

**Class, Race, and Sex:
The Dynamics of Control**

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Barbara Haber, Series Editor

The Scholar and the Feminist, Volume II

Papers from the Barnard College Women's Center Conference

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Class, Race, and Sex: The Dynamics of Control

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Preface

Class, Race, and Sex: The Dynamics of Control is a collection of essays based on the seventh and eighth Scholar and Feminist Conferences held at Barnard College, New York City, in April of 1980 and 1981. Initiated in 1974, these conferences have been sponsored by the Barnard College Women's Center and funded by the Helena Rubinstein Foundation. An examination of the impact of traditional scholarship on feminism, they are to some extent a record of the development of questions being posed by women's studies scholars over the intervening eight years. The Future of Difference, an anthology of papers from the 1978 conference, appeared in December 1980. Papers from the morning sessions of three of the earlier meetings (1975, 1976, 1977) have been published in pamphlet form.

An understanding of the conference planning process illuminates the particular questions raised in this volume and the history of conference themes in general. The conceptualization and administration of these conferences is the collective responsibility of Jane Gould, director of the Barnard Women's Center, other Women's Center staff, the academic coordinator, and the planning committee. The planning committee is composed of faculty, students, administrators, activists, women from the larger community, and Women's Center staff. Under the leadership of the academic coordinator, the planning committee meets regularly during the fall semester to discuss theme and select speakers; like a small study group, they engage in lengthy and often heated discussions on practical and theoretical issues. This process has ensured the vitality of these conferences by encouraging argument and debate as well as consensus on the final form of the conferences.

The diversity and richness of the papers in this volume are in large part a tribute to the commitment and varied interests of the women who served on the 1980 and 1981 planning committees. The decision in those years to enlarge the planning committee to include more activists and Third-World

women was a milestone in the history of these conferences. A response to the retrenchment in the academy and the growing conservatism and antifeminism in the society, this action bespoke a new stage in feminist consciousness in the university. The planners realized that in order to further develop feminist theory and reaffirm the power of sisterhood, the new scholarship on women would have to address current political, economic, and social crises directly. An understanding of differences based on race, class, and sexual preference was enhanced by broader representation on these planning committees.

The evolution of conference themes highlights some of the ways in which the new scholarship on women continues to be informed by feminist consciousness. The purpose of the first conference, held in 1974 and coordinated by Susan R. Sacks, was to articulate the questions that would organize our inquiry; scholars from several disciplines used their personal/intellectual biographies as a starting point for a consideration of how one could integrate feminism and scholarship. The 1975 conference, "Towards a New Criteria of Relevance" (Nancy K. Miller), examined the ways in which feminism might alter traditional academic definitions and thereby transform methodology and subject matter. Relying on the fields of anthropology and history of religion, "The Search for Origins," 1976 (Mary Brown Parlee), investigated the roots of female oppression. "Connecting Theory, Practice, and Values," 1977 (Hester Eisenstein), compared the value system particular to traditional university structure to the new system now proclaimed as the basis of feminist scholarship. Using experiences of artists and scholars, "Creating Feminist Works," 1977 (Elizabeth Minnich), focused on how the personal and the political merge in feminist process and form. These early meetings shared a concern for identifying commonalities among women as a means of defining, legitimizing, and naming women's studies as a discipline.

At the heart of the focus on sameness was an understanding that the establishment of "woman" as an appropriate category was the primary task. Once "woman" was proclaimed a viable "subject," the concept of "difference" could be introduced. The Future of Difference, 1978 (Alice Jardine), sought to define the structures that organize and determine our concepts of sexual identity and difference among women and between women and men. "Class, Race, and Sex: Exploring Contradictions, Affirming Connections," 1980 (Amy Swerdlow), considered the ways in which primary institutions of power divide women according to class, race, ethnicity, and sexual preference. Continuing this analysis, "The Dynamics of Control," 1981 (Hanna Lessinger), examined the institutions and

special interest groups that control women's lives within the context of the socioeconomic crises and the emergence of the New Right. The maturation and increasing sophistication of our scholarship permitted us to freely consider sameness and difference, and their ensuing combinations and permutations.

During the past eight years, the Scholar and Feminist Conference has become a New York City feminist event, bringing together some six hundred women activists, scholars, and artists each year. A seriousness of purpose and acknowledgment of the difficulties of combining feminism and scholarship characterize these conferences. Jane Gould, director of the Barnard Women's Center and part of this project since the beginning, has always understood that to be a feminist in the academy is not an easy task, than one constantly walks a tightrope between so-called respectability and radical thinking. In spite of the difficulties, the rewards of our inquiry have been enormous. That is what inspires us to carry on the project.

JANIE L. KRITZMAN
The Women's Center, Barnard College

Acknowledgments

Preparing the yearly Scholar and Feminist Conference is an enormous undertaking for all those involved, and every year the task becomes more complex as the conference grows in size and scope. The preparation of a book such as the present anthology is equally difficult. Although the shaping of each conference and each anthology is the responsibility of the academic coordinator and the editor, little could be accomplished without the help of numerous other people. The present editors are delighted to be able to acknowledge here their profound debt to the Barnard College Women's Center and its devoted staff, a debt stretching back two and a half years. The editors are equally indebted to the Helena Rubinstein Foundation, which has funded these conferences for the past eight years. In addition, they are extremely grateful to large numbers of other local feminists who took part in some stages of the planning process.

As befits a feminist institution, support from the Barnard Women's Center has been simultaneously practical, intellectual, and emotional; the center is always there when needed most. Jane Gould, director of the Women's Center, has been the guiding force behind the annual Scholar and Feminist Conferences since their inception. She more than anyone else has given the conferences their continuity; her unique contribution has been her vision of feminism and the women's movement as a whole, which has prevented any conference from becoming narrow or exclusionary. The breadth of her experience has always been offered to us most warmly and generously. In addition, her superb organization of the Women's Center has given the editors smoothly functioning facilities in which to work. Anyone undertaking a similar project knows how rare such facilities are.

Janie Kritzman, associate director of the Women's Center, has served as editorial coordinator for this volume, as well as assisting in the planning of the seventh and eighth conferences. Janie had overseen much of the day-to-day work involved in soliciting manuscripts, editing and revising

them, and checking revisions with authors located all over the world. In addition, she has been a liaison between two harried editors working in opposite ends of the city. Janie's calm, her tact, and her considerable understanding of women's studies, combined with a meticulous attention to detail, have been critical to the success of this undertaking.

Others on the staff of the Women's Center have also contributed to our work amidst their other duties. Christina Greene, Maria La Sala, and the many students who have worked in the Women's Center have all, at one time or another, contributed time and effort. Special thanks are also due to Hester Eisenstein, former director of the Experimental Studies Program at Barnard, academic coordinator of the sixth Scholar and Feminist Conference, and editor of the first anthology of conference papers, titled The Future of Difference. It was largely through her efforts that conference papers began to be reprinted in book form. We are disappointed that she is no longer in the United States and thus could not be involved in the production of this volume.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the role that the two conference planning committees played in the shaping of conference themes, the choice of speakers and workshop leaders, and thus the subsequent contents of this volume. It was their energy and enthusiasm that made the conferences exciting, and it is that excitement that we hope is transmitted to our readers. Committee members are identified by the year or years in which they participated: Bettina Berch, 1980, 1981; Roberta Bernstein, 1980; Lila Braine, 1980; Janet Corpus, 1981; Julie Doron, 1980, 1981; Frances Doughty, 1980; Joan Dulchin, 1981; Hester Eisenstein, 1980; Wendy Fairey, 1981; Irene Finel-Honigman, 1980; Catherine Franke, 1980; Susanne Gordon, 1980; Atina Grossman, 1981; Diane Harriford, 1980, 1981; Elizabeth Higginbotham, 1981; Elaine Hughes, 1980; Angela Jorge, 1980; Jacqueline Leavitt, 1981; Diane Levitt, 1980; Sherry Manasse, 1980, 1981; Cynthia Novack, 1980, 1981; Barbara Omolade, 1980; Ellen Pollak, 1980; Carolyn Reed, 1980; Susan R. Sacks, 1980, 1981; Mary Sheerin, 1981; Barbara Sicherman, 1981; Maxine Silverman, 1980, 1981; Philippa Strum, 1980; Angela Wilson, 1980; Kathryn B. Yatrakis, 1980; Quandra Stadler, 1981; and Laura Whitman, 1981.

To all these people the editors extend their warmest personal thanks.

Hanna Lessinger
Amy Swerdlow

New York City, February 1982

HANNA LESSINGER and AMY SWERDLOW

Introduction

The essays in this volume are drawn from two conferences, the Scholar and the Feminist VII and VIII, presented by the Barnard College Women's Center in the spring of 1980 and 1981. Like their predecessors, held annually since 1974, both these conferences explored urgent and critical issues of concern to women from the vantage point of feminist scholarship in all the disciplines in dialogue with feminist activism. The goal of the Barnard conferences from their inception has been twofold: (1) to shed light on women's role and status in society and on the possibilities for change, and (2) to illuminate the relationship between feminist scholarship and feminist activism in order to strengthen the connection between the two.

Meeting in the fall of 1979, the planning committee of the seventh Scholar and Feminist Conference considered the critical issues that women would be facing in the 1980s. The committee recognized that although the decade of the 1970s had revealed the power of "sisterhood" to inspire and energize thousands of women to band together and change their own lives, it had also revealed the limitations of "sisterhood" as a cohesive political force capable of achieving institutional and political change. The committee, after lengthy debates and deliberations, decided that the most compelling issue for the 1980s for scholars, for activists, and for all women was the issue of women's power and woman's powerlessness.

Of particular interest to the committee was the way in which the primary institutions of power--the economy and the state--divide women along the lines of class, race, ethnicity, and sexual preference, thus preventing them from uniting to achieve and consolidate even their basic and minimal rights.

The committee recognized that the feminist scholarship of the 1970s, although devoted to a thorough investigation of the material, cultural, and psychological roots of patriarchal oppression, had not yet sufficiently distinguished the

historical particularities of patriarchy and its specific contemporary forms in different classes, races, and cultures, in different economic systems, and in different parts of the world. For the most part, contemporary feminists have been loath to recognize conflict among women. They have tended to ignore the fact that women of different classes, races, ethnic groups, and sexual preferences have varied, sometimes contradictory relationships to social institutions, and even to one another. While recognizing that there can be class conflict and opposition between the woman who employs a household worker and the one who does the paid housework, the rhetoric of the women's movement has tended to minimize the conflict and to stress the fact that both women are sisters in their secondary status to the men of their own class and race, and in their oppression by white male elites. An acknowledgment of the existence of difference, but a reluctance to probe in depth its causes and its consequences, has led to growing divisions within the women's movement, the alienation of women of color, and disaffection by those who perceive the race and class privilege, the hierarchical relations, and the heterosexism of the larger society mirrored in the women's rights movement and in feminist theory.

The conference planning committee, composed of Barnard faculty and students, plus members of the wider feminist community, representing women of varied racial and ethnic backgrounds and of different occupations and academic disciplines, chose as the theme for the Scholar and Feminist VII, "Class, Race and Sex: Exploring Contradictions--Affirming Connections." Implicit in the choice of this topic was a desire to investigate whether, how, and under what circumstances the universal female experience of gender oppression could overcome difference and contradictions to create, at some bottom line, the unity and the coalition in struggle necessary for women's emancipation.

The planning committee of the Scholar and Feminist VIII, also representing Barnard women and the feminist community at large, decided to elaborate further on these ideas about race, sex, and class, and division and unity among women raised in the previous year. In response to a growing onslaught on women's rights and on feminism, coming both from institutions of the state and from special interest groups, the planners decided to focus on the control of women: how they are urged, persuaded, manipulated, coerced, and controlled into thinking and behaving in ways that do not serve their own interests. The committee chose as its topic, "The Dynamics of Control," in order to develop a systematic view of the mechanics of economic, political, and ideological

control imposed on women's lives, particularly in the area of production and reproduction. Speakers were asked to assess the extent to which the control of women is due to public policies, social institutions, and patriarchal ideology and the extent to which women perpetuate their own subordination and control. In both conferences a central issue for consideration was how women resist division and control and how, under certain historical circumstances, they unite across class and race lines to fight for their own rights and for each other.

The essays presented in this volume ask difficult questions, reject comfortable myths, struggle to unite scholarship with life and theory with experience. They examine the contradictions and connections of class, race, and sex, of power and powerlessness, of difference and domination. Their goal is not to establish a universal theory but to counteract bias, indifference, and imprecision in our understanding of women's oppression in order to increase the possibilities for cooperation and unity among all women.

The editors' decision to group the papers of the seventh and eighth Scholar and Feminist Conferences into a single volume was made when it became clear that most of the articles submitted to us shared a common set of interests. Writer after writer points out that feminist theory, to be either comprehensive or effective, must move beyond the discussion of gender to encompass the admittedly difficult issues of class, of race and ethnicity, and of sexuality and sexual preference. The other common thread among these writers is their conviction that the 1980s represent a period of great difficulty, even crisis, for feminist activity and for women in general. A conservative backlash, felt at the level of public policy, in major institutions, and in the realm of ideas, threatens the legislative, economic, and organizational gains women have made over the past twenty years. Women's demands are widely perceived as threatening: by the Right, by sections of the state, by many individual women and men. Women's demands are seen as something to be curtailed and controlled. It is therefore critical, as most of these writers indicate, to understand the intersection of gender with race, class, or sexual identity if the women's movement is to broaden its scope.

This kind of feminist analysis is best developed out of close study of particular groups of women at particular historical periods. Most of the authors included here assume that the multiple social, economic, political, and ideological influences on women can only be understood initially by examining them in the context of specific cases. Part I of this book, "Historical Parallels," contains six papers that

examine earlier periods of feminist activity in order to raise questions about the present.

Renate Bridenthal sets out a dominant theme for the section in her "Notes Toward a Feminist Dialectic." Starting from parallels between the United States of the 1980s and Weimar Germany, Bridenthal argues that feminism goes through periods of advance followed by periods of quiescence as it struggles with the inevitable antifeminism produced by prior feminist successes. Just such a period of struggle against antifeminism, Bridenthal believes, is now upon us. Her discussion also emphasizes the close historical connections between class struggle and feminism, a theme taken up by other writers in the book.

The dialectic is visible again in Judith Walkowitz's "Male Vice and Female Virtue: Feminism and the Politics of Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain." Tracing the development of late nineteenth-century antivice movements directed at prostitution and pornography, Walkowitz shows how middle-class feminist reformers gradually allied themselves with both working-class men and antifeminist, repressive moralists. The basis of the alliance was a set of shared ideas about the centrality of the patriarchal family and the need to control working-class female sexuality. By the late 1880s the movement had lost its progressive and feminist direction and was reactionary, repressive, and largely in male hands. Walkowitz's work points to another recurring theme in this volume: not only do classes have opposed interests in women's roles, but men and women within the same class often have contradictory interests.

Evelyn Brooks, writing about "The Feminist Theology of the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1900," implies that within the Black community of the period the interests of men and women were less antagonistic than among their white contemporaries. In another section of this book, the papers by Elizabeth Higginbotham and Cheryl Gilkes return to this point. Because Black women Baptists saw themselves as engaged in important work for the improvement of their race, women were, to a limited extent, able to break out of their purely domestic roles. Using theological justifications, Black women were able to become active in church and community affairs, work as evangelists, engage in social reform activities, and hold jobs as teachers, journalists, doctors, and writers. These Baptist women adapted and shaped late nineteenth-century feminism to their own needs without, according to Brooks, drawing major opposition from men.

Atina Grossmann returns to the economic and political similarities between the early twentieth century and the present. In "Crisis, Reaction, and Resistance: Women in Germa-

ny in the 1920s and 1930s," Grossmann addresses herself to the various attempts to control or redirect women's reproduction and sexuality that grew out of Germany's post-World War I economic crisis. The state in general tried to promote a policy of large families serviced by women already pushed out of the labor force. The state simultaneously promoted eugenic policies and advocated sterilization for other sectors of the population deemed "unfit." The same period saw the development of a countertrend, the Sex Reform movement. This coalition of leftist, liberal, and feminist groups advocated legalized abortion, contraception, sex education, and women's right to sexual gratification. Although this movement implemented many progressive ideas through its clinics, its feminist vision was limited by the working-class political preoccupation with the rise of the Right. As Lisa Duggan notes elsewhere in this book, such reform movements still saw female sexuality as passive, exclusively heterosexual, and oriented toward marriage and childbirth within the family. Issues of female autonomy and control were ignored. Grossmann sees a potential conflict between issues of class struggle and issues of feminist struggle. Like Bridenthal, however, she is hopeful that the two strands of resistance can remain linked.

Lisa Duggan also turns to the social history of the 1920s, this time in the United States, to discuss links between feminism and lesbianism. Her article, "The Social Enforcement of Heterosexuality and Lesbian Resistance in the 1920s," examines the period's widespread backlash against the economic and political gains women had made in the previous decade. In the post-World War I world of industrialization, economic expansion, and consumerism, many of these gains were undone, and feminism was characterized as threatening. A lesbian life-style, as one alternative to marriage and the patriarchal family, was under attack. Duggan quotes contemporary advice and sex manuals to good effect to show just how the norms of marriage and sexuality were redefined to bolster the nuclear family against the threat posed by feminists, spinsters, lesbians, and "sexual deviants," all thought of as more or less interchangeable. Duggan sees close parallels with the present, when the lesbian or gay alternative to the nuclear family is again under attack from conservatives who see patriarchy as threatened once more by female autonomy.

Rayna Rapp and Ellen Ross discuss another aspect of the same period. In their "The Twenties' Backlash: Compulsory Heterosexuality, the Consumer Family, and the Waning of Feminism," Rapp and Ross stress the economic, social, and political shifts that led to the "demobilization" of that earlier

feminist movement. They note not only the direct attack on lesbianism and all homosocial relationships, but also the erosion of separate women's institutions, such as colleges, which had fostered female support networks. They show how consumerism and a newly developed adolescent peer culture interacted with Red-baiting and a general swing to the right to destroy some women's organizations and change the character of others. Rapp and Ross end with a plea that contemporary feminists learn from the past and take steps to avoid a similar dismantling of their movement.

Part II, "The New Antifeminism," deals explicitly with the contemporary conservative trends alluded to in the previous section. Three articles identify and analyze the appeal and the tactics of the New Right, which has made antifeminism its central and most compelling issue. Zillah Eisenstein, in "Antifeminism and the New Right," tackles the difficult question of why various kinds of feminism and women's autonomy have been targeted by the Right. She sees conflict within the state over the form of the family most appropriate to the present stage of capitalism. A center faction, she believes, is willing to accept the two-income household. This faction simply wants to move patriarchal control over the increasing number of working women from the household to the labor market. The neoconservative faction wants to return to a "moral," ordered society with patriarchal control over women and their reproductive capacity firmly reestablished in the family. Both groups see the women's movement as a direct threat and are anxious to dismantle it. Eisenstein believes these trends are opposed by a growing number of women, already radicalized on a number of economic issues, but not yet organized. It is these women, with their nascent feminist consciousness, whom Eisenstein feels the women's movement must now address.

Jan Rosenberg, in her "Feminism, the Family, and the New Right," identifies the same general social and economic upheavals that other authors note. She sees rapid social change as the root of both feminism and the rise of the Right. Unlike other writers in this book, however, Rosenberg connects working-class female responsiveness to the New Right directly to feminist errors. She blames the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s for narcissism, individualism, and a "shared denigration of family life." Family life, Rosenberg says, is central to working-class women's lives. She suggests that the capacity of feminism to survive the onslaught from the Right depends on its ability to accommodate to the family, rather than demanding its obliteration.

Like Rosenberg, Lisa Desposito is concerned with a white,

ethnic working class which, she believes, embraces right-wing issues out of fear that a valued way of life is about to be swept away by tides of social change. In "The New Right and the Abortion Issue,"* Desposito carries her analysis further, however. She stresses the ways in which a multifaceted New Right coalition, in alliance with the Catholic church and other religious organizations, actively manipulates these fears to build a fraudulent antifeminist "consensus." Desposito also insists that feminists must keep trying to reach such people, because there is, in fact, some ground for agreement and alliance. Desposito implies that there is a strand of liberal, even progressive, thinking among many working-class people, which makes them hostile to the Right's attempt to legislate away women's reproductive rights.

As these brief comments on the preceding papers have indicated, one writer after another has identified the divisions of class, race, or sexual orientation that sow disunity among women and hamper efforts to organize wider coalitions. As various papers have also pointed out, these divisions and antagonisms intensify in times of economic scarcity and sharpened class struggle. The seven papers that follow in Part III, "Gender, Class, and Race," represent attempts to examine specific issues that divide women by structuring their supposedly common gender experiences in different ways. Several writers also touch on the issue of consciousness, noting that class and race often shape women's understanding of their objective situations and thus frequently divide them. In addition, all these papers insist that class and race are an integral part of feminist theory.

Nancy Hartsock starts from the proposition that difference does not need to create relations of domination between groups. Her article, "Difference and Domination in the Women's Movement: The Dialectic of Theory and Practice," examines the way in which the women's movement has dealt with (or failed to deal with) the differences of class and race within its ranks. Hartsock claims that the current concern about racism in the women's movement indicates the continuing difficulty of dealing with issues of difference while also indicating a collective expression of feminist willingness to rethink the significance of differences. She sug-

*Lisa Desposito's article is the only paper not originally delivered at a Scholar and Feminist Conference. Rather, Desposito spoke at a Women's Issues Luncheon, sponsored by the Barnard Women's Center in the fall of 1980, when the eighth Scholar and Feminist Conference was being planned.

gests that the socially structured recognition of "otherness" need not imply domination or exclusion as it has done in the past. Once the links between power and difference are severed, Hartsock says, difference may become a source of creativity and strength to women.

Bonnie Thornton Dill lays out the profound gulf between Black and white women in her article, "'On the Hem of Life': Race, Class, and the Prospects for Sisterhood." According to Dill, the feminist concept of sisterhood, uniting all women, has little relevance for Black women to whom racial consciousness has always been primary. She describes the recurrent fear among Black women that the white women's movement, largely bourgeois and highly individualistic, will abandon Blacks at critical moments in pursuit of benefits for white women only. In suggesting that feminists should study questions of ideology, presentation of self, distribution of power, and the material circumstances shaping Black women's lives, Dill is optimistic about an eventual alliance between feminists and Black women.

Nancy Boyd Franklin's article, "Black Family Life-Styles: A Lesson in Survival," examines difference from the perspective of ethnic family life-style. She counters the deficit view of the Black family perpetrated by white social scientists, stating that Black women may choose not to participate in the women's movement because they perceive it as anti-family and highly individualistic. She calls our attention to the survival mechanisms of the Black family--a product of extended family networks and a history of oppression--and proposes that these coping strategies serve as a model for other oppressed groups. Citing from her work as a clinical psychologist, she describes the difficulties faced by the Black woman, who must struggle to develop an autonomous self while defining herself in relation to a large family network system.

Elizabeth Higginbotham's "Laid Bare by the System" reiterates the point that the women's movement ignores women of color because it has not understood the realities of racial oppression or the economic exploitation stemming from it. In surveying the experience of various racial ethnic groups, Higginbotham cites a range of features that set women of color off from middle-class white women. Among them are a greater equality between the sexes, the variety of family forms that developed as survival strategies of the oppressed, and the sheer value of the family to such women. She also notes the segregation of the labor force, which means that Black and Hispanic women's distribution in the work force always differs from that of white women. This in turn contributes to the slower, more difficult economic as-

simulation of racial ethnics into U.S. society. Angela Jorge's "Issues of Race and Class in Women's Studies: A Puerto Rican Woman's Thoughts" makes a similar plea that the women's movement, and particularly the discipline of women's studies, take into consideration the separate history and oppression of Puerto Rican women. Otherwise, Jorge warns, there will be two women's movements instead of one.

Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, writing about "Reproduction and Class Divisions among Women," offers a critique of the way many feminists and Marxists have dealt with the intersection of gender and class. Going beyond the proposition that men and women in the same class have conflicting interests, Petchesky proposes that women within the same class may also have opposing interests in the questions of work and reproduction. She suggests that women have an individual class position of their own which is defined partially by each woman's linked decisions, made early in life, either to work most of her life or to have many children. The effects of these decisions are, in turn, mediated by each woman's family-derived class background. The working-class woman who embarks on a life of high fertility and low work-force participation lives through very different experiences than the middle-class woman who makes a similar decision. Different still is the life of the working-class woman who has opted for low fertility and high work-force participation. Petchesky argues that feminists need to understand more clearly this relationship between production and biological reproduction. She goes on to point out that women with high fertility and low work-force participation share one trait: their relative dependence on men and the family. She suggests that it is this group of women who are most responsive to right-wing appeals in defense of the family, since their material interests are so closely tied to it.

Lourdes Beneria and Gita Sen in their paper, "Class and Gender Inequalities and Women's Role in Economic Development: Theoretical and Practical Implications," criticize the economic development literature for its failure to examine the interaction of capital formation, class, and gender relations. Like Petchesky, they stress the fact that a woman's class position structures the meaning of gender for her and may set her in opposition to other women, since class is necessarily an antagonistic relationship. One of the points stressed by the authors is that a class analysis without consideration of gender, or gender analysis without consideration of class, will fail to benefit women. Drawing on the example of rightist women's organization in Chile under Allende, Beneria and Sen offer a particular warning to those

concerned with socialist development: if development plans, however geared toward the working class, fail to address women's particular interests, women will become a potent source of reactionary opposition.

Part IV of this volume, "Control through Institution and Ideology," looks at some specific ways women are controlled and manipulated. Of the six papers, some deal with institutions, such as welfare or the legal system, that implement policy toward women. These policies have built into them assumptions about women's roles, sexuality, class, and race. Other papers in this section deal primarily with ideology. They show the subtle ways in which women are brought to accept images of themselves, usually false and damaging. Ideology is particularly powerful in convincing women to internalize their own control.

Nadine Taub, in "Defining and Combating Sexual Harassment," talks about the ways in which feminists, lawyers, and the courts have begun to define sexual harassment and to develop mechanisms for halting it. Taub, who has the activist viewpoint of a feminist lawyer, shows how sexual harassment itself operates as a form of control over women, by reminding them of their traditional role as sex objects and by stressing their inappropriateness and incompetence in the work place. Taub indicates that the harassment is interwoven with changing male-female relations and shifting ideas about sexual expression. Taub also demonstrates how mechanisms to stop sexual harassment can turn into potential weapons in the hands of white men who prosecute sexual harassment charges against minority or radical men but not against more powerful men.

Bettylou Valentine examines the racism, sexism, and class prejudice against the poor incorporated into the system of public welfare. Her "Women on Welfare: Public Policy and Institutional Racism" traces the development of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. She suggests that the system now functions to reinforce female subordination and to control women's work-force participation. More than 40 percent of AFDC recipients are white, Valentine notes, but the classic image is that of a shiftless Black mother, too lazy to work. Valentine's figures also show the growing poverty of both Blacks and women, which leads her to conclude that poverty and welfare are feminist issues. She suggests short-term goals, such as helping women win the assistance to which they are entitled, but she sees the long-term solution in the provision of adequately paid work for everyone in the society.

Cheryl Townsend Gilkes confronts another derogatory image of Black women. In "From Slavery to Social Welfare: Racism

and the Control of Black Women," Gilkes shows how white culture has punished Black women for their preeminent roles in their families and communities and for their special relationship with Black men. The dominant culture has labeled Black women "deviant," bad mothers, and highly dangerous individuals. In her most extended example, Gilkes cites the notorious Moynihan Report, which articulated and publicized these images at a time when Black women were particularly active in local politics. As a result, Black women have been forced to expend their energy in justifying their activities to Black men as well as to the white world. Nevertheless, Gilkes concludes that Black women still define their major problem as racism. She warns that conservatives are again trying to isolate and contain minority people through an attack on minority women.

Francine Quaglio illustrates the way patriarchal ideals are embedded in Catholic doctrine in her "Religion as an Instrument of Social Control." In spite of its contention that woman, symbolized by the Virgin Mary, is all-powerful, Catholicism actually sees the Virgin, and all mortal women, as dependent, passive, and self-abnegating. Quaglio notes that theology structures reality for believers, so that it is logical that such a theological system will seek to ally itself with "other social forces . . . projecting similar images of control," such as the New Right.

Lillian Robinson analyzes another system of ideas as presented through the media. Her "Women, Media, and the Dialectics of Resistance" goes beyond the usual feminist accusations of media sexism. Although there are still plenty of these sexist images of women around, Robinson says, there have also been shifts and changes; movies and television now offer a broader range of images and ideas about families, women, minorities, and homosexuals. The present problem, she indicates, is more insidious. The media, when they do show these new forms of family and sexual relationship, imply that such things are normal, even commonplace. Women's long struggle to achieve change is thus quietly negated. The women's movement itself is still caricatured, if shown at all. Furthermore, as the media assimilate the sexual revolution, they are showing more explicit sexuality, more violence against women and children, and more female characters whose sole function in the story is sexual. When feminists try to oppose these trends, they find themselves in an intensely contradictory alliance with the Right.

Ellen Willis's article, "The Challenge of Profamily Politics: A Feminist Defense of Sexual Freedom," takes up the theme of feminist antisexual attitudes and sexual repression on the cultural and individual levels. Willis identifies a

tendency in the women's movement she labels "neo-Victorian." Made up of lesbian and straight women, this group categorizes male sexuality as violent and bestial, in contrast to the gentle, supportive, and emotional female variety. Adoption of these stereotypes, Willis suggests, leads many feminists into an unwitting alliance with the Right. She recommends that this theoretical impasse be broken by a feminist reexamination of assumptions about sexuality and sexual liberation. The creation of a true sexual liberation must develop, Willis believes, in a reshaping of male/female relations and in drastically altered child-rearing practices.

Taken together, these essays illuminate and enrich each other, as one writer after another adds her particular perspective to the ongoing process of feminist theory building. While these essays are a beginning, they do not pretend to offer any final solution. Nevertheless, these authors offer strategies and questions for research and organizing. What the articles in this volume succeed in showing is the continued strength and vitality of a movement that, however divided, continues to be willing to examine its own differences and contradictions.

Part I
Historical Parallels

RENATE BRIDENTHAL

Notes toward a Feminist Dialectic (1981)

The contemporary women's movement has often seen itself as organized to resist oppression. The problem with that concept is that it appears to leave the initiative to the oppressor. It overlooks the fact that, historically, oppression has heightened when the ruling group, threatened by initiatives from those it oppresses, has been resistant. Were that not so, we would have political stasis with little change in the levels of exploitation and oppression and the opposition to these. In fact, struggles for liberation result from continuing initiatives, resisted by those whose power they challenge, but also, sadly, by elements within the group seeking liberation. There is external and internal resistance to forward movement and freedom.

The forward movement I mean is that of oppressed groups toward equality. I will argue here that feminism, in particular, is a child of class struggle and has evolved with it on both sides of that struggle. It has often been noted that women are most free to participate in society when there is disruption, such as civil or foreign war. Women on both sides of such conflict, in trying to participate more fully, find themselves both needed and blocked. They become stimulated by that contradiction to feminist insights, even when they seem to be fighting them. However, not until the nineteenth century did feminism become a sustained movement. This was possible thanks to urbanization, geographical mobility, and above all, improved communications. Ideologically, feminism devolved from bourgeois ideology with its assumptions of formal civil equality, yet it was contradicted by bourgeois society with its actual economic, social, and political inequalities. Articulated socialism was fed by the same stream. Thus, both the spur to organized feminism and the means to make it possible became available at the same time, not by coincidence, of course, since capitalist development created both. And although the tides of its organization advance and recede, feminism as a form of awareness and as intention has remained at least latently present since then.

4 Historical Parallels

These notes toward a feminist dialectic are prompted by my current research on German women between the two world wars, a topic always overhung by intimations of fascism ahead. Two thoughts guide my work:

1. What was women's relationship to feminism after they won suffrage? Did feminism die, as some have suggested?
2. What was women's relationship to creeping and successful fascism?

German women are particularly accessible to researchers because Weimar Germany was a highly associational society and many women also organized into groups. I am researching the interaction of organized women's economic interest groups with general national politics in Germany under the Weimar Republic, 1919-1933, up to these groups' dissolution in 1934 under National Socialism. I am finding that women's economic and political organization and their gender self-awareness attended major shifts in the organization of production, that this involved struggle not only with men in the same arena, but also among women of different classes, and that this struggle involved diverse strategies, some of which became self-defeating. Thus, some women's interest groups supported National Socialism, though gender inequality was part of its philosophy and policy.

Between the two world wars, the German economy reorganized drastically under the pressures of international trade competition, reparations payments, and the ambition to become a leading world power once more. Intensified monopolization and nationalization of industry restructured the sex-segregated labor market, already dislocated because of the disproportionate number of male deaths in World War I. Mass consumption created new markets and new distributive forms, such as the department store, with accompanying changes in the nature and number of sales personnel. An inefficient agricultural sector failed to halt rural-urban migration, which added to urban unemployment while creating labor shortages in the countryside.

A major effect of these changes was to relocate women in various jobs, intensifying the economic war between the sexes and its subjective reactions: both a heightened feminism and its opposite, nostalgia for women's return to the domestic sphere. Women's response to their new situation also had a class dimension which became increasingly important under the economic pressures of inflation and depression, with the result that women increasingly expressed the issues that divided them rather than those that might have united them. Another reason for this phenomenon is that the republic ex-

panded suffrage to include women, so an earlier unifying issue was no longer present. In fact, suffrage provided one instrument by which women of different classes expressed their sometimes conflicting interests.

However, even conservative, antifeminist women found themselves, in the course of the continuing class struggle of the 1920s and 1930s, pressing for their interests in various public forums, such as the parliament, chambers of agriculture and commerce, and the press. Women demanded representation, legitimacy, and a public voice. They began to act like feminists, debating strategies of sex-separatist versus sex-integrated political activity, and insisted on their importance as women to the larger social good as they defined it.

In this article, I will advance some theoretical propositions emerging from my empirical research. They pertain to the nature of feminism, which now seems more complex than I used to think.

First, some generalizations about what feminism is not:

1. It is not a theory, in the sense of being a total explanation of human behavior.
2. It is not a position or a program, in the sense of having final, universal, ahistorical goals, though specific programs may sound so.
3. It is not merely a perspective, either, in the sense of being the view from woman's place, though it does include that meaning. Woman's place, and therefore her view, changes in time and place, that is, historically and culturally. It also differs by social class. Thus, we assess each of several past points on the line from a moving point on that line. The perspective requires interpretation.

Secondly, some thoughts on what feminism is:

It is something very obvious, that we have all been saying for over a decade: it is a coming-to-consciousness. However, this coming-to-consciousness has a particular form. That form is of an evolution that is birthed through class struggle, but that advances through a struggle of its own against resistance, both external (such as social barriers, male opposition) and internal (such as psychological barriers, female opposition). Feminism is the growing awareness of boundaries, now perceived as surmountable. It creates opposition, that is, antifeminism, not only to movement, but to the very idea of such an egalitarian perception. Feminism is the consciousness of women as separate selves which women derive from actual activity in other struggles, such

as abolitionism, civil rights, or class conflict, and which becomes articulated as an ideology of gender equality. It is a dependent variable that becomes an independent variable over time. In other words, feminism derives from altered relationships with the social world and then self-consciously aims at further alteration in such relationships.

I am positing feminism as being in a dialectical relationship to the social world. At each encounter, it confronts its resistance, antifeminism, and compels it also to take historical shape. It creates its own articulated opposite in conscious antifeminism. In the ensuing struggle, however, women who join the resistance to feminism also transform their relationship to the social world. By taking public action, they help to break down the very barriers they have chosen to defend. Thus, feminism has grown from a relatively elite movement in the nineteenth century to a much more broadly based movement in the twentieth century with global repercussions. This has happened not just through a trickle-down effect, nor simply through osmosis, accommodation, or any other porous interpretation, but through constant, active struggle against its own negation.

Just as class struggle is continuous, but explodes into overt class conflict at certain historical moments, so feminism has a similar dialectical movement. In between historical moments of articulated programmatic feminism, such as occurred in the second halves of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, feminism as a part of collective consciousness persists, consolidating and integrating its gains, assessing its losses, until new barriers are experienced. Then it emerges again with a freshly articulated program.

Thus women discovered that the vote was not enough. We will discover that the ERA is not enough, as have women in socialist countries where equal rights have long been constitutionally guaranteed. Each new program will have to address the particular historical and cultural situation within which its feminist consciousness comes into being, until a social infrastructure exists that allows women to come to full potential and until the social norm accommodates our life cycle with its reproductive implications as well as it does men's.

The models of dialectical feminism, a process of coming-to-consciousness through struggle, whose very engine is contradiction and resistance, can be derived from the Freudian, the Hegelian, and the Marxian dialectics.

The psychoanalytic model shows struggle in the individual arena. Here, material rising from the unconscious to the conscious mind does so against a strong pull of resistance to the awareness of forbidden desires. Progress in psychoan-

alysis is not smoothly linear, but proceeds with waves of regression, balancing out for long periods in the limbo of half-consciousness. Each of us as feminists experiences similar resistance to full awareness as our fears of responsibility and of retribution confront our desires for full social adulthood. Each of us is one unit in a collective, which collectively undergoes that experience of pushing forward and pulling back.

Hegel's model in the Phenomenology of Mind, analyzes human evolution of consciousness over time, beginning with the conflict-filled relations of slave versus master. According to this view, the enslaved human realizes his own humanity and thus comes to consciousness in two ways: (1) through his labor, which reveals to him his creative self, transforming the natural world into objects for social use, and (2) through his relationship to his master, of whom he is by necessity aware, as he is under the master's power. The master, by contrast, need not labor and need not recognize the separate person or humanity of the slave, since the master regards the slave as a serving appendage of himself. Thus, according to Hegel, human history begins when the slave overthrows his master and continues his journey of coming-to-consciousness as a human being engaging with the natural and social worlds which he continually transforms through interaction with them.

For women, this model of the historical process would have to be further refined to acknowledge the presence of four rather than two parties: the master and mistress, the slave man and the slave woman. The slave woman, then, at the same historical juncture, encounters three other personae, of whom she is by necessity aware, though they are not aware of her separate personhood, for if there is slavery, there will also be patriarchy. She also experiences a double creativity, that of producing and reproducing, of transforming both natural and human material for social ends. Such a model could usefully explain why women today are so conscious of the nuances of oppression and also why, given multiple oppression, the struggle has been so protracted. One could also argue from it, that women's consciousness is the highest of all, encompassing as it does several forms of human relationship and labor.

The Marxian model is historically the most precise, however. It allows us to identify particular historical situations in which both class and gender struggle occur, and to see how they relate to one another. According to this view, major changes in the mode of production alter class relations and sharpen class struggle, leading to transformations in the organization of society and polity that are more com-

mensurate to changes in economic organization, and reflect new power relations. In this process, workers become increasingly conscious of their political role and move to assume full responsibility over production and over the fruits of their labor. In the last century and a half, organized class conflict has been attended by organized gender conflict, but circumstances have determined which of these becomes primary for women. So far, while cross-class alliances have been possible for special issues relating to all women, economic crisis periods have brought class identity to the fore, without, however, destroying an underlying feminist consciousness, which resurfaces at a later time.

I am now proposing that in feminist movements, even the antifeminist opposition by some women becomes part of the overall feminist movement, as its opposite but necessary pole. Thus, paralleling the Marxian view that all history is a history of the working class coming to consciousness and to control over their own lives, so all women's history is the history of feminism, that is, of women coming to consciousness and to control over their own lives. The resistance to that is part of the process, because the struggle itself, more than achievement of any goal, sharpens awareness. This even carries over into arenas in which women struggle against one another on class or feminist issues, for the very act of organized political conflict raises women's consciousness of their powers and of the barriers against expression of those powers and thus assists the advance of feminism.

This may be hard to accept. In one individual's lifetime, resistance of this sort is subjectively experienced as setback. Phyllis Schlafly and Anita Bryant are not our sisters. But this is a short-term view. In the long term, past resistance has been absorbed and the collective consciousness has advanced. Few women now would return the vote or eliminate themselves from higher education, though many resisted those innovations. Twentieth-century women's consciousness transcends these old conflicts, though it retains some resistance to further change, which can only come through new conflict. In our time, a new feminism encounters a new antifeminism, with some unresolved old issues and some new issues. But the twentieth-century movement builds on the nineteenth-century movement, with an intervening period from the 1920s to the 1960s which appeared as social amnesia for feminism, but in which actually gains were integrated, losses assessed, and messages conveyed generationally. The period I have studied, the 1920s and 1930s in Germany, indicated intense class and gender struggles, though the official feminist movement seemed comatose. The lull was digestive; the process continued, to explode again in our generation.

The current crisis of capitalism, with its reorganization of an already sex-segmented labor market and its need to heighten the exploitation of labor, has drawn an increasing proportion of women into the labor force, where their consciousness as workers and specifically as women workers has raised awareness to a new programmatic level of feminism, to a second women's movement. Technological progress and social differentiation have given us options our grandmothers never had--a historical gain--but have further sedimented women toward the bottom of a more differentiated social hierarchy, widening the gap with men--a historical loss. This contradiction has given rise to the subjective experience of relative deprivation, engendering contemporary feminism. In short, it is not merely the experience of constant oppression, but the fruitful and noticeable contradiction of gain and loss, of ambiguously met expectations coming out of previous struggles, that has birthed the modern women's movement. Were there no change, we would experience stasis. Were the change only positive, we would not experience dissatisfaction. Were the change only negative, we would not experience hope or take action. Contradiction is the midwife to movement, and this movement progresses through combat with the resistance against it including that of women and that from within our individual selves, as the Freudian model elucidates. All honest consciousness-raising has shown us our own drag, our sometime refusal to move wholeheartedly into full responsibility. We carry the struggle inside ourselves, and our regressions are not merely stumbling blocks, but part of the advance.

In conclusion, I have argued that feminists and antifeminists are at opposite poles of a shared historical process of feminism, defined as coming-to-consciousness. The inertial middle of unfeminists responds also, lending its mass to whichever force appears preponderant and thus creating the subjective historical experience of social progress or reaction. They are not front-line feminists, but I would include them just the same as part of the collective coming-to-consciousness through internal, not just external, conflict.

A preemptive rejoinder against the charge that this view is too optimistic: it is not an attempt to gauge the future. We are on a frontier, and no pioneer can know what lies beyond. Indeed, the fear of that is what creates resistance against further movement. Here I am merely suggesting a way of understanding the past, the historical process already behind us. We can trace an interrupted feminism, whose history we are now reconstructing on a more conscious plane than our ancestors. As Robert Burton said in The Anatomy of Melancholy, we see further, because we stand on the shoulders of giants.

JUDITH R. WALKOWITZ

Male Vice and Female Virtue: Feminism and the Politics of Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain (1980)

Phil Donahue: You're not fearful of being looked down upon as a bunch of old-fashioned fuddy-duddies who don't understand our Constitution and the First Amendment?

Susan Brownmiller: Well, we know we're not old-fashioned fuddy-duddies. We're radical feminists, so I don't think they can accuse us of being old-fashioned; some people think we're too new-fashioned.

Donahue: But you understand--

Brownmiller: --I think that words like purity, morality, and decency are very nice words. I wish that the women's movement would reclaim those words.

Brownmiller's disclaimer aside (1), the radical feminist attack on commercial sex is old-fashioned; it has its roots in earlier feminist campaigns against male vice and the double standard. In this essay, I will outline some of the historical precedents for the current feminist attack on commercial sex, as represented by the Women Against Pornography campaign (2). Past generations of feminists attacked prostitution, pornography, white slavery, and homosexuality as manifestations of undifferentiated male lust. These campaigns were brilliant organizing drives that stimulated grass-roots organizations and mobilized women not previously brought into the political arena. The vitality of the women's suffrage movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be understood without reference to the revivalistic quality of these antivice campaigns, which often ran parallel with the struggle for the vote. By demanding women's right to protect their own persons against

male sexual abuse and ultimately extending their critique of sexual violence to the private sphere of the family, they achieved some permanent gains for women.

Nonetheless, judging by the goals stated by feminists themselves--to protect and empower women--these campaigns were often self-defeating. A libertarian defense of prostitutes found no place in the social purity struggle; all too often prostitutes were objects of purity attacks. Although the early feminists succeeded in starting a discourse on sex and mobilized an offensive against male vice, they lost control of the movement as it diversified. In part this outcome was the result of certain contradictions in these feminists' attitudes; in part it reflected their impotence to reshape the world according to their own image.

In Great Britain, explicitly feminist moral crusades against male vice began with a struggle against state regulation of prostitution (3). Parliament passed the first of three statutes providing for the sanitary inspection of prostitutes in specific military depots in southern England and Ireland in 1864. Initially this first Contagious Diseases Act, as it was obliquely entitled, aroused little attention inside or outside of governmental circles. Public opposition to regulation did, however, surface in the 1870s, when a coalition of middle-class evangelicals, feminists, and radical workingmen challenged the acts as immoral and unconstitutional and called for their repeal. The participation of middle-class women in repeal efforts shocked many contemporary observers, who regarded this female rebellion as a disturbing sign of the times. The suffrage movement was in its infancy, and respectable commentators looked on with horror and fascination as middle-class ladies mounted public platforms across the country to denounce the acts as a "sacrifice of female liberties" to the "slavery of men's lust" and to describe in minute detail the "instrumental rape" of the internal exam (4). One troubled member of Parliament was moved to remark to Josephine Butler, the feminist repeal leader, "We know how to manage any other opposition in the House or in the country, but this is very awkward for us--this revolt of women. It is quite a new thing; what are we to do with such an opposition as this?" (5).

Under the leadership of Josephine Butler, the Ladies National Association (LNA) was founded in late 1869 as a separatist feminist organization. A Ladies Manifesto was issued, which denounced the acts as a blatant example of class and sex discrimination. The manifesto further argued that the acts not only deprived poor women of their constitutional rights and forced them to submit to a degrading internal examination, but officially sanctioned a double standard of

sexual morality that justified male sexual access to a class of "fallen" women and penalized women for engaging in the same vice as men (6).

The campaign also drew thousands of women into the political arena for the first time, by encouraging them to challenge male centers of power--such as the police, Parliament, and the medical and military establishments. Rallying to the defense of members of their own sex, these women opposed the sexual and political prerogatives of men. They rejected the prevailing social view of "fallen" women as pollutants of men and depicted them instead as women who had been invaded by men's bodies, men's laws, and that "steel penis," the speculum (7).

Mid-Victorian feminists treated prostitution as the end result of the artificial constraints placed on women's social and economic activity: inadequate wages and restrictions of women's industrial employment forced some women on to the streets, where they took up the "best paid industry"--prostitution (8). They also saw prostitution as a paradigm of the female condition, a symbol of women's powerlessness and sexual victimization (9). Feminists realized that the popular sentimentalization of "female influence" and motherhood only thinly masked an older contempt and distrust for women as "The Sex," as sexual objects to be bought and sold by men (10). The treatment of prostitutes under the acts epitomized this pervasive and underlying misogyny. "Sirs," declared Butler, "you cannot hold us in honour so long as you drag our sisters in the mire. As you are unjust and cruel to them, you will become unjust and cruel to us" (11).

As "mothers" and "sisters," feminists asserted their right to defend prostitutes, thereby invoking two different kinds of authority relationships. A mother's right to defend "daughters" was only partially an extension and continuation of women's traditional role within the family. It was also a political device, aimed at subverting and superseding patriarchal authority: it gave mothers, not fathers, the right to control sexual access to the daughters. But it also sanctioned an authority relationship between older, middle-class women and young working-class women that, although caring and protective, was also hierarchical and custodial. In other contexts, feminist repealers approached prostitutes on a more egalitarian basis, as sisters, albeit fallen ones, whose individual rights deserved to be respected and who, if they sold their bodies on the streets, had the right to do so unmolested by the police (12).

This was the radical message of the repeal campaign. It was linked to an enlightened view of prostitution as an ir-

regular and temporary livelihood for adult working-class women (13). The regulation system, feminists argued, not prostitution per se, doomed inscribed women to a life of sin by publicly stigmatizing them and preventing them from finding alternative respectable employment. "Among the poor," declared Josephine Butler, the "boundary lines between the virtuous and the vicious" were "gradually and imperceptibly shaded off" so that it was "impossible to affix a distinct name and infallibly assign" prostitutes to an outcast category (14). In fact, the young women brought under the acts lived as part of a distinct female subgroup in common lodging houses among a heterogeneous community of the casual laboring poor. They were both victims and survivors. The "unskilled daughters of the unskilled classes" (15), their lives were of a piece with the large body of laboring women who had to eke out a precarious living in the urban job market and for whom sexual coercion was but one form of exploitation to which they were subjected. But prostitutes were not simply victims of male sexual abuse: they could act in their own defense, both individually and collectively, and prostitution itself often constituted a "refuge from uneasy circumstances" (16) for young women who had to live outside the family and who had to choose among a series of unpleasant alternatives.

Through their agitation, feminist repealers established a political arena that made it possible for prostitutes to resist, "to show the officers," in the words of one registered woman, "that we have some respect for our own person" (17). LNA leaders and their agents descended upon subjected districts like Plymouth and Southampton, agitated among registered prostitutes, and tried to persuade them to resist the regulation system.

Political expedience also pulled feminists in a different direction. On the whole, the discussion of voluntary prostitution received far less publicity than exposés of innocent girls forced down into the ranks of prostitution by the "spy police" (18). Feminist leaders used sensational stories of false entrapment or instrumental rape to appeal to working-class radicals and middle-class evangelicals alike.

Furthermore, feminist propaganda was still constrained by an extremely limited vocabulary constructed around the theme of female victimization. By mystifying prostitution and women's move into it, this propaganda imperfectly educated the LNA rank and file on the "politics of prostitution."

A politics of motherhood also structured the cross-class alliance between feminists and radical workingmen within the repeal camp. As mothers, LNA leaders called upon the sons

of the people to join with them in a rebellion against the evil fathers, clearly presuming that their working-class allies would follow their political lead. "Our working men . . . are not unwilling to follow the gentle guidance of a grave and educated lady" or to "devote the whole influence of their vote . . . when the right chord in their hearts and consciences is touched by a delicate hand" (19). Ironically, feminists encouraged workingmen to assume a custodial role toward "their" women and frequently reminded them of their patriarchal responsibilities as defenders of the family. One LNA poster, for instance, warned "Working Men!" to "Look to the protection of your wives and daughters. They are at the mercy of the police where these Acts are in force" (20). Propaganda of this sort aroused popular indignation against regulation, but it also buttressed a patriarchal stance and a sexual hierarchy within the organized working class that feminists had vigorously challenged in other contexts. At the same time that Butler and her friends were trying to build bridges with the organized working class, they had to struggle with their new allies over proposals to restrict female employment. To feminists, a defense of free female labor and an attack on the "slavery" of prostitution were part of the same work, but working-class leaders saw it otherwise. They countered libertarian and feminist arguments against protective legislation with a defense of the "family wage" and with the view that prostitution resulted not from female unemployment but from the vitiating of the working-class family when adult male labor had to compete with the cheap labor of women and children (21). Feminists knew they were treading on dangerous ground here. Despite her strong feelings against protective legislation, Butler hesitated from pressing the point at the annual meeting of the Trades Union Congress. "I think it might be wise for us not to raise the question of the restrictions on female labour in the Trades Congress, this year. . . . It is such a serious question for the future, that we must try to avoid that awful thing--a real breach between women and workingmen" (22).

