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 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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COVER: Winslow Homer: A Summer Night (Detail). See: Journeys in Art.

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"Gumdrop Flowers and Marilyn" photo by June M. Smith (page 29)

THIRD CLASS MAIL IS NOT FORWARDABLE.

When moving send us your old address and ZIP as well as new address and ZIP.
Thank you for asking

Response to our two last requests for help has been enormous. Many women who felt they could not supply any of the things asked for have asked how they might help with THE LADDER.

Through the good help of a Boston D.O.B. woman and a Denver woman active in women's liberation there, we have a mailing or handout sheet which describes us very well. This is suitable for giving out at meetings or for posting on bulletin boards. We would like volunteers who live near colleges and universities or women's liberation groups to post this for us on the bulletin board. This can be done, of course, in the case of institutions, without any permission whatever; simply stick the things up. Libraries and student unions of all schools have bulletin boards with ready access to the public. If you could do this for us, write to us and tell us how many you can use. There are other places where this could be handed out as a handbill, and we leave this to your fertile imaginations.

We are in need of good short fiction. Very bluntly, we do not like to run less than top quality fiction, and until we get a substantial supply of usable short stories we won't be able to run many. We know there are writers out there, but getting to them is something else again. If you know anyone who writes who isn't aware of us . . . make us all happy and put us in touch. We realize that some women might be willing to write but not under their own names; this is no problem, pseudonyms are welcome. We need to know who you are, but no one else does.

Recently we have been told by some women that due to personal situations, they are unable to keep their copies of THE LADDER. Some have said they have no one to give THE LADDER to and they do not like to discard it. Please DO NOT discard your copies . . . If you have a situation which precludes your keeping your copies, send them back to us with a short note saying that you want to donate them for sample issues and the like. This magazine is very expensive to produce, and this would be a blessing to us. We would prefer you keep your copies, but if the choice is the wastebasket and us . . . send it back and let us use it in the common fight for our rights.

One important comment. If all of you could share with the LADDER women the mail we receive day in and day out, expressing delight and joy on finding us from women who have felt isolated from the world and hopelessly so, you would easily understand our determination to continue publishing THE LADDER. Our only reward is knowing that for each issue safely published, we will reach a few women who will find in our pages their hope for future freedom and happiness, or even more altruistically, their hope for the future lives of women like themselves who, in a better world, not have to suffer their pains.

Give us your ideas. That helps us too. Tell us what pleases and does not please you. We are together, THE LADDER lives and progresses, or dies, because of you, and us.

(After this Editorial was written and typed, see also received help from a woman in the Washington, D.C. area, and another in far away Nova Scotia in preparing material to use in publicizing and promoting THE LADDER. In every case the work and the cost was absorbed by the helpers. We are properly grateful.)

Editorial By GENE DAMON

The Undefeatable Force Revisited

By RITA LAPORTE

A year has elapsed since I wrote a short editorial for the August/September 1970 issue of THE LADDER, the issue that inaugurated THE LADDER's transition from a Lesbian rights to an all-women's rights magazine. In rereading that editorial I was struck by my statement that men's 'divide-and-conquer' tactics are on the way out. I have a pollyanna way of escaping on the wings of optimism despite daily evidence that would lead any realistic, rational mind to expect an early end to human life. Whatever has happened to men's 'divide-and-conquer' tactics, what I have picked up in a year of intensive reading of women's liberation literature is that women themselves have taken over the division. Hundreds of small groups proclaim that only they have the answer and all the rest of us women must do as they say or be cast out in disgrace. But, true to my unquenchable idealism, I am not discouraged. I have simply altered my timetable to allow room for this current phase of getting it all out in the open.

I will set down what I consider to be some of the divide ideas expressed in the women's liberation literature of the past few years. One of the most harmful, in my opinion, is that I call political theology, i.e., the idea that society must first undergo some kind of Marxist Revolution, led by men enamored of power and an outdated European male theology, before we women can hope for first class citizenship. There are today Lesbian groups who actually believe that totalitarian dictatorships (China, Cuba, the USSR) welcome Lesbians and homosexuals. As long as these Lesbians live on dreamy faith rather than fact, there is no sense in attempting to disillusion them. While I deplore the fact that so many women are hoodwinked into leftist politics first, women's rights and liberation second, I am encouraged that more and more women are leaving such male dominated groups or skipping them altogether. For my own peace of mind I do not consider these Politicos — these women still under the spell of leftist male — as feminists of any kind.

This raises the question of what is a feminist, what is a women's liberationist. There seems to be no consensus here and I do not expect one in the near future, but I have my own definition: a woman who knows that female oppression is universal

and fundamental and that none of the myriad other oppressions and exploitations will be effectively eliminated until women liberate themselves and each other. Every human being alive today was born of a slave and learned at an alarmingly early age that she was an inferior creature or that he was a superior being. It is the fact that one learns this so early that has enabled humanity to blind itself to the oppression of over half the human race. It takes a black child a good deal longer to realize her oppression by virtue of her blackness and by that time her oppression by virtue of her sex is well buried in her unconscious or is therefore not surprising that many minority women still see their race or color as their primary oppression and are standing behind their men. But these women are not feminists by my definition, however worthy their cause is in other respects.

Nor do I consider women who blame the System and think women equally oppressed to be feminists. These women are victims of fuzzy thinking. The System, after all, is the male power structure and consists of male people only. These women are afraid to label men the enemy. Perhaps they are not clear about the meaning of the word, enemy. During World War II we Americans had no doubt who was the enemy, the Germans and the Japanese. This never meant to any intelligent American that every single German and every single Japanese was evil incarnate, born of the Devil. Most were themselves victims of their respective male power structures. They became victims of their governments through apathy and ignorance. Nevertheless, most of us felt the need to label Germany and Japan, the enemy and fight, rather than argued that these two countries were the victims of a world System, lay down our arms and let them overrun us. Women who cannot see that men are the enemy in the fight for the liberation of women must perform turn aside from women's liberation and take up some other fight.

If we feminists are not careful, we can become involved in fights with minority women that will render us all impotent, to the delight of the male establishment. I recently came across a statement by Nina Harding, billed as a black feminist, and reported in PANDORA, a women's newspaper published in Seattle. To a question
about the advisability of separate black women's liberation groups [which seems most advisable to me]. Ms. Harding said, "I find that white women have no humanity, sensitivity, integrity, commitment or moral fiber in their relationship with their own peer group let alone inter-group relationships with Third World women." This statement is a reminder that racism is not confined to whites. However much we may understand all forms of racism, women who are afflicted with it are not feminists according to my definition; they have not yet seen that underlying racism and all other forms of prejudice is the bedrock of society -- the oppression of women by men. I loathe racism in anyone and do not entertain any sentiment that it is less heinous in black women than in white women. I do not subscribe to the notion that, as a white woman, I am to blame for the importation of slaves from Africa. That was white man's doing. What I would like to ask Ms. Harding is her feeling for her Lesbian sisters, black Lesbians. Would her black chauvinism override her heterosexual chauvinism?

Some of these heterosexual black women are attempting to take over the leadership of Third World women, while objecting vigorously against white women who, they say, are shoving aside minority women. A black woman who thinks only blacks should lead minority women because blacks are the largest minority are no better than white women who think leadership should devolve upon them as representing the majority race. This aping of male racist power struggles is gruesome. But there is a large segment of the female population, one at least as numerous as all minority women put together, that cuts across all racial and class distinctions, that knows oppression not only from men, but apparent women as well, that can make a mockery of this dangerous divisiveness among heterosexual racial and ethnic "feminists." These are the country's Lesbians, those women who "infiltrate" every other female group, who are themselves at least as diversified as all heterosexual women taken together, but who, unlike heterosexual women, suffer an additional oppression by virtue of their Lesbianism. This creates a sisterhood among all Lesbians that is not available to heterosexual women. It is this Lesbian leaving sprinkled throughout the female population that will bring together all women. Heterosexuality is not a unifying principle. And women who wish to exclude Lesbians from liberation are not feminists.

But even among women whom I would call feminists, there is much divisiveness. We are frightened by diversity and lose sight of the fact that all we have in common is our oppression as women and that is all we should want to have in common, other than our humanity. The feminist dream is of a society of expanding choice of lifestyles for all women, which will bring in its train an expansion of choice for men. Too many bona fide feminists cling to conformity, in this case conformity to what happens to be their peer group. Some women decide that all forms of leadership are bad, apparently on the theory that leadership is a purely male phenomenon and that everything male is bad, and so they must hate any woman who appears to them to take some form of leadership. Groups who prefer to operate without overt leaders, who wish to try to function without anyone in charge of anything, should be free to do so, but should not condemn another group that has decided on some kind of structure. Another form of peer pressure that helps to alienate many women is the compulsive pressure to LOVE every woman. The more women endeavor to force conformity, the more they strengthen centrifugal forces, ending ultimately in hatred of their fellow feminists. Why on earth must I love all women in order to work for their and my justice? Or, why must women bent on careers ridicule women who want only home and family? I will continue to believe that there need be no divisiveness between feminists, between the single and the married, between the poor and the middle class, between young and old, between career women and the home and motherhood types, between those who favor monogamy and those who favor promiscuity, between prostitutes and those who give it away, because I believe that women can rise above such irrelevant divisions. I have to believe this because I believe they can rise above the most difficult division of all that between Lesbians and heterosexual women.

A real beginning has been made here. But much more must be accomplished in the years to come. We Lesbians are still up against a great wall of prejudice on the part even of women who scream "sexist" at men. It is not inconceivable that we Lesbian feminists will become so fed up with the heterosexual women's movement that we will simply desert it and watch it collapse as did the 19th century feminist movement. Where would Betty Friedan's NOW be without the closet Lesbians who gave it much of its initial impetus? Where would all the professional women's groups be without us? Some of us feminist Lesbians are well aware of the fact that, without us, heterosexual women are doomed to remain the slaves of men till the end of time. We are also aware that without the help of heterosexual women we are doomed to lead our hidden lives, but we are NOT doomed to slavery. We will still have our half a loaf while heterosexual women have none. It can get very difficult at times for the Lesbian feminist to keep faith with her less liberated heterosexual sisters. These so-called heterosexual feminists, these women who stop short of permitting any women (other than perhaps nuns) to be emotionally free of men, are at best only partial feminists. My feelings range from fury to hilarity when these "innocents" speak proudly of great women of history and great feminists of the past whom we Lesbians know to be part of our history, our Lesbian history. Her-story is more often

Lesbian than heterosexual.

I titled my editorial of a year ago THE UNDEFEATABLE FORCE. Society's ignorant cruelty causes many individual Lesbians to fall by the wayside, but, taken all together Lesbians are an undefeatable force, something I cannot say about heterosexual women. In this past year, however, the seeds have been sown for the coming together of Lesbians and heterosexual women and those of us who are real feminists will see to it that the seeds grow.
couple of years in a large city out West and had seen sights and had a story to tell. Short of money and something of a starved artist, Miss Kirkpatrick had accepted a teaching position and had returned to the home town. Only one month ago Miss Kirkpatrick had once again left home — this time for Louisville, where she was presently employed as an apprentice trainer on a horse farm. She supplemented her scanty income by selling her drawings and paintings of horses. In turn, I reported very little about myself except that I was steadily and contentedly employed. I did attempt to exchange passwords, a primitive, even corny procedure, with Miss Kirkpatrick. "Whenever I fly home there is a stop-over in Louisville; I usually get a taxi and go to the X; it is an interesting bar in a way. Have you ever been there?" No, Miss Kirkpatrick had not. "Well, have you ever been to the Y in Evansville, perhaps?" "Do they have interesting places in Evansville?" Miss Kirkpatrick inquired. "In a way." We talked at length from our separate and distant cities and agreed to write each other. We did not.

Mother is crafty. I saw at once that it was going to be necessary for me to "handle" her, a family public relations function at which I have been adept since Mother's hysterectomy when I was thirteen. It is only fair, because after all it is usually I who upset her. You see, I have not done what my brother has not done as yet either but can be counted on to do when his time comes, namely "settle down." Actually I have many of the accoutrements of the settled-down condition: life insurance, annuities, gas and electricity bills. But I have not married and one cannot be unmarried and settled down at the same time: it is a contradiction in terms. According to Mother, I have been living vaguely in a distant city for some years, and before that, obscurely away at college, and even before that, uncertainly at home where by the senior year of high school I had failed to "blossom out" properly. By the time I left for college, Mother had already come to bite her lower lip whenever she began to brag about my virginity to other girls' mothers. Virginity is a precise and certain quantity in a young girl's character. (It is non-existent in a young man's.) A fraction too little (the back seat and not the front seat of a parked auto or as according to other local customs) and the poor girl will be the town whore or at least a hippie and never marry anybody worth having. An infinitesimal quantity too much virginity means being an old maid who will never marry anybody worth having either. Most shocking of all is the young girl who escapes that degrading old game altogether. She is the one who wears the proud but paradoxical stigmata of both virginity and sensuality. She is the one who has her cake and eats it too. Only with horror may a mother reconcile her daughter's smug flat stomach with that same daughter's wicked eyes. Therefore my Mother makes somewhat pitiful attempts to justify or to excuse to the neighbors or to her God the existence of a daughter who is two years out of school and husbandless. Therefore I do not often write home — and when I do, I always lie. For at least six years the only factual information my parents have had about me is that I am alive.

Yes, Mother definitely was pouting. I had just gotten off the plane and had unpacked and suddenly, instead of talking to my brother and my father and me in the living room, she went off by herself to the den to address Christmas cards. My brother and father ignore her little rebellions, but she knows just how to "get to" me. Father and brother grew quiet in the living room, safely awaiting the results of my diplomatic mission to the den. I knew what was bothering her this time. My letter. I was an ass to send it so near Christmas or to send it at all. Oh hell. Then of course my brother had just clued me in that he had phoned up drunk saying he was going to be a day late getting in. Mother is a Southern Baptist and a teetotaler. Just the same, the truer cause of mother's exile in the den had to be me. My brother never does anything so askance from the norm that it would jeopardize Christmas.

