

# Redstockings

## First Literature List and a Sampling of Its Materials

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## INTRODUCTION

As you can see from comparing the literature list (in the FBI file) with what's available in this packet, not everything that Redstockings chose to distribute through its first literature list is included in the following pages. Materials mentioned on the list which are not in the packet but that you can find in other Redstockings publications are below.

"Redstockings Rap on Abortion" by Susan Brownmiller is available in the "Archives for Action Packet," documents from and responses to two Redstockings abortion speakouts, 1969 & 1989. Available for free reading on [www.redstockings.org](http://www.redstockings.org).

*Women: a Bibliography* by Cindy Cisler. Many editions, beginning with the first in 1969, are available on microfilm in *The Redstockings Organizational Collection, Part I: The Birth of the Women's Liberation Movement: Pioneers and Their Sources* (Gale, A Cengage Company, Primary Source Media).

*Toward a Female Liberation Movement* and *Notes from the First Year* are available separately under those titles as free reading on the Redstockings website: [www.redstockings.org](http://www.redstockings.org).

*Sexual Politics* (the pamphlet) by Kate Millet is available as free reading on a Redstockings archival blog [womenwhatistobedone.wordpress.com](http://womenwhatistobedone.wordpress.com) (go to "Readings" and "S. Firestone Conference 2013").

Kathie Sarachild's "Feelings" and "Feminist Consciousness-Raising and Organizing" in the Packet are available in the Appendix to *Feminist Revolution*, as is the "Principles." *Feminist Revolution* is available to read for free on the Redstockings website: [www.redstockings.org](http://www.redstockings.org).

Corrective note: Ellen Willis's article "Consumerism and Women" is not a reprint from *Mademoiselle*. The literature list states otherwise. It was first distributed at a Redstockings action on June 23, 1969 and later reprinted in a shortened form in *Ramparts* magazine, Vol. 8, No. 12 (June 1970), 13-16.

Clarification: Redstockings first published the literature list in late fall, 1969. The date of May 28, 1969 on page 1 indicates the first document in the files of FBI "SAC, NEW YORK (100-164665)" and not the date of the literature list that follows. We've included this early page to show some of the overall context. The literature list on pages 2 & 3 is a photocopy the FBI made of the Redstockings original. The slashes and handwritten notations were added by the FBI.

Further information about Redstockings is available at [www.redstockings.org](http://www.redstockings.org) and on the Redstockings Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/Redstockings](http://www.facebook.com/Redstockings).

You can also write to us at:

Redstockings of the Women's Liberation Movement  
PO Box 744, Stuyvesant Station  
New York, NY 10009

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

DATE: MAY 28 1969

FROM : SAC, NEW YORK (100-164665) (P)

ST-101 RECORDED

SUBJECT: WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT  
INFORMATION CONCERNING - MISCELLANEOUS  
(OO: CG)

*[Handwritten signature and initials]*

ReNYlet to Bureau and Chicago, dated 4/4/69.

[REDACTED SECTION]

B1

[REDACTED SECTION]

B1

- 2-Bureau (RM)
- 2-Chicago (RM)
- 1-New York (100-165887)
- 1-New York

REC-10

100-453233-5

JRN:jag Deleted Copy Sent \_\_\_\_\_ JUN 2 1969  
(6) by Letter Dated \_\_\_\_\_  
Per FOIPA Request \_\_\_\_\_

59 JUN 27 1969

59 JUN 26 1969

INT. SEC.



NY 100-164665

The literature listed below is available from:

REDSTOCKINGS

of the Women's Liberation Movement  
P.O. Box 748 Stuyvesant Station  
New York, New York 10009

Please indicate desired quantity:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Abortion Counseling Sheet - free - (1 cent each in bulk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Redstockings Manifesto - free - (1 cent each in bulk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Redstockings Rap on Abortion - Susan ~~Brown~~ Miller - 10 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Women; a Bibliography - Cindy Oisler - 25 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ What ~~Can~~ Be Learned; A Critique of our Miss America Protest  
Carol ~~Manisch~~ - 15 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Towards a Female Liberation Movement - Beverly ~~Vones~~ and Judith ~~Brown~~ -  
25 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Man-Hating - Pam ~~Kearon~~ - 10 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Politics of Housework - Pat ~~Mainardi~~ - 15 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sexual Politics - Kate Millet - 10 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Politics of "Free Love"; Forced Fornication (reprinted from the  
Guardian) - 10 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Consumerism and Women - Ellen Willis (reprint from Mademoiselle) - 15 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ A Report on the New Feminism - Ellen Willis (reprint from Mademoiselle)  
15 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Women and the New Left - Ellen Willis (reprint from the Guardian) - 10 cents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notes from the First Year (1968) 50 cents for women  
New York Radical Women \$1.00 for men
- \_\_\_\_\_ A Woman Scientist Speaks - Diane Narak - 15 cents
- Buttons: SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL - 25 cents
- Banner: FEMINISM LIVES - (silkscreened on cloth - 2ft. by 6in.) - \$1.00

US

NY 100-164605

**Packets:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Ideas For Forming a Group - 25 cents  
(More complete handbook in progress)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Feelings (Intuition and Consciousness Raising)  
Kathie Sarachild (1 cent each in bulk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Resistances to Consciousness - Irene Peslikis  
(2 cents each in bulk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Feminist Consciousness Raising and Organizing  
Kathie Sarachild (2 cents each in bulk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Protective Rules for Consciousness Raising (1 cent each in bulk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Some Questions Used in Groups (2 cents each in bulk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Principles (1 cent each in bulk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Defining Reality - Lynn O'Connor (2 cents each in bulk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ False Consciousness - Jennifer Gardner (1 cent each in bulk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ What is Consciousness Raising - Barbara Kaminsky (2 cents in bulk)
- NO LCC*

Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the above order

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

REDSTOCKINGS  
of the

WOMENS LIBERATION MOVEMENT  
P. O. Box 748 Stuyvesant Station, New York, N. Y. 10003

Dear Sister,

We are glad to hear from you. We are sure you will find the Woman's Liberation Movement relevant to your experience, thoughts and feelings. Ours is a mass movement. We plan to reach every woman in the United States.

It has been fifty years since we women fought for and won the right to vote. But this was only a small step towards achieving equal human rights for both sexes. Fifty years have passed and it is still a man's world. At home or on the job, women are kept at the bottom, kept in their "place."

Education for women is still terribly limited. We are virtually kept out and kept ignorant of all the technological fields on which our lives depend. If our competence is finally recognized, we are then considered a threat, not an asset. We may be "free" now to get an education, but for a woman it is still "smart to be dumb".

Supposedly, we are free now to work, to have some money of our own, some economic independence. But we get paid so little when we work (half the salary that men make yearly) that we might as well be right back in the home. Even when we spend all day on a job, we end up doing housework anyway.

We women didn't even get free speech when we won the vote. When a woman voices her just grievances, she is called a bitch. We are shut up or shut off just about every time we open our mouths. Men either dismiss what we say, or dismiss us. And even with women, many of the topics which are most troubling to us are off limits to discussion.

The most fundamental rights to life and body are still denied women. Laws against abortion in every state force us to bear children against our will and cause thousands of us to die each year.

Well, we women are fighting for our freedom to the very finish this time. We will attack every law, every custom, every institution, every group and every person who stands in the way of all women or one woman obtaining full human rights, liberties and respect.

Our only chance for a real victory, a permanent one, lies in breaking down all the barriers which now divide women and building a worldwide sisterhood of women. When we have unity, we will have STRENGTH; for in the power of solidarity, lies the greatest weapon we have.

We hope you will join with us! For those of us in New York we hold introductory meetings the first Sunday of every month at ~~87 East 3rd Street~~, New York City. We will also be listed in the New York City telephone directory under Woman's Liberation and Redstockings.

We look forward to meeting and talking with you. December 7 at 1:00 pm

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL!

509 E. 5<sup>th</sup> St. Apt 3R

REDSTOCKINGS For January meeting call  
Barbara - MA 5 27 31  
or Joyce - 477 5760  
or Barbara - 254 - 2778

General comments:

- 1 Be as sure as you can that you ARE pregnant before seeking help from a counseling service. Try to have had a chemical pregnancy test and get an internal examination from a doctor. Take the written results with you (a full "pregnancy workup" is unnecessary).
- 2 All services should try to determine whether you have the grounds--and the time!--for a legal abortion in your state or in another state: be sure to ask your doctor about this, even before asking the service. Practices may not always agree with laws. Your local Planned Parenthood clinic may also be able to advise you on this (some now help you find a sympathetic doctor for a pregnancy examination, and some even do referrals themselves).
- 3 Avoid using the word "abortion" in phone conversations with the services or with the doctors they refer you to; say you "have a problem", or something similar that still conveys your message. "Comparison shop": this may be the most important purchase of your life.
- 4 Some services have been able to force prices down somewhat, but of course they are still exhorbitant: in the United States, \$350 - \$1000 (costlier for pregnancies beyond 11 or 12 weeks); in Mexico, \$200 - \$500, plus travel; in Puerto Rico, \$600 - \$1000, plus travel; in Japan, \$100 or so, plus TRAVEL (the only one of these countries where abortion on request is almost completely legal); in England, \$200 - \$400, plus travel. Do not go to a foreign country without having made firm arrangements in advance, preferably through one of the services.
- 5 You will help other women tremendously if you will report your experiences--whether bad or decent--to your service or other referral source: too many women expect the worst and accept it passively. Providing feedback, and working actively for total repeal of the laws and for proper, reasonably-priced medical care for all women, is a major responsibility of those who join this "community"--to which perhaps one-fourth of American women belong. Change is up to YOU!

**Abortion Counseling Service (ACS)** P. O. Box 9199, San Diego, California 92109 (714) 233 - 4515  
 Run by a group of young women only for San Diego County residents; helps with legal abortions in that county. Arranges for discreet pregnancy tests and consultations with sympathetic physicians. Located at 1369 "B" Street, San Diego. ACS has an excellent newsletter that could serve as a model for other groups; \$2.00 to be on the newsletter mailing list.

**Association to Repeal Abortion Laws (ARAL)** P. O. Box 6083, San Francisco, California 94101 (415) 387 - 6480  
 Patricia Maginnis and Rowena Gurner are the guiding lights of this service. For a \$5.00 donation to ARAL they will send you very detailed advice and a list of abortion specialists--mostly in Mexico, but also in Puerto Rico and Japan. The list should always be freshly ordered: it is updated constantly for your safety. Help is available up through 7 months. A post-abortion care center and classes in various aspects of abortion are other ARAL activities.

**Clergy Consultation Service (on Abortion / on Problem Pregnancies / etc.)**  
 These services are located in several cities and are run by groups of ministers and rabbis. Each service generally counsels with women from its state or area only. Clergy services will soon be in operation in Chicago, Montreal, and other cities: write the National Clergy Consultation Service on Abortion, 55 Washington Square South, New York City 10012; or call, weekdays between 9 a.m. and noon, 212 - 254 - 6314, to find out whether there is someone available in your area. These services have recently received some foundation support for their work. Most of them maintain a tape-recorded message, reached at the phone numbers given below, that announces which 5 or 6 ministers and rabbis are available for counseling that week, and gives instructions on procedures to follow in setting up appointments with the one you choose. The CCS uses out-of-state doctors and foreign doctors (England, Puerto Rico, Japan), and provides help up to 22 weeks. Those over 12 weeks are generally referred to England. (The laws there are far from repealed, but some doctors are willing to interpret them liberally). The clergy services will ask you to bring with you a note signed by an obstetrician/gynecologist, stating how many weeks pregnant you are: be SURE to get this note before contacting the, and take it with you when you go.

Massachusetts (Boston)	(617) 527 - 7188	Connecticut (New Haven)	(203) 624 - 8646
Ohio (Cleveland)	(216) 229 - 7423	New Jersey (north)	(201) 933 - 2937
Michigan (Detroit)	(313) 964 - 0838	upper New York State	(607) 272 - 7172
California (Los Angeles)	(213) 666 - 7600	New York City *	(212) 477 - 0034
Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)	(215) 923 - 5141	*no message giving clergy list between 5 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. Monday: call on a weekday.	
Iowa	(515) 282 - 1738		

**Parents' Aid Society** 130 Main Street, Hempstead, Long Island, New York 11550 (516) 538 - 2626 or 437 - 2828  
 This service of Parents' Aid, a birth-control clinic, has been in operation since before April 1967. Be sure to place all telephone calls person-to-person to Bill Baird--a former drug-company executive who is the founder and director: he is sometimes hard to reach because he travels around the country lecturing, or because he may be in Massachusetts seeing about his test case challenging their anti contraceptive laws. Parents' Aid generally holds evening consultations at the clinic, usually on the weekends. The clinic--which may move to new quarters soon--is a block and a half from the Hempstead station of the Long Island Rail Road, and is about one hour's ride from Penn Station in New York City. Parents' Aid gives advice on both local and distant sources of help, and tries to aid any woman who comes to them; women visiting the clinic should try to bring the man involved, if possible. Joining Parents' Aid is a good way to help the service meet its expenses. Contraceptive advice and materials are also available.

**Women's Assistance Tour** New York City (212) 245 - 2569  
 A woman runs this air tour to an eastern European city that has excellent medical facilities--and attitudes to match. You must have (1) a doctor's note saying how many weeks pregnant you are (not over 12 weeks). (2) a record of a current vaccination (available from your local department of health or your doctor), and (3) a passport (you can get one in a week for \$12, in two days for \$14). You leave on a Wednesday night plane, are met at your destination, and are back home Sunday evening. The total cost now is \$800, if you leave from the east coast (more from points west), but volume may soon bring the price down to under \$700. This includes: air fare, lodging in first-class hotels, meals, in-city transportation, medical care and post-abortion checkup, 24-hour English-language information service--and sightseeing! Phone for more data.

*Great Britain:* Abortion is by no means completely legal in Britain, and many doctors are rather uncooperative as well. Earlier versions of this counseling sheet listed referral services in England. Unfortunately, these services are so overwhelmed by requests from English women that they are regretfully turning away foreign visitors who seek their help. In any case, do not go to England without first having made firm arrangements through an American source. And do not expect to have the abortion paid for under the National Health plan: things usually don't work out that way. Bring money.

