprised and mystified when I first learned of Blackey's hostility toward our Liberation Movement.

For on the face of it, you would think that black men, who have been oppressed for so long in this country, would be against discrimination against *everybody*.

Yet, the facts tell us otherwise. "Our" black educators and civil rights leaders (all male, of course) have repeatedly stressed the idea that black men should be advanced at the expense of black women "if full acculturation is to come about as the patriarchal family is a cherished American institution."

Yeah, that's true too, it's as cherished as the gun and the atom bomb and twice as deadly. And, of course, if one wanted to be really nasty, you could point out that lynching black people was once a "cherished American" pastime too, but we won't go into that bag right now.

Let's stick with patriarchy, or the male-dominated family which is what that googily-sounding word really means. And patriarchy has really screwed up all of us Sisters ever since our Brothers stopped bouncing from tree to tree and came into the home and started ordering us around. For we haven't had one free-swilling breath since.

To put it bluntly, patriarchy is the root cause of all the major ills in the world today. For as long as men are able to keep half of the population in chains (us Sisters that is), they are going to be forever trying to enslave the other half. And as long as hostile, aggressive males are at the head of power, humane legislation will be as non-existent or non-enforced as it has always been which is why everywhere you look there is a crisis at hand. And if there are no crises, then chaos has already set in.

Of course, you don't have to take my word for any of this; all you have to do is look around you.

For example, when was the last time you got a doctor to pay you a house visit? What's that you say? What on earth is a doctor? Well, never mind, let's examine the local transportation system; don't you usually find it on strike, off schedule or just plain broken-down? And the fares! Why cabs used to be cheaper than the bus is

today. And the gas fumes those monsters spew out are really something to write home about for a gas mask.

And what about the fish! Have you eaten any good mercury lately? I remember down South where we used to have the good old Saturday night fish fry. I guess they're now calling it the Mercury Mixer or some little happy thing like that. And I know you don't want to go into the latest war news which always brings the body count up-to-date; nor do I think you want more horror stories about how some of our Sisters are getting their heads tore up messing with that dope which has made so many "Brothers" rich.

But yes, all too soon, I discovered that patriarchy was the "most cherished dream" of our black Brothers, even those who'd never heard of the word. And I realized that when they go out there whooping and hollering about "We want freedom for everybody," they meant *freedom for everybody male*.

And that's why they're forever flinging that equally googily-sounding word *Matriarchy* at us. They, and Whitey too, are blaming us because we have had to go out and break our backs doing all of Whitey's crapwork for a few lousy dollars which barely kept body and soul together. But because we did manage to struggle along on those pcon's wages and somehow kept our families intact, we are now being called every rancid name in the book.

As you know very well, if it hadn't been for us and our mothers and grandmothers and great, great-grandmothers, black folks in America would have gone the way of the Indian and Australian bush folk. And what thanks have we got for our back-breaking slaving? We've been slapped down by every other group of people that's ever lived in this country; that's the reward we've received.

And Whitey is bugged because we're still here and have stopped grinning and doing the buck dance, and Blackey is bombed off because having to work so hard for so long has made most of us black Sisters too strong to take his crap for very long periods at a time.

And any woman who won't take but so much guff from a man is called unwomanly by the less foul-mouthed, and is called castrating bitch by the other jackasses. But we in the Movement are no longer frightened by such terms for we realize it's just another little male trick to keep us in *our*

place.

We know that all of us Sisters make up at least sixty-five percent of the population and that is more or less why Whitey and Blackey have tried to blast our Movement to hell for they know that that many people can cause all kinds of social change once they get their heads together. And that is precisely what we intend doing.

But really, I don't want to go on so in this first little note. I just wanted you to start thinking about things a little, and please put the damn bottle down and drown all them frigging pills and leave the kids with him tomorrow and take a day off and go sporting in your car for a wheeze instead of messing with them wheezing buses and dirty, thug-carrying subways.

In fact, take the whole damn week off. You've earned it. And more too, Sister!

(Anita Cornwell writes that she was born in South Carolina. She lives in Philadelphia and has been there since junior high school days. She majored in journalism in college and comments that this "was as useful to me career-wise as if I'd taken up birdwatching". After a brief stint on various black weekly newspapers, Anita became a "slave for Uncle, the City of Philadelphia and State Public Welfare (as caseworker) which means I was on the rack intermittently for about a dozen years". Since that time, during the last ten years, Anita has been a freelance writer. She describes this occupation as being worse than the rack. Ms. Cornwell is working on an article about the black Lesbian for a future issue of THE LADDER.)

Poetry

Three Poems by LYN KELLY

on the train yesterday
on my way home from the
structurally sound sewage system
I listed the names of people to call
under the telephone
the dentist came first—
red ink slashed over month old
pencilings of a misused notebook
the last name of a tired caseworker
rested a space below and then
a sheer drop of ten lines—
in the center of the page was
a spelling of marianne
late this afternoon i
reopened the notebook and
was charmed by the size and care
that i gave to the eight letters
of your name
until then i hadn't realized . . .

Last night, in some swirling recess of
My mescaline inflamed brain, I felt a
Line of floating brown hair stab my eyes.
It was rich and light and for all the world
I could not see how there might yet be more.
But it was only a part of you.
A living and fleeting part.

A child to me, but having more years
To strengthen the dreadful determination
That is told in the mouth (all is told in
the mouth) that is heard in her
Softened eyes

Brown are the eyes, reflecting the highlights
Of her darkness; there is darkness,
Always much darkness within her, and is seen
In her fingers, and felt in her breathing.
Darkness. So much of that saintly darkness
That I will turn away forever when it ends
Remembering how to prefer the greyneess
Relearning how to fall asleep when
It's over.

Cross Currents

WOMEN '71: YOUR ART SHOW. The women students and faculty of Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, opened an art exhibit on October 4, 1971, and it is to run through November 2, 1971, at the University Center Gallery. Every woman is invited. Their press release (which reached us way too late to get to you in time to have you submit art works to them by their July 19 deadline . . . sorry) says in part: "Women artists in the past were frequently ignored or ridiculed by their male colleagues . . . WOMEN '71 is to be an exhibition to provide professional women artists in the central states with their first opportunity to exhibit as a group in a show devoted exclusively to their own creative efforts". All media are represented and women in Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Nebraska, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, Kansas and Missouri are participating.

MY IDEAS ON WOMEN'S LIBERATION HAVE CHANGED A GOOD DEAL. Thus spoke 16-year-old Ellen McConnell, one of the young women who recently became a Senate page after months of hassling. We can almost be grateful to the males for raising consciousness in this case. It's delightful to have a 16-year-old say: "Before all this delay, I guess I wasn't too sympathetic, but now I understand why women get so angry".

WOMEN WED IN BANGKOK, April 6, 1971. A wealthy land owner and a young market vendor, both women, were married in the Northern Province of Kamphaeng-phet, with hundreds of guests coming from miles around. The BANGKOK POST describes the wedding as the social event of the year, if not the decade.

HOLLAND IS PROGRESSIVE: Many bills recently passed in Holland show a good deal of fairmindedness we could use a lot of over here. The age of consent for women is 16 and a recent bill lowered male homosexuals to the same age of consent — reason only, fairness. Low cost housing is now available to male homosexuals or Lesbian couples who have been together five years. This is probably less liberal than for heterosexuals, who are undoubtedly eligible the day they marry, but this is a next step. A new bill very likely to be passed provides for pensions for Lesbians on the death of their loved one, and for male homosexuals as well. As we have covered in these pages,

the women's liberation movement, the "Dolle Minas", are well established there and apparently treated seriously.

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY: April 29, 1971: Women's studies will begin at Hofstra University this fall at the demand of the women's liberation group on campus. Speaking supporting them were Elizabeth Fisher (editor of APHRA), Jill Johnston (columnist, VILLAGE VOICE), Jacqueline Ceballos of NOW and Lucinda Cisler of Women for Abortion Repeal.