"Madness," a friend had suggested, "to go a thousand miles bearing expensive gifts and all that plane fare and fretting for weeks beforehand and then spend all your vacation time being interrogated by your mother." "When you grow up in Obensburg, you go home for Christmas," I had answered. After complimenting Mother on her Christmas card selection, conversation toppled; and I saw Mother wasn't about to be her usual jolly ruddy self and was not going to capitulate, not on my first night home.

The next morning I made more serious efforts. I dreaded getting up and going into the kitchen where I knew my mother would be staring grimly into her coffee; but if the rest of the family were going to get their breakfast, I knew I had to get it over with. It was my fault. Fool! Why did I have to make a big deal and write that letter? I put on the negligee Mother gave me as a birthday present that she thinks I look so sweet in and washed my face and put on makeup and walked in. "Good morning, Mother." Now what am I going to say? "Oh, the floors look so shiny, Mother. I have never seen them look so shiny." The only time my Mother ever gets compli-
avoided dying her hair or smoking or drinking so she wouldn't look like a factory girl or a beautician. She worked hard all her life and kept herself pure. When she was twenty-six she owned two beauty salons of her own and married the town "catch" - a handsomely educated, well-to-do young bachelor who insisted she never work again. While she was making money as a beautician, she sent home dresses to her sisters on the farm for their high school proms and bought her mother a fancy "suite" and a set of real china so the family wouldn't have to stand up when they ate and drink out of jelly jars. My mother had a high school home economics teacher who made fun of the fact that Mother could not afford material to bring to class and brought flour sucking instead. We have quantities of information about each other, therefore we are a family.

I kept up through breakfast with what I hoped would be a few more unloading pleasantries. Usually I began with queries like, "What do you hear from old Mrs. Barnes?" Mother did not play my game fairly. To such a colloquial query she tended to make some universal response: "Well, her children don't come to see her much any more," accompanied by a pitiful expression, "Well, she's just going to have to get hard to thinking, like some other folks." Mother is quite dextrous with significant observations. My mother had been a spunky girl. I can see traces of it still. She was once the proprietress of beauty salons, but more recently of ovarian squalor.

Early in November I had received a letter from Mother saying, "You never seem to write us, we could drop dead and you don't seem to care to know." I did not want my parents to think I did not write because I did not love them. I wrote a reply. In it, I told them that I thought we could be better friends if they would first accept three things about me. I apologized to them for not being able to alter myself on any of these matters: That I would never marry, that I detested the idea of pregnancy, and finally, that I had never had a hard kiss and did not intend to do so. I concluded by asking again for their affection and requesting that my privacy be respected. Mother has a troublesome habit of going through my drawers and wallet and interrogating doormen about me when she comes to visit me in New York. This habit is in keeping with her religious beliefs. The Baptist religion maintains that privacy conceals only sin, and in consistency with this philosophy, no doors in our house in Obensburg are locked and no mail is sacred. I had considered strengthening the suggestion of my letter by adding that I had never been out on a date since the last time Mother had sent me to some Younger Women's Club Dance or other, but I thought better of that. The letter was a hint and my parents elected not to comprehend it. They telephoned me in New York after they had received the letter and said, "You have been working too hard. Don't worry, the right man will come along some day who will love you as we do. Remember, dear, nobody loves you like your own parents." However, the privacy invasion reference hit home with Mother; and although she did not go into her grievances over that little accusation on the telephone, she did not omit to "straighten me out" on calling her a "detective" when she "got me home."

My brother blundered into the breakfast room. "Hiya, Ma," he said affably, and Mother beamed at him in excessively blatant contrast to the expression with which I had been greeted. My brother started teasing and horsing around with her: picking her up and putting her on his knee and bouncing her up and down as a child. Inadvertently he knocked into her breast a little. Mother grabbed at herself. "Be careful - you'll break my tumor." (I have been suffering from the threat of Mother's female cancers for years. Mother is in bloom quite as much as from Calvary, "Oh, it's just a little thing that I got the Old Rugged Cross scene again. Dammit, Mother, you have gone too far this time. That's close to an outrage lie. Usually when I hurt your feelings you just threaten to get cancer of the breast. I said nothing. At breakfast I just followed Mother into the living room where she intended to brood over another cup of coffee. All the other housewives in our town drink secretly. They have "water" glasses on the right hand corner of their sinks in the kitchen which they rinse out immediately afterward. The younger housewives and their girls now and then went to high school with, now have the added amusement of wife-swapping. My mother's religion and the fact that she is "artistic" and has lots of flower arranging hobbies has rescued her from some of these more popular forms of atrophy. The wife-swapping vogue, incidentally, is beginning to cause me some grave personal concern. The availability of high school girl-friends, particularly the married ones, is not providing my handsome and sexually satiated brother with sufficient marital motivation. It is my selfish wish that he will commence his reproductive activities immediately upon discharge from the armed services, thereby diverting Mother's attention from her daughter to her grand-children.

Once we were in the living room, I again had difficulty engaging Mother in conversation and in restoring, through this means, her chuckling good spirits. There are two topics of conversation that never fail to excite the women of Obensburg. I had so far exhausted my store of other trivia without securing Mother's interest. Now I must bring myself to discuss one of the two remaining topics, both of which I find distasteful because they are sadistic. I was even less attracted by (1) "Lower Intestinal Gothic Distress" than I was by (2) "The Histories of Obensburg's Unwed Mothers in This Century." Knowing no other way to restore the serenity of our Christmas reunion, I began by asking Mother whatever happened to Sharon Miles - knowing damn well what happened to Sharon Miles. I was being quite the verbal whore that morning, trifling with the reputation of some poor female wretch who had to be sent off to (In the Year of Our Lord 1970) a "home" in Louisville where she is not permitted to stay out past 10:30 P.M. To prevent her from getting pregnant again, no doubt. It wasn't long until Mother was in full swing again and we were once more a happy family gathered together for Christmas.

One of Mother's more recent moral fables has as a heroine, one of Mother's own relatives, an unusually sympathetic as in my old high school and had run into Gail and she got to wondering whatever became of you. Well, I just don't know a think about her but I guess her people are all right. They go over to the big Baptist church over near where Margaret Fogel lives."

I began hastily rummaging about in the past. Joanna Kirkpatrick, Gail, and high school six years ago. Seven years ago.

Mother went on, "She sounded nice enough on the phone. You know she said to me, "Of all the people I went to high school with, I wanted what happened to your daughter most."" Mother is sometimes, occasionally, rarely, proud that I am one of Obensburg's most astonishingly ex- citizens. But when she means, it could be easier on her if she could have traded me in for someone a little less dark, a little less tall - a nice girl with long brown hair who likes to bake pies, perhaps. Someone who would just fit in for a change.

Oh, have you seen Gail anywhere lately, Mother? How's she doing?" Mother allowed me to have in Gail the grocery only just last week and so she had seemed fine then. I said, "Well, I don't think I will try bothering to call her. She knows I will probably be home and she can call me if she wants." Mother became sympathetic as in my old high school and junior high school days when I knew Gail. She had liked Gail and had felt sorry for her
but she had not liked the way Gail always tried to gouge me and demean me in order to emphasize her own social importance. We had been "best-friends" since the seventh grade and had parted bitterly in our senior year of high school. I had seen her briefly on a few of my subsequent visits back to town. She was now divorced and recovering from a severe mental illness. I had never met her husband. She met him in Nashville after I left town. Gail had apparently gotten well enough to student teach at County High, where she presumably had the opportunity to discuss me with Joanna Kirkpatrick. I wondered what Gail, in vengeance or in madness, might have told Joanna. It could only have been a hint, something that would not implicate herself. Gail had been driven by her social-climbing physician father to make good — to make perfect grades. She failed miserably. She was only salutatorian. Later she flunked out of Vanderbilt and had to endure the humiliation of going back to the small religious college in Obensburg, getting her degree somewhere in between her divorce and psychotic episodes in which she claimed to be God. At a distance, I illuminated her failures by being, on occasion, her intellectual superior and by finishing college without a visible hitch. When I think of Gail now, I do not think of us as looking as we do now; but I do think of what children we must have been then. Fifteen years old or fourteen. Me a tall dark looming creature looking down in awkward "popcorn" bobby socks at her — a dumpy-figured little termagant who was always in a temper but who said such clever things. I remember standing in that over-heated hallway at our (always adjoining) lockers with the radiators hissing — for years and years.

We had an old and complicated relationship even then. Life has gone well for me of late and I have no time for old misunderstandings.

But Joanna Kirkpatrick was another matter altogether. I had no one at all to care to call up from high school days and for the most part was grateful when Mother excused me from these stiff little encounters. For the past several years, whenever I go home to Obensburg, I stay in the house, or go to the country with my father, or go for long drives with my brother. I had never been close friends with Joanna, mainly because Gail dictated who would and who would not be permitted in our clique, and I never made any effort to annoy Gail — nor did any of the rest of our group, because we all knew that Gail was not from a very happy family and therefore we permitted her eccentricities and suffered our indignities and let her think she was our leader. Gail did not seem to feel Joanna was from a prominent enough family, nor did Gail feel Joanna possessed a sufficiently remarkable intelligence. Joanna was (for Gail's information) from as respectable antecedents as any of the rest of us in that small town with one movie house and strong rural connections.

Gail's own mother had grown up in worse circumstances than my own in a tarpaper shack near Rumsy, Kentucky (a fact that Gail's mother didn't like to be reminded of when she became "Dr. and Mrs. Yarburn."). Gail, with her dumpy body and overbearing personality could do little to glorify the family name as the town debutante. That's why she damn well had to make straight A's. "Dr. and Mrs. Yarburn" ran the kind of household that even when we very naive and very young kids went there after school, we preferred next time to go to somebody else's house. Joanna had a more casual, less desperate intelligence than Gail, and an affectionate family.

My most intimate encounter with Joanna occurred during our senior year of high school when we were both in the formidable-bosomed and petty-hearted Mrs. C. Overhurst's art class together. Mrs. C. Overhurst-of-the-bulldog-chest's artistic claims rested upon her ability at painting roses on china and at needlepoint. We were also given to understand Mrs. O. had a lot of social waltz in our mothers' garden clubs. I had been, in years past, Mrs. C. Overhurst's pet due to an exacting and precise skill at drawing. I drew roses quite superior to those of even Mrs. Overhurst. Indeed she sometimes displayed them as her own. During my last year I had come to thoroughly hate being her pet, and decided to become her "enfant terrible". One day I was given the trusted assignment of making football posters, which I executed to the bald school principal's and Mrs. Overhurst's horror. On the posterboard I had created violent abstract messes with the date, place, and time of the game attached almost as an afterthought in the form of a tiny typeset written paragraph which was attached to the already virulent painting by means of a lavish wad of Bazooka bubble gum. Such instances of scintillating wit had always made Gail treasure me as a member of her clique and closest chum. On the day of the football poster scandal, Gail made a great point of accompanying the "enfant terrible" all over school. After that I made F's in art, and Joanna became Mrs. Overhurst's favorite. During most of the senior year, Mrs. Overhurst put me to work on some kind of simple manual labor task where I could do no damage, like building Southern Mansion columns for the prom. I was not even trusted with the glitter that had to be put on after they were painted. A young man in our class with a telling facility for glitter and net did that.

The redoubtable Mrs. C. Overhurst tried very hard to promote a rivalry between me and Joanna. This purported rivalry occasioned the only conversation I ever had with Joanna that I recall vividly enough to remember that something important was said between us two and to remember how she looked as she spoke. The boys in our class would not have considered Joanna Kirkpatrick attractive. She was short and class would not have considered Joanna her to forget it, that it was high time assured me that she did not want to impinge her to discuss me with Joanna Kirkpatrick. I wondered what Gail, in vengeance or in madness, might have told Joanna. It could only have been a hint, something that would not implicate herself. Gail had been driven by her social-climbing physician father to make good — to make perfect grades. She failed miserably. She was only salutatorian. Later she flunked out of Vanderbilt and had to endure the humiliation of going back to the small religious college in Obensburg, getting her degree somewhere in between her divorce and psychotic episodes in which she claimed to be God. At a distance, I illuminated her failures by being, on occasion, her intellectual superior and by finishing college without a visible hitch. When I think of Gail now, I do not think of us as looking as we do now; but I do think of what children we must have been then. Fifteen years old or fourteen. Me a tall dark looming creature looking down in awkward "popcorn" bobby socks at her — a dumpy-figured little termagant who was always in a temper but who said such clever things. I remember standing in that over-heated hallway at our (always adjoining) lockers with the radiators hissing — for years and years.

We had an old and complicated relationship even then. Life has gone well for me of late and I have no time for old misunderstandings.

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The Threat of Women

By LENNOX STRONG

A very small paperback original publishing company in New York City, Pinnacle Books, has issued a 95¢ novel, THE FEMINISTS, by Parley J. Cooper, with a 1971 copyright. On the cover we read “They rule the world, and top dog is bitch!”

Reading THE FEMINISTS with a background of reading science fiction, there is no way to imagine what the reader reaction would be without such a background. Due to the women’s liberation movement in this country, no publisher would care to bill such “headline” material as science fiction, but it was not always this way.

In 1958, Charles Eric Maine, a minor science fiction writer, had his WORLD WITHOUT MEN published by Ace Books as a 35¢ paperback original. It has 190 pages while THE FEMINISTS has only 188 for its 95¢. A measure of the increase in cost you or me — probably me if I know Mother’s tricks — getting any anonymous telephone calls? Have you ever heard Mother or Father say anything about my getting anonymous telephone calls?” “Well, Sir,” he said, “there was that Joanna Kirkpatrick. She called here Thanksgiving.” “Yeah, I know about that. Mother told me about her; but I mean anonymous calls. Or did Joanna supposedly have anything — you know — did I get an anonymous call and Mother think it might have also been from her or something? It’s confusing; you know Mother — she all of a sudden one day started hinting around about cousin Mattie’s new baby and Aunt Nila getting an anonymous letter, and then she started some funny business about me getting anonymous telephone calls.” “Hey, yeah,” he said, “somebody did call here for you when I was home Thanksgiving, and I wasn’t paying much attention. I was watching TV, but Mother and Daddy went into the dining room and were whispering about it. They didn’t say who it was, I guess.”