LNA leaders did not entirely ignore their female constituency in the working class, but they tended to see working women principally as objects of concern than as active participants in the struggle. Although working-class women attended LNA lectures in great numbers and loudly voiced their indignation against "those blackguard Acts" (23), they were not effectively organized into their own repeal associations (24). This failure was due in part to the indifferent organizing efforts and the elitism of the LNA and in part to the practical difficulty of organizing working-class women

given their economic dependence and exclusion from the political culture (25).

Although capable of enunciating a radical critique of prostitution, feminist repealers still felt ambivalent about prostitutes as women who manipulated their sexuality as a commodity. And although they had joined with radical workingmen in an attack against elite male privilege, this cross-class, cross-gender alliance was fraught with contradictions. By and large these anxieties and contradictions remained submerged during the libertarian struggle against state regulation, but they soon surfaced in the more repressive campaign against white slavery.

After the suspension of the acts in 1883, Butler and her circle turned their attention to the agitation against the foreign "traffic in women" and the entrapment of children into prostitution in London. When Parliament refused to pass a bill raising the age of consent and punishing traffickers in vice, Butler and Catherine Booth of the Salvation Army approached W.T. Stead of the Pall Mall Gazette for assistance. The result was the "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," published in the summer of 1885 (26).

The "Maiden Tribute" was one of the most successful pieces of scandal journalism published in Britain during the nineteenth century. By using sexual scandal to sell newspapers to a middle-class and working-class readership, Stead ushered in a new era of tabloid sensationalism and cross-class prurience.

In lurid detail, the "Maiden Tribute" documented the sale of "five pound" virgins to aristocratic old rakes, graphically describing the way the "daughters of the people" had been "snared, trapped and outraged either when under the influence of drugs or after a prolonged struggle in a locked room" (27). The series had an electrifying effect on public opinion: "By the third installment mobs were rioting at the Pall Mall Gazette offices, in an attempt to obtain copies of the paper" (28). An enormous public demonstration was held in Hyde Park (estimated at 250,000) to demand the passage of legislation raising the age of consent for girls from thirteen to sixteen. Reformers of all shades were represented on the dozen or so demonstration platforms. For one brief moment, feminists and personal rights advocates joined with Anglican bishops and socialists to protest the aristocratic corruption of young innocents (29).

Recent research delineates the vast discrepancy between lurid journalistic accounts and the reality of prostitution. Evidence of widespread entrapment of British girls in London and abroad is slim. During the 1870s and 1880s, officials and reformers uncovered a light traffic in women between

Britain and the continent. All but a few of the women enticed into licensed brothels in Antwerp and Brussels had been prostitutes in England. Misled by promises of a life of luxury and ease as part of a glamorous demimonde, they were shocked and horrified at the conditions imposed upon them in licensed state brothels, a sharp contrast to what they had experienced in England. In most cases, then, it was the conditions of commercial sex and not the fact that deeply upset the women (30). Stead's discussion of child prostitution contained similar misrepresentations and distortions. There undoubtedly were some child prostitutes on the streets of London, Liverpool, and elsewhere; but most of these young girls were not victims of false entrapment, as the vignettes in the "Maiden Tribute" suggested; the girls were on the streets because the alternatives were so limited. "Since sexuality in western cultures is so mystified," notes Gayle Rubin, "the wars over it are often fought at oblique angles, aimed at phony targets, conducted with misplaced passions, and are highly, intensely, symbolic" (31). The "Maiden Tribute" episode strikingly illustrates both this mystification and its political consequences. Shifting the cultural image of the prostitute to the innocent child victim encouraged new, more repressive, political initiatives over sex.

Why then did feminist reformers endorse this crusade? Why did they ally with repressive moralists and antisuffragists who were as anxious to clear the streets of prostitutes as to protect young girls from evil procurers and vicious aristocrats? Like the image of the instrumental violation of registered women under the earlier acts, the story of aristocratic corruption of virgins "generated a sense of outrage with which a wide spectrum of public opinion found itself in sympathy" (32). Feminist repealers undoubtedly believed they could manipulate this popular anger for their own purposes, first to secure the full repeal of the acts (they were finally removed from the statute books in 1886) and then to launch a sustained assault on the double standard. They were also attracted to the radical message in Stead's exposé of aristocratic vice. The disreputable performance of MPs during the debates over the age of consent confirmed feminists' worse suspicions about "the vicious upper classes." During the debates, old rakes like Cavendish Bentinck treated prostitution as a necessary and inevitable evil, and others openly defended sexual access to working-class girls as a time-honored prerogative of gentlemen.

Feminists felt obliged to redress the sexual wrongs done to poor girls by men of a superior class, but they registered the same repugnance and ambivalence toward incorrigi-

ble girls as they had earlier toward unrepentant prostitutes. For them as well as for more repressive moralists, the desire to protect young working-class girls masked impulses to control the girls' sexuality, which in turn reflected their desire to impose a social code that stressed female adolescent dependency. This code was more in keeping with middle-class notions of girlhood than with the lived reality of the exposed and unsupervised daughters of the laboring poor who were on the streets. Respectable working-class parents certainly shared many of the same sentiments toward female adolescents. Despite the fact that they often sent their daughters out to work at thirteen, they nonetheless took pains to restrict their social independence and sexual knowledge and experience (33).

Another subtheme of feminist discussion was that young females of all classes were vulnerable to male sexual violence. "There was no place of absolute safety, neither in streets, nor parks, nor railways, nor in the houses, where the procuresses were often known to enter as charwomen, nor indeed in the very churches and chapels," one speaker announced at a meeting of middle-class women (34). Although female victimization was a sincere concern of feminists, it also served diverse political interests. Whereas feminists identified the "outlawed political condition of women" (35) as the root cause of the crimes exposed in the "Maiden Tribute," antifeminists used the occasion to activate men into a new crusade to protect rather than emancipate women--a crusade that was, at times, overtly misogynist. "Let us appeal to their manhood, to their chivalry, to their reverence for their own mothers and sisters--to protect the maidens of the land," declaimed one speaker, who rapidly acknowledged that the objects of such manly solicitude--"those poor, silly, weak children who know not the frightful ruin they are bringing on their lives"--were not worthy of the ideals they had inspired (36).

What was the outcome of the "Maiden Tribute" affair? The public furor forced the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, a particularly nasty and pernicious piece of omnibus legislation. It raised the age of consent for girls from thirteen to sixteen, but also gave police far greater summary jurisdiction over poor working-class women and children--a trend that Butler and her circle had always opposed. It also contained a clause making indecent acts between consenting male adults a crime, thus forming the basis of legal prosecution of male homosexuals in Britain until 1967. An antiaristocratic bias may have prompted the inclusion of this clause (reformers accepted its inclusion but did not themselves propose it), as homosexuality was associ-

ated with the corruption of working-class youth by the same upper-class profligates who on other occasions were thought to buy the services of young girls (37).

Despite the public outcry against corrupt aristocrats and international traffickers, the clauses of the new bill were mainly enforced against working-class women and regulated adult rather than youthful sexual behavior. Between 1890 and 1914, the systematic repression of lodging house brothels was carried out in almost every major city in Great Britain. In many locales, legal repression dramatically affected the structure and organization of prostitution. Prostitutes were uprooted from their neighborhoods and had to find lodgings in other areas of the city. Their activity became more covert and furtive. Cut off from any other sustaining relationship, they were forced to rely increasingly on pimps for emotional security as well as protection against legal authorities. Indeed, with the wide prevalence of pimps in the early twentieth century, prostitution shifted from a female- to a male-dominated trade. Further, there now existed a greater number of third parties with a strong interest in prolonging women's stay on the streets. In these and other respects, the 1885 act drove a wedge between prostitutes and the poor working-class community. It effectively destroyed the brothel as a family industry and center of a specific female subculture, further undermined the social and economic autonomy of prostitutes, and increasingly rendered them social outcasts (38).

But prostitutes were not the only objects of reformist attacks. In the wake of Stead's "shocking revelations," the National Vigilance Association (NVA) was formed. First organized to ensure the local enforcement of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the NVA soon turned its attention to burning obscene books and attacking music halls, theaters, and nude paintings. It condemned the works of Balzac, Zola, and Rabelais as obscene and successfully prosecuted their British distributors; it attacked birth control literature and advertisements for "female pills" (abortifacient drugs) on the same grounds. To these moral crusaders, "pornographic literature," thus broadly defined, was a vile expression of the same "undifferentiated male lust" (39) that ultimately led to homosexuality and prostitution. The fact that pornography was now available in inexpensive editions undoubtedly heightened middle-class concern over the emergence of a degenerate and unsupervised urban popular culture (40).

Although the social purity movement served middle-class interests, it is a common error among historians to assume that working-class support for social purity was ephemeral or that both before and after the summer of 1885 social pur-

ity remained an almost exclusively middle-class movement. Middle-class evangelicals may have predominated in the NVA, but the values of social purity seem to have penetrated certain portions of the working class.

By the mid-eighties, Ellice Hopkins, the female pioneer in social purity, had already organized hundreds of male chastity leagues and female rescue societies. Besides counseling working-class mothers on how to avoid incest in their homes, she regularly delivered speeches on purity before meetings of workingmen. She and others successfully recruited thousands of respectable workingmen throughout the nation into White Cross armies, who were dedicated to promoting the single standard of chastity and attacking public and private vice. The prescriptive literature distributed by social purity groups also seems to have influenced the child-rearing practices of the time. Edwardian working-class parents were notable for the strict schedules, puritanical treatment of masturbation, and severe restrictions they placed on their teenage daughters' social and sexual behavior. Although the late-Victorian and Edwardian years represented a germination period for the formulation of a "new sexuality," the available facts about sexuality--the general decline in both venereal disease and prostitution, the high age of marriage and low illegitimacy rates, the apparently limited use of contraceptives among the working classes--seem to support the hypothesis that "sexual restraint" was indeed "spreading down through society" (41).

But sexual restraint could also serve women's interests. In a culture where women were often the victims of sexual coercion yet blamed for the crimes committed against them (42), and where it was difficult even to conceive of female sexual agency as long as women lacked agency in other vital areas, defenders of women's rights could and did regard the doctrine of female passionlessness and male sexual self-control as a significant advance over traditional assumptions of a dangerous and active female sexuality (43). Whatever its drawbacks, this sexual strategy resulted in some permanent gains for women: it made it possible for women to name incest and rape as crimes against their person (rather than as crimes against the property of men). Most particularly, through the Incest Act of 1908, young women were offered legal recourse against sexual violence by male family members for the first time (44). By insisting that women had the right to refuse the sexual demands of husbands, feminists working within the social purity framework laid the foundation for a new egalitarian code of marital relations still to be fully realized in the contemporary era (45). In feminist hands, desexualization could empower women to at-

tack the customary prerogatives of men; it could also validate a new social role for women outside of the heterosexual family.

Since middle-class women elaborated these ideas, it is hard to know what working-class women thought of them. Laboring women did participate in mothers' meetings, and they may have found the moral authority imparted to desexualized women attractive, as it reinforced the power of mothers and female collectivities (46). In the dense urban neighborhoods of late-Victorian and Edwardian England, where female neighbors shared space and services and female relatives sustained the bonds of kinship, social and sexual norms were often articulated at street level through hierarchical female networks. The mothers of Plymouth, Lancaster, and Salford, for example, enforced incest taboos, socialized their daughters into a fatalistic and dependent femininity, and increasingly shunned "bad women" (often at the instigation of purity agencies) (47).

On the whole, the activities of neighborhood matriarchs sustained social hierarchies and divisions, particularly along generational and sex lines (48). Female sexual respectability in these neighborhoods was purchased at a high price, with little promise of social independence. The "new woman" option was simply not available to working-class daughters: they could not aspire to a future outside of heterosexual domesticity. For working-class women, such a future could only forebode a life of hardship and homelessness. As a result, the contradictory nature of the power imparted to women through passionlessness appears even more apparent for working-class women. However much such a doctrine mitigated the powerlessness of dependent wives, it left working-class women alienated from and ignorant of their own sexuality and body and unable to control their reproduction--a disabling condition, to judge from the depressing letters collected by the Women's Cooperative Guild in their volume, Maternity (49).

Social purity presented workingmen with a different set of implications and opportunities; it could bolster their authority as responsible patriarchs if they were willing to submit themselves to a certain domestic ideology. In general, sexual respectability became the hallmark of the respectable workingman, anxious to distance himself from the "bestiality" of the casual laboring poor at a time when increased pressure was being placed on the respectable working class to break their ties with outcast groups. The social purity movement itself provided an avenue of social mobility for some men like William Coote, a former compositor who became the national secretary of the NVA. Changing employment pat-

terns also seem to have reinforced patriarchal tendencies among skilled sectors of the working class by the end of the century, as the proportion of married women working outside the home declined and the family wage for male workers became an essential demand of trade unions. In this context, social purity--which called upon men to protect and control their women--may have served as the ideological corollary of the family wage, morally legitimatizing the prerogatives of patriarchy inside and outside the family (50).

What was the subsequent relationship between feminism and social purity? Initially, prominent feminists filled many of the committee positions of the NVA, but this connection was short-lived. Butler and her circle resigned when the prurient and repressive direction of the NVA became apparent. Throughout the late eighties and nineties, Butlerites warned their workers to "beware" of the repressive methods of the social purity societies who were "ready to accept and endorse any amount of coercive and degrading treatment of their fellow creatures in the fatuous belief that you can oblige human beings to be moral by force" (51). But their warnings were too late. The new social purity movement had passed them by, while absorbing a goodly number of the LNA rank and file (52).

Moderate suffragists like Millicent Fawcett and Elizabeth Blackwell remained within the ranks of social purity, and feminist purity reformers, most notably Laura Ormiston Chant, were prominent in the attack on theaters and immoral public entertainments. Feminists still maintained a voice within social purity after 1885, but they were in constant danger of being engulfed by positions far removed from their own. To be sure, feminist repealers had earlier faced a similar dilemma, but the problem of social-purity feminists was compounded by the fact that social purity was by no means an explicitly feminist or libertarian cause, nor was it dominated by a forceful feminist leader like Josephine Butler. The reactionary implications of social purity, for feminists and prostitutes alike, are illuminated by the public controversy surrounding the Jack the Ripper murders.

In the autumn of 1888, the attention of the "classes" as well as the "masses" was riveted on a series of brutal murders of prostitutes residing in lodging houses in the Whitechapel area of East London (53). Public response to the murders was widespread and diverse, but the people who mobilized over the murders were almost exclusively male.

An army of West End men, fascinated by the murders and bent on hunting the Ripper, invaded the East End (54). Meanwhile, a half-dozen male vigilance committees were set up in Whitechapel--by Toynbee Hall, by the Jewish community, by

the radical and socialist workingmen's clubs (55). These male patrols were organized to protect women, but they also constituted surveillance of the unrespectable poor and of low-life women in particular. They were explicitly modeled on existing purity organizations already active in the area that had helped to close down two hundred brothels in the East End in the year before the Ripper murders (56). As we have seen, the message of social purity to men was mixed: it demanded that men control their own sexuality, but it gave them power to control the sexuality of women as well, since it called upon them to protect their women and to repress brothels and streetwalkers.

These generalizations are borne out by the Ripper episode, when men ostensibly out to hunt the Ripper often harassed women on the streets while husbands threatened wives with "ripping" in their homes (57). Female vulnerability extended well beyond the "danger zone" of Whitechapel. Throughout London, respectable women, afraid to venture out alone at night, were effectively placed under "house arrest" and were dependent on male protection. Despite the public outcry against the "male monster" "who stalks the streets of London" (58) in search of fallen women, public attention inevitably reverted to the degraded conditions of the Whitechapel victims themselves. "The degraded and depraved lives of the women," observed Canon Barnett of Toynbee Hall in the Times, were more "appalling than the actual murders" (59). Men like Barnett finally manipulated public opinion and consolidated it behind closing down lodging houses where the murdered victims once lived and replacing them with artisan dwellings. Through the surveillance of vigilance committees, the murders helped to intensify repressive activities already underway in the Whitechapel area and to hasten the reorganization of prostitution in the East End (60).

During the Ripper manhunt, feminists were unable to mobilize any counteroffensive against widespread male intimidation of women. Josephine Butler and others did express concern that the uproar over the murders would lead to the repression of brothels and to subsequent homelessness of women; but these were isolated interventions in an overwhelmingly male-dominated debate.

Although some feminists still maintained a national presence in the purity crusade, all in all, by the late 1880s feminists had lost considerable authority in the public discussion over sex to a coalition of male professional experts, conservative churchmen, and social purity advocates. On the other hand, social purity permanently left its imprint on the women's movement through the First World War. Both the

sixteen-year campaign against state regulation and later sexual scandals such as the "Maiden Tribute" ingrained the theme of the sexual wrongs perpetrated against women by men on later feminist consciousness. After the 1880s, the "women's revolt" became "a revolt that is Puritan and not Bohemian. It is an uprising against the tyranny of organized intemperance, impurity, mammonism, and selfish motives" (61).

On the whole, this attack on male dominance and male vice involved no positive assertion of female sexuality. Although a small minority of feminists like Olive Schreiner and Stella Browne were deeply interested in the question of female pleasure, they were far removed from the feminist mainstream, where the public discussion of sexuality and male dominance was still couched within the terms of a "separate sphere" ideology, implying that women were moral, "spiritual" creatures who needed to be protected from animalistic "carnal" men and demanding, in the words of Christabel Pankhurst, the Edwardian militant suffragist, "votes for women" and "chastity" for men (62). Moreover, the obsession with male vice again sidetracked early twentieth-century feminists into another crusade against white slavery (1912), while obscuring the economic basis of prostitution. It even prompted the most progressive women of the day to advocate raising the age of consent to twenty-one. Finally, it led to repressive public policies. Commenting on the enforcement of the White Slavery Act of 1912, Sylvia Pankhurst remarked, "It is a strange thing that the latest Criminal Amendment Act, which was passed ostensibly to protect women, is being used almost exclusively to punish women" (63).

These then are the early historical links between feminism and repressive crusades against prostitution, pornography, and homosexuality. Begun as a libertarian struggle against the state sanction of male vice, the repeal campaign helped to spawn a hydra-headed assault on nonmarital, nonreproductive sexuality. The struggle against state regulation evolved into a movement that used the instruments of the state for repressive purposes.

It may be misleading to interpret the effects of these later crusades solely as blind, repressive attacks on sexuality; in many ways they clarified and identified whole new areas of sexuality. According to Michel Foucault, this elaboration of new sexualities was a strategy for exercising power in society. By ferreting out new areas of illicit sexual activity and sometimes defining them into existence, a new "technology of power" was created that facilitated control over an ever-widening circle of human activity (64). But power is not simply immanent in society; it is deployed

by specific historical agents, who have access to varying sources and levels of power (65).

The reality of a hierarchy of power severely impeded feminists' efforts to use purity crusades to defend and empower women. Rescue work, mothers' meetings, and moral suasion by no means carried the same authority as a morals police under the Contagious Diseases Acts, male vigilance committees, or an emerging "science of sexuality" controlled by male professionals. The feminist challenge to male sexual prerogatives was a major historic development, one necessary precondition for the ideology of egalitarian heterosexual relations. But when feminists tried to use the powers of the state to protect women, particularly prostitutes who had been the original objects of their pity and concern, feminists usually came face to face with their own impotence.

What are the moral lessons of these moral crusades? If there is one, it is that commercial sex as a locus of sexual violence against women is a hot and dangerous issue for feminists. In their defense of prostitutes and concern to protect women from male sexual aggression, feminists were limited by their own class bias and by their continued adherence to a "separate sphere" ideology that stressed women's purity, moral supremacy, and domestic virtues. Moreover, they lacked the cultural and political power to reshape the world according to their own image. Although they tried to set the standards of sexual conduct, they did not control the instruments of state that ultimately enforced these norms. There were times, particularly during the antiregulationist campaign, when feminists were able to dominate and structure the public discourse on sex and to arouse popular female anger at male sexual license. Yet this anger was easily subverted into repressive campaigns against male vice and sexual variation, controlled by men and conservative interests whose goals were antithetical to the values and ideals of feminism.

This leaves us with a central dilemma: how to devise an effective strategy to combat sexual violence and humiliation in our society, where violent misogyny seems so deeply rooted and where the media continue to amplify the terror of male violence, as it did during the sexual scandals of the 1880s, convincing women that they are helpless victims. We must struggle to live our lives freely without humiliation and violence. But we have to be aware of the painful contradictions of our sexual strategy, not only for the sex workers who still regard commercial sex as the "best paid industry" available to them but also for ourselves as feminists. We must take care not to play into the hands of the New Right or the Moral Majority, who are only too delighted to

cast women in the roles of victims requiring male protection and control and who desire to turn feminist protest into a politics of repression (66).

Notes

1. "Phil Donahue Show," 18 July 1979, Multimedia Program Productions, Chicago. An earlier version of this essay first appeared as a review essay, "The Politics of Prostitution," Signs 6 (Autumn 1980):123-35. This essay will also appear in History Workshop Journal (Spring 1982) and in Politics of Sexuality, ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, forthcoming 1983). I would like to thank Amy Swerdlow, Sharon Thompson, Barbara Taylor, and Ellen Dubois for their critical suggestions and advice.
2. Writings supporting the Women Against Pornography position are included in Take Back the Night: Women on Pornography, ed. Laura Lederer (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1980). Kathleen Barry identifies the British feminist mobilization against state regulation as the first wave of protest leading to the current campaign against pornography and "sexual slavery" in Female Sexual Slavery (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979), ch. 2. Two useful critiques of Women Against Pornography include Ellen Willis, "Lust Horizons: Is the Women's Movement Pro-Sex?" Village Voice, 17 June 1981; Deidre English, Amber Hollibaugh, and Gayle Rubin, "Talking Sex: A Conversation on Sexuality and Feminism," Socialist Review (1981):43-62.
3. Edward Bristow, Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain since 1700 (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1977); Deborah Gorham, "The 'Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' Reexamined. Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late-Victorian England," Victorian Studies 21 (Spring 1978):353-69; Paul McHugh, Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980); Judith R. Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Jeffrey Weeks, Sex, Politics and Society (London: Quartet Books, 1981), ch. 5.
4. Mrs. Kell of Southampton, quoted in Walkowitz, Prostitution, p. 170; National League Journal (London), 1 September 1879.

5. An M.P. to Josephine Butler, quoted in Josephine Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir, ed. George W. Johnson and Lucy Johnson (Bristol: Arrowsmith, 1913), p. 90.
6. "Women's Protest," quoted in Josephine Butler, Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade (London: H. Marshall & Son, 1911), pp. 9, 10; Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard," Journal of the History of Ideas 20 (1959):195-216.
7. Thanks to Martha Vicinus and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg for these perceptions.
8. Josephine Butler to Mary Priestman, 4 May 1874, no. 3327, Butler Collection, Fawcett Library, London.
9. Mary Hume Rothery, A Letter Addressed to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., and the Other Members of Her Majesty's Government and of Both Houses of Parliament, Touching the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1866 and 1869, and Their Proposed Extension to the Civil Population (Manchester, 1870), p. 18. Sally Mitchell notes the changing definition and social identity of the "fallen woman" in women's fiction, from an object of charity in the 1840s and 1850s to a reader substitute in the 1860s in "Sentiment and Suffering: Women's Recreational Reading in the 1860s," Victorian Studies 21 (1977):29-45.
10. Nancy F. Cott, "Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology, 1790-1850," Signs 4 (1978):219-36; Thomas, "Double Standard," pp. 213, 214.
11. Josephine Butler, quoted in Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, p. 83.
12. The Royal Commission as a Court of Justice. Being an Examination of the Declaration that "The Police are Not Chargeable with Any Abuse of Their Authority" (London, 1871).
13. Ibid.; Judith R. Walkowitz, "The Making of an Outcast Group: Prostitutes and Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Plymouth and Southampton," in A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), pp. 72-93.
14. Butler, On the Moral Reclaimability of Prostitutes (London: privately published, 1870).
15. Abraham Flexner, Prostitution in Europe (New York: Century Co., 1914), p. 6.
16. Downward Paths: An Inquiry into the Causes Which Contribute to the Making of the Prostitute, with a foreword by A. Maude Royden (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1916), p. 48.

17. Registered prostitute to Josephine Butler, quoted in Walkowitz, Prostitution, p. 202.
18. Repealers referred to the plainclothes officers of the Metropolitan Police force, working under the Contagious Disease Acts, as "spy police."
19. "Seventh Annual Report of the LNA, . . . 1876," LNA Reports, 1870-1886, Butler Collection, Fawcett Library, London.
20. "Working Men!" LNA poster displayed during the Colchester by-election of 1870, H.J. Wilson Collection, Fawcett Library.
21. See the exchange between Robert Applegarth and Josephine Butler, P.P. 1871, Question 13, 114-15. See also Applegarth's speech at "Great Mass Meeting in the Corn Exchange, Leeds," Shield, 21 October 1871.
22. Josephine Butler to Mary Priestman, 5 December 1876, Butler Collection, Fawcett Library, London.
23. "Josephine Butler," Woman's Dreadnought, 24 October 1914.
24. York was a notable exception. "Twelfth Annual Report . . . of the LNA, 1881," LNA Reports.
25. For a fuller discussion, see Walkowitz, Prostitution, pp. 143-46.
26. "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," pts. I-IV, Pall Mall Gazette, 6, 7, 8, 10 July 1885; Gorham, "Maiden Tribute," and Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, are the best secondary discussions of the scandal.
27. Gorham, "Maiden Tribute," p. 354.
28. Bristow, Vice and Vigilance.
29. For instance, George Bernard Shaw and Olive Schreiner, whose ideas of sexual hygiene and female sexual pleasure were at odds with evangelical moralists, were also drawn into the "Maiden Tribute" agitation. See Ruth First and Ann Scott, Olive Schreiner (New York: A. Deutsch, 1980), pp. 155-56; Frederick Whyte, The Life of W.T. Stead (London: Cape, 1925), 1:175.
30. Gorham, "Maiden Tribute," pp. 376-78.
31. Gayle Rubin, unpublished essay, 1981.
32. Gorham, "Maiden Tribute," p. 355.
33. Gorham, "Maiden Tribute," pp. 372, 373; Walkowitz, Prostitution, p. 249. For reformers, "girlhood" was a stage in life marked by dependency, not any specific psychosexual development. Accordingly, debates over the age of consent rarely included reference to the actual sexual development of the girls they were seeking to protect. The age of consent was arbitrary; indeed, many reformers wanted to raise it to eighteen, some to twenty-one. Moreover, many of the same assumptions about protecting and controlling female adolescents

- ultimately led to the definition and incarceration of sexually active girls as "sex delinquents."
34. "The Crusade against the Crimes of Modern Babylon," Pall Mall Gazette, 23 July 1885.
 35. Mary Priestman to the editor, Pall Mall Gazette, 23 July 1885.
 36. "A Crusade to Men," Pall Mall Gazette, 24 July 1885.
 37. Jeffrey Weeks, Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present (London: Quartet Books, 1977), pp. 18-20.
 38. See Walkowitz, Prostitution, pp. 210-13.
 39. Weeks, Coming Out, p. 18.
 40. Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, p. 201. Similarly, purity reformers were concerned about the pernicious effect of music hall entertainment, not only because they deemed many of the acts obscene, but because the acts encouraged workingmen to emulate the parasitic, licentious life of the "swell." See Peter Bailey, Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 47.
 41. Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, pp. 103-6; Walkowitz, Prostitution, pp. 210-13, 253; Robert Roberts, The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), p. 23, ch. 3; Paul Thompson, The Edwardians (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), ch. 5; Standish Meacham, A Life Apart: The English Working Class 1890-1914 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 64-67.
 42. Susan Edwards, "Sex Crimes in the Nineteenth Century," New Society 49 (13 September 1979):562-63; Anna Clark, "The Language of Rape and Seduction in the Nineteenth Century" (unpublished paper, 1981); Jan Lambertz, "Male-Female Violence in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England" (B.A. diss., Harvard University, 1979); Linda Gordon, commentary on session on "Family Violence," Berkshire Conference on Women's History, Vassar College, May 1981.
 43. I am following Nancy Cott's use of the concept of passionlessness to "convey the view that women lacked sexual aggressiveness, that their sexual appetites contributed a minor part . . . to their motivations, that lustfulness was simply uncharacteristic. The concept of passionlessness represented a cluster of ideas about the comparative weight of woman's carnal nature" ("Passionlessness," p. 220).
 44. Victor Bailey and Sheila Blackburn, "The Punishment of

- Incest Act 1908: A Case Study of Law Creation," Criminal Law Review (1979):708-18; Sheila Jeffrys, "The Spinster and Her Enemies: Sexuality and the Last Wave of Feminism," Scarlet Women 13 (Pt. 2, July 1981):23.
45. Ellen Holtzman, "The Pursuit of Married Love: Women's Attitudes toward Sexuality and Marriage in Great Britain, 1918-1939," Journal of Social History (1982); Angus McLaren, Birth Control in Nineteenth Century England (London, 1978), pp. 198, 199.
 46. Helen Meller, Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), pp. 133, 139, 174; Mrs. Layton, "Memories of Seventy Years," in Life as We Have Known It, ed. Margaret Llewellyn Davies (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1931, rep. 1975), p. 40.
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EVELYN BROOKS

The Feminist Theology of the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1900 (1980)

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Black Baptist women expressed their "righteous and burning zeal" to go forward in Christ's name in their writings and in speeches delivered before male-dominated missionary associations (1). They challenged the "silent helpmate" image of female church work, and set out to convince their brethren that women were as obliged as men to advance Baptist efforts. During these years, Black Baptist women translated their fervor into action by establishing and administering separate women's societies at the state and local level. In 1900 their "burning zeal" culminated in the formation of a national organization, namely, the Women's Convention, Auxiliary to the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.

Black Baptist women reinforced their sense of sex consciousness by recognizing their solidarity with women across racial lines. Within this female-centered context, they accentuated the theme of woman as saving force, rather than woman as victim; they thereby encouraged an aggressive womanhood that felt a personal responsibility to labor, no less than men, for the salvation of the world. Black Baptist women conceived of themselves as part of an evangelical sisterhood united in the battle against ignorance, intemperance, and irreligion. On religious as well as patriotic grounds, their evangelical zeal fervently rejected a fragile, passive womanhood, or the type preoccupied with fashion, novels, and self-indulgence. America offered them a vast mission field to solicit as never before the active participation of self-disciplined, self-sacrificing workers. Women leaders in the Black Baptist Church were well acquainted with the history of white Baptist women's societies and praised their work for the freed-people, Indians, immigrants, and settlers on the western frontier (2).

The religious posture of Black Baptist women in the last two decades of the nineteenth century conforms to Rosemary Ruether's and Eleanor McLaughlin's conceptualization of the "stance of 'radical obedience.'" Referring to female lead-

ership in Christianity, Ruether and McLaughlin distinguish women's positions of "loyal dissent" arising within the main-line churches from women's positions of heresy that completely rejected the doctrines of the traditional denominations. They argue for the wider influence of the former, since women, in the "stance of 'radical obedience,'" seized orthodox theology in defense of sexual equality (3).

The feminist theology of the Black Baptist Church certainly did not constitute a break from orthodoxy, but it did entail the restatement of orthodoxy in progressive, indeed liberating terms for women. Black religious leaders already adhered to a progressive theology when it came to their belief in racial equality. In the Jim Crow America of the late nineteenth century, Black Baptist minister Rufus Perry even dared to interpret the Bible as a source of ancient Black history--as the root from which race pride should grow (4). The liberating principle in Christianity was not new to Black people who, for generations under slavery, rejected scriptural texts that defended human bondage. Despite the reluctance of the slavemaster to quote the biblical passage, "neither bond nor free in Christ Jesus," the slaves expressed its meaning in their spirituals and prayers (5). In the Black Baptist Church of the late nineteenth century, the women in the leadership called attention to the verse in its more complete form: "Neither bond nor free, neither male nor female in Christ Jesus." By expounding the biblical precedents for women's rights, Black Baptist women claimed their right to intellectual, theological, and ethical discourse.

The speeches and writings of Black women members of the male-dominated American National Baptist Convention (ANBC), forerunner of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., focused on the role of women in the church and in the broader American society. Virginia Broughton, Mary Cook, and Lucy Wilmot Smith stood out as the intellectual leaders of the cause of Black Baptist womanhood between 1880 and 1900 (6). None of the women were theologians in any strict and formal sense, and yet their theocentric view of the world in which they lived justifies calling them theologians in the broad spirit that Gordon Kaufman describes:

Obviously, Christians are involved in theologizing at every turn. Every attempt to discover and reflect upon the real meaning of the Gospel, of a passage in the Bible, of Jesus Christ, is theologizing; every effort to discover the bearing of the Christian faith or the Christian ethic on the problems of personal and social life is theological. For Christian theology is the critical

analysis and creative development of the language utilized in apprehending, understanding, and interpreting God's acts, facilitating their communication in word and deed. (7)

Virginia Broughton described the Black woman's rising consciousness as part of the "general awakening and rallying together of Christian women" of all races, and traced the providential evolution of this movement to Eve in the Garden of Eden. In 1904 Broughton, in Women's Work, as Gleaned from the Women of the Bible, summed up the ideas that had marked her public lectures, correspondence, and house-to-house visitations since the 1880s, and sought to inspire the churchwomen of her day "to assume their several callings" (8).

Mary V. Cook, the most scholarly of all, expressed her views in the Black press, in an edited anthology, and in speeches before various groups, including the American National Baptist Convention. She served on the executive board of the ANBC, and was honored by being selected to speak on woman's behalf in the classic statement of Black Baptist doctrine, The Negro Baptist Pulpit (1890). In more militant language than Broughton, Cook strove to enlarge woman's power in the church. She termed the Bible an "iconoclastic weapon" that would destroy negative images of her sex and overcome the popular misconceptions of woman's place in the church and in the world at large. Like Broughton, Cook derived her position from the "array of heroic and saintly women whose virtues have made the world more tolerable" (9).

Lucy Smith wrote extensively in the Black press, served as historian of the American National Baptist Convention, and until her death in 1890, delivered strong feminist statements at its annual meetings (10). Other men and women joined the three to form an articulate cadre committed to voicing woman's concerns. These Baptist interpreters of the Bible perceived themselves as part of the vanguard of the movement to present the theological discussion of woman's place (11). They used the Bible to sanction both domestic and public roles for women. While each of the feminist theologians had her own unique style and emphasis, the basic arguments resembled each other closely on four essential roles for women: in the home, in the church, in social reform, and in the labor force. In every case, the Baptist women emphasized biblical passages that portrayed women positively.

Black feminist theologians did not depict woman as having a fragile, impressionable nature, but rather as having a capacity to influence man. They described woman's power of

persuasion over the opposite sex as historically positive, for the most part. They did, however, also mention a few instances of woman's negative influence, notably, the biblical stories of Delilah and Jezebel. But this discussion, too, emphasized man's vulnerability to woman's strength, even though it was pernicious, and never recognized an innate feminine weakness to fall before temptation. "She may send forth healthy, purifying streams which will enlighten the heart and nourish the seeds of virtue; or cast a dim shadow, which will enshroud those upon whom it falls in moral darkness" (12).

According to the feminist theology of the Black Baptist women, although the Bible showed women in a dual image, it also portrayed both good and evil men, and thus only affirmed woman's likeness to man and her oneness with him in the joint quest for salvation. Virginia Broughton argued that the Genesis story explicitly denied any right of man to oppress woman. Her interpretation of woman's creation stressed the fact that God had not formed Eve out of the "crude clay" from which he had molded Adam. She reminded her readers that God purposely sprung Eve from a bone, located in Adam's side and under his heart, for woman to be man's helpmate and companion. Broughton noted that God took the bone neither from Adam's head for woman to reign over him, nor from his foot for man to stand over her. Broughton pointed out that if woman had been Satan's tool in man's downfall, she was also God's instrument for human regeneration, since it was to Eve alone that God entrusted the germ for human redemption by commanding that "the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Broughton argued that redemption was therefore inseparably linked with motherhood and woman's role in the physical deliverance of this redeemer (13).

Feminist theologians praised and took pride in the mothers of Isaac, Moses, Samson, and other greater or lesser heroes of the Old Testament. They described these Old Testament women as providing far more than the bodily receptacles through which great men were born into the world. They were responsible for raising the sons who would deliver Israel from its oppressors. The mother's determining hand could extend as far back as the child's prenatal stage--or so concluded Virginia Broughton in a reference to Samson's mother: "An angel appeared to Manoah's wife, told her she should have a son and instructed her how to deport herself after the conception, that Samson might be such a one as God would have him be, to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines" (14).

Since motherhood was regarded as the greatest sanctity,

Mary the mother of Jesus personified the highest expression of womanhood. Of all biblical mothers she assumed the position of the "last and sublimest illustration in this relation" (15). Hers was motherhood in its purest form, in its most feminine, for it was virginal and without the intercession of a man. To the feminist theologians of the Black Baptist Church, Jesus, conceived from the union of woman and the Angel of God, became the fruition of God's commandment in Genesis. Mary Cook's knowledge of ancient history and the Latin classics added further insight into the virgin mother theme and revealed its roots in antiquity. The story of the twins, Remus and Romulus, the mythical founders of Rome, also reinforced the theme of the virgin mother. According to Cook, "Silvia became their mother by the God Mars, even as Christ was the son of the Holy Ghost" (16).

Motherhood remained the salient domestic motif, though the feminist theologians also referred to the roles of wife, sister, and daughter in order to complete the larger picture of woman's participation in the home. They frequently attributed a man's conversion or a minister's righteous lifestyle to a mother's influence, a sister's guidance, or to the tender persuasion of a devoted wife or daughter. Marriage was especially presented as "a holy estate." Speaking before the American National Baptist Convention in 1888 on the subject, "Women in the Home," Mrs. G.D. Oldham of Tennessee asserted: "The home is the first institution God established on earth. Not the church, or the state, but the home." To Oldham, woman's domestic role was of supreme importance and represented her "true sphere," since within the home, woman exercised her greatest influence of all. According to Oldham, it was in the home where woman reigned "queen of all she surveys, her sway there is none can dispute, her powers there is none can battle." Although she acknowledged that exceptional women would seek work outside the home and indicated her hope that they not be excluded from careers in government and the natural sciences, Oldham firmly believed that most women would confine their activities to domestic duties. She exhorted women to be the ministers, not the slaves of their homes. Woman as homemaker should provide her husband with an atmosphere of comfort and bliss. Oldham's image of marriage and home life romanticized woman's ability to create a refuge from worldly pressures and problems. Home life was to resemble the "center of a cyclone where not even a feather is moved by the hurricane that roars around it" (17).

For feminist theologians such as Cook and Broughton, the image of woman as a loyal, comforting spouse transcended the husband-wife to embrace the relationship of woman to Jesus.

woman that has taken the trouble to visit her." She encouraged women to organize social purity societies, sewing schools, and other types of unions in order to uplift the downtrodden (22). The tireless work of Dorcas, who sewed garments for the needy, became a standard biblical reference for woman's charitable work.

Mary Cook also argued the unique capability of women to cleanse immorality, indecency, and crime "in the face of the government which is either too corrupt to care, or too timid to oppose." For Cook, Baptist women typified much more than the hope of the church, they represented the hope of the world, inasmuch as their influence would have greater moral than political sway. Since Cook perceived societal ills as primarily a moral issue, she did not trust their eradication to legislation alone. Mary Cook pictured the ideal wife of a minister as a good homemaker, an intellectual, and at the forefront of social reform causes. She encouraged women to engage actively in charitable work in orphanages, hospitals, and prisons (23).

Proponents of a feminist theology endeavored to broaden work opportunities for women. Lucy Wilmot Smith, historian of the American National Baptist Convention, put it squarely before her predominantly male audience in 1886 when she decried the difference in training between boys and girls. She noted that the nineteenth-century woman was dependent as never before upon her own resources for economic survival. Smith believed that girls, like boys, must be taught to value the dignity of labor. She rejected views that considered work for women disdainful or temporarily necessary at best--views that conceded to women only the ultimate goal of dependency on men. "It is," she wrote, "one of the evils of the day that from babyhood girls are taught to look forward to the time when they will be supported by a father, a brother, or somebody else's brother." She encouraged Black women to enter fields other than domestic service, and suggested that enterprising women try their hand at poultry raising, small fruit gardening, dairying, bee culture, lecturing, newspaper work, photography, and nursing (24).

In similar fashion, Mary Cook suggested that women seek out employment as editors of newspapers or news correspondents in order to promote women's causes and in order to reach other mothers, daughters, and sisters. She advocated teaching youths through the development of juvenile literature, and urged women in the denomination's schools to move beyond subordinate jobs by training and applying for positions as teachers and administrators. Cook praised women with careers as writers, linguists, and physicians, and she told the 1887 convention of the American National Baptist

Convention that women must "come from all the professions, from the humble Christian to the expounder of His word; from the obedient citizen to the ruler of the land" (25).

Again, the Baptist women found biblical precedents to bolster their convictions and to inspire the women of their own day. In the Book of Judges, Deborah, a married woman, became judge, prophet, and warrior whom God appointed to lead Israel against its enemies. Depicting Deborah as a woman with a spirit independent of her husband, Cook asserted:

Her work was distinct from her husband's who, it seems, took no part whatever in the work of God while Deborah was inspired by the Eternal expressly to do His will and to testify to her countrymen that He recognizes in His followers neither male nor female, heeding neither the "weakness" of one, nor the strength of the other, but strictly calling those who are perfect at heart and willing to do his bidding. (26)

Huldah, wife of Shallum, was also singled out by Cook and Broughton. Huldah lived in a college in Jerusalem where she studied the law and interpreted the Word of God to priests and others who sought her knowledge. Biblical examples had revealed that God used women in every capacity and thus proved to Cook that there could be no issue of propriety, despite the reluctance of men. She urged the spread of woman's influence in every cause, place, and institution that respected Christian principles, and admonished her audience that no profession should be recognized by either men or women if it were not Christian. She concluded her argument with an assertion of woman's "legal right" to all honest labor, as she challenged her sisters in the following verse:

Go, and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do and dare;
It you want a field of labor
You can find it anywhere. (27)

The feminist theology of the Black Baptist Church combined the ideas of several distinct intellectual trends. Its idealization of the home and motherhood reflected society's sexual bifurcation of the private sphere of home and family from the public sphere of business and politics. Like other Americans, the Baptist thinkers accepted a priori the notion of certain intrinsic differences between the male and female personality. The dominant thought of the age ascribed to womanhood a feminine essence that was virtuous, patient, gentle, and compassionate, while describing manhood as ration-

al, aggressive, forceful, and just. Unlike man, woman was considered naturally religious, bound by greater emotionalism, and with a greater capacity to sympathize and forgive. Because the manifestation of the feminine essence became most readily apparent in the act of raising children in the home, feminine virtues equated easily with maternal qualities (28). It appeared axiomatic that God and nature had ordained woman's station in life by providing her with a job and work place uncontestedly her own.

Yet the Baptist feminist theologians were influenced by the secular woman's movement and its attack on sexually exclusive spheres. Secular feminism sought to broaden woman's work by defending her right to the world outside the home. Although this movement tended to question gender-prescribed roles, most adherents to nineteenth-century feminism still continued to define womanhood, that is, the feminine essence, in terms separate and distinct from manhood. The pre-eminence of maternal qualities in molding the future character of youth translated into woman's superior ability to shape the moral destiny of the larger American society. Frances Willard, the suffragist and temperance leader, asserted that woman carries her "mother-heart" into every occupation she entered and lost none of her femininity in the process. On the contrary, woman's "gentle touch" refined and softened all the professions (29).

Even more directly analogous, the feminist impetus in the writings and speeches of Black Baptists formed part of the larger tradition of a feminist theological genre that spanned the entire nineteenth century. Feminist theological writings especially proliferated in the century's latter decades--the years that religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom has termed the "golden age of liberal theology." Arthur Meier Schlesinger, Sr., designated the last quarter of the nineteenth century as the "critical period in American Protestantism." Both historians have correctly assessed the intellectual climate of the age. Darwinist biological theories of evolution, social Darwinism, and a host of geological discoveries and historical studies challenged what had previously seemed to be the timeless infallibility of the Bible. A radical tendency to deny any sacred authority to the Scriptures found advocates among "infidels" such as famed orator Robert Ingersoll and suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton, both of whom indiscriminately shelved the book with other literary masterpieces. At the other end of the spectrum stood the fundamentalists, many of whom were southern Protestants tenaciously holding on to the literal truth of each biblical statement despite disclosures of inaccuracies and contradictions (30).

Between these extremes were liberals who came from the pulpits and seminaries of northern Protestant denominations--in fact, some of the same groups responsible for establishing institutions of higher learning for Black people in the South. The great majority of these liberals attempted to reconcile their traditional religious beliefs with the new social and scientific theories. By articulating a resilient and vibrant orthodoxy, evangelical liberalism, led by ministers such as Henry Ward Beecher, Newman Smyth, William Newton Clarke, and Washington Gladden, effected the survival of traditional Protestantism in an age of questioning and positivistic devotion to accuracy. Discussing the largely "conservative intent" of this liberalizing influence, Winthrop Hudson writes:

The central concern of the evangelical liberals was quite explicitly apologetic. They wished to preserve the truth of the gospel as it spoke to the hearts of men. In the face of what many feared might be fatal assaults on Christian faith, they sought to restate the essential doctrines of evangelical Christianity in terms that would be both intelligible and convincing and thus to establish them on a more secure foundation. (31)

This exact intent may be attributed to the writings of feminist theologians. Frances Willard, also a contributor to feminist theology, reconciled woman's rights with the vital spirit of the Bible, although she rejected some of its literal pronouncements on women. She noted that the insistence on "real facts" had changed not only views toward science and medicine, but also those toward theology. This emphasis caused the latter to become more flexible and to see the Bible as an expansive work that "grows in breadth and accuracy with the general growth of humanity." Willard advocated the "scientific interpretation of the Holy Scriptures," and urged women to lend the perspective of their sex to the modern exegesis of the Bible (32).

Other traditional Protestants who employed a feminist hermeneutic in biblical criticism included such women's rights proponents as Anna Howard Shaw, medical doctor and ordained Methodist Protestant minister, who presented her views in 1891 in the speech "God's Women" before the annual meeting of the National Council of Women; Lille Devereaux Blake, novelist and author of Woman's Place Today (1883), a series of four essays that challenged the Lenten lectures of Rev. Morgan J. Dix; T. DeWitt Talmage, minister of Central Presbyterian Church in New York, whose sermons were syndicated in the Black and white press across the country; and Benja-

min T. Roberts, Free Methodist minister and author of Ordaining Women (1891). In contradistinction to the condemnation of the Bible in Elizabeth Cady Stanton's The Woman's Bible (1895), the feminist theology that was rising in the other mainline denominations argued for woman's rights from the standpoint of liberal orthodoxy (33). Its goal was to make religion less sexist, not to make women less religious.

Feminist theology proceeded during the late nineteenth century within the context of the liberalization of theology. Feminist theology did not make converts of all who professed Protestant liberalism, but it clearly represented a submovement within the liberal evangelical effort to relate theology to concrete social issues. During the "golden age of liberal theology," religious education and critical theological scholarship took on unprecedented dynamism. Referring to the term Christology as a coinage of his day, Augustus Strong noted in 1884 that the study of Christ had become a science in its own right (34). As biblical scholars investigated and debated the human and divine nature of Christ, some of them also drew attention to his masculine and feminine qualities in an effort to discuss the feminization of religion in general. The works of Ann Douglas and Barbara Welter have analyzed earlier aspects of the feminization of American Protestantism. Looking at developments to 1860 (Welter) and to 1875 (Douglas), they have revealed a wealth of religious and literary materials that increasingly identified the church and Christ himself with feminine attributes--soft, gentle, emotional, and passive (35). The discussion, pro and con, of a church and Savior with feminine virtues certainly lost none of its vibrancy after 1875. In fact, several outstanding religious leaders used the concept to fight for women's rights as well as to address other social questions of the late nineteenth century. Popular ministers, such as T. DeWitt Talmage, spoke of the "motherhood of God," and Laurence Oliphant urged the necessity of recognizing the "divine feminine principle in God" (36).

In July and August 1898, the Biblical World, journal of the Baptist-founded University of Chicago Divinity School, featured a two-part series on the subject of Christ as a feminine power. Written by George Matheson of Edinburgh, the articles contended that the Bible chronicled the centuries-old struggle between the masculine and feminine ideals. The Book of Revelation was said to climax in Christ's victory over sin and in the final triumph of feminine values. Matheson described feminine power as a passive force, equal in strength to the muscular power of men, but with a completely different nature. He derived his conception of a triumphant feminine ideal from the Beatitudes of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus not only blessed the vir-

tues of meekness, tenderness, and forgiveness, but also championed them as the new heroism that both men and women should respect. Matheson contrasted the feminine "force to bear up" against the masculine "force to bear down," and distinguished feminine power from the neuter "inability to exert any power." He also identified feelings of resignation and impotence as neuter, not feminine. He praised woman's charitable work on behalf of society's neglected. He regarded woman's work in hospitals, asylums, and orphanages to be representative of the feminine ideal and of woman's commitment to transform the world into a place that valued the individual over the state or a particular class. According to Matheson, this spirit would gradually bring about a social revolution in government, labor, and society at large (37).

The metaphorical counterposing of feminine and masculine traits to reflect oppressed and oppressor groups throughout history ultimately reduced masculinity to a negative social trait. Like Matheson, Frances Willard adopted this tactic in Woman in the Pulpit (1888), a feminist polemic that advocated the ordination of women. Citing the testimony of numerous male and female supporters, she favored woman's right to access to the clergy not because of an androgynous personhood, but precisely because of her womanhood, her feminine essence. Willard's concept, the "mother-heart," characterized as sympathetic, intuitive, and morally pure, became the instinctive, immutable trait that equipped women especially for religious work. In Willard's opinion, the mother-heart was godlike, while religion was, above all, an "affair of the heart," a source of inner comfort and spiritual regeneration. She defined masculine qualities--acquisitiveness and force--as market characteristics and concluded that they had led only to the pursuit of world dominion and the attendant reality of a "white male dynasty reigning undisputed until our own day." She castigated men for their historical inability to interpret the spiritual content of religion in any meaningful way:

It is the men who have taken the simple, loving, tender Gospel of the New Testament, so suited to be the proclamation of a woman's lips; and translated it in terms of sacerdotalism, dogma, and martyrdom. It is men who have given us the dead letter rather than a living Gospel. The mother-heart of God will never be known to the world until translated into terms of speech by mother-hearted women. (38)

Opponents of the feminine version of religion often conceded Christ's feminine qualities, but reaffirmed the domi-

nance of his masculine attributes. Such writers countered efforts to subsume Christ's manliness in the glorification of the feminine by contending that his feminine virtues, namely, tenderness, sympathy, and forgiveness, were subordinate to his masculine characteristics of assertive leadership and strong intellectuality. Defenders of the masculine orientation evoked the image of the "church militant" in the religious conquest of the world, and offered a "tough Christianity" with stern, uncompromising features as a counterpoint to the softness and emotionalism of a feminized church (39).

