

The NEW FEMINIST

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The ideas and opinions expressed in these articles are not necessarily those of the New Feminists - take it from there people!

"Friedan's idea was that the system was all right but women should have a piece of the pie. Now I think the whole pie is rotten and the entire system must be changed."

New Feminist, Dorothy Curzon,
Toronto Daily Star, November 8, 1969.

EDITORIAL

New Feminists are a group of women in search of their humanity in a society that demeans them.

We are children of our times and our world. Each of us bears the scars of having grown up as women in a man's world. We are groping to understand and change - first ourselves, and then the distorting society.

Our ideas vary. Some of us believe that marriage must be abolished. Others that marriage can be reformed and be saved, much changed and for the few.

Some believe that all women must have a job; some others think that whether man, woman, both or neither are employed is irrelevant, providing their lives are productive.

Some think political and economic revolution is necessary for the liberation of women. Others think that 19th century ideologies are not the answer to the problems of the 20th century woman - we must find our own way.

On this we are all agreed. Our society is fundamentally built on

separate but unequal sex-roles for men and women. The first, fundamental step in the liberation of women is the rejection of a society so ordered. A new society where pre-packaged sex-roles are irrelevant is our objective. We must be humans before we are male or female, and society must be reconstituted to express this.

Since our beginning in the early spring we have made some false starts, explored some dead ends and wasted a lot of energy. Naturally. We are women of our times. But we have just begun. We think there are new times ahead if we work for the

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONVENTION Winnipeg, October 1969

At this convention, a group of women delegates attempted to gain an amendment to the constitution of the N.D.P., The present constitution allows the Women's Committee to delegate five women to the approximately 100-strong Federal Council.

It was proposed on the floor to the 1100 delegates that the Women's Committee should put forward twenty-five delegates - thereby making certain of at least 25% representation on the Federal Council (which is surely not being over-greedy.) While a majority of the delegates were in favour of the change in the constitution, the necessary two-thirds of the vote was not forthcoming. David Lewis, the Deputy Leader, suggested the number be reduced to fifteen, but the same reaction occurred; it was a majority vote, but at 638 to 389, it was not enough.

The 1100 delegates duly voted on representatives to the Federal Council and the following women are now members of that body:

Mary Eady (Ottawa), treasurer
Peggy Prowse (Nova Scotia)
Vice-president

(continued on page 2)

You'll never amount to much - that is what people will communicate to you in a thousand savage or subtle ways.

Children of the slums and reserves get the message nasty and brutish. Girls are swathed in pastel pink, cuddled and kissed into their caste. It is the soft sell. Be pretty, be passive, be soft, simple and unassertive. It seems natural, god-ordained, immutable.

Sex, like race, is an immediately visible characteristic. When two people meet, even most casually on the street, or have any dealings, the name, the age, the height may not be remembered. The sex is.

We refer to people by their sex; he or sho, his or hers, Mister, Miss and Mrs. Even the names of males and females are drawn from different lists.

Just as there is a characteristic way of talking to the deaf, the aged, or a baby, there is a characteristic way of talking to a male or a female. There is man to man talk. Male jock-strap locker-room talk. There is girl talk and woman talk.

There is very little human + human talk, especially between the sexes. Tones change when a woman enters a male conversation. And the tone is different if the conversation enters the so called woman's domain. Sniffles and small talk. If playing by the rules women will be coy and flirtatious when they talk to a man, and men condescending or leering when they talk to a woman.

Human to human talk - serious talk - is presumed to be a male trait. Even women say they prefer talking to men. The best put down for a woman who talks seriously is a pat on the head - real or implied.

• Your sex is your fate and fortune in this society we live in. Sex is fate in the same way that race is fate and class is fate. If you are born female or Indian, Black, hard-core poor, physically or mentally crippled, you've got a problem.

The discriminations of sex begin even before birth. Will it be a boy? Or a girl? Shall we buy pink or shall we buy blue? Shall we play safe with a ~~neut~~ral or yellow. How will we take it if ... My DAUGHTER the doctor?