Of all the people she went to high school with, she was most curious about whatever happened to you,” Mother had said. I had composed my face into an expression appropriate to the mild experience of hearing from an old acquaintance of the female sex.

In paperbacks. The stories, while very different, are very much the same. They are about how men feel about women; they are about the threat of women.

WORLD WITHOUT MEN is set 5000 years in the future, when all men have died out and all women are naturally Lesbians. Birth is by parthenogenesis, which always (very conveniently) produces same sex offspring. There is no war, no violent crime, no pollution, very few problems indeed, in a well-run and orderly universe. But Mr. Maine, who described WORLD WITHOUT MEN as the book he most enjoyed writing, lets his feelings be known right off when he describes the offices of the administration building as “effeminate,” not feminine, but effeminize. As his plot unfolds, Mr. Maine writes himself into a couple of corners . . . how to make a clearly better world seem worse, so he drags in secret computer control. It seems that this perfection of happiness and plenty was done by a nasty computer, not those helpless hapless women after all. An evil machine has made this wonderful world. Now the thing that is wrong with this world is that there are no men and even though 5000 years have past since the last man died, and even though everyone is happy, Mr. Maine has a handful of the women (in complete defiance of any known laws of heredity or environment) begin to yearn for a man. All this though NONE of them have seen a man nor so much as HEARD about them. In the end, this group artificially creates a man and as the book ends . . . “the explosion flung one of the windows of the room inwards in a cascade of glass splinters . . . there was something wrong with the sky . . . the deepening purple of approaching night was affame with a livid orange stain . . . It has started’, she told herself fearfully. All because of one male child. This is the end of all things . . . But a voice in the darkness of her mind whispered, ‘This is only the beginning’ . . . “Thus we are left with the way in which a man solves things . . . blow up the world.

Other males have also used the theme of all female worlds. They see them as very evil, of course, and the worlds always fall to some kind of male influence in the end. One such (many cuts above the two books THE FEMINISTS and WORLD WITHOUT MEN) is John Wyndham’s classic, CONSIDER HER WAYS, N.Y., Ballantine, 1956. In this, the threat of sexuality is avoided by creating a world based loosely on the ant or bee structure, with workers, queens, etc. Mr. Wyndham uses the device of having a female narrator accidentally visit this world . . . and awake from the visit as from a nightmare. But even so, Mr. Wyndham is unable to get away from the impression left with the reader of a very happy world, except perhaps for the mothers (queens).

THE FEMINISTS is very up to date; instead of 5000 years away, we are only to 1992. Mr. Cooper is not nearly so good a writer as Mr. Maine or Mr. Wyndham, so we have to overlook some pretty bad plotting. His all female run world still has males, but they have lost all political power because the feminists have taken over. How they managed this is never discussed. But despite even the most prejudiced predictions to the contrary,* this female run world is very like a male run world only worse. Armed guards march around the streets (most of the lovingly told violence in this book concerns crushing their skulls and the popping sound as they are variously splattered, punched, crushed, shot, chopped, etc.) and there is a brave band of men who live in the city sewer system with their own loyal group of groupies. Conditions above ground are considerably better than below ground so there is some paranoia about to why the women are below ground with the men, but this is never explained either. In fairness (why are women always fair?) it should be mentioned that no action is taken in this novel that could be considered to be based on logical thought processes. One of the major activities of the underground crew is to blow up food trains coming into the city . . . this allows a lot of skill cracking of female train guards. And, wouldn’t you know it, when they go out at night on dangerous scouting expeditions, guess who the underground are “up front” . . . sure enough, the chucks. In the end the men overtake the government because the powerful mayor of New York City discovers that the most wanted leader of the underground is her long lost son . . . so when the crowds are about to tear him to pieces, yip, she throws herself between him and the crowd . . . he escapes, and as the female taxi driver explains to him as they drive away, “When she had to face the choice the mayor discovered she possessed the major feminine weakness . . . before she was a Feminist, she was a mother”.

(*Philip Wylie, whose hatred of women is hardly a secret, in his novel THE DISAPPEARANCE, N.Y., Rinehart, 1951, documents a divided world where the men are shown in an all male society and women are shown in an all female society. In the male society, holocausts and wars are the total activity . . . in the female society most problems in terms of social problems are solved at once and all wars stop, etc.)
The Independent Women of Winslow Homer

A rather dandified image of Winslow Homer and Albert W. Kelsey taken in Paris in 1867 prefaces the 1958 Homer catalogue published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Homer is actually and (perhaps symbolically) seated upon a pedestal while Kelsey with clasped hands leans against Homer’s shoulder. Although not shown, the photograph is stated to be inscribed by Kelsey, “Damon and Pythias”. Damon and Pythias were two young men in Roman mythology who so loved each other that when Pythias wished to return to his home for the last time before being executed for plotting against Dionysius I, Damon offered his own life as a pledge that Pythias would return to face his sentence. At the last moment before the time set, Pythias returned as he had promised. Dionysius was so impressed by Pythias’ return and the love between these two men, he pardoned them both.

The photograph is in many ways a revelation in regard to Homer’s personal life and adds greatly to the understanding of his art. One of his most dominant themes is that of companionship, a kind of silent, heroic and enduring bond between two people (always of the same sex), who trust in each other’s continued existence so completely that speech or any other overt form of communication is no longer necessary. Whether it is two peasant women working side by side in a field, two elegant ladies strolling the beach in the moonlight, two men on a hunting trip or two fishermen battling a storm at sea, never a word is spoken. And, although this theme of silent understanding between friends of the same sex is repeated over and over, only once does Homer allow it to blossom into sensual love.

A Summer Night, painted in 1890, is the only “romantic” painting of Homer’s career. The story ascribed to this work is that the artist was watching the sea from his studio at Prouts Neck, Maine, one night and suddenly noticed a number of people on the rocks below. As he watched, two women disengaged themselves from the group and danced on his lawn. The scene so affected Homer that he rose the next morning and painted the scene from memory adding only a porch for better composition and as a light source. In looking at this work it is important to remember that the dancers were not inspired by any sort of music excepting the sounds of the sea, the intimacy of the night and their feelings for one another.

The Homer sea is a constantly changing personality but its temperament is always relatable to the mood of the figures played against it. In A Summer Night, the sea, like the dancers, is sensuous and free; the moonlight glitters lusciously upon the waves and this sensuousness is echoed by the embrace of the figures, the tenderness...
in the gesture of their outstretched hands, the closed eyes of the woman facing us. In addition, the sea not only reflects the figures symbolically; in actuality, the couple is reflected on the water's surface at the left center edge and here the two women unite to form one whirling image. The figures on the rocks seem to face this reflection and are perhaps enchanted as the magic of the dancing reflection continues.

There is a strong feeling of independence projected by *A Summer Night*; the women are oblivious to the world and its conventions, demonstrating a kind of defiance which is characteristic of almost all the American women in Homer's work. Whether it is a farm girl, a woman on horseback, a fisherwoman, or ladies of fashionable country life, the females of his paintings are allowed a very great amount of physical freedom for art in America in those Victorian times. In fact, several of his paintings, especially those of women swimming, were thought a bit risqué for the amount of physical activity allowed the female sex.

Homer, who lived almost all of his adult life alone, was fascinated by a certain kind of self-sufficient, unaffected country woman and liked to paint her isolated against a landscape that was left just as independent and unidealized. In *Girl with a Pitchfork*, *Weary*, *The Bridal Path White Mountains* and *Inside the Bar*, this is especially true. The girl reclining in *The New Novel*, reproduced here, clothed in a very simple dress for the period, has the stubbornness of face, with cleft chin, straight nose and strong forehead usually reserved for portraits of boys. She is content to be alone entertaining herself with a new book; she is independent and self-involved and the foliage about her has this same kind of unself-conscious simplicity. It is possible after dwelling on this watercolor for a time to smell the grass, feel the warmth of sun on face and even to become half-consciously annoyed at the summer insects pestering about.

*The New Novel* and *A Summer Night* depict the strength of women with independent minds. In *Saved*, the final reproduction here, a very different kind of strength is examined, the fight of life against its destruction by the sea. *Saved* is a study of courage and heroism. The woman, who, as a symbol of weakness, is usually presented as the dead victim of such a powerful male symbol as the sea, is, in this etching, not only victorious over that sea but is rendered in a way which completely subordinates the male rescuer as well. In the original oil paintings upon which the print is based, the rescuer has a far more dominant role; his heavy boots are large in the foreground and almost control the rest of the painting.

In changing the domination of the work Homer also changed the title from *The Life Line* to *Saved*. The new title not only confirms the woman's victory in the fact that she has survived but also encourages new religious connotations. The position of these two figures is exactly that of the Pietà where the dead Christ is draped across Mary's lap. In this case, it is a woman who plays the role of martyr but the same overtones of dignity through suffering are present. This etching is one of the few instances in art when a woman, like Christ, emerges as the conquering victim and for this reason, it is a very exceptional work.

In conclusion, it should be repeated that Homer firmly refuses in a majority of his works (except his book illustrations) to combine the sexes. There are only three major breaks from this rule: *Saved*, *The Undertow* and *The Wreck of the Atlantic*. In all three cases the paintings deal with life and death struggles with the sea in which men and women come together only in acts of heroism. There is an honesty in all this as Homer's personal life followed this same pattern. He lived in self-isolation for long periods of time and at other times visited only with a select group of male friends and with his brother. Homer has been accused of being dispassionate because his work
does not relate to heterosexuality but for those who understand the meaning of a deeper companionship between members of the same sex, Homer's paintings are deeply fulfilling and, in fact, the real passion of his work cannot be truly appreciated without this knowledge.

Albert W. Kelsey, a Boston painter, was a life long friend and lived with Homer for a short time in Paris.

(book review)

The PRICE OF WOMEN, by David Allen, Jarrow Press, Inc., N.Y. 1971 ($6.95, 206 pp.)

I cannot review this book for I cannot force myself to read it. Instead, I will explain why I cannot read it. Under Acknowledgements Mr. Allen begins, “This book utilizes and synthesizes the work of many men.” In the Introduction he admits “there is indeed something wrong . . . between the sexes” and the theme of the book is that “insofar as this is true the current feminist cry for reform has some legitimacy.” (Italics mine.) “What is needed is not more equality or greater freedom for the female, but more responsibility from her.” That is (as I understand it) we women, who once “suffered injustice and had legitimate grievance – which was repressed” (Italics mine) should become more responsible slaves. We should run the plantation, the home, without bothering Massa.

By now I was seething, but pushed on into Chapter I. There I found, “the outcome of the first feminist revolt was that society acceded to women’s demands . . . SOCIETY ACCEDED TO WOMEN? What did that mean? It sounded to me rather like society consisted of men only. Two paragraphs down I read, “in the face of the new feminist demands for more equality, we want to know what the cost will be . . .” So there it is Ladies. Society, i.e., we males, must consider that, “if the cost is to be borne by men, the current disequilibrium will obviously be increased.” Therefore, we may want to consider other alternatives, . . . we may want to shift some of the existing costs to women, with no corresponding increase in benefits.” I could go no further.

By HOPE THOMPSON

I do not give a damn what men think they should or should not give to women. The matter is quite out of their hands, for they are not dealing with the demands of minors, or horses, or being gently and not so gently bypassed by the majority of human beings. It is women who have the better claim to the use of “we” (above) in speaking of society, if for no other reason than that we are more numerous. So it is we who will have to teach the boys that neither sex alone can speak for society. The so-called, “conceited bastards” plan for us in their all male preserves is irrelevant.

I was surprised at my reaction to the first few pages of this book and paused to take stock. There was something very familiar in this violent emotional response of mine. And then it all flooded in on me — my years of reading psychiatric claptrap about the mental disease known as Lesbianism. It was some six or seven years ago that I swore never to read another line about this “illness” and never to argue the point. From time to time I run into someone, usually male, who spouts the illness theory to me and I answer, “That’s fine. You may think of me as a mental case if that pleases you,” I take my leave. These people, after all, have a need to think me sick. It is their way of holding their shabby little psyches together.

Anti-feminists, male or female, are of the same ilk as far as I am concerned. Just as I know that my Lesbianism is healthy for me, so too do I know that being a woman is as valid as being a man, and perhaps a wee bit more so since women are free of the juvenile notion that one sex is better than the other. I expect the sickness theory of Lesbianism to live on well into the 21st century, and it would be unrealistic of me to expect the myth of male superiority to die any sooner. Ideas, whether true or false, are very long-lived. The other day I came across this: “The poor creatures do not wish to become men in order to be more perfect, but to have freedom and escape the bondage which men have imposed on them by their own authority.” These are the words of Giuliano de Medici, as reported by Count Baldassare Castiglione in his book, THE COURTIER, completed in 1516. They are in answer to a David Allen type who said, “man resembles Form and woman Substance; and, as Form is more perfect than Substance, man is superior to woman; . . . moreover all women want to be men, by a natural instinct which teaches them to seek their perfection.” What is this but a 16th century version of Freud’s penis envy? I will not engage with anti-feminists in a battle that is now well into 500 years old. I embrace dear old Giuliano de Medici, but my concern is the women’s movement, not what men think about it.


This information is enough for this reviewer. It tells me that Marilyn is a very proper Mrs who thinks that Christian women are finer than other women and that she has risen above feminism, a selfish, contentious, and deplorable stance. It also tells me that Lesbians will not be mentioned, even to be damned. But I did read the book just to make sure.