The Masculine in Religion (1906), written by a white Baptist minister in Brooklyn, New York, exemplified the male rebuttal to feminist theology. The author, Carl Delos Case, advanced a "comparative psychology of religion" that recognized two sexually distinct religious expressions. Although Case accepted only one theological statement of faith, he argued that sexuality determined the angle of vision by which faith was worshipped and practiced. Women became religious for emotional reasons, men did so for rational ones. Case identified the "overfeminization of religious life" to be both the cause and the effect of the preponderance of female church members. He blamed this feminizing process for creating a modern church predisposed to self-sacrifice, meekness, and self-abnegation. He charged that woman's pervasive influence too narrowly defined Christian life as synonymous with feminine behavior, which consequently made the church unattractive to men by denying them a continuity between the church and the male personality. Bemoaning the feminization of religious art, Case noted that portraits of Christ transmitted an effeminate male with long brown hair, dreamy eyes, and a meek and resigned demeanor. By countering the notion of the church as woman's domain, Case and other spokesmen for virile sermons, martial hymns, and a rugged Christianity hoped to restore the church's appeal to men and to render it as legitimate an outlet for male expression as business, the factory, or the lodge (40).

Although the feminist theologians of the Black Baptist Church failed to participate in this debate, the dual images of Christ as feminine and masculine, passive and aggressive, and meek and conquering informed their own self-perceptions and self-motivations. The Black feminist theologians shifted back and forth from feminine to masculine imagery when describing their role within the evangelical crusade that simultaneously fostered both their sex and race awareness. Being Baptist was central to their sense of self and mission. Self-definition for Black churchwomen also always proceeded from the obvious dichotomy of sex and race. Less obvious-

ly, each of the two categories formed a separate basis for the articulation of a dual gender consciousness. Within the contexts of sex and race, Black women understood themselves equally as homemakers and as soldiers.

The bond of womanhood was very real and definable to Black Baptist women, who often expressed their views in explicitly sex-conscious language. Virginia Broughton called attention to the feminine symbolism in the Bible (for example, the designation of the church as the bride of Christ), and she regarded such metaphors as conveying biblical esteem for women (41). Black feminist theology presented woman's uplift within an evolutionary framework that repeatedly referred to the degraded status of women in ancient civilizations and in contemporary non-Christian cultures, thus arguing that the standard of womanhood evolved to a higher plane with the spread of Christianity. This view enhanced the significance of motherhood and domesticity. Since mothers were considered the transmitters of culture, woman's virtue and intelligence within the home measured the level of civilization (42).

White Baptist missionary Joanna P. Moore was highly regarded by Black Baptists in the South for her several decades of service there after the Civil War. A strong respecter of "womanly" behavior, Moore nonetheless drafted a position paper addressed to Louisiana Black churches and stated that women's duties included a wider range of responsibilities than collecting money and cooking dinners for ministers. Citing biblical precedents, she argued that missionary women should serve as teachers and leaders. Her conception of an outgoing womanhood, engaged in teaching, house-to-house visitation, and temperance work never minimized the singular importance of woman's domestic role. But she encouraged missionary women to live and mingle among the masses, and criticized those who imagined themselves on a pedestal reaching down to the lowly. Her ideas coincided with the views of the Black feminist theologians who saw women ideally as functioning within the traditional home environment, but also going into the world and spreading the faith. Moore expressed this duality in a description of herself and her co-workers:

We are the highway and hedge workers, who are also able to expound the Scriptures. We can help a tired mother cut out a garment for her child, and meanwhile teach both mother and child the Gospel. We not only pray for the sick, but also cook them a tempting morsel of food. We are equally at home in parlor or kitchen. "Our shoes are iron and brass," there is no road too hard for us to travel. (43)

The feminist theologians of the Black Baptist Church considered the combined efforts of Black and white women to be essential to the progress of Black people and to harmonious race relations. By Christianizing the home and educating the masses, woman provided the key to solving the race problem in America. Black women likened their role to the biblical queen Esther who had acted as an intermediary between the king and her people, and they envisioned themselves as interceding on behalf of their race in cooperative missionary work. They frequently cited Black and white "apostles of modern missions," naming well-known Black leaders in the woman's movement, such as Sojourner Truth and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and white women, such as Frances Willard and Joanna Moore. Lucy Smith also alluded to European luminaries Harriet Martineau and Madame de Staël to bolster her arguments for woman's right to employment and education (44).

Certainly the intellectual equals of their men, the Black feminist theologians epitomized the quality of woman's rational powers. Widely read, this educated female elite included in its speeches and writings references to internationally renowned male scholars like John Ruskin, Edward Gibbon, and Herbert Spencer. The Black Baptist women implicitly and explicitly challenged the idea that men were intellectual and women were emotional. Mary Cook explained that the cultivation of the female intellect was Christ's special mission to woman and proclaimed further:

It is not Christianity which disparages the intellect of woman and scorns her ability for doing good, for its records are filled with her marvelous successes. Emancipate woman from the chains that now restrain her and who can estimate the part she will play in the work of the denomination. (45)

The feminist thrust of the Black Baptist theologians was not uniform in tone. Virginia Broughton incorporated a conciliatory attitude toward men. She urged complementary work with a deeper sensitivity to what she called man's "long cherished position of being ruler of all he surveys." She referred to the "womanly exercise" of talent, and at a time when woman's role was emerging but not yet clearly defined, she tended to assure men that women would not seek unauthorized office. To Broughton, separate women's organizations provided an arena within which they could express the concerns of their sex and establish their own priorities and tasks (46). Mary Cook and Lucy Smith concurred with Broughton on the importance of autonomous women's societies, but they spoke in more militant terms. In a demand for new ex-

pectations of women, Smith revealed her outspoken belief in woman's need to adopt attitudes usually identified as male in outlook:

Even in our own America, in this last quarter of the Nineteenth Century ablaze with the electric light of intelligence, if she [woman] leaves the paths made straight and level by centuries of steady tramp of her sex, she is denominated strong-minded or masculine by those who forget that "new occasions make new duties." (47)

However, Lucy Smith could easily, almost imperceptibly, move from a feminist perspective to one that foresaw racial unity. On one occasion she stated that educated Black women held certain advantages over their white counterparts. She believed that the identical labor reality for male and female slaves created a solidarity not found in the white race, and she praised the Black man of her day for continuing to keep his woman by his side as he moved into new kinds of work. Smith noted that the white woman "has had to contest with her brother every inch of the ground for recognition" (48). Mary Cook spoke of the freedom women exercised within the Baptist denomination, and told the men of the American National Baptist Convention: "I am not unmindful of the kindness you noble brethren have exhibited in not barring us from your platforms and deliberations. All honor I say to such men" (49). Thus racial identity created another medium through which Black women expressed feminine and masculine ideals.

Racial consciousness placed Black women beside their men in the same missionary movement that spawned a sisterhood between themselves and white women. From the perspective of racial self-help and self-determination, this evangelical crusade sanctioned at least a theoretical blurring of behavior exclusively associated with either the masculine or the feminine essence. Despite the common assumption of woman's moral superiority, the moralistic attitude imbued in racial uplift work never recognized the double standard of sexual behavior for social purity (50). Concepts like self-sacrifice and patience lost their traditionally feminine connotations and became sources of strength endorsed by men as well as women. Black ministers championed self-denial as a prerequisite for bettering the race, while they hailed patience as necessary to the building of a strong Black denominational force. The writings of Black Baptist ministers admitted no inherent contradiction in encouraging humility and piety while at the same time applauding "Christian manhood." In

his anthology The Negro Baptist Pulpit, Edward McKnight Brawley praised the self-sacrificing attitude of missionaries to the South in the same breath that he shouted: "Content for the faith." In the 1890s the Reverend Charles Octavius Boothe of Alabama commended the present wave of "charitable and self abasing" men who were countering the older style of arrogant, boastful leaders. Anthony Binga, Black Baptist minister in Manchester, Virginia, described the ideal deacon as being wise, grave, and lofty, but also long-suffering, gentle, and meek (51).

Black women often shifted from feminine to masculine concepts and images when describing their role and the work before them. Joined in a struggle for the economic, educational, and moral advancement of their people, Black men and women alike employed the language of war when characterizing their efforts to combat the legacy of slavery and the continued rise of racism at the turn of the twentieth century. The Black women in the Baptist Church unquestioningly thought of themselves as the "home force" and in duties that required love, humility, and gentleness, and yet these same women constantly exhorted each other to assume the role of valiant "soldier"--to go out into the "highways and hedges" and forge the "link between the church militant and the church triumphant." This aggressive, warlike attitude commonly identified with male self-perception underlay the female insistence upon women as leaders, not merely helpmates (52). The Old Testament figures Deborah and Huldah became the recurrent reference points illustrating woman's capacity to combine humility and grace with aggressive zeal and strong intellectuality. The examples of Deborah and Huldah were also cited by the Black Baptist women to prove that marriage need not negate public leadership for women.

This dual self-perception of Baptist men and women never altered the hierarchical structure of the church by revolutionizing power relations between the sexes, nor did it inhibit ministers like Anthony Binga from assuming male intellectual and physical superiority over the majority of women (53). It did not cause Black women to challenge the male monopoly of the clergy, or lead them to dominate business meetings and conventions in which both males and females participated. But the dual consciousness facilitated a greater appreciation of woman's potential contribution to the race and the denomination. It encouraged women to revere their traditional role in the home while vigorously establishing new self-definitions and new spheres of influence.

Within the American National Baptist Convention, Black feminist theology won support from ardent race leaders like William J. Simmons and Charles H. Parrish of Kentucky,

Walter H. Brooks of Washington, D.C., and Harvey Johnson of Maryland (54). In 1899 the National Baptist Magazine, the official organ of the ANBC, gave first-page coverage to an article on women's influence. In this case, the writer, Rev. J. Francis Robinson, supported "human rights for every individual of every race, of every condition, regardless of sex." Introducing biblical texts to illustrate the historical importance of women's church work and charitable activity, Robinson concluded that women should be allowed to reign not only in the home but in the political world as well. He endorsed women's suffrage and admitted his preference for the ballots of women as opposed to those of saloon keepers and ward bosses. He finally urged woman's equality in the name of progress and enlightened thought, stating:

The slaves have been emancipated; now let us emancipate the women! The unconditional and universal and immediate emancipation of womanhood is the demand of the age in which we live; it is the demand of the spirit of our institutions; it is the demand of the teachings of Christianity; it is her right, and, in the name of God, let us start a wave of influence in this country that shall be felt in every State, every county, every community, every home and every heart. (55)

Perhaps the progressive aspects of feminist theology, as part of the liberal theological impulse of the age, are most clearly evident when juxtaposed beside the image of woman and the church in Ann Douglas's The Feminization of American Culture (1977). Douglas's discussion of the disestablished, nonevangelical denominations in the Northeast is an indictment of an anti-intellectual, misogynist clergy who, like its predominantly female laity, occupied a position marginal to government as well as to an increasingly industrialized and urbanized America. According to Douglas, the outcome was a feminized religion and a "loss of theology" on the part of ministers who by 1875 preferred to read fiction and poetry rather than think about and develop theological scholarship. Worse yet, Douglas finds women in these northeastern churches unable and disinclined to provide a polemical theology to counter the sentimentalism and consumerism that finally engulfed them all (56). Douglas's generalizations of an insipid, anti-intellectual religious tradition, however, cannot be imputed categorically to the larger Protestant community. Her narrow focus ignores evangelical feminist writings of the nineteenth century (57). Her portrayal of intellectually bankrupt New England Congregationalists and Unitarians ignores their liberal evangelical wings.

These groups figured preeminently in the rapprochement of science and theology between 1870 and 1900 (58).

Similarly, no generalizations can be sustained about an efete and debilitated womanhood and clergy within the Black Baptist Church. Although marginal to the American politico-economic mainstream, the Black Baptist male and female leadership reiterated time and again the necessity of having an educated pulpit and an educated laity. Their writings condemned the unintelligent preacher who made his congregation happier, but failed to make it wiser (59). These leaders, as witnessed by the men and women of the American National Baptist Convention, considered themselves to be the political, social, and spiritual voices of Afro-American Baptists (60). Of equal importance, Black Baptist women, who added to the feminist theological literature of the late nineteenth century, expressed pride in their own mental competence and challenged sexism from the standpoint of biblical criticism and interpretation. The feminist theology of Black Baptist women had significant implications for their future religious work. It buttressed women's demands for greater participation and infused their expanding ranks with optimism about woman's destiny at the dawn of a new century. It also encouraged aggressive women to abandon the old ideal of the silent helpmate and prompted them to establish and control autonomous missionary conventions at the state and national levels. If Black Baptist women were in the end not radical enough, they were surely ingenious in fashioning the Bible as an "iconoclastic weapon" for their cause. The feminist theologians of the Black Baptist Church had operated "from a stance of 'radical obedience.'" And because they argued from the vantage point of orthodoxy, the brethren were compelled to listen.

Notes

1. National Baptist Convention, Journal of the Twentieth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention, Held in Richmond, Virginia, September 12-17, 1900, pp. 195-96.
2. American National Baptist Convention, Journal and Lectures, 1887, p. 57; Mary V. Cook, "Work for Baptist Women," in The Negro Baptist Pulpit, ed. Edward M. Brawley (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1890), pp. 273-79, 285.
3. Rosemary Radford Reuther and Eleanor McLaughlin, eds., Women of Spirit (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), p. 19.

4. Rufus Perry traced the ancestry of Black Americans to the biblical Cushites who were the descendants of Cush, Ham's eldest son. According to Perry, the Cushites were the ancient Ethiopians and indigenous Egyptians whose history exemplified prowess in medicine, war, art, and religious thought. Identifying the Cushite leaders of the Bible, Perry considered the greatness of the African past to be the foundation stone of the Afro-American's future. See Rufus L. Perry, The Cushites, or the Descendants of Ham as Found in the Sacred Scriptures and in the Writings of Ancient Historians and Poets from Noah to the Christian Era (Springfield, Mass.: Willey & Co., 1893), pp. 17-18, 158-61.
5. Benjamin Mays speaks of the slaves' and later the freedmen's belief in human and spiritual equality as a God-sanctioned idea. See Benjamin Mays, The Negro's God as Reflected in His Literature (Boston: Chapman & Grimes, 1938), pp. 19-127; Eugene Genovese discusses Christianity's inherent meaning to slave society by describing the dialectic within Christianity itself--its conservative quality, i.e., the ethic of submissiveness, and its opposite liberating intent, i.e., "spiritual freedom and equality before God." See Eugene D. Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 161-68. For a treatment of northern antebellum Black views, see Monroe Fordham, Major Themes in Northern Black Religious Thought, 1860-1880 (Hicksville, N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1975), pp. 139-50, 153-54; also see for an overall study of the radical tendency in Black religion, Gayraud Wilmore, Black Religion and Black Radicalism (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Co., 1973), pp. 136-86.
6. Virginia Broughton was born a slave, but after the Civil War was able to gain an education and graduate from Fiske University in 1875. She worked as a missionary in Memphis and Nashville. In 1900 Broughton was one of the founding members of the Woman's Convention, Auxiliary to the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. Mary Cook was born a slave during the Civil War, but was also able to get an education afterwards, partly through the financial support of New England white Baptist women and through the help of William J. Simmons, Baptist minister and president of the State University at Louisville. Cook received the A.B. degree from the State University at Louisville in 1887, where she also taught Latin and literature. After her marriage to minister Charles H. Parrish, Cook worked with him at Eckstein Norton University in Kentucky.

- Although it is not clear whether Lucy Wilmot Smith was born a slave, she grew up in very humble circumstances. Her mother, Margaret Smith, was Lucy's sole provider, and she struggled to give her daughter an education. Smith graduated from the normal department of the State University at Louisville in 1887. She worked as a journalist, taught at the state university, and was an ardent supporter of woman's suffrage. See Thomas O. Fuller, History of the Negro Baptists of Tennessee (Memphis: Haskins Print-Roger Williams College, 1936), pp. 81-83; I. Garland Penn, The Afro-American Press and Its Editors (Springfield, Mass.: Willey, 1891), pp. 366-74; G.F. Richings, Evidences of Progress among Colored People, 12th ed. (Philadelphia: Geo. S. Ferguson Co., 1905), pp. 224-27; Charles H. Parrish, ed., Golden Jubilee of the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky (Louisville, Ky.: Mayes Printing Co., 1915), pp. 284-85.
7. Gordon D. Kaufman, Systematic Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), p. 57.
 8. Virginia Broughton, Women's Work, as Gleaned from the Women of the Bible, and Bible Women of Modern Times (Nashville: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1904), pp. 3, 23, 36.
 9. Brawley, The Negro Baptist Pulpit, pp. 271-86; ANBC, Journal and Lectures of the Second Anniversary of the 1887 American National Baptist Convention, Held with the Third Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., August 25-28, 1887 (n.p., n.d.), p. 49.
 10. Penn, The Afro-American Press, pp. 376-81.
 11. Mary Cook stated: "As the Bible is an iconoclastic weapon--it is bound to break down images of error that have been raised. As no one studies it so closely as the Baptists, their women shall take the lead." ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, p. 49.
 12. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54; also see this evaluation of woman's influence by Black Baptist minister William Bishop Johnson, editor of The National Baptist Magazine, when he stated: "Man may lead unnumbered hosts to victory, he may rend kingdoms, convulse nations, and drench battlefields in blood, but woman with heavenly smiles and pleasant words can outnumber, outweigh, and outstrip the noblest efforts of a generation." See William Bishop Johnson, The Scourging of a Race, and Other Sermons and Addresses (Washington, D.C.: Beresford Printer, 1904), p. 78.
 13. Broughton, Women's Work, as Gleaned from the Bible, pp. 5-7.

14. Ibid., pp. 11-16.
15. Ibid., p. 25.
16. Mary Cook described Mary, the mother of Jesus, as "non-excelled maternal devotion." See ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, pp. 47-48.
17. Representative of the cult of domesticity, Oldham's version of home life advocated woman's complete attentiveness to her husband's needs. See ANBC, Journal, Sermons, and Lectures, of the Third Anniversary of the American National Baptist Convention, Held with the Spruce Street Baptist Church, Nashville, September 23-24, 1888 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 88, 90.
18. ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, p. 48; Broughton, Women's Work, pp. 31-32; Brawley, Negro Baptist Pulpit, p. 273.
19. The argument that attempted to restrict Paul's words exclusively to "immoral" women of Corinth was used by both Black and white advocates of greater church roles for women. See, for example, Frances Willard, Woman in the Pulpit (Boston: D. Lothrop Co., 1888), pp. 159, 164; ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, pp. 48-50.
20. Ibid., pp. 49-50.
21. Broughton restricted women in these three cases based on the fact that none of the twelve apostles were women. Otherwise, she sought to encourage women by noting that of the seventy who followed Jesus, "we are not sure they were all men." A classic rejoinder to those who shared Broughton's view on the twelve apostles was Frances Willard's statement that no Black or Gentile had been among the twelve, but this did not restrict men of either group from seeking ordination to the ministry. See Broughton, Women's Work, pp. 39-41; Willard, Woman in the Pulpit, p. 35.
22. Olive Bird Clanton was the wife of New Orleans minister, Solomon T. Clanton. Olive Clanton was raised in Decatur, Illinois, where she obtained a high school education. Her husband was elected secretary of the American National Baptist Convention in 1886. In a biographical sketch of Solomon Clanton, William J. Simmons, then president of the ANBC, described Olive Clanton as "one of the most discreet, amiable and accomplished women in the country." See William J. Simmons, Men of Mark (Cleveland, Ohio: Geo. M. Rewell & Co., 1887), pp. 419-21; ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, pp. 56-57.
23. Ibid., pp. 46, 55.
24. ANBC, Minutes and Addresses of the American National

- Baptist Convention. Held at St. Louis, Mo. August 25-29, 1886 in the First Baptist Church (Jackson, Miss.: J.J. Spelman Publisher, 1886), pp. 68-74.
25. ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, pp. 50-53, 55-56.
 26. *Ibid.*, p. 47; Broughton, Women's Work, pp. 27-28.
 27. ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, p. 55-56.
 28. For discussions on the cult of motherhood and domesticity, as well as treatment of woman's unique qualities relative to man's, see the following: Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), pp. 87-89; Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," American Quarterly 18 (Spring 1966):151-74; Katherine Kish Sklar, Catherine Beecher (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1976), pp. 134-37; Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 37.
 29. Willard, Woman in the Pulpit, pp. 54-64; Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture, pp. 51-52.
 30. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 763-87; Arthur Meier Schlesinger, "A Critical Period in American Protestantism, 1875-1900," Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings 44 (1930-32):523-48; Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860-1915 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944), pp. 1-16, 88; Barbara Welter, "Something Remains to Dare," introduction to Elizabeth Cady Stanton et al., The Woman's Bible, reprint ed. (New York: Arno Press, 1974), pp. v-xi.
 31. The label "progressive orthodoxy," coined by the faculty of Andover Seminary in 1884, accurately characterized the majority of evangelical liberals who sought to retain Christian doctrine as much as possible, while allowing for adjustment when necessary. See Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), pp. 269-74.
 32. Black Baptist leader Mary Cook also encouraged the belief in a living rather than static doctrine, and argued that woman's freedom would grow with the "vitalizing principles" of the Baptist denomination. Frances Willard's position was more extreme than Cook's, however. In order to discourage literalism, Willard presented a two-page chart graphically revealing changing, ambivalent, and contradictory biblical texts referring to women. By the same token, Willard also rejected literalism's opposite tendency, or what

- she termed "playing fast and loose." See ANBC, Journal of Lectures, 1887, p. 49; Willard, Woman in the Pulpit, pp. 17-38, 50.
33. Speaking of Robert Ingersoll's and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's views toward women and religion, Willard wrote: "Whether they perceive it or not, it is chiefly ecclesiasticism and not Christianity that Robert Ingersoll and Elizabeth Cady Stanton have been fighting; it is the burdens grievous to be borne that men have laid upon weak shoulders, but which they themselves would not touch with one of their fingers." Also for a letter from T. DeWitt Talmage to Willard dated 2 March 1888, along with the testimony of many other supporters of woman's right to the clergy, see Willard, Woman in the Pulpit, pp. 9-15, 52, 73-112, 129-72; also see Lillie Devereaux Blake, Woman's Place Today: Four Lectures in Reply to the Lenten Lectures on "Women" (New York: J.W. Lovell, 1883); Benjamin T. Roberts, Ordaining Women (Rochester: Earnest Christian Publishing House, 1891), pp. 47, 49, 58, 115-19, 158-59; for the antichurch position, see Matilda Jocelyn Gage, Woman, Church and State, 2d ed. (New York: Truth Seeker Co., 1893); and Welter, "Something Remains to Dare," intro. to Stanton, The Woman's Bible, pp. xxv-xxxiv; Aileen S. Kraditor, ed., Up from the Pedestal (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), pp. 108-21.
34. Augustus H. Strong, Philosophy and Religion (New York: A.C. Armstrong & Son, 1888), p. 201.
35. Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture, pp. 9-13; Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860," in Clio's Consciousness Raised, ed. Mary Hartman and Lois Banner (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 137-57.
36. Talmage's syndicated sermons appeared in Black religious and secular newspapers across the country. The following appeared in a Topeka, Kansas, Black Baptist paper, and while the extract does not specifically utilize the phrase the "motherhood of God," it does make an analogy between God and mother: "All others may cast you off. Your wife may seek divorce and have no patience with you. Your father may disinherit you and say, 'Let him never darken the door of our house.' But there are two persons who do not give you up--God and mother." See the Baptist Headlight, 25 January 1894, p. 2; Talmage and Oliphant are quoted in Carl Delos Case, The Masculine in Religion (Philadelphia: American Baptist Society, 1906), p. 31.

37. George Matheson, "The Feminine Ideal of Christianity," pt. 1, Biblical World 12 (July 1898):29-36; and pt. 2 (August 1898):90-97.
38. Ibid., pp. 45-47, 72, 97.
39. Twenty years before Matheson, white Baptist minister Augustus Strong stated that Christ had brought new respect to passive virtues at a time when the world had hitherto exalted only manly virtues. Strong's writings nonetheless insist on Christ's dominant masculinity. Strong incurred the ire of suffragists, since he opposed woman's suffrage and believed in woman's subordination to man in office based on biblical authority. See Strong, Philosophy and Religion, pp. 400-416, 549-50; another white Baptist minister, Jesse Hungate, denied woman's right to ordination, maintaining that the ministry was the divine calling of men. Hungate stressed the necessity of woman's subordination to her husband. Included in his book are the responses of seventy-two Baptist ministers who overwhelmingly agreed with Hungate's opposition to women in the clergy. See Jesse Hungate, The Ordination of Women to the Pastorate in Baptist Churches (Hamilton, N.Y.: James B. Grant, University Bookstore, 1899), pp. 4-5, 11, 13-14, 29-36, 46, 69-84, 101-2.
40. Case was pastor of the Hanson Place Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. He praised the religious expression of the YMCA for being a style representative of men and the work place. See Case, The Masculine in Religion, pp. 9-11, 22-29, 46-51, 59-78, 84-88, 113-20.
41. Such metaphors could present interesting consequences. For Virginia Broughton, they seemed to offer unambiguous masculine and feminine images: "By no title could our risen Lord endear himself more to women than that of bridegroom, and thus it is he likens his return in the parable of the 'Ten Virgins.'" For the sexist, masculine bias of white Baptist Jesse Hungate, the common designation of the church as the "bride" of Christ, led him to assert his demand for a manly Christianity, stating, "She is the church militant; who is also the conquering one." See Broughton, Women's Work, pp. 43-44; Hungate, Ordination of Women, p. 35.
42. The discussion of woman's status as evolving with Christianity was assumed by critics for and against woman's rights. It put religious emphasis on the general impetus of Social Darwinism. The anti-women's rights group argued that Christianity's civilizing influence

- heightened differences between men and women. The higher the culture, the more women were removed from the hardening contact with labor alongside men. Women were able to confine their duties to home and family and thus became more refined and delicate. The Black Baptist writers did not stress this particular theme as much as they argued the direct relationship between Christianity and the sanctity of marriage and home life. They focused on woman's victimization in non-Christian cultures in antiquity and the present. In non-Christian cultures, women were described as merchandise subject to barter, polygamy, and marriage without love or "delicacy." See ANBC, Minutes and Addresses, 1886, p. 69; ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, pp. 45-46; ANBC, Journal, Sermons, and Lectures, 1888, pp. 89-90; also see Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, pp. 24-29; Strong, Philosophy and Religion, pp. 405-6; Hungate, Ordination of Women, pp. 41-42; Case, The Masculine in Religion, pp. 5-8.
43. The very title of Joanna Moore's autobiography showed that she viewed her own work as surrogate to Christ's. See Joanna P. Moore, In Christ's Stead (Chicago: Women's Baptist Home Mission Society, 1895), pp. 131-33, 139-40, 146.
 44. White Baptist women also spoke of the Christianization of family life as the cure for racial strife. See *ibid.*, p. 141; ANBC, Minutes and Addresses, 1886, p. 70; ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, pp. 52-53; Broughton, Women's Work, pp. 21-23.
 45. ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, pp. 48-49.
 46. Broughton, Women's Work, pp. 37-40, 43.
 47. ANBC, Minutes and Addresses, 1886, p. 69; ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, p. 48.
 48. Penn, The Afro-American Press, pp. 380-81.
 49. ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, p. 49.
 50. Broughton, Women's Work, p. 32.
 51. Interestingly, at the women's rights conference in Rochester, N.Y., in 1878, Elizabeth Cady Stanton advocated that women relinquish the attitude of self-sacrifice and cultivate self-development instead. Frederick Douglass noted at that time that self-sacrifice and self-development were not inconsistent with one another. See Augustus Strong's reference to this exchange in Strong, Philosophy and Religion, p. 409; Brawley, The Negro Baptist Pulpit, pp. 278, 287, 290-95; Charles Octavius Boothe, The Cyclopedia of the Colored Baptists of Alabama (Birmingham: Alabama Publishing Co., 1895), pp. 253, 255; Anthony Binga, Jr.,

- Sermons on Several Occasions (n.p., 1889), pp. 121-23, 293.
52. ANBC, Journal and Lectures, 1887, pp. 46-47, 49-50, 54-55, 57; Brawley, The Negro Baptist Pulpit, p. 285; Black Baptist minister William Johnson used the warfare motif when addressing women and challenged them to fulfill their obligations to God "by going forth into the highways and hedges and compelling men to bow allegiance to Calvary's cross." Johnson, Scourging of a Race, pp. 78-79.
53. Anthony Binga does not describe women outside the role of homemaker; William Bishop Johnson contended that men did not give women their proper estimation in society, and yet he also assigned to man the qualities of "understanding" and "mind," and to woman "will" and "soul." See Binga, Sermons, p. 293; Johnson, Scourging of a Race, p. 76.
54. William J. Simmons was a leading force advocating educational and economic advancement for women. President of the American National Baptist Convention until his death in 1890 and also president of the State University at Louisville, Simmons was directly responsible for extending educational and job opportunities to Mary Cook and Lucy Smith. A journalist and editor, Simmons was also responsible for giving Black journalist Ida B. Wells her start in newspaper work. Charles Parrish, an educator and leader in the American National Baptist Convention, married Mary Cook in 1898. Walter Henderson Brooks and Harvey Johnson were active in the ANBC from its inception in 1886 and were supporters of educational opportunities for women, as well as spokesmen for Black control of schools founded for the race. See Penn, Afro-American Press, pp. 370, 378; Brawley, ed., Negro Baptist Pulpit, pp. 279-81; Simmons, Men of Mark, pp. 39-63, 729-32, 1059-63; Richings, Evidences of Progress, pp. 222-24; Walter H. Brooks, "Wanted--A Baptist College for Colored Youth in Virginia," Baptist Home Mission Monthly 3 (January 1881):8-9; James M. McPherson, "White Liberals and Black Power in Negro Education, 1865-1915," American Historical Review 75 (June 1970):1357-86; Alfreda M. Duster, ed., Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells, Negro American Biographies and Autobiographies series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 32.
55. J. Francis Robinson, "The Importance of Women's Influence in all Religious and Benevolent Societies," National Baptist Magazine (November-December 1899):117, 120-21.

56. Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture, pp. 3-48, 130-39, 168-81.
57. The Quakers are most well-known for a theology of woman's equality with man, but mainline Protestant denominations also contributed to this tradition. The most comprehensive work expressing a feminist theology and directly relating this to woman's rights was written by Elizabeth Wilson of Cadiz, Ohio, soon after the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. Wilson notes the significance of the convention to women, although she did not attend. See Elizabeth Wilson, A Scriptural View of Woman's Rights and Duties, in all the Important Relations of Life (Philadelphia: William S. Young, Printer, 1849); one of the earliest feminists to speak publicly for woman's rights was a Black woman who also incorporated biblical precedents into her argument. See Maria Stewart, "Farewell Address to Her Friends in the City of Boston, 21 September 1833," in Black Women in Nineteenth Century American Life, ed. Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), pp. 197-200; Samuel J. May, The Rights and Conditions of Women: A Sermon Preached in Syracuse, November 1845, 3d ed. (Syracuse: Lothrop's Print, 1853); Nancy Hardesty, Lucille Sider Dayton, and Donald W. Dayton, "Women in the Holiness Movement: Feminism in the Evangelical Tradition," in Women of Spirit, ed. Ruether and McLaughlin, pp. 225-54.
58. Hudson, Religion in America, p. 270.
59. Boothe, Cyclopedia of the Colored Baptists, p. 252; Simmons, Men of Mark, p. 730; R. DeBaptiste, "Ministerial Education," National Baptist Magazine (October 1896), pp. 243-44.
60. In 1889, Black Baptist minister Walter H. Brooks revealed the intentions of Black Baptist leaders who endeavored to unite in a national organizational base, when he stated, "Our political leaders are few, and even those we have cannot reach the people; therefore it becomes our duty to speak out upon all questions that affect our people, socially, economically, as well as religiously." See ANBC, Journal of the American National Baptist Convention, 1889, 1890, 1891 (Louisville: Bradley & Gilbert Co. Printers, 1892), p. 19.

ATINA GROSSMANN

Crisis, Reaction, and Resistance: Women in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s (1981)

Using my research on women, sexual politics, and population policy in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s as a base, I will point out here some possible socialist-feminist strategies for today in a time of political and economic crisis. In a discussion of the Sex Reform movement in the Weimar Republic, I will look at the different forms the control of women took. I also examine some forms of resistance to that control, raising questions about the complex relationship, for women, between resistance and control. I then extend the discussion to a series of contemporary questions that are also relevant to the Weimar period:

1. What are the mechanisms and dynamics of control over women?
2. What has been the role of the right wing in attempts to control women?
3. What are some of the contradictions among right-wing groups?
4. To what extent is control part of public policy or social institutions, and to what extent do women internalize and perpetuate their own control?
5. How do differences of class, racial/ethnic identity, and sexual orientations among women affect the imposition and experience of control?
6. Under what circumstances do women organize to resist control? Why, under some circumstances, are they unable to resist?

Crisis

Political, social, economic, and population crises shook Germany after its defeat in the First World War and peaked in the Depression years of 1929 to 1933. The crisis culminated in the coming to power of the National Socialists. As a result of the population crisis, Weimar Germany experienced

the development of what may be called a "new woman" and a "new family," particularly a new proletarian family.

These phenomena corresponded to the changed economic and political circumstances of the republic. The "new woman" was the product of the mobilization of female labor in World War I. Accustomed to wage labor and managing a household without a male presence and recently granted suffrage and an increased role in public political life, she presented a threat to an official state population policy based on dedicated and informed motherhood and directed toward replacing the manpower losses of the war. She was expected to heal the ravages to health and morality precipitated by war, rebellion, and economic instability. The fear was that the polarization of wartime experience with women on the home front and men in the trenches along with women's increased potential for economic independence would cause a crisis of marriage and procreation.

Although the birthrate in Germany had been steadily declining since the middle of the nineteenth century, the decline did not appear as a mass phenomenon among the working class until after the First World War. Only then did it begin to arouse public and government concern about the survival of the German Volk and the labor and military capacities of the coming generations. The traditionally large birthrate differential between rich and poor, wherein the poor produced the mass of workers and soldiers, was becoming ominously narrow. Although women continued to marry--indeed in greater numbers than ever before--families became distinctly and intentionally smaller. According to the 1925 census, working-class families averaged only 3.9 persons per household. Disturbed observers began to speak of a "birth strike."

The "new woman" was not only the intellectual with masculine haircut and unisex suit or the young white-collar worker in flapper outfit so familiar to us from 1920s movies. She was also the young married factory worker who now cooked only one meal a day, no longer baked or canned, cut her hair short into a practical Bubikopf, and tried by all available means and at any price to keep her family small. This represented a rationalized reproductive survival strategy suited to an increasingly urbanized society, which was experiencing an acute housing shortage and in which a significant proportion of married women engaged in wage labor. All these trends only intensified during the Depression with its massive unemployment and drastic cutbacks in public welfare services.

The Depression particularly affected women who not only fell victim to unemployment as men did, but endured an in-

tensification of household labor. On a material level, responsibility for social needs like health care and food production was reverting to the individual household. On an emotional level, women were called upon to stabilize and nurture the family in a turbulent time, to soothe the tensions of unemployment, and to mediate the conflicts supposedly caused by increased competition for jobs between men and women. By 1931, at the height of the Depression, with 6 million officially counted as job-seekers, it was estimated that 1 million abortions occurred annually with about 10,000 to 12,000 fatalities. That averages out to at least two abortions for every woman in Germany (1).

The decline in the birth rate and the high abortion statistics were perceived as a population crisis and also as a crisis of political legitimacy. Women's loyalty to traditional roles and their willingness to procreate and socialize children and nurture the family unit were considered symbolic of a society's ability to provide for families and the reproduction of the next generation. Abortion, birth control, and sexuality in general were emotionally explosive and ideologically laden issues (what Alan Hunter is now calling in terms of today's New Right, "compressed symbols" [2]) because they were emblematic of the stability and legitimacy of the entire social fabric. It is clear that the working class was trying to cope with the crisis by family limitation--perhaps we can call it the other side of trade unionism and class struggle on an individual family level. They turned mainly to abortion and coitus interruptus, but increasingly they also used mechanical and chemical means of contraception propagandized and supplied by the loose coalition of organizations and counseling centers known as the Sex Reform movement.

Reaction to the Crisis

The role of public policy and social institutions in controlling women was contradictory and frequently caught between opposing goals in what can be called a power struggle for control of women's bodies and reproductive functions. To further complicate the analysis, we cannot assume that government policy was directly reflected in social developments. We have to distinguish carefully which state and social institutions (the medical and social work professions, political parties, counseling centers, and the media) were involved. We must examine proscription and prescription, and the reality of what women were doing.

At the level of state control, there were, first of all,

repressive sex laws that had been on the books since the establishment of the German Empire in 1871. Paragraph 218 prohibited any abortions that were not strictly medically indicated. Paragraph 184.3 outlawed the advertising and publicizing of birth control, although selling contraceptives was not forbidden. This legislation represented an unsuccessful attempt to enforce a population policy favoring large families. Positive legal inducements were also considered but not legislated, such as tax incentives for large families and insurance for parents or mothers to be financed by a levy on single people or childless couples. These initiatives were thwarted by the precarious economic situation; the state did not in fact have much room in which to maneuver.

Other forms of state control, some legislated and some matters of public policy, were less direct. Housing policy, for example, worked in contradictory ways. Since much of the distribution of public housing was state controlled, there was an attempt to give priority to large families in the extremely limited housing market. On the other hand, new housing projects built during the brief stabilization period from 1924 to 1928, financed by trade unions and socialist municipal governments, were designed for the new nuclear family of parents and a maximum of two children, and served as an encouragement to family limitation.

State health policy was also contradictory, reflecting the tensions between a nationalist conservative right and a powerful communist and socialist working-class movement vocally represented in Parliament and local institutions. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that both right and left shared a commitment to what I call a "motherhood-eugenics consensus" which emphasized the importance of protected motherhood and healthy offspring. On the one hand, there was an attempt to encourage childbearing through social institutions by providing socialized health services such as prenatal, maternal, and infant health clinics and school health programs. On a legislative level, the 1927 Law for the Protection of Mothers offered insured women workers a maternity allowance of three-quarters of their wage for four weeks prior to, and six weeks after, delivery. Other guarantees such as nursing pauses and protection against dismissal made this the most advanced maternal protection legislation in the world with the exception of Bolshevik Russia. Most German women, however, simply could not afford to take advantage of the provisions, and they were loudly denounced as lacking health consciousness and maternal feeling by the doctors and politicians who had sponsored the legislation. The Law for the Prevention of Venereal Disease, also passed in 1927, on

the other hand, facilitated access to birth control by permitting the publicizing of condoms as a method of preventing infection. In fact condom automats were installed in some large cities.

In 1926 the Prussian and Saxon state governments issued decrees setting up official marriage counseling clinics. Their purpose was definitely not to provide birth control but to offer eugenic counseling for prospective mates and parents, advising them on their fitness for procreation. This was a program that potentially worked both ways; it could discourage childbearing by uncovering eugenic disabilities, but the hope was that the counseling would generally encourage procreation by alleviating people's fears about hereditary diseases and the hazards of pregnancy. In reality, the centers were little used, because prospective clients were more interested in obtaining safe inexpensive contraceptives than in testing their physical fitness for marriage and parenthood.

Therefore, German government policy was constantly caught in a series of dilemmas. It needed to promote large families but also needed to promote eugenic health. It was further trapped by the practical exigencies of an economic situation that couldn't carry the burden of increased social welfare costs or even maintain the many services that had been established by Weimar Social Democracy. This led finally in the early 1930s, before the Nazis actually passed their sterilization law in July 1933, to serious consideration of massive so-called voluntary sterilization. Sterilization was considered to be a cost-efficient method of crisis management and was intended to ease the burden on social welfare institutions. These plans, actively discussed in the Ministry of Health and state legislatures as well as in medical and Sex Reform literature, included tabulations of how expensive it was for the state to support retarded, crippled, or delinquent citizens compared to the minimal expense of simply sterilizing the socially or physically unfit.

The necessity and feasibility of establishing "scientific" norms for what was healthy and what was unfit, what was degenerate and what was wholesome, was commonly accepted as part of the motherhood-eugenics consensus which as already noted, transcended the traditional left/right, socialist/conservative distinctions. Human society was dichotomized into two groups: those who were potentially capable of leading industrious and socially worthwhile lives and those judged to be asocial, a burden and danger to the general welfare. This approach meant urging a "differentiated welfare policy" (differenzierte Fuersorge) that tried to serve and reha-

bilitate those with a realistic possibility of achieving a socially productive life while merely maintaining--warehousing--those who would never be anything but ballast for the state. The next generation would presumably be purged of such undesirable elements. Trying to fertilize the fit and sterilize the unfit was the basis for a highly selective population policy and an example of how class and/or racial/ethnic differences affect the imposition and experience of control. Such discussions graphically preshadowed National Socialist population policy; indeed, one could argue that the social and scientific acceptability of making such hierarchical distinctions in "quality of human life" facilitated its implementation.

Population experts and doctors who often served as consultants to the government thus found themselves in a frustrating double bind. They were caught between the desire to raise the birthrate to the level of three children per family considered necessary for replenishing the population and the opposed need to ensure eugenic and social hygiene. For if the "new woman," with her smaller family and aura of sexual freedom, was a sexual threat and population-political danger, then the "old" proletarian family with many children was a eugenic and social danger, particularly under the new conditions of married women's wage labor and overcrowded urban housing. All too many of the supposedly desirable and glorified large families (kinderreiche Familien) were in fact perceived as degenerate and irresponsible by doctors, social workers, and policy makers.

Therefore, we must move away from the level of direct state intervention to examine another more sophisticated aspect of the reaction to the population crisis. This aspect endeavored to take account of the need for family limitation and women's double burden at home and in the work force. It carried within it some of the elements of resistance to state policy--there are no neat lines here. A broad Sex Reform movement, claiming up to 150,000 members in its various organizations, developed during the Weimar years. Doctors, social workers, and lay people, many of them associated with working-class political parties (Communist and Social Democratic) and independent Sex Reform leagues, were involved in numerous groups espousing different political goals and social visions. But whether they identified themselves as part of the socialist, communist, or women's movement or the emerging specialty of sexology, the umbrella Sex Reform movement implied a shared commitment to legalized abortion, contraception, sex education, and women's right to sexual satisfaction.

The medical and scientific wing of the movement often

functioned in close conjunction with local governments, insofar as they were dominated by Socialist or Communist officials. It sought to alleviate the economic and sexual misery of working-class families and youth. It intervened on the assumption that as long as the birthrate was already declining and as long as it was inevitable that married women and mothers engaged in wage labor, then the situation should at least be rationalized by increasing medicalization of birth control. This involved attempts to reduce quack or self-induced abortions by the introduction of more sophisticated contraception, such as the diaphragm, the cervical cap, and even in some cases the IUD, as well as possible sterilization. All these methods required a doctor's prescription and supervision. The guiding idea was that if there were to be fewer workers, they should at least be strong, healthy, and of sturdy physical and moral quality.

In competition with the state-run marriage counseling centers, medical Sex Reform set up birth control and sex counseling centers run by municipal health departments or health insurance services. Independent Sex Reform leagues and the social welfare organizations of the Communist and Social Democratic parties also established counseling centers. Medical contraception was prescribed and distributed and advice on sex techniques was offered.

Again there were contradictory effects. These institutions surely represented an advance in health terms, but they also marked a certain setback for women's autonomy in controlling fertility. Many of those much-maligned backstreet abortionists, against whom women were constantly being warned, in both the working-class and the bourgeois presses, were in fact female midwives. These women were increasingly losing the economic basis for their livelihood through tighter licensing procedures, the general decline in the number of deliveries, and the takeover by physicians of the limited amount of obstetrics work still available. Without suggesting that abortion is a wonderful feminist experience, we must note that the decision to abort was a woman's decision made in the context of a female network that spread information about "wise women" and abortion methods. Abortion is, after all, the one form of birth control that need not require the cooperation or approval of either male partner or doctor. This is surely one reason why abortion on demand is still seen as such a threat today.

Even within this increased medicalization--this attempt to discipline and rationalize procreative and sexual activity by intensified government and medical intervention--there were multiple contradictions. It was not a policy approved on the national level by either the state or the medical es-

tablishment. In fact, the medical establishment remained bitterly opposed to birth control as well as to legalized abortion. It saw the clinics as professional and economic competition. The Sex Reform clinics were generally run by physicians committed to the working-class movement in one form or another (in sharp contrast to the state-run centers). Such doctors constituted the least prestigious ranks of the profession; they were employees engaged neither in academic medicine nor in full-time private practice. Furthermore, they included a significant number of women doctors, since women were more likely to be found at the lower level and to be active in pregnancy and maternal care and birth control clinics. One did not have to be a certified gynecological specialist to work in a clinic, so that although the Sex Reform movement meant intensified control over women's lives, it also opened up opportunities for a certain number of professional women.

These counseling centers, and the numerous journals and illustrated periodicals associated with them, provided material aid for women in the form of birth control, but they also propagated a new vision of sexuality. I call this the "rationalization" of sexuality, parallel to the rationalization of industry and housework beginning in the 1920s. The centers attempted to institutionalize certain common standards of "healthy" socially responsible sexual behavior. Indeed, they mounted an all-out attack on male sexual insensitivity and female frigidity, recently discovered as widespread social phenomena. The new social service institutions of the Weimar Republic, maternal and infant care centers, school medical programs, and marriage and sex-counseling clinics were intended to alleviate conditions of economic despair. Nevertheless, their very existence and their newly systematized files and records served to document the existence of a culture of poverty that was not only material but also emotional and sexual. Women who came to the counseling centers for birth control devices and information also told of their lack of pleasure in marriage and sexual relations, helping to define frigidity as a major social problem that threatened family stability.

The question arises here of how control by benevolent and beneficial public policy and social institutions like the counseling centers was connected to the internalization and perpetuation of control by women themselves. Just as the Sex Reform movement intervened to medicalize and rationalize an ongoing birthrate decline, it also intervened to rationalize, discipline, channel, and control changes in sexual mores and behavior that were happening anyway. The aim of Sex Reform was to improve both the product and the process of

sexual relations, not only the quality of the offspring but also the quality of the sexual experience. The emphasis was on improving female sexuality or, more precisely, the female orgasm.

The period was characterized by the widespread practice of family limitation with an increased availability of birth control and rising abortion figures. There was a perceived increase in economic resources for both single and married women, particularly young white-collar workers in the cities. These changes were accompanied by the loosening of traditional family structures and the blurring of time-honored sex-role distinctions. The growth of coeducation and youth groups, a general eroticization of media and culture, and an apparent increase in premarital and teenage sexuality were all seen as the legacy of war, revolution, and economic crisis. In this milieu, it was critical that the female sexuality the Sex Reform movement wanted to awaken be directed into the proper heterosexual marital paths. One sees the terms of female sexuality becoming defined and therefore narrowed just as it becomes technically and economically possible to live out that sexuality.

The new Sex Reform and sexology scientifically charted the geography of female desire and fulfillment. The Sex Reform movement assumed that men must awaken women sexually, that female sexuality was fundamentally and naturally different from the male's--slower to arouse and come, more passive and diffuse. It asserted that men must be trained to consider women's peculiarities, which meant learning about the clitoris as women's primary organ of sexual stimulation and foreplay. Female sexuality was squeezed into dots on the ubiquitous orgasm curves of Sex Reform literature, where women's climax did or did not meet that of men.

The goal of this novel fascination with technique was clear and predetermined: simultaneous orgasm during intercourse. If women's sexuality was judged to be naturally more emotional and generalized throughout her body and psyche--in other words, less genitally fixated than that of men--then Sex Reform aimed to change all that. Nothing less than a reorganization of women's sexual impulse was called for. Indeed, it was only through male manipulations finally bringing her to orgasm during intercourse that a woman could become truly mature and sexual in the narrow Sex Reform definition of the term.

Thus, sexuality was rationalized and technologized. Coming did not come naturally; it required discipline and concentration, basically the same skills and characteristics necessary to be a good worker in a rationalized factory. The same criteria set up for effective rationalization in indus-

try were applied to sexuality: uniformity, standardization, reliability, reproducibility, and predictability (3). Certain defined processes were deemed efficacious in leading to a certain product--mutual orgasm and, by extension, healthy children. The introduction of prescribed methods of foreplay into the sexual regimen meant the institutionalization of the streamlined, step-by-step lovemaking schedule most of us grew up with: body caresses and stroking, manual and/or oral stimulation of the clitoris, and, necessarily and inevitably, the serious business of fucking (4). The pleasuring of woman's whole body and the clitoris was never an end in itself, but only the means to an end predefined for the most part by men--male experts.

The real issue was not desire or sexual pleasure per se, but heterosexual, preferably marital "togetherness." Sexual technique and women's right to orgasm were propagated as a means of stabilizing and harmonizing the nuclear family; a strategy for what Rayna Rapp and Ellen Ross call elsewhere in this volume the "social enforcement of heterosexuality." In that sense, Sex Reform was clearly an attack on the single and/or lesbian woman. The fear was that women who voted and worked outside the home would also demand orgasms. Independent financial resources and an increased public role threatened to allow more and more women to opt out of marriage altogether. The hope was to attract women to marriage and motherhood by heightening the joys of sexual surrender. If women were reconciled to happy marriages, they would also be more likely to produce physically and mentally healthy children. In other words, orgasm had become an eugenic measure.

Once again we see immense contradictions. Female sexuality was recognized and encouraged, but on male heterosexual terms and in defense of the family. The Sex Reform slogan, "There is no such thing as a frigid woman, only incompetent and insensitive men," may sound liberating, but female orgasm remained dependent on men, its very nature defined by male needs and societal priorities. It is not simple. It does seem to be true that German women in this period did benefit from this new recognition of the need for female sexual satisfaction and that couples' sex lives did improve. But women, at least heterosexual women, were never given a chance to try to define, envision, experience their own woman-identified sexuality. They were supposed to let go, submit to men's newly tender ministrations--let themselves be skillfully played like a violin--rather than construct their own sexual possibilities.

And women had an additional burden--men were to be educated to offer women a share of the sexual ecstasy that had previously been reserved for males, but women were now

expected not only to lose themselves in orgasm but also to be on their guard, to remain responsible for contraception. Sex Reform wanted to teach men techniques and teach women birth control. The stress on women's sexual fulfillment and the new comradeship and partnership in relations between the sexes did not alter the assumption that men's commitment to birth control could not be trusted. Nor did it change the prevailing belief that women's fundamental sexual passivity ensured that they would keep their heads even during the satisfactions of "sex-reformed" intercourse. As a German friend of mine, a Wages for Housework advocate, remarked, not only were women still responsible for the family, but now they also had to moan. Or as Michel Foucault has been quoted as noting, "We must not think that by saying yes to sex, one says no to power" (5). In that sense, certain assumptions about sex roles and the sexual division of labor were internalized and perpetuated among women themselves.

Furthermore, the rationalization of sexuality meant that the right to contraception, abortion, and sexual pleasure was couched not in terms of a woman's individual right to control her own body and life but rather in terms of general social and state welfare. Social health--the Body Politic--was the crucial question. As the Weimar German Left saw it, the working class needed to restrict births during economic crisis as a matter of class survival. As the Right saw it, an economically and militarily strong state required a healthy Volk. Eugenics questions were central to the politics of reproduction and sexuality, not just for the Right but across the entire spectrum of the Sex Reform movement. Here again, as with state policy, we are struck by how much the imposition of control, even benign control, can be affected by differences in class, racial/ethnic group, and sexual orientation.