YWCA AIDS LESBIAN CENTRE: Seattle, May, 1971. The University of Washington YWCA has assisted in the opening of a "Gay Women's Resource Centre", located at 4224 University Way N.E., Seattle. The centre is open to all women, but specifically for Lesbians and is intended to be a place where women can meet "on a personal level in an area of acceptance". Centre has a library, and is staffed and open from 11 AM to 8 PM. Various women's liberation groups staff the centre and do telephone duty. And, if you don't think women's liberation has changed anything, try finding a news item like this one ANYWHERE 10 years ago.

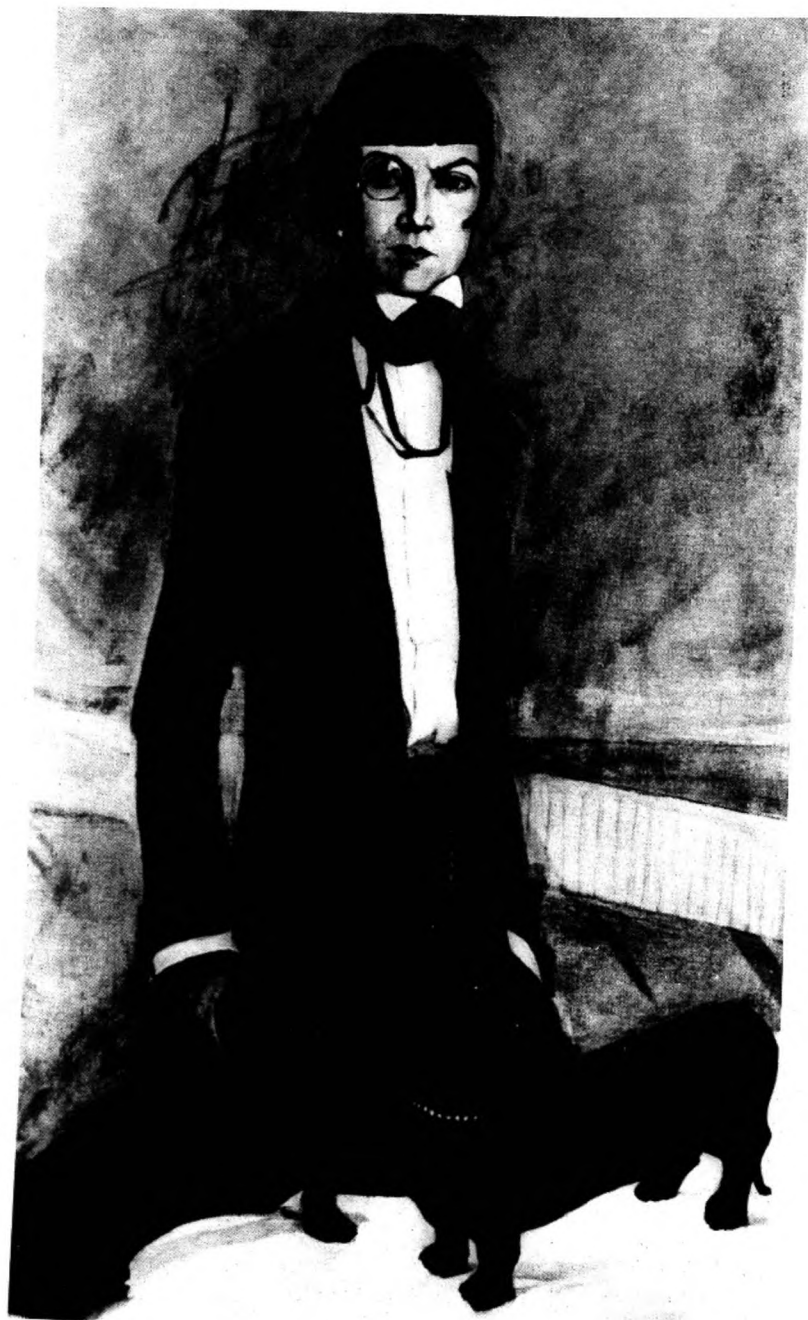
CONSISTENCY PLEASE: In Long Island on May 15, 1971, the Temple Beth Shalom hires a woman as cantor; one of the few in the nation. On May 29, 1971, a parish priest, Msgr. John J. Noone, is forced by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to stop allowing girls to serve as altar girls. We get more examples of this sort of mickey mouse than we can print, but just remember, until it cannot happen ever we haven't got anything.

ALL DOES NOT INCLUDE WOMEN: SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, May 19, 1971. Gov. Ronald Reagan announced there are no plans to make women eligible for admission to the new Ecology Centers now being opened by his administration. Later, Mr. Reagan was quoted as saying that the centers were open not only to conscientious objectors but "to all volunteers". We conclude from this that ALL does not include women.

THE FOREST FOR THE TREES: Sydney J. Harris, syndicated columnist who has often appeared in THE LADDER (very kindly on his part) with words unusual coming from a male, both on women's

Continued on Page 46

Lyn Kelly is 18 years old, and was born and raised in the East Bronx. A Spring, 1971 high school graduate, she is attending Queen's College.



Una, Lady Troubridge. 1924. Oil on canvas. National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of the Artist.

Journeys in Art

By SARAH WHITWORTH

ROMAINE BROOKS — Portraits of an Epoch

The painting of a portrait confronts an artist with the problem of having to combine an objective visual likeness with a subjective interpretation of the person portrayed. The success or failure of portraiture is dependent upon how well an integration of fact and personal feeling has been achieved. At its best, a good portrait will reflect a truth concerning the subject's personality which could not be recorded by the simple use of a camera. This is the key to the brilliance of the painting of Romaine Brooks. She was, throughout her long career, financially secure enough to choose her subjects at her own discretion and wisely agreed to paint only those people about whom she felt a personal insight.

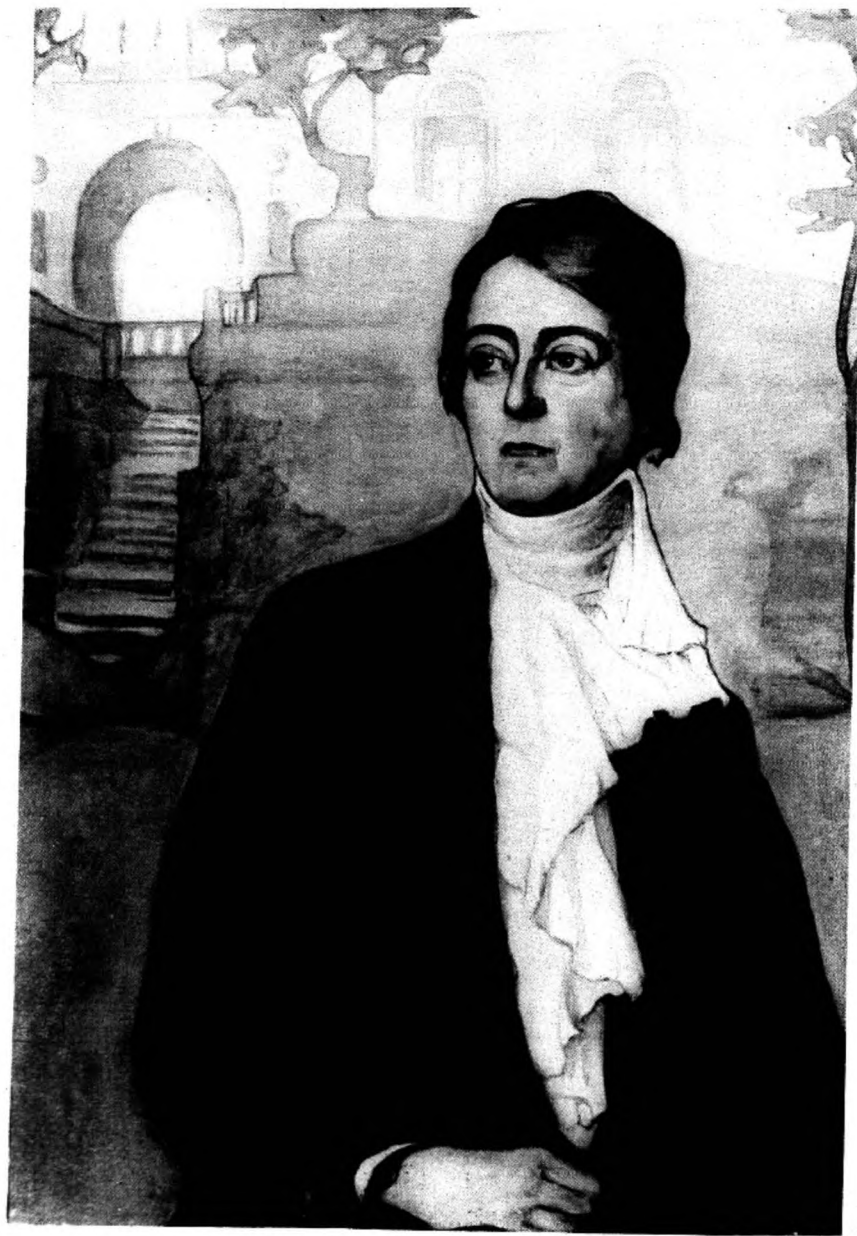
Romaine Brooks was born to American parents in 1874 but spent most of her adult life in France. She died at Nice in December, 1970, just previous to the opening of an exhibition of 30 paintings and 37 drawings at the National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. The exhibition was organized by Adelyn D. Breeskin, Curator