In order to “stop short of” – what Mrs. Oden calls “beyond” – feminism, she first tells us that militant feminists advocate imitating males and she will have none of that. I have noted elsewhere that non-feminists think feminism is nothing more nor other than women aping men. I have no idea whence this misconception arises for it is not in the women’s liberation literature. I can only conclude that women who fear freedom and autonomy must invent a false concept of feminism in order to damn it. Quoting from the foreword, “[Mrs. Oden] makes a clear and convincing case that a woman today . . . has both the freedom and the responsibility to carve out a new and creative life-style which builds on all the strengths of femininity . . .” Well, it seems we already have our freedom (that is, if we are heterosexual); and we are permitted only one life-style (“we need a model for women’’ writes Mrs. Oden); and “femininity” is our strength. I think LADDER readers will get the picture.

Mrs. Oden tells us that feminism is self-actualization for women as an end in itself, but she goes “beyond” this for her self-actualization is but “a means to effective self-giving.” Much of the book simply restates the obvious, e.g., “we are victims of reality, and, paradoxically, we are also its creators.” Her rehash and popularization of such thinkers as Eric Fromm, Erich Fromm, John Gardner, Rollo May, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Paul Tillich may impress the Ladies’ Sodality, but it says little about the plight of women. Mrs. Oden wants women’s career development to recognize our humanistic qualities and our importance as volunteer workers. Apparently men are not to be saddled with humanism and voluntarism. “She [the woman of faith] decides to follow the way of Christ — to live her life for others . . . Her giving of herself is her reward . . . She lives a sacrificial life . . . Being aware of her worth as a person . . . she decides to respond by giving herself away.” There is nothing wrong with all this giving — society. What is wrong is that women and not men are to follow Christ in this manner. Probably because, as Mrs. Oden says, “the role of wife and mother is basic.” By now, nearing the end of the book, I had concluded that Mrs. Oden is the limp, sentimental, wishy-washy type of female Christian, the antithesis of my favorite, St. Teresa of Avila. I was then agreeably surprised to learn that she favors the repeal of abortion laws. “Abortion, tubal ligation, and vasectomy need to be seriously considered as options to the immorality of producing unplanned and unwanted additions to the masses of
humanity." Would she consider the option of Lesbian couples who do not want children? "She [the Christian feminist] understands the need for finding ways of relating to . . . deviant . . . of her community." How sweet! This "deviant", Christian reviewer would like to reassure Mrs. Oden that Lesbians are no threat to women who freely choose heterosexual marital sacrifice as their life-style. Many life-styles, many models for women, is what feminism, even Christian feminism, is all about.

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Hopefully, this book is subversive. Hopefully, it will draw fire from all the articulate sections of the community," writes Ms. Greer in the Introduction. Though this book too is all about heterosexual women, as the title suggests — for there is nothing "eunuchy" about Lesbians, it is heaps of fun for Lesbians. How any woman could honestly espouse heterosexuality after reading THE FEMALE EUNUCH is beyond me. But Ms. Greer purports to be heterosexual and I will review her book assuming her to be so. Since we Lesbians are working both sides of the street these days, some of us coming out openly as Lesbians and others taking a heterosexual stance in our efforts to educate the hapless heterosexual, I will not risk any electrical jolts. But Ms. Greer herself admits to the Perils of Pauline pale "side the Horrors of Heterosexuality. . . . the female stereotype of today. "Her consciousness is castrated . . . and she must not have a sexual organ." I think her point is well taken — there is something asexual about the ideal Madison Avenue female, about those women who go to a lot of trouble to be what Ms. Greer calls a man. Ms. Greer helped me solve a problem that has puzzled me off and on for years: Why is it that, for the most part, the women whom men gather round like moths to a flame are the very women I find most unattractive, rapid, silly? Because, being a lover of women and a fully sexual being myself, the female eunuch is repulsive to me. Ms. Greer explains the development of these strangely desired females as resting upon age-old fear of the womb — the wicked womb, as she calls it and cunt-hatred on the part of men. Female sexuality is denied and in its place is substituted femininity or sexlessness. "What happens to the Jewish boy who never manages to escape the tyranny of his mother is exactly what happens to every girl whose upbringing is 'normal.' She is a female faggot." Ms. Greer herself admits to having had a lover at school, "a girl who was obliterated by puberty." She talks of "inseparable girls [who] are often fascinated by each other, deeply altruistic and cooperative, and often genuinely spiritual . . . . Yet, when her mother discovered a letter from her lover, 'screaming that I was unnatural: to stem her flow, I repeated what I had read in the Sunday Supplements, that it was an adolescent homosexual phase, and I was through it anyway. I expiated thatpusillanimous, lying betrayal of myself and my love for weeks. After such knowledge, what forgiveness?'" If she indeed made a 'successful adjustment to heterosexuality' thereafter, she is to be commended upon her ability in warping her nature, like a tree that survives, bent and twisted after being half cut down.

The chapter titled Womanpower fits rather well, I thought, what the Lesbian reaches for. "Womanpower means the self-determination of women, and that means that all the baggage of paternalistic society will have to be thrown overboard. Woman must have room and scope to devise a morality which does not disqualify her from excellence, and a psychology which does not condemn her to the status of a spiritual cripple." There must be a way for heterosexual women too, though Ms. Greer leaves their future nebulous and concludes with a quotation from Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet: "The great renewal of the world will perhaps consist in this, that man and maid, freed from all false feeling and aversion, will seek each other not as opposites, but as brother and sister, as neighbors, and will come together as human beings. Unless we are all Lesbians and homosexuals, there is something either incestuous or asexual in this dream.

It is hard to say who fares worse at Ms. Greer's hands, men or heterosexual women. And, when she dares to use the word 'Lesbian' toward the end of the book in the chapter titled Rebellion, we fare about as well as mongoloids. I might have gotten furious had I not been so tickled at Ms. Greer's ignorance, feigned or real. "Much lesbianism . . . may be understood as revolt against the limitations of the female role . . . as well as rejection of the brutality and mechanicalness of male sexual passion." Heterosexual do cling to that revolt idea, unable to imagine that one woman can love another above and beyond the spur of any negative emotions, love beyond anything heterosexual seems capable of according to Ms. Greer. It seems to me too that rejection of male sexual brutality and mechanicalness is rather sensible. Elsewhere Ms. Greer puts the blame on heterosexual women for the less than perfect male/female art of sex. Despite male cunt-hatred, despite the male's conception of the penis as a weapon, heterosexual women should "embrace and stimulate the penis", they "must humanize the penis, take the steel out of it and make it flesh again." Then Ms. Greer, it seems to me, puts a very large burden upon heterosexual women, leaving nothing for men themselves to accomplish. Perhaps, like me, she is something of a female chauvinist and naturally expects little from male.

But to get back to Greer on Lesbianism. "All forms of lesbianism involve an invention of an alternative way of life." An invention! This strikes me as an odd way of describing the freedom of Lesbians to be themselves and to love fully and humanly another person, without problems of weaponry and frightfulness and ogamic crises. Then Ms. Greer gets hung up on tribadism,
which she imagines to be "the principal lesbian mode of lovemaking." Maybe she knows something I don't. For 30 years I have wondered how that method is accomplished and have yet to meet a Lesbian who knows, though I do not doubt her existence. Ms. Greer gets upset over Anne Koedt's *The Myth of Vaginal Orgasm* and "wonders just whom Miss Koedt has gone to bed with." I might ask the same of Ms. Greer, for here is where she gets into the full cunt bit. I guess she does not know that what is important to Lesbians is love and not a fixation on what to do with one's vagina. After quoting Ms. Koedt on Lesbianism (a favorable view), she tells us that "sex is simply not a cohesive force." And I agree with her. Lesbians are no more in agreement with each other than any random sample of heterosexual women. But, if sexual orientation is not cohesive, why all this effort to get women and men together in heterosexual bliss? Then Ms. Greer speaks gratefully of Nancy Mann, who "attempts a new explanation of female failure to achieve orgasm, mostly on the grounds that we are not doing it right, that we are not turned on to the essential nature of the experience. [Remember, Ms. Greer has amply described its "essential nature"—brutal and mechanical]. Her conclusion is a hopeful one for women who really don't want to masturbate or learn *tribadism.*" (Italics mine). Tribadism, any one?

"It is true that her [the Lesbian's] inability to play the accepted role in society probably results from a failure of conditioning . . . ." If the conditioning is all wrong in the first place, as THE FEMALE EUNUCH so ably proves, let us hope for more and more "failures." Ms. Greer is naÃ¯ve about Lesbianism. "Most women teachers are not married and do not have any very significant intercourse with the opposite sex." No, if they are lucky, they can limit their public "intercourse" to an occasional appearance in the company of a butch male homosexual and otherwise dispense entirely with the opposite sex. Nor does she understand the neurotic cruelties that stem from the repressed Lesbianism of many women and the even worse cruelty of unrepressed Lesbians who denounce their Lesbian sisters in their immoral efforts to deflect suspicion from themselves . . . . I suspect that Ms. Greer would not write about Lesbianism today as she did in her book. When she wrote the book women's liberation had not yet openly faced up to the issue of Lesbianism. The women's movement is moving so fast that all of us who write about it are apt to wish we could disown our words of the past.

"Men are tired of having all the responsibility for sex: it is time they were relieved of it. And I do not mean that large-scale lesbianism should be adopted . . . The cunt must come into its own." Well, it's all so heterosexual. And what would be wrong with large-scale Lesbianism? Men's liberation groups are getting around to discussing homosexuality. We may see an "increase" in homosexuality there, just as we are seeing an "increase" in Lesbianism in women's liberation groups. I put "increase" in quotations because it is not a true increase, only a peeling off of "successful" layers of heterosexual conditioning. Ms. Greer would like to see the "emphasis . . . . replaced upon human sexuality" and so would I, but I care not whether that leads to more Lesbianism or better heterosexual relations or both. For me and for millions of Lesbians "the cunt long ago came into its own."

Conflict of Identity

It came as a great surprise to me that Lesbians did not jump on the bandwagon of women's liberation or cry for joy that at long last here was a movement that was for and by women against the great oppressors of our society. True there are pockets of activists like the radical Lesbians, the gay women's liberation and others, but it is also true that these women are, for the most part, under thirty. Where are the great numbers of women who by reason of their experience you expected to be right on the front lines pitching? I couldn't accept age as the hang-up since I belonged to an over-forty group and I felt I belonged to the movement before it was.

I soon found that my personal enthusiasm for women's liberation ruined every cocktail and dinner party to which I was invited. Even the mere mention of it was like waving a red flag. These women were as hostile as suburban housewives. Dismayed, I decided to explore the causes.

Most of my Lesbian friends are professional women. I have known them for years on a completely social basis. I suddenly

By KANE KELLEY
realized that I had seldom talked politics or social issues with these friends. Now, probing, I found they read little in this area and wished to discuss it even less. Sports, current fiction, theater, music, yes. So here was the first big block: they were indeed underdeveloped politically and, amazingly enough, had not read any of the literature of the women's liberation movement. They only knew by some emotional response that they were against it!

Many reasons can be advanced for their seeming lack of social consciousness. As women they were well aware that they were second-class citizens and as Lesbians they were something less. Could they get out and declare themselves for peace, motherhood, better schools, etc.? Who the hell would listen to them? So why get all hot over these issues? Besides, fear and insecurity about their own social roles had imbued them with a kind of Puritanism, a view of life that makes the past an authority over the present. A view too, that while they are gay and always will remain so, they have "bought" the system's brainwashing that such a life is "inferior" to the straight life.

Next, they have straddled two worlds successively. They have made it in the system. The liberation thing might open up too many doors and in the process things are being mentioned that could be embarrassing to them as women who are sensitive to their "hidden" life. They thank God every day for their job security (?) and the image they have been able to maintain in the office. They've worked hard to prove that they can "relate" to men on the job. How could they join forces with a movement that the male-dominated establishment is already calling a bunch of dykes. They can only shiver in terror at the suggestion they are part of such a thing!

Another factor here, of course, is that in the process of achieving a certain position, they have patterned their power and success symbols after that of the system. Accordingly they are submissively conservative and imitate the "good" life of the straight society with almost slavish compulsion. In fact they work so hard at it that in many ways they are more establishment than the establishment.

It is difficult to talk rationally with these women because they are really in conflict with their own identity. What they need, of course, is to attend some Lesbian rap sessions where they can uncover the plastic layers of a false role and talk clearly and honestly. They must rid themselves of this self-hate that has oppressed them too long in the name of a heterosexual culture which daily reminds them of its contempt for Lesbianism. They need to relate to those sisters, the radical Lesbians, in women's liberation who can help them over this hurdle. Otherwise as long as they maintain this image of themselves as something less than pleasing they will continue to seek identification and approval from their oppressors. They must learn to let their energies flow toward their sisters, not backwards to men for acceptance.

Once the Lesbian achieves this she will recognize how women have been systematically made into empty consumers, competing in fashions and material goods. She will see that the male supremacy upon which the nuclear family is based has been prescribing for her too in the area of clothes, jobs and class consciousness. It will be clear that it is as important to root out male domination as it is to root out racism. There will be no guilt, no submission, necessary when the system no longer sets up an "ideal" life style.

The Lesbian who faces this will find the simplest of reasons for women's liberation, namely, that men as a group oppress women as a group; therefore women must organize to confront male supremacy collectively. "Free Our Sisters, Free Ourselves" is what it's all about.
"Yes, you. Come on, get up, come on." She wrapped her in part of her robe and they walked to the closet mirror. "Look—"

Julia hugged her. "So solemn," she said, smiling. "I think it's splendid. Here, stand right next to me, here, shoulder to shoulder." They stared into the mirror and Angela began to laugh. "It's incredible," she said. "Look at us."

They spent the rest of the week together. Angela went to her office; she worked and she worked well. When she arrived at Julia's, always with a bouquet of anemones, the fire was already going. In the mornings when she returned to her apartment for a change of clothes the quiet she found made her do what she had come for quickly, without thought.

They dined in every evening. Twice they bundled up in pants and boots and fur coats and went to a neighborhood movie, sitting in the balcony, smoking, touching, watching the film.

One of the evenings after the movie Julia suggested a bar she had heard of. It was not a success. The drinks were overpriced, the place smelled of disinfectant and the couples, well, the couples looked sad somehow, nervous, and when they danced they did so without grace. No, Julia thought, a bar scene really has nothing to do with it.