The heterosexual bias of Sex Reform, its focus on the companionate couple and potentially procreative sexuality, has already been noted. The discourse also exhibited a class-specific differentiation. The bourgeoisie tended to be targeted for how-to sex information, whereas the working class was offered more advice on birth control and health. One imagines that it would have been very difficult for most working or working-class women to find even the time and energy necessary for the new "progressive" domesticity and sexual intimacy. The motherhood-eugenics consensus posited motherhood as a natural desire for all women, simply repressed in some by economic necessity. The same consensus, however, also made a pseudoscientific identification of certain people as carriers of what was thought to be hereditary disease. People diagnosed as suffering from, for example, tu-

berculosis, venereal disease, or alcoholism (all "social diseases" of the poor) or epilepsy and schizophrenia were warned not to reproduce. They became targets for sterilization. These categories, based on a medical model of deviance, could (and eventually did) overlap with distinctions based on class and race or political and moral behavior--the murky category of the "asocial."

There was a definite overlap in Sex Reform discourse between reproductive rights--never defined as such--and population control. The major contradiction, I would argue, is that women themselves were never judged competent to make their own sexual and procreative decisions. Decisions about birth control, abortion, or sexual pleasure were deemed much too important to the general welfare to be decided by the unreliable whims of an individual woman.

Resistance

Under what circumstances is resistance to this kind of control possible or not possible? I have concentrated on medical and professional Sex Reform because it came to dominate the movement. However, in terms of numbers and direct contact with the proletariat, the working-class political parties and autonomous lay Sex Reform leagues were very important elements. But by the time of the Depression, these had increasingly come to share the medicalized and rationalized assumptions and prejudices I've outlined above. The massive lay movement, although closely connected with sympathetic professionals, functioned as a genuine proletarian self-help structure, offering birth control remedies, sex education, and general health advice to people who would otherwise have no access to them.

The various wings of the movement, both lay and professional, interacted with, influenced, and pressured each other. Again and again, the experts were shocked and inspired to fight for reform by their experiences in the health centers located in working-class neighborhoods, and by political pressures exerted by the lay leagues and the Social Democratic and Communist parties. Population policy and sexual politics were central to the male-dominated political discourse of the Weimar Republic in general. It was particularly crucial to the political demands of the Communist party, which focused on the high abortion statistics as a symbol of the bankruptcy, inhumanity, and irrationality of the capitalist system. The abolition of Paragraph 218, which criminalized abortion, was the fulcrum of its campaign to organize women, traditionally one of the groups seen as most resistant to

the Left (6). The right to birth control and abortion--that is, the right to enjoy sex without the punitive consequences of continual pregnancies--represented an attempt to unite the issues of sex and class within the socialist and communist movements. Birth control and abortion were primarily understood not as assertions of women's liberation but as acts of self-defense in the context of a class struggle for economic and political survival.

The fact that birth control, abortion, and sex education were first and foremost class and health issues, not women's issues, constituted the simultaneous strength and weakness of the Sex Reform movement for reproductive rights. This circumstance defined the parameters of women's possibilities for resistance to coerced motherhood and economic disaster. The great advantage of the class emphasis was that it offered the possibility of unity with men within a strong, highly organized working-class movement with access to an infrastructure of party apparatus, journals, propaganda, and funds. It also allowed reproductive rights to be seen as part of a general social analysis, ultimately pointing toward the necessity of revolutionary change. The glaring disadvantage, of course, was the lack of an authentic, powerful feminist perspective, although there was certainly room for women to organize and maneuver within the "social-sex-population" space carved out for and by them within the working-class parties. Because the issue of abortion and Paragraph 218 was considered a major focus of general organizing rather than a merely secondary contradiction, women and women's organizations gained a certain visibility and legitimacy within the working-class movement as a whole. But women were never able to achieve a voice of their own within either the Sex Reform or the working-class movements--not even at the points so critically affecting their daily lives where questions of class and sex coalesced.

Sex Reform undeniably spoke to women's needs, but women were never able to define the issue in their own terms or to seize control of the discourse so that they might deal with the issues not only as functions of class or the state, but for themselves, regardless of whether their goals and vision included family, children, and relationships with men. As Joan Kelly has so eloquently pointed out, "The tensions between the need for separation and the will to create social change runs deep in the women's movement and in each of our lives, as do the related tensions between the claims of class, race and sex" (7). The historical lesson comes back to the necessity of maintaining women's political autonomy and Kelly's "unified 'doubled' view of the social order" (8). To struggle for reproductive rights, we must understand them in the context of what "is at once an economical-

ly and sexually based social reality" (9). We need indeed to "see double" and assert feminism and reproductive rights as being simultaneously issues both of the social good and of individual rights. We are stuck with the Marxist/socialist-feminist hyphen.

Notes

This paper was presented as part of a panel in which Renate Bridenthal and Marian Kaplan also participated. I am grateful for their support and insights.

1. For a more detailed discussion of abortion as a social phenomenon and political issue during the years of the Weimar Republic, see Atina Grossmann, "Abortion and Economic Crisis: The 1931 Campaign against Paragraph 218 in Germany," New German Critique 14 (Spring 1978):119-37. For statistics, see especially pp. 121-22 and 125.
2. Alan Hunter, presentation on "Pro-Family Politics" at the Seminar on the New Right, New York Institute for the Humanities, 2 May 1981. See also Linda Gordon and Alan Hunter, "Sex, Family and the New Right, Anti-Feminism as a Political Force," Radical America 11, no. 6 (November 1977); 12, no. 1 (February 1978).
3. For general discussions of rationalization of work that have informed my thinking on the rationalism of sexuality, see Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital, the Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974) and David Noble, America by Design: Science, Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977). See also Christopher Lasch, Haven in a Heartless World, the Family Besieged (New York: Basic Books, 1977), pp. 10-18 (from a different point of view!) and Michael Gordon, "From an Unfortunate Necessity to a Cult of Mutual Orgasm: Sex in American Marital Education Literature, 1830-1940," in The Sociology of Sex, an Introductory Reader, ed. James M. Henslin and Edward Sagarin (New York: Schocken, 1978), pp. 41-83.
4. The classic of this genre of sex manual was Th. Van de Velde's Ideal Marriage, first published in 1926, in Germany in 1928, and in the United States in 1930.
5. Quoted by Alexander Cockburn in a review of Gay Talese's Thy Neighbor's Wife in New York Review of Books 27 (29 May 1980):12.
6. For the role of the Communist party in the abortion

rights struggle, particularly during the Depression, see Grossmann, "Abortion and Economic Crisis."

7. Joan Kelly, "The Doubled Vision of Feminist Theory: A Postscript to the 'Women and Power' Conference," Feminist Studies 5, no. 1 (Spring 1979):220.
8. Ibid., p. 216.
9. Ibid., p. 224. See also Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "Reproductive Freedom: Beyond 'A Woman's Right to Choose,'" Signs 5, no. 4 (Summer 1980):666-85.

LISA DUGGAN

The Social Enforcement of Heterosexuality and Lesbian Resistance in the 1920s (1981)

The present economic and political crisis constitutes a severe test for all progressive people. Political and economic attacks on poor and working-class people, women, Blacks and ethnic minorities, and gay men and lesbian women continue to gain momentum; the pressure is on to counter these attacks with clear theory, strong organization, and careful strategy. It is particularly pressing for lesbians to think hard and clearly about our situation, as we are met with myriad forms of scapegoating from some of our progressive "allies" as well as from our clear political adversaries. In order to understand our situation, it is necessary that we understand something of our history. This essay is devoted to that task.

The 1920s was a period of backlash against feminism and the Left in American history. It followed decades of profound structural change and ideological ferment during which the economic relations of industrial capitalism and the gender relations of the patriarchal family had been seriously challenged. During the 1920s, these challenges were quieted. Capitalism and patriarchy were modified but stabilized. For these reasons, the 1920s and 1980s exhibit some striking similarities (though there are important differences). For our purposes, one of the most important similarities is that the 1920s was the first period in the history of sustained, mass-based attacks against lesbianism.

This essay will (1) examine the historical background to the events of the 1920s--some of the structural and ideological changes of the nineteenth century, their meaning in the lives of women, and their effect on the heterosexual organization of gender relations; (2) examine efforts during the 1920s to contain and limit change, specifically the attempts of liberal sex theorists to "save" heterosexuality by redefining it, and the attacks of these same theorists on feminism and lesbianism; (3) look at the growth of lesbian communities and their resistance to the pervasive enforcement of heterosexuality in the 1920s; (4) consider the implications

of that earlier lesbian resistance for us in the 1980s.

The Historical Background

The nineteenth century was a period of enormous expansion of industrial capitalism in the United States, involving the growth of the wage labor force, the rise of the factory system of production, the expansion of markets for the new goods produced, and the concentration of ownership of the means of production in fewer and fewer hands. The resulting gradual decline in the family economy and the household method of production had serious consequences for the predominant organization of gender relations, though these consequences differed according to class. Some poor women were drawn into the wage labor force early, as factory workers, home workers, and domestic and farm laborers. These women also retained primary responsibility for child care and household maintenance. Bourgeois women generally did not enter the wage labor force, though the expansion of factory production and of markets for industrially produced goods removed from the home much of their "traditional" labor. As working-class women stretched themselves between paid labor and "women's work" in the home in the interests of survival, bourgeois women were increasingly confined within the household in a world separated from "public," "male" wage labor. An ideology of "separate spheres" arose to explain and justify this separation and to base it in female nature and character.

During the nineteenth century, gender relations remained firmly defined by heterosexual marriage, compulsory reproduction, a sexual division of labor both within the household and outside it, and male domination. For the vast majority, heterosexual marriage was an economic necessity, because women could rarely support themselves outside of it and men depended on the production and reproduction of women. But within these confines, some historians have argued that there was considerable latitude for loving relationships between women (up to about 1870). Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Nancy Cott, and Lillian Faderman have shown the widespread devotion and sensuality that could exist between women within a universal system of heterosexual monogamy (1).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as the size of the wage labor force continued to grow, the overall proportion of employed women jumped. There was, during these same years, an expansion of educational facilities open to women, and they attended high schools, business courses, and women's colleges in ever larger numbers. From 1920 to 1930,

this expansion of the female work force slowed to a near halt. The proportion of women who held jobs increased only 1 percent during the decade, while the proportion of women in colleges and the professions declined.

The expansion of the female wage labor force up to 1920 was both a blessing and a curse. It provided the possibility of economic self-sufficiency for significant numbers of women. This possibility was largely unrealized, however. The grim reality of wage labor for most women put them at the mercy of employers in the most exploited sectors of the job market. Women worked for lower wages, in worse conditions, and with less protection than men. Women combined their work, if married, with responsibility for children and home as well. Work did not provide independence, satisfaction, or liberation for most women. The small group for whom it did was highly visible, vocal, and threatening to defenders of patriarchal gender relations.

Changes in the organization of work for women were accompanied at the turn of the century by changes in the organization of marriage, family, and sexuality. The economic necessity of monogamous heterosexual marriage and the reproductive family was relieved by the rise of wage labor for some women, and this is reflected by the statistics for the period. The divorce rate rose dramatically; available statistics for premarital pregnancy, illegitimacy, and premarital sexual activity during the period 1880 to 1920 also indicate increases among the female population. There are also indications of a growth in the proportion of women using some method of birth control.

The possibility that some women could achieve economic independence from the family raised the further possibility that loving relationships between women, formerly existing side by side with heterosexual marriage, could become a serious alternative to such marriages. And there are, in fact, indications that a growing number of women did choose to live with other women rather than marry. At least some of these began to define themselves as lesbians and chose to associate in informal groupings with other lesbians. This marked the beginning of self-conscious lesbian communities in the twentieth century.

Together these developments posed the possibility of increased female control over the fate of marriage and the conditions of reproduction; but women were not always able to exploit these possibilities. Especially during the 1920s, the marriage rate rose and the age at marriage dropped. Unmarried women, childless women, and lesbians became the targets of psychological theories of inadequacy and the subject of popular anxiety and pity. Celibacy, defined as the re-

jection of heterosexual intercourse within marriage or outside it, was no longer considered a choice above suspicion.

All of this change, however constrained, did not go by unnoticed. Various aspects of "the woman question" were topics of vigorous public debate. The feminist movement was nourished and built partly within the separate woman's sphere of the nineteenth-century bourgeois class and partly by the contradictions and exploitation in the lives of women workers. Feminism as an ideology and a political movement grew steadily until it became a major social movement during the early twentieth century, combining a broad range of visions from radical to reform.

The reaction against the changing lives of women, and against the feminist movement particularly, began in the nineteenth century. The medical literature on female sexuality that mushroomed late in the century illustrates this reaction clearly. Doctors, psychiatrists, and "sexologists" analyzed the psychological and physical "pathology" of the independent woman, feminist, and/or lesbian. These figures were in fact overlapping in their work. Well-known sexologists Richard Von Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis described the lesbian and the feminist as congenitally different, more "masculine" than other "normal" women. Or, as James Weir, M.D., argued in 1895,

Every woman who has been at all prominent in advancing the cause of equal rights in its entirety, has either given evidences of masculo-femininity (viraginity) or has shown that she was a victim of psychosexual aberrancy. (2)

Ironically, the feminist movement lost strength after women won the vote in 1920. By the mid-1920s, the League of Women Voters had dropped one-tenth of its original membership, the Women's Trade Union League and the Consumers' League disintegrated, and the General Federation of Women's Clubs retrenched to privatized conservative positions. This decline can be traced to the disintegration of the suffrage coalition; the belief of some that women's freedom had been won; and the erosion of women's solidarity and friendships with the passing of separate spheres of male and female activity, with vicious attacks on feminism, female solidarity, and independence by psychologists and other ideologues, and with the reinterpretation of the meaning of female freedom by advertisers and commercial interests.

Enforcing Heterosexuality in the 1920s

The tremendous expansion of the productive capacities of

American industrial capitalism led to a crisis of distribution in the 1920s. During this period, new mass production industries were enlisted to create consumer demand for new products, and the advertising industry enlisted psychological theories as marketing aids. Women were targeted as the primary consumers of household goods, whose psychology could be manipulated to sell everything from refrigerators to cosmetics. For instance, the consumer-oriented industries, abetted by the media, created a new icon of womanhood to embody their ideals--the Flapper. The Flapper was young, pleasure-oriented, and "free"--free to express herself, to smoke cigarettes, and to purchase all the conveniences and beauty aids that the consumer market offered.

The Flapper image was not designed to enlist the imaginations of all women--only the women who could afford what the market had to offer. To most women she was a cruel joke, a mockery of the hardship and deprivations in their lives. To the small number of women who might have lived out the image, the Flapper represented a distortion of the feminist ideal of freedom. She also represented an emerging redefinition of heterosexual gender relations. She engaged in heterosexual courtship and pursued heterosexual marriage, not because it was her "duty" or even because she "had" to, but rather because heterosexuality was fun, fulfilling, the most meaningful and absorbing aspect of her life. The 1920s Flapper eschewed serious political involvement, female company, and "old maids," while she dated, "petted," married, and bought her way to happiness.

This redefinition of heterosexuality was articulated most clearly in the mass of literature on sex and marriage written during the 1920s by psychologists, doctors, counselors, sociologists, and liberal reformers for a popular middle-class audience. This massive literature strove to accommodate the changes in women's lives occurring over the preceding decades. Its writers acknowledged that women often worked, especially when single, and for the most part, these writers advocated divorce and birth control. They believed that sex for pleasure (within marriage) was good and provided, rather than drained, energy. They thought that wives ought to have rights in marriage; they believed in romantic love and the wife's right to sexual fulfillment. Some even advocated pre- and extramarital sexuality for women as well as men. They believed that men and women should be comrades and friends in marriage and that children, though desired, might be postponed (3). These writers advocated reform of marriage to reflect the changes in women's lives, and they regarded this advocacy as daring and risky.

There was an edge to this reformist élan, however. The liberal sex reformers, generally writing for a middle-class, or "respectable," audience, frequently combined their reform-

ing views with some formulation of eugenic doctrines: the belief that the "lower" orders were unfit biological material and should be prevented from reproducing. This gave their writing a particular class bias. These reformers also attacked "extreme" pre-World War I feminist views of female independence, while judging individual feminists, female friendships, celibacy or "spinsterhood," "lesbianism," and "frigidity" as deviant, pathological, misguided, and/or pathetic. They redefined female freedom within the context of heterosexual "fulfillment" and male control, giving their writing a gender bias as well. Change was to be curtailed just short of any real threat to the status quo.

These writers redefined and liberalized heterosexuality in order to save it. To make love and companionship rather than economic necessity the basis of marriage, the writers undertook two related projects: first, they celebrated the joys of heterosexuality and advocated its liberalization, often borrowing the ideas of earlier "sex radicals" such as Emma Goldman, F.W. Stella Browne, and Edward Carpenter; and second, they attacked every conceivable alternative to marriage and family life for women. Though they touted heterosexuality as natural and wonderful, they also expressed a great deal of anxiety about the compatibility of women and men, and they identified feminism as a particular threat.

These themes are clearly illustrated in Companionate Marriage, published in 1927 by Judge Ben Lindsey and Wainwright Evans. This book, which advocated marriage reform and recounted the experiences of the judge in the Denver juvenile and family courts, had a wide readership, especially after it was serialized in Redbook. As Lindsey and Evans defined it,

Companionate Marriage is legal marriage, with legalized Birth Control, and with the right to divorce by mutual consent for childless couples, usually without payment of alimony. (4)

The authors believed that the "educated classes" already practiced a form of companionate marriage, although the legal structures had not been altered to accommodate it. The authors attributed the new practices to the advent of birth control, a beneficial scientific advance with powerful potential for social improvement:

Scientific contraception promises what may develop into the most revolutionary change in human affairs that history has ever recorded. (5)

Typically, Lindsey and Evans were afraid that some of the social changes they observed were getting out of hand. They advocated companionate marriage to contain change within the bounds of the social order:

The non-procreative marriage, then, would be at least a partial solution of our present sex problem, and would restore sex in this country to wholesome sense and sanity. It would reduce to a minimum illicit sex relationships, promiscuity, demoralization, and lack of effective legal and social guidance and control in a department of life where such guidance and control, at the present stage of social evolution, are imperatively needed--and, I think I have shown, conspicuously lacking. (6)

If sanity could be restored to the current situation of sexual "lawlessness" and a tendency to excess by the introduction of legalized companionate marriage, Lindsey and Evans believed that most people would settle into a monogamous and loving marriage (with divorce as a corrective for mistakes):

Monogamy is the preference of all who do not consider themselves at liberty unintelligently to follow their passing and badly grounded impulses. (7)

The companionate marriage would be supplanted, in Lindsey and Evans's scheme, by a more permanent family marriage, once children arrived on the scene.

Underlying the authors' support for a reformed, happy, and flexible heterosexual marriage system were their beliefs in eugenic policies and antifeminism. They hoped that birth control and divorce would be made available to the "poor and the socially unfit, who need it most," and they expressed hope for a society "that so recognized the need for leadership and light, the need of the world for geniuses to lead it, that it would breed its geniuses intensively" (8). The authors also argued, in a contradictory fashion, that men and women were so different they could not understand each other, but that this difference was the basis of a successful marriage:

What gives marriage its peculiar power as a developer of human life is the enormous difference of potential, both psychological and physiological, that naturally exists between man and woman. Indeed, one might say that the fundamental and important fact in marriage is that men

and women cannot fully understand each other, and yet are impelled always to make an effort toward such understanding. Marriage focuses on that effort. (9)

Some people, it seems, preferred to forego the attraction-repulsion of marriage. Their resistance, according to these and many other authors of this period, was highly suspect and threatening. Lindsey and Evans quote a "respected churchman" of their acquaintance who advocated more sexual freedom for his daughter than he could admit to in public. Although this churchman expressed fear of sexual excess, he expressed an even greater fear of excess "sublimation." Drawing from popularized versions of Freudian psychological theories, this churchman was quoted as saying,

I know women who have never married, and who ought to-- who need marriage badly. They have the notion that they have sublimated all the sex they've got in feminist careers. But I've concluded with respect to such people that they either haven't got much, or else there is an unused surplus of bottled-up sex inside of them that much more than accounts for their nerves and their "peculiarities." In addition, of course, they miss the companionship, the human elements, of marriage; and they lose heavily by that.

More than that, I've concluded that many of these people who think that they have sublimated their sex impulses into something they call "higher" have really translated them into perversions and disorders and a general inability to love, think, and feel right. The psychoanalysts call that "introversion," I believe. (10)

This implied association between feminism, "spinsterhood," and lesbianism, or sexual "pathology," not new in the 1920s, became a pervasive and repetitive theme in the popular sex literature of that decade.

Thus, legalization of companionate marriage involved not only "freedom" and liberalization of repressive sexual mores but an enforcement of a new pattern of gender hierarchy based on love, heterosexual marriage, and reproduction (for the eugenically "fit").

The major themes of Lindsey and Evans were also reflected in the work of Dr. Th. H. Van de Velde, a very different sort of writer than the Denver judge. A Dutch physician and director of a gynecological clinic, he published a trilogy of books on marriage that were translated into English and widely distributed in the United States. These books--Ideal Marriage: Its Physiology and Technique, Sexual

Tensions in Marriage: Their Origin, Prevention and Treatment, and Fertility and Sterility in Marriage: Their Voluntary Promotion and Limitation--emphasized physiology and were devoted to describing biological functions and sexual techniques. But Dr. Van de Velde also had a reform agenda. He believed that "sex is the foundation of marriage" and that knowledge of sexuality could restore marriage to a more stable basis. He saw himself as arguing against the mainstream, as fulfilling an almost messianic mission.

In the first book of the trilogy, Ideal Marriage (translated into English by the well-known feminist and sex radical Stella Browne), Dr. Van de Velde addressed an audience of "the medical profession, and . . . married men." He expressed a concern that modern marriage was causing much pain and suffering, but felt that, contrary to the many voices calling for its abolition, marriage had to be saved. In his introduction, the author explained,

Marriage--in Christian civilization at least--is often a failure. On that point there can be no manner of doubt. It can be the gate of an earthly Eden, but it is, in actual fact, often a hell of torment.

It should be, in the true sense of the word, a Purgatory, that is, a state of purification; but how rarely is that obtained!

Then, should we abolish marriage?

Many voices have clamoured for its destruction, but they have not shown a more excellent way.

And a far greater number have defended this immemorial institution--the most distinguished thinkers among them.

Marriage is sacred to the believing Christian.

Indispensable to the Social Order.

Absolutely necessary to the interests of the children.

It offers the only--even though relative--security to the woman's love of love, and of giving in love.

And men, too, on the whole, find in the permanent recognition and responsibility of marriage, the best background for useful and efficient work. (11)

In Ideal Marriage, Van de Velde offered four cornerstones of the "temple of love and happiness in marriage": the right choice of partner, good physiological attitudes of the partners, a solution to the problem of parentage, and a vigorous and harmonious sex life. Ideal Marriage devoted itself to describing how the latter goal might be achieved.

Sexual Tensions in Marriage was less technically oriented. Here Dr. Van de Velde summarized various psychological theories to show that hostility is endemic to marriage (the

book was originally titled Sex Hostility in Marriage), but that this hostility could be controlled and happiness achieved. Van de Velde described two forms of sexual antagonism--the first he designated "primary" and used examples from the animal world to show that hostility between the sexes is to some extent biologically innate; the second he designated as "secondary" and explained it as a reversal or inversion of the impulse of sexual attraction. (His debt to Freudian theory is clear here.) Chapters 3 through 7 of the book were devoted to establishing "The Contrast between Masculine and Feminine." Van de Velde observed the irony that sexual differentiation is the basis of marriage, but that it at the same time undercuts its happiness and stability. In this section, the author engaged in the two major antifeminist tactics employed by liberal sex reformers--he refuted feminist theories and impugned the psychological health of women who resist marriage and "feminine fulfillment":

Many attempts have been made in recent years to prove that, psychologically, man remains man only in a society ruled over by men and that only in such a society does woman show those "feminine" characteristics that we consider typical of her sex. After all is said and done, the biological difference between masculine and feminine cannot be explained away; neither can the physical and mental contrasts between man and woman proceeding from this. . . .

And the woman? Is there really one, even among the fanatical men-women who (unless there is a homosexual disposition, or disturbance of the inner secretion) if honest, will not admit that she would like to be feminine and exclusively feminine (or at one time wished to be) and would have been only too glad to have seen a "real" man enter her life? (12)

Van de Velde was clear about the nature of the differences between men and women and the "natural" basis of male dominance. He titled several subchapters "A Married Relationship, in which the Woman Allows Herself to be Guided by her Husband, Is in Harmony Both with the Nature of the Man and of the Woman," "The Woman Is Fortunate Who Can Believe in Her Husband," and "If the Man Lacks the Necessary Qualities for This, the Woman's 'Behaviour-as-if' May Work Wonders Sometimes." Van de Velde followed this discussion up with a direct comment on feminism:

Even though this movement has arisen for the most obvi-

ous and justifiable reasons; even if it has brought, or hopes to bring, an improvement in or complete removal of, intolerable conditions and laws affecting numerous unmarried women, the divorced, the really unhappily married, widows, and, to a certain extent, those married women whose married life is unhappy for reasons of a special nature; even if Feminism has made it possible for these women to find satisfaction in life outside marriage--nevertheless, it produces, owing to many of its fundamental ideas and slogans, and its propagators, a state of mind, both in unmarried women and in married women susceptible to its influence, which is definitely opposed to the outlook dealt with above. I am, therefore, convinced that Feminism has a more or less unfavorable influence on the foundations of marriage, and on the mental disposition in many marriages. (13)

In saving marriage, Van de Velde wanted to base marriage on sexual love and sexual love on gender differences (though those same differences also caused sexual antagonism). Gender differences were interpreted within the context of male dominance.

Floyd Dell was a very different sort of writer whose work reflected the same recurrent themes. A novelist active in literary circles in Greenwich Village in the 1920s, he is identified by some as a radical, even a feminist. His Love in the Machine Age, published in 1930, is the most highly self-conscious of the books discussed here. Dell saw himself as in the midst of great economic, industrial, and scientific changes that would permit a greater degree of human development than had heretofore been achieved. He combined his ideas about economic development with psychological ideas about individual human development and hypothesized that each epoch in history had allowed humans to develop psychologically only so far. He believed that the modern age, which was rapidly eroding "patriarchal" conventions, would finally allow for full psychological development and biological fulfillment. According to Dell, human history had passed from savagery, when sex was based on property controls, to the modern age in which sex could be based on love and responsible adulthood. For Dell, responsible adulthood included emancipation from the parental family, the achievement of heterosexuality, earning a living and achieving a philosophy of life.

Dell advocated divorce, birth control, sexual expression and knowledge, and a marriage in which both partners worked in the early years before the birth of children. Others, who had gone further than this in their advocacy of change,

stood in need of correction, Dell thought. In his chapters on "some ideological overcompensations," Dell attacked state sponsorship of child care, theories of female independence of men, "free motherhood" or the desire of women to have children without husbands, and theories of sex as amusement. Against these theories (most with some sort of feminist origin), he hurled the usual psychological attacks:

The plea of preferring not to enjoy a mated love-life with the man deliberately chosen as the father of one's child, if true, would amount to a confession of some sort of sexual infantilism. (14)

Though Dell believed in heterosexual love and marriage as the apotheosis of human development, he also believed that numerous obstacles stood in the way of this goal. His chapter and subchapter titles reveal a good deal of anxiety: "Delay and Failure in Reaching the Heterosexual Goal" and "Obstacles to Heterosexual Development." Although natural, heterosexuality also had to be "achieved." In fact, the young needed to be trained for it:

The question is: do we want to train young people for--we need not hesitate to use the phrase--living happily ever after in heterosexual matehood, or for living tormented and frustrated lives of homosexuality, impotence, frigidity and purposeless promiscuity? We have our choice. (15)

Dell was also self-conscious about the fact that the "revolution" he advocated was an admittedly middle-class revolt. And in keeping with the emphasis of advertisers and consumer-oriented industries, Dell promoted married love and sexual pleasure over the potential satisfactions of work:

Our civilization will have to realize that work is not the instinctive center of our human lives and that love is; that work gains its chief emotional and practical importance as a means, not of self-support, but of mutual support of those who are joined together in mate-love and family-love. (16)

This emphasis on sexual fulfillment in marriage as a primary life goal, particularly for women, was a double-edged sword. It undercut feminist demands for female autonomy as infantile or unfulfilled, and it undercut radical demands for meaningful work and control of the production process. In Dell's view, work was not meant to be the center of life nor to be rewarding.

Thus, the liberal sex reformers can be seen advocating a reconstruction of gender relations in the 1920s. This reconstruction involved the social enforcement of heterosexuality through a glorification of heterosexual fulfillment in marriage and an assault on all alternatives to this model.

But how influential were these liberal sex reformers? Did they have a significant effect in limiting the prospects for social change in the 1920s? Questions like these are very difficult to answer adequately. They were one component of a general trend. According to surveys of American magazines, approval of extramarital relations, divorce, and birth control grew quickly after 1918 and reached a peak between 1925 and 1929, especially among the "intellectuals." By 1918 some 23 percent of all intellectual magazines favored "sex freedom," and the proportion had grown to 56 percent by 1928. The corresponding proportions for mass magazines were 13 percent in 1918 and 40 percent in 1928 (17). The theme of antifeminism and the representation of "career women," "spinsters," close female friends, and lesbians as sick and pathetic also became widespread in popular fiction during the 1920s (18). There are indications that many women internalized these messages, spread by elite and popular literature, advertisers, the movies, and newspapers (19).

Lesbian Resistance in the 1920s

These attempts to enforce heterosexuality as norm and practice were not wholly successful. Although accounts of actual sexual behavior, or even descriptions of the responses of women to the ideological assaults of the liberal sex reformers, are difficult for the researcher to locate, there is evidence that alternatives to the male-dominated heterosexual family did exist in the 1920s. This evidence is at best fragmentary and can be presented only in rough outline here. Further research will undoubtedly fill the gaps in the future.

The biographies of individual "notable" women are a rich source of information about women-loving-women in this period. Research by Blanche Cook, Judith Schwarz, Frances Doughty, Tee Corinne, and others is continuing to reveal widespread female support networks and communities of loving friends existing as alternatives to the enforced model of the heterosexual couple. Such biographies indicate the dimensions of the struggle for survival at the margins of convention. They also provide a glimpse of the power such associations could often generate--the power to resist the imposition of a heterosexual norm and the power to struggle politically in a variety of ways (20).

The literature of the 1920s is another overwhelming source of information about the resistance of women to the heterosexual norm. Works by Virginia Woolf, Vita Sackville-West, Djuna Barnes, Radclyffe Hall, Gertrude Stein, Renee Vivien, Colette, and many others provide articulate visions of alternative realities. Though most of these writers were Europeans or American expatriates, many of their works had wide circulation in the United States (21).

Accounts of the lives of ordinary lesbians are, for obvious reasons, rare. But a unique study of a lesbian community in Salt Lake City, Utah, discovered by Vern and Bonnie Bullough, indicates that other similar communities probably existed in many major cities at least by the 1920s. And a study of the sex lives of 2,200 women conducted by Katherine B. Davis, undertaken during the twenties, yielded the startling conclusion that as many as 50 percent of the women interviewed reported homoerotic feelings and 25 percent had had some homosexual experience. There is sparse information in these surveys about the response of these women to either the liberal sex reform literature or the lesbian literature available in the 1920s. The women in the Bulloughs' study did report knowledge of Radclyffe Hall's novel, Well of Loneliness, however, and the book was apparently a hotly debated topic in the Salt Lake City community (22).

All this evidence is severely limited; it is, for instance, confined to information about white middle- and upper-class women. But it does make it clear that lesbian communities existed in the 1920s, from cosmopolitan Paris to provincial Salt Lake City. Certainly, lesbian relationships had existed earlier and probably have existed in every human society. These relationships have been contained, however, by the economic necessity of marriage for most women in most times and places. Love between women existed, certainly, but it existed alongside marriage for most women. What is unique about the 1920s is that larger numbers of women began to replace heterosexual marriage with lesbian relationships. The structural changes in the lives of women that had occurred in earlier decades, while bringing on repression and reaction to limit them, did make female existence outside male control more possible for more women.

In the face of massive efforts to eradicate it, even the existence of lesbianism in the 1920s constitutes a form of resistance. In some cases, we know that more articulate and even political forms of resistance were generated as well (Radclyffe Hall intended her novel to be a form of political resistance). But from a 1980s' perspective, this resistance appears limited and ineffective. Its limitations fell into

five major categories: (1) some lesbians internalized the deprecating theories of lesbian congenital inferiority, such as that embodied in Radclyffe Hall's Well of Loneliness; (2) most lesbians, like those in the Bulloughs' study, hid themselves from necessity, limiting their ability to alter popular ideology; (3) some privileged lesbians, such as those frequenting Natalie Barney's Paris salon, developed a life-style that was a purely personal solution for the exceptional; (4) some lesbians became obsessively self-destructive, as in the case of Renee Vivien; and (5) some women-loving-women, such as Virginia Woolf, found their power and their vision contained and crippled by the men in their lives. The good news, then, is that even in the face of a massive campaign to enforce heterosexual conformity, marriage, limited childbearing, and "woman's place," many women refused it, often at great cost to themselves. (There may be more good news once more research is done on the ways of survival of working-class, Black, and ethnic lesbians.) The bad news is that the forms of resistance to the dominant ideology women could muster in the 1920s were not strong enough to stem the tide of negativity against nonconforming women. The "liberal" discourse, with its profoundly conservative implications, won the day; our side, although not vanquished, was crippled and contained.

Lesbian Resistance in the 1980s

Today, we need to fashion theory and build strategy in order to resist the current attacks on us by the right and to stem the probable defection of many of our allies. We need to develop our strengths, while avoiding the limitations of our predecessors. Unlike the 1920s, this is a period of economic contraction rather than an investment boom for capitalists. We are witnessing a resurgence of religious conservatism rather than an emergence of secular liberalism. But like the 1920s, this is a period of great change, in which a lesbian renaissance is being followed by a reaction meant to check the change and consolidate capitalism and patriarchy in the face of the challenges of recent decades. Lesbians and gay men are still being judged as deviants from a heterosexual norm--an ideological trap that lesbians themselves must still struggle to avoid.

Thus far, the lesbian-feminist community has produced two major theory/strategy combinations. The first and earliest, emerging in the late sixties and early seventies, was articulated in the Radicalesbians' "Woman Identified Woman" pa-

per, developed by the Furies, celebrated in the music of Alix Dobkin, and most recently articulated in the work of Adrienne Rich. This is the "any woman can be a lesbian" theory which argues that heterosexual identity is a social convention (23). Heterosexual behavior or a heterosexual identity is not seen as usual, natural, normal, or inevitable for any woman. Like femininity, heterosexuality is perceived as a social invention meant to contain the possibility of female autonomy. This truly radical position represents the most powerful insight that lesbian-feminism has to offer us today; it is also the position best supported by historical evidence.

The second position is a more defensive one, used primarily by lesbians working within liberal feminist or gay organizations or working in campaigns for gay and lesbian civil rights. These lesbian-feminists accept some version or other of reworked congenital or psychological theories. They argue that lesbians are either born that way (as Krafft-Ebing believed) or made that way (as Freud thought), though they also argue that there is nothing wrong with being "that way." The virtue of this theory for defensive purposes is that it presents lesbianism as innately fixed at a relatively early age. Lesbians therefore pose no threat to those heterosexuals who are wary of our "influence" on themselves or their children.

In a period of repression, when the lesbian-feminist community and the progressive Left in general are under attack, the temptation will be to adopt the latter approach because it seems more expedient in the short run. But we become our own enemies if we do so. Our only real hope is to expand the radical vision of our early years. This is the only way we can avoid the failures of the crippled and defensive lesbian resistance of the 1920s. We need to hold on to reality, to see heterosexuality as socially enforced and as a mainstay in the oppression of women. We must demand that the feminist movement not only fight economic discrimination, political repression, and physical abuse, but also challenge heterosexuality as an institution, as an imposed form of behavior. The entire feminist movement, in order not to be trapped and contained by the Right in its attempt to check social change, cannot abandon the early radical insights. We must fight for the civil rights of the lesbian and gay minority (that task remains of paramount importance) and against the idea that heterosexuality is natural, inevitable, or fixed for anybody. To be free, all women must be free to love and make commitments to other women without censure.

Notes

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1. See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth Century America," Signs 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1975); Nancy Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England 1790-1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Lillian Faderman, Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1981).
2. Dr. James Weir, "The Effects of Female Suffrage on Posterity," American Naturalist 29 (1895):819, quoted in an outstanding and persuasive paper by Polly Beals and Cindy Himes, "Varieties of Discourse on Lesbianism in England and America, 1880-1925," unpublished, 1980. Beals and Himes survey the medical literature on the subject and the feminist and socialist responses to it.
3. This essay is greatly influenced by the work of Christina Simmons. See especially her "Companionate Marriage and the Lesbian Threat," Frontiers 4, no. 3 (Fall 1979).
4. Judge Ben Lindsey and Wainright Evans, The Companionate Marriage (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1927), p. v.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 154.
7. Ibid., p. 269.
8. Ibid., pp. v and 394-95.
9. Ibid., p. 273.
10. Ibid., p. 311.
11. Th. H. Van de Velde, Ideal Marriage: Its Physiology and Technique (New York: Random House, 1926), pp. 2-3.
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RAYNA RAPP and ELLEN ROSS

The Twenties' Backlash: Compulsory Heterosexuality, the Consumer Family, and the Waning of Feminism (1981)

In the 1920s, governments openly hostile to liberal reforms in general and to feminism in particular came to power in Washington and in many state legislatures. The country's serious economic problems were in part resolved over the next decade by restructuring the family as a consumption unit. That process may be underway again in the 1980s.

A great deal separates the 1920s and the 1980s--our economy is contracting while theirs was expanding, for example--but there are lessons to be learned from the earlier backlash against feminism. Like present-day feminists, our movement foremothers stayed mobilized and active in the face of growing harassment and repression. But their social programs and activities were blocked in the courts and Congress, and their political enemies used Red-baiting language to scare away popular support: feminism and socialism were labeled "anti-American" and "anti-family." Internal splits, crystallizing around the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), divided the feminist movement, and slowly, dissension and burn-out took their toll. At the same time, a dramatic transformation of American culture, fusing sex, love, and consumerism, made the all-female organizations of the feminists seem stuffy and outmoded.

By the end of the twenties, the movement was nearly stilled, torn apart by forces that have some parallels today. Red-baiting, and something we today would call lesbian-baiting, divided feminists from one another. Activists failed to recruit younger women who were sold on the new "heterosexual revolution" and out of touch with their feminist heritage. And professional women increasingly defined their own feminism as a life-style, not a political movement. They opted for individual careers and personal development over the often tough and thankless work of organizing when government, social policy, and cultural values were turning against feminism.

Although we alone cannot control the large-scale changes that American politics, economics, and culture are now going

through, we can be alert to the problems of scare tactics, recruitment, and life-style demobilization. Feminist "survivalism" in the eighties needs to face these issues as we defend the movement we have built.

The 1923 election of Calvin Coolidge, Ronald Reagan's favorite among presidents and a staunch advocate of laissez-faire capitalism, was warmly greeted by businessmen. The Wall Street Journal proclaimed enthusiastically, "Never before . . . has a government been so completely fused with business" (1). Coolidge and his predecessor, Warren Harding, set about undoing the enormous accomplishments of the Progressive era, work in which millions of women had participated and had a stake.

Left politics had flourished in the Progressive era. The Socialist Party of America, founded in 1901, went on to accumulate electoral successes all over the country in the next two decades. The Industrial Workers of the World, founded a few years later, advocated militant direct action and worked to unionize unorganized industrial workers. Progressivism met the challenge by incorporating some of the socialist and labor demands and forestalling others.

The Progressive movement provided an umbrella for, and was shaped by, the political activism of women, especially that of the small but growing group of female professionals. By 1900, about 85,000 women were enrolled in colleges; in 1920, their number was 250,000. For these women, the expanding social service sector that accompanied the reform movement provided increased job possibilities. By 1910, for example, 80 percent of schoolteachers were women, as were the vast majority of settlement house workers (2).

These women graduates married at much lower rates than did other American women. Among the turn-of-the-century generation, only 28 to 40 percent of female college graduates married, and in 1920, 75 percent of female professionals were single (3). These figures suggest that educated elite women had been making a choice between "social housekeeping"--a commitment to life-long professional work based on women's unique contribution to social service--and the pursuit of private housekeeping within the institution of marriage.

In the schools and settlement houses where they worked, white single professional women had often formed enduring social networks, female-centered "social families." They taught "social housekeeping" to the immigrant women and urban families they worked among. As the Henry Street Settlement House Bulletin stated it, "Running New York is just a big housekeeping job, just like your own home, only on a larger scale. Therefore, you should be interested in

city-wide affairs" (4). Many reform-minded women were also what William O'Neill has called "social feminists." This tendency in the feminist movement linked women's rights and needs with a commitment to a whole set of social reforms--in municipal government, child and women's labor regulation, health and safety measures. The link was often, though not always, the belief that women were uniquely suited to putting society's house in order (5).

This "social motherhood" was inspired by the vision of an alliance of women across class lines to reform the evils of the masculine world. Without benefit of the vote and working in mothers' clubs, consumer groups, industrial reform coalitions, and suffrage organizations, women had pressed Congress and the state legislatures to enact literally hundreds of child labor, women's equity, and social hygiene laws before the Progressive era drew to a close. Middle-class Black women formed an active settlement house and rescue-mission movement out of their women's club base. Black women's political and community work, however, so much of which focused on providing basic necessities like education, civil rights, and municipal services in Black neighborhoods, was both less class-segregated and less sex-segregated than that of white women (6).

The left-wing movement was nearly obliterated during the political repression of World War I and in the Red scare that followed the success of the second Russian Revolution. Members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), of immigrant political clubs, and later, of the newly formed Communist party were harassed and many were deported. The Socialist party and the IWW were decimated, and union organizing, membership, and militancy were at a low point during the twenties (7). Sheltered by conservatives and reactionaries in government positions, groups like the Sentinels of the Republic operated confidently on the local and national levels. Others like the American Medical Association (AMA) and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) became more conservative during this period. In right-wing groups like the Woman Patriots (formerly, the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage), the National Association of Manufacturers and its state branches, and the Ku Klux Klan, any government protection of women, immigrants, workers, or consumers was opposed as an "imported socialistic scheme." At the height of its power in the early 1920s, the Klan probably had millions of members and had had startling electoral successes in several states. Although aimed mostly at Blacks, other targets of Klan violence, especially in the midwest and west, included Catholics, immigrants, and "bad" ("loose" or "divorced") women (8).

The coalition of women's and feminist organizations, which had so recently triumphed with the Nineteenth Amendment granting women's suffrage, found itself in strange political territory under Harding and Coolidge. But it would be wrong to assume that the winning of suffrage dismembered the coalition or destroyed its effectiveness. Millions remained mobilized, at least in the first half of the decade.

A group of the old organizations--some with new names--cooperated to push through social feminist programs in Washington and in the states: the prohibition of child labor through a constitutional amendment, maternal and infant protection, and expansion of such civic rights for women as serving on juries or holding office. The National League of Women Voters, newly set up by the National American Women Suffrage Association; the National Consumers League; the National Women's Trade Union League (NWTUL); the American Association of University Women; the General Federation of Women's Clubs; the Women's Christian Temperance Union; the YWCA; and even, temporarily, the DAR came together in the Women's Joint Congressional Committee (WJCC) to lobby for these programs in Washington. One of its first successes, The Sheppard-Towner Bill of 1921, was pushed through both houses of Congress by the threat of newly enfranchised women using their untried vote. The law provided a very modest amount of money administered through the states for instruction in maternal and infant health by visiting nurses in clinics and centers, and through conferences and the distribution of literature. The AMA, which opposed the bill, thought women had become "one of the strongest lobbies that has ever been seen in Washington" (9).

But by mid-decade, the coalition's programs met a series of roadblocks that were not removed until the Roosevelt administration. The Supreme Court in 1923 ruled against the concept of a minimum wage protecting women but not men. Many states that had already passed such laws began to repeal them. George Sutherland, a recent Harding appointee to the Court, argued that the Nineteenth Amendment had given women equality with men and so special protection for them was no longer necessary. Like our own ERA, the child labor amendment to the Constitution was easily ushered through Congress and the White House in 1922. But it was blocked in key states in antirratification campaigns organized by the Catholic Church defending the "traditional" family against government "intrusion," and by the state manufacturers' associations (10).

In 1921, the Woman's party, the most militant of the pro-suffrage groups, reorganized around a platform of total legal equity with men. This position became a lightning rod

for bitter splits and controversies among feminist groups. The conflict centered on the Equal Rights Amendment which the new party proposed. The amendment was first introduced in Congress in 1923 by Representative Daniel Anthony, Susan B. Anthony's nephew. In the early twenties, the ERA was not viewed as a far-off dream, for such an amendment had handily passed in Wisconsin in 1921 (with wording protecting whatever special protection women had already won). The passage was supported by a powerful coalition of women's groups ranging from the DAR to the Polish Housewives League. Many social feminists opposed the ERA, however, because they believed that the courts would surely interpret the measure so as to leave women workers more vulnerable than their male peers (11).

The social feminists and the Women's party were on opposite sides in state-level campaigns for such protective laws as the eight-hour-day bill introduced in New York in the early twenties, in California in 1927 and, later, in Indiana. The ERA issue was introduced repeatedly by the Women's party and could be very disruptive. Adept at publicity techniques from suffrage days, the Women's party representatives grabbed the news spotlight at many drabber women's events, acting as the guerrilla theater of their day.

By the early thirties, social feminist groups like the NWTUL were severely weakened in finances and membership; those groups that remained of the original suffrage coalition were operating on a shoestring (12). Yet some women's organizations were undiminished in strength or purpose; most of these did not define themselves as feminist. The National Association of Colored Women (NACW), founded in 1896, united a network of Black women's clubs and service groups which were extremely active at the municipal and state levels in conducting antilynching campaigns, running settlement houses and shelters, and agitating for decent school and municipal services in southern and northern cities. Mary Talbert, the NACW's president, was also head of a women's group formed through the NAACP in the early twenties to support antilynching legislation in Washington (13).

In addition to internal splits and recruitment problems, feminist groups and causes were harmed by labels like "subversive," "Bolshevik," or "antifamily." The NWTUL was called a communist organization, and the U.S. Women's Bureau was charged with trying to Bolshevize America by destroying the family through its support of federal legislation like the Sheppard-Towner Act. Feminist organizations were especially active during and after World War I in international-

ist and peace groups. Feminism was thus particularly suspect in the War Department, headed in the early twenties by the notorious antisuffragist John Weeks. In his department, a huge chart was compiled in 1922, known as the "spider web" chart, linking feminist and women's organizations with Bolshevism and demonstrating the imminence of a Bolshevik takeover, with Florence Watkins, head of the Parent Teachers Association, as the connecting link (14).

Reading accounts of the electoral battles of the twenties, one senses that these concerns--with subversion from abroad or with undermining "the family"---were cynically mustered by interest groups with selfish fears about such matters as federal interference with the medical profession's prerogatives or abolition of the child labor on which the U.S. textile industry still relied. Activists believed, however, that such charges were central to the ultimate defeat of the child labor amendment.

Feminist activists recognized how destructive this Red-baiting was. It not only defeated the legislation they fought for but diverted their much-needed energy into endless rebuttals and defensive campaigns. Furthermore, it undermined the feminism and Progressivism of many members, successfully detaching a number of organizations from the original coalition. For instance, some delegates to the League of Women Voters' 1921 convention believed that the Communist International was behind the Sheppard-Towner Act. Members of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs tried to prevent the federation from working with the NWTUL in 1923 because it was supposedly communist-run. Many professional women's groups became right wing or apolitical. By the second half of the twenties, the Federation of Women's Clubs was proselytizing about the value of household appliances and ferreting out communist schoolteachers. It withdrew from the Women's Joint Congressional Committee in 1928. Even the League of Women Voters adopted a more complicated and timid method of taking stands on national issues. In sum, the political context had shifted, and the attacks on feminism, the broken coalitions, and the growing conservatism of many earlier allies left the women's movement without energy or new recruits (15).

The failure of female social activism on the Progressive model to extend itself into the next generation is illustrated in the history of the Association of Women for the Prevention of Lynching. A large and effective organization of white women, based on the huge southern membership of the Methodist Women's Missionary Council, it was founded in 1930. The leadership of the association was made up of women who had led the suffrage movement a dozen years before.

Their average age was forty-eight. The League of Women Voters also complained of difficulty recruiting younger members, and throughout the ranks of organized progressive womanhood in the twenties and thirties, there was a dearth of young women (16).

The dismantling of organized social feminism occurred in the context of a massive reorganization in the U.S. economy. Between 1922 and 1929, corporate financial growth was about 300 percent, and industrial production nearly doubled. New technology--the electrification of production and the assembly line, for example--underlay this growth in the major industries of the era; autos, construction, consumer products for the home, and petrochemicals. In 1914, after the assembly line had been introduced at Ford's Highland Park plant, it took only 93 minutes to assemble an auto that had required 12.5 hours to build four years earlier (17). The techniques of mass production were thus mastered in this period. What remained was distribution, an especially tricky problem since real incomes did not keep up with the growth of corporate wealth. Foreign markets, installment buying, and advertising were all called in to create new buyers. By the end of the decade, there were 25 million cars registered in America, 70 percent of them bought on credit. A new system of credit-fixed monthly mortgage payments helped spur the home-building industry. Home owning, so essential to the profits of banks and industry, was lauded in patriotic terms. Advertising became a major business expense in the twenties, with magazine revenues alone growing from \$59 million to \$196 million between 1918 and 1929. In this context, a growing advertising industry set about "effecting a self-conscious change in the psychic economy," as historian Stuart Ewen puts it, creating new needs for "prestige," "glamour," or "sex appeal," new fears of looking old or of having "halitosis" (18), and new pressures on families.

Modern families engaged in new kinds of consumption. During the twenties, the majority of American homes got electricity, and sales of domestic appliances boomed. Power companies not only advertised appliances, they also extended consumer credit and repaired what they sold for free. Seventy percent of gas stoves and 90 percent of washing machines and sewing machines were purchased on credit (19). The packaged food industry also flourished; during the decade, Campbell, Kellogg, and Quaker Oats became household words. Most Americans also switched to store-bought, ready-made clothing purchased from mail-order houses and department stores. American businesses soon learned that 80 percent of domestic funds were spent by women. The new market researchers argued that families would be strengthened by learning

to spend, not to save. In home economics courses, buying, not frugality, was defined as the civic duty of young girls (20).