of Contemporary Art, who has, for many years, researched and written about numerous female artists. Ms. Breeskin was acquainted with Romaine for several years and presents, in a valuable and informative catalogue, a candid documentation of the artist's life and her involvement with the homosexual *haut monde* of Europe in the early 20th century.

In fact, it is specifically from this elite society that Romaine chose to select her subjects for portraiture. Indeed, the *Lesbian* portrait was Romaine's deepest interest. Such paintings as *Una, Lady Troubridge*, *Renata Borgatti au Piano* and *Elisabeth de Gramont, Duchesse de Clermont-Tonnerre*, all reproduced here, demonstrate a special feeling for depicting the Lesbian in portrait, leaving little doubt in the viewer's mind as to the sexuality of the sitter. *Peter, A Young English Girl*, painted in 1923-24, reproduced in the catalogue to the exhibition, is also an excellent example of Romaine's unusual ability to paint this difficult combination of femaleness in male



Renata Borgatti au Piano. circa 1920. Oil on canvas. National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of the Artist.



Elisabeth de Gramont, Duchesse de Clermont-Tonnerre. circa 1924. Oil on canvas. Musée du Petit Palais, Paris.

garb.

The portrait of Una Troubridge, the Lesbian companion of Radclyffe Hall, presents Una a bit outrageously, looking nervous and distraught and entirely dressed in masculine apparel. The two dachshunds, a gift from Radclyffe, reflect the couple's real love for dogs and other animals but it is distressing to see Una clothed as she is, as I have been unable to find photographs of her in any but the most acceptable female attire. Ms. Breeskin suggests that the Troubridge portrait is meant to "reveal the lesbian almost in caricature." If this is true, it seems unfortunate that the deeply sensitive humanity revealed in Una Troubridge's biography, *The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall*, should be the personality Romaine chose to use as a point of departure for a painting that has within it a mockery of Lesbianism that cannot be denied. Nevertheless, there is a sense of humor here which is necessary in looking at this particular social milieu honestly and for that reason, the painting, though not particularly illuminating in terms of Lady Troubridge herself, is, nonetheless, informative as a work of Lesbian satire.

The painting of Elisabeth de Gramont, unlike the Troubridge portrait, relies more upon the true individuality of the subject. It presents an intelligence and introspection in the eyes which is in keeping with the talent and education of this woman who was a friend of Natalie Barney and a member of her social set. In the same way, the portrait of the daughter of the Italian tenor, Guiseppe Borgatti, *Renata Borgatti au Piano*, though poorer in terms of stylistic composition, establishes a better understanding of the individual, connecting the figure most primarily with her art as a pianist.

Perhaps not ironically, the best of Romaine's studies of the Lesbian personality is her own 1923 *Self Portrait*. Romaine's childhood was a troubled and lonely one. Her mother was unstable and oppressive; her brother, St. Mar, whom she was forced intermittantly to care for, was insane. In describing Romaine's family life, Ms. Breeskin states: "her mother found that St. Mar was less difficult to manage when Romaine was with him and therefore kept her in his company constantly. As they grew older, the resulting nervous strain from this relationship was intensified and complicated by his sexual preoccupations which became menacing and often obscene.

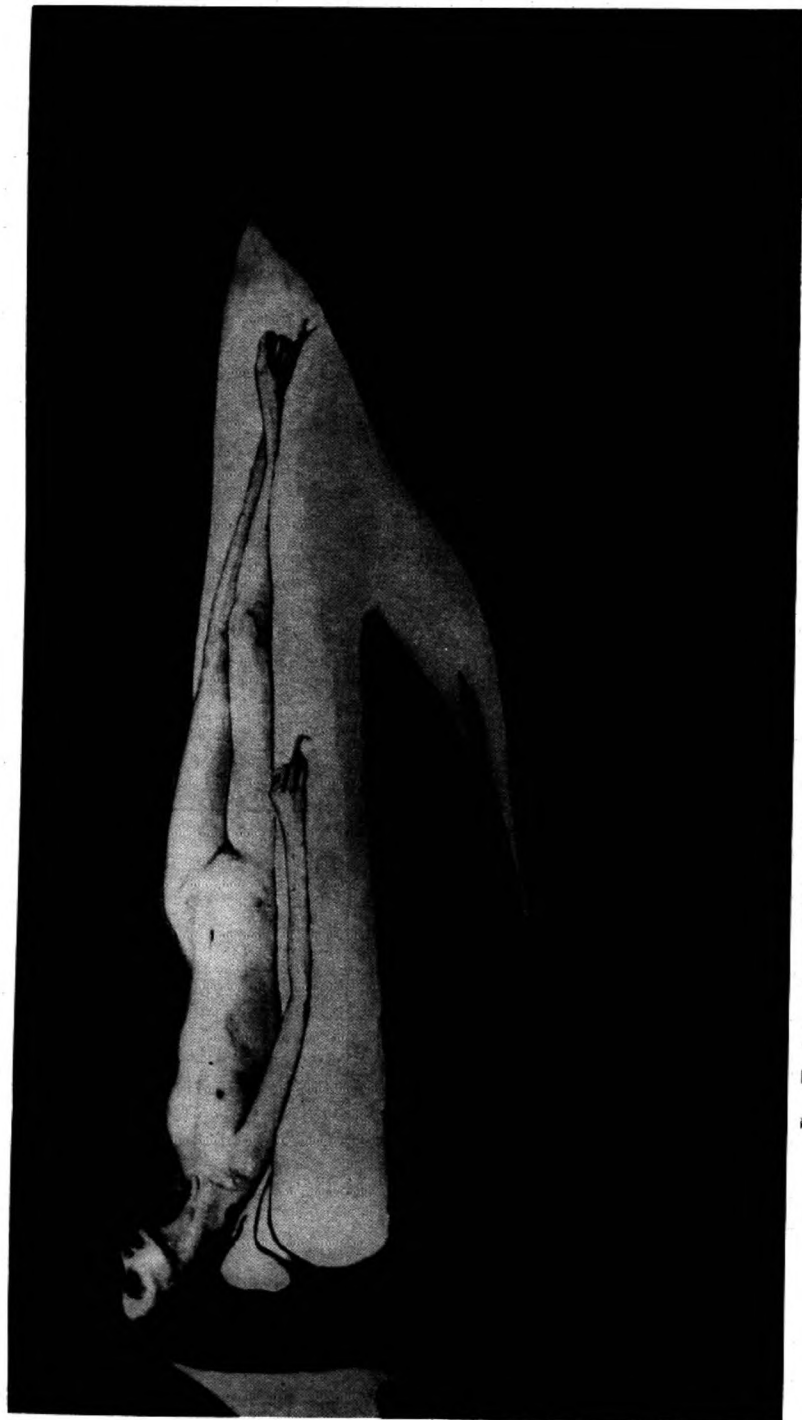
No servant or nurse would stay with him for any length of time . . .