"It's a boy," or "it's a girl," is the first thing the doctor tells you about your baby after birth.

We give boys toys that train them to control their environment. Girls are given toys that teach them to be nurturant and relate through others; role-playing toys for one role - marriage, motherhood and maintenance. Parents worry if Johnny likes dolls, or Georgina prefers fire-engines. Will he be a ... should we take him to a psychiatrist?

We train boys to be adventurous and lively and allow them liberties because they are boys. We praise girls for demureness, sweetness, and obedient affection.

Boys are dressed in practical clothes that allow them freedom and movement, and the dirtiness of hard play. Girls are dressed to be pretty.

As a child's world expands the distinctions become greater. In school we give them separate gym classes and separate sports to play. There is home economics for girls and woodworking or shop for boys. There are girl's books and boy's books; little gentlemanly manners and little ladylike ways.

Puberty strikes boys and girls differently. Boys commonly masturbate in groups, are proud when they are first able to ejaculate, and brag about their first intercourse. A boy is expected to get all he can and then tell. That's manliness.

For the girl puberty is felt as a furtive and timid secret. It divides the good from the bad. The message is clear; boy's don't respect girls who "put out." Hang on to your treasure. Who will want to buy the cow if they're getting the milk free? Virgins make better wives and mothers. And if dirty old men leer and pinch or awkward school boys snicker and wise-crack, then obviously, she's "asking for it." Morality is the female's responsibility.

We teach our children to regard their bodies and sexuality in different ways. The male body, in the company of other males, can be sexually neutral. Boys swim and shower and run around nude together

as a matter of course.

The female is always a sexual being. She has been trained from childhood, with its two-piece bathing suits, the doors and curtains on toilet and shower stalls, the references to her frailty on "those days," to be acutely conscious of her body and its sexual and biological functions.

Sociological studies have shown that boys tend to be highly rated in school for their athletic prowess, and in the middle-class also for brains. Girls are rated for their popularity with boys.

"What is your fortune,
my pretty maid?
My face is my fortune, sir,
she said."

The conflict between the sexual being and the human being becomes increasingly acute for the girl who goes on to college. In college more girls than boys drop out and the boys have higher grades. The higher the level of education the fewer females in it and the lower their level of achievement.

The signals are contradictory: Be bright - but not too bright; boys never make passes... What is a pretty girl like you doing in a place like this? If you're so smart why aren't you married? A woman doesn't need an education - she has her female intuition and a mother's instinct. A girl has failed if she gets her diploma before her engagement ring.

The more education a girl gets the more she narrows down the marriage market - both in the men she would choose and the men who would choose her. Professor Higgins can marry Eliza Doolittle - but who will marry Miss Jones Ph.D.?

And of course, as in the fairy tales (Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White...) every girl lives for the moment she marries.

"Where ARE you going,
my pretty maid?"

By Joan Johnson.

NEXT ISSUE: PART TWO :
AND SHE LIVES HAPPILY
FOREVER AFTER?

NOW and THEN

TELEVISION

"Male and Female" an 11 part series about the sexual revolution.

On channel 6, a program called Man at the Centre - Tuesday's at 10.30p.m.

Don't expect too much enlightenment...worth watching as it appears to have been an ambitious project to begin with.

COMING UP on the Pierre Berton program (6.00p.m. and 11.10p.m. each week night.

Joan Lawler (a non-active new feminist member) debates with a virgin on the topic of virginity.

WOMEN - a week long series.

We believe that the series on WOMEN will be shown towards the end of December, but the VIRGINITY program will appear before, as a lead into the total (!) view. There will be Canadian and American feminists - and women not of that ilk. It should be illuminating.

EXHIBITIONS

"THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE in symbolist art." at the Art Gallery of Toronto - on until Nov. 26th.