When, in the 1920s, the General Confederation of Women's Clubs offered their membership lists for use in both consumer and sexual surveys, the fusion of the two topics was anything but accidental. Ladies Home Journal had labeled the twenties the decade not of the sexual revolution but of the "cosmetics revolution." Mass circulation pulp journals full of Avon, Pond's, and Woodbury ads created home markets for products that disseminated images of feminine attractiveness. By the late 1920s, True Romance had a circulation of two million, and like Ladies' Home Journal and Good Housekeeping, it mingled sex and sales. What Mary Ryan has described as the "sexy saleslady" became a standard cultural image: energy, youth, and beauty in the service of consumption (21). By the end of the decade, beauty pageants had taken on a standardized, popular format: women had been trained not only to do the consuming but to be consumed as well.

Promoted by psychologists and other social service professionals, what we have come to think of as the "heterosexual revolution" was indeed an important element of the consumer culture of the twenties. The rise of "companionate marriage" as an ideal and the labeling of female-centered sociability as "lesbian" and deviant--two main themes in the heterosexual revolution--indirectly undermined organized feminism by labeling the intense friendship networks on which feminist organizations were based as stodgy and old-fashioned.

Earlier generations of women had internalized notions of sexual differences and distance between women and men, and prescriptive literature viewed sex as a wife's duty. But the writings of the new sexual modernists--Havelock Ellis, G. Stanley Hall, and, later, Freud and such disciples as Helene Deutsch and Marie Bonaparte--transformed the image of the female. In the new psychological discourse, women were constructed as sexual beings, and orgasm was defined as a natural imperative for both sexes. Victorian marriage, repressive and formal, was criticized by modernists in favor of a union in which partners might function as friends and lovers. Heterosexuality, its problems and pitfalls, became a topic of concern among a broad spectrum of social reformers, health activists, and educators. New marital and sexual practices were debated and publicized, and movements for trial marriage, serial marriage, and divorce as solutions to sexual incompatibility gained popularity. The twenties marked the height of the struggle for birth control, and by

this time a large majority of middle-class women used contraception. By the thirties a growing proportion of working-class women used it as well. The Victorian image defining maternity as women's ultimate fulfillment was being replaced by attention to their sexual partnership with men.

Many of the sexual modernists and psychologists who expressed such sympathetic interest in women's heterosexual liberation also pinned punitive labels on those who could not or would not conform to the new proscriptions. Women's lack of orgasm with males was attributed to their resistance to "fully adult" sexuality; "frigid" women were labeled immature, even masculine. Psychologists routinely labeled feminists as neurotic, sublimating sadists and saw their homosocial liaisons as "compensations" for their lack of heteroerotic success (22).

The heterosexual revolution was thus a double-edged sword. Women undoubtedly benefited from the more open discussion of female-male sexuality and its frustrations. But they also lost the diffuse homosocial and homosexual milieus within which earlier generations of women had operated, for sexual surveys revealed that college-educated women had had rich experiences in homoeroticism. And those women who continued to keep their social distance from men--who lived in what was popularly known as the "Boston marriage"--were seen as obstacles to the growth of companionate marriage. Lesbians were castigated for their rejection of male-centered coitus and their lack of interest in marriage and maternity; lesbianism became a highly charged social and scientific category. As historian Christina Simmons has pointed out:

In cultural terms lesbianism represented women's autonomy in various forms--feminism, careers, refusal to marry, failure to adjust to marital sexuality. (23)

The negative image of lesbians that appeared in sexologists' writings centered on their dangerous, "intermediate" sexuality, and lesbianism served as a focus for a cultural discourse concerning proper degrees of gender dichotomization in a period when womanhood and manhood were being redefined. Feminist scholars Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Esther Newton have analyzed the evolution of "mannish women" in the 1920s and the images' implications for lesbians' self-definition. Though lesbianism as a category was partly created by sexologists, some women eagerly claimed it as their own, for it provided a sphere in which women could both assert their social independence from men and develop a woman-centered eroticism. Thus the creation of a specifically lesbian subculture, built out of the dismantling of a

formerly diffuse, homosocial sphere, was intensified in this era (24).

Simultaneously, prior homosocial institutions, so important to feminist organizing and consciousness, came to be viewed as old-fashioned and lost much of their legitimacy. The proportion of single-sex colleges declined continuously from the 1870s on as coeducation became more and more popular (25). Settlement houses declined in social and financial importance for white women, as social work became a profession rather than a live-in vocation and restrictive immigration quotas diminished the pool of prospective clients (26). Settlement work by Black women, however, did not diminish in this period, nor did the antilynching campaigns in which so many participated.

Above all, the focus on companionate marriage and the "consumer revolution" reorganized the most prevalent of all homosocial institutions--the family itself. Generations of Americans had relied on close ties among same-sexed kin and kin-like friendships to transmit a variety of skills and cultural practices. But the rise of domestic science in settlement houses and public schools provided a compelling version of family life which competed with the knowledge immigrant mothers could pass on to their Americanizing daughters. As Jane Addams wrote, "An Italian girl who had had lessons in cooking at the public school will help her mother to connect the entire family with American food and household habits" (27). The rise of boys' clubs, sports clubs, and the Boy Scouts can also be viewed as replacements for skills no longer transmitted from father to son under conditions of expanding urban capitalism. As the power of parent-to-child networks decreased, adolescent peer culture grew with its emphasis on preparation for heterosexuality. The public schools, settlement houses, dance halls, and street life made claims on immigrant daughters and sons that separated them from the worlds of their parents (28).

The rise of an adolescent peer culture occurred as public education expanded dramatically. By the end of the twenties, half the nation's youth were attending high school. The schools spread not only technical skills and training but what the Lynds, studying Middletown, trenchantly referred to as "social illiteracy," a kind of uncritical consumerism and individualism. High school was the environment in which heterosexual youth culture really flourished: in Middletown, a city of 35,000, there were fourteen girls' clubs to sponsor dances around high school events and dozens of boys' clubs promoting athletics. Mass mobilization and hysteria surrounded the endless cycle of basketball, football, and baseball games, accompanied by cheerleading and

boosterism. Car ownership also came to play a role in adolescent culture. "If you want to know all that's changing in Middletown, it's spelled A-U-T-O," one local commented. Motoring by youth replaced porch-sitting and family picnics as auto ownership became widespread. By 1923, 4 million cars were being manufactured in America, and there were two of them for every three families in Middletown. The autonomy youth achieved through the auto created a social upheaval. Use of the car was listed as one of the most serious causes of family disputes among Middletown's teenagers, and the majority of what juvenile courts handled as girls' "sex crimes" in 1924 took place in automobiles (29).

In the same period, the growth of the movie industry produced a mass culture consumed across the continent. In Middletown, programs changed frequently--three hundred different screenings could be viewed in a single year, and teens reported attending up to three times a week. Although "Wild West" films were popular, by far the most admired films were "society romances." With titles like "Married Flirts," "The Daring Years," "Flaming Youth," "Old Wives for New," "Why Change Your Wife," the movies presented a revised social anatomy of romantic heterosexuality. Girls reported to survey researchers that they learned the details of making love in movies, such as what to do with both pairs of arms while embracing. As one seventeen-year-old put it, "No wonder girls of the older days, before movies, were so modest and bashful. They never saw Clara Bow and William Haines . . . If we did not see such examples . . . where would we get the idea of being 'hot'? We wouldn't." As Elizabeth Ewen points out, such films had a major impact on the Americanization of urban immigrant girls, whose assimilation linked bourgeois fantasy, consumption, and heterosexual romance, all experiences to be had outside of their families (30). In Middletown, movies advertised, "girls! . . . if you want to know what love really means, its exquisite torture, its overwhelming raptures, see. . . ."

Peer culture, shaped by the spread of consumerism in autos and movie houses, was a powerful force in demobilizing the homosocial, intergenerational world within which social feminism had flourished. As one thoughtful exsuffragist remarked in 1928, "The feminist movement just isn't all that smart among the juniors" (31). Sold on celluloid and male-oriented images of glamour, young women were no longer recruitable to what appeared as outmoded "causes."

The new commercial culture of the twenties was not so much directly antifeminist as it was co-optive of feminist issues and concerns. By the late twenties, much that passed for feminist thought dealt with individual choices and personal

fulfillment--life-style feminism supplanted its activist predecessor. Ruth Pickering, one of "those modern women" whose stories were printed in the Nation in the twenties, wrote, "I have traded my sense of exhilarating defiance (shall we call it feminism?) for an assurance of free and unimpeded self-expression (or shall we call that feminism?). In other words I have grown up." Confessions from "Feminists--New Style" who had given up employment for domestic life expressed their choices in articles like "I Gave Up My Law Books for a Cook Book" or "You May Have My Job, a Feminist Discovers Her Home." Such articles focused on individual choices and their rewards, but never analyzed the enormous difficulties involved in women's double shift at home and at work or the obstacles even professional women faced on the job. Female self-assertiveness--where it existed--took unpolitical forms. "We're not out to benefit society," a young woman told an interviewer in 1928. "We're out for Mary's job and Luella's art, and Barbara's independence and the rest of our individual careers and desires" (32). Themes of female independence, even militancy, were thoroughly co-opted, resurfacing in advertising, the most impressive example of which was staged in 1929 by advertising consultant Edward Bernays, Freud's nephew. In that year's Easter Parade, accompanied by enormous publicity, Bernays organized a contingent of smoking women in formation aping the suffrage demonstrations of an earlier decade. "Why not a parade of women lighting torches of freedom--smoking cigarettes?" he had suggested to George W. Will, owner of the American Tobacco Company (33). We had indeed come a "long way."

Delving into the political and cultural backlash that took place two generations ago alerts us to mistakes we can avoid this time around and opportunities we ought to pursue.

Right now, we need to become self-conscious about defending all groups that support feminist issues, despite our differences. Sacrificing the less "respectable" groups and issues from coalitions is futile, surely a mistake to avoid. In a right-wing era, feminism cannot be respectable without abandoning its real content. Scare tactics like those of Jeremiah Denton's Senate Committee on Internal Terrorism and Subversion may try to encourage the separation of respectable from unrespectable opposition groups, but history shows us the importance of defending all our own.

We are entering this period of backlash with some strengths that our foremothers lacked. The institutions feminists established in the seventies--feminist health centers, women's centers, rape crisis groups, battered women's shelters, and especially women's studies programs--have es-

tablished a network perhaps wider than the one that won the vote, and its political scope is broader and more varied. These institutions need our zealous defense, not only for their crucial services, but as our lifeline to the generation who follows us into feminism.

Today, too, a far larger and more representative proportion of women are in the paid work force than during the twenties, and although labor unions in general have faced massive losses, their "female sector" is growing fast. Organized female labor is an enormous asset for our movement and a sign of real hope for weathering the Reagan years. Indeed, as powerful members of the left-to-liberal coalitions that are beginning to form now, we feminists have it in our power to make the depths of the twenties' backlash impossible to re-create today.

Notes

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1. William E. Leuchtenburg, The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 103.
2. Sheila M. Rothman, Woman's Proper Place (New York: Basic Books, 1978), p. 106; Mary P. Ryan, Womanhood in America: From Colonial Times to the Present, 2d ed. (New York: Franklin Watts, 1979), p. 138.
3. Rothman, Woman's Proper Place, pp. 46-47; Ryan, Womanhood in America, p. 152; Christina Simmons, "Companionate Marriage and the Lesbian Threat," Frontiers 4, no. 3 (Fall 1979):59, n.33.
4. Rothman, Woman's Proper Place, pp. 3, 117 citing the Henry Street Mothers Club, papers of Lillian Wald.
5. We are using the terms suggested by William L. O'Neill in Everyone Was Brave (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1971), p. x. The social and emotional lives of women settlement house workers are discussed in Blanche Wisen Cook, Women and Support Networks (New York: Out & Out Books, 1979).
6. There is a great deal of exciting new historical work on the civic and neighborhood activities of Black women, much of it noted in a useful bibliographical essay by Rosalyn Terborg-Penn (History Teacher 13 [February

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7. Julian F. Jaffe, Crusade against Radicalism: New York during the Red Scare, 1914-1924 (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1972), pp. 81-82.
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 9. William H. Chafe, The American Woman. Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Role, 1920-1970 (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 28.
 10. On Adkins v. Children's Hospital, see Clarke A. Chambers, "The Campaign for Women's Rights in the 1920's," in Our American Sisters: Women in American Life and Thought, ed. Jean E. Friedman and William G. Shade, 2d ed. (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1976), pp. 323-44, 330. A good account of the defeat of the Child Labor Amendment is found in Lemons, Woman Citizen, pp. 219-33.
 11. O'Neill, Everyone Was Brave, pp. 277-78; Lemons, Woman Citizen, p. 87.
 12. Lemons, Woman Citizen, pp. 200, 200-203, 192-93.
 13. Lerner, "Community Work of Black Club Women."
 14. Lemons, Woman Citizen, pp. 214, 210, 214-17, 218.
 15. *Ibid.*, pp. 213-14, 222-23.
 16. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "'A Truly Subversive Affair': Women against Lynching in the Twentieth-Century South," in Women of America: A History, ed. Carol R. Berkin and Mary Beth Norton (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), pp. 360-88; O'Neill, Everyone Was Brave, p. 307.
 17. Leuchtenburg, Perils of Prosperity, p. 179.
 18. Stuart Ewen, Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), pp. 32, 167.
 19. Joan Greenbaum, "Out of the Frying Pan: The Kitchen as Commodity and Culture," unpublished ms., 1981, p. 6.
 20. Ryan, Womanhood in America, p. 180; Heidi I. Hartmann, "Capitalism and Women's Work in the Home 1900-1930" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1974).

21. Ryan, Womanhood in America, pp. 177-82.
22. Ibid., pp. 153-77, 159; Simmons, "Companionate Marriage."
23. Simmons, "Companionate Marriage," p. 58.
24. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Esther Newton, "The Mythic Lesbian and the New Woman: Power, Sexuality and Legitimacy," paper delivered at the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, Vassar College, 16 June 1981.
25. Rothman, Woman's Proper Place, p. 181.
26. The decline of the settlement movement after World War I is noted by Allen F. Davis, in Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement 1890-1914 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 228-35.
27. Quoted in Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, "The Manufacture of Housework," Socialist Revolution 5, no. 4 (October-December 1975):5-40, 30.
28. Elizabeth Ewen, "City Lights: Immigrant Women and the Rise of the Movies," Signs 5, no. 3 suppl. (Spring 1980):S45-S65.
29. Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, Middletown, paperback ed. (New York: Harvest Books, 1956). Two other good studies of youth culture in the American twenties are Paula S. Fass, The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920's (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); and Lewis Ehrenberg, Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981).
30. Mary P. Ryan, "The Projection of a New Womanhood: The Movie Moderns in the 1920's," in Our American Sisters, pp. 366-84; Ewen, "City Lights," pp. S55-S58.
31. Quoted in O'Neill, Everyone Was Brave, p. 307.
32. Elaine Showalter, ed., These Modern Women: Autobiographical Essays from the Twenties, p. 16; Frank Stricker, "Cookbooks and Law Books: The Hidden History of Career Women in Twentieth-Century America," in A Heritage of Her Own, ed. Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), pp. 476-98, 491.
33. Ewen, Captains of Consciousness, p. 160.

Part II
The New Antifeminism

ZILLAH EISENSTEIN

Antifeminism and the New Right (1981)

The feminist movement is on the defensive in 1981 because of the highly mobilized assault against it by New Right and neo-conservative forces. These include the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC), New Right organizers and fund raisers like Paul Weyrich and Richard Viguerie, the so-called prolife movement, the evangelical right headed by a group calling itself the Moral Majority (which is not a majority), neoconservative policy makers like Senator Patrick Moynihan, and factions of the Republican party that include Senators Jesse Helms and Paul Laxalt (1). It is important to remember that the antifeminist focus of the New Right is a reaction to the power exercised by the women's movement through the 1970s, a reaction to married women's entry into the wage labor force, and a reaction to the changing nature of the family. It is women's potential power to transform this society that the right fears. Proof of this power is the fact that both the New Right and the center factions think they need to mobilize against the feminist movement and that they have made it a central focus of their politics, although they have different conceptions of how to do this.

The reactionary forces in this country reject the liberal state, which they define as the welfare state. Neoconservatives (2) hold the welfare state responsible for the increasing demands for equality, which they call an "excess of democracy." Hence, they argue, the crisis of the state is a problem of too high expectations. In addition, New Right forces indict the welfare state because it has redefined the traditional patriarchal family and therefore the relationship of men and women to the state and to each other; the crisis, for the Right, is that men have lost their authority. I will argue that the crisis of the welfare state instead reflects the conflicts among liberalism (the ideology and consciousness of the majority of Americans) (3), the needs of an advanced capitalist market, the requirements of traditional familial patriarchy, and structural racism. The

state embodies these conflicts at the same time it tries to resolve them. Although the New Right has made major inroads into the realms of state power, it has not achieved hegemony. It still must vie for power against center factions within the Democratic and Republican parties. Although I think the top priority of these different factions is to stabilize the patriarchal underpinnings of capitalism, they differ on how to do this.

This discussion will show that there is a systematic attempt by the different factions of the state to deradicalize the women's movement by dismantling the gains made by groups working for reproductive rights and the right to abortion. These groups are the target because they are the most forceful arm of the feminist movement as well as the most organized force for progressive change today. Abortion has become the central issue for the state because women's control of their reproductive freedom is directly at odds with patriarchal control, a control that is presently being undermined by the transformation of the traditional patriarchal family. It is important to understand that there is a significant difference between the patriarchal, antifeminist priorities of the state and the New Right forces within it, on the one hand, and the American public, on the other. The public has not moved to the Right but instead has withdrawn from mainstream electoral politics.

The Married Wage-Earning Woman and the Patriarchal State

First of all, it is important to define the state. I understand it to be an active part of the struggle within society. The activism of the state actually grows out of the attempt to reconcile conflict. The state must create social order and political cohesion by mediating the conflicts that arise among capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and the ideology of liberalism. In this sense, the state is simultaneously structured by its commitments to patriarchy, capitalism, and racism. I will focus here on the particular relation between patriarchy and the state because it is this problem that presently preoccupies the state. My major point is this: central to the politics of the 1980s is the formulation of a family policy that will address the present conflict between the needs of advanced capitalism (for married women workers) and the needs of patriarchal authority.

Structural changes in the economy, changes in the wage structure, and inflation have pulled white married women into the labor force (4). As a result, the dominant form of family life has become the dual-wage-earning family (5).

However, this advanced capitalist patriarchal family form--particularly the married wage-earning women--is under attack by the New Right. The New Right presents as the preferred model the traditional patriarchal family, defined as a heterosexual married couple with the husband in the labor force and the wife responsible for the rearing of children and the care of the household. This model, however, applies to only 14 percent of families today (6). Conflict exists, as we shall see, within the state over which family form should underpin state policy in the hopes of mediating conflict between capitalism and patriarchy.

What remains a question for the politics of the 1980s is whether the conflict between advanced capitalism and the patriarchal family can be resolved. It may appear that the needs of the capitalist market for women workers has developed within a system of patriarchal hierarchy (7). Women have been segregated in the low-productivity sector of the market, and their pay is unequal to men's even when the work is the same or of comparable worth. But women as workers come to expect equal treatment in the market, whether or not they expect it in their familial relations. The relations of the home are supposedly regulated by love and devotion. The work in the market for a majority of women is done because they need the wages. Thus, the wage is what regulates woman's relations at the work place. In this sense, her boss is not her husband. In this sense, women wage earners think they deserve equality as wage earners.

Some women workers may accept the patriarchal organization of their family life in that they think it is acceptable that they cook the meals or do the laundry (although many do not), but I have yet to hear one woman say that she does not have the right to earn the same wages as a man. In other words, the capitalist marketplace has reproduced a patriarchal structure within the market, but the ideology of the bourgeois marketplace--equality of opportunity, equality before the law, individual aggressiveness, and independence--remains. As women internalize and apply these values to themselves and, at the same time, operate within the patriarchal structure of the market, a consciousness develops that is critical of their dead-end work lives. In the market, one's sex is supposed to be irrelevant. People are supposedly individuals, not members of a sexual class. Whoever works hard is supposed to be rewarded. To the extent that one internalizes these values when one enters the market, the married wage-earning woman becomes a contradiction in terms.

This highlighting of women's differentiation from men in the marketplace begins to develop a consciousness one can term feminist. With a majority of the married women work-

ing in the labor force today and expecting equality—even if it is only equality in the work place--the promises of liberalism are being challenged. The issue here is not merely the cost to the capitalist or profit maintenance, although these are always at issue. (To equalize pay between men and women would cost billions of dollars.) More important is that equality in the work place would erode a major form of patriarchal control that is presently maintained as much in the market as it is in the home.

Here then is the contradiction: advanced capitalism, given structural changes and inflation, has required married women to enter the labor force. Although the capitalist market is patriarchally structured, its ideology is liberal. The consciousness of married wage-earning women reflects the conflict between liberalism as an ideology and patriarchy as a structural requisite of the capitalist market. Women's discontent, however limited, recognizes and rejects this patriarchal structuring of their opportunities in the market. When this is combined with married women's double work day--the work of the home and children as well as the outside job--the possibility of a feminist consciousness heightens. The New Right's attack on married wage-earning women lies in this reality: that wage-earning women, in beginning to demand equality (before the law and in wages), have begun a challenge to the patriarchal organization of the market. This challenge constitutes a crisis for the state because of its patriarchal foundation.

What do we mean when we say that the state is patriarchal or that patriarchy operates on the state level (8)? For one, it means that the distinction between public (male) and private (female) life underlies the formation of the state, thus reifying the division between public and private life as one of sexual difference. The separation of male and female, or public and private, life upon which patriarchy is premised is undermined by married women's entry into the labor force. Patriarchy, therefore, must be redefined to encompass woman's activity in the market as she becomes the "working mother."

As patriarchal authority is redefined, it must be extended to the market in the hopes of bolstering it in the family while the patriarchal institution of motherhood (9) comes to include the public space of the market. The New Right's reaction to women's challenge is to try to remove women from the labor force, thereby reinforcing patriarchal authority in the family. Center factions within the state, however, acknowledge the changes in both the family and the market and wish to establish a policy that recognizes the fact that a majority of mothers are presently in the labor force.

Their hope is to establish a family policy that can successfully transfer the patriarchal authority of the father to the advanced capitalist market, and as a result restabilizing the patriarchal underpinnings of capitalism. This issue of family policy is what presently defines the antifeminist stance of the state. The 1980 presidential election and the Reagan-Stockman budget are two examples that reflect the state's antifeminist priorities.

The Sexual Politics of the 1980 Election

The theme of the 1980 election was the need to make America strong through strengthening the family, the economy, and the military. The neoconservative and New Right answer to the crisis of American democracy as one of reconstituting the traditional patriarchal family and constructing an authoritarian democracy was what Bertram Gross calls "friendly fascism" (10). Profamily politics, which are antifeminist, antidétente, anticommunist, and anti-affirmative action, provided the ideological language for arguing for a strong America. A presently unstable society must be reconstructed, they felt, by rebuilding the authority of the family and the state at home and abroad. Sexual politics did not serve merely as a gloss in the 1980 election for the real politics of the unstable economy. Rather, the authority of the family was seen as central to reconstituting and restrengthening America.

Antifeminism is central to the politics of the eighties, because the prolife sector of the New Right is using the abortion issue to gain control of the issues of good and evil, morality and self-indulgence. Given the role sexual politics played in the past election, it is important to recognize the New Right's continued double-edged use of those politics. Antifeminism is being used simultaneously as a rallying cry and as a tool to create a morally strong society. Exactly what the new "moral" family will look like is unclear. What is clear is that the traditional patriarchal institution of motherhood, which confines woman to the home, will remain central to the family if the New Right has anything to say about it. They wish to re-create an honored status for the institution of motherhood and with it, the honor of the state.

The promotherhood stance implicit in the antiabortion movement seeks to posit the rights of the unborn in opposition to the rights of women. The antiabortion movement sees the concerns with reproductive freedom as being self-indulgent and narcissistic. Women are said to take their own needs

too seriously and have supposedly forgotten about their commitments to others--husband, children, aged parents, and so on. They pose narcissistic woman (the feminist) against the moral woman who puts others before herself, particularly in reference to motherhood. The antiabortion campaign highlights this struggle for a morally ordered society requiring the reconstitution of the traditional patriarchal family and the contradictory nature of that family form.

The New Right does not recognize this contradiction, however. Former President Carter did, and this is why he did not invoke images of a nuclear family constructed around the traditional patriarchal institution of motherhood but rather recognized and praised "working mothers" (11) who constitute more than 50 percent of all married women. This difference in the viewpoints of two succeeding administrations simply emphasizes the fact that there have been, and still are, different views within the state on how to save the patriarchal institution of motherhood. Reagan and the Right speak of re-establishing the traditional model. Carter recognized that a new version of patriarchal motherhood and the family was needed for advanced capitalist society. But it is also clear that neither recognizes the equality of women within the home or market. The woman as a mother, whether she is relegated to the home or is active in the market, is politically differentiated from man and denied equality.

The important point here is that in reality undeniable conflicts exist--between patriarchy's need for woman as mother in the family to care for children and men and capitalism's need for the married woman wage-earner, given structural changes in the labor force and inflation. These conflicts will act as constraints as Reagan and the faction of the state he supports continue to contend with the center-liberals whom Carter represented. There is little agreement between these two factions on how to deal with abortion policy and legislation affecting the family or how to deradicalize feminism. Within Reagan's own party, he will have to try to create a cohesive policy that spans the differences among Paul Laxalt, the Moral Majority, and the centrists of the party. Already, members of the New Right are asking, "Is Reagan really a Reaganite?" I would say he probably is not a Reaganite or, if he is, he will not be so for long. He will be unable to mediate successfully the conflicts within the family and hence the state while saluting the traditional nuclear family.

The 1980 presidential campaign did expose the New Right's commitment to the traditional patriarchal family. But it also exposed the fact that this hardly represents a majority position in America. It is true that the state is moving to

the right under pressure from a well-mobilized, focused, and disciplined New Right. But it would be a mistake to think that this right wing is a majority of the American public--or that it is a hegemonic political force (12). In the 1980 election, only 53 percent of the eligible electorate voted to begin with. Of this group, Reagan polled 27 percent of the vote, and of these voters, only 11 percent said that they voted for Reagan primarily as a conservative, whereas 38 percent said their vote for Reagan was really a vote against Carter. The so-called Reagan mandate was actually made up of approximately 10 percent of the population.

The people who voted for Reagan reflect the backlash effect of a society in transition. Fifty-two percent of housewives and retired women voted for Reagan and 41 percent for Carter. In a society in which a majority of married women are in the labor force, it is interesting to note that it is these women who made the significant difference in male-female voting patterns in the 1980 election. Wage-earning women were the main source of the difference; they split 49 percent for Reagan and 45 percent for Carter. Men backed Reagan by 56 percent to 36 percent (13).

A February 1981 Newsday national poll found that approximately 72 percent of respondents opposed a constitutional amendment that would make abortion illegal. And although the Moral Majority launched an intense lobbying campaign to defeat a Maryland bill allowing school counselors to give VD and pregnancy information to students, the bill passed (14). Nancy Stevenson, South Carolina's first woman lieutenant governor, refused to reappoint two anti-ERA senators to a study committee on state employees, because she thought that senators serving on the committee should be sensitive to discrimination in hiring and promotion practices. Stevenson assumed their anti-ERA stance would inhibit such sensitivity. She was deluged by mail running three to one in favor of her action (15).

By pointing out these trends, I do not mean to say that the state's move to the right is insignificant. The New Right may represent only a minority of the public, but it is an enormous danger because it is mobilized and has an aggressive organized approach to electoral politics. It is, however, important to recognize that another public--a real majority--also exists, and it remains to be organized and mobilized. I would describe this other public as feminist if feminism were defined as the mainstream politics of liberal feminism that recognizes the importance of women's equal rights before the law. This group supports the ERA and women's individual right to the freedom of choice in abortion. What is interesting to note about the 1980 elec-

tion is that these are precisely the demands that Reagan challenged--those emanating from the mainstream of the women's movement. Was this his attempt at demobilizing the women's movement for the 1980s?

The assault against feminism has taken on the women's movement at its most popularly supported point, and I think this has been done because the liberal feminist movement has been radicalizing its demands. By doing so, it has begun to uncover the real conflicts within the state over how to restabilize the family (16). This attack on the mainstream feminist movement was actually launched by Carter; he just had different tactics. It was after Bella Abzug enlarged her definition of women's issues to encompass the impact of inflation and the economy on women's lives that Carter dismissed her as head of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Women.

Given the present attack, feminists must develop a politics that recognizes their defensive posture within the realm of electoral politics. Yet the movement must not limit its politics to countering the New Right assault against it. It must continue to radicalize its earlier demands while fighting hard against New Right tactics. In order to do this, feminists must understand how Reagan's economic policies are an integral part of his sexual politics. The two cannot be separated. We must also recognize that other factions within the state seek to restabilize patriarchy in other ways. The Laxalt Family Protection Bill and the Economic Equity Act, as we shall see, reflect the different options the state is offering women. Neither is interested in creating a nonpatriarchal form of the family.

The Sexual Politics of the Reagan-Stockman Budget

Reagan's budget is based on implicit sexual politics. This means more than that budget cuts affect women particularly, which they do. It means that the economic policy of the proposed budget seeks to realign the relationship between the state and the family, men and women, and public and private life, as much as it seeks to deal with inflation.

One can argue that the reaction against state policies that developed through the 1960s and 1970s was in part a reaction against the need for them, partially reflecting the redefined responsibilities of the family and the state as married white women entered the labor force. Seen as such, the reaction against state involvement in social services is a statement against the transformations taking place in the family and the relationship between the state and the family. The budget seeks to limit and curtail the responsibili-

ties of the state and to increase the responsibilities (and supposed freedom) of the family.

In essence, then, the Reagan-Stockman budget is as much about the family as it is about the economy. It is struggling to restabilize patriarchy as much as it is fighting inflation in order to stabilize advanced capitalism. The government budget cuts in social services (while the military budget grows) mean that individuals, and hence the family, are supposed to be responsible for their own health and welfare. The state will be responsible for defense.

Neoconservatives want people to understand that the state cannot and should not create equality of conditions for them. Patrick Moynihan, the neoconservative senator from New York, clarifies this point with his distinction between liberty (which is equality of opportunity) and equality (meaning equality of conditions): "Liberty does, of course, demand that everyone be free to try his luck, or test his skill in such matters. But these opportunities do not necessarily produce equality: on the contrary, to the extent that winners imply losers, equality of opportunity almost insures inequality of results" (17).

However, the family--or the various forms of the family that exist today--do need aid from the state. In a report to President Carter titled "Critical Choices for the 80s," female poverty is examined as one of the critical issues of the next decade. "Almost one female-headed family in three is poor; about one in 18 families by a man is poor" (18). And the number of families headed by a single parent is growing. "In 1978, one in five families in the United States was headed by a single parent, versus one in nine in 1980" (19). Most single parents are women and their risk of finding themselves in poverty is almost three times that of single fathers. "The median income in 1977 of single-mother families was only \$340 above the poverty level for a nonfarm family of four; among Black and Hispanic single mothers, about \$1000 below it" (20). The single-parent family headed by a woman is growing in number, and more than a third of these women who worked full time and had children under six years of age were defined as poor in 1977.

What is it that the Reagan administration expects these women to do? It assumes that the cutbacks in social welfare benefits will make the poor work harder. But what does working harder mean when you are already part of the working poor? It makes life in the woman-headed single-parent impossible. And this may be what the Reagan budget intends to do --to force a different set of choices on these women and on any woman who is not part of a traditional patriarchal family.

By asserting the role and purposes of the family against

the state, as the new budget does, the New Right hopes to re-establish the power of the father in the family. According to Jerry Falwell, government has developed at the expense of the father's authority. "The progression of big government is amazing. A father's authority was lost first to the village, then to the city, next to the State, and finally to the empire" (21). I think the state will have to look beyond the traditional patriarchal family to resolve the contradictions between it and advanced capitalism. Those representing center interests in the state therefore continue to seek a model that can create cohesion for the capitalist patriarchal state.

The Antifeminist State

The conflict within the state over the changing nature of the family and the issues of feminism are quite real. One saw intrastate conflict during the Carter administration over the issues of the working mother, the Equal Rights Amendment, the threat to draft women, abortion legislation, and pregnancy disability payments. These issues continue to be significant areas of controversy under the Reagan administration; present attention in the Senate is focused on a human life statute and the Laxalt Family Protection Bill. The human life statute defines the personhood of the fetus as beginning at the point of conception and makes abortion an act of murder. It reflects the patriarchal need of the state to control woman's options and alternatives to motherhood.

The Laxalt Family Protection Bill—"to strengthen the American family and promote the virtues of family life through education, tax assistance and related measures"—is another attempt by the Right to enforce their vision of the patriarchal family. It seeks to restrengthen traditional sex roles in the family through monitoring and controlling the educational and tax system. Under this bill, educational institutions that allow the questioning of traditional sex roles, for instance, women's studies programs, would be denied federal funding. It seeks to limit sex education in the schools and to give tax credits to families for children, volunteer work, and housework; it requires that parents be informed of VD, abortion, and contraception counseling for their children. Its major purpose is to reinforce the traditional patriarchal heterosexual family by asserting the power of the family against the state and its interventionist policies.

Although it may appear that the state is hegemonic, it is by no means unified on this rightist position. Three Repub-

lican senators--David Durenberger, Mark Hatfield, and Bob Packwood--have sponsored the Economic Equity Act, and Patrick Moynihan has endorsed it. It hopes to counter "policies in the public and private sector that are completely at odds with work patterns determined by the realities of women's dual wage-earning and parenting." The senators hope to (1) give tax credits to employers who hire women entering the work force after divorce or death of a spouse; (2) give the same tax status to heads of households that is now given to married couples; (3) allow employers to provide child care as a tax-free fringe benefit similar to health insurance; and (4) increase tax credits to offset the cost of child care. The vision of the family proposed here is clearly different from the vision presented in the Family Protection Act. The traditional patriarchal family is juxtaposed against the advanced capitalist patriarchal family; the "moral mother" is contrasted with the "working mother." The conflicts reflect different visions of how best to revitalize patriarchal society and, with it, capitalism.

The issue of protecting patriarchy from the demands of the capitalist economy is what ultimately concerns the New Right. Jerry Falwell, leader of the evangelical right and the Moral Majority, documents this concern in Listen America. When writing about the rights of children, he states that they should have the right "to have the love of a mother and a father who understand their different roles and fulfill their different responsibilities. . . . To live in an economic system that makes it possible for husbands to support their wives as full time mothers in the home and that enables families to survive on one income instead of two" (22). He is angry and critical of the economy and inflation because it has eroded the authoritative place of the father in the family. He wants to create a healthy economy, limit inflation, and then reestablish the single-wage-earner family. "The family is the fundamental building block and the basic unit of our society, and its continued health is a prerequisite for a healthy and prosperous nation. No nation has ever been stronger than the families within her" (23). According to Falwell, the father's authority must be reestablished and with it the order of society.

It is interesting to note that the criticism of female wage-earning's effect on family life first emerged in Patrick Moynihan's 1965 report, "The Negro Family, the Case for National Action," although in somewhat masked form. Moynihan argued there that "at the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of Negro society is the deterioration of the Negro family" (24). The cause of the deterioration of the Black family was seen as being due in part to the emascula-

tion of the Black male by his female counterpart who was working in the labor force and/or heading a household. Moynihan, believing that "the very essence of the male animal, from the bantam rooster to the four-star general, is to strut" (25), thought that the challenges to the Black male's authority made a stable family relationship impossible. He also noted in this report that "the white family has achieved a high degree of stability and is maintaining that stability" (26).

The Family Protection Act, fifteen years later, replicates the concerns of the Moynihan Report, but now in the context of the white family. The model of the white, traditional, patriarchal family is used in both reports to assess the family's stability and viability. Paul Laxalt, the act's original author, could as easily have quoted from Margaret Mead as Moynihan did.

Within the family, each new generation of young males learn the appropriate nurturing behavior and superimpose upon their biologically given maleness this learned parental role. When the family breaks down--as it does under slavery, under certain forms of indentured labor and serfdom, in periods of extreme social unrest, during wars, revolutions, famines, and epidemics, or in periods of abrupt transition from one type of economy to another--this delicate line of transmission is broken. Men may flounder badly in these periods, during which the primary unit may again become mother and child. (27)

Today, advanced capitalism and its racist structure require the wage-earning Black and white mother and the single-parent family. Both of these realities require a more active state, even if it is not the welfare state as it is presently defined. Neither the traditional nor the advanced capitalist patriarchal family, whether white or Black, is organized around women's equality (28). If one recognizes that family forms are integrally connected to the demands of the advanced capitalist economy, one has to move beyond the outworn models of the competitive marketplace and the traditional family.

If Reagan and the New Right begin to appreciate these realities, they will have to move beyond their rhetoric, because in the end it can only heighten the conflicts that appear in people's everyday lives. After all, the New Right's critique of monopoly capitalism, its embrace of the petit bourgeois competitive market, and its rage against advanced capitalist family forms put it in real opposition to the state itself. Their theorist might have been Jean-Jacques

Rousseau. Reagan and the New Right's visions of the economy and of the family are outmoded. But this does not mean that they will not seek to force them on us.

The level of feminist consciousness today is directly related to the everyday experience of women, who are caught up in the changing nature of their lives, the changing structure of the family, and the gains made by the women's movement, especially those related to reproductive rights. In this sense, feminist consciousness is much larger than the actual women's movement. We must use this consciousness to launch an assault against the New Right. I argue that mainstream feminist groups--particularly those related to the reproductive rights struggle--must direct their energy to mobilizing and organizing support for feminist issues. We need to match feminist consciousness with a strong organization. In part, this will require our rethinking of how we can fight both within and outside the electoral process so that the feminist movement can present itself as a counter, an alternative, to the New Right. We must pressure the Democratic party from within and, more importantly, from outside just as the New Right pressures the Republican party. We cannot afford to remain removed from electoral struggle.

Before the New Right, the feminist movement understood that its power grew out of concerns rooted in the issues of everyday life. Richard Viguerie, major fund raiser of the New Right, makes it clear that the New Right also believes in building their politics out of everyday issues.

It was the social issues that got us this far . . . and that's what will take us into the future. We never really won until we began stressing issues like busing, abortion, school prayer and gun control. We talked about the sanctity of free enterprise, about the communist onslaught until we were blue in the face. But we didn't start winning majorities in elections until we got down to gut level issues. (29)

Feminists must realize that we will have to fight it out on these same issues--and not give them up to the Right. After all, we too are fighting for a moral society if morality concerns equality and nonpatriarchal family forms.

The New Right has been unable to develop a vision of the family for the present and the future that grows out of a majority of people's everyday real needs. It represents a minority view. Feminists must therefore struggle to build a politics that recognizes the needs existing in the dual-wage-earning family and the single-parent family. The New Right may say it is profamily, but we must counter it by

making clear that we are prochildren, prochoice, and pro-woman. The New Right can win only if we let them. We must therefore reenter the fight for the 1980s on the offensive.

Notes

Parts of this paper have been previously published in my article "Antifeminism in the Politics and Election of 1980," Feminist Studies 7, no. 2 (Summer 1981).

1. I use the term New Right to represent these disparate conservative forces. They do not represent a homogenous analysis of the crisis of liberalism nor do they constitute a single unified politics; some of the sharpest disagreements are between the neoconservatives and the New Right.
2. Peter Steinfels, The NeoConservatives, the Men Who Are Changing America's Politics (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979); and Nathan Glazer and Irving Kristol, eds., The American Commonwealth, 1976 (New York: Basic Books, 1976).
3. I distinguish this use of the term liberalism from the use that equates it with the welfare state. Both uses are relevant today. I therefore argue that although liberalism primarily defines people's consciousness and values in this society, it also is rejected when it is defined as the welfare state. This in itself poses a serious problem for the liberal democratic state.
4. See Emma Rothschild, "Reagan and the Real America," New York Review of Books 28, no. 1 (5 February 1981):12-18.
5. Presently, 57 percent of two-parent families have two wage-earners. See Families and Public Policies in the United States, Final Report of the Commission (Washington, D.C.: National Conference on Social Welfare, 1978). Available from National Conference on Social Welfare, 1730 M Street, NW, Ste. 911, Washington, DC 20036.
6. Barbara Ehrenreich, "The Women's Movements: Feminist and Antifeminist," Radical America 15, nos. 1 & 2 (Spring 1981):100.
7. See my book, The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism (New York: Longman, 1981), ch. 9, for a more developed discussion.
8. See Radical Future of Liberal Feminism, especially chs. 2 and 10.

9. See Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering, Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); and Adrienne Rich, Of Woman Born (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976).
10. Bertram Gross, Friendly Fascism (New York: Evans & Co., 1980).
11. "Working mother" is the phrase used by the state to describe wage-earning mothers. This phrase assumes that mothers who are not in the labor force are not working as mothers. As such, it denies the reality of woman's labor as a mother and at the same time, defines her as a mother first, even when she is working in the market.
12. See Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Rabb, "The Election and the Evangelicals," Commentary 71, no. 3 (March 1981):25-31.
13. This data was compiled by a AP/NBC Poll of about eleven thousand voters.
14. The National Now Times 11, no. 4 (April 1981):2.
15. Ibid.
16. See The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism, especially chs. 9 and 10.
17. Lee Rainwater and William Yancey, The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1967), p. 49.
18. "Facts We Dare Not Forget," Dissent 28, no. 2 (Spring 1981):166. "Critical Choices for the Eighties" can be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Jerry Falwell, Listen, America (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1980), p. 26.
22. Ibid., p. 148 (my emphasis).
23. Ibid., p. 121.
24. Rainwater and Yancey, Moynihan Report, p. 5.
25. Ibid., p. 62.
26. Ibid., p. 51.
27. Ibid., p. 63, quoted from Margaret Mead, Male and Female (New York: NAL, 1967), p. 148.
28. See my "The State, the Patriarchal Family, and 'Working Mothers,'" in Irene Diamond's Families, Politics and Public Policy: A Feminist Dialogue on Women and the State (New York: Longman, in press).
29. Ben Bedell, "The New Right Sets Its Agenda," Guardian 33, no. 26 (1 April 1981):5.

JAN ROSENBERG

Feminism, the Family, and the New Right (1980)

Vast changes have marked indelibly the social relations between the sexes in post-World War II America. These changes have ranged from women's increasing labor force participation through the expansion of female involvement in higher education to behavior and norms concerning marriage, divorce, sexuality, and child rearing. Take one key statistic: the divorce rate doubled between 1950 and 1980 (1). As part and parcel of these changes the family has become a major political and intellectual battleground, now defended as vociferously by the New Right as it once was attacked by elements of the New Left and many early feminists.

The transformation of the traditional family has reverberated throughout the society, though typically professional and working-class women experienced and responded to these shocks very differently (2). To many middle- and upper-middle-class women, the changes meant rising career expectations and expanding opportunities to achieve independence and individuality, once closely guarded male prerogatives now adopted by feminism. Working-class women, however, generally cleaved to the norms of family-centered traditionalism even as many felt sharp pangs of dissatisfaction with emerging realities of family life (3).

How, and to what extent, has the grass-roots, working-class view of the family resonated with the sentiments of a political movement, the New Right? What are the basic values and assumptions that inform the conservatives of the pro-family New Right? What alliances have they made, at what costs, to transform personal and collective sentiments and a core of cultural symbols into a political movement? What is the range of New Right issues, economically and politically as well as culturally, and where does the family fit into the larger agenda?

This article addresses these questions by exploring the cultural contours and class bases of feminist and antifeminist/New Right views of the family. It argues that the New Right, the most vocal and highly organized threat to femin-

ism, reaches far beyond movement activists, touching responsive chords among many women and men whose identities are rooted in traditional families. The ability of feminism to successfully combat the New Right depends in part on whether adherents can persuasively repudiate the view that the logic of feminism necessarily leads to the obliteration of the family.

Feminism, Social Class, and the Family

For many younger professional women, the group from which feminist leadership and core membership is drawn (4), the family had come to be seen as a fetter on women's individual achievement and expression. These antifamily views may be seen, in part, as an extension of a central tendency in middle- and upper-middle-class culture--the emphasis on individualism and achievement (5). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, radical feminists repudiated the domestic "imprisonment" of women in favor of public achievement. They began by criticizing female subordination within the patriarchal family but quickly moved to a wholesale rejection of the family itself. By confusing the traditional family with the family per se, these women denied the humane, fulfilling possibilities of marriage and family life with restructured sex roles, child rearing, and housekeeping (6). It is not surprising that the movement's earliest attacks were so intense and undifferentiated (many women were enraged when they discovered the extent of their own subordination) or that they eventually generated so much opposition outside the feminist movement. What is surprising, however, is that other feminists failed to make the crucial distinctions between the patriarchal family and other possible, more egalitarian family forms. (Speculation about alternatives fastened onto communes, not restructured families.)

As the following quotes illustrate, feminists, like large segments of the counterculture, saw the family as the locus of sexual repression, the breeding ground of all inequality and exploitation, and the heart of provincialism and particularism (7). Sisterhood Is Powerful (1970), one of the most popular anthologies of the new feminism, included an attack entitled "The Dynamics of Marriage and Motherhood":

No one would think of judging a marriage by its first hundred days . . . in general all is happiness; the girl has finally made it; the past is but a bad dream. All good things are about to come to her. And then reality sets in. . . . The man moves to insure his position of power and dominance. (8)

Even Juliet Mitchell, one of the most thoughtful and influential early feminist theorists, attacked the family as tyrannical, though Mitchell tried to differentiate the biological family from an alternative, nonbiological family form. As was typically the case, the alternative remained hazy and abstract, more a reproach than a historical possibility. Mitchell wrote of an ideal future when "the dependence of the child on the mother (and vice versa) would give way to a greatly shortened dependence on a small group of others in general. . . . The tyranny of the biological family would be broken" (9). Like others, Mitchell envisioned the abolition of the family, not its reform, thus accepting the then-popular notion that families are necessarily oppressive to women.

Perhaps the most memorable image of antifamily ideology is still Shulamith Firestone's technological fantasy in The Dialectic of Sex (1970). Even if one discounts Firestone's extreme, sci-fi formulations about "extrauterine pregnancy," one is left with the view that the family is the fount of women's subordination and powerlessness. In a concluding chapter of The Dialectic of Sex, Firestone summarizes her account of women's (and children's) role within the family as follows:

We have now attacked the family on a double front, challenging that around which it is organized: reproduction of the species by families and its outgrowth, the physical dependence of women and children. To eliminate these would be enough to destroy the family, which breeds the power psychology. (10)

Some women now argue that the early women's movement was not so much antifamily as it was prowoman, but they ignore how easily prowoman attitudes become antifamily and anti-male. It was difficult to emphasize the virtues of femaleness without at least implicitly denigrating maleness and the institutionalization of heterosexuality in the family.

Swept away by the lure of transcendence in the outside world, women replaced one set of stereotypes with another. We had moved, in the words of early feminist Alice Rossi,

from the old stereotype of women as pure, the home their pedestal and motherhood their true and exclusive fulfillment, to a "new" stereotype of the home as a cage, its maintenance "shit-work" and motherhood a "drag." . . . To read the social science and political literature in this area is to gain the impression that women can find nothing but economic dependency, boredom, and mental

stagnation at home, while they can find true fulfillment and autonomy only by holding down a job. (11)

Anthropologist Joan Cassell captured this aspect of the women's movement when she wrote:

The consciousness-raising confessional mode has its (unspoken) conventions, as does the "feminine" mode. . . . One reveals difficulties or disillusion with men, but says little good about relationships with the opposite sex. . . . One discusses one's work, but keeps discreetly quiet about the joys of motherhood--although one is free to describe the difficulties and inconveniences posed by children. There is, in short, an inversion of the conventions of middle-class conversation, where consumption is stressed, financial and marital difficulties glossed over, and motherhood glorified. (12)

The younger feminists' renunciation of family life was embedded in the age as well as the social-class base of their branch of the movement; it appealed most to those just beginning their adult lives with very high expectations for making their own destinies. Socially, the relatively egalitarian college experiences of unprecedented numbers of women in the 1960s undoubtedly fanned the flames of their ambitions and led to the revolution of rising expectations. Intellectually, Simone de Beauvoir's "work equals transcendence" equation legitimized and theoretically grounded their views and values concerning work and their shared denigration of family life.

By the mid-seventies, this was beginning to change. As younger feminists grew a bit older and distanced themselves from their earlier ambitions, they began revising their views of the family and of work. Leading feminist documentary filmmakers, as early as 1973, gave cinematic shape to the emerging reassessment of the family by exploring their own matrilineages (13). A fuller and more complex and shaded image of women's past came into focus; the strengths of women's traditional roles as mothers, homemakers, and workers were explored in loving detail within a broader feminist view which simultaneously deplored women's traditional subordination. Joyce at 34, still the prototypical film about women's heritage, traces three generations of women in a family, while exploring the shifting balance between work and family roles in their lives. (Other significant films in this genre are: Old-Fashioned Women, Nana, Mom and Me, and Yudie.)

In addition to life-stage changes for younger feminists,

broader changes in the women's movement and in the larger society also affected these women's shifting views of the family. The radicalization of NOW's objectives and the broadening of its base meant that by the early seventies the distinctions between the rights and liberationist tendencies of feminism had faded considerably (14). For the entire movement, the personal was now political, and consciousness raising was seen as an appropriate strategy for unearthing the personal sources of women's oppression. Women in the rights branch whose initial interests in feminism were directed outward at collectively reforming or transforming social institutions that discriminated against women added a new dimension by attempting to focus some of their energies on the private sphere and reforming or transforming themselves.

Changes in the larger political context of American society further clarify shifts in feminist ideology and views of the family. The current American political climate contrasts sharply with that of the sixties; between 1966 and 1980, there was a marked decline in left-liberal political activity. Christopher Lasch, Tom Wolfe, and others argue that Americans have become ensnared in narcissism (15). The seemingly endless appeal of various self-help movements (EST, assertiveness training, Esalen, exercise, and running) and best-selling books on how to say no without guilt and how to be your own best friend are taken as conclusive evidence that Americans have retreated from politics and have become obsessed with gratifying their personal appetites for money, power, body fitness, and sex.

Parallel shifts from public/political to private/internal emphases characterized the women's movement during the same period. Many commentators glibly assumed that privatization signified a repudiation of core feminist values and hence the demise of the contemporary women's movement. This is only part of the story. For many feminists, the privatization of the women's movement parallels, but is distinct from, the narcissism mentioned above. Privatization indicates that some feminists are involved in the difficult but demanding task of integrating feminist values into their personal lives, rather than rejecting such values.

It seems likely that contemporary feminists were following the same internal dialectic that characterized earlier generations of feminist activists. Alice Rossi has argued that social change involves a predictable dialectic between the public and private expression of core values (16). Individuals (or generations) who engage in highly visible public activity in the political arena in one stage of their lives may struggle to apply the same values to the personal, pri-

vate sphere in the next stage (or the next generation). Each stage strengthens the entire fabric of social change: public, political behavior has an impact on social institutions and private behavior has an impact on personal life. Through this dialectic, public ideas are translated into the stuff of private lives, and social theory is refined and modified. NOW's profamily conference (1979) signaled its new position, just as much socialist-feminist theory modifies the antifamily thrust of early feminists (17).