Yet St. Mar's particular madness, awful as it was, seemed mild to Romaine when compared with the more exacting and autocratic madness of their mother. In her bad moods, she would accost Romaine with a hateful look and declare: 'I will break your spirits.' This she never managed to do; nevertheless, Romaine feared her always. She was vindictive and entirely unpredictable. Whenever St. Mar was especially difficult and most obviously demented, the doting mother would become provoked and turn her anger on Romaine who was defenseless against her. Romaine's entire childhood was passed in humoring and appeasing these two unbalanced people and why she was not crushed between them remains a mystery to her even today at the age of ninety-six."

The mixture of indomitable spirit and moody hopelessness that pervade her *Self Portrait* seem directly connected to Ms. Breeskin's account of Romaine's early childhood. The eyes, which reflect so much of the personality in a portrait, are hidden in shadow, adding to the face of the artist a look of enigma and mystery. There is, in addition, a weakness about the mouth which alludes to the feeling of indecision and pain. However, the stern chin, the stiffness and set of her hat, the lack of color and simplicity of clothing, and the wearing of gloves all purport a defiance and removal from the misfortunes of life which are in keeping with her strong will and longevity.

One of the most important people to enter Romaine's artistic career was Ida Rubenstein, a Russian dancer, who performed the title role in the 1911 drama, *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* by the Italian poet, Gabriele d'Annunzio. In the same year, Romaine painted a work entitled *The Masked Archer* in which a nude (Ida) is depicted tied to a stake, about to receive the arrow of an archer whose face is covered with a black mask. The theme is reminiscent of the actual death of St. Sebastian and the painting was probably inspired by the d'Annunzio play in which Rubenstein portrays St. Sebastian as an hermaphrodite.

The meeting of Ida and Romaine is recounted by Julian Phillipe in *Prince of Aesthetes: Count Robert de Montesquiou*: "Miss Brooks, slender as a figure in a Beardsley drawing, fascinated Rubenstein and d'Annunzio. They commissioned her to



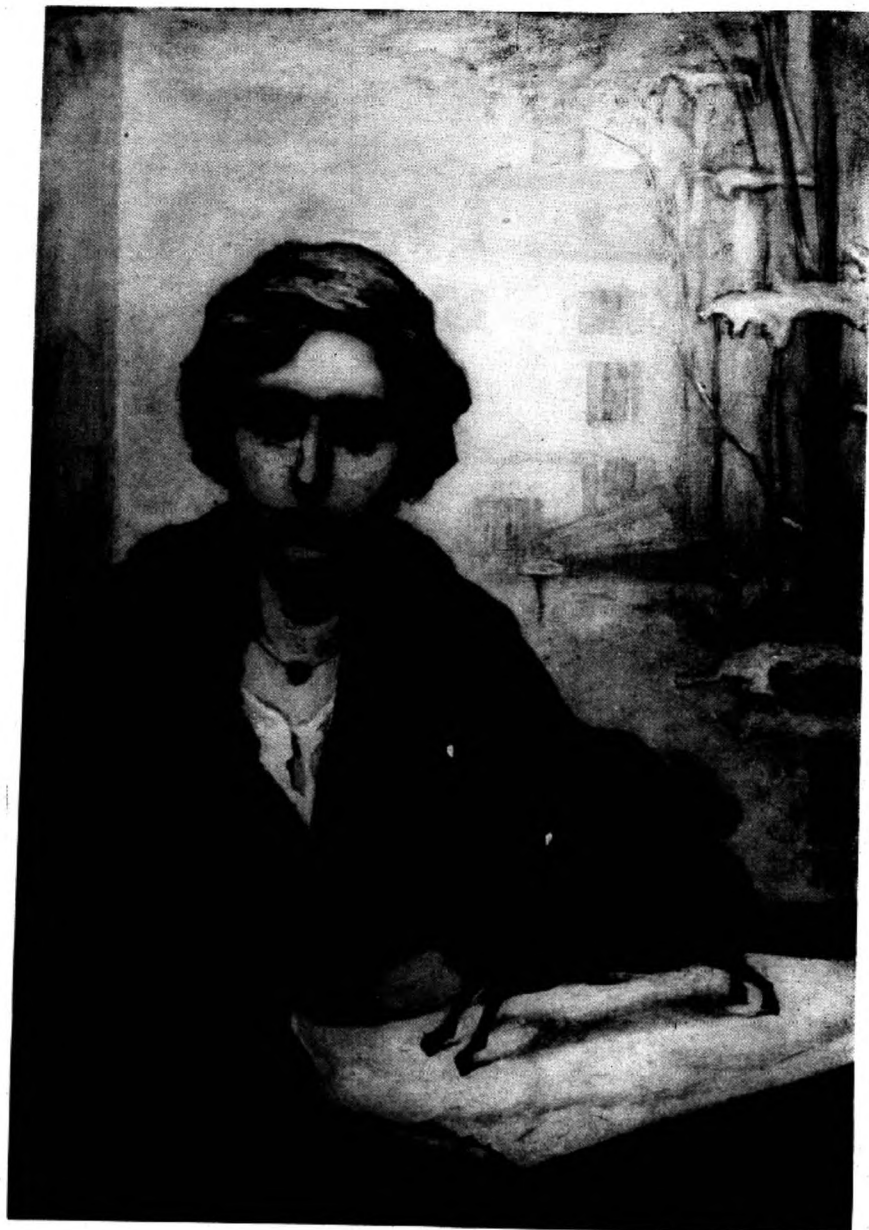
Le Trajet, circa 1911. Oil on canvas. National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of the Artist.

paint their portraits, and for the purpose, she followed the poet to Arachon, only to run away with the dancer [Ida Rubenstein], whom she was painting to look not unlike Holbein's Christ." Romaine had been obsessed, beginning with her early drawings, with an ethereal and death white female form, the epitome of which she found in the figure of Ida Rubenstein. *Le Trajet*, also titled *Femme Morte*, is an idealization, like so many of Romaine's nudes, of the kind of

beauty for which Rubenstein was famous. The bone structure of the woman in this work is infinitely fragile, stabbing the viewer with its reminder of the vulnerability of human mortality. And, in fact, the figure seems to have completely accepted death and succumbed to it without a struggle. The wing upon which the nude is placed floats in the center of the painting, adding to the overall cast of elusiveness and perhaps symbolizing the transcension of death.



Ida Rubenstein. 1917. Oil on canvas. National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of the Artist.



Miss Natalie Barney, *l'Amazone*. 1920. Oil on canvas. Musée du Petit Palais, Paris.

The clothed 1917 portrait of Ida with its background of clouds, air and wind, again reveals the sensitive and wispy figure which Romaine found so compelling. But here she dwells upon Ida's face and brings it to a clarity which had been previously foregone in the nudes. Yet, the dark shadows around the eyes, the parted lips and the glance of the figure away from the viewer continue that cold sensuality with which Romaine had always been intrigued.

It is interesting to note also that Romaine was not the only female artist who believed in Rubenstein's beauty as ideal for art. In *A Legend of Wax*, the sculptor, Catherine Barjansky, describes her meeting with Ida at a party given by Romaine: "Opposite me sat a strange woman, the famous actress and dancer Ida Rubenstein. She had just been playing d'Annunzio's *St. Sebastian* to the music of Debussy, and Paris was talking about her 'too slender form, her unequalled grace, her mysterious life.' During the whole luncheon I gazed at this woman. Her body was quite Egyptian; her costume, created for her by Worth, a combination of black laces, velvet, and bird-of-paradise feathers. Her face was dead white and delicate, her black hair, her long grey eyes, and her red expressive mouth showed an intense inner life. Her hands were slender and as though designed by the Italian Renaissance painter Crivelli. She belonged to art. She was art."