Try and see this collection of some 400 paintings. The anti-love, anti-life, anti-women bias is startling. Some artists to watch for: Selicien Rops (Belgian), Aubrey Beardsley (English), Auguste Rodin (French), Moreau (French), Bocklin (Swiss), Hodler (Swiss), Kandinsky (Russian), Knopps (Belgian).

Liz Willmott (a non-active member) is presenting abstract reliefs in wood, wood/plexiglass and aluminum, at the GLENDON CAMPUS (Bayview & Lawrence) 9.00a.m. to 9.00p.m. Mon. to Fri. and 1 to 4 Sat. This is on until Nov. 20th. Liz exhibited her work at the inaugural opening of York University.

The last of a SERIES OF LECTURES ON WOMEN. Nov. 24 and Dec. 1st. Mon. 1.30 to 3.00p.m. at Willowdale branch of NORTH YORK LIBRARY (5126 Yonge St. Bonnie Kreps is giving the Dec. 1 lecture on FEMINISM AND THE NEW WOMAN.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

THE QUEEN IS IN THE GARBAGE. A first novel by feminist Lila Karp.

Recently published in U.K. & U.S.A.. Got extremely good reviews in the New Statesman and N.Y. Times. It's available here at Copp Clark Publ.. Lila was in Toronto as a guest on the Pierre Berton show on Women.

"MOTIVE" magazine - March/April. The whole issue is on Women, and is published by Univ. Christian Movement for board of Ed. of United Methodist Church (Nashville, Tenn.)

We have one copy and are attempting to get more. We discovered Ref. Library at U of T carries this magazine but they don't have this issue yet.

COSMOPOLITAN magazine!! has two good pieces in the Nov. issue. A column called Speakeasy and an article on the Locker-room Boys.

TIME magazine - Oct. 31st issue - lead article on homosexuals. A serious opinion on current sex-roles. Do you agree?

HATING

by Ruth Glass and Margie Stanberg

Male supremacy works when everyone, including the slave, sees the world in the oppressor's terms. Only one vision of reality is permitted and the slave, as well as the master, defines her self-image through the value-system of the master. Male supremacist ideology defines the highest value of women to be "nice", always patient, "non-hostile", all-loving, hating no-one, even people who are using her. And those women who perform reap the compensations society grants to its servants, to be kept in working order and praised.

We must reject sweet docility. The essence of our struggle is the legitimization of polar-opposite behaviour to slave mentality - i.e., hostility and its extension -- violence. The rage which we have been forced to suppress throughout history must become overt, must become legitimate. Hostility is the core of resistance against oppressor's ideology.

Any resistance to roles -- overt expressions of violence and hostility -- will be met by the oppressing forces with instant repression - anything from intimidation of "castrating bitch" to violence. This actual, concrete, tangible day-by-day, direct, constant repression against stepping out of our role pressures each of us every day to back away from hostility.

Women who take the risk of expressing hostility (against overwhelming pressure to "accept, to be nice, to be sweet, generous, thoughtful, etc.,) must NOT be made to feel guilty, or freakish by other women.

O.K. -- most everyone in WL gives lipservice to hostility when we talk about directing it against men. The real problem strangling WL is that "niceness" among women, "niceness" between women in WL meetings is still considered legitimate, proper and desirable.

Niceness is not synonymous with support. Niceness is counter-revolutionary when it prevents women from learning from each other's actions, when it prevents struggle within the group.

Being nice is a declaration that the status quo is adequate. Being nice means that the situation is not so bad that we would risk being hostile about it.

As long as we are "accepting" of each other, "understanding", "considerate above all", we are maintaining the level of consciousness we now have. We are supporting only that level which we have already attained and implicitly stifling any attempts to advance to a higher level of consciousness and action. This "accepting", in other words, maintains the status quo, i.e., serves the interests of male supremacy, rather than challenging it.

We are kept slaves because the reality of our situation has been mystified. It is essential that we come to see the world exactly as it is.