For many onlookers and critics, however, the antifamily tendency of feminist ideology continued to define the entire women's movement in spite of emerging revisions. To many powerful opponents of feminism, particularly among Roman Catholics and supporters of Phyllis Schlafly, the 1972-73 congressional passage of the equal rights resolution and the Supreme Court decisions declaring abortion a constitutional right symbolized the victory of antifamily feminism. (Neither the ERA nor prochoice positions are inherently antifamily, of course, though they were sometimes presented that way by feminists, and more importantly, they were perceived and defined as such by the emerging opposition to feminism [18]). The Catholic bishops and Schlafly, working in their separate ways, galvanized a shrill, strident defense of traditionalism—a defense nurtured by the special meaning the family holds in working-class culture.

The Working Class and the Family

Among the working class, identities are typically submerged in, and given meaning by, the web of relationships that constitute the family—not merely the stripped-down, nuclear family and companionate marriage that haunt the sociological and popular literature and are most commonly found among mobile professionals, but the extended family (or family circle) in which the nuclear family is embedded. It is the focus of social life; married children and parents, siblings, cousins, and in-laws often live near one another and rely on each other for material and emotional support. The most meaningful social relations and most frequent social interaction occur within these wider familial bounds. Ties among selected, typically same-sex kin, formed in childhood, often bind individuals to a cohesive peer group throughout their lives. Among working-class women, female kin and friends offered the companionship, intimacy, and support that middle- and upper-middle-class women sought increasingly from their spouses. The possibility of meaningful, non-competitive relationships with other women, an important

promise of the feminist movement, was already a fact of life for many working-class women.

Marriage, not work, is seen as the gateway to maturity and adulthood for most working-class women and men (19). This should not come as a surprise, given the intrinsic limitations of most blue-collar and lower-level white-collar jobs. Work is often routine, boring, and narrowly defined, allowing little room for imagination or personal judgment. As others have frequently noted, work is, and is expected to be, a means toward desired ends, in no way "its own reward." In addition, marriage is the typical passageway from the parental home to one's own home, and it is through marriage that one becomes ensconced in an extended family network. Rather than viewing marriage and the family as a restraining tether, working-class people more commonly regard it as a barrier against an alien and increasingly intrusive society--as something that protects "us" from "them."

The New Right: Threat to Feminism

The New Right is more heterogeneous and divided than its name or popular image suggests. It combines three separate streams of contemporary life: culture (life-style and religion), politics (foreign policy), and economics (free market ideology and antiunion strategy). The cultural sphere draws on two major institutional axes--family/sexuality and religion (20). It is these, especially the family/sexuality constellation, that constitute the major threat to the contemporary feminist movement. The profamily movement favors resurrecting an idealized patriarchal family structure and claims to oppose government intervention in family life while in fact favoring its own brand of government regulations of sexuality, abortion, and marital relationships. It is against the ERA, abortion, divorce, sex education, publicly supported child care, homosexuality, and what it sees as lurking beneath all these issues--the overall decline of male authority.

In the face of the conflict over the meaning of the family, the cultural traditionalists within the New Right have entered into an ironic alliance with free-marketeers--ironic because the market has been the great engine of change undermining social and cultural tradition. As Robert Heilbroner recently wrote:

Capitalism builds and it also undermines. It satisfies wants but creates new ones even more rapidly, so that capitalist societies are marked by a perpetual craving, not a sense of commitment. (21)

In spite of their rhetoric, the free-marketeers' economic ideals are guaranteed to undercut the stability and conservatism that their allies, the profamily groups, are seeking. Capitalism has undermined stability and has led, instead to a loss of cultural coherence; it has bred modernism, that great "rage against order and bourgeois orderliness." Yet the contradictions between capitalism's endless thrust toward change and innovation and the cultural conservative's quest for stability are largely ignored or obscured in the current attempt to forge alliances and create a New Majority.

Although some New Right activists sincerely seek a return to traditional family and religious values as their main priority, certain key movement leaders manipulate family sentiments to mask their more basic antigovernment, laissez-faire economic program. Paul Weyrich, spokesman for the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress (CSFC), a leading New Right organization that embraces all three main tendencies, baldly laid out his strategy for publicly emphasizing the family and other cultural/quality-of-life issues as follows: "We talk about issues that people care about, like gun control, abortion, taxes, and crime. Yes, they're emotional issues, but that's better than talking about capital formation" (22).

Since making that statement, Weyrich has increasingly emphasized family/life-style issues. He recently helped found Library Court, a Washington-based coalition of more than twenty national profamily groups which meets frequently to discuss issues and formulate strategies. Statements made by some profamily spokesmen indicate they are trying to maintain their integrity against pressure from the broader New Right movement. Implicitly denying the subordination of family issues to economic and foreign policy concerns, Jim Wright, chairman of the Christian Coalition for Legislative Action, asserted: "The pro-family movement is not a subset of the conservative movement" (23). Similarly, another Library Court participant proclaimed "the New Right influences the pro-family movement only to the extent that it shares the movement's God centered views and that the movement needs the New Right's technical guidance" (24).

What holds this diverse, multifaceted movement of cultural conservatives, free-marketeers, and xenophobes together? A fully developed analysis of the New Right is beyond the scope of this paper, but even a brief discussion such as this must mention two primary factors: the Jacobite/restorationist ideology that marks each cluster of issues, and the overlapping national leadership, including organizations and journals as well as individuals. All three axial clusters--culture, economics, and foreign policy--share an aggressive

nostalgia for an idealized, simpler past in which America, the dominant world power, was ruled by successful businessmen and inhabited by happy, God-fearing families headed by strong, decisive fathers and loving, supportive, full-time mothers. Each strand of the New Right is attempting to establish one element of this sentimentalized version of the past.

In sum, the New Right is a cluster of restorationist forces and groups responding to cultural, economic, and political tensions which have characterized American society since the mid-1940s. New Right groups have begun to tap the long-standing cultural conservatism of blue-collar Democrats (mostly Catholics) and to activate the political potential of the evangelical Christians (estimated at 30 to 40 million Americans) (25), which their national leaders hope to join with the economic conservatism (read "union busting") of middle-level businessmen. All three major groups, for reasons of their own, feed into the overwrought nationalism which is the third leg of the New Right's power base.

At the moment, the New Right seems to be riding high by glossing over the internal contradictions within its far-flung base and underscoring the pervasive sense of loss and drift that casts such a large shadow on contemporary America. But its coalition of diverse forces will not hold forever. Even more significantly, the New Right's vision derives from a nostalgic, sentimentalized version of our past and consequently offers little to shape our vision of the future.

Feminists have provided ample, insightful criticism of this idealized myth: it denies the costs of business dominance to working people and of male dominance to women, and systematically overlooks the endemic conflicts between business and labor, men and women, the United States and other countries. Like all myths, this one distorts our understanding of our own past and present.

As feminists, we need to rethink our basic assumptions about the meaning of, and tensions between, individualism, family, and community, and to repudiate the radical individualism and unbounded social experimentalism that have led us into the current cul-de-sac.

Notes

Members of the Park Slope women's group deserve special thanks for forcing me to clarify my ideas and helping me to anticipate my critics. Liz Phillips and Jo Freeman were par-

ticularly important in helping me sharpen ideas that often conflicted with their own. Thanks, too, to Carole Turbin and Sue Levine for asking tough questions.

1. From 1950 to 1978, the proportion of women who worked at paid jobs nearly doubled, increasing from 32 to 56 percent. Mothers with young children became a sizable proportion of the new female wage earners, increasing tenfold from 1940 to 1975. See Alice Kessler-Harris, Women Have Always Worked (Old Westbury, N.Y.: Feminist Press / McGraw-Hill, 1981), pp. 144-48 for a summary of contemporary trends. Many of the relevant data on women and family status are presented in American Families and Living Arrangements (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980).
2. Characteristically, working-class women have high school educations, blue-collar or low-level white-collar (traditionally female) occupations (if they work outside the home), very modest family incomes, and little if any savings. Professional women, by contrast, have college degrees and additional education in many cases, relatively high incomes, and professional careers.
3. The extensive sociological literature supports this thesis. These studies include Herbert Gans, The Urban Villagers (New York: Free Press, 1962); Mirra Komarovsky, Blue Collar Marriage (New York: Random House, 1964); Michael Young and Peter Willmott, Family and Kinship in East London (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957); Arlene Mancuso, Women of Old Town (Ph.D. diss., Columbia Teachers College, 1977); Nancy Seifer, Absent from the Majority (New York: National Project on Ethnic Research, 1973); David M. Schneider and Raymond T. Smith, Class Differences in American Kinship (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1978). Recent studies underscore the continuing importance of family roles for working-class women. The 1980 Virginia Slims Survey indicates that women's preferences for job versus housewife roles correlates closely with their educational level (an important indicator of social class). (The 1980 Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll: A Survey of Contemporary Attitudes, Conducted by the Roper Organization, p. 55.) And Arrington and Kyle's study of pro- and anti-ERA activists lends further support to the existence of a traditional cultural orientation among working-class women. The women opposed to the ERA were less educated than the other three groups studied (men opposed, men and women supporters). In

- addition, women activists opposed to the ERA were very likely to be housewives, whereas almost all the women supporters worked outside the home and over half of these were professionals. See Theodore S. Arrington and Patricia A. Kyle, "Equal Rights Amendment Activists in North Carolina," Signs 3, no. 3 (Spring 1978).
4. See Jo Freeman, The Politics of Women's Liberation (New York: David McKay Co., 1975); Barbara Easton, "Feminism and the Contemporary Family," Socialist Review, no. 39 (May-June 1978); and Maren Lockwood Garden, The New Feminist Movement (New York: Russell Sage, 1974) for the class base of the women's movement.
 5. Individualism refers to the underlying belief in women's right to personal expression and fulfillment, to self-actualization. Many activists who accepted this individualist goal also recognized that collective political action was necessary to achieve it. Important secondary tendencies, from the politicians in the late 1960s to socialist feminists today have provided an ideological critique of the proindividualist ethos of feminism.
 6. See Blanche Glassman Hersh, The Slavery of Sex: Feminist-Abolitionists in America (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978) for an interesting interpretation of nineteenth-century feminism and the family.
 7. See Jesse Bernard, Women, Wives, Mothers (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1975), especially Ch. 9, "Class and Feminist Issues," for a discussion of the antinatalist and antifamily impetus of the early feminist movement.
 8. Beverly Jones, "The Dynamics of Marriage and Motherhood," in Sisterhood Is Powerful, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p. 46.
 9. Juliet Mitchell, Woman's Estate (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).
 10. Shulamith Firestone, The Dialectic of Sex (New York: Bantam, 1972), p. 208.
 11. Alice Rossi, "Response," Signs 5, no. 4 (Summer 1979): 714-15.
 12. Joan Cassell, A Group Called Woman (New York: David McKay, 1975), pp. 57-58.
 13. Jan Rosenberg, Feminism into Film: Social Bases of an Artistic Movement (Troy, N.Y.: Whitston Publishing Co., in press).
 14. For shifts in the women's movement from the late 1960s into the 1970s, see, for example, Maren Lockwood

- Carden, Feminism in 1975: the Non-Establishment, the Establishment, and the Future (New York: Ford Foundation, 1976) and Freeman, Politics of Women's Liberation.
15. Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism (New York: Viking, 1977); Richard Sennett, "Destructive Gemeinschaft," Partisan Review, no. 3 (1976); Tom Wolfe, "The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening," New York Magazine, 23 August 1976; Richard Kazis, "Berger-Tanner and the New Narcissism," Socialist Revolution 7, no. 5 (1977). Fred Siegel's "The Agony of Christopher Lasch," Reviews in American History 8, no. 3 (September 1980), points to the continuities and contradictions in Lasch's work.
 16. Alice Rossi, "Contemporary American Feminism: In and Out of the Political Mainstream," paper delivered at International Symposium on Research on Popular Movements, Stockholm, Sweden, February 1978.
 17. Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), and Easton, "Feminism and the Contemporary Family."
 18. Carol Mueller, "Rancorous Conflict and Opposition to the ERA," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, New York City, 1976.
 19. Peter Skerry, "The Class Conflict over Abortion," Public Interest, no. 52 (Summer 1978), offers considerable insight into these issues. The particularly bleak, isolated existence Lillian Rubin so movingly describes in Worlds of Pain is at odds with most studies of working-class family life. Rubin's sample California families may be geographically cut off from kin who would otherwise be important.
 20. Fred Siegel, "Notes on the New Right," Commonweal, 7 May 1981, provides an incisive historical perspective on the social base and ideological core of the New Right.
 21. Robert Heilbroner, "The Road to Serfdom," New York Review of Books 27 (17 April 1980):6.
 22. Quoted in Jerry Phelan and Flo Estes, "The New Right: Threat to Labor," Labor Center Review (Amherst, Mass.) 1 (Fall/Winter 1980).
 23. Quoted in Conservative Digest, May/June 1980.
 24. Quoted in Conservative Digest, May/June 1980.
 25. New York Times, 17 August 1980.

LISA DESPOSITO

The New Right and the Abortion Issue

Abortion is a complex and emotional issue, and according to the prevalent media myth, all Catholics oppose it vehemently. But do they really? All recent polls show that although American Catholics may reject abortion for themselves, they do not oppose it as a legal option. Catholics believe abortion is a matter of individual choice and conscience. Nevertheless, in the past several years, the Roman Catholic hierarchy and subsequently the New Right have seized on the complexities of the abortion issue and used them to further their own political agenda. Should the new group of prolife, profamily activists succeed in passing such restrictive legislation, we will lose more than twenty years of progressive legislation and social programs; in the process we will lose many dearly held constitutional rights.

This article tries to document the uneasy alliance between the Catholic hierarchy, fundamentalist Christians, and New Rightists. I want to show how the New Right has targeted blue-collar workers, the lower to middle classes, certain ethnic groups, conservatives, and traditional Democrats--people who have been called the old "New Deal coalition"--to build a profamily army. Roman Catholics comprise a substantial percentage of the targeted constituency, as do fundamentalist Christians. The right to life movement is largely composed of Catholics and fundamentalist Christians. In addition, the hierarchy of the Catholic church has had an important place in the development of the right to life movement, which in turn has served as a role model for the larger New Right political phenomenon. The right to life movement has given conservative political organizers critical access to religious institutions and to the Catholic community.

In entering such a coalition, the Catholic hierarchy has put itself in an extremely awkward position, since abortion really is its major point of contact and agreement with the Right. In forming this informal alliance, the church risks its more liberal stands on other social issues. It also

risks losing the support of much of the Catholic laity, which is disturbed, even alarmed, by the hysterical, reactionary politics of the New Right. In helping to elect conservative, antiabortion legislators, the church is also helping to dismantle the kinds of social justice programs it has supported in the past.

My own credentials for writing this paper reflect the opposing trends among Catholics. I was brought up and still live in Brooklyn, New York. I was raised in a large, close, traditional, and very conservative Catholic family. The majority of my relatives are blue-collar workers. Yet I am an abortion-rights organizer for Planned Parenthood of New York City, and I am an active member of Catholics for a Free Choice. Thus I understand both sides of the issue. Although I believe firmly in legal abortion, I also see how the New Right can appeal to many people. I believe that pro-choice activists cannot simply dismiss traditional constituencies as hopeless reactionaries. For people with my background, "feminists," "liberals," and "leftists" are seen as a threat to families, neighborhoods, and churches that people have worked hard to create and sustain. People want to hang on to the stability of morals and values they have always known. As an organizer, my task is to convince such people that the kind of challenge to traditional values posed by feminism will not destroy an entire way of life, as the New Right suggests. To do this, it is essential to understand how the New Right is organized, how it operates, and the basis of its appeal.

Organization and Leadership in the New Right

Today's New Right differs from the "old" Right in certain important ways. The old Right consisted primarily of splinter groups, which, despite moments of success, usually lacked a broad base of support. Fractured into subgroups which quarreled with each other, old Right groups had few mechanisms to broaden their constituencies. The New Right, in contrast, is highly organized and very efficient at building coalitions. As the neoconservative thinker and activist Paul Weyrich said, "Organization is our bag. We preach and teach nothing but organization" (1).

By the late 1970s, technology and a new style of leadership had allowed the New Right to weld disparate right-wing organizations into a multifaceted, powerful, grass-roots political machine. This machine relied heavily on single-issue groups, using particularly the antiabortion right to life movement as the lightning rod. To create this coali-

tion, the New Right has tapped deep-seated sentiment in favor of God, home, and country. By clearly identifying the "enemy," which are home-grown and consist of groups and institutions that are traditionally liberal (the woman's movement, the civil rights movement, the "Eastern establishment elites," the Eastern universities, the television networks and major newspapers), the New Right diminishes internal differences and strengthens its own internal solidarity.

For practical reasons, the New Right seized on family issues (of which abortion is the most critical) rather than economic ones in building its platform and political machine. Strategists have shrewdly assumed that these will rally more support than the Right's economic platform. As Weyrich has noted, "The New Right is looking for issues that people care about, and social issues at least for the present fit the bill. We talk about issues that people care about like gun control, abortion, taxes and crime. Yes, they're emotional issues, but that's better than talking about capital formation" (2). This does not mean that the New Right has abandoned the rest of its social and economic programs, simply that it sees family issues as the opening wedge in its drive to win national political power.

The New Right leadership is a quartet. Richard Viguerie, a forty-seven-year-old conservative Catholic, is the movement's direct-mail fund-raising wizard. He is also the publisher of the magazine Conservative Digest. A former member of Young Americans for Freedom, Viguerie began his career with 12,500 names from the Goldwater campaign (3). Today his Falls Church, Virginia, company, called PAVCO, employs three hundred nonunion employees and raises more than \$40 million annually. Viguerie's influence rests partly on the more than 25 million names on his computer list, cross-indexed by issues and organization, to whom he claims to mail out more than 100 million lobbying and fund-raising letters a year (4). He helped launch the profamily groups in many states, and works closely with the progun and antiunion lobbies.

In addition to Viguerie there is Paul Weyrich, an Eastern Orthodox Catholic from Wisconsin who often refers to himself as the "architect of the movement" (5). Weyrich is closely associated with conservative beer brewer Joseph Coors, who underwrites many of the New Right groups (6). He claims that the New Right is a "revolution" of the "middle class," against an "elitist upper class" (7). One of Weyrich's projects is a candidate training school; he also coordinates several New Right networks, such as the Library Court, a coalition of major profamily groups.

Terry Dolan, thirty-one, is executive director of the Na-

tional Conservative Political Action Committee, and he concentrates on attacking the record of incumbent moderate and liberal legislators. He has said, "A group like ours could lie through its teeth, and the candidate it helps stays clean" (8). Dolan worked on Nixon's campaign staff in 1972 (9). In March 1981, he called on conservatives at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) to support a \$172 billion cut in the federal budget, including the elimination of federal agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration and OSHA (10).

Howard Phillips, the son of a Boston insurance broker, is Jewish and claims to read the Bible every day. He supports a "return to biblical law" (11). A Harvard graduate, his goal is to "Organize discontent. That's our strategy" (12). Through the Conservative Caucus, he concentrates on grass-roots district organizing, particularly on "home and family" groups (13).

In order to understand how the New Right functions as a whole, it is important to understand its constituent parts. The New Right is made up of three kinds of groups: the multi-issue umbrella groups, the single-issue groups, and the religious groups.

Umbrella Groups

New Right umbrella groups specialize in legislative activity, political campaigns, fund raising, research and legal challenges. The following is a brief list of some key organizations that provide overall organization to the New Right coalition:

The Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress was founded in 1975 by Weyrich and Joseph Coors (14). Located in Washington, D.C., it is one of the most effective right-wing Political Action Committees (PACs), emphasizing the organization of campaign operations. The Conservative Caucus does grass-roots organizing in congressional districts. Founded in 1975 by Howard Phillips and Senator Jesse Helms, it claims an annual budget of \$3 million raised from 300,000 contributors (15). The National Conservative Political Action Committee (NicPac) was founded by Terry Dolan and Charles Black, former aide to Senator Helms, to offer conservative candidates in-kind services, such as campaign management, and television and radio advertising (16). The Congressional Club was founded in 1973 by Viguerie, Senator Jesse Helms, and attorney Tom Ellis; Ellis was the former director of the Pioneer Fund, created to conduct research on the genetic inferiority of Blacks (17). The Congressional Club raises money for right-wing candidates--some \$8 million in 1980 from 300,00 contributors (18).

This array of organizations is rounded out by several others. The Heritage Foundation, begun in 1973 by Coors and Weyrich, is a research institute offering studies and analyses to the press and to federal and state legislators providing confirmation of right-wing positions on issues and legislation (19). The Pacific Legal Foundation is a right-wing version of the American Civil Liberties Union. Also founded in 1973, it now has a staff of more than twenty attorneys and concentrates on challenging the work of organizations like the Sierra Club or laws such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act (20). The American Legislative Exchange Council is a clearinghouse for right-wing legislation in various states and helps conservative state legislators in researching, writing, and passing conservative legislation (21). The Committee for Responsible Youth Politics is directed by Morton Blackwell, editor of the New Right Report, former employee of Viguerie and currently a special assistant in the Reagan administration. It trains activists in campaign management before they join the staffs of right-wing candidates (22).

Special Interest Groups

While umbrella groups provide the overall direction and coordination of the New Right's extensive, sophisticated campaign to win control of the legislative process, the single-issue group is increasingly powerful as well. Organizations like the antiunion Right to Work Committee or the progun National Rifle Association have been around a long time. The newer profamily groups specialize in a series of issues that, they believe, threaten the sanctity of the U.S. family. They work to oppose abortion, to prevent the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, to curtail gay rights. They have supported and tried to implement prayer in the schools and book censorship. Using these issues, they have been unusually successful in mobilizing frightened women and men in defense of values and ways of life that are, these people believe, profoundly threatened by social change.

Two points are significant about the profamily groups. First, this is the sector of the right with which the Catholic Church has the closest links through the right to life movement. Secondly, this is the sector of the Right in which women are most prominent as organizers. Women are involved in the day-to-day operation of such organizations and they are also leaders, probably because family issues are thought to be the proper sphere of feminine and maternal concern, especially among the most traditionally minded women. I believe, however, that many of the major decisions in these groups are subordinated to the decision making and

planning of male New Right leaders, especially to those of Paul Weyrich. The following sketch of some female leaders and the single-issue groups they run will suggest the scope of profamily activity.

Cannaught Marshner is the chair of the Library Court coalition and the director of the Family Policy Division of the Free Congress Foundation (23). She was also the chair of the Pro-Family Coalition on the White House Conference on Families and is the editor of the weekly Family Protection Report. Norma Galber of Educational Research is from Longview, Texas (24). She is a leader in the book censorship movement, analyzing children's textbooks and testifying against them. She has been credited with forcing textbook companies to rewrite entire editions because the books "gave a biased view of America" (25). JoAnn Gasper is the editor of The Right Woman and the Register Report, which monitors family issues in the Federal Register (26). She has been called the profamily movement's "early warning system in Washington." Onalee McGraw of the Heritage Foundation and the Coalition for Children is considered an "expert on the dangers of secular humanism" (27). She has worked against legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act, because it imposes governmental controls on the family. Susan Phillips is the director of research and publications for the Conservative Caucus and for the Conservative Caucus Research and Education Foundation. She writes several newsletters informing the profamily movement of key issues (28). Kathy Teauge is the expert on women's issues for the American Legislative Exchange Council. As the executive director, she "offers brilliant political advice on how to market pro-family issues" (29). Martha Rountree runs the Leadership Foundation, which concentrates on the passage of a constitutional amendment guaranteeing prayer in schools (30). The involvement of so many women in these groups raises critical issues about how women get involved in political efforts to control other women.

Christian New Right

The Christian New Right is central to the profamily movement, since it links together many of the other groups. It too consists of a variety of interlocking subgroups, and its goal is to politicize fundamentalist Christians, estimated to include up to 60 million Americans. Indirectly, the Roman Catholic hierarchy has played a role in this phenomenon by providing a model of how to activate the religious community on family issues, such as abortion, ERA, and tuition tax credits.

The best-known leader of the Christian New Right is the

Rev. Jerry Falwell, a television preacher of the Old Time Gospel Hour, which has an estimated audience of 18 million people each week (31). Falwell comes from the Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, where the show is filmed, and reportedly raises \$46 million a year (32). He has been preaching the gospel through the electronic pulpit for years, but received national fame only in 1979 when he founded Moral Majority, the political action arm of the Christian New Right (33). Since then, Falwell has been organizing his fellow preachers to mobilize their congregations, church by church, in support of the New Right agenda.

Today's fundamentalist right-wing groups are different from their predecessors, such as the John Birch Society, because they are directly linked to the New Right leadership, especially to Paul Weyrich. The present groups are also different because they no longer exist in hostile, suspicious isolation from the rest of society. Perhaps most important, they now vote. Through the electronic ministry of television and radio, these fundamentalists reach a captivated audience of more than 115 million people each week. They can call forth God's righteous soldiers and virtually limitless funds. Once people write in with donations to their favorite preacher, their names are put on computer lists and they can be solicited to supply funds, to join letter-writing and lobbying campaigns, and to vote for right-wing candidates.

The Christian New Right succeeds through a combination of masterful publicity and skillful grass-roots organizing. For instance, in April 1980, some 200,000 fundamentalists, calling themselves One Nation Under God, descended on Washington, D.C., to pray that Congress repent its sins (34). The event, according to its organizers, was not political. Instead, Christians asked for God's intercession in "a world aflame in sin" and lobbied their representatives to return to a moral government (35). In 1980, many fundamentalist preachers also carried out voter registration drives in their churches, targeting the group of conservatives who had traditionally not voted.

During the summer of 1980, the Religious Roundtable held an organizing conference in Dallas, Texas, attended by fifteen thousand ministers. The speeches and sermons clearly reflected the agenda of the New Right: the Red menace, abortion, affirmative action, the ERA, day care, and OSHA were among the subjects discussed and condemned (36). The Rev. James Robinson, a television preacher from Fort Worth, Texas, whose program is syndicated on more than a hundred stations, told the gathering:

If you think our solution is political, you too have

been deceived. Don't you commit yourself to some political party or politician, you commit yourself to the principles of God, and demand those parties and politicians align themselves with the eternal values in this book [the Bible], and America will be forever the greatest nation on this earth! (37)

The Rev. Bailey Smith, then president of the Southern Baptists, told the group:

It's interesting to me at great political rallies how you have a Protestant to pray, and a Catholic to pray, and then you have a Jew to pray. With all due respect to those dear people, my friend, God almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew, for how in the world can God hear the prayer of a man who says Jesus Christ is not the true Messiah? (38)

The Christian New Right is able to operate because it clearly defines all issues in terms of their opposition: either you are a good, moral, believing Christian, or you are one of the "evil," led by "satanic forces," anti-God, antifamily, and anti-America. Anyone who disagrees on any one of these issues becomes one of "them," cut off from security and community in this confusing world and from salvation in the next one.

The Constituency of the New Right

One of the secrets of New Right success is the way it is able to cut across the lines of traditional political parties in putting together its coalition. Although many New Right elected officials are Republicans, the New Right's goal is not to build a party, but to build a conservative coalition that can, in effect, bypass or control the two-party system of American politics. Richard Viguerie has said that the New Right has taken control of the conservative movement and that in turn the conservative movement has taken control of the Republican party. What remains, he says, is to "see if they can take control of the country" (39). Central to this plan is the ability of the New Right to woo traditionally Democratic voters, what was known as the New Deal coalition of blue-collar ethnics--Catholics, Jews, Blacks, and fundamentalist Christians.

To win these groups, the New Right is taking advantage of current social, economic, and political upheavals to stir up anxiety and anger over social issues. Then a New Right

candidate or piece of legislation is offered as the answer. In this strategy, the Catholic vote is very important. Although not a monolithic group, there are 48 to 50 million Catholics in the United States, a population that tends to be conservative, especially on social issues. According to a New York Times/CBS poll, 51 percent supported Reagan in the last election. According to former White House aide Anne Wexler, "The Catholic vote at one time was solidly Democratic," but now, she believes, ethnic Catholics are "in a situation of protecting what they have." Michael Novak of the conservative American Enterprise Institute believes the conservative mood among Catholics has to do with ". . . the whole Democratic Party. They started talking the language of the new morality." He claims that "Catholics are the single most important voting bloc in the country" (40).

Obviously many people in the United States have been frightened and bewildered by changes in the society over the past twenty years. Families and communities have been affected by the new sexual morality, by the demands of women and teenagers for more autonomy, by women's entry into the labor market, by new sex role models. The clarity and definition of old moral truths have been washed away. For many people, these changes, rather than bringing a sense of personal liberation, have brought anxiety and a sense of isolation from their communities and the larger society. Their families, churches, and neighborhoods have taken on a symbolic value as barricades between them and a world gone astray.

The New Right has both confirmed and escalated these fears. By defining the enemy and the issues and offering solutions, the New Right has created a new sense of community and security for its constituency. The New Right has only to adapt already-conservative traditional Christian values on subjects like women's roles, sexuality, marriage, and the family, and to emphasize existing fears (41). The Quixote Center, a Catholic social justice organization in the Midwest, surveyed attitudes on abortion and found that "those in the right-to-life movement see abortion at the deepest psychological level less as a taking of a human life than as a practice threatening existing social patterns and customs in families, marriage and sexual relations" (42).

The Catholic Church and the Right to Life Movement

Although Catholics have had various kinds of connections with different segments of the New Right coalition, the Catholic Church has had its closest organizational links with the right to life groups who share its opposition to abor-

tion. The church hierarchy has been the motivating force in the antiabortion movement, beginning with the mid-1960s, when it responded to the feminist movement to legalize abortion. In 1966, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the policy-making body of U.S. Catholicism, commissioned its Family Life Division to "construct a program of opposition to the effort to liberalize abortion laws" (43). By 1972, public support for legal abortion was apparent in the passage of laws legalizing abortion in several states, and in response the Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities was formed (44). Its purpose was to organize church antiabortion efforts by distributing antiabortion literature to Catholic institutions and by educating Catholics about the hierarchy's antiabortion position.

In 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion, the bishops had changed their focus to concentrate on overturning the court decision. During that year, the National Right to Life Committee (NRTLTC), the nation's largest anti-abortion organization, claiming 11 million members, emerged as a separate entity (45). The NRTLTC began an aggressive campaign to defeat prochoice legislators running for election, while simultaneously conducting massive letter-writing campaigns to pass antichoice legislation. The bishops, in turn, established their own independent lobbying organization in 1973, the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (NCHLA) (46), to work for the passage of an antiabortion constitutional amendment.

On the national level, the NRTLTC and the Catholic hierarchy have carefully preserved a separate identity in the public eye. The close relationship can be seen only when the local parts of the two organizations are examined. The church has provided the NRTLTC not only with financial and organizational support but also with religious authority and the power of moral righteousness. For instance, in November 1975, the bishops passed a detailed, thirteen-page document called the "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities" (47). The document is an organizing strategy to draw all parishes and all church-related agencies into a national network of antiabortion activities. It aims for "passage of a constitutional amendment providing protection for the unborn child to the maximum degree possible" and for the "passage of federal and state laws and adoption of administration policies that will restrict the practice of abortion as much as possible." The plan is divided into three parts: education, pastoral outreach to women, and legislative advocacy. Each state Catholic Conference is responsible for implementing the plan, for creating parish prolife committees, and for enlisting the aid of other Catholic organizations, such as the

Knights of Columbus. Within each diocese, each bishop is instructed to appoint a prolife director as his representative. Although the church is not supposed to become involved in direct political activity, it comes perilously close to doing so in these organizations, which are directed to work closely with the secular right to life groups. The plan claims that these right to life groups are not to be "controlled or financed by the church" (48), but the church provides the right to life movement with operating facilities, supplies, fund-raising assistance, and volunteer workers.

The plan has already proved an effective organizing tool for the antiabortion movement. Catholic schoolchildren have been allowed to miss a day of school in order to visit their state capitols with taperecorded "heartbeats of unborn children" to play for their legislators. Other schoolchildren have been instructed to have their parents sign letters opposing abortion. One Catholic school amended the Pledge of Allegiance to include ". . . with liberty and justice for all, the born and unborn." Another parish distributed pledge cards during mass which would authorize the sending of antiabortion messages to legislators in the signers' names. Every 22 January, the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision, most dioceses provide buses to take parishioners to Washington for the annual March for Life.

The church also uses its power of moral persuasion to push Catholics who might otherwise remain silent on the abortion issue. The St. Louis Cathedral Bulletin called for Catholics to picket a local abortion clinic with the admonishment, "No Christian will excuse himself lightly on this duty" (49). For sixteen months, the only abortion clinic on Staten Island, New York, had been under constant siege by the right to life movement. Flyers distributed in church parking lots urged Catholics to help picket the clinic; among the antiabortion demonstrators were nuns, priests, and elderly women saying the rosary and singing hymns. Their van, complete with sound system, was decorated with pictures of the Virgin and the Sacred Heart. Patients at another clinic in Brooklyn, New York, have been sprinkled with "holy water" as they entered.

The right to life movement also receives crucial financial support from the Catholic Church as a 1973 memo from Msgr. James McHugh of the Family Life Division of the U.S. Catholic Conference illustrates. Five months after the NRTLIC officially separated from the Catholic Conference, it faced severe funding problems. Noting this "impending financial crisis," McHugh instructed each state Catholic Conference to contribute funds, one cent per person in their state.

Hence, the NRTLTC was restored to solvency. This support continues; in New York, for instance, the Catholic Conference regularly contributes substantial funds to the New York State Right to Life Committee, as well as to the national organization (50). The Catholic hierarchy's total dedication to the antiabortion crusade can be seen clearly in the fact that the Pro-Life Secretariat receives one of the largest budgets within the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. In 1981, the suggested budget was \$295,343 (51).

In the last few years, the church has been edging closer and closer to overt political involvement in elections. In 1978, New York became the first state to have a Right to Life political party on the ballot, with a fetus as its symbol. Although the Right to Life party is not officially tied to the church, many parish priests have openly supported efforts to get right-to-lifers into every elected position possible. There are reports of voter registration drives being conducted on the steps of churches, sometimes by nuns. In at least one instance, it has been reported that the Right to Life party was already checked off on the registration card before the new voter even registered. Bishops and priests have denounced legal abortion and legislators who support it from the pulpit on the Sunday before election day, and the Right to Life party has distributed flyers to Catholics as they leave mass.

Internal Opposition

Despite the efforts of the hierarchy, Catholics are not as united as it might seem around the antiabortion position, but protest is only slowly beginning to emerge. Fully 77 percent of Roman Catholics support legal abortion, according to a 1980 Gallup Poll. Lay Roman Catholics, and even members of the religious community, feel they don't have a vote in what one right-to-lifer called the church's "benevolent dictatorship." Most Catholics simply listen to the church's position, and then follow their own conscience. A few brave voices have begun to oppose church policies.

For example, Catholics for a Free Choice, a national organization with local networks in more than eighteen states, was formed during the mid-1970s to speak for free choice among Catholics. Thomas Gumbelton, at that time auxiliary bishop of Detroit, argued against the Pastoral Plan since it appeared that the church was trying to control the prolife groups. Catholic religious bodies such as the National Federation of Catholic Priests have complained that the church hierarchy was stressing single-issue abortion politics (52).

In 1977, the National Association of Women Religious, an organization of three thousand nuns, passed a statement supporting church opposition to abortion but warning that the passage of an antiabortion constitutional amendment would constitute an "imposition of one [moral] view on the rest of society" (53).

Other observers and organizations have expressed alarm that the church is meddling so directly in electoral politics. The National Catholic Reporter, a liberal Catholic newspaper, criticized the plan in a 1975 editorial:

If the Bishops have created a Catholic party, and only time will tell, they have unleashed a fearsome thing. . . . Such proportions, given the 48 million Catholic population in this country, could yet rival or counterbalance the largest political parties or lobbies in this country: the Republican party, the Democratic party and the AFL-CIO. (54)

Apparently, the bishops themselves have begun to be concerned about the single-minded passion of the right to life movement, recognizing that all other social justice issues could easily suffer. On 26 October 1979, the bishops issued a directive for Catholics in Origins, the official newsletter of the U.S. Catholic Conference. This statement urged Catholics not to vote on the basis of one issue but to "examine the positions of candidates on the full range of issues, as well as the person's integrity, philosophy and performance" (55). In 1980, the National Coalition of American Nuns issued a statement: "Unborn life is no more sacred than born life and any candidate's worthiness solely on the basis of the abortion issue is unfair" (56). Father Theodore Hesburgh of Notre Dame has also condemned this single-issue fury by saying, "It is deplorable that political candidates who agree 95 percent with Catholic principles on social justice on most issues of public policy have been defeated by their opposition on this one issue--abortion--and have been replaced by candidates who agree superficially on this issue but disagree with us on almost every other issue bearing on social justice and equality" (57).

Today we are faced with a long-term battle, not only to determine public policy but to win the hearts and minds of people throughout the country. The prochoice movement has the opportunity to define the issues clearly. Can we organize ourselves quickly enough to prevent a right-wing victory? I believe we can. The New Right does not actually have mass support in its antiabortion position or on most of its posi-

tions, as poll after poll shows. My experience as an organizer confirms these polls.

Our job is obvious: to organize on a grass-roots level, to reach outside the feminist and progressive movements, and to define the issues clearly as those of women's lives and constitutional and religious liberty. To do so, we must create an ongoing dialogue with this large group of people who might be called "traditional Americans." They need not be won over to the New Right.

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Part III
Gender, Class, and Race

NANCY HARTSOCK

Difference and Domination in the Women's Movement: The Dialectic of Theory and Practice (1980)

Feminist understandings of difference, as these are expressed in our practice, have gone through several phases as our movement has developed. We have moved from a denial of the importance of difference through an avoidance of difference to the beginnings of a recognition that the differences among us need not imply relations of domination. Yet much of what we have learned about difference in practice has not yet been articulated as theory. My purpose here is to contribute to this process.

I will take up several interrelated questions that the nexus of power and difference poses for feminists. First, does power mean only power over others? And does difference always provide a ground or justification for domination? Second, what effects does the practice of separatism (an avoidance of difference) have on the theory and practice of power? Third, separatism seems to institutionalize differences. Can a strategy of institutionalizing differences, whether in the forms of separatism, the formation of caucuses in larger organizations, or the construction of coalitions, help to overcome differences that lead to or support hierarchy and domination? But if our organizations institutionalize differences along the lines of race, sexuality, or class, can these organizations then be able to prefigure the society we want? These are difficult questions, and I do not claim to be able to answer them here.

I believe we can gain more clarity about these difficult questions by drawing some distinctions within the concept of difference. I propose to distinguish differences both from Difference and from specificity. Differences can best be understood as empirical phenomena. We are, after all, not all alike: feminists differ in terms of income, occupation, race, sexuality, height, hair color, and a host of other characteristics. It is only when these characteristics are given a particular social and even ontological meaning that they become the grounds for what I would call Differ-

ence, or radical alterity; they thereby can be used as a basis for domination.

Ursula Le Guin provides an important clue to how our society uses differences to construct Difference when she suggests that there is an important relation between the treatment of aliens in science fiction and the treatment of humans who are considered to be somehow different. She argues, "If you deny any affinity with another person or kind of person, if you declare it to be wholly different from yourself, as men have done to women, and class has done to class, and nation has done to nation, you may hate it or deify it, but in either case you have denied its spiritual equality and its human reality. You have made it into a thing to which the only possible relationship is a power relationship and thus you have fatally impoverished your own reality" (1). Le Guin is claiming that the logic by which Difference is constructed is a logic of domination, a logic that results in damage to both parties. The existence of differences, then, allows for the construction of Difference and thereby domination.

Yet feminist practice has demonstrated that this need not be the inevitable result of differences. Socially constructed Difference can be transformed into specificity, or positive collective identity. Thus, while men have defined women as radically "other," feminists have gradually been able to give a series of specific and positive contents to this otherness. We have constructed a series of collective and overlapping identities as feminists, as lesbians, as women of color, specificities that can no longer be reduced to "otherness," to "not men" (2). And while the logic of Difference leads to domination, I will argue that the logic of specificity supports the development of a definition of power as energy, as an ability to act.

The transformation of Difference into specificity, and domination into energy and ability to act, important and essential as it has been, simply mirrored and reversed the relations of capitalist patriarchy. We need to move beyond simple reaction and reversal toward more creative and encompassing responses. From this perspective, the current efforts to confront differences of race, class, and sexuality in the women's movement represent something new and important. We are beginning to see our differences as a ground for creativity, connection, and complementarity (3). And I will argue that if we analyze difference in a new way, given the intimate connections of difference and power, we should expect the development of new theories of power. Let us

look more closely, then, at the practice in which these insights about difference and power have taken form.

The Denial of Difference

The strategy of civil rights organizations in the late fifties and early sixties, and in turn that of a number of early feminist groups, can be seen as efforts to make the rhetoric and promises of bourgeois democracy real. These reform strategies implicitly accepted the ruling class account of our society as fundamentally constituted by free and equal individuals. This account was believed to conflict with the reality only in minor ways, and thus strategies for change in the early and mid-sixties did not grow from questions about the fundamentals of the American way of life.

In the first stage of feminist reform efforts (1964-68), feminists implicitly held that the differences between women and men were not a sufficient base on which to construct Difference, that is, that differences of gender were superficial and insufficient grounds on which to construct radical alterity, or otherness. Thus, efforts to overcome discrimination against women took the form of attempts to create what could only be a false universality and a concomitant refusal to recognize the economic and social underpinnings of power differences.

In retrospect, the reform strategies of both the civil rights movement and the early women's movement were part of a failure to see the ways differences were systematically transformed into Difference and used to dominate both women and men of color and white women (4). In turn, lack of attention to Difference, to socially constructed otherness, led to a failure to notice how domination was perpetuated within movements committed to change. To take just one example, in view of the fact that it was white, middle-class women with access to media visibility who named the problems that should be of concern to all women, it is not surprising that few women of color were interested in participating in feminist activities (5).

The Black movement discovered early that the assumption that everyone was equal in movements for social change represented an unworkable and false universalism, and Black leaders were the first to point out that differences were manifested as power differences. It is no accident, then, that Black separatism and Black liberation initially took form through a call for Black power: the discovery of the

significance of socially constructed radical alterity was directly connected to the discovery of the importance of power relations.

Difference as Domination in Feminist Practice

Feminists benefited a great deal from the insights of the Black Liberation movement. As the women's movement followed the same directions as those taken by the Black movement, feminist practice, though not yet feminist theory, implicitly held that it was Difference that defined Black and Third World oppression, and it was socially constructed Difference that defined women as other and led to their exclusion from decision making, both in society and in movements for change. Feminist recognition of the use of Difference to construct domination took the form of efforts to prevent the construction of Difference within the women's movement, thereby preventing domination. These efforts included opposition to structured organizations and leadership, advocacy of collective work, and separatism.

Unstructured consciousness-raising groups provided the first feminist organization forms, and many small groups of grass-roots activists as well as many women's centers have functioned on the CR group model. Related to feminist emphasis on unstructured groups was the stress on process. Many feminists remember the emphases on the importance of "the growing self," or the "evolving consciousness." Or the frequent practice of remaking and rethinking decisions when a new woman showed up at a meeting for the first time and questioned the decisions a group had already taken. The great weight feminists have given to making certain that everyone was satisfied with decisions makes clear both our reluctance to use the power of the majority to dominate and the seriousness of feminist efforts to prevent the construction of Difference in status within organizations.

In addition, in the early seventies, feminists overwhelmingly opposed leadership. Although this opposition grew in part from the strong influence of anarchism among the New Left, it came more immediately from feminist desires to eliminate bureaucratic structures and elitist leadership. Because women had been oppressed by elitist, unresponsive male leaders in radical Left groups, they reacted by refusing to designate any leaders at all. The point that emerges from these strategies is that feminists attempted to avoid appointing, electing, or selecting anyone who would be in a position to exercise power over them. We recognized in practice the important ways structural differentiation in posi-

tions could serve as a basis for domination and attempted to avoid those effects by refusing to build more than minimal structures.

Working collectively was a third response/reaction to the problems posed by Difference. Although there are a variety of models for collectives, one of the most common forms requires that the work done by each member of a group should be identical with that of every other--a way of avoiding the division of labor that has in the past taken the form of a division between mental and manual labor with resulting elitism. This practice contains an important statement about both power and Difference. Collectives of this sort are a statement that differences inevitably lead to the social construction of Difference and therefore to inequality and domination. These collectives, by insisting on the identity of interchangeability of members, represent another important way feminists have worked against the construction of Difference.

Separatism too can be seen as a strategy for avoiding the construction of Difference and, therefore, domination. Feminists responded to male domination by insisting that they could work only separately and used the split between Blacks and whites in the civil rights movement as justification. When it became clear that heterosexual women were oppressing lesbians and trying to make them invisible within the women's movement and that upper- and middle-class women were oppressing working-class women in the movement, the natural response was to split into smaller units. Racial separation, whether in the form of separate organizations for women of color or their indifference or hostility, has been a constant. These small units meant that no woman had to work politically with others who might be in a position--whether through class, race, or heterosexual privilege--to exercise power over her.

The creation of structureless groups in which there were no differences of gender, sexuality, class, or race implicitly affirmed the theoretical position that differences inevitably provided a ground for the construction of Difference and therefore domination or even perhaps, that Difference and differences were identical. In addition, these strategies for avoiding power and domination implicitly accepted that power was the ability to compel obedience, that power must be power over someone--something possessed, a property of an actor that enables him or her to alter the will or actions of others in a way that produces results in conformity with the actor's own will. On this understanding, power is exercised in situations in which one person induces another to do something the latter is disinclined to do by threat-

ening some consequences that the second person will dislike more than taking the required action (6).

All this amounts to a feminist acceptance of the phallogocratic logic of domination. First, we failed to go beyond the phallogocratic understanding that power is domination, and second, we failed to see that differences need not lead to Difference. Rather than re-examine this logic, we tried to prevent the existence of differences and therefore Difference within our movement. In saying this, I must point out that this acceptance was both untheorized and inarticulate. In addition, I do not mean to suggest that these several strategies were wrong. Separatism in particular has proved very fruitful.

Transforming Difference into Specificity

Separatism must be assessed and understood not simply as a defensive reaction to the phallogocratic use of Difference to construct and reinforce domination but also as the means by which feminists transformed our socially defined otherness into a self-defined specificity. Feminists have created spaces in a capitalist and patriarchal society where we could be free of our oppression as women--in women's music, women's businesses, coffee shops, bars, living communities, and so on. Separatism was fundamental to the survival and sanity of feminists, both as individuals and as a movement. We needed to create safe spaces where we could grow and learn and experiment, and we continue to need places where we define the terms--as women, as lesbians, as women of color, as working-class women.

Yet separatism has a larger significance. Although we initially formed groups on the basis of our socially defined otherness, we discovered in these groups that we shared not only oppressions but strengths. And our efforts to prevent the construction of Difference within the women's movement did allow space for new ways of thinking and organizing. Consciousness raising, with its stress on examining and understanding our own experience and on connecting that experience to the structures that define our lives, allowed for a very different mode of theorizing than one finds among other movements for change. We began to see feminism as a new and different mode of analysis rather than as a set of political conclusions about the oppression of women, a world view that could structure our understanding of society as a whole (7).

As we attempted to develop new and nonhierarchical ways of working, we developed new organizational forms and feminist work places as well. In addition, the reclaiming of lesbian

identity in the early seventies, the creation of lesbian feminism in both theory and practice, was one of the most important ways in which, by re-examining our experience and reappropriating it, we managed to transform both our past and ourselves. All these changes were important results of our reaction against the use of differences to construct Difference and relations of domination.

Empowerment and Difference

The experience of separatism led, as it had previously in the Black movement, to a transformation of the understanding of the nature and consequences of the differences along which the movement had split. It led as well to a transformation of feminist understandings of power. Within the movement, power exercised in and by feminist groups began to be seen not as domination but as ability to act and capacity to perform. It came to be synonymous with strength, vigor, energy, force, and ability.

In attempting to develop and describe this understanding of power, I argued some years ago that feminists must recognize that "power understood as energy, strength, and effective interaction need not be the same as power which requires domination of others in the movement." At the same time, I argued that because we also confront the world of traditional politics, "creating political change involves setting up organizations based on power as energy and strength, groups which are structured and not tied to the personality of one individual, groups whose structures do not permit the use of power as a tool for domination of others in the group" (8). I repeat this because I think that my views were widely shared and that my arguments reflected feminist efforts to construct organizational forms that expressed our newly developed sense of our strengths and identities. Thus this theorization of power as energy grew both from the feminist flight from domination and from the development and discovery of capabilities. It expressed the experience of empowerment the various separatist strategies had made possible and marked a willingness to think more explicitly about issues of power. Perhaps most important, it represented a break with phallocratic, male-defined reductions of power to domination.

In retrospect, however, I believe this was an incomplete understanding. Having the ability to act, or energy, is not the same as actually acting in ways that change the world. The feminist theory of power as energy and ability is uncomfortably close to Adrienne Rich's description of the tradi-

tional way women's power has been experienced--an energy looking for objects into which to pour itself, even sometimes a demonic possession (9). It is power bottled up and contained. Although I argued for an understanding of power as energy and ability, I was silent as to what actions might actually represent such an exercise of power. Perhaps this failure to consider the exercise of power or the impact of our actions reflected the insularity, isolation, and containment inherent in the several separatist strategies we had adopted.

In sum, the theorization of power as energy marked a break with phallogratic understandings of power; it began to formulate a feminist reunderstanding of power which rested on and expressed the practical transformation of Difference into specificity. Just as otherness was transformed into self-constituted identity, so too domination was transformed into energy and ability to act. Despite the fact that these understandings were simply reversals of the social relations of the capitalist patriarchy, they paved the way for breaking the links between difference and domination.

Difference and Domination: Breaking the Links

The current concern about racism in the women's movement is an indication both of the continuing problems differences pose and the collective expression of feminist willingness to rethink their meanings and to learn to use differences as sources of new ideas and strategies. We are only beginning to understand the practical and theoretical significance of treating racial differences as sources of creative tension rather than justifications for domination. Yet we can learn something about what might be possible by looking at the experience of an early lesbian feminist separatist group in Washington, D.C., organized in 1971. The Furies refused to work politically with straight feminists, and yet their efforts to live and work only with others who shared their politics and sexuality were deeply handicapped by issues of Difference.

Despite the prominence of arguments that the women's movement has always consisted of white middle-class women, the Furies like many feminist organizations had a number of members from poor and working-class backgrounds. These women insisted that class differences be confronted and argued that "refusal to deal with class behavior in a lesbian/feminist movement is sheer self-indulgence and leads to the downfall of our own struggle" (10). One response to the discovery of the Difference constructed out of class differen-

ces might have been to create yet another split, but, perhaps because of the extent to which Difference had already become specificity in the context of the women's movement, the Furies began to develop ways to make it possible to work together despite differences. The fact that the Furies produced some of the best feminist analyses of class differences and their workings within the women's movement illustrates the creative possibilities in such a situation. Some of what they learned is worth recounting here since it remains pertinent.

The Furies learned the sense in which we are all taught to take for granted that the "middle-class way is the right way." Being middle class "means being able to control people and situations for your benefit. No one in our movement would say that she believes she is better than her working-class sisters, yet her behavior says it over and over again" (11). Class arrogance can be expressed in looking down on the "less articulate," but may also be apparent in a kind of passivity often assumed by middle- and especially upper-middle-class women for whom things have come easily (12). Advocating downward mobility too can be another form of middle-class arrogance. What is critical about all this is that the Furies saw that class differences worked to allow middle-class women to set the standards of what is good and to act "more revolutionary than thou" toward those concerned about money and the future (13). Middle-class women retained control over approval.