The evening before John's return they were again lying before the fire.

"Well?" Angela said.

Julia bent to kiss her. "That, my love, is an excellent question."

Angela shrugged and pitched her voice theatrically low, "Well, nothing much we can do about it, is there?"

They laughed, clowned a bit, and grew silent. It was the quiet that preceded their lovemaking.

But Angela sat up and looked at Julia. "It's serious, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"A beginning, really." "An ending too, you know."

"How do you explain it?"

"Falling in love?"

"Us, I mean."

"Us falling in love?"

"Julia . . ."

"Let's not."

"And that bar?"

"It means nothing."

"Julia . . ."

"Slowly, darling," she said, bringing Angela to her. "Not now. Not yet."

The next evening it was John who spoke first. Julia came to kneel on the sofa beside him. "John, she's marvelous."

He smiled and kissed her hair. She touched his hand.

"It has happened, hasn't it?" she said. "So it certainly seems."

"You'll like her very much."

"I don't doubt it."

"We tried that bar around the corner."

"Oh?"

"Depressing."

"I'm sure."

"She's coming for dinner tonight. I want you to meet her."

"Good."

"I didn't fuse."

"How are we with wine?"

"I've seen to it."

"Good," John said and then got up and walked toward the bedroom. "I'll unpack a few things. I should be able to find a place easily, don't you think?"

"Actually," Julia said, walking to him, "I . . . I called a few agencies today. You do want the East Side, don't you?"

"Oh yes, I suppose so. It's going to be strange, looking."

"Do you want me to go with you?"

"No, no, not necessary." He surveyed the apartment. "All this furniture," he said, "So many things. That's the hell of it, isn't it?"

Julia put her arms around his waist and hugged him tightly. "It has been good in its time, hasn't it?"

He kissed her hair. "I envy you falling in love again, you know. How good that is."

"Do you remember how we used to visit the seals?"

"They're still there, are they?"

"Oh yes. God knows if they're the same ones—but it seems so."

"Good weather for seals," he said, again kissing her hair, then letting her go.

In the bedroom John saw the Félicien Rops etching that Julia had had framed: a heavy-thighed woman, blindfolded, dressed only in a large hat, long gloves and black net stockings, is led by a pig on a leash. In the air, winged cherubs, holding their heads, are scurrying.

He called out to Julia: "Is the Rops show still on this week?"

She called back from the kitchen: "Yes, it just opened."

When her voice crosses the Mojave, passes through huge black cables buried under the Father of Waters, leaps across the Alleghenies to me in Manhattan, in the sad-ass end of February: It's like she wasn't gone.

It's speed and acid in a way no solo trip could be; dormant privet hedges swell and stretch their twigs in lightning angles, traffic signals flash a secret pattern, hinting of rhythms I scarcely imagine:

Brainpaths of a manic city.

And I run down the morning streets, no money to fly but I run West as far as Second Avenue.
I loathed myself for doing it, 
waited desperately to wait 
but couldn’t face waiting perhaps in vain, 
didn’t want to make a scene 
when I see you out of pure frustration.

I tranquilized my passion, 
so far gone from mental games 
with high-charged words, 
it went to sleep in thirty seconds.

One tightly curled hair clung to my finger, 
tucked itself under the edge of a nail to surprise me 
turning a page of poetry 
forty minutes after my isolated assignation.

The Bobsey twins incestuous —
hermaphroditic beast, four legs, one mouth —
rolling, squealing on the couch, 
mock passion raking my eyes 
as if your play were real, 
me with itching hands in pockets, 
aching for my share, 
not daring to rock our leaky rubber raft, the “Maybe.”

Out of regard for the piano player’s feelings, you lead me to a private, curtained room. We hear him play a few bars, no more, sound-proofed as we are by pounding blood, loose flowing hair, tongues in ears, pillows, pants, sheets, a tangle of clothes and covers all finally torn from the bed 
and you are beautiful, my ghost, 
my lovely apparition, my unreal love, come real to me at last.

Manners forgotten, polished silver-finger bowl-upbringing gone, 
thrown to the floor along with muddy boots, 
I’m a ravenous, noisy guest 
at a feast of delicate sensation; you’ve lost the pungency of my mind’s last hesitation; you transcend the taste of flowers. 
Absence has given me a gourmet’s palate and a gourmand’s appetite; no time to savor when I cannot get enough; in my haste I nearly bite my tongue — a curious hunger that takes me further from satiety with each swallow. You come and come, finally cry, half-laughing, for compassion.

Wiping the corners of a bruised, untidy mouth, I remind myself we again have many seasons, many linen-covered beds.

I am young and hungry, but you have enough. I will be fed.

Driving towards the city on a Sunday night 
back to your wakeful husband, 
your hand warm milk in mine, 
a primal comfort I kiss, 
for it’s soon to go the way the other went.

You make a wrong turn — Eros-inspired accident — 
and a wandering hour is stolen from his watch, his bed. 
We spend the extra seconds on our fingers, each pulse a portion of shared treasury, 
buying our way out of this hard, diminishing return.

ANNE ZIMOVA

Still Life: Drinking Tea

Peeing out behind our eyes, waving misty handkerchiefs, talismans that disappear with a wink in the jostle of a crowded aisle.

Example: an interior person drinks from the same cup her outside face does, some nights, only tissues swallow. We sat, three sightless monkeys, benched in a jangling neon room; still I could softly remember (between our frequent sips and smiles) fog’s early morning once, when we sat outside. Then I said no, and stared hard at the mist. (But a qualified yes, since sooner that month I’d wanted to die.) Now — perhaps I’d say yes, but there’s only bright plastic sky. Your friend laughs, playing catch with your sleeve: let her rest safe in her yes, in whatever tongue; fog time has gone by.

Graveyards; headstones. Minds invent ghosts to lurk as shadows in our eyes. We all look at one another, but those weeds are what we will not see. Fog behind each glass is safer: blink, and quickly lid it over; touch it only with the inner eye.

Patricia Hanen
Female Sexual Alienation

By LINDA PHELPS

In the last few years, the so-called sexual revolution has turned sour. The end of inhibition and the release of sexual energies which have so often been documented as the innovation of the revolutionary culture are now beginning to be seen as just another fraud. After the gang-rapes at Altamont and Seattle, after the demands raised at People's Park for "Free Land, Free Dope, Free Women", after the analyses of (male) rock culture, women are beginning to realize that nothing new has happened at all. What we have is simply a new, more sophisticated (and thus more insidious) version of male sexual culture. Sexual freedom has meant more opportunity for men, not a new kind of experience for women. And it has been precisely our own experience as women which has been decisive in developing the Women's Liberation critique of the sexual revolution. The generation of women who only a few years ago saw themselves as the vanguard of the new sex, now suddenly find themselves plagued with all the problems of their grandmothers - loss of interest in sex, hatred of sex, disgust with self. This turnabout happened very fast and I think it happened because we opened ourselves up in consciousness-raising and a lot of bad feeling we thought we'd gotten rid of floated to the top. It has been good to get these feelings out and look at them. But can we explain them, can we understand what has happened to us in the last five years?

I would like to suggest that we can understand the destruction of female sexuality if we conceptualize it as a special case of alienation, understood as a political phenomenon. If alienation is the destruction of self which ultimately leads to schizophrenia, the widespread alienation of females from their own sexuality is a kind of rampant mental illness at the base of our experience which we must recognize for what it is.

Alienation is a much used and little explained term. Put simply, it refers to the disintegration of our very selves and personalities which occurs when we are powerless. The opposite of powerlessness is self-actualization; and the healthy, self-actualizing human being is one who moves through the world as an autonomous source of action. As Ernest Becker put it in an important essay on alienation:

People break down when they aren't 'doing' - when the world around them does not reflect the active involvement of their own creative powers ... Alienated man is man separated from involvement with and responsibility for the effective use of his self-powers.

What is more difficult to understand is precisely how alienation comes about in certain individuals. Becker suggests three ways: (1) Alienation occurs along the dimension of time. As children we learn certain patterns of behavior which bring us approval. As we grow older, however, we must constantly adapt to new situations. If our early childhood training has been too rigid, we are unable to make the necessary adjustments and become increasingly unable to handle our experiences. (2) Alienation also occurs in terms of the roles we play. This problem affects both men and women, but we are particularly familiar with the female version. Not only are females confined to a few narrow roles, but they are also subject to contradictory messages about the roles they do play. Motherhood, for example, is viewed as a sacred task, but mothers are not taken seriously when they act outside their kitchens and homes. (3) The third dimension of alienation is more complex: breakdown of self occurs when the gap between thought and action, theory and practice, mind and body becomes too great. The classic and extreme example of this form of alienation is the schizophrenic, living totally in a thought world of his own creation with no relation to reality.

This three-dimensional model of alienation is complex but I think it can help us understand our own experience with sex. What I am about to say about female sexuality as schizophrenic will make more sense, however, if I digress for a moment to describe some attributes of schizophrenia. This extreme form of alienation, you will recall, is produced by a split between mind and body. Such an odd condition is possible in human beings as opposed to animals because we are self-conscious beings. We have an 'inner self' of reflection and thought but our body is part of the world 'out there' of experience and material objects. This mind-body dualism is at the base of human power - our ability to
to the search for the man who is smarter, taller, more self-confident — someone to look up to and thus worthy of giving into.

In each of our lives, there was a first man for whom we were prepared like lambs for the slaughter. My fantasy of him was a composite of Prince Valiant, Gary Cooper, and my father. Trained in submission, in silence, I awaited him through a series of adolescent boyfriends who were not masterful enough to fit the dream... because I would not really graduate to the estate of womanhood until I had been taken by a strong man.

Trained in submission women instinctively look for the strong man who will continue the loving benevolence of the father. That pattern of sexual relations is our society's model is confirmed by psychologist Abraham Maslow. In a study of sexual behavior, Maslow reported that women who find a partner more dominant than they usually make the best sexual adjustment. On the other hand, a very sexually active woman in his study failed to reach orgasm with several male partners because she considered them weaker than herself and thus could not "give in to them." Thus, "normal" sexual adjustment occurs in our society when the male plays the dominant role.

If we come to view male-dominated sexual relations as deflation healthy sex, the mechanism of this learning process is the bombardment of sexual fantasy that we experience long before we experience sex itself. Sexual images of conquest and submission pervade our imagination from an early age and lay the basis for how we will experience sex in what is done to us. We learn to relate to an object under your own power and not to be the object of sexual desires rather than to a self-directed sexual being oriented toward another; she is taught to be adored rather than desiring. Is it surprising then that so many women find the male body ugly, that so many women see the drama of sex as what is done to them?

Two things happen to women's sexual lives. Many women have no sexual fantasies at all (since there is little male sexual imagery available in this culture). Masters and Johnson found that many women who could not focus on sexual imagery had difficulty having orgasm. The good doctors have tried to encourage sexual fantasy (by reading arousing material) to enable these women to experience orgasm.

Females that do have fantasies often have the same sadomasochistic fantasies that men do. As Shulamith Firestone points out in The Dialectic of Sex, "Cultural distortion of sexuality also explains how female sexuality gets twisted in narcissism: women make love to themselves vicariously through the man rather than directly making love to him." In these fantasy episodes, the female does not always play the masochistic role. The female who is focusing on sexual imagery can take the part either of the male, the female, or an onlooker, but in any case eroticism is still dealing in female powerlessness.

How do women tolerate a situation in which men control and define the experience of sex? I believe we solve our problem in the same way the schizophrenic does. A woman's sexuality is experienced in symbolic terms at the expense of the constricting involvements that are extended to her by society in symbolic messages of passivity and conquest. Like the symbolic world of the schizophrenic, a woman's fantasy life — her desire to be taken, overpowered, mastered — allows her to play the passive role and perhaps even to enjoy it if she fully accepts the world as defined by men.
Caught between the demands of a male-dominated society and the demands of our own self-definition, we survive by fully accepting the masochistic symbol-world given to us by male society at the expense of our own experience. In fact, our physical experience is so often distorted for so long that most of us aren’t even aware of the sacrifice we have made. We are only uneasy that all is not well.

Yet ultimately in the lives of those women for whom fantasy and reality become too far apart, a crisis occurs. The mechanism of crisis in some cases may be merely the demystification of the male through years of marriage. It is hard to keep in tact fantasies of male power when confronted with the reality of a pot-bellied, lethergic husband. Such a crisis may result either in a transfer of fantasy to a new male or in a loss of interest in sex altogether. For women in Women’s Liberation the whole fragile structure of fantasy and power often falls along with the myth of male supremacy. Males are subject to the same fantasies of male power that seems to happen to women whenever they separate people from their own experience.

Women, then, are alienated from their sexuality along several dimensions. From an early age, we are alienated from ourselves as sexual beings by a male society’s ambivalent definition of our sex. So we are sexy but we are pure; we are inatistable but we are frigid; we have beautiful bodies but we must shave and anoint them. We are also alienated because we are separated from our own experience by the prevailing male cultural definition of sex — the male fantasy of active man and passive woman. From an early age, our sexual impulses are repressed. It is only recently that we have caught a glimpse of the narcissistic counterpart of the male fantasy world. In social relations with men, we are alienated from ourselves as initiating, self-directed persons. Some women hold all sexual power (albeit also in a false way) and does not separate them from their own experience.

To say this is to suggest some ways out of our cultural and sexual alienation. Yet it is also too easy to blithely assume, as we often do, that all this sexual distortion is going to be easily changed in some new culture in the future. We have pushed beyond the economic revolution and the cultural revolution to come face to face with the real sexual revolution and we are not sure what we have left in the way of hope and affirmation.

Perhaps the most courageous and in the long run the most positive statement we can make is to acknowledge the pain we feel now and perhaps irreparable damage that we have sustained. But saying this is not totally to despair. Sometimes it is necessary to touch rock bottom before we can find the strength to push up for air.