FOR INFORMATION ON POLITICAL & OTHER ACTION to get rid of present laws and practices, contact these groups:

- 1 **National Association for Repeal of Abortion Laws** Room 2428, 250 West 57 Street, New York City 10019  
This "umbrella" groups has some literature that may help you. Ask especially for Dr Lester Breslow's "Abortion: the Case for Repeal" (10 cents or 25 for \$2.00); make checks payable to NARAL.
- 2 Also try the **National Organization for Women (NOW)**, whose National Abortion Task Force co-chairmen are:  

Lana Clarke Phelan	Lucinda Cisler
3430 Orange Avenue	102 West 80 Street, Apt. 77
Long Beach, California 90807	New York City 10024
(213) 424 - 4681	(212) 799 - 0620

NOW's local chapters are active in the repeal movement, and the co-chairmen of the Task Force can tell you if there is a chapter in your area; they can also help you locate repeal groups and repeal-minded individuals near you, and give advice on starting a local group for abortion law repeal.
- 3 **New Yorkers for Abortion Law Repeal (NYALR)** 2 West 64 Street, New York City 10023  
This statewide action group for New York has contacts throughout the country, and can help you form a local committee for repeal. A regular newsletter is available to members, as are brochures, reading lists, and other materials---such as buttons showing the "alpha" symbol of abortion law repeal (5 cents + stamped envelope, or \$4.00 for 100). Please send a stamped, self-addressed business-size envelope with your request for information. Out-of-state inquirers are welcomed.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT OF ABORTION:

- 1 **Books:** Read Lawrence Lader: **Abortion** (1966: Beacon paperback BP 264, \$1.95), the best general source of information on the subject. Also see Selig Neubardt; MD: **Contraception** (Pocket Books 77025, \$ .95; in hard covers as **A Concept of Contraception**; 1967). Lana Clarke Phelan and Patricia Maginnis are the authors of **The Abortion Handbook for Responsible Women** (1969; Contact Books, Inc., 6340 Coldwater Canyon, North Hollywood, California). This book, a "survival kit" by women and for women, is available at some bookstores, or can be ordered for \$3.00 from the publisher or from Lucinda Cisler, 102 West 80 Street, New York City 10024.
- 2 **Leaflets and reprints:** Write for the latest newsletter and current bibliography/reprint list from the **Association for the Study of Abortion**, 120 West 57 Street, New York City 10019. Reprints are 10 cents each. Especially good ones are those by Hardin (all of them--4 at this writing), Lucas, Monroe, Rossi, Schenk, Shainess, Simms, TIME essay, White.  
A reprint list is also available from the **Society for Humane Abortion**, P. O. Box 1862, San Francisco, California 94101. Enclose a stamped, addressed business-size envelope. Particularly good reprints (20 cents each): Rossi, ("Public Views..."), Phelan, Kerslake, Maginnis, Hardin. Mailing list: \$2.00 a year.  
Several pages of "Abortion Facts", with commentary and extensive references, are available for 25 cents from James Clapp, 607 East 12 Street, New York City 10009.
- 3 **Recordings and tapes:** LP record of 10 women describing their own abortion experiences: \$3.50 from the Marin County Chapter of the **California Committee for Legalized Abortion**, Box 101, Kentfield, California 94904. Their supply of records may have run out, so it is best to write first and inquire.  
Series of 5 hour-long tapes on various aspects of the issue (all repeal-oriented), for discussion groups (ask also about broadcast arrangements): contact James Clapp, 607 East 12 Street, New York City 10009 for details.





REDSTOCKINGS MANIFESTO

I After centuries of individual and preliminary political struggle, women are uniting to achieve their final liberation from male supremacy. Redstockings is dedicated to building this unity and winning our freedom.

II Women are an oppressed class. Our oppression is total, affecting every facet of our lives. We are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servants, and cheap labor. We are considered inferior beings, whose only purpose is to enhance men's lives. Our humanity is denied. Our prescribed behavior is enforced by the threat of physical violence.

Because we have lived so intimately with our oppressors, in isolation from each other, we have been kept from seeing our personal suffering as a political condition. This creates the illusion that a woman's relationship with her man is a matter of interplay between two unique personalities, and can be worked out individually. In reality, every such relationship is a class relationship, and the conflicts between individual men and women are political conflicts that can only be solved collectively.

III We identify the agents of our oppression as men. Male supremacy is the oldest, most basic form of domination. All other forms of exploitation and oppression (racism, capitalism, imperialism, etc.) are extensions of male supremacy: men dominate women, a few men dominate the rest. All power structures throughout history have been male-dominated and male-oriented. Men have controlled all political, economic and cultural institutions and backed up this control with physical force. They have used their power to keep women in an inferior position. All men receive economic, sexual, and psychological benefits from male supremacy. All men have oppressed women.

IV Attempts have been made to shift the burden of responsibility from men to institutions or to women themselves. We condemn these arguments as evasions. Institutions alone do not oppress; they are merely tools of the oppressor. To blame institutions implies that men and women are equally victimized, obscures the fact that men benefit from the subordination of women, and gives men the excuse that they are forced to be oppressors. On the contrary, any man is free to renounce his superior position provided that he is willing to be treated like a woman by other men.

We also reject the idea that women consent to or are to blame for their own oppression. Women's submission is not the result of brainwashing, stupidity, or mental illness but of continual, daily pressure from men. We do not need to change ourselves, but to change men.

The most slanderous evasion of all is that women can oppress men. The basis for this illusion is the isolation of individual relationships from their political context and the tendency of men to see any legitimate challenge to their privileges as persecution.

V We regard our personal experience, and our feelings about that experience, as the basis for an analysis of our common situation. We cannot rely on existing ideologies as they are all products of male supremacist culture. We question every generalization and accept none that are not confirmed by our experience.

Our chief task at present is to develop female class consciousness through sharing experience and publicly exposing the sexist foundation of all our institutions. Consciousness-raising is not "therapy," which implies the existence of individual solutions and falsely assumes that the male-female relationship is purely personal, but the only method by which we can ensure that our program for liberation is based on the concrete realities of our lives.

The first requirement for raising class consciousness is honesty, in private and in public, with ourselves and other women.

VI We identify with all women. We define our best interest as that of the poorest, most brutally exploited woman.

We repudiate all economic, racial, educational or status privileges that divide us from other women. We are determined to recognize and eliminate any prejudices we may hold against other women.

We are committed to achieving internal democracy. We will do whatever is necessary to ensure that every woman in our movement has an equal chance to participate, assume responsibility, and develop her political potential.

VII We call on all our sisters to unite with us in struggle.

We call on all men to give up their male privileges and support women's liberation in the interest of our humanity and their own.

In fighting for our liberation we will always take the side of women against their oppressors. We will not ask what is "revolutionary" or "reformist," only what is good for women.

The time for individual skirmishes has passed. This time we are going all the way.

July 7, 1969

REDSTOCKINGS  
P.O. Box 748  
Stuyvesant Station  
New York, N.Y. 10009

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED

A Critique of the Miss America Protest

by Carol Hanisch

The protest of the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City in September told the nation that a new feminist movement is afoot in the land. Due to the tremendous coverage in the mass media, millions of Americans now know there is a Women's Liberation Movement. Media coverage ranged from the front pages of several newspapers in the United States to many articles in the foreign press.

The action brought many new members into our group and many requests from women outside the city for literature and information. A recurrent theme was, "I've been waiting so long for something like this." So have we all, and the Miss America protest put us well on our way.

But no action taken in the Women's Liberation Struggle will be all good or all bad. It is necessary that we analyze each step to see what we did that was effective, what was not, and what was downright destructive.

At this point in our struggle, our actions should be aimed primarily at doing two inter-related things: 1) awakening the latent consciousness of women about their own oppression, and 2) building sisterhood. With these as our primary immediate goals, let us examine the Miss America protest.

The idea came out of our group method of analyzing women's oppression by recalling our own experiences. We were watching Schmearguntz, a feminist movie, one night at our meeting. The movie had flashes of the Miss America contest in it. I found myself sitting there remembering how I had felt at home with my family watching the pageant as a child, an adolescent, and a college student. I knew it had evoked powerful feelings.

When I proposed the idea to our group, we decided to go around the room with each woman telling how she felt about the pageant. We discovered that many of us who had always put down the contest still watched it. Others, like myself, had consciously identified with it, and had cried with the winner.

From our communal thinking came the concrete plans for the action. We all agreed that our main point in the demonstration would be that all women were hurt by beauty competition -- Miss America as well as ourselves. We opposed the pageant in our own self-interest, e.g. the self-interest of all women.

Yet one of the biggest mistakes of the whole pageant was our anti-womanism. A spirit of every woman "do her own thing" began to emerge. Sometimes it was because there was an open conflict about an issue. Other times, women didn't say anything at all about disagreeing with a group decision; they just went ahead and did what they wanted to do, even though it was something the group had definitely decided against. Because of this egotistic individualism, a definite strain of anti-womanism was presented to the public to the detriment of the action.

Posters which read "Up Against the Wall, Miss America," "Miss America Sells it," and "Miss America Is a Big Falsie" hardly raised any woman's consciousness and

really harmed the cause of sisterhood. Miss America and all beautiful women came off as our enemy instead of as our sisters who suffer with us. A group decision had been made rejecting these anti\*woman signs. A few women made them anyway. Some women who had opposed the slogans were in the room when the signs were being made and didn't confront those who were making the anti-woman signs.

A more complex situation developed around the decision of a few women to use an "underground" disruptive tactic. The action was approved by the group only after its adherents said they would do it anyway as an individual action. As it turned out, we came to the realization that there is no such thing as "individual action" in a movement. We were linked to and were committed to support our sisters whether they called their action "individual" or not. It also came to many of us that there is at this time no real need to do "underground" actions. We need to reach as many women as possible as quickly as possible with a clear message that has the power of our person behind it. At this point women have to see other women standing up and saying these things. That's why draping a women's liberation banner over the balcony that night and yelling our message was much clearer. We should have known, however, that the television network, because it was not competing with other networks for coverage, would not put the action on camera. It did get on the radio and in newspapers, however.

The problem of how to enforce group decisions is one we haven't solved. It came up in a lot of ways throughout the whole action. The group rule of not talking to male reporters was another example.

One of the reasons we came off anti-woman, besides the posters, was our lack of clarity. We didn't say clearly enough that we women are all FORCED to play the Miss America roll - not by beautiful women but by men who we have to act that way for and by a system that has so well institutionalized male supremacy for its own ends.

This was non too clear in our guerilla theater either. Women chained to a replica, red, white and blue-bathing-suited Miss America could have been misinterpreted as against beautiful women. Also, crowning a live sheep Miss America sort of said that beautiful women are sheep. However, the action did say to some women that women are viewed as auction-block, docile animals. The grandmother of one of the participants really began to understand the action when she was told about the sheep, and she ended up joining the protest.

There is <sup>as</sup> great <sup>a</sup> need for clarity in our language as there is in our actions. The leaflet that was distributed as a press release and as a flyer at the action was too long, too wordy, too complex, too hippy-yippee-campy. Instead of an "in" phrase like "Racism with Roses" (I still don't know exactly what that means), we could have just called the pageant RACIST and everybody would have understood our opposition on that point. If we are going to reach masses of women, we must give up all the "in-talk" of the New Left/Hippie movements - at least when we're talking in public. (Yes, even the word FUCH!) We can use simple language (real language) that everyone from Queens to Iowa will understand and not misunderstand.

We should try to avoid the temptation to say everything there is to say about what is wrong with the world and thereby say nothing that a new person can really dig into the understand. Women's liberation itself is revolutionary dynamite. When other issues are interjected, we should clearly relate them to our oppression as women.

We tried to carry the democratic means we used in planning the action into the actual doing of it. We didn't want leaders or spokesmen. It makes the movement not only seem stronger and larger if everyone is a leader, but it actually is stronger if not dependent on a few. It also guards against the time when such leaders could be isolated and picked off one way or another. And of course many voices are more powerful than one.

Our first attempt at this was not entirely successful. We must learn how to fight against the media's desire to make leaders and some women's desire to be spokesmen. Everybody talks to the press or nobody talks to the press. The same problem came up in regard to appearances on radio and television shows after the action. We theoretically decided no one should appear more than once, but it didn't work out that way.

The Miss America protest was a zap action, as opposed to person to person group action. Zap actions are using our presence as a group and/or the media to make women's oppression into social issues. In such actions we speak to men as a group as well as to women. It is a rare opportunity to talk to men in a situation where they can't talk back. (Men must begin to learn to listen.) Our power of solidarity, not our individual intellectual exchanges will change men.

We tried to speak to individual women in the crowd and now some of us feel that it may not have been a good tactic. It put women on the spot in front of their men. We were putting them in a position which we choose to avoid ourselves when we don't allow men in our discussion groups.

It is interesting that many of the non-movement women we talked to about the protest had the same reaction as many radical women. "But I'm not oppressed," was a shared response. "I don't care about Miss America," was another. If more than half the television viewers in the country watch the pageant, somebody cares! And many of us admitted watching it too, even while putting it down.

It's interesting, too, that while much of the Left was putting us down for attacking something so "silly and unimportant" or "reformist", the Right saw us as a threat and yelled such things as "Go back to Russia" and "Mothers of Mao" at the picket line. Ironically enough, what the Left/Underground press seemed to like best about our action was what was really our worst mistake - our anti-woman signs.

Surprisingly and fortunately some of the mass media ignored our mistakes and concentrated on our best points. To quote from the Daily News, "...some women who think the whole idea of such contests is degrading to femininity, took their case to the people.... During boardwalk protest, gals say they're not anti-beauty, just anti-beauty contest." Shana Alexander wrote in a Life magazine editorial that she "wished they'd gone farther." Together Life and the Daily News reach millions of Americans.

We need to take ourselves seriously. The powers that be do. Carol Giardina of Gainesville, Florida, was fired from her job because of her activities in women's liberation and her participation in the protest. Police cars were parked outside the planning meeting one night. The next day we got a call from the mayor of Atlantic City questioning us about just what we planned to do. Pepsi Cola is withdrawing as a sponsor of the pageant. They produce a diet cola and maybe see themselves as next year's special target.

Unfortunately the best slogan for the action came up about a month after when Roz Baxendall came out on the David Susskind show with "Every day in a woman's life is a walking Miss America Contest." We shouldn't wait for the best slogan; we should go ahead to the best of our understanding. We hope all our sisters can learn something as we did from our first foray.

MAN-HATING  
by  
Pamela Kearon

The question of man-hating among radical women seems like the most difficult one to get up a serious discussion on. And you really feel crummy dragging it all out again only to encounter the raised eyebrows, the surprised expressions, voices vibrating with moral indignation; or worse yet, some cute joke and a round of hearty chuckles - completely destroying your point. But hold on! Before you get indignant, before you make your little joke, allow me to try and convince you that man-hating is a valid and vital issue.

Hatred is certainly an observable human fact. And since women are human - not a link between man and the ape - not some innocuous, shadowy, fairy-tale version of the Man - since this is so, hatred, hostility and resentment probably exist somehow in us. And, further, since many of us have already come to the conclusions of feminism - that equal status and opportunity with the male is necessary to our full human existence - the realization of our past and continued subjugation has most likely aroused in us some sentiment resembling hatred. Now, each of us, in denying our hatred and explaining our astonishing magnanimity, relies upon some common argument. Among the most common:

Argumentum ad Sexus:

"Men and women are made for each other sexually. I am perfectly 'normal'. Therefore, I must certainly love men"

Answer:

Many men engage in sexual intercourse, often extensively, even marry, while yet hating women. These men are called misogynists. Now, there is no shame in being a misogynist. It is a perfectly respectable attitude. Our white society (including too many of the women in it) hates women. Perhaps we need a Latin or Greek derivative in place of 'man-hating' to make the perfect symmetry of the two attitudes more obvious.

