

THE OTHER WOMAN

VOL 2 NO 1

SEPT/OCT '73



LESBIAN

ISSUE

25¢

editorial

Due to external and internal circumstances, namely falling in love, holidays, illness, freak outs, tripping around on motor-cycles, overwork, travelling from coast to coast and sundry other delays including political disagreement within the collective, eg: the loudest voice wins - WE ARE LATE AGAIN.

Although this is our first issue in praise of lesbianism we do not regard it as a token issue. We have only just begun to deal with what lesbianism and lesbian feminism mean to us. In future issues we intend to discuss themes such as roles, bars, objectification etc. We also want to expand the points brought out in the Lesbian Feminist Statement at the end of this paper. We consider the Statement important enough for ALL women to discuss, study and criticize.

Thank you to all the women who helped with this issue - and to all the women who are starting new women's centres and lesbian groups across the country.



Lesbian rap groups have started and new groups are being formed. Meetings on Tuesday nights at 195 Seaton Street. More information, call: 929-3185.

NEWSPAPER MEETINGS.

Special meeting to criticize lesbian issue: Thurs. Oct. 18th, 7.30.p.m. at 195 Seaton St.
Regular paper meetings: Thurs. 7.30p.m. at 195 Seaton St. and Sun. 11.00.a.m. at 31 Dupont St.

Information, call: 929-3185
or: 366-6167



Women who helped put out this issue:

Pat, Judith, Ellen, Ilona, Wendy, Rowena, Susan C., Susan P., Margo, Roberta, Colleen, Holly, Marcia, Chris, Arlene, Hadassah, Lydia, Adrienne, Alexa

Lesbian-feminist speakers are available. Please phone: 366-6167
or: 921-6517
or call Friday nights : 929-3185.

a letter...

My Dear Sisters:

At the gay women's festival held in Toronto at the end of June this year, there was talk of a nationwide conference -- whether we should/could have one (is it time?), & where to have it (central location). I would much rather have a lesbian-feminist conference, as I was disappointed in the results (none) of our one-day affair & would like to start out on a narrower base (i.e., lesbians who are committed to feminism), & work from there on such problems as immediate & future goals and tactics.

It would have to be organized fairly well to keep out infiltrators, disrupters, etc., and to provide accommodation et al for everyone. I would like it to be at least 3 days long, pref. a week, with lots of time for being together, learning each other's songs, playing together, & a few work sessions that meet twice during the week on a given subject & thus give time to develop thought & iron out difficulties in between meetings--this would get us a lot farther in a short period of time than trying to deal with every issue facing lesbians and/or feminists from how do I tell my mother to what's our policy on media to do we work with men.

I would like to see the focus be "personal liberation & political strategy" (note: not "personal liberation vs political strategy"). Some of the workshop areas might deal with 1) how do we survive within the system & avoid being suffocated by it at the same time? (jobs;

living situation; self-sufficiency; fit in vs. segregate vs fish-in-the-sea approach etc.)

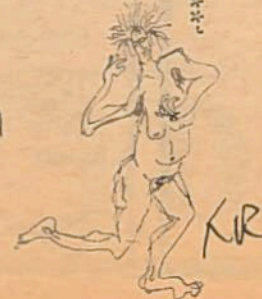
2) what do we need to be doing now to provide physical support & cross-country community for each other? (communication; money for emergencies, etc.)

3) What things should we work towards (goals & means) in the way of changing/attacking the system in the short run & how can we integrate this with our long-run goals? (traditional political action re laws, daycare, etc; WITCH actions; nationalism etc)

4) What goals do we have for the future community of women--ie., what kind of world do we want "after the revolution"? (socialist, anarcho-communist theories; etc)

5) Cultural Study--what do we know about ourselves & our herstory? (required reading beforehand of the usual sources--workshop itself to bring out little-known facts & theories, sample women's works etc). Required reading would be a good idea for the other workshops too, come to think of it--women's herstory, Canadian Movement publications & herstorical anthologies, etc.

Nice if it could be in good weather at an outdoor location. Do you have any ideas on any of this? There will be some communication between Vancouver and Toronto about this, & maybe Montreal, but everything is very nebulous right now so I'm just throwing out the above ideas & don't know what anybody else will think of them. Let me know what you think & send names of any women you know who might be interested when you get the time OK?



& a reply...

Guthrie has some very good ideas about the need for a lesbian-feminist conference, and the need for a strong organization of lesbian feminists in Canada.

But I think it unfair to criticize the conference in Toronto at the end of June for not being the conference that she envisions. In the first place, it seems to me that it was never clearly defined whether it was to be a lesbian feminist conference, or an attempt to begin to organize lesbians in Canada around some basic issues, with lesbian feminism as one of most important among them.

If the whole idea of the conference was the second, then I would think that the conference was successful and meaningful to many women. Some of these feelings were expressed at the summing up at the end of the day. As one woman said, it was the first time she had seen, in Toronto, such a great number of women meet together because they were lesbians, not in someone's house, not in a social situation, but expressly in order to exchange ideas, experience, and information, with a view to action.

The danger with a finely-defined lesbian feminist conference is that it draws the same small clique of women who already know each other and exchange ideas in other ways.

Our strength in organizing lies in getting together not only with those women actively engaged in feminism and defining our theory, but in getting together and recognizing our bond with all our sisters in offices, schools, bars, homes. Events such as the June Conference in Toronto provide such an opportunity.

Guthrie
c/o 804 Richards Street
Vancouver, BC



ACROSS THE LAND

- N.F.L.D.: Women's Place*
204 Water St.
St. John's
- P.E.I.: c/o Joanne Opperman
Wellington
RR#1
Grand River
- N.S.: c/o Women's Bureau
P.O. Box 3596
Halifax South Postal Stn.
Halifax
- N.B.: c/o Linda Gow
Y.W.C.A.
27 Wellington Row
St. John
- QUEBEC: Womens Info & Referral Ctr.
3595 St. Urbain
Montreal I3I
La Place Des Femmes
3764 Boul. St. Laurent
Montreal, Quebec
845-7146
- ONTARIO: Women's Centre*
136 Lewis St. (rear)
Ottawa
- The Woman's Place
968 University Ave. W
Windsor, Ont.
- Women's Collective
300 Erb St.
Waterloo
- Women's Place*
31 Dupont St.
Toronto 929-3185
- Women's Place
366 Water St.
Peterborough
- Women's Centre
306 Herkimer St.
Hamilton
528-4583
- Women's Resource Centre*
- Women's Resource Centre*
283 Dufferin
London
- c/o L. Silvonen
318 Marks St.
Thunder Bay "F"
- MANITOBA: Women's Liberation
c/o Millie Lamb
#10 812 Wolseley
Winnipeg
- Women's Place
300 Victor St.
Winnipeg
- SASK: Women's Centre*
147- 2nd Ave. S.
Saskatoon
- Women's Centre
1 Angus St.
Regina

a conversation

The newspaper collective is made up of women who are lesbians, lesbian feminists, heterosexual and various shades in between. Most of this issue has been put together by lesbians. But non-lesbians have contributed too. One suggestion for a contribution from non-lesbians was that they might write something about lesbianism from their perspective. After this dialogue, we have printed one woman's thoughts about lesbianism. Her thoughts arose specifically out of a discussion amongst the lesbian feminists and heterosexual women on the collective. I wrote down most of what was said and I have written it out as accurately as I could below. I hope that readers will find some questions, fears, doubts, hopes etc, about lesbianism voiced here. I also hope that you will find some attempt to answer the questions. The lesbian feminists in the groups were Ellen, Judith, Ilona, and Rowena. Margo, Susan and Roberta were the non-lesbians.

Roberta: Why is it that heterosexual women avoid lesbian relationships?

Margo: How do lesbians define themselves as lesbians?

Ilona: I came out in the High School Women's Group and I was the only woman there who was lesbian. The straight women didn't know how to relate to me as a lesbian. They were afraid of me sexually once I had come out. We all sat round with lots of space between us. They saw me as a threat. Like a man. Later on some of the women said they were lesbian. The atmosphere gradually relaxed again as women saw that lesbians were not going to treat them like sex objects. Since then the other lesbians have decided they are bisexual. That's a cop-out.

Ellen: I remember people saying "Ilona's really depressed. Ilona's freaking out." Finally I figured they were telling me Ilona's trying to come out. She needs your help. I was being defined as the token lesbian and was supposed to give you support.

Margo: What's the difference between falling in love with a woman and falling in love with a man?

Judith: I had all kinds of fears about saying things to men. I used to internalize my feelings because the men I knew wouldn't take the same degree of responsibility for building a relationship. I was always putting a lot of work into my relationships with men, never getting anything back.

Ellen: I think before we get into talking about the differences we should define what we mean by heterosexuality. I think people are basically able to relate to both women and men. There has been a denial of the possibility of women relating to each other. We have to realize this.

Roberta: If there's so much conditioning to be heterosexual how do women become a lesbian?

Ellen: It depends. In my case I was brought up in a family that was liberal enough to treat me as equal and encourage me not to see myself as subservient; to do what I wanted. It depends on your family environment and the society you live in.

Rowena: In my family, sexuality was such a taboo subject that the word lesbian was never mentioned. I never had any preconceived notions. My parents also encouraged me to think for myself a lot, make my own decisions and be independent. So when I started to think about my sexuality there were no guilt or taboo feelings, that I might have inherited from my parents, to get in my way.

Judith: I grew up in a female-centred atmosphere in Edmonton. There wasn't much touching but a lot of respect, and I never connected that with lesbianism because lesbians were creatures that lived in New York and did strange and exotic things to each other. People should realize that to come out you don't have to have a woman lover. It's more a question of whether you can say that you feel able to relate to women totally, in every way. I didn't realize lesbians are female homosexuals until long after I knew the word.

Rowena: What did you think it meant?

Judith: I avoided thinking about it. It meant pervert in my head. It wasn't until I came into contact with lesbians in the women's movement that those ideas started to change.

Ilona: It's hard for me to be a lesbian because I'm so young. People keep doubting me. They say: "She can't know what she is at that age."

Susan: People talk about labelling in connection with lesbianism. I think labelling- lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual- is important. Actually it's a process of growth.

Judith: I sort of agree. As long as oppression is coming from labels we have to fight it with labels. We fight heterosexism by labelling ourselves lesbian.

Susan: But where does that leave me? I feel in a limbo.

Ellen: It opens a door.

Susan: But does that mean I have to go through it?

Judith: It's a choice that you can make.

Susan: I've always had the choice. I grew up relating to women and had my warmest, closest relationships with women, but I've never had a sexual relationship with a woman.

Ellen: We have to think of lesbianism not in terms of sexuality alone. That's based on a romantic objectification of other women. I want women to be able to have full and complete relationships with women.

Susan: I'm living with a man and it is a central, monogamous relationship. I feel it's a positive, fairly non-sexist relationship. I don't feel it's doing anything to my relationships with women.

Judith: What is your political rationale for your relationship with the man you live with?

Susan: It's a political relationship. We're both Canadian Nationalists and visual artists. I analyse Canadian society as a sexist, capitalist, imperialist society.

Judith: I'm a Canadian Nationalist too. When I came out I saw my energies going into feminism. In terms of my love relationships to share that with a man would be impossible. Politically, the only relationship I could have was with a woman. But I can see that men can fit into your Canadian Nationalist politics.

Roberta: I see my feminist struggle continuing through my heterosexual relationships. To me it's important that I connect with both women and men.

Judith: Just because I'm in a relationship with a woman doesn't mean we don't have to struggle with our heterosexual conditioning all the time. Because I'm a woman I can share my experiences with other women. There's no way that I could do that with a man.

Susan: What is your feeling towards a woman like myself? Would you struggle with men?

Rowena: I'm not prepared to put my energies into men on the whole. But if I'm close to a woman whose life is closely affected by the men around her then I'll struggle with them.

Susan: I feel like I'm lower in your struggle or something.

Ellen: I wouldn't expect to struggle with you in terms of making your heterosexual relationships more progressive. But I will struggle with you in terms of making us both stronger women.

Susan: I can see lesbian feminism as a progressive answer theoretically. Every heterosexual woman in the movement wonders if it is not the most complete way of seeing things.

Ellen: One thing we haven't talked about is how hard it is to be a lesbian. There's a million reasons why women don't come out.

Roberta: In a heterosexual relationship your energies are diffused and you can't give your feelings to women, so you sometimes feel alienated from the women's movement.

Susan: For two years I thought about being a lesbian and decided not to.

Ellen: After two years of opening myself up to women I found I was scared shitless of having a deep relationship with a woman.

Judith: I was scared shitless of lesbians!

Susan: Tell me about that.

Judith: Before I came out I used to think of lesbians as sexually aggressive women. I knew that women are sometimes into objectifying other women and I got scared.

Roberta: A lot of women don't want to be lesbian because they don't want to have to deal with sexism from women as well as from men. It's much easier not to deal with sexuality or sexual games. CONTINUED....



ALBERTA: Women's Centre
11812- 95 St.
Edmonton

B.C.: Women's Centre and Bookstore
804 Richards St.
Vancouver
684-0523

Women's Centre
Box 521
Nelson

Women's Resource Centre
2961 - 272nd St.
Aldergrove

Women's Centre
#414- 1029 Douglas St.
Victoria

N.W.T.: c/o Nellie Cournoyea
Inuvik

* has a newsletter

N.B. if you would like to be listed please send us your address

NEWSPAPERS



QUEBEC: Quebecoises Deboutte
3908 Mentana
Montreal, P.Q.
\$3 per year

Long Time Coming
Gay Women's Paper
Box 161 Station E
Montreal
\$3 per year

Feminist Communication
Collective
P.O. Box 455
Montreal 215

ONTARIO: The New Feminist
P.O. Box 597
Station A
Toronto
\$3 per year

Status of Women News
P.O. Box 927
Adelaide St.
Toronto
\$3 per year

The Other Woman
Box 928 Station Q
Toronto
\$2 per year

The Native Sisterhood
P.O. Box 515
Kingston

Tightwire
(Women's Penitentiary
newspaper)
Box 515
Kingston, Ont.
\$2 per year

Over the Wall
c/o 306 Herkimer St.
Hamilton
10¢ per copy

Judith: I think it's good to have that fear and struggle with it. To figure out what we mean by sexuality. For me it has a much broader definition than the one we inherit from men.

Ellen: Sensuality and sexuality. We have to say what we mean by those words.

Roberta: I feel like I can be affectionate with women; put my arms around them, rub their backs without fear, because I'm heterosexual. Women would relate to me quite differently if they knew I was a lesbian.

Susan: If a man touches you, you can always assume, because of the way our society is, that you have to deal with that. The opposite is true if you're with a heterosexual woman. The trouble with lesbianism is that it's in the grey area in the middle.

Ellen: The fears that we're talking about are fears about fucking. Heterosexual women only know one way of relating sexually. But loving women is a gentle, sensual thing and it's not something confined to genitals. It involves our whole selves.

Roberta: Yes, the trouble is that heterosexual women put lesbians into the man's role.

Rowena: Heterosexual women have to struggle with how they objectify us into roles. It's a myth that being heterosexual keeps you safe. All that's happening is that you're blocking off the problem of sexuality. In fact it makes no difference to me whether a lesbian rubs my back or a heterosexual woman does it. In both cases I have to deal with my feelings about that woman. The same should apply to anyone else.

Ellen: If a woman wants to get into something more than a backrub I have to deal with it. If the woman is heterosexual I have to be very careful about my response because I don't know what she really feels about her sexuality.