(Linda Phelps is a member of the Kansas City, Missouri Women’s Liberation Group. Her educational background includes graduate study in both sociology and history. Her early pamphlets, “Mirror, Mirror, On The Wall” and “What Is That Difference: Women’s Rights and Women’s Liberation?” are in wide circulation.)

FOOTNOTES

(Time Magazine, January 11, 1971. The behavior section of this issue contains a fascinating look at the male attitude toward women. We received this late, but recommend you look it up at the nearest library. It’s worth the trip.)

PREGNANT BY GOD? OR ELSE IN IRELAND: March, 1971. The Irish Senate refused to consider a bill introduced by Senator Mary Bourke Robinson to repeal the 1935 ban on the import, sale or advertisement of contraceptives. A group of women outside shouts “We shall not conceive”. Obviously the legislature says otherwise, but the women vow they will continue protesting until contraceptives are legalized. The hierarchy (read MALE) of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland has vowed it will stop the protesting. One wonders how — by keeping them pregnant 9 months of the year and barefoot the other three?

1200 WOMEN AT N.Y. CONFERENCE: March 6, 1971, New York City, Special to THE LADDER: The New York Women’s Strike Coalition sponsored this two-day meeting, hosted by Barnard and Columbia Women’s Liberation. Women from schools and colleges in New York State and all over New England attended. 87-year-old Florence Luscomb (this worthy woman lives in a commune) opened the session with a reminiscent and humorous speech. Included was comment on Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, who on being introduced once by a man as “a woman with the brains of a man” asked to “see the man whose brains I’ve got”. 35 workshops were set up, and after the opening talks the women broke into groups for the various sessions. The best-attended workshops were on Lesbianism, on living with a man, and on alternatives to the family. The abortion workshop was also well attended. An all women’s dance was held with the New Haven Women’s Liberation Band. Highlighted
speaker on Saturday was Kate Millett, author of SEXUAL POLITICS and a founding member of Columbia's Women's Liberation. Millett's talk stayed right with her usual subject, the repressive sex roles. "Nobody except the women's movement has begun to be honest about how sick sexuality is in this society, and we are only beginning to understand how desperate, how brutal a thing sex has been in the past. Our very notion of the erotic is derealized on every side. Even our language of love abounds in a diction more military than amorous. It is loaded with terms like 'surrender'." Some of the costs of the conference were defrayed by selling a perfect duplicate of the most expensive perfume in the world, "Joy", which retails for $64 an ounce. The women cooked up their imitation "Joy" and sold it for $3 a bottle - it cost them about 50 cents a bottle to make it. That should tell you something about cosmetics.

MARCH 8, 1971 WAS WOMEN'S DAY: And women all over the U.S. celebrated it in various ways - speakers, marches, dances, joy and sorrow. Too much of all those things to report here except to say that every major city and many smaller cities had activities. We note too that sufficient general coverage was given in the media, with an improved tone and less snideness.

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DEPARTMENT OF IMPOSSIBLE IRRITATION: Did you know that in some 13 or so states you have to register to vote by marital status? You must sign Mrs. if you are Mrs. and Miss if you are Miss. Then they have your vote doesn't count. Did you know that in most places you have to pay more to go to the JOHN if you are a female (and note where you are going to) than if you are a male. In Mansfield, England, this was recently stopped by the local women's liberation group bringing pressure to bear on the city council. Did you know that the Air Force demands from every female applicant four photos - but none from the male applicants. Do you know what they had the almighty gall to say they were looking for? They are looking for a "healthy, personable appearance". Marvelous!

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ZEE, DETROIT FREE PRESS, March 28, 1971. By the time you read this the movie ZEE with Susannah York and Elizabeth Taylor may be in general release. It is supposed to deal with Lesbianism. We wish we could be more excited, but having seen Hollywood's efforts to date in the area, we feel mild dismay instead. Do you suppose Susannah York won't be cast as a moron married to a sadist as in THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE? We hope so.

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DR. CARL McINTIRE: March 29, 1971. A group of male homosexuals and Lesbians picketed Dr. McIntire's church in Philadelphia. Dr. McIntire (who is seemingly for everything that is bad and nothing that is good) told them he loved them but homosexuality "is a sin".

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MOVING TO CEYLON? SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, April 3, 1971. An article on the condition of women in Ceylon by a writer identified only as "S."
unmarried New Yorker, has sponsored a bill which will possibly end the inequities in taxation between single persons and married couples. The arrogance we find in it is that this bill is being described in terms of its BENEFIT to the bachelor, while the lack of accounting for the fact that women work in shit jobs, are paid lesser wages and work harder and are still taxed to death. Other house sponsors include unmarried Republican Barry Goldwater, Jr. of California and liberal Democrat Robert Drinan of Massachusetts. The latter is a Roman Catholic priest.

THE ARMY IS GOING TO ALLOW MOTHERHOOD: April 25, 1971. The Army is going to allow its female officers and enlisted women to have children if they are married. Unmarried women who get pregnant still get axed unless they have abortions or give up the child for adoption. The Air Force adopted this same general policy in March, 1971, and the Navy is expected to follow suit. One WAC officer commented: "I would think most women who want to have children would prefer to leave the Army." We tend to agree with her.

A WOMAN’S PLACE IS IN THE HOUSE: The Fresh Woman In Congress, Bella Abzug. Detroit Free Press, April 25, 1971. Writing about Bella Abzug’s first four months as a "fresh(wo)man" congresswoman, Eileen Foley lists her deeds to date. She believes women should be leaders and the top jobs in her office are filled by women. She opposes the war and draft and carefully tacks on anti-sex discrimination amendments to every federally-assisted program that passes her desk. She has started a national newsletter called "National Constituency for Bella Abzug" and it’s available from 1829 Phelps Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. Clearly, a woman’s place is in the House (and the Senate and everywhere else where power is and can be wielded).

ERA PASSES FIRST HURDLE IN HOUSE: Washington, D.C., April 30, 1971. A House subcommittee has approved the ERA again this year and it’s gone to Cellar’s cellar for holding. Before you read this it will almost surely get out of full committee and onto the floor and pass, again, as it did last year. After that THE SENATE.

ALL WOMEN ARE LESBIANS EXCEPT THOSE THAT DON’T KNOW IT: A DIALOGUE?, New York City, April 30, 1971. Nearly every paper in the U.S. and most major news magazines have reported the evening event wherein Jill Johnston, Jacqueline Ceballos of NOW, Diana Trilling and Germaine Greer (see review of her book elsewhere in this issue) took on Norman Mailer in a dialogue. NEW YORK POST reporter Helen Duder sums it up neatly by saying it was a "jolly pandemonium." Jill, after cleverly announcing to the very mixed audience that all women are Lesbians, occupied the stage only long enough to irritate Mailer. She was then greeted by two friends from the audience who joined her on stage for a well-reported event; they all left short shrift behind. Mailer is said to have told Mailer off; with the support of the balcony (where the women who could not afford the main floor sat), the women won the evening. (Editor’s Note: May we point out that Simone de Beauvoir MANY years ago in SECOND SEX said the same thing — that all women are naturally Lesbian).

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR: April, 1971. We received so many copies of an article from this issue purportedly on Lesbians that we issue this warning. If everything in this magazine is to be along the lines of this initial issue, skip it. Some of the material included is a marvelous lesson in the old adage that "figures don’t lie, but liars do figure."
they are using some women about whom much is already available. Otherwise the idea is good and might work if they can launch it.

HARASSMENT DOESN'T STOP...

EVER: May 1, 1971, SPECIAL TO THE LADDER. N.Y. DOB was holding a fund-raising dance on this date when the local policeman entered the premises and attempted to enter the offices. Local officers refused to be intimidated, and drove him away. They also called the local precinct promising to fight any trumped-up charges in court. Two hours later 3 summonses were served on DOB officers. By now charges have been dropped. They always are, but the harassment goes on and on and on.

WOMAN LEFT TO DIE AT HOSPITAL DOOR: Kirkwood, Mo., May 8, 1971. St. Joseph Hospital has been suspended from membership in the St. Louis County emergency care program because a woman who had been stabbed 8 times, beaten and robbed, was refused emergency treatment. The emergency room staff used as excuse the fact that they "believed" hospital policy was to refuse treatment to any woman who "might have been raped". As it happened, Ms. Jacquelin Price was not raped, though her assailant had attempted such an assault. She was left for 30 minutes on a stretcher without treatment before she was taken to St. Louis County Hospital. She remains in serious condition.

WHOSE FUTURE?? Washington, D.C., May 13, 1971. A large group of upper-middle-class white males (representing obviously the whole world) and calling themselves the World Future Society (they decide what the world is to be like in the future) were decidedly kept from the purpose of their meeting by a take-over by middle-class white males (representing obviously the whole world) and calling themselves the World Future Society (they decide what the world is to be like in the future) were decidedly kept from the purpose of their meeting by a take-over by a mob of straight sisters, including some straight sisters who will also be elevated to one-star rank. Elizabeth P. Hoisington is retiring as head of the Army Nurse Corps; she is to be replaced by Col. Mildred C. Bailey, who will, of course, be promoted to the rank of General. Brig. General Alma Mae M. Hays is retiring as head of the Army Nurse Corps and will be replaced by Col. Lillian Dunlap, who will also be elevated to one-star rank.

MOM AND P COLLECTIVE, 3015 W. O'BRIEN, YOU'VE GOT 6000N TEAM, GIRL PAGES ALLOWED IN TACTICAL UNIT; WOMAN IN COMMAND; COUNTY GIRLS ALLOWED TO JOIN TEAMS; GIRL PAGES ALLOWED TO CARRY U.S. FLAG; PRIESTHOOD Sought by Widow (age 76); and SOAP BOX DERBY TO ACCEPT GIRLS.

Next those are simply headlines from articles sent to us during April, May and June, 1971. We will see many more of them before you read this, but along with these which range from the ridiculous to the sublime, were some very serious appointments and a serious aftermath. The Mayor of Hartford, Conn., Ann Uccello, was named by Transportation Secretary, John Volpe, to head the Office of Consumer Affairs. Barbara Hackman Franklin, on leave from her job as Asst. V.P. and head of government relations at the First National City Bank of N.Y.C., has been appointed a staff assistant to Nixon, assigned to bring more qualified women into top government jobs. The city of Oklahoma City elected a woman, Patience Sewell Latting to be its Mayor, thus making itself the largest U.S. city to do such a thing. And a small but excellent college in Detroit (Shaw College) has named a woman, Dr. Dawn E. Francis, a distinguished chemist, as its academic dean — which may be a first for women.

Now there are some key words in the opening headlines of this commentary. Note "accept", "allowed" (twice) and "added" — to our conditional humanity — we are accepted or allowed — or added to the real world. But in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in April, 1971, an added and allowed woman, Catherine M. "Kate" Webb, United Press International bureau manager in Phnom Penh, was reported missing after being caught in an area that was overrun by Communist troops. It really doesn't matter in a man-made war what kind of troops were overrunning or what they were running over. What matters is that people die, including some women like Kate Webb, age 28, of Christchurch, New Zealand. Miss Webb, incidentally, had been a combat correspondent early in the Vietnam War for two years.

(Editor's Note: We debated re-writing this segment of CROSS CURRENTS when we learned, on May 1, 1971, that Kate Webb is alive and well and has been released from captivity, but decided that the points still remain valid.)

WOMEN FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS IN EDUCATION FIELD: NEWSWEEK, May 17, 1971. In the Education section a four-page article covering battles from coast to coast in the "placid" Halls of Academe for women's rights. Worth looking up and reading.

MAY 14, 1971: Rep. Bella Abzug, together with Rep. Shirley Chisholm, announced the introduction of a bill in Congress calling for $2 billion over a three-year period for day-care nurseries. Ms. Abzug was speaking before the first national conference on equal pay and promotion for women sponsored by the Urban Research Corp. Also on May 14, 1971, the Social Security-Welfare Reform Bill was approved by the House Ways and Means Committee. This contains one slight provision for working mothers allowing them to deduct for child care with a total family income of up to $12,000 a year. Presently the limit is $6,000. Thus a family where the husband makes nearly $6,000 a year and there are 3 or 4 children, the wife cannot work even at the slave labor wages paid to women to supplement the income without the family losing the total cost of child care, which is astronomical if it is minimally adequate.

LOIS H. STAIR TO HEAD UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: Rochester, N.Y., May 17, 1971. For the first time a woman has been chosen to head the annual assembly of the 3.1 million-member church. She was elected from a field of four candidates; she was the first woman candidate for the office since 1963. Ms. Stair is not a minister, which adds to the honor since usually a minister fills the position.

WOMEN GET ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS: FORDHAM UNIVERSITY: First Midwife Goes on Duty: Explorers go co-ed; Woman Mechanic Liberates Auto Shop: Girls Added to Relay Carnival for the First Time; Waf Wears 12 Hats in Tactical Unit; Woman in Command; County Girls Allowed to Join Teams; Girl Pages Allowed to Carry U.S. Flag; Priesthood Sought by Widow (age 76); and Soap Box Derby to Accept Girls.

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By ELLEN GOLD

They had created an atmosphere about themselves that hid the cramped clutter of the apartment. It was a small place, but the ceiling was high and sometimes when they were home at night, the East River's breezes billowed the deep red drapes in the room, bringing with them through the wide window a city smell that made them wild to be outdoors and near the water. Naomi tried to keep the household needs behind an oriental screen, ornate with reds and golds. Sayre hung more red drapery across the small hall between the big room and the bathroom that served as a kitchen.

Usually when they were home the couch was opened to their bed and they would be there drinking wine, looking from their books to the mantelpiece draped with a purple cloth above the fireplace, now bricked in. The moon could follow the breeze inside their window, falling from the sky across a thin strip of Riverside Park and finally onto their toes if the lights were off. Sometimes they found themselves making love at the foot of the bed to catch the light on each other's bodies as they moved in chase of each other.

Sayre was imposing. She would come in from the fresh spring city streets still in her only coat, a big brown fake fur. The bright colors of her dresses and scarves emphasized the breadth and height of her body. Her decisive movements, her carefree walk, made her a giant to Naomi in daylight. When they walked through the park Sayre seemed to be bounding, leading, protecting. She was a surprise to Naomi each time they threw off their street clothes and sometimes met.