Argumentum ad Superioritatus:

"Hate men? No! Definitely not! We must understand them; they depend upon us to show them how to love."

Answer:

This argument is based upon the "Natural Superiority of Women". We are congenitally incapable of hatred. It is our mysterious XX chromosomal structure. Failing to 'understand' the man is a perversion of our second nature.

Brushing aside forever the utterly unprovable fiction of our second nature, and speaking purely from personal experience, it would seem, on the whole, that people do not react to oppression with Love. I mean the poison seeps out somehow. Sometimes aggressively on those in an even meaner position; sometimes taking the form of an all-pervading and impostent resentment - a petty and spiteful attitude. When women take their hatred out on others, those others are likely to be other women, particularly their own daughters. In doing so they reconcile their own impulse for an object with the demands of an authoritarian system which requires all hate and spite to be directed downward, while respects and 'understanding' are reserved for higher-ups, thus keeping nearly everyone supplied with pre-ordained and relatively powerless victims.

Anyway, all arguments which tend to suppress the recognition of man-hating in our midst are reducible to this : FEAR. Man-hating is a subversive and therefore, dangerous sentiment. Men, who control definition, have made of it a disgusting perversion. We have been unable to get out from under their definition. I've been at meetings where women actually left because they thought that 'man-haters' were on the loose. One woman talked to me in awe and disgust about a woman who she felt had made an anti-male statement at a meeting. It has been the cause of a deep rift within Women's Liberation. It is a vital issue because it involves ultimately the way we feel about ourselves, and how far we are willing to go in our own behalf.

#### HATRED AND MAN-HATING

There is no dearth of hatred in the world, I agree. But the thing is, people keep on hating the wrong people. For instance, a lot of people apparently believe that we must fight to preserve our freedom against little Viet Nam. Whites just now stepping out of poverty themselves, arm against the 'menace' of the Poor and the Blacks. Uppermiddle-class radical snobs despise the class of Whites just beneath them. And men hate women. Our hatred is such a shoddy and confused emotion. We indulge in the most circuitous and illogical prejudices. We have never given the idea of hating someone who has actually done something hateful to us a chance. Oh, I know we ought to hate the sin and love the sinner. But too often we end up loving the sinner and hating his victim ( as when one woman seeing another put down or hearing about her unhappy affair calls it masochism and that's the end of it).

If hatred exists ( and we know it does) let it be of a robust variety. If it is a choice between woman-hating and man-hating, let it be the latter. Let us resolve to respond immediately and directly to injury instead of taking it all out on a more likely victim. It is a difficult stance because it requires a fidelity to what is real in us and neither innocuous nor attractive to oppressors, that part of you which turned you on to feminism in the first place. That part which is really human and cannot submit.

June 27th 1969

Women's Liberation

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THE POLITICS OF HOUSEWORK

BY Pat Mainardi

" Though women do not complain of the power of husbands, each complains of her own husband, or of the husbands of her friends. It is the same in all other cases of servitude; at least in the commencement of the emancipatory movement. The serfs did not at first complain of the power of their lords, but only of their tyranny." ... John Stuart Mill, On the Subjection of Women

Liberated women - very different from Women's Liberation ! The first signals all kinds of goodies, to warm the hearts (not to mention other parts ) of the most radical men. The other signals - HOUSEWORK. The first brings sex without marriage, sex before marriage , cozy housekeeping arrangements ( "You see, I'm living with this chick" ) and the self-content of knowing that you're not the kind of man who wants a doormat instead of a woman. That will come later. After all . who wants that old commodity anymore, the Standard American Housewife, all husband, home and kids. The New Commodity, the Liberated Woman, has sex a lot, and has a Career, preferably something that can be fitted in with the household chores - likedancing , pottery , or painting .

On the other hand is Women's Liberation - and housework. What ? You say this is all trivial ? Wonderful ! That's what I thought. It seems perfectly reasonable. We both had careers, both had to work a couple of days a week to earn enough to live on, so why shouldn't we share the housework ? So I suggested it to my mate and he agreed - most men are too hip to turn you down flat. You're right, he said . It's only fair .

Then an interesting thing happened. I can only explain it by stating that we women have been brainwashed more than even we can imagine. Probably too many years of seeing television women in ecstasy over their shiny waxed floors or breaking down over their dirty shirt collars. Men have no such conditioning. They recognize the essential fact of housework right from the very beginning. Which is that it stinks .

Here's my list of dirty chores : buying groceries, carting them home and putting them away; cooking meals and washing dishes and pots ; doing the laundry, digging out the place when things get out of control; washing floors . The list could go on but the sheer necessities are bad enough. All of us have to do these jobs, or get someone else to do them for us. The longer my husband contemplated these chores , the more repulsed he became, and so proceeded the change from the normally sweet considerate Dr. Jekyll into the crafty Mr. Hyde who would stop at nothing to avoid the horrors of - housework . As he felt himself backed into a corner laden with dirty dishes, brooms, mops and reeking garbage, his front teeth grew longer and pointier, his fingernails haggled and his eyes grew wild. Housework trivial ? Not on your life ! Just try to share the burden .

So ensued a dialogue that's been going on for several years . Here are some of the high points :



"I don't mind sharing the housework, but I don't do it very well. We should each do the things we're best at.

MEANING Unfortunately I'm no good at things like washing dishes or cooking. What I do best is a little light carpentry, changing light bulbs, moving furniture. (How often do you move furniture?)

ALSO MEANING Historically the lower classes (Blacks and you) have had hundreds of years experience doing menial jobs. It would be a waste of manpower to train someone else to do them now.

ALSO MEANING I don't like the dull stupid boring jobs, so you should do them.

\* \* \*

"I don't mind sharing the work, but you'll have to show me how to do it."

MEANING I ask a lot of questions and you'll have to show me everything, everytime I do it because I don't remember so good. Also don't try to sit down and read while I'm doing my jobs because I'M going to annoy hell out of you until it's easier to do them yourself.

\* \* \*

"We used to be so Happy!" (said whenever it was his turn to do something)

MEANING I used to be so happy.

MEANING Life with out housework is bliss. No quarrel here. Perfect agreement.

\* \* \*

"We have different standards, and why should I have to work to your standards. That's unfair."

MEANING If I begin to get bugged by the dirt and crap, I will say "This place sure is a sty" or "how can anyone live like this?" and wait for your reaction. I know that all women have a sore called "Guilt over a messy house" or "Household work is ultimately my responsibility". If I rub this sore long and hard enough it'll bleed and you'll do the work, I can outwait you.

ALSO MEANING I can provoke innumerable scenes over the housework issue. Eventually, doing all the housework yourself will be less painful to you than trying to get me to do half.

\* \* \*

"I've got nothing against sharing the housework, but you can't make me do it on your schedule."

MEANING passive resistance. I'll do it when I damned well please, if at all. If my job is doing dishes, it's easier to do them once a week. If taking out laundry, once a month. If washing the floors, once a year. If you don't like it, do it yourself oftener, and then I won't do it at all.

\* \* \*

"I hate it more than you. You don't mind it so much."

MEANING Housework is garbage work. It's the worse crap I've ever done. It's degrading and humiliating for someone of my intelligence to do it. But for someone of your intelligence...

\* \* \*

"Housework is too trivial to even talk about"

MEANING It's even more trivial to do. Housework is beneath my status. My purpose in life is to deal with matters of significance. Yours is to deal with matters of insignificance. You should do the housework.

\* \* \*

"This problem of housework is not a man-women problem. In any relationship between two people one is going to have a stronger

personality and dominate.

MEANING That stronger personality had better be me.

\* \* \*

"In animal societies, wolves, for example, the top animal is usually a male even where he is not chosen for brute strength but on the basis of cunning and intelligence. Isn't that interesting?"

MEANING I have historical, psychological, anthropological and biological justification for keeping you down. How can you ask the top wolf to be equal?

\* \* \*

"Women's Liberation isn't really a political movement."

MEANING The Revolution is coming too close to home.

ALSO MEANING I am only interested in how I am oppressed, not how I oppress others. Therefore the war, the draft and the university are political. Women's Liberation is not.

"Man's accomplishments have always depended on getting help from other people, mostly women. What great man would have accomplished what he did if he had to do his own housework?"

MEANING Oppression is built into the system and I as the white American male receive the benefits of this system. I don't want to give them up.

POSTSCRIPT

Participatory democracy begins at home. If you are planning to implement your politics there are certain things to remember.

- 1. He is feeling it more than you. He's losing some leisure and you're gaining it. The measure of your oppression is his resistance.
- 2. A great many American men are not accustomed to doing monotonous repetitive work which never issues in any lasting let alone important achievement. This is why they would rather repair a cabinet than wash dishes. If human endeavours are like a pyramid with man's highest achievements at the top, then keeping oneself alive is at the bottom. Men have always had servants (you) to take care of this bottom strata of life while he has confined his efforts to the rarefied upper regions. It is thus ironic when they ask of women--where are your great painters, statesmen, etc. Mme Matisse ran a millinery shop so he could paint.

Mrs. Martin Luther King kept his house and raised his babies.

- 3. It is a traumatizing experience for someone who has always thought of himself as being against any oppression or exploitation of one human being by another to realize that in his daily life he has been accepting and implementing (and benefiting from) this exploitation; that his rationalization is little different from that of the racist who says "Niggers don't feel pain" (Women don't mind doing the shitwork); And that the oldest form of oppression in history has been the oppression of 50% of the population by the other 50%.

- 4. Arm yourself with some knowledge of the psychology of oppressed peoples everywhere and a few facts about the animal kingdom. I admit playing top wolf or who runs the gorillas is silly but as a last resort men bring it up all the time. Talk about bees. If you feel really hostile bring up the sex life of spiders. They have sex. She bites off his head.

The psychology of oppressed peoples is not silly. Jews, immigrants Blacks and women have all employed the same psychological mechanisms to

survive. Admiring the oppressor, glorifying the oppressor, wanting to be like the oppressor, wanting the oppressor to like them. Remember that Blacks and Jews at one time felt whites and Germans really were superior.

5. In a sense all men everywhere are slightly schizoid—divorced from the reality of maintaining life. This makes it easier for them to play games with it. It is almost a cliché that women feel greater grief at sending a son off to war or losing him to that war because they bore him, suckled him, and raised him. The men who foment those wars did none of those things and have a more superficial estimate of the worth of human life. One hour a day is a low estimate of the amount of time one has to spend "keeping" oneself. By foisting this off on others, man has seven hours a week—one working day more to play with his mind and not his human needs. Over the course of generations it is easy to see whence evolved the horrifying abstractions of modern life.

6. With the death of each form of oppression, life changes and new forms evolve. English aristocrats at the turn of the century were horrified at the idea of enfranchising working men -- were sure that it signalled the death of civilisation and a return to barbarism. Some working men even fell for this line. Similarly with the minimum wage, abolition of slavery, and female suffrage. Life changes but it goes on— don't fall for any line about the death of everything if men take a turn at the dishes. They will imply that you are holding back the Revolution ( their Revolution). But you are advancing it ( your Revolution).

7. Keep checking up. Periodically consider who's actually doing the jobs. These things have a way of backsliding so that a year later once again the woman is doing everything. Use timesheets if necessary. Also bear in mind what the worse jobs are, namely the ones that have to be done every day or several times a day. Also the ones that are dirty-- it's more pleasant to pick up books, newspapers etc. than to wash dishes. Alternate the bad jobs. It's the daily grind that gets you down. Also make sure that you don't have the responsibility for the housework with occasional help from him. "I'll cook dinner for you tonight" implies that it's really your job and isn't he a nice guy to do some of it for you.

8. Most men had a rich and rewarding bachelor life during which they did not starve or become encrusted with crud or buried under the litter. There is a taboo that says that women mustn't strain themselves in the presence of men--we haul around 50 lbs of groceries if we have to but aren't allowed to open a jar if there is someone around to do it for us. The reverse side of the coin is that men aren't supposed to be able to take care of themselves without a woman. Both are excuses for making women do the housework.

9. Beware of the double whammy. He won't do the little things he always did because you're now a "Liberated Woman", right? Of course he won't do anything else either. . .

I was just finishing this when my husband came in and asked what I was doing. Writing a paper on housework. Housework? he said, Housework? Oh my god how trivial can you get. A paper on housework.

# THE POLITICS OF "FREE" LOVE

## *forced fornication*

This June marks an important milestone in our history—the 50th anniversary of the death of the women's suffrage movement. On June 4, 1919 the U.S. Senate approved the 19th Amendment to the Constitution: "The right of citizens of the U.S. to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

Our sisters struggled more than 100 years to win the right to vote which, they thought, would be the first step to freedom. The victory has been proven hollow. In 50 years, the subjugation of women has become only more sophisticated, the ideology of male supremacy more deeply rooted in our culture.

One of the more sophisticated forms of control has been identified by the women's liberation movement as pseudo-sexual emancipation, or more bluntly, forced fornication. It can be seen at work in the current issue of *Cosmopolitan* magazine in an article by Barbara Bross, an American gynecologist, entitled "How to Love Like a Real Woman." She begins:

"Sexual abstinence in a normally constituted person is always pathogenic. We have been given sex organs to use them. If we don't use them, they decay and cause irreparable damage to body and mind. This is blunt, firm, indisputable and true."

The message: Don't try to make it on your own. Don't think, act or work. Because, along with other horrors, you will wake up one morning and find your vagina rotted away and your mind in even worse shape.

The article continues: "Woman is man's intermediary between himself and nature. He considers her as part of nature, though he will never say so, but that is what he *feels*. Her periods echo the rhythm of nature. Her ability to give birth makes her part of nature. She is the mother. She is the earth. She *senses* where he can only *think* or *act*. Woman *is*, man *does*. That is the strength *and* weakness of *both* sexes. Do not ruin your marriage, or your love affair, by trying to compete with your man on his own masculine terms. And by that I do not mean that you may lose an argument; I mean that you may lose your dignity, your stature, your strength as a woman." (Italics in the original)

In 1969, women are not only still slaves but, as *Cosmopolitan* so accurately describes it, they are not even considered part of the human race, existing somewhere "between man and nature." And their status has, if anything, deteriorated in the last 50 years.

In 1969, more than one million illegal abortions will be performed in the U.S., from which countless thousands of women will die.

In 1969, men will still be paid, on the average, nearly twice as much as women for all jobs in all economic classes.

In 1969, of the Americans who earn more than \$10,000 per year, only 2% are women.

In 1920, a higher proportion of women received Ph.Ds than receive them today. The number of women awarded masters degrees is lower now than in 1930.

Women held 38% of all technical and professional jobs in 1966, as compared with 45% in 1940.

We've come a long way, baby.