Roberta: Some heterosexual women put you into male roles because you sometimes wear dykey clothes.

Rowena: Wearing jeans and shirts is just part of rejecting the feminine mystique. And it's comfortable.

Judith: It's different than with men. Male homosexuals in drag are being masochistic. Drag is an incredible put down of women. They're taking the worst aspects of society's image of women to an extreme and showing how society sees women as sick.

Ellen: The thing about dressing like a dyke is that it challenges the assumptions that if you dress like a dyke you're trying to be a man. We can be what we want to be. We're proud of being strong-looking and dykey. ♀

Windsor Woman
76 University Ave. W
Room 603
Windsor

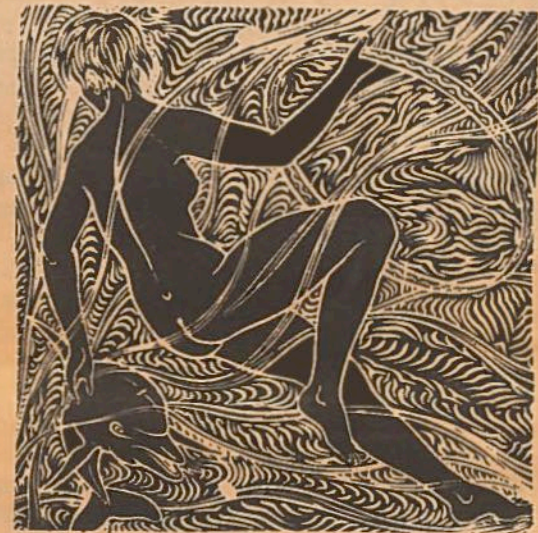
The Northern Woman
318 S. Marks St.
Thunder Bay F
\$1 per year

Clearing House for Feminist
Media
P.O. Box 207
Ancaster, Ont.

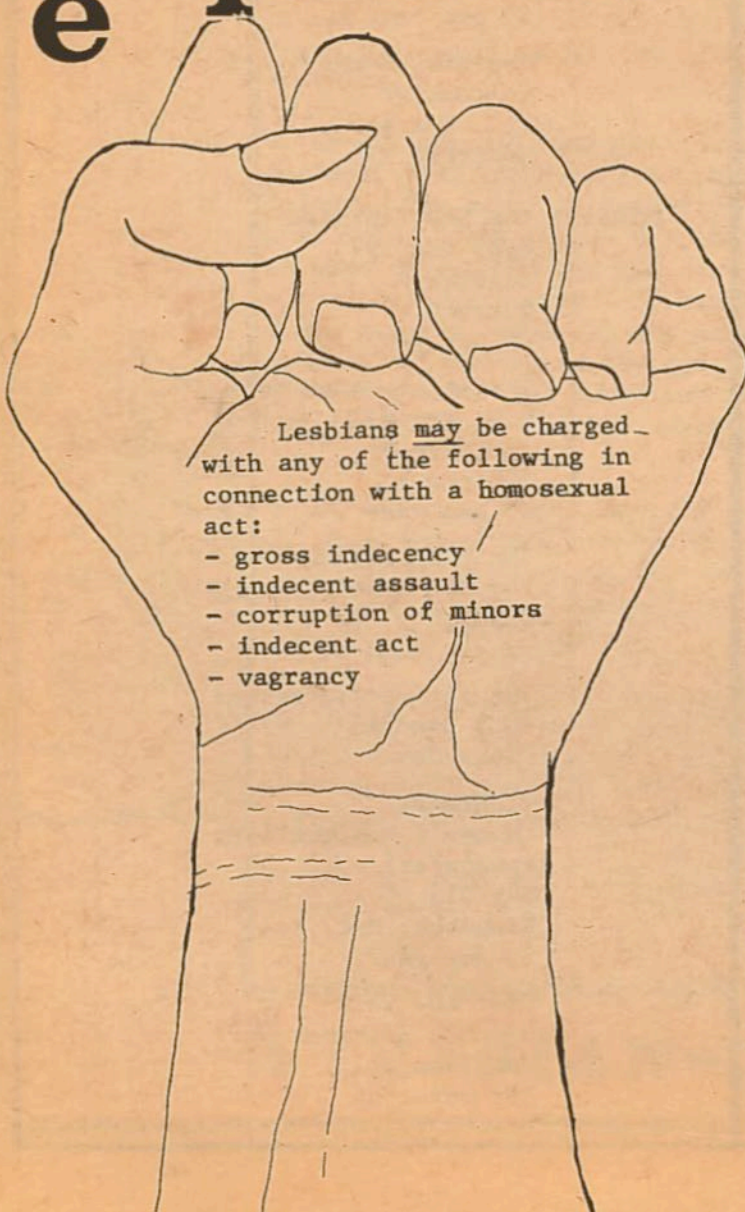
ALBERTA: On Our Way
P.O. Box 4508
Edmonton
\$2 per year

B.C.: The Pedestal
804 Richards
Vancouver
\$3 per year

Priorities
c/o 2803 Wall St.
Vancouver 6
\$2 per year



w e protest



Lesbians may be charged with any of the following in connection with a homosexual act:

- gross indecency
- indecent assault
- corruption of minors
- indecent act
- vagrancy

Gross Indecency (Section 157)

"Everyone who commits an act of gross indecency with another person is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for five years"

Helpful, isn't it! In 1965 the Manitoba court of Appeals held that an act of fellatio committed by a male upon a female is an act of gross indecency, being unnatural and depraved according to Canadian standards. At least that sets a precedent in defining it. Generally speaking if you're making love in public and the cops pick you up, they can use this charge.

Gross indecency and indecent assault are indictable offenses and can get you up to 5 years. The corruption of minors is not so bad; it's indictable but there's a maximum of 2. Indecent act and vagrancy are summary offences, therefore pettier and you may get 6 months probation.

Below we have printed the law from the Criminal Code as it pertains to each of the above charges.

Indecent Assault (Section 157)

"Everyone who indecently assaults a female person is

guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for five years."

There is a provision that if the woman consents to being assaulted (which may mean touch) under 'false and fraudulent representations' you may still be charged. Interesting to note that the indecent assault of a male will get you up to 10 years. Indecent assault is commonly understood to mean any unsolicited touching of a person particularly on the breasts or genital area.

Corruption of Minors (Section 168)

It is important to note that no charge can be laid under this section unless the consent of the Attorney General is obtained, or through a society for the protection of children or an officer of a juvenile court.

Child means anyone under 18. "Everyone who, in the home of a child, participates in adultery or sexual immorality or indulges in habitual drunkenness or any other form of vice, and thereby endangers the morals of the child or renders the home an unfit place for the child to be in, is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for two years."

Of course this is all wide open to interpretation. Basically it



Interesting to think that the cop would assume that you are a dangerous sexual offender, haul you off to the station for fingerprinting, photographing etc., only to discover later that you're not really a dangerous etc.

This is your legal situation - it is however very theoretical, Firstly every act is wide open to interpretation by police, jury, judge etc. Secondly lesbians seldom if ever get charged with any of the above. Male homosexuals get charged most of the time. The only exception I have heard was of 2 women who were charged on Woodbine Beach for having liquor in a public place and gross indecency (they had a case of beer and were kissing and fondling each other). The gross indecency charge was dropped in court so the case cannot be seen as a precedent.

Where the law affects lesbians most is in connection with divorce and custody of children - that is assuming that the court knows you are a lesbian. In a custody case there is nothing in the law to either protect or punish a lesbian mother who wants to keep her children when she leaves her husband. In every instance it is up to the individual judge to decide "what is best for the child". He may deem the proposed home to be an unfit place for the child (see: corruption of minors) or he may, as in a recent case in Seattle, allow the mother to keep the child only if she does not live with her lover.

OK, so when are we tolerated these crazy laws? This is how the liberals make space for us.

EXCEPTIONS RE ACTS IN PRIVATE BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE OR CONSENTING ADULTS.

Section 155 (buggery and bestiality) and 157 do not apply to any act committed in private between (a) a husband and his wife, or (b) any 2 persons, each of whom is 21 or more of age, both of whom consent to the commission of the act.

In private means in a room with no-one but the two of you and with the door closed.

There is much to be said about the idiocy, injustice, ambivalence and complicatedness of the law. However it seems best to know the approximate threshold of tolerance of the police and to continually try to push it back. I have tried to interpret the law but have to remain vague for obvious reasons. Police tolerance of lesbians may be helped by being openly affectionate in public places, holding hands, walking arm in arm, kissing etc., wearing lesbian T-shirts and greeting lesbian sisters on the streets. (this last tactic should encourage sisters not to be afraid of being open). However we have to remember that any of these things may only serve to antagonize an already hostile pig or to thrust a more frightened sister back into the closet.

Besides the Criminal Code, the Immigration Act and the Human Rights Code should be mentioned.

The Immigration Act
(Revised Statutes of Canada. Chapter 325 Section 5) lists all the undesired persons who cannot be admitted into the country. Along with prostitutes and criminals are listed homosexuals. That is you don't have a chance of getting into the country if you are openly lesbian and you could be deported if you are a landed immigrant and lesbian. However I do not know of anyone who knows of the latter happening recently.

The Human Rights Code
(Revised Statutes of Ontario. Chapter 318)
deals with discrimination against persons on the basis of race, creed, colour, sex, marital status, nationality, ancestry or place of origin but does not mention sexual preference. At the moment anyone who feels they have been discriminated against under the Human Rights Code may take her case to the Human Rights Commission, Homosexuals, however, cannot. Whilst not being totally illegal we are not protected by the law as any other person is.

It is obvious that the Human Rights Code must be amended to include discrimination on the basis of sexual preference. But it is never enough to change a little bit of the law here and there. If we delete all references to homosexuals in the Immigration Act where does that leave our sisters who are prostitutes? Freeing ourselves of the charge of criminality by repealing or amending the law does nothing to challenge society's concept of the criminal. But that is another article.....

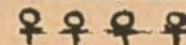
by Rowena Hunnisett



A lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion. She is the woman who often beginning at an extremely early age, acts in accordance with her inner compulsion to be a more complete and freer human being than her society - perhaps then, but certainly later - cares to allow.



If lesbians do sometimes play roles they cannot be criticized when heterosexuals are almost always into roles and lesbians merely imitate them.



Famous lesbians: sappho, atthis, dica, gyrrino, Ladies of Llangollen, Mary Shelley (sister), Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, Djuna Barnes, Radclyffe Hall, Una Troubridge, Natalie Barney, Joan of Arc, Rosa Bonheur, Virginia Woolf, Vita Sackville-West, Marie Antoinette (unfortunately), Emily Dickinson, Susan Sonntag, ME!, Lysistrata, Queen Christina, Kim Novak, Pope Joan, Greta Garbo, Lana Cantrell, Karen Carpenter, Lily Tomlin, Janis Joplin, Dusty Springfield, Jill Johnson, Anne Murray, Martha Mitchell, Gorgons, Medusa, Hippolyte, Oreithyia, Antiope.



means that if you're a lesbian mother living with your lover and get visits from a reactionary or unsympathetic Children's Aid Officer you should watch out. Also watch out if your child is in juvenile court for some offence.

Indecent Act
(Section 169)

"Everyone who willfully does an indecent act (a) in a public place in the presence of one or more persons (b) in any place, with intent thereby to insult or offend any person is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction."

Again an important note - if you are found guilty you do not have to be convicted, you may get a discharge or 6 months probation. An indecent act is generally considered to be touching of the breasts or genital area whilst embracing. But if the cop's feeling nasty he can obviously interpret it his own way.

Vagrancy
(Section 175)

"Everyone who commits vagrancy is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction." (This is not the whole section. Part (e) is the one we're interested in.)

This one's a bit more complicated. If you are considered a dangerous sexual offender and are found loitering or wandering in or near a school ground, playground, public park or bathing area you may be charged on vagrancy. In order to be considered a dangerous sexual offender you have to have been convicted of something like indecent assault.

lesbian sing-a-long

SHE'S A WOMAN OF THE MORNING

music and lyrics by:
Adrienne E. Potts

As she wakes up in the morning
And she moves so closely like a
sun escapes silently in to her smile
like a stream embracing children with her mind.

She's a wo-man of the morning
so ver-y beau tiful and fine



As she wakes up in the morning
the sun escapes silently
into her smile.
And she moves so closely
like a stream embracing children
with her mind.

She's a woman of the morning-
so very beautiful and fine.

And as the clocks turn so slowly
she thinks about those she
loves inside.
The spirit of their beauty-
she's a student of the ones
she's left behind.

She's a woman of the morning
so very beautiful and fine.

You're a soldier of the morn-
ing. Giving me the strength
to stand strong.
It's written in the waters-
the wind whispers how beau-
tiful you are.

Cause you're a woman
of the morning---
so very beautiful and fine.



LESBIAN CONTACTS OR GROUPS

Maritimes:
Halifax Gay Alliance for Equal
#207 1585 Barrington St. ity
7 P.M.- 10 P.M. Thurs. - Sat.

Quebec:
Montreal: 3764 St. Lawrence
843-6431
Tues. 7:30 P.M.
or phone Gay Line: 843-8849

Ontario:
Ottawa: c/o Women's Centre
Toronto: Lesbian Drop In
Lesbian Feminist Collective
31 Dupont St. 8 P.M. Friday
929-3185

Community Homophile Association
of Toronto
Gay Women's Night
201 Church St.
Thursday 8 P.M.
862-1544

Manitoba:
Lesbian Resource Centre
c/o Nym and Chris
300 Victor St.
Winnipeg

Saskatchewan:
c/o Beth and Erin
Women's Centre
1 Angus St.
Regina

Edmonton:
Alberta:
Lesbian Feminist Collective
11812 - 95 St.
Edmonton

B.C.:
Vancouver: Lesbian Drop In
804 Richards
Monday 8 P.M.
684-0523

Generally contact local women's
centre and get a group started.

BUNTU women often marry each
other to retain property and
power. This tradition has
been passed on through the ages
and continues today.

MY NAME IS GAY WOMAN

My name is Gay Woman. Gay means
to me being open to learning how
to love other women in a total
way.

This involves defining ourselves
through ourselves as opposed to
man's social definitions of
women. This also involves trusting
in ourselves enough to relate not
only intellectually but learning
how to deal with the emotional/
sexual feelings we have for other
women.

To assume that we do listen or see
other women, is, I believe, a
mistake. We forget how incredibly
narrow a path our education has
led us along. We live in isolation-
without joy- without the tools
for creating joy- unable to demand,
let alone ask softly, for a place
in this world.

We must fight to regain ourselves-
to rediscover our own minds and
bodies- to know that it can be
a good thing to love another
woman.

To learn how to deal with our
feelings for one another, for
the longer we say no to one
another, the longer we negate
ourselves.



"we do a lot of TALKING"

We are big, we are small,
we are old and we are young,
we are two - we are ten thou-
sand ----we want to be one.

Sometimes it seems that the problems we all face as lesbians ought to be enough to bring us together, but so far the best that has happened is that we've learned to co-exist in our bars without too many open fights. Those of us in the lesbian-feminist community have done a lot of talking about how we should try to involve all of our sisters in the struggle about identifying with the oppression of the lesbian who came out before the women's movement, about meeting the needs of the working class lesbian and so on. Sometimes we go to bars and watch other lesbians while talking in corners about how we must get a clear analysis of their situation.