It is not surprising that the Furies' discoveries about class can be characterized by a Black woman's point about racism: "The force that allows white authors to make no reference to racial identity in their books about 'women' that are in actuality about white women is the same one that would compel any author writing exclusively on black women to refer explicitly to their racial identity." She continues that "it is the dominant race that reserves for itself the luxury of dismissing racial identity while the oppressed race is made daily aware of their racial identity. It is the dominant race that can make it seem that their experience is representative" (14). Much the same is true of class, though since class differences have been less central to public debate in the United States, there seems even less awareness of classist behavior than of racism in the women's movement.

The Furies' experience indicates the potential value of differences to the feminist movement. For example, one white middle-class woman stated, "I learned out of necessity what classism was and I changed more quickly than if I had not been in a group with women who had class conscious-

ness. . . . Class oppression was no longer an abstract concept. . . . It was part of my life which I could see and change. And, having seen the manifestations of class in myself, I better understood how class operated generally to divide people and keep them down" (15).

In addition, the Furies made organizational efforts to construct new forms and to develop strategies that took account of the class differences among them, strategies for income and responsibility sharing that paid attention to both past and present privilege. These organizational changes signaled that differences need not become Difference, and that differences among women need not lead to the construction of otherness. Rather, these differences could be used to clarify the class nature of our social system and help us protect our organizations from the full impact of class oppression.

It is important to stress that these efforts to deal creatively with class differences required organizational changes. These changes may also be required when women of color and white women work together. As one writer has put it, "It is easy for white women to think that a group has been integrated if third world women have been brought in, but maybe they will also have to change the structure of their organization. Otherwise, the only third world women who can 'succeed' are those who can integrate. So we need fundamental changes in structure" (16).

Developing ways to work together across differences of class, race, sexuality, and gender once again raises the double question of power and difference, a question feminists can confront with the benefit of having discovered that differences need not be only sources of domination but can also become sources for creativity and growth. At the same time, by beginning to deal with differences in a new way, the Furies' experience implicitly posed problems for the feminist definition of power as empowerment and ability rather than domination. The feminist view of power as energy and ability grew from a period in which some, though not all, of the most damaging differences among women were muted by separatism. By going beyond this understanding, working together across differences, acting in a world in which women's differences are acknowledged, the Furies may have helped us to go beyond an understanding of power as energy.

Difference and Creativity: Toward a New Understanding of Power

The current phase in which many feminists are attempting to move beyond separatism raises in urgent form the need to

learn to use differences as sources of creative tension. The Furies' experience gives us a sense of both the importance of dealing with differences and the creative possibilities differences make available. These possibilities emerge very strongly as well in one of the recent collections of writing by women of color. Audre Lorde's essay is one of the most powerful statements of what might occur. She argues that "Advocating the mere tolerance of difference between women is . . . a total denial of the creative function of difference in our lives. For difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways to actively 'be' in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters" (17).

Interestingly enough, there is a resonance between Lorde's understanding of the creative possibilities of difference and the understanding of the role of differences that emerges in Marx's vision of human interaction in communism. Work, or conscious, self-realizing human activity, taken in its most inclusive definition as creative activity rather than toil, forms the basis for Marx's conception of the nature of humanity itself. Marx's description of an unalienated work process makes clear the possibilities for mutual interdependence and creation of community on the basis of difference--in this case a difference that takes the form of a division of labor. In an extraordinary passage from the 1844 Manuscripts, Marx speculates about nonalienated production. "If I had produced in a human manner," he says,

I would have (1) objectified in my production my individuality and its peculiarity. . . . (2) In your enjoyment of use of my product I would have had the direct enjoyment of realizing that I had both satisfied a human need by my work and . . . fashioned for another human being the object that met his need. (3) I would have been for you the mediator between you and the species and thus been acknowledged and felt by you as a completion of your own essence. . . . (4) In my expression of my life I would have fashioned your expression of life, and thus in my own activity have realized my own essence, my human, my communal essence. (18)

In this passage, differences among people create the possibility of realizing one's very humanity.

We can see as well some rudiments for a new understanding of power. This passage suggests that power need not be understood as energy bottled up but can be expressed in ways that change the world to help or enrich others different from ourselves. Indeed, power can only work this way when the others with whom we associate differ from ourselves, since only then can they and we receive the unique gifts each of us has. I am not suggesting that neither this brief passage nor the organizational experience of the Furies nor Lorde's argument for using differences articulates a new understanding of power that grows from a new understanding of differences. Such a theory of power can only emerge in the future from years of practical struggle with differences in our movement. Rather, I like to read these passages as visions and perhaps guides that underline the variety of possibilities for community and interdependence made available by differences among people.

Feminists are only beginning to explore possibilities of working together across differences. Because of a widespread and urgent sense that we need to work together, a deep-going exploration of differences among feminists seems profoundly important. We need to look more closely at the way class, race, or differences of sexuality result in the same feminist demand having very different effects on different groups of women. Black women, to take only one of these examples, have often argued that feminists are irrelevant, since they want every woman to have a job, whereas Black women would enjoy the luxury of being housewives.

But if our needs and desires are so different, how can we work together? I contend that it is possible at present only by using, preserving, and enhancing our differences. Feminist communities must make sure there are spaces for women of color closed to white women, lesbian spaces closed to heterosexual women. We must build these spaces into our political organizations as well--whether in the form of caucuses or the construction of coalitions. The one thing that can never be allowed is separate space for the dominant or privileged group. If we attempt to construct a unified movement with men, then there must be no separate organizational space for white males. They have always had access to separate space. Their separate spaces, their separate organizations, their differences from us have been sources of their power. We cannot allow them to continue.

A strategy of preserving and institutionalizing our differences could respond to the twin problems posed by the fact that universalistic strategies that ignore differences do not work and that separatist strategies fail to question the definition of differences as Difference. But this effort to institutionalize differences in our movement raises yet an-

other difficulty--one faced by any revolutionary organization, but not yet much dealt with by feminists--the contradiction between means and ends.

Many feminists have insisted that feminist organizations must form the model for the society we want. But do we want a society in which differences of race, class, gender, or sexuality remain institutionalized? Are there important distinctions between "walling out" and "walling in"? Do we want a society in which all differences are individual differences? Or a society like the one Marge Piercy constructs in Woman on the Edge of Time in which ethnicities continue to exist but are disconnected from color? Is there something about our differences that is worth preserving?

I have worried about the extent to which both we and our organizations may be transformed by our struggle for power. I have wondered whether our organizations can serve as tools for taking power for women and still lay the groundwork for new nonsexist, nonracist, nonclassist societal institutions. Although I once thought our institutions could prefigure the society we want, now the question of means and ends, the issue of how our organizations are related to the world we want seems permanently in flux. Perhaps it is time to abandon the notion that our organizations must prefigure the new society. It is important to experiment with new forms, but the history of the women's movement suggests that this is not always possible. We cannot expect feminist organizations to be small oases of universality and community in a patriarchal capitalist society. Nor can we develop a single organizational form appropriate to all parts of the movement. In the end, organizations can be evaluated only historically. What was right in the past will doubtless be wrong in the future.

The practice of the women's movement around the questions raised by differences suggests that political change is a process of transforming not only ourselves but also our most basic assumptions about humanity and our sense of human possibility--not just once but many times. Making change requires that we incorporate in our organizations both our constantly changing understandings of the possible and the needs of feminists involved in these organizations. At bottom, the change we seek requires transforming the meanings of both power and difference not once but many times.

Conclusion

The history of feminist understanding of difference and power makes it clear that different strategies are appropriate

at different times and that each strategy can make a contribution to our understanding of the significance of the differences among us. Each strategy contains an implicit analysis which needs to be "read out" of the practice and theorized in order to show us the new possibilities toward which it points. Our practice has demonstrated that differences need not be reduced to otherness and that the meaning of power is not exhausted by domination. We have been able to transform some of our socially defined othernesses into self-defined specificity and in so doing, have transformed feminist understandings of power. We have not, however, been able to avoid the differences among ourselves. Our experience indicates that we are beginning to see that the link between differences and Difference can be broken in both theory and practice and that our differences as feminists can instead be points of connection and creativity. Yet these new understandings will pose new problems for us--problems that center around questions of the relation of means and ends, questions about the extent to which our organizations should be or can be expressions of the world we want. Perhaps the most fundamental question to be asked of every strategy for change is this: how does this strategy contain at least the seeds of its own supersession?

Notes

The following people discussed this paper with me at a very early stage in its writing: Alexa Freeman, Sarah Begus, Annette Bickel, and Lucius Outlaw. In addition, I have been helped by comments from Sandra Harding, Amy Swerdlow, and Gerri Traina. This paper was significantly cut for inclusion in this volume, hence the lack of qualification and illustration.

1. Ursula Le Guin, "American SF and the Other," Science Fiction Studies 1, no. 3 (November 1975):208-9, cited in Pamela Sargent, introduction to More Women of Wonder (New York: Vintage, 1976), pp. xxxiv-xxxv.
2. This distinction is made by Erica Joy Mannucci, though she is not responsible for what I have made of it. See "Personal and Political Loyalty," mimeo available from the author at University of Milan, Center for the Study of Women in Culture. See also Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in This Bridge Called My Back ed. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua (Watertown, Mass.: Persephone Press, 1981), p. 99.

3. Audre Lord is one of the best-known people to make this claim and make it eloquently. See This Bridge, p. 99.
4. I do not mean to condemn all reform strategies. See Charlotte Bunch, "The Reform Tool Kit," in Building Feminist Theory, ed. Charlotte Bunch et al. (New York: Longman, 1981).
5. For example, see Judith Witherow, "Native American Mother," Quest: A Feminist Quarterly 3, no. 4 (Spring 1977). More recently, see Bell Hooks, Ain't I a Woman (Boston: South End Press, 1981), p. 138.
6. See, for example, Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 76; and David Bell, Power, Influence, and Authority (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 15-17.
7. Although I made this point in "Fundamental Feminism: Process and Perspective," in Building Feminist Theory, it was very much a widely shared view among the Quest staff.
8. "Political Change: Two Perspectives on Power," Quest: A Feminist Quarterly 1 (Summer 1974):16, reprinted in Building Feminist Theory.
9. Adrienne Rich, Of Women Born (New York: Norton, 1976), pp. 69, 101.
10. Nancy Myron, "Class Beginnings," Furies 1, no. 3 (March-April 1972):3.
11. Charlotte Bunch and Coletta Reid, "Revolution Begins at Home," Furies 1, no. 4 (May 1972):2-3. See also Delores Bargowski and Coletta Reid, "Garbage among the Trash," Furies 1, no. 6 (August 1972):8-9. Some of the essays from Furies are collected in Nancy Myron and Charlotte Bunch, eds., Class and Feminism (Baltimore: Diana Press, 1974).
12. Ibid.
13. Compare Barbara Smith and Beverly Smith: "Race is a concept of having to be twice as qualified, twice as good to go half as far. . . . No way in Hell would I give up getting a degree or some piece of paper that would give me more economic leverage in this 'boy's' system." Barbara Smith and Beverly Smith, in This Bridge, p. 113.
14. Bell Hooks, Ain't I a Woman, p. 138.
15. Ginny Berson, "Only by Association," Furies 1, no. 5 (June-July 1972):5-7.
16. Remark attributed to Mirtha Quintanales at the December 1981 Women in Print conference. Off Our Backs 11, no. 11 (December 1981):3.

17. Audre Lord, "The Master's Tools," p. 99. It is striking how many of the authors of This Bridge note that they were different from other members of their community--looking white, being able to pass, being lesbian, going through puberty prematurely, being the lightest or the darkest of the family, and so on--a link with creativity?
18. Quoted in David McClellan, Karl Marx (New York: Viking, 1975), pp. 31-32.

BONNIE THORNTON DILL

“On the Hem of Life”: Race, Class, and the Prospects for Sisterhood (1980)

The concept of sisterhood has been an important unifying force in the contemporary women's movement. By stressing the similarities in women's secondary social and economic positions in all societies and in the family, it has been a binding force in the struggles against male chauvinism and patriarchy. However, as we review the past decade, it becomes apparent that the cry "sisterhood is powerful" (1) has engaged only a few segments of the female population in the United States. Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian-American women of all classes and many working-class women have not readily identified themselves as sisters of the white middle-class women who have been in the forefront of the movement.

This article examines the concept of sisterhood and some of the reasons for the limited participation of racially and ethnically distinct women in the women's movement. This is done with particular reference to the experience and consciousness of Afro-American women. The article is divided into four parts. The first is a critique of sisterhood as a binding force for all women. It examines the limitations of the concept for both theory and practice when applied to women who are neither white nor middle class. The second part discusses the structures that differentiate women and their analytical importance in reformulating feminist theory. The third part briefly examines the question of consciousness and presents data to suggest the ways in which some Black women see themselves in relationship to the class and race divisions of our society. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of the prospects for sisterhood and suggests political strategies that may provide a first step toward a truly inclusive women's movement.

The Limitations of Sisterhood

In a recent article entitled "The Personal Is Not Political

Enough," Marxist historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese provides a political critique of the concept of sisterhood (2). Her analysis identifies some of the current limitations of this concept as a rallying point for women across the boundaries of race and class. It therefore provides a useful starting point for this paper. According to Fox-Genovese, sisterhood, in both its historic and contemporary manifestations, is a nurturant, supportive feeling of attachment and loyalty to other women which grows out of their shared experience of oppression. A term rooted in familial ideology, it tends to focus on the particular nurturant and reproductive roles of women and, more recently, on commonalities of personal experience. Fox-Genovese draws an important distinction between sisterhood and feminism. In fact, she argues that the underlying philosophies of each have generated conflict as well as complementarity.

The contemporary ideas of sisterhood and feminism both have their roots in the great bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Sisterhood perpetuates the struggle within the familial metaphor of politics that those revolutions repudiated in theory; feminism demands the realization of the democratic potential that the revolutions have thus far failed to deliver in practice. (3)

I interpret this statement by Fox-Genovese as saying that sisterhood has a particularistic aspect which has sometimes been diametrically opposed to more socialist directions in feminism. At times, it has treated the world of women as unique and insisted upon maintaining a separation between the competitive values of the world of politics (the public sphere) and the nurturant ones of the world of women (the private sphere). At other times, particularly during the current women's movement, it has been more closely aligned to feminism by serving as a source of political and economic action based upon the shared needs and experiences of women.

There are limitations in both of these aspects of the concept of sisterhood, limitations that have an important bearing on the prospects for an all-inclusive sisterhood. Fox-Genovese points out that sisterhood in the first form is an inward-turning idealization of feminine traits. As such, it encouraged the growth of bourgeois individualism which resulted in "the passage of a few middle class women into the public sphere," but sharpened the class and racial divisions between them and lower-class and minority women (4).

In its second form, as the politics of personal experience, sisterhood is severely restricted by the boundaries of

dominant social conditions such as race and class. She says:

Sisterhood has helped us, as it helped so many of our predecessors, to forge ourselves as political beings. Sisterhood has mobilized our loyalty to each other and hence to ourselves. It has given form to a dream of genuine equality for women. But without a broader politics directed toward the kind of social transformation that will provide social justice for all human beings, it will, in a poignant irony, result in our dropping each other by the wayside as we compete with rising desperation for crumbs. (5)

It is these two facets of sisterhood--bourgeois individualism and the politics of personal experience as expressed in the current women's movement--that seem to offer some insights into the alienation many Black women have expressed about the movement itself.

The bourgeois individualistic themes present in the contemporary women's movement led many Black women to express the belief that the movement existed merely to satisfy the needs for personal self-fulfillment on the part of white middle-class women. The movement's early emphasis on participation in the paid labor force and escape from the confines of the home seemed foreign to many Black women. After all, Black women as a group had had higher rates of paid labor force participation than their white counterparts well into the 1970s, and many would have readily accepted what they saw as the "luxury of being a housewife." At the same time, they expressed concern that white women's gains would be made at the expense of Blacks and/or that having achieved their personal goals, these so-called sisters would ignore or abandon the cause of racial discrimination. The experiences of racial oppression were likely to make Black women strongly aware of their group identity and consequently more suspicious of women who, initially at least, defined much of their feminism in personal and individualistic terms.

Sisterhood, that is, the nurturant supportive feelings of attachment and loyalty to other women, is not new to Black women. We have institutionalized sisterhood in our churches, organized it through the club movements that began in the late 1800s (6), recited it in numerous informal gatherings, and live it in our extended family groupings that frequently place great importance on female kinship ties. Anthropologist Carol Stack in her book on kinship patterns among urban Blacks and social work professor Elmer P. Martin writing with his wife, Joanne Mitchell Martin, a reading

teacher, identify the nurturant and supportive feelings existing among female kin as a key element in family stability and survival (7).

Although Black women have fostered and encouraged sisterhood, we have not used it as the anvil to forge our political identities. This contrasts sharply with the experiences of many middle-class white women who have participated in the contemporary women's movement. The political identities of Afro-American women have largely been formed around issues of race. Sociologist Cheryl Gilkes has pointed out that national organizations of Black women, many of which were first organized on the heels of the nineteenth-century movement for women's rights, "were (and still are) decidedly 'feminist' in the values expressed in their literature and in many of the concerns which they addressed," yet they also always focused upon issues which resulted from the racial oppression affecting all Black people (8). Poet and writer Adrienne Rich has also identified the linkages between Black women and white women with regard to feminist ideals (9). However, both writers, as described below, have also argued that racial animosity has undermined the potential for coalition between Black and white women since the women's movement began.

Although many contemporary white feminists would like to believe that relations between Black and white women in the early stages of the women's movement were characterized by the beliefs and actions of Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and some others, the historical record suggests that these women were more exceptional than normative. Historian Rosalyn terborg-Penn provides interesting documentation of her contention that

Discrimination against Afro-American women reformers was the rule rather than the exception within the woman's rights movement from the 1830's to 1920. (10)

Although it is clearly beyond the scope of this paper to provide a detailed discussion of the incidents that created mistrust and ill-feeling between Black and white women, the following quotations provide examples of a legacy that is still with us. According to Gilkes,

Besides the color bar which existed in many white women's organizations, black women were infuriated by white women's accommodation to the principle of lynch law in order to gain support in the South (Walker, 1973) and the attacks of well known feminists against anti-lynching crusader, Ida Wells Barnett. (11)

Rich specifically discusses the failure of the suffrage movement to sustain its commitment to the democratic ideal of enfranchisement for all citizens. Instead, she points out,

After the Civil War, the suffrage movement was deeply impaired by the split over the issue of whether black males should receive the vote before white and black women. . . . in the heated pressure over whether black men or white and black women should be enfranchised first, a classist, racist, and even xenophobic rhetoric crept in. (12)

The historical abandonment of universalistic principles on the part of white women in order to benefit a privileged few is, I think, one of the reasons Black women have been reluctant to see themselves as part of a sisterhood that does not extend beyond racial boundaries. The fear that the movement will benefit white women and abandon Blacks or benefit whites at the expense of Blacks is a recurrent theme. Terborg-Penn concludes,

The black feminist movement in the United States during the mid 1970's is a continuation of a trend that began over 150 years ago. Institutionalized discrimination against black women by white women has traditionally led to the development of racially separate groups that address themselves to race determined problems as well as the common plight of women in America. (13)

Historically, as well as currently, Black women have felt called upon to choose between their commitments to feminism and to the struggle against racial injustice. Clearly they are victims of both forms of oppression and are most in need of encouragement and support in waging battles on both fronts. However, insistence on such a choice continues largely as a result of the tendency of groups of Blacks and groups of white women to battle over the dubious distinction of being the "most" oppressed. The insistence of radical feminists upon the historical priority, universality, and overriding importance of patriarchy in effect necessitates acceptance of a concept of sisterhood that recognizes one's womanhood over and above one's race. At the same time, as sociologist Elizabeth Higginbotham has suggested, Blacks are accustomed to labeling discriminatory treatment as racism and therefore may tend to view sexism only within the bounds of the Black community rather than see it as a systemic pattern (14). On one hand, the choice between being Black and

female is a product of what Rich refers to as the "patriarchal strategy of divide-and-conquer" and therefore, is a false choice (15). Yet, the historical success of this strategy and the continued importance of class, patriarchy, and racial divisions perpetuate such choices both within our consciousness and within the concrete realities of our daily lives.

Structural Barriers to Sisterhood

Race, of course, is only one of the factors that differentiate women. It is the most salient in discussions of black and white women, but it is perhaps no more important, even in discussions of race and gender, than is the factor of class. Inclusion of the concept of class permits a broader perspective on the similarities and differences between Black and white women than does a purely racial analysis.

The first step is to analyze the structures and categories that differentiate us and the ways in which they interact to produce differences in concrete social relations, social ideology, and consciousness. Zillah Eisenstein in her book, Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism, states that power is distributed through three structures in American society today. They are the capitalist class structure, the patriarchal sex hierarchy, and the racial division of labor. She argues that

Women share an oppression with each other; but what they share as sexual oppression is differentiated along class and racial lines in the same way that patriarchal history has always differentiated humanity according to class and race. (16)

These three structures are at once independent and integrally related. Each has an individual history and a particular present that was shaped by the dynamic influences of one structure on another. The dialectical relationships between gender and class and race and class have, to date, received the greatest amount of theoretical attention.

Eisenstein, in the tradition of Marxist feminism, argues for refocusing the Marxist method by expanding the study of power to include the analysis of the "sexual spheres of power," in other words, to examine social relations not only through studying the role of power in class conflict but in patriarchal conflict as well. Her frame of reference clearly identifies patriarchy as a social form that may exist prior to capitalism. However, for the purposes of analyzing

women's position under late capitalism, it is clearly a structure that is dialectically related to class and race. Although this perspective provides a useful framework for beginning to examine the dialectics of gender and class, the role of race, though recognized, is not explicated.

Just as the gender-class literature tends to omit race, the race-class literature gives little attention to women. Currently, this area of inquiry is dominated by the controversy over whether race or class more appropriately explains the historical and contemporary status of Blacks in this country. A number of scholars writing on this issue have argued that the racial division of labor in this country began as a form of class exploitation which was shrouded in an ideology of racial inferiority. Through the course of U.S. history, racial structures began to take on a life of their own and cannot now be considered to be merely a reflection of the class structure (17). A theoretical understanding of the current conditions of Blacks in this country must therefore take account of both race and class factors. It is not my intention here to enter into this debate but instead to point out that any serious study of Black women must be informed by this growing theoretical controversy.

Analysis of the interactions of race, gender, and class fall squarely between these two developing bodies of theoretical literature. Because both are nascent and controversial, the task of integrating them is perilous and challenging. It is a task that appropriately falls to Black women, because, as the Combahee River Collective, a group of Marxist feminist Black women, has pointed out,

We realize that the only people who care enough about us to work consistently for our liberation is us. . . . We often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously. (18)

Although Black women experience class, race, and sex exploitation simultaneously, we must attempt to separate them analytically so that we may better understand the ways in which they shape and differentiate our lives. Angela Davis, in her much cited article "Reflections on Black Women's Role in the Community of Slaves," provides one of the best analyses to date of the intersection of sex, race, and class under a plantation economy (19). Nevertheless, we cannot take that particular historical reality and read it into the present as if the experience of Black women followed some sort of linear progression out of slavery. Instead, we must look carefully at the lives of Black women throughout history in

order to define the peculiar interaction of race, class, and gender at particular historical moments.

In answer to the question of where Black women fit into the current analytical frameworks for race and class and gender and class, I would ask how might these frameworks be revised if they took full account of Black women's position in home, family, and marketplace at various historical moments? In other words, the analysis of the interaction of race, gender, and class must not be stretched to fit the procrustean bed of any other burgeoning set of theory. It must develop with full cognizance of related theoretical directions, borrowing where appropriate, creating when desirable, and enlightening wherever possible.

The Role of Consciousness

It is within this spirit, therefore, that I return to Eisenstein, because she discusses a method for developing socialist feminist questions that may provide a useful point of departure for the study of gender, race, and class. Although recognizing the dialectical relationships between gender and race, race and class, and gender and class, she points out that all three are expressions of a more fundamental question about the organization and distribution of power under late capitalism. In order to understand the activity of any particular woman at any given historical moment, she argues, we must examine "the relations of power which shape her activity and the ideology which defines, protects, and maintains it." This examination of social relations and ideology is integrally tied to questions of consciousness (20).

The argument for looking at consciousness as well as structure is also appropriate to understanding the relationship of gender, race, and class for Black women. Unfortunately, there have been very few attempts to investigate systematically the development of consciousness among Black women. The profiles of Black women that have been appearing in magazines like Essence, the historical studies of Black women, fiction and poetry by and about Black women, and some recent sociological and anthropological studies provide important data for beginning such an analysis. However, the question of how Black women perceive themselves with regard to the structures of race, gender, and class is still open for systematic investigation. The analysis of consciousness requires an examination of how it takes varied forms among different segments of the population in response to the several structures that affect their lives. Such an examination could be particularly useful in trying to explicate

differences among women. Black women perceive themselves to be different from white women; working-class women, Black, brown, and white, perceive themselves to be different from middle-class women; and fundamentalist Christian women in the South perceive themselves to be different from agnostic Northeasterners. How important are these differences? It appears to me that they must be measured on at least two levels. Analytically, we must examine the ways in which the structures of class, race, and gender intersect in any woman's or group of women's lives in order to grasp the concrete set of social relations that influence her behavior. At the same time, we must examine individual and group perceptions, descriptions, and conceptualizations of their lives so that we may understand the ways in which different women experience the same and different sets of social structural constraints, and how social ideology influences the development of consciousness among them.

Concretely, and from a research perspective, this suggests the importance of looking at both the structures that shape women's lives and their self-presentations. This would provide us, not only with a means of gaining insight into the ways in which racial, class, and sexual oppression are viewed, but with a means of generating conceptual categories that will aid us in extending our knowledge of their situation. At the same time, this new knowledge will broaden and even reform our conceptualizations of women's situation.

For example, how would our notions of mothering and particularly mother-daughter relationships be revised if we considered the particular experiences and perceptions of Black women on this topic? Would overmothering be so pervasive an issue in situations where mothers have had a relatively high rate of labor force participation? Historians Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, who studied working-class women in early modern France and England, have already suggested that we must modify our notion that industrialization automatically resulted in the loss of an economically productive role for all women. Their research suggests that for working-class women there was, perhaps, more continuity than change accompanying industrialization. The changes that did occur were not in the economic role of working-class women but in the conditions and types of labor in which they were engaged (21). If we were to look at the labor force experiences of Afro-American women before and after industrialization, how might we further modify this notion?

There are many different questions we might ask in order to gain insight into the consciousness of Black American women. I would argue for beginning this process by examining the lives of particular women and searching for patterns

in the ways in which they describe themselves and their relationship to the society. Such an approach has been enlightening with regard to questions of class consciousness among Black women, although very little has been done on this topic.

For example, Elizabeth Higginbotham, in a study of college-educated Black women, has explored the impact of class origin upon the women's strategies for educational attainment. She found that class background made an important difference in these Black women's educational experiences as well as in the ways in which they saw their lives and careers once they had graduated from college.

According to Higginbotham, the middle-class women in her study had access to better schools and more positive schooling experiences than did their lower-middle-class sisters. Repeatedly, the lower-middle-class women credited their parents' willingness to struggle within the public school system as a key component in their own educational achievement. Social class also affected college selection and experience. Lower-middle-class women were primarily concerned with finances when selecting a college and spent most of their time adjusting to the work load and the new middle-class environment once they had arrived. Middle-class women, on the other hand, were freer to select a college that would meet their personal as well as their academic needs and abilities. Once there, they were better able to balance their work and social lives and to think about integrating future careers and family lives (22).

In my own research on private household workers, all of whom were working class--though some were closer to the lower margins of this group than others--I found that the women had a very clear sense that the social inequities that relegated them and many of their peers to household service labor were based upon their race, their poverty, and their gender. Yet different women, depending upon their job, family situations, and overall outlook on life, coped with this recognition in different ways. One woman described the relationship between her family and her employer's as follows:

Well for their children, I imagine they wanted them to become like they were, educators or something that-like [sic]. But what they had in for my children, they saw in me that I wasn't able to make all of that mark but raised my children in the best method I could. Because I wouldn't have the means to put my children through like they could for their children. (23)

When asked what she liked most about the work she did, she said,

Well what I like most about it, the things that I weren't able to go to school to do for my children. I could kinda pattern from the families that I worked for, so that I could give my children the best of my abilities. (24)

A second woman expressed much more anger and bitterness about the social differences that distinguished her life from that of her female employer. She said,

They don't know nothing about a hard life. The only hard life will come if they getting a divorce or going through a problem with their children. But their husband has to provide for them because they're not soft. And if they leave and they separate for any reason or (are) divorced, they have to put the money down. But we have no luck like that. We have to leave our children; sometime leave the children alone. There's times when I have to ask wino's to look after my children. It was just a terrible life and I really thank God that the children grow up to be nice. (25)

Although she ultimately acknowledged her fate as an oppressed person, she used her knowledge of the anomalies in her employers' lives--particularly in those of the women--to help her maintain her sense of self-respect and determination and to overcome feelings of despair and immobilization. When asked if she would like to switch places with her employers, she replied,

I don't think I would want to change, but I would like to live differently. I would like to have my own nice little apartment with my husband and have my grandchildren for dinner and my daughter and just live comfortable. But I would always want to work. . . . But if I was to change life with them, I would like to have just a little bit of they money, that's all. (26)

These are only two examples of the many different ways that the women who participated in my research study internalized and talked about differences that the structures of race, sex, and class made in their lives. Although the women adopted different personal styles of coping with the inequities, they were all clearly aware that being Black, poor, and female placed them at the bottom of the social structure, and they, like the women in Higginbotham's study, used the resources at their disposal to make the best of what they recognized as a bad situation.

These selections suggest some of the ways in which some

Black women view their differences and similarities with some other women: Black, white, rich, and poor. It indicates a concrete basis for understanding the potential linkages and barriers to an all-inclusive sisterhood.

Toni Morrison, in The Bluest Eye, provides the imagery that expresses very well the ways in which class and race interact in the lives of many Black women. In a sentence from which the title of this paper is borrowed, she says,

Being a minority in both caste and class, we moved about anyway on the hem of life, struggling to consolidate our weaknesses and hang on, or to creep singly up into the major folds of the garment. (27)

The Prospects of Sisterhood

Given the differences in experiences among Black women, the differences between Black and white women, between working and middle-class women, between all of us, what then are the prospects for sisterhood? Although this paper has sought to emphasize the need to study and explicate these differences, it is based on the assumption that the knowledge we gain in this process will also help enlighten us as to our similarities. Thus, I would argue for the abandonment of the concept of sisterhood as a global construct based on unexamined assumptions about our similarities and would substitute a more pluralistic approach which recognizes and accepts the objective differences between women. Such an approach requires that we concentrate our political energies on building coalitions around particular issues of shared interest. Through joint work on particular issues, we may come to a better understanding of one another's needs and perceptions and begin to overcome some of the suspicions and mistrust that continue to haunt us. The limitations of sisterhood as bourgeois individualism and the politics of personal experience presently pose a very real threat to combined political action.

For example, with regard to the field of household employment, a focus on the needs of a growing number of middle-class women to participate in the work force and thus find adequate assistance with their domestic duties could all too easily become support for proposals like the one made by writer Anne Colamosca in a recent article in the New Republic (28). She suggests an essentially bourgeois feminist solution to the problem of limited supply by proposing government training for unemployed alien women so that they could develop into "good household workers." Although this may

help middle-class women pursue their careers, it will do so while continuing to maintain and exploit a poorly paid, unprotected lower class and leave the problem of domestic responsibility virtually unaddressed for the majority of mothers in the work force who cannot afford to hire personal household help. A more socialist feminist perspective requires an examination of the exploitation inherent in household labor as it is currently organized for both the paid and unpaid worker. The question is, what can we do to upgrade the status of domestic labor for all women, to facilitate the adjustment and productivity of immigrant women, and to ensure that those who choose to engage in paid private household work do so because it represents a potentially interesting, viable, and rewarding option for them?

At the same time, the women's movement may need to move beyond a limited focus on "women's issues" and ally itself with groups of women and men who are addressing other aspects of race and class oppression. One such example is school desegregation, an issue that is engaging the time and energies of many urban Black women today. The struggles over school desegregation are rapidly moving beyond the issues of busing and racial balance. In many large cities, where school districts are between 60 and 85 percent Black, Hispanic, or Third World, racial balance is becoming less of a concern. Instead, questions are being raised about the overall quality of the educational experiences low-income children of all racial and ethnic groups are receiving in the public schools. This is an issue of vital concern to many racially and ethnically distinct women because they see their children's future ability to survive in this society as largely dependent upon the current direction of public education. One way in which feminists may involve themselves in this issue is by recognizing that feminist questions are only one group of questions among many others that are being raised about public education. To the extent that Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian-Americans are miseducated, so are women. Feminist activists must work to expand their conceptualization of the problem beyond the narrow confines of sexism. For example, efforts to develop and include nonsexist literature in the school curriculum are important. Yet this work cannot exist in a vacuum, ignoring the fact that schoolchildren observe a gender-based division of labor in which authority and responsibility are held primarily by men while women are concentrated in nurturant roles. The problem must be addressed as a structural one. We must examine not only the kinds of discrimination that occur within institutions but the ways in which discrimination becomes a fundamental part of an institution's organiza-

tion and implementation of its overall purpose. Such an analysis would make the linkages between different forms of structural inequality, like sexism and racism, more readily apparent.

While analytically we must carefully examine the structures that differentiate us, politically we must fight the segmentation of oppression into categories such as "racial issues," "feminist issues," and "class issues." This is, of course, a task of almost overwhelming magnitude, and yet it seems to me to be the only viable way to avoid the errors of the past and to move forward to make sisterhood a meaningful feminist concept for all women, across the boundaries of race and class. For it is through engagement in struggles that are not particularly shaped by our own immediate personal priorities that we will begin to experience and understand the needs and priorities of our sisters--be they Black, brown, white, poor, or rich. When we have reached a point where the differences between us enrich our political and social action rather than divide it, we will have gone beyond the personal and will, in fact, be "political enough."

Notes

1. Robin Morgan, ed., Sisterhood Is Powerful (New York: Vintage Books, 1970).
2. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "The Personal Is Not Political Enough," Marxist Perspectives 2 (Winter 1979-80):94-113.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
6. For a discussion of the club movement among Black women, see Alfreda Duster, ed., Ida Barnett, Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Rackham Holt, Mary McLeod Bethune: A Biography (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1964); Gerda Lerner, Black Women in White America: A Documentary History (New York: Random House, 1972); Jeanne L. Noble, Beautiful, Also, Are the Souls of My Black Sisters (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978); Mary Church Terrell, A Colored Woman in a White World (Washington, D.C.: Ransdell Publishing Co., 1940).
7. Carol Stack, All Our Kin (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); Elmer P. Martin and Joan Martin, The Black

- Extended Family (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).
8. Cheryl Gilkes, "Black Women's Work as Deviance: Social Sources of Racial Antagonism within Contemporary Feminism," paper presented at the 74th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, August 1979, p. 21.
 9. Adrienne Rich, "Disloyal to Civilization," Chrysalis, no. 7, pp. 9-29.
 10. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, "Discrimination against Afro-American Women in the Woman's Movement, 1830-1920," in The Afro-American Woman, ed. Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1978), p. 17.
 11. Gilkes, "Black Women's Work," p. 19. In this quotation, Gilkes cites Jay S. Walker, "Frederick Douglass and Woman Suffrage," Black Scholar 4 (7 June 1973).
 12. Rich, "Disloyal," p. 14.
 13. Terborg-Penn, "Discrimination," p. 27.
 14. Elizabeth Higginbotham, "Issues in Contemporary Sociological Work on Black Women," Humanity and Society 4, no. 3 (November 1980):226-42.
 15. Rich, "Disloyal," p. 15.
 16. Zillah Eisenstein, Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), pp. 46-47.
 17. This argument has been suggested by Robert Blaumer in Racial Oppression in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), and William J. Wilson in The Declining Significance of Race (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).
 18. "The Combahee River Collective: A Black Feminist Statement" in Eisenstein, Capitalist Patriarchy, p. 365.
 19. Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," Black Scholar 2 (December 1971). Reprinted by New England Free Press, Somerville, Mass.
 20. Eisenstein, Capitalist Patriarchy, p. 47.
 21. Louise A. Tilley and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978).
 22. Elizabeth Higginbotham, "Educated Black Women: An Exploration in Life Chances and Choices" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1980).
 23. Bonnie Thornton Dill, "Across the Boundaries of Race and Class: An Exploration of the Relationship between Work and Family among Black Female Domestic Servants" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1979), p. 53.

24. Ibid., p. 54.
25. Ibid., p. 62.
26. Ibid., p. 76.
27. Toni Morrison, The Bluest Eye (New York: Pocket Books, 1974), p. 18.
28. Anne Colamosca, "Capitalism and Housework," New Republic, 29 March 1980, pp. 18-20.

NANCY BOYD-FRANKLIN

Black Family Life-Styles: A Lesson in Survival (1981)

It is an important step toward a theory of women's emancipation that the concept of family life-styles and the issues of ethnic difference are being addressed at major feminist conferences. Many explanations have been offered as to why Black women have not been active in large numbers in the women's movement, including the fact that the movement has been seen by many as having a white middle-class image (1). Black women often rank the elements of their feminism differently than white women, citing the struggle against racial oppression as being of equal or greater priority. Another possible reason for the nonparticipation of minority women in the women's movement may well be that it has been perceived by many as rejecting or opposing the family. For Black women, given our legacy of complex family support networks and extended family relationships, this has been an important area of difference in perception and consciousness. Because of the pattern of racism and oppression that Black families have experienced in this country, they have had to develop strengths or survival mechanisms which have required all family members to assume a variety of roles within our family structures. In fact, many of these survival skills provide a model of coping which could be examined by women of other ethnic groups who may be faced for the first time with the reality of having to support themselves and their children.

The Myths about Black Families

Any effort to correct the racist stereotypical images of the Black family perpetrated by white social scientists and journalists must make special efforts not to replace one set of stereotypes with another. The first myth that must be dispelled is the myth of a typical Black family. Black communities in this country are extremely diverse; geographic origin, class, age, and other variables can produce different

life-styles and family configurations. Although there have been recent immigrations of Black people from the West Indies and Africa in the last century, this article will address itself primarily to the life-styles of Black people of African descent, whose ancestors were brought to this country during the era of slavery.

My own family background is illustrative of the diversity that can be found among Black families. I was born in Harlem and raised in the Bronx in a Black family with both Caribbean and southern-Black roots. My mother's family is from Jamaica, West Indies; my father's family moved to New York and New Jersey from North and South Carolina. My work as a clinical psychologist and as a family therapist has reinforced my respect for the difference and diversity in Black communities and has emphasized the caution one must exercise in making unwarranted stereotypical generalizations.

A number of pejorative, or deficit, views of Black family life have been based on a pathology model. Daniel Patrick Moynihan in 1965 looked at Black families from a white, ethnocentric viewpoint and labeled the strong role of women in our families as evidence of a "Black matriarchy" (2). Black women were represented as domineering, and Black families were characterized as depressed, deprived, and disadvantaged. Joyce Ladner in 1972 in her excellent rebuttal of this viewpoint made the following statement:

The problem is that there has been a confusion of the terms dominant and strong. All dominant people must necessarily be strong, but all strong people are not necessarily dominant. Much of this misconception comes from the fact that women in American society are held to be the passive sex, but the majority of black women have perhaps never fit this model, and have been liberated from many of the constraints that society has traditionally imposed on women. Although this emerged from forced circumstances, it has nevertheless allowed the black woman the kind of emotional well-being that Women's Liberation groups are calling for. (3)

This article will offer a look at Black family life-styles from the perspective of their strengths and will highlight the strategies that have helped our families to survive through generations of oppression and racism.

With the economic and social pressures that are operating on the family today, the high divorce and separation rates, and the new economic and family roles for women brought about by the unprecedented rate of female participation in the paid

work force, mainstream America is experiencing changes in family life-styles and alternative family forms once associated only with marginal groups. As families change form, break up, divide, and regroup, the coping skills and survival mechanisms of Black families provide a model for others in similar circumstances. The strengths of Black women and their ability to struggle for liberation for themselves and their families provide an inspiration for women of all ethnic groups and class levels. It is important to clarify that the expression "struggle for liberation" does not imply that women have achieved liberation from racial oppression in the society at large or that they have achieved sexual liberation in male-female relationships. It does, however, imply a commitment to this struggle that has been apparent for generations. This is manifested in the strong and influential role that Black women have always played in the support and survival of their families and in familial relationships.

The Strengths of Black Families

In recent years, a number of Black authors, including Robert Hill (4), Andrew Billingsley (5), Robert Staples (6), and Joseph White (7), have begun to reject the deficit models of the 1960s and to examine Black families in terms of their strengths. Robert Hill, in his book The Strength of Black Families (8), has provided the following framework for examining these strengths: (1) strong kinship bonds, (2) adaptability of family roles, (3) educational orientation, (4) religious orientation, and (5) work orientation. Although this article will focus primarily on the first two criteria, some attention will also be given to the other areas.

Our strong family orientation is a legacy from our African heritage and the wrenching and often disrupting experience of slavery, both of which led Black people to place a tremendous emphasis on maintaining family ties. Family members were often the only sources of support and comfort in an oppressive world. It is also important to recognize that in order to understand the concept of family among Black people, one must be prepared to abandon the limited notion of a mother, father, and two children. Our families tend to be complex extended networks composed of blood relatives and non-blood friends who may have equal importance with each other within the family structure. This model is consistent with the African tribal concept of family. It can also trace its beginnings to the experience during slavery of families being pulled apart and members being sold separately. In re-

sponse to this tragedy, adult individuals and children were often absorbed into new families.

As Robert Hill has noted, one of the greatest strengths of Black families is their strong kinship bonds (9). There is a great deal of reliance on extended family for help with finances, child rearing, advice, and household help. Because of economic burdens and limited resources, it is not unusual for a family member who can provide more help to raise a sister or brother's child. There is a strong maternal instinct in our families and the rearing of children is a major priority. There is also a network and support system among our women which often provides the backbone for family survival. For example, a grandmother or an aunt may be called upon to help raise the children so that a mother and father can both work. In times of trouble, family members are often the first people called upon for help.

Because adoption agencies historically did not cater to the needs of Black children, an informal adoption network developed in the Black community. Carol Stack refers to this process as "childkeeping" (10). This meant that in times of trouble, relatives or family friends would often take in children until their own parents were able to care for them. This informal adoption process is one that I have often had to utilize in my clinical work with Black families. An extended family member can be mobilized to intervene and care for a child in lieu of a foster home or institutional placement.

Childkeeping is rarely a permanent arrangement. It is not unusual for a mother or father to leave their children with other family members while they move to a new city in search of a job. This was a common feature in the migration pattern from the South to the cities of the North. Frequently, when young people wished to settle in a new city, they would contact a family friend who had originally come from their home town and move in with that family until they could support themselves. The newcomers would then become boarders within the home and a part of a new extended family network. My paternal grandmother, for example, frequently took in as boarders young women from North Carolina who came to New York to live. Many of these women still visit her with their families.

Although women's centers throughout the country are just beginning to provide help for women who are trying to relocate, such efforts are rare. Black families long ago developed an informal method for handling this crisis which helped migrants to avoid the sense of loneliness and isolation that are part of starting a new life.

Another example of the taking-in process can be seen in

the role of the elderly in Black communities. Partly in response to economic necessity, elderly Black people have tended to continue to work and to remain contributing and valued members of the community for many more years than is common in other communities in America. A woman, for example, may raise her own children, work at a job all her life, raise her grandchildren, and make a significant contribution to the rearing of her great-grandchildren. Black people do not tend to abandon their elderly in nursing homes. Black people form a very low percentage of the population in these facilities. The philosophy of mutual responsibility common to Black families precludes the removal of a senior citizen from the family as a first, or primary, option. Since women tend to live longer than men in Black as well as white populations, it is a significant fact that the women's movement has given relatively little attention to the plight of older women when they can no longer care for themselves. The key point here is that for a woman raised in a Black family where mutual support and responsibility are highly valued, the individualism expressed in the rhetoric of the women's movement may be perceived as running counter to family bonds and collective notions of survival. Once again, Joyce Ladner has eloquently stated the feelings of many Black women in this regard: "Success is measured by the degree to which one can care not only for her family but her extended family as well. Young children are encouraged to provide assistance to other family members when it is needed. One must stick to one's own and never turn one's back to them" (11). Within this framework, many Black women have had to struggle to meet their needs as women within the extended family context.

It has been difficult for proponents of the women's movement who have primarily individualistic notions of survival to comprehend the collectivistic concept of sacrifice for family survival that many Black women have been forced to struggle with. This has been an area of conflict for many Black women today. On the one hand, a Black woman often benefits from the support of the extended family, which often lessens the burden on the individual working mother who in the Black community is usually less isolated than women in the traditional white nuclear family. On the other hand, many young Black women have had to struggle with their own needs for self-development and a family ethic that often calls upon them to "sacrifice." In my clinical work with Black women, it has been my experience that a system framework and treatment called "family therapy with one person" is often required in which the task is to help her to differentiate herself as a woman while also helping her to rede-

fine her role within a complex family network. For example, some years ago, I worked with a Black woman of thirty-five who was the mother of nineteen- and twenty-one-year-old adult children and the grandmother of a three-year-old boy. She was a very central person in her extended family. In family-system terminology, she was a "switchboard" for all communications within her family. This meant that other family members would call upon her for everything. She was so overwhelmed by this role that she became extremely depressed and was increasingly unable to function at home and at work. My task as her therapist was first to help her recognize this process and then to change it by helping her make her family aware of her pain. Eventually, she was able to delegate some responsibilities, such as the care of an aging grandmother, to other family members, and she was able to involve family members in other crucial family tasks. She was ultimately helped to deal with her own need to be central in her family and was able to accept the help of other family members and be clear about her own needs.

Adaptability of Family Roles

One of the most misunderstood aspects of Black family life is the concept of role adaptability. Robert Hill points out that because of economic necessities, male-female and mother-father roles are often more flexible and less rigid than in other cultural groups (12). Black women have had to be strong and have often been called upon to work outside of the home and provide for their families. Often household chores and child-rearing responsibilities are shared, and it is a fact of life that men and women participated in these tasks. Although the majority of Black American families are two-parent households, economic necessity forced both parents to work. Therefore, certain structures emerged. An older child often took on the responsibility of caring for the younger children until the parent returned home. Unlike Hispanic families, for example, in which this role is often filled by the oldest girl, who may have two or three older brothers, in Black families, the oldest, whether boy or girl, could assume this role. In many Black homes, chores and household training are not divided strictly along sex lines. Boys as well as girls are taught to cook, clean, and take care of younger children.

Women today from many cultures are struggling with the pressures inherent in attempting to work and raise a family. Black women have always had to struggle to fill both roles and their efforts at handling this can provide useful les-

sons. It was this fact that made having an extended family of both blood and nonblood kin an absolute necessity. A mother with young children would take in a neighbor's children while she worked. Or the problem of finding an appropriate caretaker for children was often solved by seeking the aid of a grandmother or an older aunt. In black families today, older women may continue to work, and grandmothers and older aunts may not be available. Therefore, there is still a critical need for day care and infant care facilities that can supplement the traditional extended family supports. The concept of adaptable roles in terms of child care and household responsibilities does not imply the absence of sex-role stereotyping in Black families. Nor does it imply that Black men do not have their share of male chauvinism. Black women continue to struggle for sexual equality with their men. Michele Wallace has described the dual myths of Black macho and the Black superwoman (13). Both of these stereotypes are products of a history of racism and oppression which has mislabeled the relationships between Black men and women. It has perpetuated an ongoing psychological struggle within male-female relationships among Blacks over basic issues such as respect, dignity, and equality.

Religious Orientation

Religion has always played an important role in Black families, particularly in older generations, and it provided a major survival mechanism for Black people in the United States. Particular mention is made of the role of religion in the lives of Black families because many in our generation tend to dismiss religion and the churches as another institution contributing to the oppression of women in a predominantly male establishment. Although this has certainly been true to some degree, the church has also provided an outlet for many Black women and an arena in which they could develop their individual skills and talents, which might have had no other opportunity for expression. Within Black churches, women who worked as domestics all day or men who might work as porters found a place where they could be respected for their unique contributions. The roles of deaconness in the church or leader of the choir were often the first leadership roles for women in Black communities. For men and women who had daily negative feedback on their value from the larger society, the Black churches provided an opportunity to experience a true sense of self-worth. Prior to the Black movement of the 1960s, the churches were often

the only places outside the home where Black women could experience a sense of sisterhood and the satisfaction of working together for a common goal.

Black churches can also serve a very important social service function. In my clinical work in Newark, I treated a family who had been burnt out in a tragic fire in which they lost all their possessions. All the family members survived. Mother was an active member of a Baptist church and her support network of church members quickly mobilized to provide the family with food, shelter, and clothing.

Work Orientation

In response to the "welfare mentality" concept of the 1960s whereby Black people were often accused of having no desire to work by researchers such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan (14), Robert Hill has documented the degree to which work and earning a living has always been an important value in Black families (15). Work outside of the home has been another area in which Black women have often felt themselves at cross purposes with members of the women's movement, which has focused a great deal of attention on the problems of the wife who is economically dependent on her husband. As Jane Torrey has so vividly stated, this idea is "simply unimaginable to women who have never depended on a man" (16). For them, said Hernandez (1974), "liberation may mean being able to choose not to take a job outside the home" (17). Because of the high rate of divorce, inflation, and economic recession in this country, white women are being forced to face a reality that Black women have shared for generations, that is, being the sole support of their children. Even in two-parent Black families, it was and still is considered a luxury for a woman to be solely a housewife. As Joyce Ladner (1972) states, "The protective shelters which the society has imposed on white women have never been problematic to black women, because the society has refused to offer them the same protectiveness" (18). This "protectiveness" carried with it a certain level of oppression on the part of white men who helped to perpetuate the pattern of dependency in their women. For Black men, who have controlled an almost nonexistent portion of the economic wealth of this country, this form of oppression of women has not been possible. Therefore, Black women have often shared the burden of oppression by an outside society with their men. Michele Wallace has challenged the use of employment outside the home as evidence of the "liberation" of Black women. She accurately states that "the fact was that the 'black women's'

liberation consisted of being bound to the most unpleasant, unrewarding kind of work, work that did not enlarge her universe or increase her fulfillment. The black woman had not chosen her work. It was something she had to do, either because of the whip or to keep her family from starving" (19).

Lest we become trapped in the argument that these are class issues that do not involve race, it is important to realize that becoming middle class or achieving a certain amount of economic stability does not have the same effect for Black families as it does for many white families. For one thing, it has often meant that two adults had to be working if a Black family were to rise above the poverty line or achieve middle-class status. Robert Hill has referred to this phenomenon as "one paycheck away from poverty" (20). This is not to imply that white families today have not experienced a similar phenomenon. However, because of the realities of racism and oppression in this country, Black people have carried an additional burden which can be illustrated by the economic insecurity evident in the statement "last hired first fired." Also, often because of the extended family support system, a middle-class family member who is working may be called upon to help support an elderly mother or other relative.