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### Women's liberation

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"CONSUMERISM" AND WOMEN

Perhaps the most widely accepted tenet of movement ideology, promulgated by many leftist thinkers, notably Marcuse, is the idea that we are psychically manipulated by the mass media to crave more and more consumer goods, thus powering an economy that depends on constantly expanding sales. It has been suggested that this theory is particularly applicable to women, for women do most of the actual buying, their consumption is often directly related to their oppression (e.g. makeup, soap flakes), and they are a special target of advertisers. According to this view the society defines women as consumers and the purpose of the prevailing media image of women as passive sexual objects is to sell products. It follows that the beneficiaries of this depreciation of women are not men but the corporate power structure.

The consumerism theory has not been subjected to much critical debate. In fact, it seems in recent years to have taken on the invulnerability of religious dogma. Yet ~~xx~~ further analysis demonstrates that this theory is fallacious and leads to crucial tactical errors. This paper is offered as a critique of consumerism based on four propositions:

1. It is not "psychic manipulation" that makes people buy; rather, their buying habits are by and large ~~xx~~ a rational self-interested response to their limited alternatives within the system.
2. The chief function of media stereotypes of women is not to sell goods but to reinforce the ideology and therefore the reality of male supremacy-- of the economic and sexual subordination of women to men, in the latter's objective interest.
3. Most of the "consuming" women do is actually labor, specifically part of women's domestic and sexual obligations.
4. The consumerism theory has its roots in class, sex, and race bias; its ready acceptance among radicals, including radical women, is a function of movement elitism.

First of all, there is nothing inherently wrong with consumption. Shopping and consuming are enjoyable human activities and the marketplace has been a center of social life for thousands of years. The profit system is oppressive not because relatively trivial luxuries are available, but because basic necessities are not. The locus of the oppression resides in the production function: people have no control over what commodities are produced (or services performed), in what amounts, under what conditions, or how they are distributed. Corporations make these decisions solely for their own

profit. It is more profitable to produce luxuries for the affluent (or for that matter for the poor, on exploitive installment plans) than to produce and make available food, housing, medical care, education, recreational and cultural facilities according to the needs and desires of the people. We can accept the goods offered to us or reject them, but we cannot determine their quality or change the system's priorities. In a truly humane society, in which all the people have personal autonomy, control over the means of production, and equal access to goods and services, consumption will be all the more enjoyable because we will not have to endure shoddy goods sold at exploitive prices by means of dishonest advertising.

As it is, the profusion of commodities is a genuine and powerful compensation for oppression. It is a bribe, but like all bribes it offers concrete benefits--in the average American's case, a degree of physical comfort unparalleled in history. Under present conditions, people are preoccupied with consumer goods not because they are brainwashed but because buying is the one pleasurable activity not only permitted but actively encouraged by the power structure. The pleasure of ~~eating~~ an ice cream cone may be minor compared to the pleasure of meaningful, autonomous work, but the former is easily available and the latter is not. A poor family would undoubtedly rather have a decent apartment than a new TV, but since they are unlikely to get the apartment, what is to be gained by not getting the TV?

Radicals who in general are healthily skeptical of facile Freudian explanations have been quick to embrace a theory of media manipulation based squarely on Fraud, as popularized by market researchers and journalists like Vance Packard (Marcuse acknowledges Packard's influence in One Dimensional Man). In essence, this theory holds that ads designed to create unconscious associations between merchandise and deep-seated fears, sexual desires, and needs for identity and self-esteem induce people to buy products in search of gratifications no product can provide. Furthermore, the corporations, through the media, deliberately create fears and desires that their products can claim to fulfill. The implication is that we are not simply taken in by lies or exaggerations--as, say, by the suggestion that a certain perfume will make us sexually irresistible--but are psychically incapable of learning from experience and will continue to buy no matter how often we are disappointed, and that in any case our "need" to be sexually irresistible is programmed into us to keep us buying perfume. This hypothesis of psychic distortion is based on the erroneous assumption that mental health and anti-materialism are synonymous.

Although they have to cope with the gypbery inherent in the profit system, people for the most part buy goods for practical, self-interested reasons. A washing machine does make a housewife's work easier (in the absence of socialization of housework); Excedrin does make a headache go away; a car does provide transportation. If one is duped into buying a product because of misleading advertising, the process is called exploitation; it has nothing to do with brainwashing. Advertising is a how-to manual on the consumer

economy, constantly reminding us of what is available and encouraging us to indulge ourselves. It works (that is, stimulates sales) because buying is the only game in town, not vice versa. Advertising does appeal to morbid fears (e.g. of body odors) and false hopes (of irresistibility) and shoppers faced with indistinguishable brands of a product may choose on the basis of an ad (what method is better--eeny meeny miny mo?) but this is just the old game of caveat emptor. It thrives on naivete and people learn to resist it through experience. The worst suckers for ads are children. Other vulnerable groups are older people, who had no previous experience--individual or historical--to guide them when the consumer cornucopia suddenly developed after World War II, and poor people, who do not have enough money to learn through years of trial, error and disillusionment to be shrewd consumers. The constant refinement of advertising claims, visual effects and so on show that experience desensitizes. No one really believes that smoking Brand X cigarettes will make you sexy. (The function of sex in an ad is probably the obvious one--to lure people into paying closer attention to the ad--rather than to make them "identify" their lust with a product. The chief effect of the heavy sexual emphasis in advertising has been to stimulate a national preoccupation with sex, showing that you can't identify away a basic human drive as easily as all that.) Madison Avenue has increasingly deemphasized "motivational" techniques in favor of aesthetic ones--TV commercials in particular have become incredibly inventive visually--and even made a joke out of the old motivational ploys (the phallic Virginia Slims ad, for instance, is blatantly campy). We can conclude from this that either the depth psychology approach never worked in the first place, or that it has stopped working as consumers have gotten more sophisticated.

The argument that the corporations create new psychological needs in order to sell their wares is similarly flimsy. There is no evidence that propaganda can in itself create a desire, as opposed to bringing to consciousness a latent desire by suggesting that means of satisfying it are available. This idea is superstitious: it implies that the oppressor is diabolically intelligent (he has learned to control human souls) and that the media have magic powers. It also mistakes effects for causes and drastically oversimplifies the relation between ideology and material conditions. We have not been taught to dislike our smell in order to sell deodorants; deodorants sell because there are social consequences for smelling. And the negative attitude about our bodies that has made it feasible to invent and market deodorants is deeply rooted in our anti-sexual culture, which in turn has been shaped by exploitive modes of production and class antagonism between men and women.

The confusion between cause and effect is particularly apparent in the consumerist analysis of women's oppression. Women are not manipulated by the media into being domestic servants and ~~mindless~~ mindless sexual decorations, the better to sell soap and hair spray. Rather the image reflects women as men in a sexist society force them to behave. Male supremacy is the oldest and most basic form of class exploitation (cf. Engels, Origin of the Family); it was not invented by a smart ad man. The real evil of the media image of women is that it supports the sexist status quo. In a sense the fashion, cosmetics and "feminine hygiene" ads are aimed more at

men than at women. They encourage men to expect women to sport all the latest trappings of sexual slavery--expectations women must then fulfill if they are to survive. That advertisers exploit women's subordination rather than cause it can be clearly seen now that male fashions and toiletries have become big business. In contrast to ads for women's products, whose appeal is "use this and he will want you" (or "if you don't use this, he won't want you"), ads for the male counterparts urge, "you too can enjoy perfume and bright colored clothes; don't worry, it doesn't make you feminine." Although advertisers are careful to emphasize how virile these products are (giving them names like "Brut", showing the man who uses them hunting or flirting with admiring women--who, incidentally, remain decorative objects when the sell is aimed directly at men) it is never claimed that the product is essential to masculinity (as makeup is essential to femininity), only compatible with it. To convince a man to buy, an ad must appeal to his desire for autonomy and freedom from conventional restrictions; to convince a woman, an ad must appeal to her need to please the male oppressor.

For women, buying and wearing clothes and beauty aids is not so much consumption as work. One of woman's jobs in this society is to be an attractive sexual object, and clothes and makeup are tools of the trade. The chief consumer in this instance is really the man, who consumes woman-as-sexual-commodity. Similarly, buying food and household furnishings is a domestic task; it is the wife's chore to pick out the commodities that will be consumed by the whole family. And appliances and cleaning materials are tools that facilitate her domestic function. When a woman spends a lot of money and time decorating her home or herself, or hunting down the latest in vacuum cleaners, ~~it~~ it is not idle self-indulgence (let alone the result of psychic manipulation) but a healthy attempt to find outlets for her creative energies within her circumscribed role.

There is a persistent myth that a wife has control over her husband's money because she gets to spend it. Actually, she does not have much more financial autonomy than the employee of a corporation who is delegated to buy office furniture or supplies. The husband, especially if he is rich, may allow his wife wide latitude in spending--he may reason that since she has to work in the home she is entitled to furnish it to her taste, or he may simply not want to bother with domestic details--but he retains the ultimate veto power. If he doesn't like the way his wife handles his money, she will hear about it. In most households, particularly in the working class, a wife cannot make significant expenditures, either personal or in her role as object-servant, without consulting her husband. And more often than not, according to statistics, it is the husband who makes the final decisions about furniture and appliances as well as other major expenditures like houses, cars and vacations.

Consumerism is the outgrowth of an aristocratic, European-oriented anti-materialism based on upper-class resentment against the rise of the vulgar bourgeois. Radical intellectuals have been attracted to this essentially



reactionary position (Herbert Marcuse's view of mass culture is strikingly similar to that of conservative theorists like Ernest Van Den Haag) because it appeals both to their dislike of capitalism and their feeling of superiority to the working class. This elitism is evident in radicals' conviction that they have seen through the system, while the average working ~~man~~ slob is brainwashed by the media. (Oddly, no one ~~man~~ claims that the ruling class is oppressed by commodities; it seems that rich people consume out of free choice.) Ultimately this point of view leads to a sterile emphasis on individual solutions--if only the benighted would reject their "plastic" existence and move to East Village tenements--and the conclusion that people are oppressed because they are stupid ~~and~~ or sick. The obnoxiousness of this attitude is ~~further~~ compounded by the fact that radicals can only maintain their dropout existence so long as plenty of brainwashed workers keep the economy going.

Consumerism as applied to women is blatantly sexist. The pervasive image of the empty-headed female consumer constantly trying her husband's patience with her extravagant purchases contributes to the myth of male superiority: we are incapable of spending money rationally; all we need to make us happy is a new hat now and then. (There is an analogous racial stereotype--the black with his Cadillac and loud shirts.) The consumer line allows movement men to avoid recognizing that they exploit women by attributing women's oppression solely to capitalism. It fits neatly into already existing radical theory and concerns, saving the movement the trouble of tackling the real problems of women's liberation. And it retards the struggle against male supremacy by dividing women. Just as in the male movement, consumerism encourages radical women to patronize and put down other women for trying to survive as best they can, and maintains individualist illusions.

If we are to build a mass movement we must recognize that no personal decision, like rejecting consumption, can alleviate our oppression. We must stop arguing about whose life style is better (and secretly believing ours is). The task of the women's liberation movement is to collectively combat male domination in the home, in bed, on the job. When we create a political alternative to sexism, the consumer problem, if it is a problem, will take care of itself.

Ellen Willis

**REDSTOCKINGS  
of the**

**WOMENS LIBERATION MOVEMENT**

P. O. Box 748 Stuyvesant Station, New York, N. Y. 10009

# WHATEVER HAPPENED TO WOMEN?

# NOTHING—

# THAT'S THE TROUBLE.

A REPORT ON THE NEW FEMINISM / BY ELLEN WILLIS

□ Feminism has revived. It began stirring in 1963, when Betty Friedan deflated the myth of the fulfilled suburban housewife. It got a push from a prankish Southern Senator who, to point up the absurdity of the proposed Civil Rights Act, added a sex-discrimination clause to the fair-employment provision. And it made its first public appearance when a number of professional women founded the National Organization for Women (NOW), a civil-rights group concerned mostly with bread-and-butter issues—discrimination in education, employment, and public accommodations; restrictive abortion laws; lack of day-care facilities. At the same time, younger women involved in the radical movement were discovering that they were second-class revolutionaries. Men who proclaimed the right of all people to control their own lives still expected women to make the coffee, lick the stamps, take typing jobs to support their men's movement work—to do anything, in fact, except help make political decisions on an equal basis. In the past two years, more and more radical women have formed separate groups to discuss their situation as radicals and as women. Out of this separation has come the Women's Liberation Movement, which is growing so fast that some large cities have as many as 20 groups. Although Women's Liberation is also interested in concrete issues, its perspective is very different from NOW's. Radical feminists do not want equal privileges in the

existing society; they want to restructure it, changing its definitions of masculine and feminine, of work and the family.

Like the early feminist movement, which grew out of the campaign to end slavery, the present-day women's movement has been inspired and influenced by the black liberation struggle. The situation of women and blacks is similar in many ways. Just as blacks live in a world defined by whites, women live in a world defined by males. (The generic term for human being is "man"; "woman" means "wife of man.") To be female or black is to be peculiar; whiteness and maleness are the norm. Newspapers do not have "men's pages," nor would anyone think of discussing the "man problem." Racial and sexual stereotypes also resemble each other: women, like blacks, are said to be childish, incapable of abstract reasoning, innately submissive, biologically suited for menial tasks, emotional, close to nature.

Most important, both women and blacks have a history of slavery—only female slavery goes back much further. From the beginnings of civilization until very recently, women in most societies were literally the property of their husbands and fathers. Even now, many vestiges of that chattel status persist in law and custom. Wives are still known by their husbands' names. In many states, a wife is legally required to perform domestic services, have sexual relations on demand [continued on page 206]



WALTER RUTTER

## BEST SHOW IN TOWN

Curtain rises on *The City*. Act. I.

Enter the coat: lean, brisk, boasting welted seams. Does a great solo.

Act II. The body dress slips into the act with a pointy white collar, a patch of a pocket, a silky tie. Together—a sensation. Hottest ticket to town.

Both, by Nuance (of brown wool/nylon tweed), 3-13, 4-14, \$120. At Jordan Marsh, Boston; Joseph Magnin, Calif. and Nev.

## Whatever happened to women? [continued from page 150]

if her health permits, and live with her husband wherever *he* chooses or be guilty of desertion. Restaurants, bars, and other public accommodations can legally refuse to admit a woman without a male escort or exclude her altogether. And vote or no vote, politics has remained a male preserve. Women make up more than half the population, but hold less than 1 per cent of elected offices. They also get few political appointments, except for the inevitable "adviser on consumer affairs" (women's place is in the supermarket).

In any case, the "emancipated" woman, like the freed slaves, has merely substituted economic dependence for legal subjection. According to Government statistics, white women workers earn even less than black men. Most women, especially mothers, must depend on men to support them, and that fact alone gives men power over their lives.