We rage and we call for us all to be sisters. And in our lesbian feminist garb point a fist to the sky and sloganeer about how we all have to be free and unite as one to overthrow a prick defined state. We set up meetings on "our turf" and get disturbed when "they" don't come in numbers...we invade their lives en masse, a self-encased gang of young dyke heavies...we see our selves and our movement as a teacher of their souls, the lesbian feminist vanguard and the solution to all their problems.

Leaving aside for the moment questions of the validity of our self-concept, we have made a number of incredible tactical and personal errors in our efforts to pull off anything like unification (i.e. friendship) with the other lesbians we encounter.

In this lesbian issue of the OTHER WOMAN, let's do a little listening to our lesbian sisters before we suggest any new efforts.

This is a composite of a number of different women's views organized topically, the quotes are real but no effort has been made to isolate individual lesbians one from another, instead we hope the collage of their views will speak for itself.

One Coming Out:... "my husband and I were getting married and my brother's wife came down for the wedding...we made love...I felt good about it...it was beautiful. "I've been out since I was

five...since I've been born ...the only place to meet lesbians was at the bars, that hasn't changed much." "it must have been really lonely and hard before there were bars...so many of the young kids coming out these days are really unhappy-it's hard to know what to do about it..."

On Roles..."I like lighting cigarettes, opening doors and so on, but by the same token I don't like having it done for me... roles are necessary - some women really need them... more obvious in the bars than in bed...it's all a lot more complicated than it might seem...we all do have the same parts, we're all women...it's a matter of taste...sometimes a really femme looking woman will come on strong in bed and sometimes she'll refuse to touch me at all...i might



prefer being touched but I can make do with just making love to her - it's all right..."

On Open Relationships:... "Jealousy is something I can't manage to overcome... I've tried and I just can't manage it...I've even tried me doing my thing while she does hers and it doesn't work...it's a sickness.. I think it's all right as long as you tell the person that you go home to...and if they tell you..."

On the Women's Movement Lesbians: ..."They're young and arrogant...really self-assured, which is both good and bad..I'm glad I'm not a teacher anymore..I'd be really tempted to beat them if they treated me like that all the time...they're not much different from other kids their age in the way they act...these chicks are really good looking...I don't see why they can't make it with a guy...it's so much better...every woman needs a man...I'm a liberated chick..."

by Adrienne E.Potts and Lydia Gross

On Being an Up Front Lesbian: ..."I just can't accept being public about lesbianism...I don't hide my lesbianism, I dress the same at work as here...and if anybody asked me I wouldn't deny it, I just don't believe in broadcasting it..what I do in bed is my business, just as what they do is theirs... I don't want to know about it...I don't feel like it's wrong at all to be a lesbian, I'm proud of it..." "I don't see myself as being gay cause I'm married but I like to sleep with chicks.. once you do it you can't get away from it...society labels people-not me...the label lesbian has always gone along with bad things...the same kind of things happen with both straight and gay people...I'm a human being first...I believe in people working together for what they believe in...my sign is the red maple leaf..."

If we are seriously interested in engaging these and other 'old school' lesbians (by old school we mean lesbians who, because of objective conditioning, find it realistic and safer to remain in the closet. "In the Closet" in this context, may mean keeping up a front at work, maintaining friendships with straight friends.) in the women's movement, we need to be ready to make some changes in ourselves, our attitudes and our behaviour towards non-movement lesbians...LISTEN, OUR SISTERS CAN TEACH US.. we need to be ready to change our ideas of where the movement should go if our own analysis proves to be too narrow to include those now outside...sexism, racism, classism are bigger problems than we've yet seen or acknowledged. Ever since our first Consciousness Raising Groups, we've been talking about women's lack of ego and self-love and we at least have been growing with the realization that we are strong and we are beautiful and we are unique. Sometimes our egos get in our way and we get scared when we think that we may have to "go back" We don't want to be robbed of our new found security.

Our arrogance and self-righteousness at the state of things really doesn't belong BETWEEN us, and our lesbian sisters, no matter how involved in perpetuating a destructive system they may be. Let's save our snottiness

for the man...We can afford to be nice to our sisters.. (this doesn't mean we stop disagreeing with their actions and start indulging their acceptance of the status quo, we just learn less cruel ways of disagreeing and better ways of changing minds.)

We need to become friends with the lesbians outside the movement... and this means active and positive involvement in their lives.. open-ness to learning from whoever we encounter and an end to alienating in group behaviour.. our crowd scenes are often self-indulgent... we need to stop hiding away from life in the relative security of our women's centres...(let's make them more efficient and less energy-consuming enterprises, enlarge their services while minimizing the efforts needed to keep them going.)

...and start living life with the people we claim to care about. How about joining women's softball and fastball teams, taking lessons in swimming at the YWCA, joining women's bowling leagues, These are established institutions that serve women, and, although they're oppressive in their competitive emphasis, they are still viable alternatives to our present "non-strategies" and may be one step towards our goal of unity.

By-Adrienne E. Potts

and Lydia Gross ♀

MOTHER

by
ROWENA



Dear Sisters, I'd like to write something on having a mother for the special lesbian issue from my perspective as a lesbian feminist. We all have mothers - that's not just a truism - we also have to deal with our mothers on some level, and that's reality. As lesbians we have particular relationships with our mothers which are the source of hours of conversation, consternation, frustration, but sometimes joy too. Reality and relationships are two things we're always struggling with. As lesbians feminists we want to have honest, growing relationships with our mothers; but reality and relationships can be hard to deal with.

Obviously all our mothers are or have been heterosexual. Many of our mothers have had life-long relationships with men, on which they have staked everything they ever had: integrity, intelligence, creativity, emotions, body, money; their whole selves. Some of our mothers have had such relationships and preserved something of themselves for a world beyond husband or family. In the process of this struggle for self-preservation they have often had to fight alone, long and hard against critic-

isms from family, friends and neighbours, not to mention society: employers, the media, the law etc. Those of our mothers who devoted everything to their husband and family often depended totally on them for their sense of self. The struggle between such a mother and her lesbian daughter to understand one another can be frightening and difficult for both. As lesbians we demonstrate to our mothers the possibility of having the really close, long-lasting relationships that our mothers looked for with their husbands and usually never found. Naturally it was a desperate search and

often a hopeless one because it is impossible to have this woman-loving-woman relationship with your lord and master. It feels pretty weird to be telling your mother how good it is being with women in a way that she always wanted to be with men. And when she reacts with the hurt: "I didn't bring you up to be like this", you both know the irony of that statement. No, she didn't bring you up to be a "Lesbian" (one of Those), but she did bring you up to be a lesbian. If we talk to our mothers then they will know that lesbian relationships usually strive to be and often are long-lasting, loyal, secure and also conducive to independence, self-exploration and creativity. These are qualities that many of our mothers respect profoundly.

When we talk to those of our mothers who did manage to preserve something of themselves, despite the pressures, it is as if we were saying: "If only you'd gone a bit further, think how much more you could have been and done". But we can only say these things to our mothers because they fought so hard for their rights in their lifetimes. Without our mothers' struggles we would not be able to live our relatively free independent lives.

Most of our mothers were isolated from each other for lack of a women's movement. They often had no sisters for strength and support. However there have been many strong women's groups and organizations, like the Girl Guides, the Y.W.C.A., churchwomen's groups, and some of our mothers were involved in the suffragette movement. These groups have done much toward the present day women's movement sense of strength in sisterhood, and ability to work and organize together.

For us as lesbian daughters there is an overwhelming sadness in seeing a woman we love so closely become aware of how much easier it is for us to be independent and strong than it was for her. And it is correspondingly exciting to see our mothers going back to school, taking journeys on their own, learning trades, all long after they vowed they were "too old for that kind of thing".

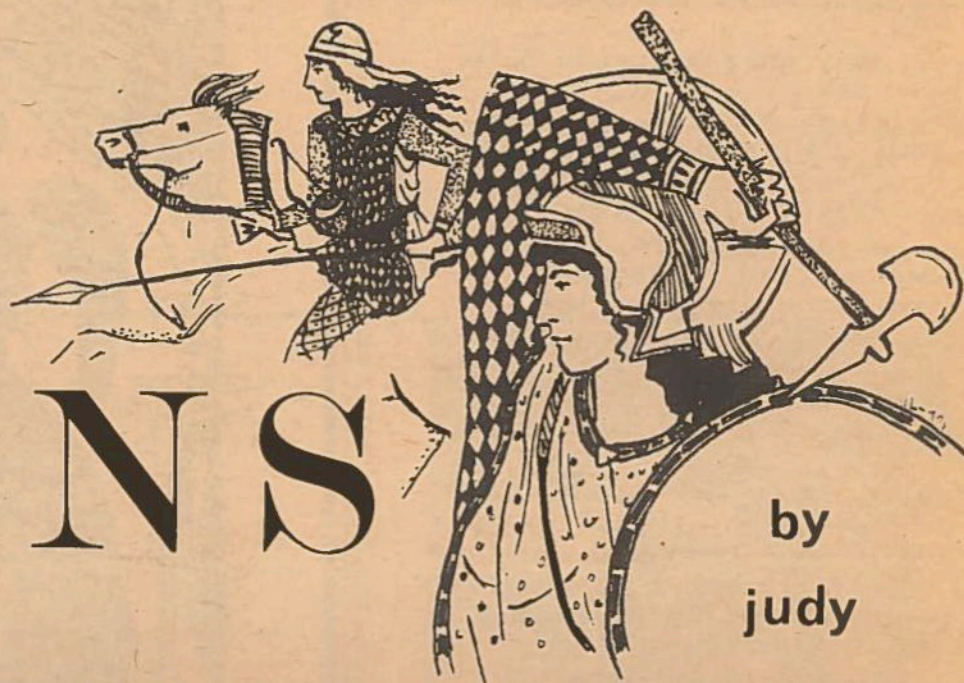
For our mothers having lesbian daughters who feel positive and good about our lesbianism can often constitute a threat. The threat is often emotional in nature. Many of our mothers have resigned themselves to their life-styles but feel emotionally upset to think that their lives might have been very different. It is when our mothers see and understand

that we love each other not only physically but in every way, that we can be totally involved with each other as women, it is then that we are most threatening. Then they can see that there is a tremendous depth and value in loving women. Many women know this from the life-long friendships that they build up even on the strength of the hard times they go through with husbands and family. It is profoundly disturbing to realize that all your life you have valued the love of a woman "lower" than that of your husband, despite the knowledge of a tremendous loyalty, understanding and involvement on her part. Disturbing too is the realization that this "lower" evaluation of your own sex in some measure implies that you value yourself correspondingly low. As lesbians we point to the lack of self-love in many of our mothers, loving our own kind, and therefore ourselves, as we do. This lack is reinforced, if not created, very often by the maternal and wifely tendency toward martyrdom, self-sacrifice, supportiveness that society encourages in women.

So far I have assumed that the woman whose life is the unhappiest is the woman who has spent her life caring for a husband and bringing up children. I have also assumed that the woman who is happiest or most fulfilled is the woman who frees herself most from the domination of men. I hold this to be true on the basis of observation, reading and experience. I have met women who say they are happy or fulfilled in the wife and mother role and I cannot deny that. But I conclude that they are women who would have chosen that life-style anyway if they had had the choice in the first place. No woman has ever had that choice in our society. All of us have had the mother-wife model thrust in front of us all our lives. And even though our family may have stressed that we could take other paths, society does such a thorough job of reinforcing the mother-wife ideal that it is elitist and arrogant to speak of a real choice. How many women in our society can proudly become spinsters, or pursue a career without having to prove our true femininity by marrying and having children as well? How many women can be lesbians and command respect in our society for loving women? When the day comes that we can love women as easily and honestly as our heterosexual sisters now devote themselves to men, there will, by implication also be a real choice between the occupation of wife or mother and some other life work or life-style.

Women who are lesbians have, one way or another,

cont p22



AMAZONS

by
judy

Some of the words used to put down woman-identified women are words that originate in Amazon herstory. Lesbian is the name of a tribe of Amazons that lived on the island of Lesbos. Gorgon, used to mean an ugly or shrewish woman, is the name of a fierce tribe of East African Amazons, whose queen was Medusa.

It is not surprising that the words patriarchal society uses to put down women originally referred to strong women. Women are supposed to be weak, after all, and any woman who is strong must be some sort of monster (with snakes instead of hair, and who turns you to stone if you look at her, no less! - far out!).

What happened that made patriarchal society build in so many defences against woman? Is it just a coincidence that we are put down for being lesbians? Is it just because we are a small minority that society hates and fears us? If that were the case why aren't people with red hair also ostracized? White people are a minority, for that matter, and we know that white people aren't oppressed for the colour of their skin.

In this series of articles I would like to suggest that there are very real reasons for the subjugation of women, and lesbians in particular, and that we can see these reasons in the herstory of what happened to women several thousand years ago.

Human written history goes back only about five thousand years. It can be traced back much further, though, through studying myths, which are merely history in story-form. When we examine ancient accounts of the world we can see immediately several things:

1. Highly developed civilisations existed long before anyone bothered to keep a record of them.
2. The bulk of human existence has been loosely matriarchal in form.
3. At the point when records started being kept, the world was in the midst of violent, far-reaching changes.

The matriarchy, briefly described, was a communistic society, centred around the

female head of an extended family or tribe. The decisions were made by consensus, with the older and wiser women advising in the case of disputes. The most formalized aspect of the matriarchy was religion. In those days, religion meant something very different than what it means today. It embodied the communal will, drive and spirit of a group of people. It was a symbolic and metaphysical statement about life, and at the centre of all life was woman.

Matriarchal philosophy, and it is much more aptly called philosophy than religion, was rich in its understanding of the role of humanity in the natural order of things. It taught a sense of harmony and interaction between living things. It recognized both the cyclical and dialectic nature of life. It was a complete blend of the material and the spiritual

For reasons which this paper will not attempt to deal with, there was a rise in patriarchal philosophy - linear thought, a desire to rule nature (and, therefore, woman) by force, development of class and caste, material values placed above spiritual values. These patriarchal tribes came in contact with highly-developed matriarchal civilizations and by force, coercion or just sheer numbers, managed to take over certain key cultures. They experienced a phenomenal rise in power as they took over more and more of the world, and amassed great wealth.

At first they met with very little resistance. War and aggression were not part of the matriarchal way of life. Cultures were overrun, destroyed and lost forever. Most of the records of the matriarchy were systematically destroyed.

However, before the

complete annihilation of the matriarchy, some groups of women learned how to fight back. They were mainly lesbians, who saw very clearly how the patriarchy threatened their way of life. They knew there would be no place for them in the new male world, and so they were fighting for their honour and survival as strong women. These were the Amazons of ancient history. They fought a life-and-death struggle with the invading patriarchies, in the longest and most decisive war of human history. For generations the battle was waged, the cause and responsibility being passed on from mother to daughter. They represented the fiercest non-mechanical fighting force of all time.

Most Amazon tribes had two queens - one in charge of the army and one in charge of the city-state. They remained faithful to the matriarchal clan structure, except that men were seldom allowed any status within the clan. Some tribes killed all male children. Others tolerated their presence, and used them to do menial work.

Sexual contact with men was usually from outside the tribe, and for breeding purposes only. The rest of the time they were strictly woman-identified. They had to be!

Every Amazon woman spent some time of her life in the army. Many made it their full-time career. Most tribes had a minimum requirement of two years in the army, during which time a woman would not become pregnant, and would train as a fighter, with bows and arrows, spears, or the famous double-edged axe, the

labyris.