And it was Sayre who insisted they have their wine in delicate stemmed glasses. She took the responsibility of pouring for them from the gallon jugs Naomi's smaller hands could lift but not control. It was Sayre who had put fine embroidery on their bargain store pillow cases, and who chose Naomi's new flowing clothes, often white or pale yellow, sheer, as room flowers, Greek togas. Naomi wondered if she had brought anything to the apartment at all besides her small body and worshipping mind, both too to be cared for by this force she found more powerful than freedom. Sayre even patched the worn spots of her dungarees for her with crazy quilt materials, carpeting pieces— even that last vestige of Naomi's street life was ornamented by her saint, as she called Sayre.

Down in the bars where they sometimes went Naomi preferred to stay at their table while Sayre, in white pants usually on those occasions, with shirts of bright orange or some homemade print, danced until she had to stop and save her energies for Naomi. Sometimes Naomi danced with a guict gayboy or one of Sayre's old lovers. They would tell Sayre that Naomi was an elf, or a child, and they envied her, but Sayre would protest that Naomi was simply her strength, her life blood and certainly no child. Then they would sit close together and watch the people look for one another, often resting with them when discouraged.

That would be on a Saturday night, or a Friday, and the next morning Naomi would pull Sayre from their bed to go to the park. There they saw old people and children and some grass, some trees and finally the river. Naomi liked to buy cheese and French bread on the way and with a couple of cokes they would have their breakfast, shivering a little, by the river.

They talked, yes. They worked, too. They listened to records and planned to go to Paris. They set violets over the mantelpiece. They saw art films and sometimes stood in the opera watching the people around them. Most of their energies were invested in the apartment and in the bars. The darkness, the drinking the physical were what held them until one day Sayre went to Paris, leaving a note that she had to find her mind. She thought it had preceded her there. She said she wanted to see the pale flowers of Paris surrounded by the city's passionate colors. She said she did not know why she could not take Naomi, but that it was better.

Naomi tore the drapes down from the kitchen and rolled herself in them, rocking in pain on the bed until she could stand the color around her no more. Turning to face the white sheets she found their embroidered pillow cases. She pulled a jug of wine onto the bed with her and laid it sideways to her lips. She tasted Sayre's mouth and felt the wet wine staining the sheet red beneath her.

Lesbian

By GENE DAMON

[Special Note: Promises and Apologies. After this column was completed, typed, the whole issue finished and in the hands of production, it was pointed out to me that it's really not a "Lesbian" column at all. I'd already more or less mentioned this (see later in the column) with some explanation. The point is that next issue the whole column (which will be much longer) is devoted to the last seven new lesbian novels... and there are a lot of them including some very major studies. So until then, forgive me. Long time readers know I'd rather review lesbian literature than edit this magazine... so my heart's in the right place, readers, at least.]

We start off with a good fun book and one that ought to be useful as well, WOMEN'S SONGBOOK, compiled by Judith Busch and Laura X, available from Judy Busch, Oral Herstory Library, 2325 Oak Street, Berkeley, California 94708, for $1 per copy plus postage... book rate postage is 14 cents and first class is 65 cents. The book contains 23 songs, drawings, photos, and a chord chart. One of the songs is a Chinese song dating from 718 B.C., but most are contemporary. Testing them out in true fashion, Gene Damon and Lee Stuart spent part of a Sunday playing and (hopefully) singing them... some of them are quite delightful; some of them aren't. All are fun. WE DON'T NEED THE MEN by Malvina Reynolds is especially delightful, and the full page photograph of her is excellent as well. Well worth buying at the ridiculously low price. The back cover, featuring one of Sarah Teasdale's "Songs for Myself," is not to be missed.

The 27 bound volumes of the unprinted diaries of Virginia Woolf are now a part of the Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library. Ms. Woolf kept her diary for 26 years... the last entry was dated four days before she walked into the sea in 1941 for a very final swim. Hopefully someday they will be edited and printed... by a woman.

Atheneum Books includes a novel based on the 1917 suffragist movement in its spring books for children. They mark it for the 10-14 year group. We hope it has no stereotyped ending, but trust one of the collectives working with children's literature will check it out. Title is NEVER JAM, TODAY, and author is Carole Bolton.

Jill Johnston, the VILLAGE VOICE columnist we talk about in these pages all the time, has a collection out, MARMA-
Boston DOB has a magazine which was formerly called MAIDEN VOYAGE and is now called FOCUS. Despite the poor name choice, it is a good small magazine, with increasingly less obsession with Lesbians alone and more knowledge that indeed, all women must stand together. Their Volume 2, Number 4 issue, March, 1971, marks their change to women's liberation interests, though the cover still states it is a "journal for gay women." Not so, and rightly so. Cost is $5 per year and address is Box 221, Prudential Center Station, Boston, Mass. 02119.

Sometimes people write to us and complain we don't review them. We review interesting magazines when we get copies. If you want to be reviewed, make sure we see your material . . . otherwise, no complaint.

The above reminds us to reiterate again. If you read and enjoy THE LADDER, and you know anyone who might but who does not see us, you are cheating them if you don't tell them about us . . . and you are cheating us, 'cause we might have to stop publishing . . . and you are cheating yourself, because if we aren't around, who will do our work on your behalf!

WOMEN'S STUDY COURSES are big news around the country. Many of these courses began with materials from the WOMEN'S HISTORY LIBRARY (also called WOMEN'S HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER) at 2325 Oak Street, Berkeley, California 94708. You can obtain a continuing CATALOG of the materials used, course outlines and various term papers available for $12 from the WOMEN'S HISTORY LIBRARY. A few rather strong words of praise need to be heaped on the head of Laura X and a few friends who have kept this historical project going since International Women's Day, 1969. TAKE the time to write to this address, asking about whatever interests you in the women's liberation field or whatever would help you with your work. Do include a stamped self-addressed envelope and do make your request as concise and to the point as possible. This library, center, whatever you want to call it, is housed in Laura X's home and is a tax-exempt, non-profit labor of love. It is the only unsupported (by the enemy) women's library in the country . . . give it something even if you don't NEED ANYTHING from it . . . even a spare buck would help. Like all women they are terribly poor. This is a personal recommendation . . . they have helped me, helped THE LADDER . . . now let's support them. O.K.? And while doing it, accord them the same patience and kindness you accord us, for few do the labor and many benefit. This has always been the way of the world, but it's time women changed all that. We can . . . there are enough of us.

Long time LADDER readers will recall mention in times past of the first known Lesbian novel in American literature, ORMOND, OR THE SECRET WITNESS, which was published in 1799. But what we did not know, and you may also not know, is that Charles Brockden Brown also did a rather strong polemic on the rights of women. This is ALCUIN, called a novel but more of a political piece of work. ALCUIN came out in 1798 . . . or rather, the first half of it came out. The printer refused to print the second half, being disturbed by the implications of women's rights. Not until 1815 was this second half published (and it is literally unknown); and now, at long last, we have ALCUIN. The book was published clearly as a labor of love by a small publishing firm, Grossman (N.Y.), 1971. There is no doubt that this is must reading for anyone in the women's liberation, women's rights movement. We fear too few will read it . . . and this is sad. The blunt makes an interesting error . . . a humorously chauvinistic one at that. They call it "the first sustained and earnest argument for women's rights in the United States, also the first complete edition of the first published work of America's first professional writer." Not so, as a recent issue of EVERYWOMAN pointed out . . . America's first professional writer was a woman, Sarah Wentworth Morton, who published a novel on January 22, 1789 . . . well before Mr. Charles Brockden Brown.

MOVING OUT is a "journal" from Wayne Women's Liberation (Wayne State University, 331 University Center Bldg., Detroit, Michigan 48202). The first issue of the planned 3-times-a-year publication was March, 1971. Contents in Number One are very very uneven, but beyond that some of it is very good. Poems by Pamela Shiman give the only indication that yes, indeed, there might even be a stray Lesbian or two loose in the Detroit area. It is, actually, in the area of poetry that the journal best succeeds, with fine material by LADDER artist and writer Adele A. Chatelin, Nancy Hennes, the above mentioned Ms. Shiman, Judy Annquist and several other promising poets. No cost is listed for this . . . but write and ask, it's worth it . . . and if it grows, it should be supported.

Low-keyed and marvelous, "A Reprieve," by Frank Tuohy, in his collection FINGERS IN THE DOOR, N.Y., Scribner's, 1970, treats of a brother in a hospital who is a real Loser. He is not homosexual (he doesn't know it); she is a Lesbian (she knows it) . . . and he is old and dying (they both know that). He doesn't get along with her or her friend . . . and they don't like living together, How Mr. Tuohy charts their lives . . . well, read this one. With the possible exception of the magazine APHRA (whose insistently heterosexual tone will be irritating to most adults), there are few women's liberation magazines or journals of high quality. However, the magazine THE SECOND WAVE, with the first issue, Spring, 1971, just out (as this is written), promises to be an intelligent addition to women's liberation material. It deals very well with articles, less so with news, moderately well with poetry . . . and it has some excellent special features. First issue has a hard hitting article by Martha Shelley, "Lesbians in the Women's Liberation Movement," which also has something to say about the generally inept way ALL women are being treated as they go hopefully (and sometimes timidly) towards women's liberation goals. Their address is P.O. Box 303, Kenmore Square Station, Boston, Mass. 02215. Cost is $3 a year: plans are to issue 4 each year.

A juvenile title, marked for the 12-14 year old group, MASKS, by Jay Bennett Watts, 1971, is clearly a minor Lesbian title. The tie-in between the narrator/author, Amanda, and her mysterious Jennifer, is confused with the same sort of psychological split personality nonsense that marks the marvelous Shirley Jackson Lesbian classic, HANGSAMAN, and the book, subtitled "A Love Story," is much for the same audience. It is hard to imagine it for the ordinary 12-14 year old . . . but then, it is not directed to the ordinary. This one, being intended (?) for the young, is given a cursory establishment ending . . . but it's a milestone in juvenile literature. Remem-
her how bored you were with books you were allowed to read at 12.

Ah, QUEEN ANNE is being visited again... this time by author David Green, N.Y., Scribner's, 1971. Yet another version of the triangular love affair between Anne, the powerful, beautiful and ambitious Sarah Churchill, and the "mean" chambermaid, Abigail Hill... the latter was undoubtedly doing a good deal of laughing up her sleeve. Too bad history hasn't left anything to tell us how SHE felt about it all. (The November, 1964, issue of THE LADDER has a long article on the love affair between Anne and Sarah.)

(For the readers who pointed out to us that the New York TIMES has proclaimed Willa Cather a Lesbian: Yes, 'tis true, and we knew it all the time: just haven't had time to work on the subject. And for the reader who asked if either Vern Niven or Lennox Strong would be kind enough to write about her for us, the answer is no. But there will be a biographical article on Cather in a future issue.)

We are working on a list of famous Lesbians, a sort of Lesbian "herstory" to borrow the phrase used by various west coast feminist groups (notably Varda One of EVERYW0MAN and Laura X of WOMEN'S PAGE). We are prompted by two things... we are tired of being "left out" of such listings on the one hand and more and more irritated when a woman is listed as ostensibly heterosexual. When you see what a proud heritage we do have historically, you'll get the point. The list will run in a future issue (or issues), and we welcome suggestions from readers. No living persons will be included, of course, and no one for whom only "intuitional" proofs exist.

Much comment critically and otherwise on the new movie THE CONFORMIST, which is based on Moravia's novel of the same name... the faithful will recall that it has a very substantial Lesbian subplot which has, apparently, been carried over in the movie. Genet of NEW YORKER commented favorably about the movie in our regular feature, "Letter from Paris," March 13, 1971, and the March 31 issue of the same magazine carried a more or less rave review.

Victoria Vidal and Patricia Horan's play, GOD BLESS GOD, SHE NEEDS IT, was recently tried out in the New Haven area. It is rumored to be on the way to Broadway. The musical (Ms. Vidal is the composer, Ms. Horan the author/lyricist) is about a Presidential election and a women's revolution that stops it. Talent runs in families... Vieki Vidal is Gore's cousin.

Two movies by women... WANDA, starring and directed by Barbara Loden, and A NEW LEAF, starring and partially directed by Elaine May, are around just now. Haven't seen either, but will, and you probably should too.

A new "helper" provides this about ARIFFE, new novel by A.B. Guthrie, Jr., Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1970: Conflict of Eastern Victorianism and the turn of the century west is an atypical "western" novel. This is a good picture of life in a small western town at that time. The Lesbian element is provided by a school teacher, Miss Carson, who arranges for a young Indian girl to enroll in the local school. She then provides a home for the girl. "Observed" in a compromising position with the girl by the local peeping tom and confronted with the information, she sends the girl back to the reservation and commits suicide. Very sympathetic view presented of the teacher, but the trite "leave them dead or dying" bit is from a Lesbian of another time. Mr. Guthrie was obviously getting on the "Lesbian handwagon" to add spice to his book.

Future reviews will include a new biography of Gertrude Stein which more clearly details her personal life than any prior work, a new find from the classics, and a review of Donn Teal's THE GAY MILITANTS, which clearly shows the reasons women are deserting gay liberation for women's liberation in droves.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The very very rare important copy of every book that includes a novel now selling at $7.50, which seems high but isn't, not for a classic Gertrude Stein major Lesbian novel, THINGS AS THEY ARE, which was first titled (by her) QUOD ERAT DEMON STRANDUM, has been reprinted in FERN HURST, Q.E.D., AND OTHER EARLY WRITINGS, N.Y., Liveright, 1971. Cost is $7.50, which seems high but isn't, not for a book that includes a novel now selling at $25 (if you can find a copy, and you very definitely cannot). The history of THINGS AS THEY ARE, from its writing date of 1903 to its initial publication in 1950 by a small private press in Vermont, is a monument to the history of how great works get kept out of circulation through fear. Great as Gertrude Stein was, she did not dare publish so explicit a proof of her own Lesbianism in her lifetime.