By now, almost everyone recognizes racism as an evil. But in spite of all the parallels, most people either defend sexism or deny its existence. "Yes, it's a man's world," some say, "and that's the way it should be. Normal women like the female role." As respected a figure as Dr. Spock recently wrote in a women's magazine, "Biologically and temperamentally, I believe, women were made to be concerned first and foremost with child care, husband care, and home care." Then he explains away the discontent of many women with these roles by saying that their education has confused them! Other antifeminists insist, "Women are free. They can vote, work, and have orgasms—what more do they want? In fact, women are too free. They're taking over and robbing men of their masculinity." In between these extremes is the argument that "women can liberate themselves individually; they don't need a movement."

The usual response to any mention of feminism is laughter. "Feminists" are little old ladies brandishing umbrellas, square-jawed mannish freaks, or humorless puritans. This prejudice is so strong that even some activists in the women's movement have been reluctant to call themselves feminists or identify in any way with the original women's-rights movement. Because antifeminist sentiment comes from women as well as men, it can't be dismissed out of hand as male propaganda aimed at keeping us in our place. The questions must be taken seriously. Is male supremacy natural and desirable? Are we already as free as we want to be? Do we need a movement?

To get an idea of why I'm convinced we do need a movement, let's analyze the situation of the most privileged woman in history—the young, educated female who is so often referred to as the "emancipated," or "new," or "modern" woman. This is the woman who wants to enjoy sex, share love and an equal companionship with a man or men, and do engaging work outside the home as well as having children. How likely is she to achieve these not unreasonable goals?

In the typical American family, a girl is trained from babyhood to be what the culture defines as feminine. Everyone encourages her to act cute and charming and flirt with her father, her uncles, and little boys. When she announces that she wants to be a fireman, her mother laughs: girls can't be firemen; you'll be a mother, like me. Or a nurse. Or a teacher. When she roughhouses, parents brag, "She's as tough as a boy." Yet at the same time they warn, "Someday you'll have to stop acting like a boy and be a lady." Most likely her brothers are free to play while she helps with the dishes, and her parents are more tolerant of their noise, dirt, and disobedience—after all, boys will be boys.

When she reaches adolescence, she finds that if she wants friendship and approval from other kids she must direct most of her energy toward pleasing boys. That means being preoccupied with clothes and makeup—with how she looks instead of what she does. It means absorbing all the advice about how to have a "good personality" and "build up a boy's ego." (No one worries about her ego.) And it means coming to understand that her status in the world and her worth as a person depend not on what she accomplishes, but on whom she marries. An A in physics is fine, but unless she is also pretty and sought-after, people will pity her and consider her braininess a compensation. She also learns that initiative in social activities belongs to the boys; it is her place to wait by the phone. When she wants a boy's company she can't approach him directly, but must maneuver him into asking her. She steps out of this role at her peril—if she is very pretty and self-assured she may get away with it, but otherwise she faces humiliating snubs. After a while—if, like most girls, she can't measure up to the standards of attractiveness glorified by the mass media and exemplified by the "popular" few—she develops feelings of inferiority that may last a lifetime. Sometimes she rebels and withdraws from the game, but only at the price of loneliness.

Then comes college. If a girl hasn't already lost her incentive to do anything but catch a husband, she is likely to run into new obstacles. Parents will go out of their way to send a boy to the college he prefers; with a girl, they are more reluctant. They may insist that she live at home and go to a public college because it's cheaper, and what difference can it make to a girl? Or put pressure on her to study "something practical that you can fall back on," like teaching. Or make it clear that in return for their investment, she had better snare a professional man.

At school she will have to cope with paternalism, condescension, and sometimes outright hostility from male instructors, especially if she takes "masculine" subjects like math or science. If she is particularly bright she may win the highest of all accolades. "You think like a man." She will find that, except in traditionally female fields, professional and graduate schools discrim-

inate in their admissions and financial-aid policies on the grounds that it is a risk to train women who are going to have children and drop out. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because of the stubborn prejudice against part-time students and the virtual absence of facilities for communal child care, a woman who gets pregnant accidentally or doesn't want to wait until her childbearing years are half over is often forced to drop out. Theoretically, the husband could stay home instead, but this idea so offends our deepest male-supremacist taboos that few wives would dare even to imagine such an arrangement.

If a woman does manage to finish graduate school, she faces blatant discrimination in almost every profession, from college teaching and newspaper reporting to medicine and law. In spite of the Civil Rights Act, she has a harder time finding a job and is paid less than a man for the same work. She has to endure nosy personal questions from interviewers who want to know if she's getting married soon; if she's planning to have children; how she'll take care of them if she does. And because of the stigma against women having any authority, she has less freedom on the job. Often, she is afraid to assert herself—all her life she has heard that aggressive women are nasty, man-hating misfits. (Note, for example, a recent ad for a Speedwriting course. Under the caption is THIS YOUR BOSS? OR IS THIS YOUR BOSS? are two pictures, one of a fat, frowning woman, the other of a clean-cut, smiling man. Guess which we're supposed to prefer?) Her male associates or subordinates are likely to resent her unless she acts "feminine"—i.e., pretends to defer to their superior judgment. (Dr. Mary Meade, a school administrator and recent appointee to the New York Board of Education, has remarked that her technique for getting her suggestions accepted is to convince one of the men she works with to transmit it to the rest.) And she will be inhibited because she knows that a woman has to be twice as good as a man—any mistake will be attributed to female incompetence.

The college graduate with no specialized training is even worse off. She will probably end up as a secretary or "gal Friday" with little or no chance of promotion to a policy-making job. The secretary in America is not only a typing-shorthand-telephone-answering machine, but a glorified housewife and quasi geisha girl. She is expected to look pretty and fashionable, have a "good personality," make coffee for the boss, soothe his temper, flatter him, and make him think her ideas are his own. Even if she does, in fact, do original work and make decisions, it is her boss who gets the money and status.

The sexual emancipation of the "new woman" is as illusory as the economic. True, the cruder aspects of the double standard are in disrepute. But real sexual freedom implies that each sex cares equally about the physical and emotional needs of the other. In our sexist society, this is far from the case. Women are brought up to be sen-

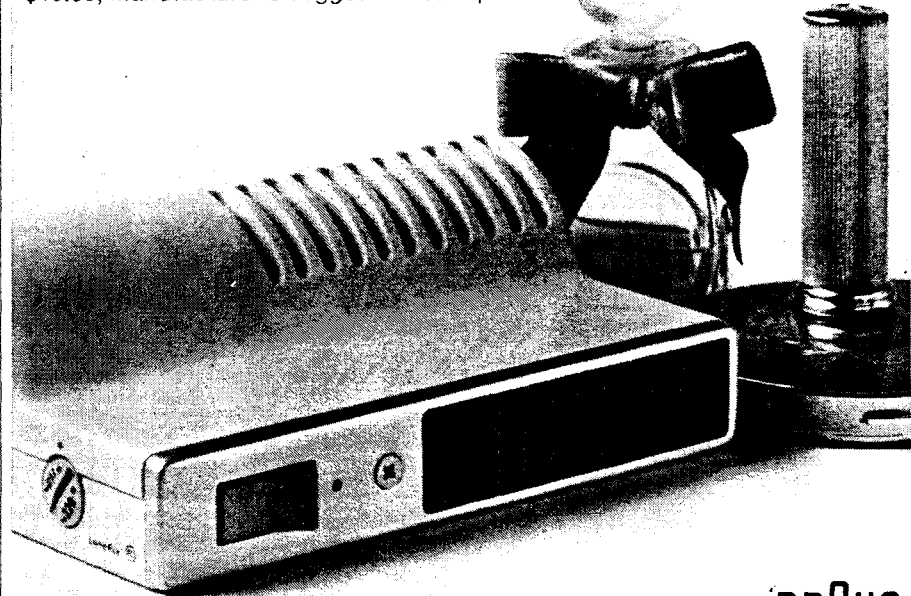
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sitive to a man's needs, to put him first. Men accept this sensitivity as their due and rarely reciprocate. Rather, they tend to see women as objects, as pretty or ugly, easy to get or a challenge, a good catch or a last resort. In general, women are sexually attracted to men whose whole personality interests them; a man's pursuit of nice legs or breasts or long blond hair may have nothing to do with whether he likes the person they belong to. This naturally makes women more hesitant than men to enter sexual relationships. And their hesitancy then impels men to play more elaborate seduction games, reinforcing the hesitancy.

In a way, the relaxation of sexual mores just makes a woman's life more difficult. If she is not cautious about sex, she is likely to get hurt; if she is too cautious, she will lose her man to more obliging women. Either way, her decision is based at least partly on fear and calculation, not on her spontaneous needs and desires. Another myth that needs debunking is that women have won the right to equal sexual enjoyment. Unfortunately, as men have become more sensitive and knowledgeable about female sexuality, they have also begun to demand passion from women as an index of their virility. Orgasmic capacity has become another criterion of a desirable object, like good looks. Under such pressure, a woman who cares about a man is increasingly tempted to let him think she is turned on whether she is or not. To refuse him if she's not in the mood or explain to him how to excite her or take the initiative her-

self is to risk "deflating his ego," provoking accusations of frigidity, and inducing him to look elsewhere for confirmation of his talents.

Men want women to be available and responsive, but without making too many demands or challenging their sexual prerogatives. By now it has become a psychiatric cliché that many men have reacted to their wives' new sexual aggressiveness with loss of interest or even impotence. The implication is clear: go back to your passive role, or else. Nearly all the participants in a recent magazine survey of young men's attitudes toward the birth-control pill resented the pill because they felt it made women too independent. Even men who defend the sexual revolution the loudest often display contempt for a woman who has a lot of affairs—not because they really think she is "bad," but because her departure from the traditional role is an implicit threat to their power position.

Finally, the sexual double standard can never disappear so long as women are denied contraceptives and abortion on demand. Birth control is not so easily available as is supposed, especially to young, unmarried girls. (Bill Baird, the director of a Long Island birth-control clinic, is currently appealing a three-month sentence for publicly breaking Massachusetts law by handing an unmarried woman a bottle of spermicidal foam.) And thousands of women die or are seriously injured each year as the result of messed-up abortions. Our "new woman" is probably white and middle class



## SCHOOL-TIE STRIPES

Remember the school-striped tie? It's lively—in yellow and red and navy-blue—and well and living a smashing campus-city life in the shape of a shirty little dress with long sleeves and a curve of a collar. By James Jure, silk and worsted (Wm. Rose), 4-14, \$70. At Harzfeld's, Kansas City; Nordstrom Best, Washington.

and thus unlikely to stick a coat hanger through her uterus or give herself over to a \$10-a-job butcher, but even high-class illegal abortions can be dangerous and degrading. Yet, in most cases a woman's only other alternative is to bear a child she doesn't want or cannot afford, emotionally, physically, or financially. One of the ugliest florescences of sexism is the state's power to force a woman to use her body for reproduction. The Constitution prohibits involuntary servitude and guarantees every citizen equal protection of the laws: how can compulsory pregnancy be justified? Politicians and churchmen who moralize about killing the fetus care more about an unconscious clump of cells than about the suffering of living women. Those who say, "She's had her fun, she should take the consequences," are denying women (even married women, who dominate the abortion statistics) the right to sexual happiness on the same basis as men.

The institution that affects women's lives most is marriage. For most women, it is a central goal. If a woman wants children, she must marry or suffer social ostracism and economic hardship. Marriage also removes her from the social-sexual rat race and gives her status: she has succeeded as a woman. But does it give her what she wants most—genuine love and companionship? If so, it is only because human tenderness and concern sometimes manage to flourish in the worst of circumstances.

Marriage, though disguised as a freely contracted bond between equals, is in fundamental respects a master-slave relationship. It is more necessary to women, but more beneficial to men. A woman's training in being supportive and ego-building is basically practice for the subordinate role in marriage, where she is expected to put her husband's work and interests above her own and provide him with a comfortable domestic environment. A working wife is nonetheless held responsible for the household, though her husband may "help out."

The constant celebration of homemaking in the media cannot conceal the fact that most housework is dirty and horing. Most people would prefer just about any job to being a domestic servant: few single women would stand for a female roommate trying to stick them with all the cleaning. But to do the same dirty work for a husband is supposed to be a privilege. The rationalization is usually that women are inherently altruistic, which makes about as much sense as Senator George Murphy's remark that Mexicans are better suited to stoop labor because they are "built low to the ground."

It is equally specious to imagine that because women are uniquely equipped to give birth and nurse infants, they also have a special talent for changing diapers and wiping noses. Much, perhaps most, of child rearing involves routine work that, however necessary for the child, is not particularly edifying for the parent. And Dr. Spock to the contrary, many women have no temperamental gift for relating to children; many men undoubtedly do, or would if they ever had a chance to develop it. Anyway,

taking care of children, however rewarding, is not the equivalent of work in the outside world. Children need love, support, someone to stand behind them and put their welfare first—more of what a culturally approved wife is already providing for her husband. A mother cannot use her children as outlets for her creative energies without making them into things that exist for her benefit instead of their own. But if she decides that she needs a vocation of her own, even if she already has one, she comes up against institutionalized sexism. Full-time motherhood is the norm, and the system discourages alternatives. The community refuses to take any responsibility for the children of working mothers. Since most part-time jobs are marginal—both spiritually and economically—it is almost impossible, even when the husband is willing, for most couples to break with the traditional division of labor and share outside work, domestic chores, and child rearing. The only option for career woman-mother is to hire a poorer woman with fewer choices to take her place in the home. And this is nothing but exploitation, just piling the load on another woman's back.

That is the other side of the woman problem. For most women—the millions of file clerks, factory workers, welfare mothers, working-class housewives, daughters of rigid patriarchal families—are not "new women" and have never pretended to be liberated. Citing the pseudo-emancipation of an educated minority as proof that women are free has been one of the crueler sports of postwar sociology and journalism.

Many women insist that they are happy with things as they are. But would they have chosen the same life if they really had a free choice in the matter or could conceive of an alternative? Male supremacy has existed for so long that it has come to seem an unalterable absolute. What is significant is not that most women are making the best of it, but that more and more women are beginning to rebel, to insist on their primacy as human beings. As for the argument that the emancipation of women has already gone too far, this is akin to the conviction of many whites that the blacks are taking over. When a group is used to mistaking certain privileges for natural rights, any encroachment on those privileges is regarded as persecution.

But the most dangerous illusion is that women can liberate themselves as individuals. Male supremacy is not a problem of individual relationships, but a pervasive social force. No man or woman is unaffected by it. The bohemian and radical subcultures are no less sexist than straight society. In hippie communes, the women still do the cooking and cleaning; the chauvinism of radical men inspired Women's Liberation. A woman cannot hope to find a man who is free of sexist attitudes, nor can she make a man give up his privileges by arguing. He will just find another woman who accepts the *status quo*. We will only begin to solve the problem when women organize and back each other up. That is the immediate

goal of Women's Liberation—to get women together, make them see each other as sisters and allies instead of competitors for male favors. As yet we have no clear vision of the new society. That will come later. But we do know that sexism, like racism, is incompatible with human dignity. And we are prepared to fight.