Many Amazon queens have been remembered for their exploits in battle, for the great cities they founded, or for being raped or murdered by a Greek hero!

At the peak of Amazon power, tribes extended throughout Africa, along the Aegean coast and north to the Ural mountains. They received support from established matriarchies, such as Egypt, and threatened any hopes of Greek imperialist expansion. Which was one of the strongest reasons for their systematic extermination by Greek and Greek-supported armies.

In future articles, I hope to outline some of the details of Amazon daily life, some of the better-known tribes and individuals, stories from mythological/historical sources, and some of the theories of the patriarchal take-over.

What is important about Amazon herstory is that they were doing exactly what we are doing now - resisting the patriarchy. We can learn a great deal about our own struggle to fight male supremacy by understanding the struggles of our ancestors. The fact that they were woman-identified is very important, since this meant that they were in a position to make the battle against patriarchy their whole way of life. The old matriarchal cultures were much more humanist and ideal as a way of life, but they were also helpless against aggression. They are a blueprint that we can aim for when trying to build a non-sexist world but the means to that world, and of destroying the present order are contained in the seeds of another Amazon-like struggle against the patriarchy. Women-identified fighters are the new Amazons, and this time around, we cannot fail!



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This is the first in a series of articles.

Judy

Lesbian Baiting: The last finger in the dyke holding back the women's movement.



LESBIAN FEMINISM

The political significance of lesbianism can only be understood in terms of feminism, women's liberation. Any other political understanding is only a matter of another minority group demanding its civil rights. Therefore, a few basic statements of feminism.

The underlying theme in all struggles for women's liberation is the fight against sex roles. Sex roles are those patterns of behavior assigned to female and male persons regardless of their individual capabilities or potentials. Sex roles are the behavior patterns to which female and male people conform irrespective of their personal well-being and growth because the rewards and punishments of society are too strong to resist. Sex roles separate people into two distinct categories: feminine (passive, dependent, gentle, weak, nurturitive intuitive etc.) and masculine (active, aggressive, intellectual, strong, leaders etc.). These arbitrary divisions are harmful to the individual and the species because they grossly limit the possibilities for personal/interpersonal growth and communication. Feminism is concerned primarily with the liberation of women from roles which demean us almost to the point of slavery.

One of the ways in which feminism attempts to free women from traditional roles is by demonstrating that women can, in fact, fill not only traditionally female roles but also any and all positive roles traditionally filled by men. (Neither all female nor all male roles are desirable) Women learnt this by joining together with one another to tackle areas and ways of life which have been previously closed to us. This includes the home, the government, scientific

research, child rearing, industrial and business administration,

Lesbianism can fit logically into the politics of women's liberation. Lesbian feminism is a life style in which one's political as well as very personal life is devoted to the goals of feminism.

Lesbian feminism finds women sharing their lives very deeply with one another, having many goals, interests and past experiences in common. Sharing this with our lovers speeds us towards the fruition of the goals, the gratification of the interests and the verification of the experience. This acceleration can only help women's liberation to grow.

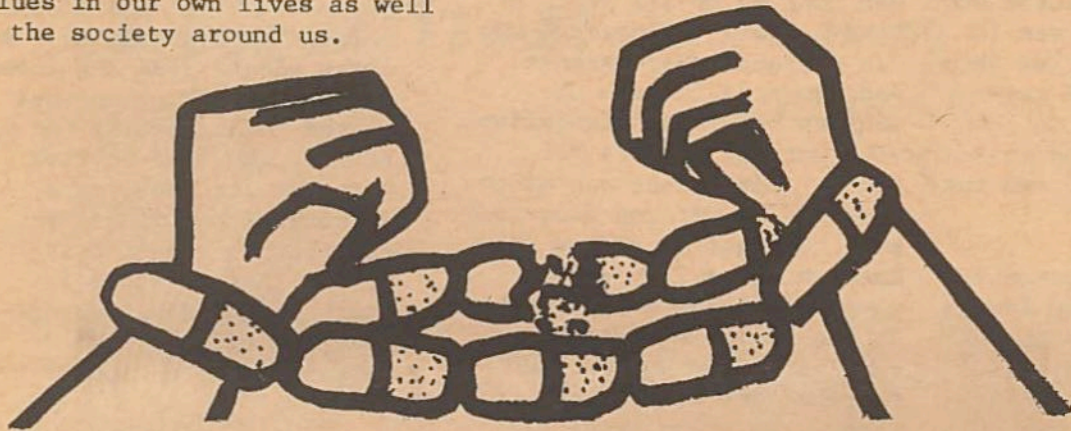
Furthermore, a woman who chooses to live her life with little or no personal involvement with men soon finds herself compelled to leave behind her feminine helplessness and dependency. She has little options as to when or at what rate she will learn to fend for herself. She must begin immediately and learn quickly. She will find no one arriving on a white charger to save her from her feminine predicament. For this reason, in a society where competence and efficiency are regarded as masculine traits, it is not surprising that many lesbians are masculine women. If women's liberation is to be achieved women must become more masculine and men more feminine. Naturally, in the learning process excesses will occur and be corrected.

Lesbian-feminism allows a woman a great opportunity to deal with and overcome her own sexist attitudes. Lesbian women are not committed to men for emotional and sexual satisfaction or personal financial support.

cont. p

There is no overwhelming tie-in to a guardian of sexist society. Lesbian-feminist women take no interest in perpetuating patriarchy and are in no way tied to those who do. As a result we are free to move as quickly as we can to eradicate the sexist values in our own lives as well as the society around us.

There are many reasons why a lesbian may be reluctant to drop a feminine or masculine role. Firstly, many lesbians are not fully aware of the ways in which their roles constrict them! Lesbians come from heterosexual parents and homes, grow up in



Lesbian-feminist women as well as celibate and sterilized women are personally free from the question of biology as destiny. (No form of birth control is perfect.) Unlike celibate and sterilized heterosexual women, lesbian women can enjoy full sexual satisfaction. A sexual satisfaction that is uncommon in heterosexual union. A woman knows best the desires, pace, mood of another woman and is best able to satisfy her. Frigidity, among lesbians, is almost unheard of. Long lasting, gentle and satisfying sexuality is the norm; sensuality, feeling good, with orgasm central only in a temporal sense being a guiding principle.

Women have been consistently socialized to be understanding, often to the point of putting others first. Certainly feminist women try to be fair and understanding with one another. When this is carried over to a love relationship there is absolutely no room for the double standard. This creates room for new less-oppressive and non-possessive forms of love relationships. Few women, in all honesty, feel that any one person can satisfy all their needs and desires. In egalitarian relationships ways must, and are, being found to insure both freedom and security. These new forms must leave behind monogamy and possessiveness and recreate the concepts of love, friendship and community.

Certainly lesbian-feminists do not have all the answers. Certainly we all fail to hit the mark in many ways. The important point is that lesbian-feminism offers possibilities that are not open to women in other lifestyles. The potential is there. The results are limited by the individual and her situation in the world.

heterosexual communities and schools, and work in a heterosexual environment. It is no small wonder that lesbians emulate feminine and masculine roles. Lesbians are offered the same, or very similar, rewards as heterosexuals. The largest being social acceptability and financial security. Anything that the lesbian can do to make herself more acceptable is a very real temptation. The feminine lesbian receives all of the rewards of the feminine woman plus the opportunity to pass as heterosexual. The masculine lesbian often receives the preferential treatment usually reserved for the male. This occurs in the privacy of the home as well as on the job and socially with heterosexual and homosexual women and men. Role playing society is more comfortable with role playing lesbians. In a society where lesbianism is considered a sickness, lesbian women often try to conform to as many social rules as possible so as to hide their "sickness".

Lesbian-feminists totally reject the ideas of lesbianism as a sickness. If society can be so blatantly wrong about lesbianism, then we must question its explanations of such phenomena as welfare and unemployment, insanity, and rampant alienation. We are forced to re-examine all of our society's values, to closely investigate the reasons for our value systems. Surely the lesbian does not live in a vacuum and just as surely society has blinded us to the magnitude of its many lies. ♀

by Holly Devor

Lesbian oppression is feeling you are all alone.

Most people's ideas about lesbianism come from pornographic films and magazines, all of which are produced for and by men. It's a very strange thing to find your existence defined as part of somebody's pornographic fantasy library - sex episode number 93.
Judy Grahn



Christine, New Haven

LESBIAN READING LIST

Out of the Closets Allen Young & Karla Jay

Lesbian/Woman (Bantam)
Del Martin & Phyllis Lyon

Sappho Was A Right On Woman
(Stein & Day)
Barbara Love & S. Abbott

Lesbian Nation
Jill Johnson

Women and Madness
Phyllis Chesler

Our Bodies Our Selves
Boston Women's Collective

Patience and Sarah (McGraw Hill)
Isobel Miller

Well Of Loneliness
Radcliffe Hall*

La Batarde
Violet Leduc*

Desert of the Heart
Jane Rule*

Nightwood (New Direction Press)
Djuana Barnes

The Guerrilleres
Monique Wittig

Mothers and Amazons
Helen Diner

*most books by these authors.



LESBIAN PAPERS:

Long Time Coming
Box 161 Station E
Montreal
\$3 per year

On our Way (Lesbian Issue)
11812- 95 St.
Edmonton, Alberta
15¢ per copy

The Other Woman
Box 928 Station Q
Toronto
\$2 per year or 25¢ per copy

BOOKSTORES WITH LESBIAN CONTENT

Glad Day
135 Seaton St.
Toronto
364-6731
(has a good bibliography on lesbianism)

Lettuce Out Bookstore
31 Dupont St. (has lesbian T-shirts
Toronto, Ont.
929-3185 and posters)

Women's Bookstore
804 Richards St.
Vancouver, B.C.
684-0523
FREWHON BOOKS
P.O. Box 2807
Station A
Edmonton, Alberta
429-1887

had to overcome that lack of choice. We defy the heavy negative reinforcement to be what we are not: feminine, submissive, docile, passive, receptive: Daddy's girl. We have to be defiant because it is for many of us a question of survival. For a lesbian it is of ultimate importance to reject society's golden images, because her self-image would be slowly and surely destroyed if she gave in to the supposed ideal. When faced with the decision: me or their image of me, I choose myself. Their image of me is a living death.

When we express this defiance we are stating our rejection of society's heterosexual norms and values. To us this is a political statement. To our mothers it may seem like a personal slap in the face. It depends on how much we can talk to each other, to what extent we can show that we care about each other as people no matter what our beliefs or life-style. A woman who can love her lesbian daughter is a strong woman with a strong sense of self. A woman who can acknowledge that everything her daughter does and is amounts to a rejection of her own life-style is very rare indeed. Trying to struggle openly about lesbianism involves hassles to which I can see no one solution. I only offer this as my perspective on our involvement with ourselves and our mothers.

I would also like to talk about my own mother to whom I am very close and who has given me tremendous strength and courage.

My mother was born in a lowland town on the river Elbe near the border between Holland and Germany in 1905. My knowledge of her life is fragmentary and picked from her memory. Why, with the passage of time, she chooses to resurrect certain scenes, events, people and not others I can't say.

When she was a small girl she and her two sisters, later her brother too, skated to school along the frozen river. School was miles away - many miles for a pair of feet. When the river ran again the children walked.

Her father was a rich merchant banker: proud, patriarchal, Victorian and dominating. Her mother was gentle, a woman who loved beautiful things, a fine needlewoman who could darn a hole in a piece of linen so that the darn had a more intricate and finer weave than the linen itself. Her abilities did not express themselves beyond her given tasks: caring for her children, keeping and managing a household of children and servants.

During the First World War my mother Ilse, her two sisters, Herta and Hildegard and their younger brother, Wilhelm gathered wood in the forests for fires in the winter. They picked berries and mushrooms and anything they could eat in the country to survive the scarcity of food. It was cold and they were poor.

Later when Ilse became a young woman her father wanted her to attend weekend house-parties in a nearby Baron's residence. This particular Baron had a son that Grandfather had chosen to be Ilse's husband. She refused to be any part of this arrangement.

She studied in Munich, in the southern lowlands of Germany, a few miles north of the sudden mountain ranges; hot summer winds blew across the Alps and winters were cold. She studied horticulture and worked as a photographer. She took pictures of actors and actresses on the Munich stage. She knew that women connected with the stage were supposed to be cheap and easy, but she stayed with herself, not leaving for her reputation's sake, but staying for her own sake.

In the 1920's she went to England for a while. Back in Germany she decided she'd had enough and settled in England for her life. She met my father whom she married 16 years later. They waited through all that time because my father wanted to marry when he had higher status than a bank clerk. Grandfather threatened hostility if she married beneath herself. After many years of hard work with my father in the bank and my mother looking after an old Victorian lady with a dominating and petty will, the two meeting and talking only during chaperoned walks at the weekends, after 16 years of that, the papers that were to promote my father to bank manager were burnt by accident. It was the Second World War.

My mother did fire duty in the streets of Eastbourne at night. Because she was German she had to apply to the local courts for permits to ride a bicycle around Eastbourne and within a radius of a few miles of the town. She received the permits. She was very polite to the magistrate and her worth as a citizen was backed up by her actions as a fire fighter. They married anyway in 1944.

For years there was silence between my mother, her parents and the rest of her family. Then news started

to filter through. The family had been separated. Herta had gone to Eastern Germany. On the last day of the war Wilhelm had been captured and taken to a Russian prisoner of war camp to do six years of hard labour. Hildegard was in England. Her parents had wandered through Germany as refugees, struggling with war and poverty for years. Her mother was dying slowly from war and from the hard domination of her dogmatic husband. My mother weeps when she remembers this. In the early 50's Wilhelm came back from Russia. He searched out his parents first. He found them, his mother was dying. She had wanted to see him and when he finally came back from Russia she died. Herta was escaping from the East to the West with her children also seeking her parents. After two days of scrambling through undergrowth, avoiding the eyes and the guns of the guards she came to a village. She saw a hearse drawing through the village. It was Grandmother's. Mother still cries for her mother's death when she remembers these things.

During the years she was married she wanted children, but she had four miscarriages, because doctors didn't know about Rhesus babies, and that the bloods of the parents were incompatible. For years after she went in and out of hospital because of an incompetent doctor who refused to give her a Caesarean for her last child. In 1948 I was adopted and became their only child.

When communications with her parents were resumed her mother wrote a letter to Ilse that she would be disinherited for adopting me. I was an illegitimate child and my new parents were threatened with the biblical saying that the sins of the fathers would be visited upon their children. Which meant that I was destined to be an evil child since my real mother had been so wicked as to conceive me. The letter disturbed mother for years. She kept it hidden in a drawer like a love letter. As I grew up something in her was looking for "signs". When the signs came and I was a rebel, untidy, defiant, running away from home, difficult and so on, she decided that on the whole it wasn't fate, but me. Finally her parents 'took her back' and allowed that it was not such a crime. But Mother was long afraid they would prove to be right.

She stayed married for 20 years, happily she says; and certainly my father and

mother seemed happy, unlike most other people's parents I knew. Then Father died of leukaemia and the years of sharing and companionship were all over. For years she grieved but gradually found herself again. She occupied herself with gardening - she loves plants like she loves children - taking courses at the Tech., caring for my cousin, who came to live with her for some years, working with children in the church. She's doing all of that now; she's busy, independent, physically and spiritually strong and often lonely.