The increasing problem of having time to review books for this column has been partially solved by the addition of two qualified "helpers", both librarians and both book women and LADDER supporters. One has provided the following: WE DANCE AND SING, by Richard Doughtery, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1971, a fictionalized biography of the Malloy family, an ex-show business couple, down on their luck and talent, who settle in the husband's hometown in Western New York in the early part of this century. Among the townfolk is a Lesbian couple. One character destroyed seventeen paintings in an instant of self hate. Alas. But, listen: you cannot imagine how much THE LADDER helped me. I mean, I really began thinking about how the concept of art (EVERY concept) has been created by the male, and now is the time for new concepts to be discovered... so I can say, "fuck you" to all the little male chauvinistic ghosts who have followed me from the Academy.

Adele A. Chatelin
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Gene:

I have a rotten self image - due to many factors: (1) family... ugh! (2) The "Academy", mainly. At the Academy (in Philadelphia) instructors (all male and VERY chauvinistic, except one female instructor who was stuck teaching a very dull cast drawing class, although she is one of the best painters in the East) used to kick in (literally) paintings done by students whose work they did not like. We - female students - were told to leave the art field and have babies instead, since that IS the function of Woman, etc., blah, blah, blah. You know, women can't paint because we lack a basic "something". Of course, they never said WHAT... balls, I presume. I got this attitude every day. There was the class of 100 students where one instructor butchered a student's ego (and self-image) in front of everyone... especially the women got it. I completed the four year course in two years... thank God!... and left. Since then, I have had crisis after crisis of self doubt. Then there was a psychiatric case-worker who lived across the hall from us. He was gay and very ashamed of it and he scared me out of my mind until I began thinking that everything I painted was a phallic symbol or vaginal teeth. I
thanks again for your encouragement and have done poems, articles, etc. but always considered myself “not very good.” In fact, though I loved putting things together,” I was always afraid to even try out for a school newspaper. Now that I’ve become involved with women’s liberation, I’ve thrown myself into working on our newsletter and I love it.

I will subscribe to THE LADDER and also order back issues, as soon as I set aside the money. It was exciting to see the coverage given Women’s Movement activities and the support shown for them. I hope we are able to give and share as equally within the Women’s Movement. Within very politically-oriented groups such as ours, there is often a real and tragic lack of enjoyable relaxing and personal contacts, free of all the business, work, and political pressure.

Our meeting should be interesting as we’ll have several women from our local WLM who are sympathetic toward and interested in Lesbianism but basically “straight” by experience and several Lesbians who are very unpolitical and not part of any women’s group (they saw the newsletter and asked to come). It’s funny when you feel emotionally Lesbian yet have no physical experience, and we all feel awkward and adolescent, like we have to grow up all over again. I’m sure we can all learn a lot from each other. I only wish my best friend (we’ve loved each other four years but can’t figure out how to confront the “physical” aspect of it—so we have avoided it) was here to participate (She’s in the States—it’s a contrast, we both live with men). I know I will never fully forgive this society for depriving me (at least temporarily) of my freedom, possibilities, and choices without even letting me know they were there at all. This is Woman’s biggest oppression—that she is brainwashed into believing she has no oppression—there’s only that she has no freedom of choice, but that there are no other choices (or if there are, the others are negative reaction to the one central choice we all are born to “make” and live).

I’ll keep you informed of how the educational meetings progress and any papers or literature that comes out of it. Thanks again for your encouragement and the opportunity to tell somebody my own feelings about some of the issues. For a long time, I was afraid to admit to anyone that I could love another woman in a deep overwhelming and permanent way. It seemed so odd. I think there are more of us who felt that (and hid or suppressed it) than anyone has guessed. Now that we are getting together, maybe we can share our fears, dreams, and future.

Best of luck on your magazine! It’s really great. When I read it, I felt like crying because it was so proud—women should be proud of what they are and can be.

A Canadian Sister

Dear Gene Damon:

I hope the married sister doesn’t need the prestige of a Kate Millett to be accepted. After reading Ms. McCormick’s article in the February/March, 1971, issue, I’m a little confused. I am not an Ethel Kennedy fan either, but I wonder if Ms. McCormick thought to really look beyond the Mr. Kenneth hair-do or the idle vacant stare, and take a count as to how many of these women might really be her sister in heart and soul, need and desire, to give and to accept. The blank stare might just be the question “How the hell did I get myself into this, and how do I get out?” No answer, just silence.

Considering the religious upbringing most women over 30 years of age today would be very interesting if an honest count could be taken to discover the true sexuality of the over-30 suburban wife and mother.

D.W.
Small Midwestern Town

April 14, 1971

Dear Gene Damon:

The Library Administration Division of the American Library Association recently conducted a salary survey among ALA members in all types of libraries. A report of that survey is in the April issue of AMERICAN LIBRARIES.

Of those librarians responding to the survey, 2778 were men and 9030 were women. With a ration of more than three to one in the profession, some might expect women to command the better salaries. Not so. The average salary for a man with a Ph.D. was listed as $19,649. The average salary for a woman with the same degree is only $15,492. This same difference held true down the scale through those people holding less than a Master’s degree.

It is ridiculous to think that a field so dominated by women would tolerate this.

One can only hope that those ALA members who work so diligently for the rights of various minority groups will see fit to labor for equal rights of the women within their own organization.

Jan Watson
Denver, Colorado

Dear Gene Damon,

There are two rock groups which all women who read THE LADDER will want to be aware of. The first is one which comes from the West Coast and has been together about five years. It is called “Joy of Cooking” and consists of two women who sing and play instruments, write the music and lyrics, and do the arrangements. On the record they are backed up by three men; their significance is obvious just in the fact that the men back up the women. Terry Garthwaite and Toni Brown, are basically the group and all its dynamic energy comes from them. Listening to their voices is not only an incredibly beautiful musical experience, but also a message to all of us about how good women can be together. They intertwine, give each other room, and generally accomplish things musically that I would expect only to hear silently in making love with a woman. If that is not enough of a recommendation, I would like to add that their appeal transcends that of rock music. Women who regularly do not listen to rock have raved about the recording. Buy it, listen to it, love it. They sing to all of us. It is on a Capitol label, and the album bears the same title as the group.

The second group does not have an album and may never have one because their audience, as well as their mission, is derived from Women’s Liberation. The New Haven Women’s Liberation Rock Band is worth at least one hundred male groups. They begin their sets and most numbers with raps from the members of the group on their purpose and reason for existence.

That is, of course, to be a voice of the women’s liberation movement. They feel that rock music is male dominated and male oriented. They cite examples like the Rolling Stones’ “Under My Thumb” as the rock that is being played today. They are all too accurate in their analysis of rock. Their lyrics are concerned with women and their songs range from militance to gentle dancing music. I know of no time when they have failed to turn on an audience more than any other group I have ever seen.

Everyone dances. If you are in the north or middle eastern part of the country, you are going to see them or bring them into your city. They are an experience we can all appreciate and are, hopefully, just the beginning of a trend in all music.

B.W.
Elmhurst, N.Y.

Dear Gene Damon,

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L.F.
New York

(Editors Note: Liberation News Service has been circulating an article about the New Haven Women’s Liberation Rock Band which includes their request for songs from women. Their address is New Haven Women’s Liberation Rock Band, 1504 Boulevard, New Haven, Conn. 06511. Also like to add our recommendation concerning joy of cooking which is really something special. This is one album you’ll keep forever.)

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It is ridiculous to think that a field so dominated by women would tolerate this.

Dear Gene Damon,

I have not written to you in a very long time. Not since before the last N.A.C.O. meeting. You made it quite clear that the entire idea of male-female co-op efforts in the Gay Movement turned you off. At that time, I am afraid I suffered from a familiar disease combination: Idealism-Naiveté. But it is amazing, Gene, how quickly reality makes itself obvious. A Radicalesbians group has formed in Buffalo. I have been involved in it almost from its inception and have learned the real meaning of Consciousness-Raising. The sense of community, the sense of strength, the sense of power, are things I never imagined could exist. It has truly been a personal revelation in the most profound sense of the word.

It has also laid a heavy trip on my personal life. My lover — a male-identified woman — and I, are parting company after almost five years. It is a great tragedy, particularly for her, since she feels that she has done nothing “wrong”. But I can no longer relate to someone who thinks...
women are second, silly, subservient and cannot achieve real closeness like "guys" or even like "bitches". It is not a matter of relating to transvestism (clothes neither make the man nor the woman), it is rather a matter of mental and emotional transsexuality which gives me the feeling that there is a man in the house — and that's not where it's at!! Up until very recently I thought I was part of the movement predominantly to help my brothers that I saw being harassed on the streets ... but no longer. It's my issue; my sisters; my flesh and guts that are being stepped on, and it's a different scene. A woman who feels profoundly the need for communication with womanhood, both her own and other's, cannot be expected to tolerate a dichotomous situation. It can only lead to mutual disgust.

Therefore, revelation has caused expansion, self-identity, communion, and sadness. Hopefully it will benefit us all. If she stays with the Movement, maybe it can happen to her. I pray for it.

But on a happier note, the Radicalesbians group has been a beautiful experience. Some of us are thinking of starting a Women's Band (I play electric 12-string now), and possibly a women's boutique — things by women for women, with the proceeds going to the rent and the Movement.

I have not left the group I belonged to before this change in my attitude. But through that kind of facility, I do a great deal of public speaking — I have a lot of patience to be heard. For women, gay women in particular. People ask about women, lesbians. Men cannot answer those questions (even though they often presume to do so!) I feel a duty, along with some other sisters, to maintain that communication and make use of that inroad and facility. I am also starting male-female dialogue on a small scale for the purpose of providing speakers who have an understanding of each other, all the aspects of sexuality, and the Movement in all its forms.

But priorities have certainly been re-evaluated since I wrote to you last. Robin Morgan, Shulamith Firestone, the published work of their womanhood have made a profound change; an emerging consciousness. I wish I had known these things when I last wrote to you.

"FOR SISTERHOOD"
BUFFALO, N.Y.

(Editor's Note: N.A.C.H.O. is the North American Conference of Homo­ philic Organizations — a primarily male homosexual affiliation. Lesbians are moving out of male homosexual groups much as heterosexual women deserted "Movement" groups to form Women's Liberation.)

FUCK YOU, "BROTHERS!"

or

YET ANOTHER WOMAN LEAVES
THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT
By NANCY TUCKER

All right guys, gentlemen, "broth­ ers"... I am leaving at last. I'm not going home to my kitchen to talk. And I'm not going out to misspend what's left of my youth in the bars. (Why should I? They're male oriented, too.) I'm just leaving.

Leaving because this organization and this movement offer me nothing. Why should I be interested in homosexual rights — they're based on (male) homosexual problems: entrapment, police harassment, blackmail, tea room assignations, venereal diseases. Christ, I can't relate to that kind of shit; it has no meaning whatsoever for me.

I'm leaving because I'm disgusted. I can't relate to people (read that men) who need people (read that fetish objects). Snow queens, dinge queens, chicken queens, muscle queens, queen queens... the list goes on and on. Pick your favorite, or add your own to the list. I see this fetish thing in every male homosexual I know. I don't see it in women. Thank God WE see people as people, not as objects.

I'm leaving because I'm tired of coping with massive male egos, egos which cannot comprehend how anyone could want to have nothing to do with a male-dominated movement. If you cannot understand why I wish to withdraw, then my "liberated" brother, you are part of the problem.

Everywhere I turn, my senses are bombarded with the most appalling crudenesses. I'm sick of watching skag drags parading up and down, prancing and dancing in their "finery" and mocking me and my sex with every step. I'm tired of hearing nobody referred to as "Miss" when he's done a no-no: "Miss Terry, well she's always late." "Miss Chuck, she can't seem to get herself together." "Hush your
mouth, Miss Cade."

Crap! The incredibly blatant sexism of the GLF could be told in many volumes.

I'm tired of being called "girl". I ceased being a "girl" several years ago. I am on my own now, I support myself, and I conduct myself in an adult manner — I deserve to be called a woman. I have many more claims on that title than many of you do to the appellation "man."

I can't even withdraw into homophile literature without being offended. Naked "stud" on every page. And those ads! "Wanted — triple amputee for photo exchange." "Want cauc. male, over 8 inches, for Greek pleasures." "Black stud needed as master for willing white slave." And on and on, ad nauseam.

The ads abound with fetishism. Whatever happened to people, huh?

Is it any wonder why there have been so few women in the movement? And why the numbers of women are plummeting?

Oh, but in our Washington, D.C. GLF there have been women. Yes, there have, and they've gone, too. How many can you count who have attended more than two or three meetings? (Not that I really expect you to be able to do it. Why should you be expected to remember mere women? After all, if you can't go to bed with them, they're of no use whatsoever.)

There aren't even women at the dances.

But the fact is that there are more lesbians than homosexuals.

You faggots, and I use that word with every ounce of malice I possess, could care less about women. And you will suffer for it.

Every time you put down a woman, you drive the knife just that much deeper into your own gut. You are committing suicide by your depreciation of the opposite sex.

Isn't the worst thing that can be said about a man is that "He's acting just like a woman." Don't you all strive to rid yourselves of effeminacy, for it's wrong to seem like a woman. Woman is not nigger, gentleman, but as long as you continue to believe it is so, you rip open your own bellies.

Gay Liberation will never succeed until Women's Liberation succeeds. Your fate hinges on that of women, like it or not. Male homosexuals will not be equal until women are equal.

And the wars which so many of you so violently (notice that word) oppose will not cease until such time as women, the lovers of peace, have an effective voice in the governments of the world.

Liberation? Gay Liberation? Liberate yourselves, my friends. For myself, I don't need you or it.

(Nancy Tucker has been the Washington, D.C. area correspondent for the L.A. ADVOCATE. . . . and active in the gay movement for many years. Like most women she is deserting the homophile movement because of its uselessness to Lesbians. Nancy has long been a "friend" to THE LADDER, and we are happy to run this "farewell".)

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