*Ellen Willis, a MADMOISELLE Guest Editor in 1960, is pop critic for The New Yorker, an associate editor of US, and a member of Redstockings, a women's-liberation group.*

### The single life: Seattle

[continued from page 143]

buddhas in the windows, and over to Jackson to the Japanese section, where one can find dried cuttle fish and rice steamers and yellow-paper-wrapped scrub brushes at stores like Uwajimaya. Then up past more hospitals than seem absolutely necessary to swoops of hills—and all in a light mist or a small rain that precludes any view of Mount Rainier. "Thirty more days of sun and we'd be another Los Angeles" is the inevitable Seattle saying, followed, just as inevitably, by "Yeah, but who needs it?"

Seattle is, in many ways, an elusive city. It is unremittingly outdoorsy, as testified by the clot of boats in the Chittenden locks, the nearby ski areas like Crystal, Snoqualmie Pass, and Alpentel, and the clusters of perpetually sun-tanned types seemingly on a permanent trek to campsites. But it has been a Zen den, a hippie haven (Sunday flower throwers in Volunteer Park; a spectacular four-day mud-in called the Sky River Water Rock Festival), and a place, according to one young resident, where "I have more freedom than any place I've ever lived. Do you know that people actually watch the sunsets here? And get stoned on the air!"

Although New England and the South are usually given the palm for producing eccentrics, one remembers a Seattleite who owned, she believed, a 2,000,000-year-old insect over whose menus she brooded long and often. And another, a *grande dame*, through whose house turtles tracked. In both women, the eccentricity was partnered—as it often is—with money.

There is lots of money, old money, tightly held on to in Seattle ("The people here are basically part of the Establishment," a carpathagger said), and sometimes there is no money at all. Following the classic ethnic housing pattern, the Jews followed and replaced the Irish in certain areas and were, in turn, followed and replaced by the blacks. There is unemployment (Seattle is basically a one-industry town; as Boeing goes, so goes income), and there is friction—terrible friction. "I don't think there's any real integration here at all. There was once, but now I don't think blacks and whites hang out in the same places, except maybe at D.J.'s where everyone goes to hear the bands"—Melissa Meyer.

Melissa, who is blond, and Sharon Clark,

who is dark, live, rather like Snow White and Rose Red, in an old carriage house belonging to Melissa's grandfather. Both work for United Air Lines, love their jobs, and are totally disinclined to move elsewhere. Seattle, they say, has everything they like: skiing, sailing on one of the city's seven lakes, tennis, hiking, jogging (with, they confess, cigarettes in pocket), even broom hockey on a rented skating rink. If they dislike anything, it is the fact that life in Seattle often consists of the same old crowd, since Seattleites who went to high school together tend to meld again after they leave their respective colleges. Both long for, one suspects, new faces.

Still, it's a nice life. When they want to see friends, they can usually find them at the Red Onion or The Attic, two bars at the foot of Madison near Lake Washington. (Although, considering the baroque aspects of Seattle's drinking laws—repealed this summer—it's a marvel bars have stayed in business. You had to carry a liquor license until 27; women were not allowed to sit at a bar; one could not move with a drink in hand.) Or at the Hindquarter, where a big sirloin is \$5 and the waiter says cheerfully, "Well, that's half out, anyway," when he breaks the cork of your wine hottle. There's the Lockspot and the Iron Bull for dancing, the Penthouse for live groups, and if one's date is an older (read "richer") man, there's El Gaucho and the Maribou, Trader Vic's and Art Louis'.

Running over to Greenfield's for auctions is great and so is shopping on Capitol Hill, or out in one of the big shopping districts like Northgate. There's always something going on in the University district, and there's "that good place out there that shows foreign flicks." And the Seattle Repertory Theatre, and the Off-Center Theatre and the ACP, and...

There's just one problem. The charming little carriage house is soon to be torn down (it got in progress's way), and the girls will have to move. They want a cottage—the whole thing will cost about \$120 a month—out by Lake Washington, and their families are agitating because that's near an area of racial turmoil. They certainly wouldn't want to live in one of the single complexes close to the airport, and a houseboat on Lake Union, however romantic that might sound, is often very close cousin to the Paris sewers. They could move out to Bellevue, where they have friends and where there are new buildings going up daily. Or across Lake Washington, from where so many commute every day. But they want the city—and so they're bucking a trend. And most likely fighting a losing battle.

Oh, Seattle is building—the new Plaza Hotel is completely round, and the Hyatt people are promising something even more exciting than Atlanta's Regency-Hyatt (before which event one might cry, "Enough already"), and apartment houses mushroom overnight. But some say the last are not filling as fast as they should, that Seattle has overextended itself, made too big a gesture. Maybe. But isn't that what the West is all about?



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Encore Shoe Corp., Everett, Mass. 02149

## Women and the New Left

By Ellen Willis

The women's liberation movement was created by women activists fed up with their subordinate position in radical organizations. Their first goal was to take an equal, active part in the radical movement instead of being relegated to secretarial and other service chores.

This circumstance has led to certain assumptions about the women's movement. In the standard radical view, women's liberation is a branch of the left and women a constituency like students or GIs. Granted that we suffer our own forms of oppression and that radical men have oppressed us as women, the emphasis is on contributing our special insights to the left as a whole and using feminist issues as an organizing tool. In return, male radicals are expected to endorse women's liberation and combat their male chauvinism.

Many of us now reject this view of our purpose as anti-woman. We have come to see women's liberation as an independent revolutionary movement, potentially representing half the population. We intend to make our own analysis of the system and put our interests first, whether or not it is convenient for the (male-dominated) left. Although we may cooperate with radical men on matters of common concern, we are not simply part of the left. We do not assume that radical men are our allies or that we want the same kind of revolution they want.

This divergence in outlook was apparent when several women's liberation groups met in Washington last month to plan anti-inaugural activities. The theme of the women's liberation action was "Give back the vote." Since women's 80-year struggle for the vote had achieved a meaningless victory and vitiated the feminist movement, we planned to destroy our voter registration cards publicly as a symbol that suffragism was dead and a new fight for real emancipation beginning. Some women wanted to invite men to burn their voters' cards during or after our action. This idea was rejected on grounds that it would change the action from a repudiation of suffrage as a sop for women to a protest against the electoral process.

There was also some wrangling over the speech we had scheduled. Some of us wanted to inform movement men that we were sick of participating in other people's revolutions and were working for ourselves. Others were horrified at the thought of criticizing the movement publicly. We decided on two short

speeches—one a general statement of women's oppression, the other a militant declaration of independence from radical men.

Ensuing events bore out the separatist argument. The Mobilization Committee, supposedly sympathetic, neither included women's liberation among the issues listed in its Guardian ad nor mentioned our action in its mimeographed program. Mobe spokesman Dave Dellinger announced at the Saturday rally that the Mobe had come to demonstrate against the war and for black liberation. When some women on the stage yelled at him, he mentioned women's liberation as an afterthought. During our presentation—which began with the moderate, pro-movement statement—men in the audience booed, laughed, catcalled and yelled enlightened remarks like "Take her off the stage and fuck her." Instead of reprimanding the hecklers (as he did during an unpopular speech by a black GI), Dellinger tried to hurry us off the stage.

It is a mistake to think that education alone will change this. Radical men have a power position that they will not give up until they have to. They will support our revolution only when we build an independent movement so strong that no revolution at all is possible without our cooperation.

## Half the human race

To work within the movement is to perpetuate the idea that our struggle is secondary. We will continually be tempted to defer to "the larger good of the movement" just as we have always deferred to "the larger good of the family." We must remember that women are not just a special interest group with sectarian concerns. *We are half the human race.* Our oppression transcends occupations and class lines. Femaleness, like blackness, is a biological fact, a fundamental condition. Like racism, male supremacy permeates all strata of this society. And it is even more deeply entrenched. Whites are at least defensive about racism; men—including most radicals, black and white—are proud of their chauvinism. Male supremacy is the oldest form of domination and the most resistant to change.

The radical movement has been dominated by men. Its theory, priorities and strategies reflect male interests. Here are some of the more obvious points radical feminists must consider:

**Theory:** An anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist analysis is insufficient for our purposes. Women's oppression antedated capitalism by some 2000 years and has outlasted it in socialist countries.

**Priorities:** Women are the only oppressed people whose biological, emotional and social life is totally bound to that of the oppressors. The function of the ghetto, the army, the factory, the campus in reifying an oppressed group's separate existence must be assumed by women's liberation. We must provide a place for women to be friends, exchange personal griefs and give their sisters moral support—in short, develop group consciousness. Yet this function is often derogated by movement-oriented women—"How can we indulge in group therapy while *men* [my italics] are dying in Vietnam?"

**Strategies:** (1) In deciding what role, if any, confrontation and violence should play in our movement, we must consider that women are at a disadvantage physically and that our aggressiveness has been systematically inhibited. On the other hand, we must realize that one reason men don't take us seriously is that they are not physically afraid of us.

(2) We must admit that we will often have more in common with reformist women's organizations like NOW (National Organization for Women) than with radical men. Repeal of abortion laws, for example, is not a radical demand—the system can accommodate it. But it is of gut concern to radical as well as liberal women.

(3) We will never organize the mass of women by subordinating their concrete interests to a "higher" ideology. To believe that concentrating on women's issues is not really revolutionary is self-depreciation. Our demand for freedom involves not only the overthrow of capitalism but the destruction of the patriarchal family system.

It is not only possible but imperative for women to build a *specifically feminist* radical consciousness. As radicals we must do our best to foster this consciousness. But we should have the humility to realize that women who have never been committed to a male-oriented radical analysis may have clearer perspectives than we. Unless we shed our movement prejudices and help women's liberation go its own way, we will not be a revolutionary vanguard but reactionary obstructionists.

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A WOMAN SCIENTIST SPEAKS

On July 22, 1969, several of my friends and I were watching the astronauts land on the moon. We watched and asked the same question. "Why aren't there any women astronauts on the moon?" "Why aren't there any women technicians?" How are we kept from these fields?

As a woman scientist and someone who wanted to be an astronaut, I feel that I know some of these answers. I have worked as an actuarial trainee, an engineer, a solid state physicist, and a college teacher of mathematics, chemistry, and physics. From these experiences I would like to tell you some of the reasons for the lack of women in technical fields.

As a child I liked to make and build objects. My parents encouraged this interest and my desire to pursue a scientific career. I was also encouraged in school, especially by a woman mathematics teacher in junior high school. This teacher continued to encourage me after I had completed her class. Both my parents and teachers helped me in my personal projects such as breeding fish and plants. This encouragement continued in high school. Several teachers helped me to obtain a National Science Foundation research grant. Following this outside recognition from the NSF, the mathematics department chairman added his help. He coached me in college level mathematics so that I could skip freshmen courses and he also helped me to get research grants. I used one of these grants to study electricity and to build my own radio set. The school where I took this course was normally attended only by men and did not even have a ladies bathroom. At the time I thought nothing of this, but it was the beginning of the discouragement I was to receive in pursuing my interests. Up to this point I had received only encouragement and help from school and home in learning about science. I wanted to study science because I enjoyed the subject and while I was encouraged I did quite well in this pursuit. Until I graduated from high school, nobody ever questioned my motives or my interest in the subject.

When I began to apply to college I suddenly discovered resistance. I knew that I had to be twice as good as a man to get into college and even better for a scholarship. So I was. I worked hard to graduate first in my class and get 700-800 on the College Boards. In addition I participated in as many school activities as possible. Yet when I applied to college I was told not to indicate my interest in science. I was told that I would not be able to compete with men once I entered college. It was not that I could not, but that I was not allowed. I had already shown that I could. When the scholarships and admissions were given out, I watched as men with poorer grades than my own were awarded the prizes. When I complained I was told that companies and colleges did not want to invest in a woman because she would eventually get married. This was the first time that I learned what it meant to be a woman. But since I did receive offers and was able to go to college I let it slide and the anger passed.

Once I entered college though, I couldn't let the anger pass because I was constantly being reminded that I was a woman and women shouldn't study science and mathematics. Professors told us women that we were not serious enough and we had to prove ourselves. In many science courses the requirements for women were much higher than for men. In my school the course which prospective mathematics majors were required to pass was taught by just such a professor. Many women were denied entrance into the major because he felt they were not serious enough. Once again a woman had to be twice as good to get by. An average man is encouraged to study these subjects but an average woman is denied the same opportunity. I was able to major in mathematics because a visiting woman professor taught the required course one semester. Instead of having to prove myself, I was encouraged to continue. I later switched my major to physics and the pressures on me as a woman became much greater. I was constantly reminded that physics was a man's domain and in order to earn equality and respect for my work I would have to give up my "female privileges". What this meant was that I had to carry my own equipment



and open doors for myself. I also had to learn to use tools and although the men knew how they would not give me any of the help they gave to each other. Naturally when a woman learns these things she is laughed at. I was told that I was no longer feminine and ridiculed for this. Many women envy another woman who pursues a scientific career. It is often felt that she will meet many men. The men who are her fellow students do not agree. They do not consider her a woman, but a queer and a threat to themselves. In this way a woman scientist becomes alienated from others very early. Other women are awed by her, men treat her as a freak.

Despite the discouragement I had received, I continued to study. I kept pursuing my interest in science partly to prove that I could do it and partly because I enjoyed it. However that enjoyment had decreased very much during my college years. The constant discouragement and pressures that I received as a woman had their result. I became less interested and my work suffered. All the energy that I had put into fighting these pressures distracted me from my work. Eventually I believed the belittling and the quality of my work was lowered. However I managed to finish school and then attempted to apply my skills.

A woman who seeks to continue in her scientific work finds that she has obtained one of the following titles: "the first woman physics graduate in the school's history", "the woman in the mathematics department", "our prettiest engineer", or "the bird-brained scientist". A big fuss is made over her when she gets a job and she is publicly pointed out. However, like every other woman she receives lower salary, lower rank, and less interesting positions than men with the same qualifications. After obtaining the skills as a man, spending the same time at the same schools, a woman is still treated as an inferior person. On my first job I was not even afforded the common courtesy of being invited to lunch by my co-workers. It is usual to take a new person to lunch. Well, on my first day all my colleagues marched out to lunch leaving me to sit alone in my office. When I was first hired I was told not to expect any favors because I was a woman. Yet every time I turned around my co-workers made a fuss. I cramped the style of the laboratory because they felt they couldn't use curse words in my presence. At the same time every man I worked with expected favors of me because I was a woman. I was told not to use my feminine wiles, but any time I participated in discussions or arguments I was put down as a flighty woman. The men did not respond to my logic but only to my feminine wiles. I wanted to be treated equally in my work but my male co-workers would not allow it. They did not want to follow my logic. They forced me to use my sex "privileges" to get attention for my work and then ridiculed me for it.