Our feelings are real. We need to have our feelings substantiated by other women, not obscured, even if the obscuring of reality is done out of kindness. In other words -- 100,000 ways to resist the awful truth. Examples:

I rage, have a fit of frustration and anger during a woman's meeting because I haven't been able to articulate my thoughts clearly (haven't been able to get my article written, haven't been able to produce.)

You say: Don't hate yourself so. I think you've done fine. After all you're a woman, and what you have done is really fine."

You are not supporting me. First of all, you are lying (even though it is a "white" (dig the racism in this) lie said to make me feel better.)

Secondly, it is not good enough. Doing it badly, writing it inarticulately, saying it inadequately, deciding not to try all is not good enough - - I know inside me I've failed, and like the Spanish Civil War - - it's not enough to have all the good songs and still lose the war, if the Fascists still control my life.

Real support would be saying "Right, don't hate yourself (understand you're not sick, you're oppressed), but keep on hating. I will hate with you. I will sit up all fucking night with you till the article is written, till the thoughts are articulated. (i.e., not "we will print this article because a woman wrote it even though it's unclear and the ideas are wrong." But rather "we will edit and rewrite it till it is clear to everyone and the ideas hold water.")

I am a woman with five children and a middling-oppressive husband. I say to a single woman, "Fuck it, I feel so oppressed I can't stand it anymore."

She says, "Don't feel so bad, I am in exactly your position and I empathize with you totally."

This is not support. Firstly, I should feel bad (angry, hostile) - - I don't want to feel better, I can't feel better unless objective reality changes.

Secondly, you are not in my position. We must understand that the "system" functions by creating divisions among people. We must see these divisions for what they are and deal with them, not pretend that they will go away.

In a meeting, I say I think certain individual men are the enemy. A woman says to me: "Men are oppressed too. My husband oppresses me, but he is oppressed as well, and he is a victim, not an enemy."

I am feeling like a freak because she is in fact telling me that my feelings of hostility are illegitimate. I attack her and say: "Man Crap! Just because you're living with so-and-so and are afraid of confronting the reality of your situation does not mean what I am saying is false. I don't trust you or your motives and I don't think your facile explanation is sisterly."

She says: "How can you attack me? I'm your sister. You shouldn't raise your voice. If we don't trust each other, we are nowhere."

I think we all agree that men are victims of a disgusting, brutal society. That is not the point. The point is by saying "yes, but men are oppressed too" you are really asking me again to deflect my anger, to once again "accept" an intolerable situation, to "understand and spiritually transcend" what should be fought against. Just because men are oppressed does not give them the right to oppress still others. In fact, if we stop allowing men to take out their frustrations on us, they might have to go get the boss.

All women share a common oppression, and this gives us the initial recognition of sisterhood. BUT, the overwhelming repressive force of the dominant ideology will continue to zero in on our sisterhood and do everything within its power to destroy us.

We have only one job: to destroy it before it destroys us. Therefore, it is clear that on-going struggle is essential for our survival.

If we stop at consciousness raising, all we have done is made the bars of our prison windows more visible. Our situation is objectively worse than it was before we understood the forces operating against us.

We must move forward. If not, the groups will dissolve anyway, for the raised consciousness will direct anger inward instead of reaching out to the real targets.

Support has meaning to us only when it is support in struggle. If we don't struggle together, our higher consciousness, the legitimization of our hostility will force us either to misdirect the anger to persons in our sisterhood, or will force us to struggle individually (against individual men, writing books alone, getting opted by becoming luminaries) all suicidal actions. Facing repression alone after fighting alone will destroy consciousness not raise it - - the despair which this implies will force us to back into the roles for survival's sake.

Even if all the women in the world belonged to Women's Liberation groups the system of male supremacy would still exist. We must understand that our oppression, and our fight, is not psychological, not simply historical, but real and tangible. Sisterhood is a process, a support-framework, a fighting tool, but not an end. The only end is changing objective reality.

From the first issue of "Tooth and Nail"
published by members of Women's
Liberation, S.F. Bay area, U.S.A.