I don't know whether it's because we always fought over our differences in preference to pacifying each other, or whether it's because my mother was never a 'perfect daughter' herself, or because she's had so much to fight for in her life that she respects my fighting capacity too, but when we talked about me being a lesbian, there was no judgement or condescension from her. Nor guilt or anger. She doesn't understand me completely, but then that's hardly to be expected. She respects me for my opinions and life-style and I feel the same way about her. I would refuse to do most of the things she does but I think it's far out that she does what she wants to do, controls her life and lives it creatively and with so much love and gentleness.

I have written this because whenever my mother tells me these things I always feel proud and strong to think that she has been through so much and retained and developed her own integrity. Perhaps her love of plants and children, whose life cycles are so intense and short, has kept her open to growth and change. She is sensitive to those she is close to and loves. Her sensitivity and openness allowed her to listen when we talked about lesbianism, despite the worry in the back of her mind that this was something taboo she was thinking about.

I learned from her, and through talking with lesbian sisters, that there is no one way of dealing with the problem of "how to tell". Only by really listening to our mothers can we speak with them. The rightness and integrity of our communications must grow out of the situation and moment in which we are speaking.

I wanted to share these things with my sisters. We can all teach each other much more about our mothers' herstory. It is that herstory that is our immediate heritage and I know that if we can listen there is much to learn that is beautiful, wise and strong.

I want to ride beside you in the car
lean over to kiss you
hold your hand at the light
take your cigarettes
when they're smoked,
light you some,
curl beside you in your bed
hold your head
when you're feeling down.
tell you I love you,
I love you.

I want to laugh with you by the lake
when the sun goes down
freak out with you in the market
when the crowds obsess us
watch you playing with children

I want to feel your hand strong on mine
giving love, giving love
to walk the streets with you
when it rains
share a coke with you
when we're thirsty
to bring you wine on your birthday
feel you hold me when I'm down

I want to talk with you about the revolution
share your work with you
and mine
hear you bitch when I'm complaining
laugh with you when the world is mad

I want to show you my love
with my lips, hands, feet
legs, stomach, breasts, thighs
tell you my dreams
and hear yours too.

I want to share our smiles
and sorrows, pain and anger,
joys and all our hopes

I want to share our love,
share our love between us.

Rowena



Daydream She Would Rather

She got up when she had dry the clothes
make tea
move around while someone drew on her mind

She would much rather daydream than read the news
She would much rather daydream than gather
her resources
take inventory
draw conclusions

Her friends told her she was buoyant
she knew she was sick of conclusions
she would rather
look at baby
she would rather sit and draw
tattoos
leaves all over the floor
hair, trees and
plain talk

She often flocked to the post office
for exotic mementoes of many countries
often there was a queen on the scene
and armies with acrid leaders
Many cats wandered in and out as she daydreamed

Her friends told her she was
hard to impress
She would fall into arguments fast
fast like ink stains like bee stings
Sometimes she wasn't much of a comfort

She thought about patriotism
and motherless countries while she drew
She always daydreamed when she looked
into the eye of her beholder

If her beholder was a sister
she daydreamed more
because this gave her pleasure
and principles

She loved their sensibilities
She had met some fine ones
two in particular
She loved their sensibilities

Each was fine on her own but when they were together
Each was fine on her own but when they were together

She had many daydreams
she had so many daydreams
she chose them carefully

She knew that brothers are important
she knew that there are very many
and so are fathers
but she hardly ever believed in them
she hardly ever contacted them

She believed in divorces
Sometimes she wasn't much of a comfort
She was Catholic, difficult to try in
nineteen seventy-three

She preferred to come out than smell like a rose inside
She lay horizontally
regarding the frontiers of her rational
suppositions
oppositions
prepositions
She knew she believed in
no regrets

She daydreamed when she was looking at new cars
remembering old cars
upholstery and broad seats in which to lay
out her legs under trees open window breeze

She had very many windows
Getting to know each of them better
she watched them new
sitting in the mainstream of a ray
she drew nude love from imagination
She had many daydreams

Thinking of one of them she would have to eat
Thinking of the other she kept her mouth closed

She was different on the telephone
than she was off the telephone
Sometimes she spent days on the telephone
depending on the time and if she had it

Putting into it or pulling out of it
this or that
was always the question
She had many daydreams

She had very old cars
she always had old cars
She rode around at night looking into neighbourhoods

One time she lived with two Catholic nuns
alone in a temple in Asia
She had many statues
There were few feast days and many prayers

She often wondered why action lies
only in the eye of the day dreaming
day dreamer

She daydreamed when she received postcards
East is East and West is aging too
She laughed when she received inhalations
She was a tentative receiver
she received but she was tentative
she had many daydreams

Of her intimate practices
like scratching
as she wondered why action lies
in the eye of a day dreamer,

Only a day dreamer knew who could
let her hear sounds like
chafing when there was only one surface
soft sighs when company was around

Sisterhood is not casual
She knew that brotherhood was important
but she hardly ever saw them
Given a row she found it hard to understand
what is difficult to understand
between them

She had very good ears
She thought the true nature of walls
was keeping anything in or keeping anything out
or anyone
or vases
or urns
She knew this because she daydreamed
dreams are fondness recycled

Leaves caught in her hair
sisterhood as usual
she had daydreams
she had many daydreams
she was careful with her daydreams
she'd rather
she'd much rather
day dream she would rather

Alexa DeWiel



I love you
as I love myself
as I love my sisters
as I love my mother
of whom you remind me
in your face and your carriage
sometimes, when she was young
as I love the sea
and the sound of laughter
and crumbling tears
that fall on our faces
and I love you always

Rowena

July 11

Hear your voice again
Wondering if you really
knew
How I felt
for you and your future.
And the times we spent,
Where're all gone
You're cold now
Like nothing really mattered
Nothing really cared
Are you the person
I saw
Through the fuzzy
little hair?

I wonder what more can
I say, as I talk
to you, in your cold,
cold way.

Wendy

I am a lesbian
 lesbian love
 of you and I
 is my longing.
 I dream of
 holding you,
 seeing you smile:
 eyes so slit with joy
 Dreamers are gypsies
 (and you are one)
 you dance by the moon
 holding my hand
 to catch me like the wind catches the wings
 of water and fire. With fire and water
 I baptize you. With the air of our breath
 and the earth of our flesh we are
 baptized in our lesbian love.

Rowena.



To everyone that i am
 (have been or am about
 to be) in love with

im a witch
 im a bitch
 im your lover
 a protector
 running errands
 writing poems
 sometimes a hurt detector.
 im your mother
 and your sister
 i laugh about the slaughter
 wiping tears from your eyes
 when your mind begins to play.
 im your artist
 star songwriter
 loud moth lezzie
 giving orders--
 taking minutes
 while the telephone is in my other hand.
 im no one's woman
 cause im free
 and its you you know--not me
 at dinner when you give me
 your knowing nod & grace
 i intimidate - discriminate
 segregate - exaggerate
 separate
 lay heavy trips
 and here i am
 & fuck u if it doesnt
 fit the pattern

Good Morning

Woke this day and
 Thought I'd write
 A feeling of you
 But the words
 Weren't right

Tried to say
 You were nice
 But that's so
 plain, the
 words weren't
 Right.

So I'll give
 you this and
 try to say
 I thought of you
 As I woke today!

by Wendy

POETRY

Talisman

Is parting the same
for the one who is staying?

I don't know i can't
seem to stay anywhere

Not here with the night
with you who is also leaving

With you it's a dive
Deep and blue as a dolphin

The depth would terrify me

When you surfaced
it seemed an ancient bio-
logical habit
no longer necessary

The great whales sing in the depth
loud and strong

we don't hear

with our sight
we pierce and drag the massive body
to our world our need

because the come
up for air
Coming from the song

in the depth
we don't hear

Once i wrote about you

and moments

that came outlined
by your presence
Came

shy animals
sniffing each other's fears

Moments stranded

like the smell of the sea
in the familiar

taste of salt
spilling

White
sparkling

a dangerous implication

A freedom
in which strange

creatures define themselves

Born of dark dreams

Suckling
nature's luminescent breasts

I watched you descebd
and loved your going
because you returned

Always with grace
hung about you
like sea-weed

These are jewels

for us still rare

Jewels i now hold
string

carefully

Watching
over that which protects us.

-Hadassa-

For sisters learning to walk on water

Dive deep

we diye deep

For each

other

in circles

Waves

Extending

larger

reverberations

without end

Until we reach

Until we

Touch

And never

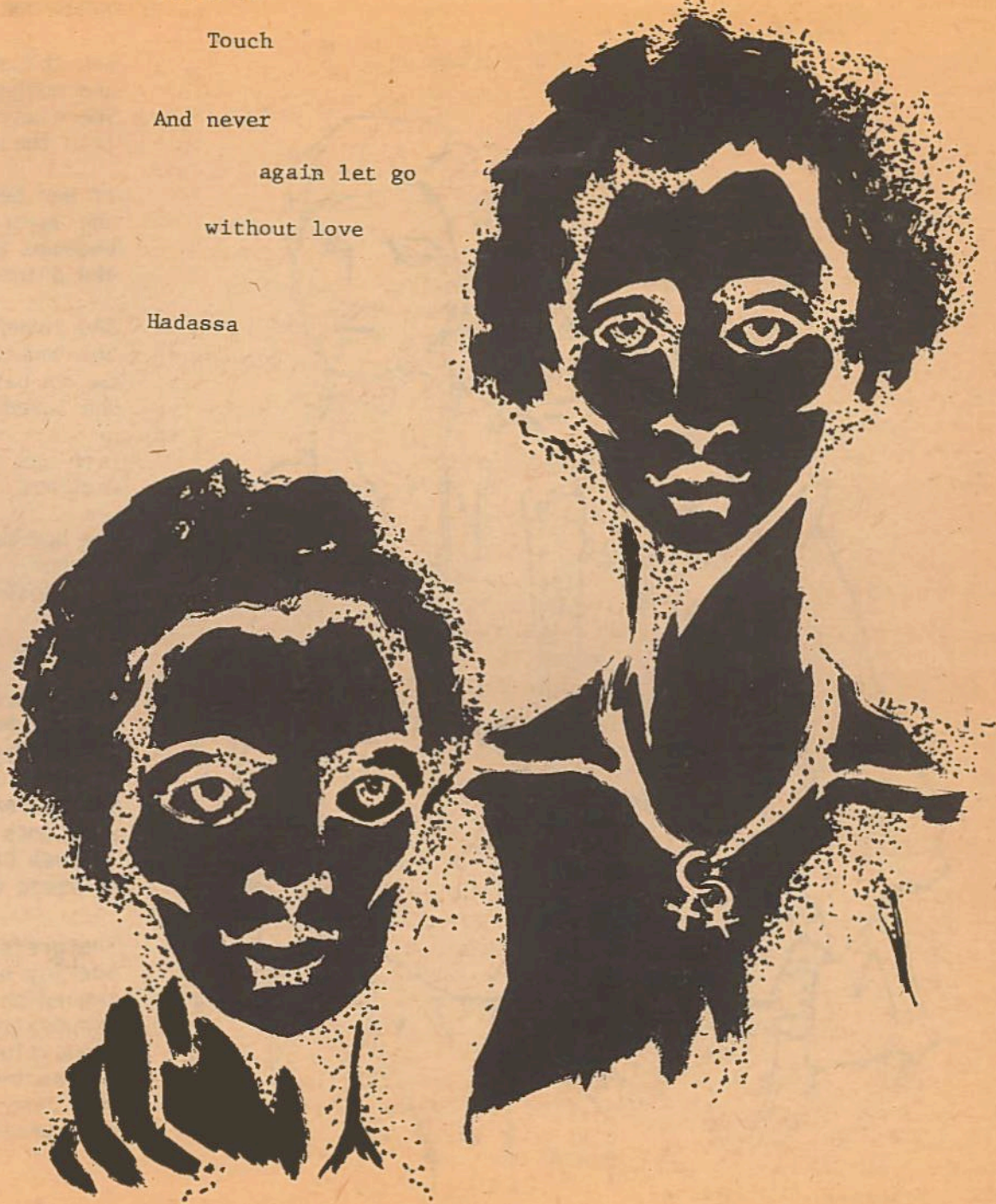
again let go

without love

Hadassa

As I awake,
The first sounds
I hear disturb me.
I wrestle tiredly
With my sheets,
Knowing I must get
Out of bed.
The confusion is
there
the pain
the hurt
despair
Can I hide in this
bed
From the people
From the people
From everything
I know
is there really this
much good in the
world!
I am happy
I am sad
I am lonely
And tired of wondering
Just why
everything must
keep going on
like this
Answers can never
be found
Solutions can never
solve the questions
The answers
The problems.

Wendy



thoughts **I-identified:** on not being LESBIAN



Edith Oorekamp

I must admit that the most difficult questions and the greatest misapprehensions I have had about feminism have arisen from my relationship to lesbianism. After three years in the woman's movement, I have still not resolved it and I still feel there is a fundamental awkwardness-which is rarely brought out in the open-between 'straight' women and 'gay' women. Several of us in THE OTHER WOMAN collective talked about it recently, and as a result of that discussion I have decided to pull my thoughts together and share them with others.

Certainly it is easy to recognize the rigidity of sexual socialization, and to accept the probability that our sexual development has been constrained and railroaded that we can only guess at what our 'natural' behaviour would be. Imagine the same kind of time and effort spent trying to turn little girls on to each other. The great golden age of gynocracy is more than an archeologist's theory, it is one of many alternatives to our present way of arranging society and accommodating sexuality. We can all speculate about the possibilities and probabilities but the important point is that heterosexuality as practiced in this sexist society should be exposed and discarded along with its attendant evil - the bourgeois marriage.

Speaking theoretically, and remembering the frustrations of struggling with mankind which is inured to its power position in sexual politics, lesbianism can be heralded as a positive step and possibly the most progressive direction to take at this point in time. What I mean by 'lesbianism' in this context is the broad and not just the sexual connotation. I refer to women taking out a total and full time commitment to women, deriving their energies and devoting them back to relationships and work with other women. But having said this, I do not see it justly follows that such an ideal is attainable only by women who include sexual relations among their many and varied relationships with women. Having just fled from one kind of exclusivity it is absurd to propose another. Human sexuality still being an unknown quantity, we cannot allow it to creep in as a criteria for identifying the

'progressiveness' of a relationship. There are women who, in acknowledging the viability of the lesbian love relationship will still choose a different route for themselves. In some cases this may even involve temporary or extended withdrawal from sexual relations altogether, and this may really and truly be the most progressive answer to their needs.

Still as one who has chosen a heterosexual love relationship, I have often wondered if this does represent a cop-out, a susceptibility to the old traps and a rejection of myself and my sisters. In other words, have I simply not been strong enough to clear the last obstacle? These are pretty heavy questions, which boil down in part to the lingering effects of freudian psychology which teaches women to doubt their own instincts and their own responses to the world.

the only time that I feel myself identified by my sexuality is when I am made aware of this difference.

As feminists we criticize the sexist system which identifies women, socially and economically, with the nearest male. Women who refuse this 'woman-effacing' patronage are also forcing society to accept them and deal with them as separate and legitimate individuals. On a personal level it means getting rid of the old male-identification trip-creating self-sufficient and self-realizing lives for ourselves. The intimate relationships we develop must not be the definition of our lives, but the expression of it. My own goal is to walk in confidence with my sisters down the street, knowing that I am also able to walk it alone. But the last place I want to feel 'male' (or any other person) identified - is in the movement.