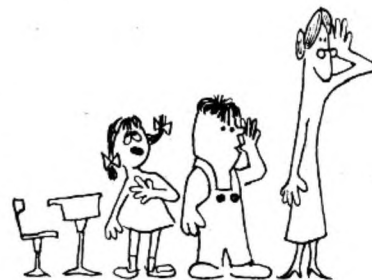
But if Ida Rubenstein was influential in Romaine's early years, there were other friends who took her place in later life. Romaine first met Natalie Barney in 1915 at the writer's salon on the rue Jacob in Paris. She painted her five years later in a portrait entitled *Miss Natalie Barney, l'Amazone*. The title, "*l'Amazone*", was given by Remy de Gourmont to Miss Barney because of her proficiency in horsemanship. (The paperweight horse in the painting illustrates this personal love.) The Barney portrait is the warmest of all the Brooks paintings, eliminating, as it does, most of the harsher contrasts of black and white and placing the figure in a heated interior, shrouded in furs, while a cold, frosty day can be glimpsed beyond. Similarly, the face is painted without the dramatic highlights of many other works; it is softer, calmer and manifests a facial expression of friendliness which foretells of years to come.

Natalie and Romaine lived together from at least 1939 until 1967 and, although

the story of these years is yet unpublished, it is possible to gain a small understanding of this long friendship from a final tribute by Miss Barney written for the Brooks catalogue just before Romaine's death: "To write about Romaine Brooks Goddard is to write about the artist I most admire. [Being] her friend for half a century enables me to realize how completely she is gifted — not only in the art of painting, but in that of friendship — and to find her taste regenerating and an example which was largely followed, even by many of her French friends, from Robert de Montesquiou to the Princess Murat. [I] am ever her admirer and friend."

The portraits of Romaine Brooks document both the personal struggles with which she lived as well as an epoch of literary and artistic history which will remain better alive because of her art. She has captured for us a unique view of her world that would otherwise be lost and which, instead, is now, in these portraits, still existent and perpetuating for each viewer to come, a new or deeper insight.

(Editor's Note: Readers will notice that "Jean Louise" is no more . . . we do not regret her demise, since it is a welcome sign of new freedom to say goodbye to any pseudonym. Sarah Witworth, an artist of some note in her own right, is our art columnist. We hope the readers of *THE LADDER* are enjoying her knowledge of this rich field as much as the staff of *THE LADDER* is, and we look forward to bringing many more columns to you from her. Your comments are welcome and any suggestions you might have in Lesbian or feminist art by women are solicited.)



ONE NATION, UNDER GODDESS

CROSS CURRENTS (continued)

liberation and Lesbian rights, wrote the following in his May 20, 1971, column: "Incompatibility strikes me as absurd grounds for divorce; all couples (sic) are incompatible, being made up of two individuals of different sexes, and the whole point of marriage consists of learning to find areas of compatibility". We wonder if it did not even occur to him to wonder what the obvious logical rejoinder would be . . . ? All couples? Not so, Mr. Harris. There are thousands and thousands of couples who do not have this incompatibility - Lesbians!

BLACK WOMEN ARE WITH IT - MORE THAN WHITES: Louis Harris poll, released on May 20, 1971, showed that 62 percent of black women questioned favored most of the efforts to strengthen and change women's status in society. 20 percent were opposed and 18 percent didn't know. White women, on the other hand, were 39 percent for, 46 percent against and 15 percent didn't know. Also interesting was that 55 percent of single women favored and 34 percent against, with 63 percent of divorced and separated women for and 28 percent against. As would be expected, the younger the woman, the better the answer, and the better the education the better the answer.

BARNARD TO ADD WOMEN'S STUDIES: NEW YORK TIMES, May 23, 1971. Barnard College will begin a women's center in September to administer women's studies and to establish new disciplines specifically for women. Ms. Martha E. Peterson, President of Barnard, commented that Barnard was "better able to establish the center because a lot of women had made some noise". **START RAISING HELL!**

THE REVOLUTION IN EIRE: WASHINGTON STAR, May 23, 1971. Publically challenging the Irish Roman Catholic ban on contraceptives, women's liberationists threw bags full of contraceptives to waiting supporters in Dublin's railway station on May 22. 43 women journeyed to Belfast and were fitted with contraceptive devices. Over 200 women waited to greet them on their return. Custom's officials were nicely embarrassed, and when a railway official came too close to the angry and jubilant crowd, he got punched in the nose for his daring.

ART FORMS - INDIVIDUAL GROUPS. We cannot begin to cover the

many announcements we receive of women in various art forms, simply because so many are understandably trying to create a new culture. We do want to continue getting these announcements and clippings. Some of them are getting wide and good coverage. **WOMEN'S DANCE PROJECT** in New York City was reviewed in the May 23, 1971, NEW YORK TIMES. This is a group of eight feminists who dance and present street theatre (a bit refined) for mass group consciousness raising.

AUTO MECHANICS - WHY NOT? May 24, 1971. Elizabeth Duncan Koontz, Director of the Women's Bureau of the Labor Department, charged that the government must help get women out of their kitchens and into businesses, even auto mechanics. Ms. Koontz is a teacher and former head of the National Education Association. While commending the present administration for doing more than any prior one, she chided it strongly for not beginning to do enough.

JILL JOHNSTON AGAIN IN "JOHNSTON PRESERVED". NEW YORK MAGAZINE, May 24, 1971. A review of **MARMA LADE ME**, by Jill Johnston, done by Rosalind Constable is more a recreation of Jill's life **OUTSIDE** her book and her column, but it's a good biographical look at a woman whose life style might not always appeal to you but who deserves these lines "Jill Johnston is regarded as a natural force to be feared, coaxed, contained, jostled with, enjoyed, never ignored". If we could get that description applied to each and every woman on earth it would greatly improve life, but I doubt it happens. (Jill again on the subject at hand: "The Making of a Lesbian Chauvinist" in **VILLAGE VOICE**, June 17, 1971. Not one of her best, but an interesting kaleidoscope in her own particular style.)

SEXISM IN EDUCATION: May 30, 1971. The Newman Task Force on Higher Education conducted by Stanford University reports widespread sexism in all educational systems and further comments it is greatly increasing and not decreasing. Educational discrimination against women is described as "overt, accepted and increasing". The report concludes that there must be a strong affirmative effort to recruit women for graduate schools, higher faculty and administrative positions and boards of trustees.

NEW JOBS OPENING UP. Again we cannot cover all the clippings we get on

women invading previously male territory, but we do want to see them all. This time we have a woman in Miami who has been made a sector sergeant in the uniformed division. This is indeed unusual, since it means she will be in a patrol car and will have all the duties that male officers normally have. A male patrolman described Ms. Mickle Carter as a "hard-nosed cop". She has been on the force 9 years. Brown University has appointed a woman to be Dean of Academic Affairs - a first to this high post. 20 girls in Missoula, Montana, have become U.S. Forest Service Fire Patrols. Dr. Helen Smits of Philadelphia is the Chief Resident in medicine at the University of Philadelphia. Gaylene Snow of Burbank, California began training on June 16, 1971, to become a Southern Pacific Railroad brakewoman. A WAF at Chanute AFB in Illinois joins the maintenance field. And 13-year-old Kendra Samuelson is batting .500 this season in Little League Games in Minneapolis. Kendra also takes piano and clarinet and says "they don't excite me much, and I'll bet they didn't excite Babe Ruth or Harmon Killebrew either".

AIR ACE WORKING ON RECORDS: June 1, 1971. British air ace Sheila Scott took off on a 34,000 mile attempt to break a series of world records. She is acting as guinea pig, actually, for the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. She will travel around the world one and a half times in all, in all kinds of climates.

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT CALIFORNIA? **EBB TIDE**, June 2, 1971. I don't know what **EBB TIDE** is, but it's obviously a local type California newspaper of tabloid size. In a short article on the first known references to California, the paper tells us that in the 15th-century Spanish novel, **LAS SERGAS DE ESPLANDIAN**, by Ordonez de Montalvo, California is described as a "distant island, on the right hand of the Indies near the garden of Eden". It was allegedly populated by a race of black Amazons ruled by an omnipotent Queen Calafia.

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM MAY RUN FOR PRESIDENT: WASHINGTON POST, June 3, 1971. Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.), talking at a reception, commented she might run for President as a "catalyst". She added she had been approached by women in 10 states and already had some funds.

THE BULLETIN, June 5, 1971. This is an Australian general magazine (apparently) and this issue contains an article "The

Humanity of Women" which (as might be expected) is written by a man and attempts to explain women's liberation. It is a very poorly done effort, but the mere fact that there is even notice in Australia of the movement is encouraging.