ICE MAIDEN

I'll belt you with my chastity
Till your marbles rattle
Against the porcelain purity of my defences.
Until you put your heart where your hand is
I'll leave you out on a limb.
You may force the issue
But I won't give an inch
Though you take a mile.

You affront me with the simplicity of your needs,
And undermine my giving with your greed.
You masticate my being to feed your hungry ego,
And brush away the crumbs of my protesting mind.

You raped the cortex of my brain
Tearing out the springs that might have let me leap.
Your contempt cuts the tendons of my flying feet
And keeps me crippled at your crotch.
I burn up with the shame of it
And creep into the cold.
And I will not come out.
You have frozen me in an ice-box deep as time
And it will take more than the kiss of a prince to thaw me out.

October 69
Joan Lawler

Ban the Bomb - and make the world safe for conventional warfare.
Hugh Hefner is a virgin.

My head is a depressed area. Lower the age of puberty.
Today is the first day of the rest of your life.

RE-ARM VENUS DE MILO.

Don't just drink to me with your eyes!

Please God, make Avis No.1. To each her own.
I'm sitting on top of a water closet.

Batman has an identity crisis.

You won't get total relief here. Where is Bill Bailey, anyway?
Pontius Pilate is a compulsive hand-washer.

and....to begin.....

DOWN WITH WASHROOM INHIBITIONS

It is the year 3969. An archaeologist is unearthing the buried ruins of 20th century Toronto. He clears away the debris from the adjoining male and female washrooms... and notices a peculiar difference between the two. No, not the plumbing. This is a much deeper and more significant difference: GRAFFITI - the walls of the men's washroom are covered with it - an abundance of lively and audacious graffiti inscribed there for posterity. But the walls of the women's washrooms are blank, except for the sign that says PLEASE DISPOSE OF SANITARY NAPKINS IN THE RECEPTACLE PROVIDED.

To the archaeologist, this is another revealing sign of the social repressions and inhibitions of 20th century Toronto women. They didn't even have the minimum of self-assertion, mental agility or defiance it takes to scrawl a message on a wall!

This deplorable situation must be remedied. Because it is true that there is a conspicuous lack of graffiti - clever, vulgar or otherwise - on our washroom walls. Furthermore, this absence of washroom creativity stems directly from the prudery and passivity imposed on female minds by a male chauvinist society. Therefore, every feminist worthy of the name should go forth to decorate the walls and washrooms of the city: she should be prepared to enscribe eloquent graffiti whenever, and on whatever surface, possible.

Not only is the propaganda potential of this media unlimited, but there is also a therapeutic joy and psychological release in scrawling one's message on the walls of the world. It's a kind of intimate mass medium - and you don't even have to pay for the space! A captive audience too! And a selective one - entirely female! (unless you are daring enough to infiltrate the men's and enscribe subversive messages on their walls.)

If your forte is vulgarity, be vulgar. If you just feel plain angry, be angry. If you want to upset middle-aged bourgeois ladies, do it. Make your graffiti cosmic, religious, messianic, philosophical, political, sexy, or just plain dirty - there's plenty of room for all!

There are one or two books on the market to get you off to a good start. And don't hesitate to pick the brains of your male associates: they have the benefit of greater exposure to and experience of such phenomena. But, of course, you will have to be selective, since much sex-directed graffiti in men's washrooms is apt to be anti-woman. Here are some suggestions to begin with. You will probably be able to think of many more.

UP WITH GRAFFITI "

by Joan Lawler

Oh, Adam, stop nagging me about that apple

Margaret Mead is alive and well and living in Samoa

now, stop fiddling and let's watch the spectacle in peace

Just because I'm paranoid, everybody picks on me

TIGER IS IN LOVE WITH HIS GROUP

Oedipus, your mother wants you.

WOMEN ARE AN UNDERPRIVILEGED MAJORITY

Clark Kent is a transvestite.

MARGARET IS IN SAMOA

DANIEL

BARWIN WILSON
HIDE

I like the fat signet ring