But there is also the problem of labelling. Though most gay women reject the practise of categorizing people by their sexuality, the very fact of a strong and proud gay community compels non-lesbian and uncommitted women to see themselves as 'straight'. I am conscious of only one main difference between my own lifestyle and that of a lesbian-feminist - and that is the fact of our sexualities. So it happens that

In the end, I also feel that women should not have to justify themselves or their lives to other women. Our decisions, particularly when they are informed, balanced and free decisions, should be supported and respected. More especially we should encourage each other to accept our own decisions without self-reproach.



BY SUSAN CREAM

This April in L.A., U.S.A.
over 2000 lesbians
attended a National
Lesbian Conference.

GAY PRIDE

August 17-26

Gay Pride week held 6 dances, 2 bake sales, photo and greeting card contests, 2 discussions on sexuality, 1 baseball game, 2 picnics, 1 pot luck supper, the presentation of a brief to the Human Rights Commission and one march through the city with speeches in the middle.

It's hard to know what to say. We don't feel particularly gay (though sometimes we feel good and strong), we didn't want to put energy into something that presents itself in a trippy, apologetic way when we're feeling serious and defiant about being lesbian. Bake sales and pot luck suppers sounded like the Women's Auxiliary again. We ended up going to the Crafts Fair and march on the last Saturday.

The Crafts Fair was well-organized and showed the works of a woman painter, a candle-maker, a jewelry-maker as well as a display of photographs and some greeting cards. And the baked goods. There was also a women's bookstore with a good selection of women's books but sadly little on lesbianism, bar Lesbian Woman and some lesbian papers.

The march was predominantly a CHAT affair, with the CHAT sign taking second place. It consisted mostly of men, but there were 2 women leading it with the Gay Pride banner. We went as a group of lesbian feminists to the march and shouted: 2468 gay is so much better than straight, whilst all the Official Megaphone Carriers (OMCs) were instructing everyone to shout 2468 gay is JUST AS GOOD as straight. We don't want to apologise for believing in who we are.

To begin with there was hostility to us, but towards the end of the march the OMC

that stayed around us was instructing everyone to shout our version. We joined with some of the women who had previously marched separately and we all shouted and sang together. It was a great feeling of sisterhood, walking down the middle of the street arm in arm. The march made us feel how strong women can be together. But that says little for Gay Pride and much for Lesbian Pride.

We all wished the men had shown more unity and strength too. The strongest things that I heard were in the form of sexist comments and songs like: "Come on over or I'll come all over you." People- 95% men- were chanting "Lesbians are mighty fine" yet in practice

the men of the Gay Liberation movement have yet to take us, as lesbian feminists, seriously. We are committed to destroying sexism both in ourselves and in society. The impression that male homosexuals give is that it's easier to leave sexism to the women: it doesn't really affect them! But it does. The very fact that so few women are involved in Gay Liberation is symptomatic of the sexist ethic in our society: that men have all the power and want to keep it that way. We recognize that there are committed women in CHAT for example who work very hard, contribute a lot and are very strong; yet for the most part it is the men in Gay Liberation who are running the movement. Women, for the most part, pose for token pictures and do the shitwork. Yet, despite the power that male homosexuals have, it was the lesbians on the march that showed real solidarity and sisterhood. A man walking behind us commented on how close and together we appeared and lamented the lack of real strength and unity amongst the men. But of course men have no strength; they are divided by their own sexism.

The speeches took place in front of the government buildings and were given by men with the exception of one woman, Adrienne Potts, a lesbian feminist, whose speech is reprinted in this issue. What happened to the decision that was made during the organization of Gay Pride Week to have at least two women speaking? There was one very good speech from Charlie Hill (from Ottawa) that talked about sexism, role-playing and the on-going struggle to overcome society's dehumanization of homosexuals.



I am writing at the beginning of Gay Pride Week reading CHAT's newsletter BACK/CHAT, and I'm horrified. So much that I cannot let it go unanswered. I feel nauseated by sickly metaphors; the "sunshine of acceptance" and wonder if the writer was being facetious. Further on my nausea is heightened by all the talk about cruising. I feel uncomfortable: CHAT was supposed to be an organization for all homosexuals; female and male. Obviously someone forgot about lesbians when he wrote this, since cruising is the pastime of male homosexuals, something that lesbians can barely relate to. Then again, I thought CHAT was committed to the destruction of heterosexual games, role-playing and sexism. Yet what more sexist game can you think of than the on-the-make game of men hunting for sexual prey. Cruising. Ah well, this is Gay Pride Week, no doubt CHAT's into having a little fun, principles or ideals were never a man's prerogative.

Now I read something more interesting; "a column highlighting news of interest to women." O, so he didn't forget about us after all, this male chauvinist homosexual. But no more information than that is forthcoming. In fact more space is given to gays interested in religion. But that's nothing unusual; the church always did win over women.

From the President's Pen is the first major item. It closes with the lines; "People have been friendly and want to know the truth about us." I wonder how CHAT can know or present the truth about lesbians if its newsletter, which is surely for lesbians as well as male homosexuals, is so dominated by the male homosexual ethic.

WEEK

The myths about Lesbianism often fall into two categories, depending on how close it is to you. Lesbians are subnatural when they live next door and supernatural when they live in Paris and write books.

The gossip column starts with cruising. Again, in that slick, thick, racy style I'm now almost immune to. Subjects covered; the Parkside, the Quest, rumors, and cruising again. (...and the President created the world, and He said, Let there be cruising. And His creatures cried; So be it, world without end, amen...) I envision a male world; bars where only a few women go because most feel so uncomfortable in them; gossip about male homosexuals. I'm getting bored.

Into the middle of my alienated feelings come the words "A TOP COP SHOP" like a slap in the face. CHAT's president has actually decided that relations with the police are getting better. Because he says, complaints "are handled swiftly and courteously". But should we be forced to have a special liaison with the police, just to deal with complaints? And besides that, are homosexuals in the street being treated the same way as heterosexuals? Of course not, and not even heterosexuals get fair treatment much of the time. I get the feeling that because one or two people from CHAT know how to smooth-talk the cops we're all supposed to be better off. I don't see it happening.

Next comes the letter column, and one on masturbation; is it harmful? I expect a clear no, but I get a qualified yes. According to BACK/CHAT masturbation can make it "impossible to relate in sexual and even non-sexual ways to other people." I bet you never knew that before; beats the ones about madness and sterility doesn't it? From talking to other women and from my own experience the opposite is actually true. Learning to love yourself is part of the process of learning to love others too. Being able to give yourself pleasure is part of learning about your body, learning to respect yourself and

hence others too. Learning to love yourself as you would want to love a sister or a brother.

Down on the last page of the newsletter I see a request for women volunteers at CHAT; I wonder how much I would want to handle men phoning in about their cruising problems, or about their messed up ideas about masturbation (that CHAT so carefully taught them). I wonder too about the lesbians in CHAT and if they find some breathing space in each other's company. Maybe the kind of male, sex-oriented exclusivity displayed in the newsletter will be an incentive to thinking about how differently women relate to each other from men. Maybe some are angry as I am to find the gay liberation movement presenting itself in totally male-dominated, sexual terms with barely a serious glance at the hard facts of the homosexual's existence; the law, divorce, child custody, discrimination in employment, persecution in the mental hospitals, lesbian mothers, the problems of role-playing, stereotyping (both into heterosexual roles and homosexual stereotypes), attitudes of the media and of society in general.

by Rowena Hunnisett



Last week being Gay Pride Week I was in some of the activities going on. One which I attended was the dance at the Manatee. Being Gay Pride week women were allowed to enter this men's domain.

I really enjoyed the club, the music was superb and the set-up is one of a kind. After being in there for a time, I started looking around, admiring some of the people, mostly the new women I had not seen before. I asked a few of them to dance, at which I received a funny look or answer from their boy friends that they were straight.

"If they're straight, and that was Gay Pride week, what were they doing at the Manatee?"

When I used to go to Mama Cooper's there were many straight women there. That was fine, because it was a mixed club, but this was our week, our thing.

I did not feel the women had the right to put me down because I am a Lesbian. They were invading a time when we as Lesbians, as gays can get together and not feel oppressed.

I cannot say anything against the Manatee or CHAT because we all know you cannot stand at a door and ask people if they are gay or not.

But this was Gay Pride Week and was a time when we as gays were to get together and not feel the outside pressures of the straight world.

Wendy



For future Gay Pride Weeks our suggestions are:

1. There should be a woman's night.
2. At least half the speakers on any occasion should be women.
3. Men should address themselves to lesbian feminism and the women's movement.
4. We would like to see a more concerted attempt to really coordinate the various homophile groups in Toronto for the organization of Gay Pride Week. Every group should be represented.

But for this year, it was really good to see that people came from outside Toronto, to feel that we support each other in our struggles. It was good that a lot of people came who had only seen each other in the dim lights of the bars. It is certainly important that Gay Pride Week was held at all, to allow women and men to come out and be open about themselves and experience the supportive atmosphere of Gay Pride Week.



ADRIENNE POTTS' SPEECH FOR GAY PRIDE MARCH

I was asked to come and speak here today as a representative of the Lesbian Collective at the Woman's Place.

Lesbians around Canada and the world live under constant oppression from a male-dominated power structured society. A society that survives off of the exploitation of women. A society of men that alienates and separates lesbians because of our potential threat to that power.

And they are quite correct when they make the assumption that their power is at stake. The threat is there, and it's there in the form of rage. Rage that every woman feels, every day of her life.

We are full of rage because we can't walk down a street without being ogled at or sized and compared like a piece of meat.

We are raging because every day hundreds of women are raped physically, emotionally, and economically.

We are raging because fascist courts want to take children away from their lesbian mothers.

And we are raging because it's not a gay life. There is nothing gay about this struggle: instead, there is sister-love, giving support to each other to defeat oppression and male supremacy.

We're building a new culture so we can grow and learn from each other. We're doing it in the form of newspapers, drop-ins, getting together a press.

We're doing this so that we can find effective ways to communicate to our sisters. We're playing music together - a new

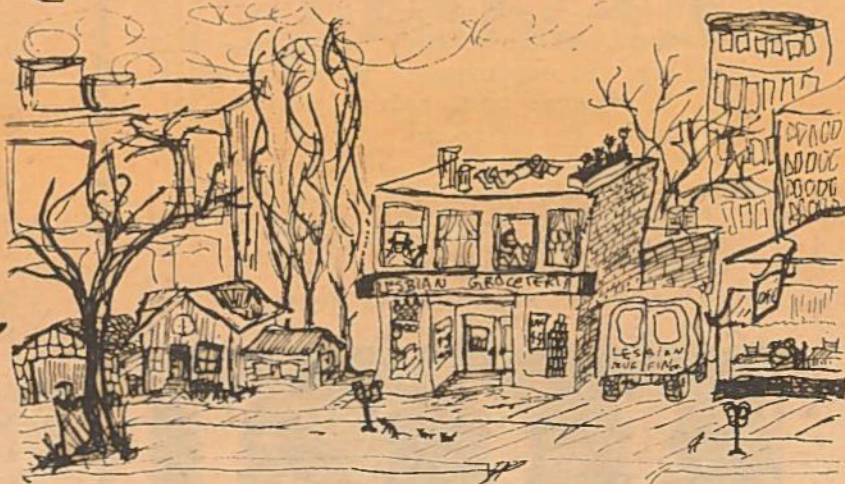
kind of music. Music by, about and for women - singing about our lives.

We're angry with the gay liberation movement for negating the presence of women's liberation. We're here on this march with you today because we are all fucked over by this sexist society. But you're not my brothers as long as you keep struggling for the freedom to cruise and trick in High Park. And you're not making me love you when you try to get a male club to start to admit women to the premises.

We're struggling around issues that effect our survival. For example, gay men get jobs and consequently get fired and then protest - whereas we don't even get the job to begin with.

No - it's time for women to get together to struggle for our lives and our freedom, so that we can feel strong, and build a strong community of women that can change and grow with other sisters.

SISTER



MAGIC

In seven (7) years a body is replaced ... all the cells are new by that time...

IF we want to pull out of the expensive male doctor/expensive hospital/expensive chemical misuse of our bodies trip ... that is, if we're tired of being told our pain isn't real, our illnesses are psychosomatic or being given medicines we can't easily afford ...

THEN we need to get into: eating organic food as much as possible, hanging loose so pressure deadlines don't induce us to take Contac instead of letting our colds happen to us relieved by Sisterlove care taking, hot tea and honey...

AND try preventatives like keeping physically fit and eating a balanced non-chemical diet, like not always taking the easy option, the soft route.

We need to be sisters eating and living healthy and strong, then occasionally,

when we are sick, we can help each other with herbal teas* (you see modern male medicine was ripped off from us back when we were witches... and you thought the torture was just for their pure pleasure...) and with a lot of sistermagic hand touching, holding, feeling sisters loving sisters growing strong.

*see Witches, Midwives and Nurses by Barbars Ehrenreich & Dierdre English, and Back to Eden or Culpepper

P.S. Did you know that pure yoghurt is very good medicine for yeast infection to create acidic balance inside? The bacteria in yoghurt is the same bacteria that fights viruses inside you.

If you suffer from bad periods - two weeks prior to flow begin replacing calcium in your body at a rapid steady rate. Keep physically fit, do a lot of exercise, e.g. yoga designed

to strengthen and relax your body simultaneously. Much of the pain is due to contractions and the inability of the body to open itself to the flow, due to conflict tightness.

For sore throat - a tea brewed of rosemary & boiling water taken with honey.

For constipation - a glass of hot water, as hot as you can stand, with a bit of lemon juice, first thing in the morning. I try to remember it every morning - it seems to keep me regular. But it doesn't taste great.

Also, 1 tbsp. of yeast with a glass of orange juice and 1 tbsp. honey - basic pep-up drink.

Or, contact:
Women's Health Clinic,
31 Dupont Street,
Saturday's 2:30-4:30
929-3185



explaining

Lesbian oppression is when you feel you can't walk down the street and hold hands with another woman.

Lesbian oppression is forcing yourself to be with men when what you really want to do is be with women.

Lesbian love is being free to kiss and caress without having to have an orgasm

Lesbian oppression is having to spend all your time and energy dealing with people's anti-lesbian attitude when what you really want to do is spend your time and energy with people, on topics such as youth oppression, racism, art, music, theatre etc... as well as sexism.

Lesbian oppression is feeling there is something wrong with you when you realize that you feel more comfortable with women than with men.

Men who are obsessed with sex are convinced that lesbians are obsessed with sex. Actually, like any other woman, lesbians are obsessed with love and fidelity. They are also strongly interested in independence and in having a lifework to do, but other than that, lesbians are not extraordinary.



Galfrid Congreve, a registered psychologist from the South-western unit of Queen Street Mental Hospital said, "It would be a good thing if people in Mental Health professions who are gay were open about it. This would make it easier for mental health patients who wanted to come to terms with homosexuality to be treated humanely and rationally."

LEZZY'S believe it or not

Q Should children be allowed to be exposed to a heterosexual in their environment - a relative, neighbour or teacher?

A The average child suffers little if any psychological damage from being exposed to the ordinary heterosexual. Actually if we consider the number of active adult heterosexuals in our society, it would be difficult to imagine any child growing up without some exposure to at least one of them somewhere along the line. This obviously does not imply that there would be heterosexual activity between the youngster and the adult. The only exceptions would occur when the heterosexual either tries to seduce the child or inadvertently serves as a model for identification. The vast majority of heterosexuals are harmless individuals who are far too interested in themselves and their counterparts to devote time to children. Therefore it becomes almost redundant to ask if the child should be exposed to a heterosexual. Obviously one does not do this deliberately but the odds that it will occur at sometime in the life of the child are great.