BORN FREE BUT NOT LIBERATED. **SATURDAY REVIEW**, June 5, 1971. This is the title of a collective review of several of the new women's liberation anthologies and individual volumes. More interesting than the review, the reviewer Glendy Culligan, a literature teacher and former book review editor for **WASHINGTON POST**, and her own dawning realization of where it's at and where she hasn't been - until someone had her review these books.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MAY BE IN HOT WATER: June 6, 1971. Cheryl Diane Clark, a research associate who is suing the University of Michigan on sex discrimination and equal pay charges lost her first step in the battle, when the University refused to voluntarily make amends. Needless to say, that's not the end of it.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK AND A VERY GOOD CHANCE TO GET IT IF YOU WILL GO TO COURT. THERE ARE LAWYERS WAITING EAGERLY TO GET INTO THIS PARTICULAR ARENA. Many newspapers and magazines are mentioning that the equal pay amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 is really working. Proof lies in these figures: over \$30 million has been paid in the last 7 years to women, about 79,000 of them who have raised hell to get it. But more interesting is the fact that ONE THIRD of this money, or \$10 million was awarded by the courts in this last fiscal year.

PAINFUL BATTLE IN THE COURTS - MS. BERNICE GERA OF JACKSON HEIGHTS. We have been reporting on Ms. Gera now for months and months. She is qualified to be a major league umpire and that is what she wants to be. But the whole world seems determined to keep her out. On June 10, 1971, she lost one minor court battle; however, her appeal is to be heard in September, and we hope to keep up with the story. She has to win. There is no other way.

726 YEARS FROM NOW. **WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS**, June 10, 1971. Since women now hold 1.6 percent of the top federal jobs compared to 1.4 percent in 1968, in 726 years they will hold HALF the

top jobs. Fancy!

UNEVEN EVENTS. In Bangui Central Africa on Mothers Day the women held in jail were all released. On the same day all males convicted of murdering their wives were executed. On the other hand, on June 10, 1971, at the Trans World Airlines press luncheon an unnamed woman reporter was barred from the "swank" New York Union League Club dining room and wound up eating in a separate room with an apologetic TWA public relations MAN. And in Paris, France, on Mothers Day women marched with picket signs.

MISCELLANY: In Cleveland in June, a black 17-year-old high school graduate, Cheryl White, who will be entering Bowling Green next fall to become a math teacher, became the first black woman jockey, racing on a commercial track. On June 8, 1971, in Washington, D.C., a Ms. Smith was tried and convicted of soliciting for prostitution. After the verdict was in, it was discovered that the wrong Ms. Smith was being tried. Needless to say, the arresting officer had "identified" the woman in the course of the trial. BOTH women were freed. In England in June, psychologist Nicolette Milnes-Walker began a solitary 3500 mile voyage in her sloop, "Aziz". She is going from Dale, Wales, to Newport, Rhode Island, and plans to make the journey in about 6 weeks. We'll tell you if she makes it. Articles on rape abound. The NEW YORK TIMES, June 15, 1971, has an excellent statistical survey on rape by Angela Taylor on page 52 called "The Rape Victim: Is She Also the Unintended Victim of the Law". No, we would say to that, the intended victim.

MAKE WAR NOT LOVE: Sydney, Australia. June 13, 1971. This is the slogan on the door at 67 Glebe Point, the local Sydney Women's Liberation Center quarters. Australian women are particularly angry with the cause because their country is especially backwards in terms of women's rights, and male chauvinism is the rule of the day.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS GIVEN KISS OF DEATH: June 23, 1971. The House Judiciary Committee, presided over by national enemy Rep. Emanuel Celler, added a protective amendment to women's rights, thus killing it completely unless it can be forcibly brought to the floor of the house (as it was last year), which would possibly insure its passage. Remember this, proof of male hatred of women, and desire to maintain

them as slaves and chattel is clearly evidenced by the legal lack of rights. You should think about this every day; every minute.

GAY WOMEN'S WEST COAST CONFERENCE: June 25, 26 and 27, 1971. The Gay Women's Service Center, Lesbian Feminists and L.A. Daughters of Bilitis, sponsored this 3-day meeting in Los Angeles, to coincide with the Christopher Street 2nd anniversary of the Gay Liberation Movement. Apparently the west coast women are more ardently organized away from the male homosexual movement, which is a blessing. The conference advertised itself as open, to women only, including straight women, and except for participation in the June 27 version of the "march" for gay liberation in general, stuck to the basic topics of concern for women. Friday evening the women met and registered at the conference, hearing a welcoming address by Jeanne Cordova of L.A. DOB. This was followed by a highly controversial movie, "Holding", produced by Lesbians from a grant made by the Glide Foundation in San Francisco. Most of the women reporting to THE LADDER found the movie ridiculous (the kindest word used). Saturday morning featured a panel of speakers: Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, and Sally Gearhart of Gay Liberation Front of San Francisco with Nancy Kelly of Los Angeles as moderator. Topics of interest to women's liberation and Lesbians in particular were discussed. The most intense topic was debate over whether or not to participate in the Christopher Street march on Sunday. All three of the women reporting to TL commented that most of the women present wanted nothing whatever to do with the male march. One reporter indicates the conference was split into the usual "young idealistic anarchists" and the "older more experienced group that realized that compromises must be made". An alarming note was sounded in that some of the women present (having no doubt had their feathers singed by straight women in women's liberation) felt that there must be a separate Lesbian movement having nothing to do with male homosexuals (true) and nothing in common with women's liberation (disastrous for both women's liberation and for, ipso facto, all Lesbians). Saturday afternoon was given over to workshops and, lo and behold, the most popular one was on the topic "Butch and Femme" which THE LADDER thought was old hat enough to bury once and for all time in the June/July,

1971, issue. An "all women's dance" was held on Saturday night, and on Sunday those women who wished to participate joined the Christopher Street West parade. Something less than one half the women attended this latter event. The conference drew about 300 women in all.

THE MEDIA SAYS 5000, MARCHERS SAY 10,000: New York City, June 27, 1971. Culminating a weekend of activities, between 5 and 10 thousand male homosexuals and Lesbians and a smattering of women's liberation supporters marched from Sheridan Square in the Village to Sheep Meadow in Central Park. The occasion was the second anniversary of the Christopher Street events which were the birth pangs of the Gay Liberation movement. Other events of the weekend included meetings and dances given by various gay men's and women's groups, women's liberation groups, etc. Jill Johnston and Kate Millett were present and both male homosexuals and Lesbians came from as far away as Austin, Texas and Western Canada. Fully a third of the demonstrators were women, with about a third again of these women's liberation (and not specifically Lesbian) supporters. We note that most of the dances were sexually segregated, though, for the ties that bind male homosexuals to Lesbians are thin these days - very thin. It was, according to on the spot reporters, very peaceful, pleasant, and without any flak from onlookers, police or anyone else. Even the "hard hat" watchers gave the marchers the "V" sign. The NEW YORK TIMES event provided pleasant coverage, though their estimate of 5,000 marchers is the lowest cited.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ACTIVELY SEEKING WOMEN PASTORS: NEW YORK TIMES, June 28, 1971. The two-million member United Church of Christ announced a formal decision to open every professional level of the church to women at once. There are 9,000 ordained ministers in this denomination and only 242 of these are women. Only 37 of these are pastors of local congregations. Much of the formal announcement concerned the very bad position of women in the church in all areas including financial.

ZAPPING BILLY GRAHAM: CHICAGO, June, 1971, Special to THE LADDER: Militant feminist Winifred Gandy of Chicago picketed Billy Graham in Chicago and passed out leaflets reading: "I'd rather go to hell than to Billy Graham's heaven where

men wear crowns and women polish them!" The picketing was reported in the CHICAGO SUN TIMES but didn't get picked up on wire services apparently.