There is set up a constant conflict between a woman as a woman and her abilities as a scientist. This conflict is caused by the around her. She is told not to act like a woman but she is always treated like a woman. Her work is belittled and she is constantly asked to prove herself in both her work and her intentions. It is never thought that she is interested in her work. Every man thinks she is interested in him. I was constantly asked why I was wasting my time and told to get married. I was told that their wives preferred homemaking and since I was a woman I wouldn't be happy unless I did the same. My work was considered to be a waste of time, while my co-workers who were doing the same thing were considered to be conducting important research. Even after several years of teaching I find that male students find it necessary to criticize my work as a mathematics teacher.

In addition to being an outcast among my male colleagues I was shunned by other women because I was different. Other women are in awe of the female member of the technical staff and they do not become friends. They also resent any superiority that is held over them and a woman scientist acts superior. The woman scientist feels that she has proven that she is a skilled and

accomplished person. She does not receive any recognition from men so she seeks to gain it from the women who are under her. In this <sup>way</sup> we women are kept divided. The secretaries resent the woman scientist's slight authority, while the woman scientist resents the lack of recognition. At present we are venting these hostilities on each other instead of on the cause, which is men. It is the men who treat us all unequally and do not recognize our individual achievements. As my awareness developed in Women's Liberation, I became less interested in gaining recognition from men and it was no longer necessary to laud my position over other women. When my position was not used this way I became friends with the secretaries and we helped and supported each other in our work. I helped her do the mimeographing and she gave me useful information. I used to feel put down when my colleagues suggested that I eat with the secretaries. I not only felt slighted but resentful because I was kept from many fruitful discussions about work. Many ideas and experiments are suggested as a result of social meetings. I felt that I was being deprived of scientific opportunities and did not want to waste this time discussing subjects which I considered to be less important with the secretaries. Since Women's Liberation I actively seek out the secretaries for social company. There is a pleasant atmosphere rather than the competitive hostility I found with men. There is no competition among us for we treat each other equally as women, not as inferiors, while the men treat all women equally, as inferiors.

The only reason that there aren't any more women scientists and technicians is because the men don't allow it. They tell us women that we are not good at mechanical skills. If we disprove their theory by learning these skills, they accuse us of being unfeminine. As a youngster I was encouraged in my scientific pursuits, yet when I tried to achieve these goals I was harassed. I had the confidence in my ability and the desire to study science. The constant pressures that I received caused me to lose both. No wonder a woman who as a child did not receive this encouragement does not enter science. No matter when we feel them, the pressures and discouragement keep us women from becoming scientists. Having the early encouragement I went further but eventually I too lost interest. It was only after my involvement in Women's Liberation that I again found enjoyment in science. I now teach mostly women students who encourage me in my work. In return I encourage them to study mathematics. They are not put down as women and I am not overly criticised and harassed by male students. In this atmosphere, where I am not ill-treated as a woman, I have rediscovered my enjoyment of science.

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November 20, 1969

June 27, 1969

Resistances to Consciousness

Thinking that our man is the exception and, therefore, we are the exception among women.

Thinking that individual solutions are possible, that we don't need solidarity and a revolution for our liberation.

Thinking that women's liberation is therapy. This, whether or not you belong to the organization, implies that you and others can find individual solutions to problems, for this is the function of therapy. Furthermore the statement expresses anti-woman sentiment by implying that when women get together to study and analyze their own experience it means they are sick but when Chinese peasants or Guatemalan guerillas get together and use the identical method they are revolutionary.

Thinking that some women are smart and some women are dumb. This prevents those women who think they're smart and those women who think they're dumb from talking to each other and uniting against a common oppressor.

Thinking that because we have an education privilege and can talk in abstracts we are somehow exempt from feeling oppression directly and talking about it honestly and , therefore think of personal experience as something low on the ladder of values (class values).

Thinking that women consent to their own oppression (or anyone for that matter). This is a statement which puts the blame on the oppressed group rather than on the oppressor class which ultimately uses brute force to keep the oppressed where they are. It is an anti-women and anti-people statement.

Thinking that only institutions oppress women as opposed to other people. This implies that you have not identified your enemy, for institutions are only a tool of the oppressor. When the oppressor is stopped he can no longer maintain his tools and they are rendered useless. Present institutions and our feelings about them should be analyzed in order to understand what it is we want or don't want to use in the new society.

Thinking in terms of them and us. This implies that you are setting yourself off or apart from women (the people). In doing this you neglect to recognize your own oppression and your common interests with other people, as well as your stake in revolution.

-2-

Thinking that male supremacy is only a psychological privilege with "ego" benefits as opposed to a class privilege with sexual and economic benefits. The former implies a considerable amount of individual variation among men therefore permitting you to find an individual solution to the problem.

Thinking that the relationships among men and women are already equal and thus immersing yourself in utopian fantasies of free love in spite of the fact that the objective conditions deny it. Love between men and women, free or unfree, is millennial not real and if we want it we will have to struggle for it.

Thinking you can educate the people. This implies that you are educated and you will get a revolution going by teaching other people what you know. Education does not bring on revolutions; but consciousness of our own oppression and struggle might. Unfortunately formal education and political consciousness do not usually coincide. Even formal education in Marxism-Leninism tends to make people think that they know more than they really know. When we think of what it is that politicizes people it is not so much books or ideas but experience.

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# defining reality

by Lynn O'Connor

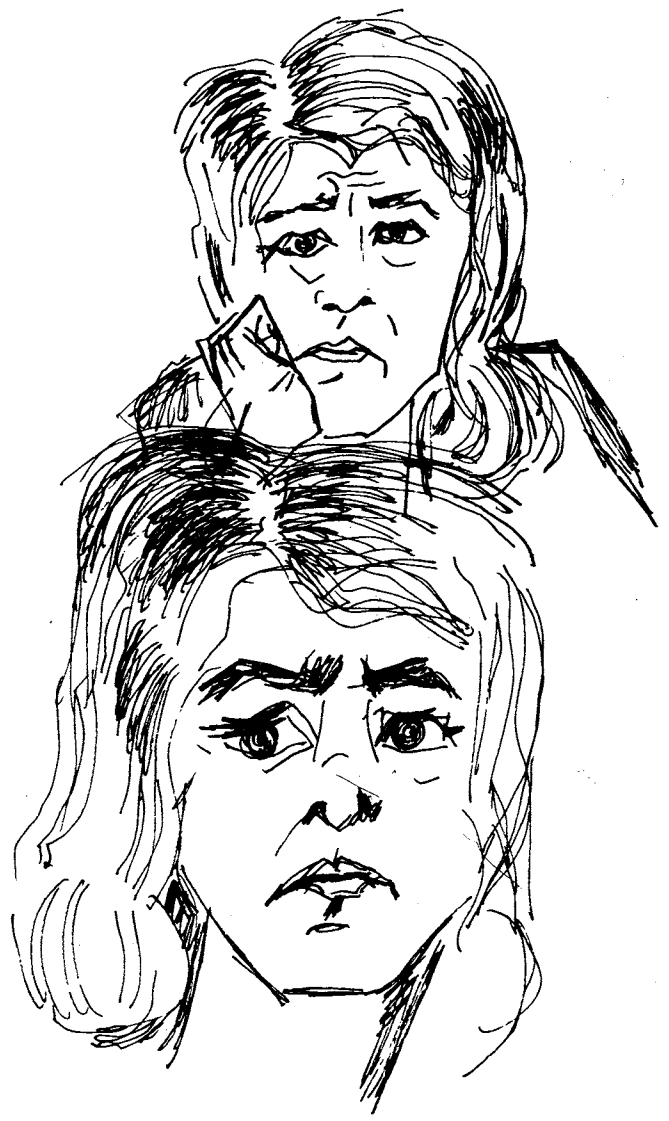
The small group has been instrumental in the development of the Women's Liberation Movement. During the last two years many small groups consisting of between five and fifteen women have sprung up all over the country, sometimes spontaneously and sometimes as a result of organizing efforts. While many of the women involved have been previously connected with the New Left and the Student Movement, some of them have had no political experience whatsoever. The following analysis is an effort to systematically order and understand my own small group experience and the experience of other women with whom I have had contact. While there are individual variations in minor details, the overall pattern seems common enough to support this analysis.

The task of the small group is labeled "consciousness raising" and refers to a long and logical process which leads to a synthesis of the personal consciousness to which the psychoanalysts have given their attention, and the political or class consciousness of the Marxists. Despite the lack of inter-group communication or a common ideological frame of reference, each group seems to have gone through three distinct stages and faced specific identifiable problems at each stage.

### STAGE I: RAGE

In fairly amorphous and unstructured weekly meetings, group members begin to discuss what they see as personal problems. Telling their stories or making their "confessions" is difficult because it demands a public admission of an individual's unhappiness in a society where unhappiness is viewed as a symptom of emotional illness, and where the details of family and other inter-personal relationships are considered private material. Two examples should clarify this:

A woman went to a party a week before the meeting. She was sitting with a small group of men and women, discussing a demonstration that had taken place. She made a thoughtful criticism of some leaflets that had been distributed. No one seemed to hear her. It was as if she were invisible or spoke another language. She immediately assumed that no one had heard her because everything she had to say was stupid and trite, and furthermore because she was too ugly and unpopular to be noticed. She found it hard to tell her story to the group because she believed it reflected and revealed some horrible private personality characteristics -- stupidity, ugliness, sickness, and dependency on other's approval which she interpreted as emotional flabbiness.



Another woman described a fight she had with her husband about the purchase of six coffee cups. They had badly needed the cups but when she came home with them her husband attacked her furiously for spending money frivolously, for being unable to understand their financial situation, which actually was not bad. She hesitated before telling the story, and felt guilty afterwards, because her husband had a public reputation for generosity and to describe his stinginess to a group seemed like a blatant betrayal of family secrets.

When the stories start flowing, so does a lot of personal rage. In the process of telling her story, a woman often releases some of her previously unrecognized anger. In the first example above, after describing the event and her shame, the woman found herself getting furious at the people who had treated her as if she were invisible.

These early sessions may seem similar to group therapy but in fact they are very different. While individual members may think of themselves as sick, there is no group assumption to that effect, especially since the group soon discovers that there is a com-

mon thread through each story; that in fact they have all been telling the same story with minor variations. Nor is there any expectation of treatment or cure. Furthermore, there is no trained authority whom the members believe can correctly interpret their stories. Thus instead of focusing on how each woman describes an event in her life, the emphasis is on the actual content of reported events. While often in therapy situations there is an assumption that inner feelings determine an event or at least your perceptions and memory, in Women's Liberation groups there is the assumption that concrete events determine your feelings. The causal arrow is reversed and some of the shame and self-blame that the women have lived with gets redirected outwards in rage.

Thus the small group functions as an arena of reality testing -- a place where the members see their experiences mirrored in each other, where they are able to check and reaffirm their perceptions. One woman alone who complains of her oppression can be told she is distorting reality. When it happens enough she learns to doubt her own observations and assumes that they are really somewhat distorted. But when a group of women perceive again and again the same patterns of oppression derived from concrete stories of their day-to-day lives, it is impossible to sweep away their words as distortions. The first stage ends with a collective recognition that their tales of failures and feelings of inferiority are not functions of inferior people, but of some unnameable force that has acted upon them all to make them feel inadequate.

STAGE II: THE VISION

With a large amount of guilt and self-blame dissipated, women enter the second stage of the process. They feel a growing personal strength that is new and exciting. Some of them feel a surge of energy. The talk about men diminishes and they turn to themselves. They reveal long-hidden secret ambitions and many realize they have never taken themselves seriously. They liberate a vision of themselves as strong, serious people with inherent capacity for achievement and independence.



# DEFINING REALITY R 2

Sometimes this new strength, this liberated vision is confused with real liberation, and women think they will now be able to move in the world with self-confidence and be treated as if they were worthy. "Show some self-respect and others will respect you," and "If only you'd pull yourself together," are old and familiar phrases for most women. Suddenly they see themselves pulling together and wait for all the old, happy expectations to materialize. This level of consciousness is inevitably temporary because it is false. It leaves out the real world where women are oppressed and assumes the possibility of individual solutions. Personal inadequacy is not at the source of their feelings and experiences. Pulling themselves together, straightening up and facing the world head on brings women to the third stage of the process.



### STAGE III: RETURN TO RAGE

**SHOCK!** The strengthened woman comes face to face with her oppressor -- men. More confident in the accuracy of her perceptions, more in touch with herself and her needs, she approaches men, be they fathers, husbands, boyfriends, brothers or employers, with diminished servility. Instead of the new admiration and respect she had expected, she is met with anger, rejection and laughter. She is forced to see how she really is treated -- how in fact men do not listen to her, how they watch and respond to her as a sex object to be judged on appearance alone. The costs of demanding any kind of economic or social equality are enormous. If she clearly expresses her needs and opinions she is scorned as aggressive, unfeminine, and sick. If, on the job, she refuses to fulfill those "womanly" obligations, such as conforming to rigid rules of dress, or always being polite, sweet and servile to her male boss, she is immediately fired regardless of her work qualifications. If she is married, her husband finds her demands laughable, or worthy of abuse, and not infrequently leaves her for a younger, more "womanly" woman. She finds that as soon as she stops being subservient to a man, he cuts off the relationship. In essence, she becomes a social freak, despised and condemned by men and their society. If she is alone, she is acutely aware of the unspoken cultural assumption that a woman alone is "not nice."

In other words, she is forced to see that woman, in and of herself, is bad unless she has a man to legitimize her. To exist she must procreate and serve. The oppression that the group had discovered and called economic and psychological is now seen as only a present-day manifestation of male supremacy. The profound political implications of this are clear. Understanding that there are no personal solutions, that only a collective force can wage a struggle against male supremacy, marks the synthesis of personal and class consciousness. With regard to male supremacy, the oldest and most profound form of dominance of one group of people over another, women are the most exploited class with no access to any form of control. Their relations with men are most often feudal in nature. Revolution comes to mean the total overthrow of male supremacy, not just of capitalism or any other system rooted in male supremacy. If all women are free, all people will be free. The small group becomes a self-conscious collective defining its goal in terms of the violent overthrow of male supremacy -- or anything which stands in the way of that goal.

THE TRAPS

Common problems arise at each stage as described. The first to be faced is that of internal democracy. Some groups are experimenting with more structured meetings to try to overcome this difficulty. For example, a meeting can be conducted with a topic selected beforehand, and then each woman in the group is expected to speak to that topic without comment from the other members until all of the women have spoken. There is a question as to whether structural changes in the meetings can solve the problems of democracy without threatening the intimacy and spontaneity of the groups which is so important to the overall task.

The problem of false consciousness comes up during the second stage and can cause severe splits in a group. The woman who continues to think she can make it by herself comes to be resented by those who feel the impossibility of private solutions, because her upward mobility makes the other women again wonder if they should blame themselves for their experiences. Out of false consciousness there sometimes arises a kind of opportunism, that is, women becoming celebrities in the women's movement, when they are motivated by a desire for only their own recognition, rather than for the recognition of all women. It is hard to distinguish right and wrong in

this kind of problem because people who have been invisible are naturally going to be very eager for recognition, and often great work is done with that as the real motivation. Clearly women who are dedicating their lives to the struggle for their liberation are doing so in their own interest. The problem seems to arise when women claim that they as individuals have been liberated. But this false consciousness is usually short-lived. The society dominated by male supremacy does not allow a woman any meaningful success.