There is an increasing tendency to remove the average heterosexual from the "criminal" category and view him as deviant or emotionally disturbed. The pertinent point is that most heterosexuals prefer the company of other heterosexuals. They avoid children for the most part. The few exceptions are not ordinary heterosexuals but those with strong sadistic tendencies.

One certainly does not deliberately go out to "educate" a child by exposing him to a heterosexual. But on the other hand one does not worry about a biology teacher who is presumed to be "straight", especially if she is a good teacher and has no desire to influence her pupils toward heterosexuality. Similarly the male gym teacher whose life is built around teaching athletics to girls may be heterosexually inclined, but these desires rarely are directed toward the youngsters.

In summary, it would be wise not to worry about the adverse effect of heterosexuals on children unless and until they attempt to entice the youngsters into this practice, and then and only then should we take action.

STUART M FINCH, M.D.

Originally this question and answer was printed in "Human Sexuality and the Medical Profession" Vol. 3, No. 6, June 1973. The word "heterosexual" has been inserted wherever the original read "homosexual".

book



review

PHYLLIS WEBB

"Selected Poems 1954-1965"
Talon Books \$5.00 & \$8.00
Vancouver B.C.

by Ilona

I have always empathized with Canadian poetry, and for me, it is Canadian Women's poetry. When I was just starting to connect with my anger, I discovered these women- Atwood, Avison, Jiles, Waddington, etc. From them, I learned that we could indeed create that which is both strong and beautiful, and be recognized for this. It was a revelation to me- until recently, Canadian art generally had an aura of colonialized mentality, especially from my viewpoint, and as for women, well I'd been taught women were "feminine", passive, there for breeding babies and servicing men- from everyone I learned that their art was second-rate. And here were these glorious women, bursting through the bonds of silence, with their poems of pain, love and sorrow, soaring higher in expression than their male contemporaries.

within this book, we have Phyllis Webb's journey between the years 1954 to 1965. It isn't an easy journey. One can grasp the tracings of pain and the vibrancy of her feelings, but there is also the opening of eyes. She has defined herself as a poet and a person, in those role-reinforcing, semiconscious days (unfortunately still existing), and in a country the rest of the world thought was inhabited by Mounties and lumberjacks.

These first poems from 1954 are superficially professional but there is a struggle here- not loud- a silent one between her and what the world feels she should be. There it is captured, as she was, seemingly with herself using someone else's style of writing and feeling uncomfortable as well.

"And the self is a grave
music will not mould
nor grief destroy:
yet this does not make refusal
somehow... somehow...
shapes fall in a torrent of design
and over the violent space
assume a convention..."

PHYLLIS WEBB

..... contd

Those poems spoke of mystic escape, dealing with a society that will not be whole but instead insanely destructive, She writes of her identity as a poet being akin to a nun, a religious recluse. Her discovery of many things comes with that time-honoured power-play between members of humanity - love. Her voice restates in "And In Our Time" that "... what can we or any lovers hold in this immensity of hate and broken things Now it is down, down, that's where your kiss cravels me..."

Her next group of poems open wider her field of vision. With her poem "Double Entendre" she explores the range of ironies within this society and why they exist, complete with the observation that "... just as the pregnant woman/ in the street/ carrying her three-year-old son/ is one and entire/ the tribe of woman/ weighed down by the race of man/ always to be renewed..." She sees now what she can do with her poetry, and how her status as a poet doesn't really threaten what she sees without having to prettify it, for: "... poetry is cloaked in sheer/ profundities of otherness/ its ambiguous nakedness its serene capacity/ for wisdom, nothing denied/ until entirely known..." She mocks herself and her position, seeing irony in that:

"The poet is his tree of hell
will see life steadily and see it well.
The world is round. It moves in circles
The poet in his vision tree
imparts miraculous necessity
to murder, ignorance and lust
The world is round. It moves in circles."

Having defined just where her unique position in this world is, she proceeds to exploit it. She knows she's a "loophole woman", she escapes convention because she is allowed to be a poet. Now she is trusting her own vision, a most important step in her growth. In this third groups of poems, something has happened- she has connected to her inner vision- first in "Propositions" with the symbol of a split leaf and/or two leaves separate, finally showing that the half has the possibility of a whole, to "Breaking":

"Give us wholeness, for we are broken
But who are we asking, and why do we ask?
Destructive element heaves close to home
our years of work broken against a breakwater..."

which travels up and down the outcasts of this world, from its roots in Greece onward, through its cultural conventions, with its governing platitude:

"There is a justice in destruction
It isn't "isn't fair".
" What are we whole or beautiful
or good for,
but to be absolutely broken?"

This is an important point, turning to "Making" where the pieces are in "... Quilted/ patches, unlike the smooth silk loveliness/ of the bought/ this madeness out of self-madness/ ...Making/ under the patches a smooth silk this quilting/ throwing into the darkness a this-ness that was not/ It, does."

She moves into the more sensitive use of her images, beginning the examination of her traditional "feminine" self, her "Glass Castle" of societal conditioning, that she doesn't know how to dispose of, or balance, to "The Beachcomber", (which we can speculate on, for it is both an ending and far-off beginning, of a love story for herself) and to "A Tall Tale" of an improbable feeling of innocence. I particularly identify with the black humour of "To Friends Who Have Also Considered Suicide" with her dialogue and position with those who tried to go through suicide, which again, is matched and continued in "The Effigy" The poet's tree is the scene of a hanging- all of Webb's dead hopes, ideals, identities, drummed into her from day one of her life are being hung as "... effigy of a flourishing effigy..." Phyllis Webb hangs her failures. She and we have burst through the reserve that veiled it before, and we are remarking ourselves painfully. "A pardon to My Bones" is such a chronicle of growth, the realization that:

"I am dumbfounded as by a great book
whose leaves lie open for illustration took
the cheating history we revere.
Bones of the appointed animal twitch the ear
and I must be appalled, merciful, must care
that my human bones have walked me here..."

The final group launches into, as Webb described it "...long lines clean and syllabic as knotted bamboo..." It goes within her vision to the bare essentials, to the thin, ascetic lines that speak the person. She has discovered, too, a new manner of showing the interactions within relationships. Each word has meanings beyond just one. From the first suite:

"YOU
took with so much
gentleness
my dark "

to the second, diving into space, where objects, the colours plum and gold recur, but in the feelings as well, both during and after the action described before. First happens the material action, now the felt reaction, and then the interplay.

"The sun comes through
plum curtains
I said
the sun is gold

in your eyes
It isn't the sun
you said. "

In her non-linear poems, the words follow not one crisp, clean line of thought but many levels in one. These, to me, are the most beautiful poems and the most honest:

" walking in dark
waking in dark the presence of all
the absences we have known. Oceans
so we are distinguished to ourselves
don't want that distinction
I am afraid. I said that. I said that
for you. "

And further, she senses a change in the air. Admittedly Betty Friedan's "Feminine Mystique" had been published, as was Simone de Beauvoir for a number of years, but did these have effect? Though there is no information on Phyllis Webb's life that I have, from this poem I feel there has been an impact with such ideas, (unconscious or not) and in this poem, those emotions emerge, within her structure of multiple meanings.:

"Hieratic sounds emerge
from the Priestess of
Motion
a new alphabet
gasps for air. "

The book ends up with the "Suite of Lies", and "Some Final Questions", those interrelated statements that we can't always communicate what we think, or what we are, to others or even ourselves. The final word that Phyllis Webb chooses to close the book with is a small "Oh?".

Phyllis Webb doesn't ask us questions in easily recognizable terms, instead she creates situations, offering us clues to her view and invites us to take in the experience with her. When it ends (or maybe doesn't) she wishes to make us reflect, saying I did this, would you have? Or she can re-create scenes, feelings with her vision serving to extend ours. One goes on journeys with her in this book, journeys all the more remarkable because she saw it differently from the majority in those years she lived in. And from whatever view you look upon, each journey is unique, never one the same as the other because you can relate to both her and her poetry in a multiplicity of ways.

I wish to close this piece with one of her poems which I believe to be central to her outlook. Too, it is a fitting comment on the artist herself, as well as having other interpretations:

Her sickness does not ebb
anyhow, it's not a sea
it's a lake largely
moon-ridden.

I can see her perfectly clearly
through this dusk her face
the colour of moonlight

Maybe my body, maybe I?
But when has my love
ever been

offered exactly.
and why should she be an
exception?

women's music

Sure, it's nice to see her in little cafes of Ontario. Personal... a new and then treat. Catch a glimpse of an old TV show. Well at least there's a little survival money trickling in. Maybe people are still buying the album of a couple of years ago.

But when I get blown away by the music it's beyond me to understand why there hasn't been more albums, more shows...the big time, etc. It seems to be the way of colonial Canada...afraid to invest in frontiers like the Arctic and Beverly Glenn-Copeland.

There have been changes since the last album. (It's been two years, remember.) There's still the beauty as in "Song From Beads"**,

"and all my stakes are mist around some distant harbour and all your love some gull above the desert"

and "Colours of Anyhow" ***
"Look into my eyes, forever the paling hour

that reveals your power and your fears
and I won't ask what was gained babe
between your lovin' and your tears"***

There's still the humour of the "Hysterical Virgin" tradition. And of course Erzili, based on a poem by Judith Weiss as well... the rhythm, the power, the chant style, and above all the nice effects. Not often do you get a chance to have musical orgasms.

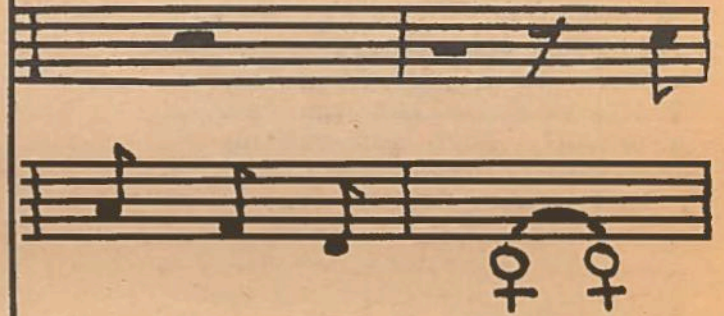
From the black tribal Erzili to "Complaining' Blues" to the operatic classical "Swords of Gold"...it's an incredibly broad musical experience just in that first album. And all through one woman!

But as I said there have been changes. It's like watching her come from sitting down, to standing up, to dancing. More and more unrestrained, unbridled rhythm, movement; it sails. There is more joy, not without pain. Somehow it all mixes together into one great release. There are other



BEVERLEY GLENN COPELAND

musicians and more instruments... bells, chimes, drums, shakers. And when it feels like everyone is ready to let loose she simply picks up the drums and suggests that it's time to make rhythm. As always, she does her own music...forever changing. But now she does more songs that are written by others, such as a song by Daisy deBolt'or this song which is one of Bev's few sing alongs
"We are going
heaven knows where we are going
But we'll get there
heaven knows how we will get there
we know we will"
Unfortunately I don't know its source. (the name Obeissa keeps rolling in my head though.) Beverly always used to tell long entertaining stories between songs. Now and then she gets into a rap but whether she actually talks or not, she is always in a communicative mood. She's in close touch with her audience and ready to respond as well as initiate. And she's encouraging, always. Sing, dance, play the tambourine. There's no need for restraint. In fact more and more I must dance to her music; and for a



by Heather

supposed folk musician that's not quite in line. Which is why there's no album yet. She's simply gotten out of line, and Canada hasn't been sure how to approach her. So Papa America is having a crack at it. An excellent demo, produced in New York recently, is being pedalled in the States and perhaps you'll soon be able to hear for yourself what I have been trying to say. I hope so. Musicians are starving these days.

P.S. In case you saw Morley Markson's flick at Ontario Theatre (Experience 73) Bev did the vocals behind it. Film makers have struck up an interest in Beverly it seems. More good luck.



** "Song from Beads"...words Judith Weiss, music Beverly Glenn Copeland @Dr. Music Pub. Co. Ltd.

*** "Colours of Anyhow"... B.G.Copeland @ Dr. Music Pub.Co.

' Of Fraser & DeBolt fame. Well worth seeing. Daisy has sung with Bev before.

lesbian graffiti :

MY FATHER TOLD ME THAT GAYNESS IS A BIOLOGICAL INHERITANCE. I THOUGHT HE WAS STRAIGHT.

Women are beautiful when they're angry (honestly angry).

Look down, woman,
And see how beautiful
You really are!

Look ahead, woman,
And see your sisters
Are beautiful too!

LESBIANS UNITE WITH ALL OTHER OPPRESSED PEOPLE TO SMASH CLASSISM, SEXISM, RACISM AND AGEISM.

Lesbian oppression is when you believe in society's myths that your way of loving is sick and inferior to their way of loving someone.

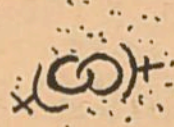
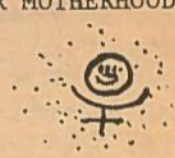
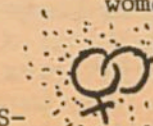
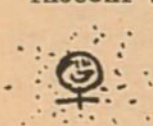
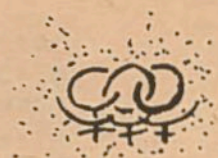
Lesbian oppression is having to use male words for loving women.

Lesbian love is becoming more than what men use us for.

Fat lesbians arise!
Skinny ones too!

LESBIAN LOVE IS SELF AFFIRMATION

KILL A MAN FOR MOTHERHOOD



SABOTAGE!

Sabotage is the fine art of smashing the state by relentless small-scale harassment. It's like fighting B-52s with pellet guns and winning! It's converting political ideals into action - and anyone can do it.

1. Our Bodies

Lesbian sisters walking arm in arm in the streets is doing more than asserting our freedom to be ourselves and gay. It is threatening male, heterosexual power that says women are pieces of meat for male consumption. We will no longer display our bodies as merchandise on the sexual market, and being obvious about our love for women makes that statement clear to all our sisters.

The clothes we wear, our hair, our lack of makeup can also make it obvious to everyone that we do not believe in or take part in the feminine role-games that men demand of their women. Every lesbian can learn to be a dyke. Not a pass-for-heterosexual femme, or a just-like-a-man butch, but a free-to-be-me, all-woman, tough-and-strong dyke!

2. Individual Sabotage

Every time you see an ad that insults the image of women, or uses women's bodies to sell prick-produced goods, write "this insults women" on it, or get a collection of stickers from The Women's Place. Keep a felt pen with you all the time and write "Dykes Unite" or "Castration for the Nation" on every free wall. Use spray paint for larger billboards and walls.

Keep a collection of large rocks in you car and paint slogans on them. Toss them through plate glass windows of places that exploit women. Like cosmetic companies, banks, department stores, food chains etc.

Walk down the street as if you own them - you do! Retaliate every time you are hassled. Learn to spit. Learn to punch. Learn to be insulting and sound like you mean it.

3. Group Sabotage

Find a few sisters, pick an obviously sexist public place (porno theatre, sex-commodity shops, strip joints) and trash



it. Trashing means cover it with paint or graffiti, disconnect the phones by calling from a booth and not hanging up, filling it with stink bombs (see Appendix for instructions), or calling in a bomb threat at peak business hours. Get the manager's name and address and phone number. Harrass him at home, order a ton of cement to be delivered on his driveway, cancel his credit cards, get the dirt on him and expose him to the press. Put sugar in his gas tank.