MCCALL'S MAGAZINE: June, 1971. Betty Friedan has a column in this magazine. It is about as bad as you would expect it to be (first one anyway), and right off she is into "homosexuals", though as it happens she isn't talking about "homosexuals" at all but about Lesbians. She has decided that "I don't know if homosexuality (sic) is any sicker than the PLAYBOY type of heterosexuality, but it isn't the point of this movement". Ah, Betty, as more and more women are discovering, it is a major part of THIS movement. Most of all we would like to know what kind of mind, out of all the possible insults one could devise, would come up with this least apt of all comparisons. Nothing whatever about the lewd and degrading view of women in PLAYBOY or any magazine like it has ANYTHING to do with Lesbians or Lesbian love.

INTRODUCING THE LESBIAN EXPERIENCE: COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE, June, 1971. Prefaced with a pornographic and exploitive picture with a caption "Posed by Professional Models. Pillow Cases from Plummer-McCutcheon", I almost skipped this one, but many a reader sent it to me intact, and admittedly, despite the picture, it is really a good article for a change. We would take issue with some of it; probably every Lesbian in the world would take issue with some part of it, but the anonymous author very carefully explains that the whole article is her personal view and nothing more. Mostly it's good enough to even give to a parent where you've neglected the basic duty of announcing your Lesbianism as rapidly as possible.

STREET THEATRE - TO THE PEOPLE, TELL THEM ALL ABOUT IT. SPECIAL TO THE LADDER, July, 1971. Possibly the most dynamic movement in theatre today is the emergence of guerrilla theatre from Women's Liberation. The *It's All Right To Be Woman Theatre* from New York exemplifies this trend in its very real drama and its enthusiastic interpretations of life situations. Eleven women participate in the group and their affection for each other is an obvious asset to their acting. Their work is done collectively with all of them participating as actresses, writers, directors and musicians. Most of their presentation consists of improvisations on a group or audience member's fantasy, experience or

dream. They use no costumes and few props, but using only their bodies become anything from a haunted house to a woman in mental anguish. They sing, chant, play various musical instruments, present crankies (picture stories like a non-electric television), smile a lot and bring pain and joy to their audiences. Some of their stories include one about a woman's relationship to her father and to authority, a story of two women falling in love and their rejection by society, a story of a woman who spent years looking for "my prince" only to find she did not need one. These women who are so ready to open themselves to us are a proud outgrowth of Women's Liberation and a reflection of what women can accomplish together. For information on performances, workshops and bookings you can contact: c/o Davis, 318 W. 101 St. No. 2, New York, N.Y. 10025.

MORE ON EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT: July, 1971. Various women's organizations have begun an intensive lobbying campaign that had previously been given up on the ERA for this year with the "kiss of death" announced earlier this issue. This drive is to bring the amendment to the floor for a vote where it is certain to pass.

PSYCHOLOGIST RECOMMENDS WOMEN AVOID MALE PSYCHIATRISTS. July 5, 1971. Dr. Phyllis Chesler, Assistant Professor at Richmond College, City University of New York, recommends women avoid male therapists because they tend to falsely attribute women's difficulties to such fallacies as "male envy" and unresolved "electra complexes". Dr. Chesler goes on to say that most women have "symptoms" because they are trained to be passive and dependent in a world that values activity and strength.

NOW HEAR THIS! Indianapolis, July 6, 1971. A woman was changing her clothing in the compartment of a women's restroom in the Indianapolis bus station. A man attacked another woman nearby. The (now naked) first woman attacked the man, unable to drive him away, she ran through the bus station to get police. She then returned to the restroom and succeeded in driving the man away. Police arrested the man who was armed with a knife. The unidentified heroine returned to the private compartment and resumed dressing.

EVERYWOMAN: Issue 21, July 9, 1971. This is a special issue of EVERYWOMAN, consistently the finest women's liberation newspaper being published. This

issue is an all-Lesbian issue, and while some of the contents seem incredibly naive to someone who's been in this movement forever, it's a fine, fine effort. If you haven't wisely taken a look at EVERYWOMAN, this is the time to do so. A single issue (outside of L.A.) is 50 cents. Write for this at EVERYWOMAN, 1043B Washington Blvd., Venice, California 90291. Subscriptions are \$6.

WILL PRAYER HELP THE SENATE? July 9, 1971. We aren't sure it will, but on this day the first woman in history acted as chaplain for the Senate, delivering the opening prayer.

PUTTING YOUR POWER WHERE IT CAN HELP: Washington, D.C., July 10, 1971 and on. Over 200 women met in Washington for the purpose of inaugurating a National Women's Political Caucus. Its sole aim is to put more women into positions of power — real political power. Betty Friedan, Fanny Lou Hamer, Rep. Bella Abzug, Gloria Steinem and others laid the groundwork for setting up an organization with the ability to affect the 1972 elections. State-wide caucuses began on August 26, the 50th anniversary of the vote women have never used to advance themselves. There is to be a full-scale National Women's Political Caucus held in the early part of 1972.

AUSTRIA EASES LAWS ON HOMOSEXUALITY BUT RETAINS LAWS ON ABORTION: July 11, 1971. Homosexual relations between consenting adults are no longer a crime in Austria. However, strong opposition from the Roman Catholic Church has kept the legislature from easing abortion laws. It is estimated that 120,000 illegal abortions are performed annually in Austria, or one for each two babies born.

CIVIL SERVICE OKAYED GUNS FOR WOMEN: July 14, 1971. The Civil Service Commission has ruled that government agencies may not deny jobs requiring the carrying of arms to women. While not outstandingly fond of guns it would seem as or more reasonable in today's world that women be allowed them than men.

AN ENEMY TO WATCH: LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD: July 14, 1971. Meeting in Milwaukee, the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church voted 694 to 194 against ordination of women, using the most demeaning anti-woman language from Paul and Timothy in the New Testament.

PUTTING YOUR FOOT THROUGH

THE TV SCREEN? WASHINGTON POST, July 18, 1971. Writer Marilyn Goldstein covers the recent "women's liberation" ads on TV. She says it all, including pats for those who are treating women equally, but we still hope you aren't putting your foot through the screen. Watch only the animal food ads. They aren't sexist usually.

HOUSEHOLD WORKERS UNITE FOR BETTER TREATMENT. New York, July 19, 1971. The National Association of Household Workers (primarily women of course) met in New York City to fight for legislation to protect the estimated 2-3 million household workers in this country. It's about time.

TRISTATE WOMEN SEEK WOMEN CANDIDATES: July 20, 1971. Women from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut have formed a mass movement to recruit women from these areas to run for political office. This is an offshoot of the July 10 Washington, D.C., national meeting which resulted in the forming of the Women's National Political Caucus. At press time, activity in this area is primarily confined to the coastal regions, hoping for more from other areas.

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY: July, 1971. This issue is devoted to "roles" in society, and while it says nothing new it says it in an attractive enough form to warrant reading. Women get screwed seems to be the primary message.

SPOKESWOMAN: July, 1971. As of now, SPOKESWOMAN, the women's liberation reporting newsletter out of Chicago is an independent publication owned and operated by women only. Previously some had complained because it had its birth under the auspices of the Urban Research Corporation. Actually, SPOKESWOMAN is the best source of instant national news about women in the country, and we recommend it highly and have always done so. It is available at \$7 per year to individuals, and you write to 5464 S. Shore Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60615. A special note here, for those of you tired unto death of the "white middle-class female" approach to women's liberation. Susan Davis, editor of SPOKESWOMAN, either has no hangups or hides them well. The newsletter has consistently and fairly covered all women with no regard to race, social status or sexual orientation. That's no news for an underground rag, but for this paper, with an uptight audience for the most part, it's good and brave.

SEPARATISM COULD PROVE FATAL TO THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT. On June 12 in New York City a planning meeting was held for a projected July National Abortion Conference. About one quarter of the women in attendance were Lesbians. We went both to participate in the planning of the actual abortion conference and with hopes of eliciting a vote of confidence from these straight sisters at whose sides we have been laboring for goals affecting them more directly than ourselves.

Our aim was to include in the plans for the conference a sub-concern. We wanted under the major aim, abortion, to include with the already specified statements of opposition to forced sterilization and restrictive contraceptive laws a call for freedom of sexual preference. Since the conference will deal most broadly with women's control over their own bodies this was an appropriate inclusion. Symbolically we Lesbians were simply seeking some visible support in a national women's action for our legitimate and related struggle. Speakers from New Haven Women's Liberation, New York and New Haven Radical Lesbians, Boston Gay Women's Liberation, the New York Women's Coalition, Gay Women's Liberation Front and others urged formal adoption of this point. The planning meeting rejected our attempts in a vote.