The third stage presents still other problems, somewhat related to false consciousness. If a woman has reached the point of getting stronger, going out and testing her new role in the world and then getting smashed, her understanding of her oppression is deeper than it was before she got smashed the second time around. She begins to understand that the process of consciousness raising is in fact a process that probably has no end, that she may now understand the need for collective revolutionary solutions, but her own consciousness is still on the move and she knows not where it will end. In other words, she has a perspective that someone new to Women's Liberation does not have. This can be a problem when she gets impatient or feels condescending toward women who are just beginning to talk about their oppression.

This just touches the surface of the kinds of difficulties that the small groups encounter. These contradictions seem to be, for the most part, non-antagonistic in nature. But too many groups have fallen apart to dismiss them lightly, and it is essential that they be looked at and analyzed systematically with the hope that greater understanding will lead to useful insights.



From "Tooth + Nail"  
~~1800 Prince Street~~  
~~Berkeley, Calif. 94703~~  
October 1, 1969

Available from:  
Redstockings  
~~P.O. Box 748 Stuyvesant Station~~  
~~New York, N.Y. 10009~~



# false consciousnesses by Jennifer Gardner

That people are unaware of the oppression of women is a serious problem, but one that will be resolved as our movement grows and makes its presence felt. The problem of false consciousness, however, is harder to solve, and ultimately more dangerous, since our consciousness will determine our goals and our strategy.

Of all the wrong theories about who oppresses women, the most confusing and insidious is the theory that women oppress themselves. This false consciousness takes two forms.

First, women are put down for submitting to unequal, unrespectful treatment without fighting back. Second, they are accused of courting their own oppression. That is, they are accused of behaving in such a weak, passive dependent way with men that men cannot possibly treat them as equals.

The first attitude is most common among women who feel that they have tried to be strong and independent, who look around them and notice that other women appear perfectly satisfied being weak and dependent. These other women seem to have made a conscious and ignoble bargain with life, sacrificing their dignity in return for protection and keep. Let us examine this bargain, and try to understand what the elements of choice really are.

Any woman, in any social class, who tries to insist on equality in relationships with men must be prepared to face the consequences of being a single woman in our society. She must face the difficulties of travelling alone, of being an obligation to her married friends, of knowing she can depend on no one for help and companionship when she wants them. These problems are real, not psychological, not in her mind. It is not a question of women being taught to believe that being single is undesirable. It is truly difficult for most unattached women to operate comfortably and effectively in a male chauvinist culture.

For many women, marriage means even more than the opportunity to avoid being single. It is also the only way out of a boring and alienating job - a job which moreover, is likely to require that she concede her dignity to men anyway. If for example, she is a secretary or waitress, and fails to placate the men who are her superiors or customers, chances are she will find herself job-hunting again.

Her only chance for respect -- partial and phony though it is -- is to have a family. Society has closed other roads to all but a few. Discrimination against women in jobs is a fact. Women's work is low-paid work. And for a woman with apparent opportunities for better-paying, less boring work, sexual discrimination in the professions and in graduate schools becomes important.

For most women, the consequences of losing -- even of attempting -- an individual struggle with a man are severe: poverty, isolation, even death, depending on the man's temperament and the woman's own class situation. Sure, every time we don't struggle we make it harder for a woman who does. But only when we have a movement, only when women can offer each other real support, can we begin to make such demands on each other. To blame women for not struggling is to forget what the risks of struggle are for us all.

The second form of this false consciousness--the theory that women are oppressed because they go around asking for it--is most dangerous to our movement. It implies that a man oppresses a woman simply as a reaction to the woman's own expectations, and that he will stop as soon as she shows him she has some self-respect. The theory denies a basic reality--that men benefit in real ways--socially, economically, sexually and psychologically--from male supremacy.

# FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

Our oppression is not in our heads. We will not become un-oppressed by "acting unoppressed." Try it--if you have the economic independence to survive the consequences. The result will not be respect and support. Men will either not like you--you are a bitch, a castrator, a nag, a hag, a witch; or they will accuse you of not liking them--you don't care about me; you don't love me; you are selfish and hostile.

True, women suffer (because they are oppressed) from feelings of inferiority and self-hatred. True, too, that believing themselves to be inadequate and to deserve their place in a different and lower class from men, women have often thought themselves unjustified in demanding their freedom. In other words, the fact that women sometimes blame themselves for their situation may prevent them from becoming strong fighters on their own behalf. Surely one important task of our movement

is to make it come clear to ourselves and to all women that our low social, economic and sexual status results not from any natural inferiority but from actual, recognizable, analyzable oppression, however subtle in form. But we cannot stop there; the elimination of self-blame, the birth of self-respect, is not the elimination of oppression. Feeling convinced of the justice of our demands is not, alas, the same as having those demands met.

The job of our movement, then, is not to blame ourselves or any other women for passivity, weakness, dependence, or any other qualities that women seem to display. Nor is it simply to strengthen ourselves for personal confrontations. Our job is to provide the vision of liberation and the hope, through our collective strength, of finally over-throwing male supremacy--everywhere.

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 New York, New York 10009

ABOUT MY CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

Politics has been around for a long time, so have radical political movements. Yet so far no political movement has come up with a political analysis that is especially relevant to us women. I can only guess that it is because the method of arriving at an analysis that talks in abstractions about other people will always exclude the people who are being directly oppressed by those doing the analysis. At Redstockings we've been developing a way of analyzing political problems that is relevant to us as women. Our method is not abstract. Each woman talks about herself and her own feelings and experiences. If our method works, we will have an analysis that is not only relevant to woman but to all people because it will be an analysis based on the realities of our lives.

Traditionally our feelings are one of the few things allowed to us women. Over a period of centuries they've become highly developed. It's time we started using them to our own advantage. Feelings and intuition may be one of the keys for forming a political analysis that is relevant to us.

The first consciousness raising session that I attended was about housework. We went around the room and each woman in turn told how she felt about housework and how she felt when she was standing over the dishes or stove, or what happened when she asked her husband or a man she was living with to do the dishes. It came to my turn and I explained how my husband always helped with the housework. If I was tired he'd cook dinner and sometimes even do the dishes. Yet I'd still start to boil every time I'd get in front of the sink or stove. I listened to other women also telling about how their men "helped" with the housework.

I began to get sick at the thought of these liberal men "helping" their wives with the housework. When we did other things like go to the beach or go out for ice cream he didn't help, he shared. It was only a matter of helping when it came to doing things that he didn't like to do. The group began to feel that something was wrong with the whole idea of men "helping" women with the housework. It meant that he was helping me with my job. Every time he'd help and I'd say "thnk you" I was reinforcing the idea that it was my job!! Regardless of whether I worked or not housekeeping was my job. It became pretty clear after hearing many women speak that this thing about helping was no petty detail of our personal lives. It became clear that it was a political fact. Listen to men talk about housework or better yet ask them how they feel about it. I'll bet that most of them say that they "help out". This is not just a matter of semantics. It is important because it keeps us having the job of housework as our job... as woman's job. There were several things that were very surprising to me at this consciousness raising session, not the least of which was the conspicuous absence of men. It was quite pleasant to talk without them. There was no need to argue about whether or not the problems we felt were real. Also, that constant undercurrent of competition that almost all of us feel when in the presence of men was almost totally absent. We were able to begin to find new ways of relating to each other.

1. Politics of Housework, Patricia Mainardi

After doing consciousness raising for a while Redstockings developed a procedure for it that we find useful. We direct our talk to one particular question at a time in order to formulate an analysis based on our real experiences and so that any generalizations we might come to will be based on fact. We go around the room, each sister taking a turn. In this way everyone has a fair chance to speak and be totally heard. When a sister gives testimony the other woman in the group can ask questions in order to clarify in their own minds what a sister is saying. Sometimes women interrupt a testimony to say how their own experiences are related directly to those of the woman speaking. When everyone has spoken we go around the room making generalizations and trying to find out what the connections are between our experiences and how they relate one to the other.

Consciousness raising is not a form of encounter group or psychotherapy. I've been involved in both and I can tell you they are very different. Therapy was useful to me in certain ways. It helped me develop a sense of self worth and come to the understanding that I wasn't a bad person or useless. My experience in therapy helped me have a better image of myself and I even started to look better and dress in a more attractive way. In short I had more confidence in myself.

Eventually I left therapy. I noticed that men paid more attention to me. They related very well to me as a sexy young eligible woman. Yet, when it came to my ideas, my needs as a human being and my work, their attention span was not very long. Oh I got more attention but it wasn't the kind I wanted. Slowly I began to lose my studied casual look. (It took quite an effort and expense to maintain.) Slowly, I noticed that men were not talking to me with that same concerned attentiveness. It seems that therapy had neglected a very important part of my education. It hadn't made clear to me that anything was wrong with the social and economic conditions in which we live. It had only made clear that I hadn't adapted to them in a way that would be useful to me. It hadn't made clear that the relationships which cause us to have problems are in large measure predetermined by a political atmosphere and that the present political atmosphere is destructive. Therapy had made me believe that I was different ~~from~~ from other women (in this case different meant better).

In retrospect therapy had separated me from my sisters by calling them "most women" and me "special". It had neglected to tell me that my newly acquired feeling of self worth was only going to propel me headlong into another struggle because although I felt worthy I was still a woman and very few other people were going to recognize my worth. Not only weren't they going to recognize my worth, but I was going to be penalized for fighting for my rights. I was labelled crazy, masochistic, etc. But this time I was not completely fooled.

I got into the womens movement and began to see that other women were also called crazy. The relief at finding I was not alone was incredible. I was stunned. Here were women who were strong. And what's more they were smart and had ideas about how things ought to be. It had been very effective in therapy calling me different than my sisters, trying to make me believe that I could find an individual solution without changing the external political conditions. It had effectively separated me from my sisters and even made me start to hate them. It put me in the position of not being able to identify with other women. I was identifying with men which seems quite natural to me since they were the ones who got all the goodies.

In the womens movement and especially in consciousness raising I saw women who recognized that there was no such thing as a personal way of solving their problems so long as male supremacy in all its formal and informal forms still existed. Here were women looking for solutions based on their own collective experience ... They were talking about their personal experiences and analyzing them in terms of social structures rather than in terms of their own weaknesses. They were not as therapy often does, blaming women for being passive and in a rut. They were trying to find out exactly what that rut was and how they were forced into it so that it could be changed. They were trusting to their own minds and experiences to understand oppression ... not as an abstraction.. not as something that happened to other women, but as a fact of their lives.

Once I became aware of my own personal oppression I was much more motivated to act both individually and collectively to change the situation in which I lived. Acting however brings repercussions and I can easily see how people resist consciousness raising especially since some of the personal actions it leads to are very painful to deal with. During one long session on abortion it became very clear to me that sex was only half shared by men and women together. The half they shared was the good part. If an unwanted pregnancy was the result of a sexual act between a man and women, it became the womans problem, as if she had done it to herself. The question was always "what are you going to do about it ?"

My husband and I had agreed that when and if we had children we would share equally in bringing them up. But we had never even considered the other half of that which meant that we should share equally in contraception. Up to now I had been taking pills but I was getting nervous about having my body controlled by chemical whose effects are still uncertain. I asked my husband if he would use condoms half the time if I would use a diaphragm the other half. Previously I had been very sympathetic to the male argument about condoms cutting down on pleasure and being uncomfortable. Since I hadn't used a diaphragm in so long it was easy for me to see that diaphragms could cut down on pleasure, (you have to stop and put them in) and that twenty four hours later when you have to take them out and wash them in your friendly office lavatory you didn't feel too comfortable either. My husband acted like I had demanded the supreme sacrifice. He said condoms were terrible to use ( I guess that meant diaphragms were pleasant) and they felt awful. He also felt terribly embarassed when he had to go to the drug-store to buy them ( I guess vaginal jelly just appears). He said he'd rather not make love at all than use one. After several weeks of bitter hassling, he realized I wasn't kidding and finally came around. Consciousness raising had brought me into direct and unpleasant conflict with men.

A collective action also came out of the same session on abortion. We came to realize that it was not only the abortion laws that had to be repealed, but that something was wrong with the whole idea of men calling them experts on problems that they would never have to face. In fact we found that we were opposed to the whole idea of experts. Out of this came the abortion hearing at the Methodist Church ( March 1969) in which we set ourselves up as experts on the abortion question by virtue of the fact that we were women. We invited all women who wanted to join us on the panel to do so because they were experts too.

Consciousness raising is a way of forming a political analysis on information we can trust is true. That information is our experience. It is difficult to understand how our oppression is political (organized) unless we first remove it from the area of personal problems. Unless we talk to each other about our so called personal problems and see how many many of our problems are shared by other people, we won't be able to see how these problems are rooted in politics. When we talk about politics we don't mean in the limited sense of political parties such as the democratic and republican or economic systems like capitilism and socialism We also see male supremacy as a political system in as much as all men are in collusion in forcing women into inferior and unproductive positions. Rare is the man who will support a woman viz. a viz. another man. There is a tacit agreement among men that woman should do only certain kinds of work, (housework, childcare, nursing, clerical work, etc.) and that woman are incapable of controlling their own lives and therefore must be helped (controlled) by men. This "understanding" that men have is reinforced by our so called democratic legal system, prostitutes are criminals but their clients aren't, ( in N. Y. state) women cannot accuse their husband of rape, etc.

In order for us to form a powerful political movement it must be a movement which answers to the needs of all women. We recognize that at the present time there are economic, class and racial differences among women which keep us from coming together politically. It is our hope that consciousness raising in groups of women who are not the same will help us to understand each other and help us all in building a movement which answers to the needs of more than just the most privileged woman. Our analysis is an expanding one, it changes as more and more women enter the movement and contribute their knowledge and experience thereby widening and correcting our understanding of oppression.

#### SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL

Barbara Susan  
A sister of Redstockings

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December 1969

PROTECTIVE RULES FOR CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING

1. Everyone in the entire group must be given a chance to bear testimony before the meeting ends.
2. When bearing testimony, each sister must stick to specific instances of her life rather than generalizing from these specifics.
3. If questions are asked, they should be to clarify further the specifics of a sister's testimony, and not to comment upon a sister's situation, or interpret it for her, or to judge it.
4. Everyone in the group must assume that each sister knows best her own motivation, and the incidents in her own life, and needs no help in interpretation. This is a judgement. We must never judge another sister's testimony.
5. After all testimony has been given, an attempt is to be made by the entire group to see if any generalizations can be drawn from the testimony given.
6. Each and every sister has an obligation to speak up immediately if any of these rules are broken.
7. These rules are to be read before every session of consciousness-raising.