Do research on companies that exploit women. Find out who owns them, what else they do (are they also making bombs for Vietnam, as well as lipstick?). Get up a profile on the company's dealings and publish it.

4. Undercover Work

Get a straight job at a large corporation and steal the files. Personnel, wage scales, advertising campaigns. Anything that proves their blatant sexism can be passed on to the straight and/or underground press.

Erase IBM tapes with a magnet, lose the files, work in welfare or unemployment and screw up the claims of obvious pricks. Be innocent and ignorant. Work in a hospital and steal speculums and first aid materials and distribute them to your sisters. Work in a bank and steal all the money. Use it to set up a lesbian karate school.

5. Train Yourself

Learn how to fight and every time a man hassles you or a sister, beat him up. Get a group of fighting sisters together and go after known rapists. Take their pictures and make leaflets saying "this man is a rapist. Watch out for him."

Learn to be a good pick-pocket and steal money and credit cards and use the money for your own newspaper. Or to start a bail fund for yourself and your sisters.

A good woman lawyer can get you off most charges short of manslaughter, if you've been cool. Wear skirts and make-up for actions and dump the clothes immediately after, don't trash establishments run by women, learn to be inconspicuous on the streets when you need to, and at the same time learn to be aware of everything going on around you. People are apathetic, and will seldom call the police if they just happen to notice you doing something illegal. Don't carry I.D. on an action. Keep the name of a lawyer with you all the time, in case you are caught

If you have to go to jail, remember that there are lots of militant lesbian sisters in jail, too. Work with them, to bust out, or organize a strike for better conditions, or start a newspaper in jail, or get the jail library to carry Lesbian Nation.

6. Appendix

STINK BOMBS:

- buteric acid in a breakable bottle - buy it from a chemical supply store. Say you are doing experiments, or that your little sister's chemistry set ran out.

- or mix egg whites, Drano (sodium hydroxide) and water and let it sit for a few days in a tightly capped bottle.

- oil of cloves or oil of wintergreen spilled on a carpet will smell for days.

- mix vinegar and sulphur, in a breakable bottle.

Warning: Don't spill any on yourself!

BOMBS:

Buy a can of Sterno (for fondues). Remove the lid and punch a hole in it big enough for a firecracker fuse. Take enough jelly out of the can to make room for a large firecracker. Slip the fuse through the lid, and glue the lid down with epoxy, and cement around the fuse. This is safe to carry as long as it is not in contact with fire.

To set it off, light a non-filter cigarette and take a few puffs. Slip it over the fuse, lit end up, and secure it with scotch tape. Be careful not to set off the fuse while you are doing this. It will take several minutes for the cigarette to burn down to the fuse, and during this time you should be taking the opportunity to saunter out and get lost in the crowd.

Warning: Don't use bombs where sisters could get hurt. This bomb is excellent for starting fires as the jelly splatters all around the room and just keeps burning!

mostly around wanting to protect Jennifer from the real world (my thoughts went something like this - she is too young to understand. She'll have her whole life to face these problems, She will not be able to deal with the conflict between her home and the rest of the world.) I realized that if she doesn't get a strong sense of my values she'll be left vulnerable to the male world values that will teach her contempt and loathing for me as a lesbian. I have, gradually, and in ways that she could grasp, told her about the ways that straight families work; about male domination, economic control and ego gratification, and pointed out to her the innumerable injustices and insults to women in books and on TV. I have talked about the lies that the male world tells about women loving-women. Her reaction is shocked disbelief at first and then a

As Jennifer grows older she grows more 'discreet', that is, more afraid. She has not yet asked me to be more cautious, but I expect that will come.

2. INDOCTRINATION

People often say, "you aren't giving your daughter any free choice. You are indoctrinating her into a lesbian lifestyle."

"Damn them," I think, then I take a deep breath, grit my teeth and begin. "Look at the world around you. How many ads, stories, TV shows do you see that acknowledge the existence of Lesbianism? My kid lives in that world too. The only place in her life that she sees anything to do with Lesbianism, with women loving women, is in her home. I wish I could know for sure that the good loving that Jennifer sees around her would influence her to choose to be with women."



LESBIAN MOTHERHOOD

by Jeanne

1. LESBIAN OPPRESSION AT AGE SEVEN

Last year my daughter, in second grade, mentioned casually at dinner, "today we were talking about what we wanted to be when we grow up. I told Mrs. S. that it is a secret, but that I wanted to be free when I grew up so I am going to be a Lesbian just like my mom. I figured I could trust her."

Jennifer's trust instincts were OK that day, for her teacher responded that people should be free to do what they want to do. Lucky Kid.

There are three important aspects to this incident:

1. The family life that Jennifer experiences was satisfying enough for her to want to imitate it. She sees Lesbianism as both pleasant and possible. It is one alternative open to her.
2. She, at age seven, experiences and is limited by the secrecy that is part of our daily lives. She didn't know that most of the kids in the class had probably never heard the word "Lesbian". Jennifer assumed that they would understand the word and ridicule her: consequently she measured her knowledge of Mrs. S. and decided that this person could accept and respect her comments.

3. Had Jennifer been mistaken about Mrs. S. a terrible scene would have ensued. The teacher would notify the principal who would have social workers called in. Our home would be inspected. I'd be told to change my life or see my child placed in an institution. This happens to Lesbian mothers. They are in danger from schools, families, ex-husbands, "concerned neighbours". (Remember that Lesbianism is not 'illegal')

Sure- I'm providing as much of a non-sexist alternative to her as I can. I get books, make up stories, bring people home, all women oriented, all attempting to show humanness under the sex roles. It doesn't begin to balance the weight of the straight male dominated world around her.

3. COMING OUT WITH THE KIDS

Lots of Lesbian mothers are unwilling to share their relationships with their kids. This may be because these women have bought the lies themselves, are ashamed of loving women and don't want to "corrupt" the kids. Or it may be that the fear of discovery is so great that children are excluded from the love between two women. Kids talk. It's hard to stop them. Much safer to hide, sneak around, deny one's relationships, than to risk one's security/ livelihood/ children. Much easier than it is to build a trust and understanding with the kids.

Or the possibility that our children will turn on us and spit the "sickie-pervert" line in our faces stops us from really sharing ourselves with them. Teenagers are generally expected to reject the life-style of their parents. They usually do, for a while. But when this happens the straight family has tradition, culture and God on its side. They KNOW they're right and the kid is wrong. The lesbian mother has nothing but her own feelings to go on. Rejection is a constant spectre. To risk it from our kids is too much for those of us who do not have a deep good feeling about ourselves and a supportive lesbian community to cushion us.

After some hassling with my self and other Lesbian Feminists,

gradual understanding of how male supremacy is in Big Trouble when women get together and that's why they hate us.

She'll need every particle of this knowledge to resist the insidious and constant pressure from the straight world; to reject the lewd remarks and looks of her friends; to keep her sense that Lesbianism is good, real and alive.



Wishing that Jennifer wouldn't have to fight the world around her is futile. They have drawn the lines, she either goes down or fights it. I just want to make sure that she's got three good weapons: A sense of her own good selfness. Knowledge about what she is up against. And good women with her.

reprinted from "On Our Way", the Edmonton Women's Newspaper.

ON A QUEER DAY...



1. We are dykes, lesbians, femmes, butches, witches, lezzies, queers, homos, perverts, narcissistics, disgusting, unnatural, gay, man-haters, commies, reds, amazons, weirdos, feminists, furies, gorgons, trouble-makers.

2. We feel the need to write this lesbian feminist statement as we have come to understand that all women are our sisters. We are women who understand the oppression of women as part of our past and part of our day to day lives. As lesbians we have come to understand how women's oppression has been so deeply internalized that it has been almost impossible for women to see each other, let alone to love each other. We see how this powerlessness is further perpetuated as we compete with, destroy and dislike ourselves and other women from our guts and our increasing intellectual knowledge of all women's oppression. We as lesbians are beginning to fight for our basic women's rights and more- our international revolution. We are learning to cut through the fears, games, lies to find each other. We commit ourselves to fighting for women, not to turning on ourselves and on our sisters, both of which serve to bolster up the man and the male system. We understand that feminism is the only comprehensive strategy that will free all people. As lesbian feminists our lives are bound up with making these changes and these commitments. We see clearly that we will never be free or get any superficial fringe benefits in a male dominated society. We as lesbian feminists have our lives joyfully committed to helping each other open up as strong fighting loving women. We have nothing to lose and we have a world to build.

3. We want a feminist revolution. This means we want to create a non-patriarchal, communal, pansexual world. (By pansexual we mean a world where sexuality is a free expression of love and is not restricted by gender or age. In this world terms like homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, male, and female would become irrelevant in all aspects of life.

4. In our vision of a completely free liberated society no group would have power over any other group. The power contained in any group, institution, or structure will be used to serve all the people. We see that the reason that exploitation develops is through the concept that one group naturally holds power over another group. Very basic to this concept is the "natural" power of male over female. As long as any power is allowed to be considered natural, then structures develop to maintain this power and prevent rebellion of the powerless group. i.e. sexism, racism, classism. More and more sub-groups develop that break up into other sub-groups. Each is trapped below the other; they dominate each other in a vertical, hierarchical structure.

5. We see the role of feminists being to break down all exploitative power systems, and at the same time to build non-exploitative systems. That is, we see that a feminist revolution is a process of destruction and creation.

6. We see that all liberated societies are based on the principle that inequalities are caused by specific conditions, all of which CAN be changed. We see that the seeds of the force that will change the patriarchy are contained in the minds and bodies of its victims-women.

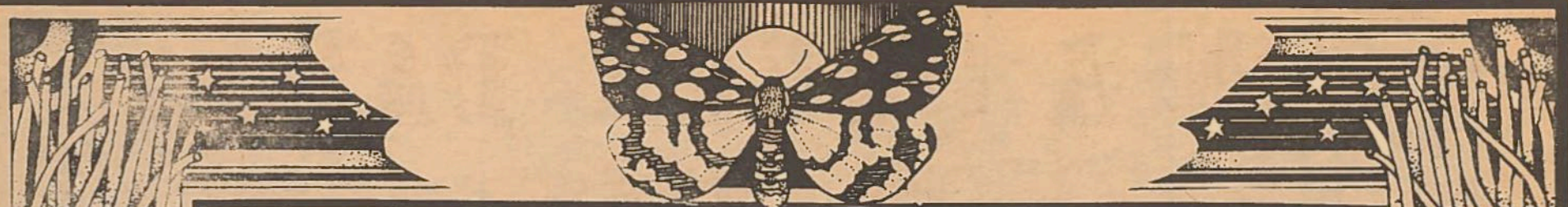
7. We support all lesbians. We understand that society defines lesbians' lives as sick and deviant, just as it defines any people that are threatening to its rule as insane or illegal. The society, by defining women's lives as primarily sexual-emotional acknowledges that this is the reason why lesbians are threatening to them. We are threatening because we have taken into our own control the very aspects of our lives by which they had thought to control and contain all women's freedom. We are setting our sexual and emotional selves free. Lesbians have set all women as example of self-determination in the early years before many of us understood the power of women together. As lesbians we want to learn how to love each other and ourselves freely and openly. We want to share with our sisters the joy and strength of this experience.

8. We see that the patriarchy is embodied in the attitudes and structures created by men-ALL men. While some men derive more benefit than others from the system, all men receive some privilege from it. For this reason we see that essential to the strength of a feminist revolution is the leadership of women. We call on men to destroy their own male privilege and that of their brothers.

9. We support the right and responsibility of all oppressed people to fight for freedom. We understand that most liberation movements are now male dominated and we call on women within them to take leadership, and on the men to destroy their own male privilege and that of their brothers. We call on all progressive movements to join us in the struggle against male supremacy.

10. We are committed to talking with all women about the nature of male supremacy and our oppression and sharing with them the vision of a feminist revolution. We want to give them the strength and skills we have already developed and learn with and from them. Together we will build new tools for the revolution.

A LESBIAN-FEMINIST STATEMENT



11. We want to struggle with our sisters who call themselves heterosexual to relinquish the chains of male supremacy. We see that all power derived from the patriarchal system is destructive to women, and women who accept or tolerate male power are taking part in their own self-destruction. Energies spent on men may give women a false sense of security, but in the final analysis only serve to delay the destruction of the system.

12. We support all feminists who are committed to changing the role of women, and will continue to work out our differences with them. We recognize that any differences among women are not of the same nature as differences with men. This is because first of all a woman's power is usually vicarious. It is mostly accrued through husbands, fathers and sons. e.g. A middle class housewife with no formal training has power over her working class sisters. But if she were to leave her family, she would lose her class status and privilege and have very few options for survival (domestic labour, waitressing, prostitution, welfare.) Secondly, even a woman with some training or financial freedom, like a nurse, social worker, teacher, small businesswoman, still faces the double burden of paid labour out of the home, and unpaid labour in the home. This serves to deplete her power. Exceptions to this are those token women who have a place in the most powerful ruling caste. This sort of tokenism and co-option is increasing in recent years, as the power system tries to contain the growing feminist movement.

13. We understand that children are as powerless as women and support children's liberation. We understand that as powerless male children grow up they inherit more and more male privilege. For this reason we choose to concentrate our energies on female children, but we support teaching boy children to have a feminist consciousness and look to effeminist* men for male models. (* see Effeminist Manifesto). We want to train our female children to be strong lesbian feminist fighters.

14. Our basis of struggle (meaning sisterhood and willingness to change) with women in other countries and cultures is the fact that all women are oppressed by male supremacy. The degree and nature of our oppression is influenced by specific conditions in each nation and culture. For this reason the strategy and tactics of the feminist movement must vary accordingly. Within and between all countries and cultures there are different levels of privilege. Women who have access to money, technology, or any power, must put this towards building a stronger and wider movement. Women who have the benefits of a particular race must work towards destroying racism and actively reject the privilege that comes from and perpetuates racist principles and practice. Women in wealthier and more powerful nations should support sister struggles in other nations as they are asked.

15. To be lesbian feminists we must be prepared to change every aspect of our lives for the betterment of our own condition and the condition of all women. We must learn to be strong. We must develop strong bodies. We must sharpen our minds. We must destroy in ourselves all traces of sexism, racism, classism, ageism and elitism. We must overcome our self-hatred, self-doubt and passivity. We must develop in ourselves everything that is strong, female, proud, and build it into our new identities.

16. We do not underestimate the strength of the patriarchal system and its determination to keep women down. It will use any tactic, including pitting us against each other to destroy our movement. We understand that the struggle before us is a long one and a hard one. We must be prepared to use every available tool to expose and counteract the patriarchy.

17. The tools of our revolution are anything that we can turn to our advantage. From fingernails to machine guns, from demonstrations to takeovers. We are underground and we are in the halls of enemy power. We act as individuals, as small guerilla units, and as a growing mass of angry women. We must build liberated zones for women across the country in our homes, in our work places, in our women's centres, in our hearts. We must have collectively-run:

- women's houses
 - women's defense squads
 - women's medical clinics
 - women's legal clinics
 - women-controlled daycare
 - communal laundries and dining halls
 - feminist factories
 - training camps for guerilla squads
 - feminist schools
 - feminist media and publishing houses
 - women's libraries
 - women's camps and farms
 - women's stores
 - women's centres
 - women's transportation systems
 - women's rehabilitation centres
 - women's technical and trade schools
- to serve the varying communities of women in the country and in the city.

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