At that point a New York Radical Lesbian took over the microphone and explained that we Lesbians could not accept such an obvious failure to even minimally demonstrate support for us and announced that we felt we had to leave the conference. All the Lesbians left in protest except those Lesbians affiliated with the Socialist Workers Party. (SWP was obviously angling for control of the whole conference and is notorious for the anti-gay policy which it held until very recently when it realized the power of gays and suddenly blossomed with a multitude of gay party members).

The Lesbians were upset at losing the opportunity to work both with and through the National Abortion Conference and caucused outside the main hall. At the persuasion of some SWP Lesbians and some concerned straight sisters we determined that the vote-down might have been due to some confusion about our goals. We made two specific proposals. One, a sentence to be included in the call letter, and two, a proposal that all literature going out about the conference specify support for freedom

of sexual preference along with the other sub-goals. We rejoined the meeting, brought our caucus proposals to the floor as motions, sat through much tactical maneuvering to obscure the issue and were, finally, again voted down.

We Lesbians were crushed. We had not in our second attempt persuaded many to our side, despite the new clarity of our goals. The significance of our defeat is large. The National Abortion Conference would have been the first national women's action to actively support us and to show concern over restrictive sex laws. The women's movement as a whole obviously is not ready to stand next to the Lesbians in it as sisters. Most tragic, a greater chasm has opened between Lesbians and straight sisters than existed before Lesbians had invested so

much energy in reaching out to close it. The bridge has become harder to build.

(Editor's Note: This last report was provided to us by a long-time LADDER writer and supporter, who is a member of one of the groups named. We felt it is too important to edit down to a paragraph as we often have to do for reasons of space. We strongly feel that the women's liberation movement seriously endangers its chances for success in the foreseeable future when it fails to take into account the fairly clearly demonstrated fact that fully one-fourth of its members are Lesbians. Let's please not wait another 100 years to do what must be done. The time is now.)

Readers Respond

Dear Gene Damon:

I wish that I were the one with eloquent words now to be able to tell you what THE LADDER means to people like me. Lesbians have been, in the past, the most secretive people on earth. I spent my entire teenage years thinking I was completely alone in my feelings. The relationships that I had involved other girls who were ashamed of their feelings and made me feel that way too. College was no better. Since I thought I had a choice, I decided to try the straight world, never really contemplating the possible complications or responsibilities. It didn't take very long to realize that there was no choice at all, but children were around by then and my husband is the kind of man that is good with them. Until I began reading THE LADDER, I had never read how other women feel or think about the same issues that interested or puzzled me. It was a breakthrough from the isolation that I have always felt. Congratulations

on the quality of the magazine too. Just don't let anything happen to it!

J.N.

New York (State)

Dear Gene,

I read in a recent AIN'T I A WOMAN an article called "Macho and Monogamy" . . . an anonymous article apparently reprinted from yet another paper. In it, the woman writing was defending strength and courage and aggressiveness on the part of women (specifically Lesbians) and also defending monogamy! I mean seriously defending it as if it were something subversive . . . rare, and very questionable from a moral standpoint. I find this incredible and also irritating. Don't you?

S.W.W.

Chicago

(Editor's Note: No, but I find your

reaction odd. The young have been rediscovering basic truths since time began and bringing them home proudly and displaying them. I read the article you refer to, also, and it's one of the best that has ever appeared in AIN'T I A WOMAN and I was pleased to see someone questioning the holy perfection of commune life and positively stating her own preference for a monogamous love relationship. You are taking it for granted . . . the young are questioning it. It's marvelous they end up with the right ideas . . . not irritating.)

Dear Sister:

More rock for women! Alice Stuart is a vocalist and guitar player who has put an album out called *Full Time Woman*. (Fantasy 8403) She wrote all the songs and does them beautifully. *Rolling Stone* magazine gave her one of the most enthusiastic reviews I've ever read in their columns. Here are some of her lyrics.

From "Just Today": "You can be my lover/ and you are my friend,/ you don't need to tell me,/ I don't care where you've been./ No, baby, I don't want to own you,/ but I love you more than just today." From "Natural Woman": "Hey, hey people/ think I've found out how to get it on./ Just let your style be known,/ don't hold nothin' back,/ let it all come out,/ you know I'll get it yet,/ cause I'm a woman!"

L.F.

New York

Dear Gene,

I am enclosing a few odds and ends which you may be able to use in THE LADDER. We want to keep your readers aware of our existence here. *(Editor's Note: a group of Lesbians in Australia.)*

CAMP INK is published by Camp, Inc. in Sydney — went to their first meeting on the 6th (of February, 1971) but they haven't much to offer the Lesbian. Is it because she is "only a woman"? Camp, Inc. has completely dismissed women's liberation — in Sydney at any rate — as a bunch of stupid women. So if they're against women's rights, equality, freedom, etc., what can they offer any thinking Lesbian? I got quite annoyed — and said so!

I enjoy the new depth of THE

LADDER, or should I say the "extra rungs".

Marion G. Norman
Australia

(Editor's Note: We are especially grateful for women's liberation and Lesbian rights clippings from other countries. These are likely to be much more inclusive and more accurate than watered down news carried by wire service to our own media.)

Dear Gene Damon:

There seems to be a recurring theme in the "Readers Respond" column of TL, and in the women's liberation literature generally: that of the married woman with family who claims that she had "no choice", and who wants her "lucky" Lesbian sisters to pity her. The latest in this series is the letter from D.W. from "a small midwestern town" in the August/September 1971 issue. At present I am occupied virtually full-time in informal counseling of women whose Lesbianism was "flushed out" by women's liberation, and I certainly understand and appreciate the difficulty of their situation. However I maintain that most of these women would do the same thing again, if they could turn back the clock. And they would do so because basically they want the social acceptance and security that comes with conventional marriage and motherhood.

D.W. says "Considering the religious upbringing most women over 30 years of age today had . . .". Dear D.W. I am 49, and my friend is 55. Most of our friends are over 30, and many are 50ish. We all had very similar upbringings. My friend grew up in a "small midwestern town", much like your own, I am sure. Yet she never married, and neither did many of our other friends in our age group.

Our choice frequently involved social ostracism, criticism and the withholding of the usual "rewards" given to obedient children. But we were willing to take the consequences, because we found it more important to be true to ourselves than to be "one of the crowd".

Life involves choices — no one can have it both ways. We do not quarrel with those sisters who opted for social acceptance — marriage and children. But there WAS a choice — obviously — because we made it. And so could they have, if they had really wanted to. I personally find it difficult to

accept their protestations-after-the-fact. And I find it undignified to bewail one's choice — be it for the straight OR the gay life.

Julie Lee
New Jersey

Dear Gene:

I would like to add Carole King to the list of must-listen-to albums or performers. Ms. King writes the songs, sings them, and, in many cases, provides the basic back-

ground on the keyboards. The songs are an excellent combination of rock/soul/folk, and more than a touch of sensitivity.

Carole King has been writing songs for quite some time (You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman is one of hers), but only recently has she begun singing them herself on albums. TAPESTRY, her latest album, has been the best-selling album in San Francisco for several months. She records on A&M records.

N.M.
Berkeley



THE LADDER IS BEING INDEXED

All of its completed fifteen years of life will be recorded in a detailed index to make the many facets of its life fully available. We have a competent indexing force working on this now, but we need at least one and probably two women who are excellent typists to volunteer to do the final typing before printing. Complete detailed instructions will be provided by the professional indexer who is heading this project. Please contact Gene Damon right away if you would be able to help with this work.

THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE a bibliography

By Gene Damon and Lee Stuart

AN ALPHABETICAL LISTING BY AUTHOR OF ALL KNOWN BOOKS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, IN THE GENERAL FIELD OF LITERATURE, CONCERNED WITH LESBIANISM, OR HAVING LESBIAN CHARACTERS.

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