Educational Orientation

In Black families, education has always been seen as an extremely important value. It was seen since the days of slavery as the way to a better life, so great sacrifices were often made for the education of a child. Often the family (including the extended family) would pool resources to send one child to college. That young person, who probably had to borrow considerable money to finish, is then expected to contribute to the college expenses of younger siblings. Once again, as mentioned above, the notion of middle class may be quite different for Black people because of these patterns of mutual interdependency and support. Many Black families in the South educated their daughters by sending them to state teachers' colleges, which led them to teaching positions in a segregated school system. This was seen as the only way to protect a daughter from the possible abuses inherent in domestic work. This pattern has led to the stereotyped notion that as a group, Black women are better educated than Black men. As Jacqueline Jackson (1973) has pointed out, if we reexamine the statistics and disregard the large pool of Black women sent to state teachers' colleges, it becomes clear that Black women have had far less

access to education for careers in law, medicine, and business than Black men (21). This pattern may have changed slightly in the last six to ten years as educational institutions, in response to the Black movement of the 1960s, have become frightened of assertive Black men. As a part of this backlash, Black women may have been given some slight educational advantages because of stereotypical notions that perceive them as less of a threat.

Many Black women and men who have spent their early lives raising a family and working have begun to return to school to continue their education. The community college systems in large cities, for example, have witnessed an expansion in their student bodies that include such individuals.

The process of seeking a higher education or professional degree is one that can often cause conflicts for a Black man or woman. These conflicts can be related to feeling different or fearing being perceived as different by family members. This problem is often presented by Black women whom I have seen in therapy. Many of these young women struggle with the reality of having both few role models and a fear of venturing into uncharted territory both professionally and socially.

Lessons in Survival

In conclusion, women throughout this country are facing a new era in which the traditional family models no longer apply. Black families have had to develop alternative structures in order to provide mutual support in times of struggle. It is my contention that many of those structures can and should serve as models of alternatives to traditional nuclear family roles. For example, our families have had to develop extended kinship networks which can help with vital survival needs, such as child care, financial support, and so on. The notion of a family that includes more than blood relatives is a model that women must adopt if they are to continue to provide nurturance for each other and receive help in the often conflicting dual roles of working woman and mother. This type of mutual support system, based on strong individuals, is essential if families are to survive. Black families also provide us with a model of how a liberated strong woman can contribute greatly to her own family and extended family system.

The concept of a support system must go beyond the family, however; it must apply to the demands of the women's movement for day care, maternity leave, male participation in child rearing, and economic benefits that will help all wom-

en and provide some of the basic supports that are necessary if families are to survive.

Notes

Some of the ideas presented in this paper have appeared in other articles by the author.

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14. Moynihan, Negro Family.
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16. Torrey, "Racism and Feminism," p. 285.
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18. Ladner, Tomorrow's Tomorrow, p. 277.
19. Wallace, Black Macho, p. 179.
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ELIZABETH HIGGINBOTHAM

Laid Bare by the System: Work and Survival for Black and Hispanic Women (1981)

Feminist theory, women's studies, and the women's movement more generally, have focused almost exclusively on white middle-class women in defining womanhood. Black, Hispanic, and other minority women have been variously ignored, treated as interesting asides, and viewed as deviant (1). The neglect, distortion, and devaluation of their histories and life situations has led many women of color to question the relevance of the women's movement (2). In addition, the lack of serious consideration given to the experiences of minority women by white feminists tends to duplicate the real-life situations of racial ethnic women (3). The work and life-styles of racial ethnic women are often out of step with dominant-culture women, and so the former group has often been defined as "unfeminine" (4). Lately there is recognition that racial ethnic women need to be included in women's studies if only to generate a more solid alliance to fight regressive forces. Yet a close examination of the life experiences of women of color is also necessary if we ever hope to understand the nature of sexism. We cannot develop theories of sex oppression if we do not incorporate the experiences of a large segment of women. Investigating the interplay of gender and race can further our understanding of the commonalities among all forms of oppression, as well as sensitize us to the unique character of race or sex oppression. It is in the spirit of this quest that I examine employment for Black and Hispanic women in the United States.

Racial Oppression

Black, brown, yellow, and red people have to live within boundaries defined by others because of their color. Racism is an ideology that justifies the exclusion of people of color from certain areas of economic and social life. It also operates to promote the tolerance of these inequities on the part of other members of society. Historically and to this

day, racism is institutionalized in the United States and has a daily impact on the lives of racial ethnic people. The exploitation of racial ethnic women in forced and paid labor has been and continues to be a key to their oppression as women.

The employment sphere has been identified by the sociologist, Robert Blauner, as a central area of differentiation between immigrant white ethnics and the racial ethnics who entered the country involuntarily (5). Comparing their histories in the labor market, Blauner found white ethnic males were considered "free labor," because they could move about freely and take a variety of wage labor jobs. In the same time period, racial ethnics were either enslaved or suffered severe restrictions on employment options. The use of Afro-Americans as slave labor to develop and sustain the agriculture of the South is the foremost example of the differences. In the Southwest, Mexican-Americans were paid wages lower than whites for their work in mines, railroads, lumber camps, oil extraction, and agriculture (6).

The exploitation of the labor of people of color has shaped the lives of the women in these groups. First, the constricted options for racial ethnic men meant their families incurred a lower standard of living than white families and varied from dominant patriarchal forms. Second, the economic situation of racial ethnic peoples forced the women into the labor market, where at the same time they were limited by their color to the least desirable and remunerative jobs. Furthermore, the organization of employment has resulted in differentiating racial ethnics from white ethnics in spheres beyond employment. Racial ethnic peoples were given the challenge of surviving as families and communities on either subsistence or no wages. Blauner sees these circumstances as the means by which racial ethnic peoples' cultures were severely assaulted.

The labor systems through which people of color became Americans tended to destroy or weaken their cultures and communal ties. Regrouping and new institutional forms developed, but in situations with extremely limited possibilities. The transformation of group life that is central to the colonial culture dynamic took place most completely on the plantation. (7)

Racial ethnic people's cultures did not develop as they might if unhampered, therefore the issue of cultural assaults has to be addressed (8). In the face of severe employment restrictions, members of racial ethnic communities are forced to choose within a limited range of survival

strategies. Often those strategies to ensure subsistence and survival also have negative consequences and make community members vulnerable in other areas of life. For example, the persistence of the Black extended family structure can be seen as a unique adaptation to welfare restrictions, a dual labor market with irregular job options, and the many family crises associated with poverty. Yet, as the research of Carol Stack and the Martins reveals, the complex interdependent support network comes at the expense of an individual's development (9).

The critical role of racial oppression means it has to be taken seriously when examining racial ethnic women. We are beyond the arguments about which form of oppression is primary. The task ahead calls for elaborating the historical, social, and cultural context of racial oppression and within that context, exploring gender and class differences. Only by examining the total context within which racial ethnic women live can one unravel the relationship of the factors impinging on their lives. Their entrance into the United States, their rights as citizens, their experiences as workers, and the cultural assault upon them shape the parameters within which racial ethnic females develop into women and then contribute to the survival of their communities. Although most examinations of racial oppression focus on the situations of men, we can build upon the colonial model to examine the experiences of women as well. This requires a sensitivity to issues of gender in addition to those of race and class.

Work for Black and Hispanic Women

Grasping how the nature of work shaped the lives of racial ethnic women requires an analysis of specific historical situations. Although the scarcity of historical accounts of Black and Hispanic women hampers this effort, some preliminary observations can serve as directives for future research. For example, Angela Davis's early statement about slave women exemplifies the sort of analysis that needs to be extended to explain the positions of Black and Hispanic women during other eras (10). Black women's labor was essential for the development of the agricultural economy and the performance of hard and heavy housework associated with the eighteenth and nineteenth century plantation. Black women were also responsible for producing and raising future laborers for the slave system. The structure of the plantation economy released Black women from the myth of femininity: in oppression, women worked hard alongside men. Black wom-

en, like Black men, suffered severely in slavery, but also faced sexual exploitation. The structure of slave labor in this country extracted work from both Black women and men in such a way as to make community survival precarious. Given this reality, Davis demonstrates that staying alive and continuing the community were signs of resistance.

Rural life continued to be difficult for Black people, even after slavery was abolished. In sharecropping, the post-Reconstruction method of keeping Black people tied to the land, men and women worked side by side to support the owners of the land. In fact, the entire family worked very hard. Social institutions reinforced this life-style. Jim Crow laws limited the citizenship rights of Blacks. Black public schools taught little and were organized around farm schedules (11). The exclusion of Blacks from industrial jobs in most areas of the South limited their employment options to agriculture. On these farms, oppressive economic conditions replaced the overseer. Again, resistance is visible in the struggles to survive and keep the family together.

The lives of independent Black farm families were also difficult. The end of Reconstruction left them with few legal rights. As the federal government actively intervened in farm production in the twentieth century, benefits disproportionately went to the richest farmers. Along with national disasters, such policies played a significant role in driving Blacks off the land and into urban centers (12).

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Mexican and Mexican-American men were instrumental in developing the railroad, lumber, mining, and oil industries in the Southwest. Under a dual wage system, they made little money. The differences between Chicano and Anglo wages ranged from one to three dollars. Employment in extracting industries required living in work camps and company towns in otherwise unsettled territories. Prior to 1870 few Mexican-American women worked outside of their homes (13). Living in company towns, Mexican-Americans were forced to spend their wages in overpriced company stores. These living conditions meant Chicanas had the difficult task of cooking, cleaning house, and raising a family under harsh circumstances. For them, as for Blacks, the exploitation of work and its structure resulted in conditions that made family life and community survival difficult.

After 1870, the economic conditions forced many Chicanas into paid employment. Mexican-American women were found in domestic and laundry work in the 1880 census. During this decade, women and children began to be incorporated into agricultural work in some parts of the Southwest (14). Yet

growers in other areas, especially Colorado, preferred to continue hiring male agricultural workers and did not employ the entire family until after World War I. In spite of hiring practices, male workers would often bring their families along when imported to work in certain areas (15).

As the Southwest developed and more Anglos were recruited into the region, Mexican-Americans were pushed out of many industrial jobs. Discrimination increasingly limited them to agricultural work. In 1930, 35 percent of Chicanos and 20 percent of Chicanas employed in the Southwest were farm laborers (16). A few were able to hold on to individual farms, but the Anglo plots to acquire their land were numerous. As the twentieth century progressed, a vast majority of the Chicano agricultural work force was migrant--laborers moving with the crops. In this setting, women had the multiple tasks of housework, childbearing and rearing, and working in the fields (17).

The structure of migrant farm work took a toll on the entire family. Adults usually died before they reached their fifties. Poor housing and health conditions also resulted in high infant and child mortality. Jessie Lopez de la Cruz, a farm organizer, provides an excellent account of migrant work patterns in her autobiographical sketch in Moving the Mountain (18). Born in 1919, Jessie began working in the fields as a child when her family's economic situation deteriorated (19). Migrant farm labor is not a temporary solution to a family crisis, but a life-style that is difficult to alter once adopted.

Jessie Lopez de la Cruz married and continued to do migrant farm work with her husband. She describes conditions for Chicana migratory farm workers in the 1940s, which illustrates the "double day":

We always went where the women and men were going to work, because if it were just the men working it wasn't worth going out there because we wouldn't even earn enough to support a family. . . . We would start around 6:30 a.m. and work for four or five hours, then walk home and eat and rest until about three-thirty in the afternoon when it cooled off. We would go back and work until we couldn't see. Then we'd get home and rest, visit, talk. Then I'd clean up the kitchen. I was doing the housework and working out in the fields and taking care of two children. (20)

The histories of racial ethnic people in rural areas reveal the harsh conditions they faced working for developing industries. A racist ideology made it easier for employers

to overlook their workers' humanity and to rationalize poor working conditions and lower labor costs. The work situations of Black and Mexican-Americans compounded the problems of raising families. Along with racism, sexism from both the dominant culture and the subculture restricted the movements of racial ethnic women.

The struggle to survive was not the only battle racial ethnic people waged. They were continually exposed to the racist ideologies of the society in an additional effort to control them. Racial ethnics living in rural areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were familiar with economic need and brute force in shaping their lives, but less exposed to the ideological assaults than their urban counterparts. The level of technology was low, but rural work also shielded the community. In these settings, men and women did much of the same work and were in close touch with each other. Furthermore, in stable rural areas, Blacks and Mexican-Americans built institutions (especially the church) that helped them to survive and preserve a sense of dignity in the face of a society that failed to recognize their humanity. Transient racial ethnics were more dependent upon the family as the sole buffer between them and the dominant culture. Yet these groups were more isolated from institutions that made fostering and sustaining their own cultural definitions easier (21).

Survival in the City

Exploitative work, with its detrimental impact on the family and community, continues in urban areas, even though the specific forms of oppression might change. Today, the overwhelming majority of Blacks and Hispanics are urban dwellers. This process began for Blacks around World War I, and around World War II for Mexican-Americans. The Puerto Rican population on the mainland United States has always been predominantly urban.

Like racial ethnic men, Black and Hispanic women are used as a reserve labor force in urban areas (22). They are denied access to "good" jobs and either move into employment sectors that white women have left or into newly developed low-wage sectors (like hospital and other service work). Historically, these have been the options for all racial ethnic women who do not have higher education. Insights into their plight can be gained from looking at Black women in domestic work.

David Katzman in Seven Days a Week documents the changing color of domestic workers as the nation became more in-

TABLE 1. Occupational Status of Women by Race for 1910, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, and 1977

Occupational Category	1910		1940	
	Black	White	Black	White
Professional & Technical	1.5	11.6	4.3	14.7
Managers, Officials & Proprietors, except Farm	.2	1.5	.7	4.3
Clerical and Sales	.3	17.5	1.3	32.8
Craftsmen and Foremen	2.0	8.2	.2	1.1
Operatives	1.4	21.2	6.2	20.3
Nonfarm Laborers	.9	1.5	.8	.9
Private Household Workers	38.5	17.2	59.9	10.9
Service Workers (except Private Household)	3.2	9.2	11.1	12.7
Farmers & Farm Managers	4.0	3.1	3.0	1.1
Farm Laborers & Foremen	48.0	9.0	12.9	1.2

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the U.S.: An Historic Overview 1790-1978, Table 164, p. 128. Data for 1977 are rounded to the nearest percent and represent women sixteen years and older. All other data are for women aged fourteen and over. Additionally, data for 1977 are not strictly comparable to 1970 statistics as a result of changes in the occupational classification system for the 1970 Census of the Population that were introduced in January 1971. For an explanation of these changes, see Bureau of the Census, Technical Paper No. 26. Data from 1910 to 1970 from Aldridge (1975). Her sources were: Data for 1910 from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1940 Census of Population, Comparative Occupation Statistics for the

1950		1960		1970		1977	
Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
5.3	13.3	7.7	14.1	10.0	15.5	13.0	16.0
1.3	4.7	1.1	4.2	1.4	4.7	3.0	6.0
5.4	39.3	9.8	43.2	21.4	43.4	27.0	43.0
.7	1.7	.7	1.4	.8	1.1	1.0	2.0
15.2	21.5	14.3	17.6	16.8	14.5	16.0	12.0
1.6	.7	1.2	.5	.9	.4	1.0	1.0
42.0	4.3	38.1	4.4	19.5	3.7	10.0	2.0
19.1	11.6	23.0	13.1	28.5	15.1	27.0	17.0
1.7	.6	.6	.5	.2	.3	-	-
7.7	2.3	3.5	1.0	.3	1.3	1.0	1.0

United States 1870-1940, Table 15, pp. 166-72. Data for 1940 from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1940 Census of Population, vol. 3, The Labor Force, Table 52, pp. 87-88. Data for 1950 from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1950 Census of Population, Occupational Characteristics, Table 3 (Washington, D.C., 1963), pp. 11-21. Data for 1970 from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Social and Economic Characteristics of the Population in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Areas: 1970 and 1960 Current Population Reports (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), and U.S. Bureau of the Census, The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States, 1972, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, no. 46 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1972).

dustrialized (23). In 1870 and 1880, domestic service constituted the major occupation for women, with the exception of agriculture. As industrial development led to increased clerical work and other occupations were feminized, white women moved into jobs in these spheres. Domestic work was left to immigrant and racial ethnic women. In 1940, 60 percent of employed Black women were private household workers (see Table 1) (24). The movement out of domestic work has been much quicker for white immigrants than for racial ethnic women. Those white women still in domestic work tend to have the higher prestige, better paying positions (25). The lowering of discriminatory barriers in the 1960s following the civil rights and Black Power movements has enabled significant numbers of Black women to leave household work and enter those traditionally female occupations of clerical and sales workers.

Black and other racial ethnic women have had to adapt to the patterns of discrimination in urban labor markets. For Black women, this is reflected in an occupational distribution which has changed over time with the shifts in the industrial base of the economy, but which has always been very different from that for white women. In 1919, 86.5 percent of all employed Black women worked as private household workers or farm laborers, whereas only 26.2 percent of working white women were so employed. By 1950, Black women were also found in significant numbers in other service work (19.1 percent) and factory (operative) work (15.2 percent). Meanwhile, white women have always been more concentrated in higher paying jobs. In the early part of the century, those occupations were factory operative, professional, clerical, and sales positions. By 1977, 43 percent of all employed white women worked in clerical and sales positions, but even after tripling their concentration in clerical and sales work since 1960, only 27 percent of all Black women were so employed by 1977. In contrast to the rather large remaining gap between the races in clerical and sales work, the significant difference between Black and white women in professional employment early in the century had been virtually eliminated by the 1970s. In 1977, 13 percent of employed Black women and 16 percent of working white women were concentrated in professional and technical jobs.

The above data illustrate that one avenue to higher wages traditionally open to white women, that of clerical and sales work, has been severely restricted for Black women. Essentially, Black women have had to seek higher education to escape working in someone's kitchen or doing other low-wage work. With an education, Black women entered professional positions serving predominantly Black clients. They

have been particularly active as teachers, social workers, librarians, and nurses. Although these significant numbers in the professions have often been attributed to high levels of motivation, racial discrimination closed alternative paths to stable and remunerative employment (26). This pattern is similar for other racial ethnic women, but Black women presently have higher levels of educational attainment than Mexican-American and Puerto Rican women (27).

The success of a small number of Black and Hispanic professional women is often used to obscure the work situations of the majority of their groups in the labor market. This view both ignores the difficulties racial ethnic women face as professionals and also avoids a careful examination of the plight of their sisters. Even though there has been some gross improvement in the labor force situation of racial ethnic women, the gains have been limited. In the past two decades Black and Hispanic women have increased their numbers in clerical and sales positions. This trend makes the occupational distribution of women of color look more like that of white women. Yet, one needs to be cognizant of the fact that the entrance of racial ethnic women into "women's jobs" is coinciding with technological innovations that are altering the nature of clerical and sales work (28). Fragmentation and increasing management control over the work process, along with efforts to block unionization, are making clerical work less desirable to white women. Clerical work continues to be, on the whole, low paying, although it is an improvement over many types of service work. For many racial ethnic women who worked hard to get an education in racist high schools, white-collar work is not delivering all that it once promised.

A very high percentage of the females working as factory operatives in this country are women of color. Only about 11 percent of all white women do semiskilled or unskilled factory work, but one-quarter of Hispanic women and 16 percent of Black women are found in this sector (see Table 2). Unlike the proverbial high-wage industrial jobs, which often go to males, Black and Hispanic women in operative positions are employed in low-wage, labor-intensive, light industries. This demanding work exploits women's labor and also limits their lives in other areas.

To illustrate how these working conditions affect the quality of life for racial ethnic women, let us take a closer look at the lives of Puerto Rican women working in the New York garment industry. During World War II and the Korean War, Puerto Rican men were inducted into the armed forces. The women were simultaneously recruited into the garment industry and cut off from more desirable work by discrimina-

TABLE 2.
Occupational Status of Black, White, and Hispanic
Women for 1977

Occupational Category	White	Black	Hispanic
Professional & Technical	16	13	7.7
Managers & Administrators (except Farm)	6	3	3.1
Sales Workers	7	2	4.7
Clerical Workers	36	25	30.0
Craft and Kindred Workers	2	1	1.9
Operatives, Except Transport	11	16	24.7
Transport Equipment Operatives	—	1	.4
Nonfarm Laborers	1	1	1.3
Service Workers	19	37	23.6
Farm Workers	1	1	2.6

Source: For Black and white women, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the U.S.: An Historic Overview 1790-1978, Table 162, p. 128. For Hispanics, Morris Newman, "A Profile of Hispanics in the U.S. Work Force," Monthly Labor Review 101 (December 1978):3-14.

tion in education and the labor market (29). More recently, the garment industry in the Northeast has faced difficult competition from shops in other regions inside and outside the United States. This has meant the loss of jobs for Puerto Rican women and a decline in their labor force participation rate (30). For those still employed in this highly unionized industry, weekly and annual earnings have declined in real terms. Furthermore, working conditions are not on a par with other unionized light industries, and the seasonal nature of the work necessitates periods when survival rests upon unemployment compensation (31).

Details of the consequences for Puerto Rican women and their families are revealed in an interview with a woman whose mother worked in the New York garment industry between the 1950s and the 1970s. Maria Diaz, a pseudonym for the respondent, vividly recalled her mother talking about her work. When Maria was eight years old, Mrs. Diaz began employment in a factory located in East Harlem, El Barrio. The shop was not unionized at the time. In the safety of her home, Mrs. Diaz complained about the dirt, the insensitive boss, and poor working conditions. But most often she talked about her fears. She was really afraid of losing her job. Therefore, she was never late for work, complied with requests to work overtime, and went to work even when she was ill. Maria heard her mother tell stories about the accidents and illnesses in the factory and complain about the ineffectiveness of the union once it was established. Hampered by knowing little English, Mrs. Diaz remained in the garment industry. Over her twenty-year career, she worked at only three different shops. She usually returned to the same shop when recalled after her seasonal layoffs.

Along with her husband, a hotel worker, Mrs. Diaz was able to provide for her four children. The Diazes struggled for the economic security necessary to raise their family and against the low priority given their community by city agencies. Although many garment shops are unionized, union leadership has chosen to sacrifice the wages and working conditions of an increasingly nonwhite rank and file to keep industries located in New York City. Under severe conditions, Puerto Rican and other racial ethnic families are expected to "make it" as other ethnic groups have in the past. Yet, they receive little support from external institutions and often use all their resources simply to keep the family together. As parents worked long and often irregular hours, responsibility for child care and housework often fell on the oldest daughters, as in the Diaz family. In this way the entire family suffered the onus of the exploitative work available to racial ethnic people.

As this country faces economic and social hardships, all indications are that the future will be harsh for women and racial ethnic people. The rekindling of racist rationales, the attacks on the few gains women and racial ethnics have achieved since the 1960s, and the general revival of explanations that blame the victim signal the end of an era. As a consequence, the next few years look particularly dim for racial ethnic women. It is essential that those people involved in scholarship and organizing be sensitive to the multiple barriers racial ethnic women face. Not only are they often oppressed in their individual homes, but they attend racist schools which often direct them to a limited job market. In this capitalist labor market, their work will be exploited at the lowest wage possible.

Conclusion

More research on the historical and contemporary situations of Black and Hispanic women is needed. Explorations into their work and other experiences are essential for developing feminist theory that also accounts for racial ethnic women. In this task, researchers have to look beyond patriarchy and subservience in the home. I propose that scholars take the context of racial oppression seriously. Racial ethnic women live with additional restrictions and pressures that most dominant-culture women never encounter. This reality has to be addressed.

This paper has briefly explored work and acknowledged that racial ethnic women have first and foremost been exploited by capitalists in the labor market. The limited employment options for racial ethnic women are intimately connected with the difficult tasks of survival and community maintenance. Furthermore, the dehumanizing impact of racial oppression has taken its toll on their roles as daughters and wives.

Racial ethnics' situations have been qualitatively different from those of white ethnics, who have experienced class oppression. Historically, white workers fought different battles at different periods. In the twentieth century, while racial ethnics struggled for subsistence, white workers fought for a living wage. Barred from industrial work where a family wage was instituted, racial ethnic men were not in a position to demand that their women remain in the home. The wages of women of color were essential for family survival. In many cases, especially in urban areas, their employment could be more regular than that of their spouses. This fact differentiates them from dominant-culture women,

whose earnings were indeed supplementary to their husbands' earnings. Even though racial/ethnic women earn less, their earnings are a higher percentage of the family income than white women's (32). Therefore, explanations that link women's exploitation in paid employment with their roles in supplementing the earnings of men are inadequate for addressing the plight of racial ethnic women.

The forces at work indicate that more than sexual oppression is involved for racial ethnic women. Their color is an additional stigma and a devaluing factor which makes them vulnerable to more intense forms of exploitation. The brief historical material revealed here suggests that employers exhibit little concern for the actual survival of racial ethnic families. Economic profit is made off the backs of racial ethnic women, and the obstacles to family and community survival are ignored, because the people are devalued. Failing to recognize this reality further complicates racial ethnic women's struggle. That is the struggle that feminist scholarship must see.

Notes

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ANGELA JORGE

Issues of Race and Class in Women's Studies: A Puerto Rican Woman's Thoughts (1981)

At the State University of New York College at Old Westbury, where I am a tenured assistant professor, I am teaching for the first time a course called Machismo and the Changing Role of Women in Hispanic Culture. This course is also the first and only one of its kind, although Old Westbury has had a women's studies program since 1971. This limited experience in women's studies in no easy way earns me the title of Puerto Rican feminist. Since my life-style, my income, and my professional life separate me from my community and its daily struggle for survival, I do not even speak for the masses of Puerto Ricans. Nevertheless, I wish to share some thoughts on issues of class and race in women's studies.

My perception of women's studies is that it is focused primarily on white middle-class women, with some few courses on the struggles of Black and other non-European women. Therefore, I perceive two basic needs in women's studies: the integration of all women into the field and the redefinition of the goals of women's studies so as to address the needs of all women. In the course of this essay, I will raise several questions and, finally, attempt to answer the question: Is there merit in compartmentalizing the problems of minority women? Is it significant to separate (and label) their problems as women, as racial minorities, as poor people?

Naturally, as a Puerto Rican woman, I am most concerned with what is happening to Puerto Rican women within the broader picture of what is happening to Hispanic women generally. Recent statistics give a sense of urgency to what I and others perceive, that is, that Puerto Ricans, and Puerto Rican women in particular, can easily become a minority among minorities. I am in no way trying to suggest that there should be a Puerto Rican women's struggle versus a Mexican-American women's struggle versus a Cuban-American women's struggle versus a Dominican-American women's struggle versus a Latin American women's struggle. I am, however,

trying to call attention to the needs and the differences within the overall Hispanic women's struggle to overcome class, race, and sex oppression in this country.

The Hispanic population of the United States is not monolithic. To compare one Hispanic group with another without taking into account their differences before coming to the United States and within the United States is to do an injustice to both groups. For instance, it would be wholly unfair to compare Cubans--who are political exiles, are primarily of the lower, middle, and upper classes, and are European (many of them) in looks--with Puerto Ricans. The Cubans received tremendous economic support from the United States government and the American people when they fled the Castro regime, but the Puerto Ricans, a majority of whom are racially mixed and represent an uprooted peasant class, have had quite a different reception in the United States. Many of the uprooted arrive at our mainland airports with nothing more than a cardboard suitcase, the name and address of a friend or relative, and the expectation of finding a job as an unskilled laborer.

Unfair, too, would be a comparison between women who have had different life experiences. For instance, how does a Hispanic woman who has lived her childhood and teenage years in an indigenous cultural setting perceive herself and/or react to race and class conflict in this American society? How does a Hispanic woman whose entire childhood and youth was lived in an inner-city community in the United States where people like her do not control the schools or the economic life of the community perceive herself and/or react to race and class conflict? Finally, how does a Hispanic woman whose experience has been primarily of living on one migrant farm after another react? That different questions need to be asked about different women is not only a truism for Hispanic women but also for other minority women across ethnic and racial lines and for white women as well. This was made apparent to me a few years ago.

At that time, I was an adviser to a young white woman of poor working-class background. She became my student in a basic Spanish course and, unlike any other student before or since, presented me with a unique challenge. This young woman was handicapped, suffering from a severe hearing impairment. Her handicap required that we meet for additional tutoring, bringing us together for four to five hours a week. It was during this time that we began to talk and share with each other as women. As I began to find out more about her, I began to see the parallels between her life and mine. Among those similar experiences were being on welfare, living in a foster home, receiving poor health care, receiving

an inadequate public education, and the other hundred and one things in life that constantly remind you that you belong to the "have nots." Our encounters during the year gave me an opportunity to "see" how oppressed the poor white working class is and understand how similar are our plights in this capitalist society. The one basic difference between the white poor working class and the minority groups is that the whites can be made to believe in the superiority of their status because of their privileged position as white Americans.

Few Hispanics have the opportunity to engage in social intercourse with whites. Too often whites are our supervisors if we are in the labor force or our landlords if we are tenement dwellers. They are also the police officers who protect the life and property of those who own our communities but do not live in them. Consequently, the vast majority of the Hispanic population "knows" white America only through conflict or the distorted picture presented on television. The myth we are presented with is that all white Americans are economically comfortable, living in luxury apartments or suburban communities with perfectly manicured lawns, perfect spouses, and perfect children. The most serious family problems of whites seem to be the selection of the best soap to use on gleaming white skin, or the best toothpaste to use on seemingly perfect teeth, or the best family deodorant or mouthwash. That there are white welfare recipients, alcoholics, delinquents, prostitutes, and wife beaters is something rarely acknowledged in the white media. Our public school and public housing segregation only ensures this isolation and reinforces the distortion. Thus, the question must be asked, how do people who live in different realities, including the distorted reality that is projected through the media, begin to communicate, to see the similarities, the common bond to their struggle to overcome class oppression?

Entwined with questions of class and culture is the question of color. As a group, Hispanic women are women of color. Some are redheaded, some are blonde, but most are brunettes whose hair texture is more than just wavy or straight. Some have blue eyes or green, but the majority have black or brown eyes. Many have straight noses and thin lips, but many others have broad noses and full lips. How does the Hispanic woman who looks like the "dream girl" of every white American man feel about herself--compared to the Hispanic woman who is physically indistinguishable from the Black American woman? How do the vast majority of Hispanic women, representing innumerable hues, perceive themselves?

In regard to the question of color, there is a vocabulary connoting social status that is rarely used in American Eng-

lish. In fact, the amount of miscegenation among Indian, African, and European peoples that took place in the Caribbean and Latin America, and its attendant connotation of social status, is alien to the U.S. experience. Most Americans perceive people as Black or white with limited recognition of mulattoes. Hispanics, on the other hand, perceive themselves as white, as Black, and as everything in between.

That different questions about race and class must be asked is by now evident. In addition to these questions, others must be asked about the historical, political, economic, and social differences or similarities each group making up the Hispanic community has in relation to the others and in relation to American society. For instance, according to a 1976 government report, whereas 42.1 percent of Mexican-American women and 49.7 percent of all other Hispanic women were part of the labor force, only 33.7 percent of Puerto Rican women sixteen years of age and over were actively participating in the labor force (1). Since 33.2 percent of Puerto Rican families are headed by women, compared to 14.4 percent of Mexican-American families, a disproportionate percentage of Puerto Rican women and their families seem locked into dependency on welfare. Why is this so, when both groups of women are poor and share a common language and culture? Several reasons not traditionally offered may help to explain why the differences exist.

First, unlike Mexican-Americans whose ancestors lived in the southwest region hundreds of years before the arrival of the Americanos, Puerto Ricans uprooted themselves to come to a strange land, seeking to adapt to a strange climate, topography, habitation, and life-style. Second, the Puerto Rican community in New York was the victim of an unprecedented urban renewal program in the 1950s and 1960s. Urban renewal destroyed local Puerto Rican-owned businesses, primarily grocery stores, and forced people to live in twenty-story buildings. Furthermore, in order to acquire an apartment in public housing, the extended-family concept had to be given up. The extended family as we had known it and sometimes reconstructed it in the older tenement buildings could not survive the new housing. It became necessary to explain and justify every member of the family unit. Extending a helping hand to a friend, neighbor, or relative who had arrived from the island with no job or place to live had to be done guardedly.

A third reason to be considered is that the Mexican-American belongs to an apparently homogenous group, the result of Native American and European intermingling. The African element in the Mexican-American is not as visible as among Puerto Ricans. The Puerto Rican uniquely represents "a

large migration of citizens from offshore, distinct in culture and language and also facing the problem of color prejudice" (2). Finally, Puerto Rican women have been victims of an organized campaign of sterilization. A 1976 report on the sterilization of women in Puerto Rico states that "more than 35 percent of Puerto Rican women of childbearing age have been sterilized--the highest rate of female sterilization in the world" (3). As if this were not enough, Puerto Rican women were also the human guinea pigs used in experiments involving the birth control pill. We are only in recent years beginning to learn about the detrimental effects of hormonal therapy on women and their children.

In this essay, I have raised questions about race and class with respect to Puerto Rican women, a group viewed collectively as Black and poor. I have been interested in providing material helpful to answer the question I raised in the beginning: Is there any merit in the intellectual compartmentalizing of the problems of minority women? Should one separate their problems as women, as a racial minority, as poor people? Although there is merit in undertaking such an analysis, I believe that those compartmentalizing the problems and the needs of minority women should avoid judging their importance or attempting to establish priorities among them or among the strategies developed to eliminate them. Similarly, I believe that programs of women's studies need to address issues of class and race more meaningfully and more broadly. For if it does not, the women's movement will remain essentially two movements: one of non-European women raising questions that are fundamental to their survival, and another of white middle-class women attempting to make some superficial changes but essentially supporting a social structure that perpetuates racism, sexism, and class bias.

Notes

1. "Table 6: Employment Status of Spanish-Origin Women 16 Years of Age and Over, by Type of Origin, March 1974," in Women of Spanish Origin in the United States (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Women's Bureau, 1976), p. 9.
2. Puerto Ricans in the Continental United States: An Uncertain Future (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, October 1976), p. 145.
3. "Sterilization of Puerto Rican Women," Puerto Rico: A People Challenging Colonialism (Washington, D.C.: EPICA Task Force, 1976), p. 62.

ROSALIND POLLACK PETCHESKY

Reproduction and Class Divisions among Women (1980)

When I first began to think about how I would relate class to women's reproductive lives, I imagined a catalogue listing the different ways in which working-class women, poor women, and middle-class women experience abortion, sterilization, and birth control. The catalogue would reveal how certain commonalities bridge their experiences, making of reproduction, as Linda Gordon has said, an experience "more basic even than class" (1). But instead, I'm going to ask you to leave this predictable discourse aside and follow me into deeper waters. For as I began to see, "class" is a category that has eluded feminist theory; we're not always sure whom we mean when we talk about working-class women and middle-class women and what the relevant differences between them are. So what I want to do is look for a moment at how feminists have thought about women and the class structure and suggest how we need to press beyond broad definitions in order to understand the really intricate divisions that exist between women and women. Yet this inquiry will not take us outside of the terrain of reproduction--including its most biological aspects, fertility and childbearing--but, on the contrary, right to the center of it. I will argue that, in fact, production and reproduction intersect in women's lives not only to influence but actually to construct their class position. What constitutes class for women is quite different from what constitutes class for men and is also structurally different for different groups of women.

Why has class continued to be such a slippery phenomenon for feminist theory? First, as many Marxist feminists have pointed out, because women's class situation has traditionally been located--by social scientists, traditional Marxists, labor historians, and individual women themselves--in relation to their connections with men and their position in the family. Thus, the specific economic contribution of women's labor, paid and unpaid, has been obscured. On the other hand, to define class strictly in terms of the relations of

production, as Marxism does, overlooks the complicated ways in which women's class position is mediated by sexual, familial, and reproductive activities that in everyday thinking tend to be defined as outside of economics. Confronting the implicit gender bias of narrowly economic theories of class, Gayle Rubin takes Marx himself to task for reducing to a couple of lines in Capital the "historical and moral element" through which class structures are reproduced, culturally elaborated, and sex and race-stratified (2). Documenting Rubin's insights through the historical experience of women, feminist scholars such as Laura Oren, Heidi Hartmann, Louise Tilly, and Joan Scott have verified that production and reproduction can certainly not be viewed as two separate spheres for women (3). Thus Tilly and Scott preface their Women, Work and Family with an observation of major theoretical importance, for all its simplicity:

The age at which a woman marries, the number of children she bears, the size of the household in which she lives, and the value of children to the family all directly affect her working life. The amount of time required for household and childbearing activities affects the amount of time spent in productive work. A history of women's work must therefore also be a history of the family. (4)

The perception of feminist historians and others that women and men experience class in different ways has not only contributed to our understanding of women's concrete relation to production, but has also contributed to the development among Marxists of a broader conception of class itself. This broader conception emphasizes social relations, historical process, and culture as integral, not peripheral, to the accumulation of capital. As Rayna Rapp puts it, ". . . what are actually being accumulated are changing categories of proletarians. Class formation and composition is always in flux; what gets accumulated in it are relationships" (5). By looking in detail at women's changing relation to modes of production, as Tilly and Scott do with regard to industrialization in England and France, feminist analysis contributes to an understanding of the process through which reproduction--as fertility, child-rearing and marital patterns--intersects the relations of production and the division of labor. Tilly and Scott in the works cited earlier show how marriage--whether, when, to whom--not only reflects but determines in certain ways women's class position in preindustrial Europe. This is an important step toward thinking about class in general as partly constituted

by, not separate from, kinship systems. Moreover, this way of thinking has helped feminist theory to move beyond earlier attempts to link up production and reproduction, such as the belabored housework literature of the early 1970s which strained to authenticate women's membership in the working class by arguing that what housewives did was "real work" (6). The abstract typing of woman as Household Worker obliterated real class distinctions, since obviously not all housewives are part of the same social universe nor are all women housewives. It also diminished the complexity of what women do, and are, as reproducers, sexual beings, childbearers and child rearers.

But the housework literature, for all its crudeness, was an attempt to show that women's relationship to class, or production, is fundamentally different from men's and grows out of a different objective situation. In this respect, discussions of housework are akin, not so much to a Marxist, as to a radical feminist theoretical tradition that defines women themselves as a "class," or a "sex-class." This definition is based on woman's social construction through family and reproductive roles. Radical feminists such as Shulamith Firestone and Mary Daly view gender relations as not only prior to class relations in a historical sense but also as subsuming class in an ontological sense (7). By collapsing class into gender, the notion of sex as class ignores the obvious, piercing differences--of power, authority, and resources--among and between women. A domestic worker interviewed by Robert and Jane Coles evokes these differences in hard-hitting, straightforward terms:

I hear her talking about all of us women, who have such a "poor life." Then she comes and sees me watching a program on television, and she decides I'm not spending my time the way she does--and besides, she wants me to be doing all her work for her, so that she can spend her time any way she wants. . . . I'll tell you what she doesn't know about the world--that because of who she is and who I am, we're not just two women, the way she pretends we are sometimes when she tries to be nice to me; we're something else--the boss and the one who's being bossed. (8)

Women have power over other women, class power. That is, some women control how other women must spend their time; they control other women's capacity to meet their own material needs and those of their children or to pursue their dreams. Feminist thinking sometimes obscures this reality. There is a milder form of the radical feminist view

that has affected even Marxist feminists, aware of class as an important social force. Its implicit premise goes something like this: women, like men, are divided by the relations of production, by economic differences, but underneath all that our reproductive experience--sexuality, motherhood, the family--brings us closer together. In other words, production divides us but reproduction unites us. This view, however, as Veronica Beechey has cautioned, conceptualizes class relations and sexual relations, production and reproduction, still as two autonomous spheres rather than as integrally related social processes and relationships. Moreover, it allows feminists to evade the hard task of looking critically at the Marxist analysis of production and capitalist relations of production from a feminist point of view (9).

A different approach to thinking about the relation between sex and class has been developed by Marxist feminist sociologists in England. In recent essays, Beechey, Jackie West, and Elizabeth Garnsey all argue strongly against views of women's class position as deriving from men's or from the family through marriage. Women derive their class position in the same way men do--through their occupation, their place in production; but that place is specific and has its own historical trajectory. As West puts it,

Women, or for that matter any other group, do not need to constitute a separate class in order to have a class position in their own right or having (its) own specificity. . . . Classes are extremely broad and complex groupings. They are not homogeneous entities, they are divided by age, skill, sex, and ethnicity. (10)

The gender-specific character of women's relation to class is made clear, according to West, by three important conditions: (1) the rapidly growing number of women who are heads of households, living alone, or living with other women; (2) the highly sex-segregated composition of the labor market--women and men are not the same "workers" any way you slice it; and (3) the sexual division of labor within the family. But it is, in West's view, the third condition above all--that women primarily are still responsible for domestic tasks and child rearing--that restricts all women to an invariably lower paid, sex-segregated, subordinate place in the relations of production (11).

There are two major problems I see in this analysis. First, it still leaves the interconnections between class and gender, between production and reproduction, undeveloped. What does it mean concretely to say that the sexual

division of labor at home conditions women's place in the labor market? Won't this be different for different groups of women, depending on whether or not they are married, whether or not they have kids, their age or stage in the female life cycle, and, of course, their class and race? And doesn't the relative weight of these intrusions of reproductive life on work change historically? Second, how does this abstract analysis of women's separate position in the labor market and their (cross-class) double day encompass the important divisions within gender? Do women enjoy class privileges, one of which may be having power over other women, only in their capacity as bosses or professionals? If reproduction structures class for women, doesn't it also structure the divisions among women?

I think we have to acknowledge that class divides women from women, or, to put it another way, women have a gender-specific relation to the class system and a class-specific relation to the gender system. And we have to examine the subtle and complex grids these relations generate with much greater attentiveness and rigor than we have heretofore. On the one hand, the almost universal reality of women's double responsibility for family and wage labor has qualitatively different meanings for different groups of women in ways that themselves reproduce and fortify the barriers between classes. For the southern factory worker interviewed by Robert and Jane Coles, being a full-time housewife appears a life of ease, the subject of wistful daydreams:

She is rather glad to imagine herself without a job. She would get up at 7:30, not 5:30. She would see her husband off, her children off, maybe drive the latter to school herself, then have a quiet breakfast. She would delight in her aloneness--no one on either side of her, working on the assembly line. She would watch television, meet a friend at a shopping mall, have lunch with her, come home and do some planting or weeding or "fixing" food or "just plain relaxing." This last option is the one she favors most when she evokes her daytime dreams while standing and inspecting an endless stream of towels. (12)

Behind this romanticized fantasy of middle-class womanhood lurks her own daily reality: kids rarely seen or enjoyed, meals rushed and frantic and merely edible, no time to muse and dream. It goes without saying, too, that, unlike the middle-class housewife, she will have neither time nor resources to enroll in some course in adult learning or any other amenity supposedly designed to buy people's way into

the "privileged life." And, in this respect, her situation may not be so different from her husband's, who also envied the ladies rambling about the shopping mall.

On the other hand, neither can we regard this textile worker and her husband as a homogeneous unit; the view of classes as composed of families or households as their basic units will just not do, given what we know about the very different ways that women and men, young and old, are recruited into, sustained by, and ejected from the labor market (13). Indeed, these fundamental, socially structured cleavages leave us wondering whether it isn't more appropriate to regard class as something that is assigned to individuals in ways that differ by gender and age rather than to families or households as collectivities. The work of Tilly and Scott and a ground-breaking doctoral dissertation by Harold Benenson on the American working class emphasize the importance of a complex set of social processes within the family structure for determining women's and men's differing relationships to the wage economy. For example, the division of labor regarding housework and child care, age and circumstances of marriage, fertility patterns (particularly one's number of children and one's age when they are born), patterns of consumption and household production, and, finally, the very flow of the life-cycle--how all these events articulate with, or collide against, work outside the home, must be considered (14). What is important to repeat is that this relationship between household processes and class structure is not only different for women and for men but also changing historically for women themselves. Tilly and Scott document how a new character emerged on the proletarian stage during the Industrial Revolution in England and France: the mother who worked away from home. Her accommodation to the conflicting pulls of domestic responsibilities and economic necessity--which meshed neatly with capitalism's need for a stratified labor force--was to work only in cases of urgency, and then as near to home as possible.

Even in the early factory towns, married women tended to become cotton pickers. Cleaning and beating the cotton with sticks was done by hand, not machine, and the pickers worked near but not in the mills. The work was performed intermittently and was not subject to factory discipline. "It appears to have been the custom to allow them to come and go as they pleased. . . . This degree of liberty attracted . . . women whose domestic duties prevented them from leaving their homes for 12 hours a day."

In general, married women tended to be found in lar-

gest numbers in the least industrialized sectors of the labor force, in those areas where the least separation existed between home and workplace and where women could control the rhythm of their work. (15)

Needless to say, the price for this flexibility and so-called liberty was the lowest status and wages. The working wife of the Industrial Revolution was in a structurally and materially different position within the working class from that of her working husband (or, for that matter, of her teenaged sister or daughter).

Today this structural specificity of women's relationship to class is, if anything, more developed, more refined. It affects a much larger mass of women, many of whom are on their own in the struggle for economic survival. How, when, and where women are recruited into the labor force bears little resemblance to the patterns for men. The 62 percent of all women between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-five who work outside the home--many of them the sole support of children--still earn 60 percent of what men earn. These women were increasingly concentrated in deskilled clerical and service sector jobs during the 1970s, and there is no reason to expect that patterns of sex segregation and female subordination in the labor force will diminish during the 1980s (16). Not unlike their nineteenth-century counterparts, they too seek, and are recruited into, jobs near home--in corporate offices, bank branches, department stores, and fast-food outlets, now conveniently dispersed to the suburbs near the available pool of cheap housewife labor.

On the domestic side of the production-reproduction nexus, there are no visible signs that what economists call "allocation of household time" between women and men is likely to change in the near future. If so, in married-couple households where both partners work full time, husbands will continue to average between 0 and a few hours of housework per week, and the wife's work week will be substantially longer than her husband's because of her disproportionate assumption of household burdens (17). According to one study, the impact of the two-job syndrome on a woman's daily life has been "a sacrifice, for her, of 14 hours a week from other activities such as gardening, visiting, eating, sleeping, and T.V. viewing" (18). This asymmetry becomes particularly striking when seen in the context of the changing work-life cycle for women and for men. It is well known that women's labor force participation--particularly that of married women--has increased tremendously in the past two decades, whereas men's labor force participation has declined. These shifts represent not so much an increase or a decrease in

absolute numbers, but rather a change in the respective life cycles of women and men. Women are working more continuously for more of their lives, whereas men are working less. One way to look at this is that, within married-couple households (and still, today, they make up the great majority of all households), a woman's increased hours, days, and years of wage labor are buying more leisure time for some man in her family--longer time in school as a young man; longer vacations and less overtime, or no second shift, in the middle years; or early retirement (19). If it weren't for the persistent, grossly unequal division of labor in housework and child care, this shifting pattern might be seen as a kind of equalization. As it is, women are working an average of between sixty-five and seventy-six hours a week, reducing their access to leisure and increasing their risk of coronary disease, and men are finding the "working wife" a blessing in disguise. No wonder one of the husbands interviewed by Lillian Rubin admits that, though he doesn't want his wife to work, if she quit he'd have to "get a second job" to keep up the payments on the car, and (he says) "working two jobs with hardly any time off for yourself isn't my idea of how to enjoy life" (20). Indeed! Women's work earns men "time for themselves"; time at home for a married woman with kids is rarely "time for herself."

The most telling evidence that families cannot be understood as units, that women and men within families are differentially situated in relation to class, comes with divorce (the fate, as we know, of one out of three marriages). Then the illusion of class homogeneity within the family falls away and the bare facts of gender division as a part of class structure are stunningly revealed. Janet Kohen, Carol Brown, and Rosalyn Feldberg, in interviews with a cross-section of divorced women in the Boston area, found that, on the average, the family incomes of these women dropped by over half after divorce. (This figure accords with 1978 data from the Department of Labor, which showed the median income for white married-couple families was \$18,370, whereas the median income for all female-headed families was \$8,537.) Moreover, report Kohen, Brown, and Feldberg of their sample of women:

This overall average obscures an important class difference--the higher they start, the farther they fall. The 8 highest income families dropped 60 percent, the 8 lowest income families dropped only 19 percent. The less the husband had contributed, the less he could take away. (21)

In other words, we might say that divorce is a kind of leveler for women. Even many women from middle-class families upon divorce find themselves faced with wage discrimination, job segregation, little training or skills, relegation to low-paying clerical and service sector jobs, difficulty in finding child care, and often little child support.

All this suggests that the current notion of women as "secondary earners" whose wages magically propel their families into the safe, secure middle class obscures a more complex reality. It mystifies both the nature of class as a social relationship, not a sum of money, and the manifold ways that women and men within the family have a different relationship to the class structure as a whole. In short, I am arguing that we have to look at how individuals are recruited into and defined by classes, not as parts of homogeneous family "units" nor as discrete individuals, but as members of gender, age, racial/ethnic, and also sexual preference groups, whose social construction mediates class itself. The fact, for example, that lesbians as a group remain permanently without access to a male wage to share makes their class position objectively different from that of either men or heterosexual women. In particular, with regard to women we need to analyze the precise interconnections between various aspects of reproductive life and wage labor and begin to understand them as a totality, "to understand," as Veronica Beechey writes, "the interrelationships between production and reproduction as part of a single process . . . [that has] been transformed historically" (22).

In the same essay, Beechey also urges us to be more precise about the concept of reproduction itself. That concept has at least three different meanings which tend to be confused in feminist thinking: social reproduction, or reproduction of the relations and conditions of production as a whole; reproduction of the labor force, for example, through housework and child care; and, finally, the narrower concept of biological reproduction. In the space remaining, I shall focus on this last meaning, the narrowest and least obviously "economic" one, and argue that reproduction even in this sense has a direct, immediate bearing on women's class position. In fact, I will suggest that what Benson calls the "major transitional events" in women's reproductive lives--marriage, sexual activity, childbearing, and motherhood--affect women's relationship to the class structure and production in ways so penetrating, so lifelong, that these events must come to be seen as part of that structure as it is socially constructed for women.

To make this point clear, let us take one such index or

event, namely fertility. What I want to look at in some detail is the relationship between fertility and women's labor force participation, as a way of giving substance to the idea of "production and reproduction as part of a single process." It is clear from the outset, first, that patterns of fertility affect women's own relationship to class, particularly their direct participation in paid labor, in a way that is utterly negligible for men, and second, that they do so differently for different groups of women. As Bonnie Thornton Dill has eloquently stressed, race and class are both independent from and interactive with gender. Demographers have long pointed to the close, interactive relationship between lowered fertility among women and their higher labor force participation rates. The impossibility of sorting out cause and effect (in fact, women have fewer babies in order to be able to work or when work opportunities expand, and more readily seek work when there are fewer children to care for) simply underlines the close connection for women between childbearing and paid labor (23). This relationship, of course, is nothing that advanced capitalism invented. It is as old as the sexual division of labor itself. But it changes form under changing historical conditions and never in a simple, mechanical way. Scott and Tilly mention that a declining birth rate in France after 1820 (in part due to the widespread use of birth control, especially coitus interruptus) resulted in an older age structure of the French population by mid-century, which in turn meant that French women were less involved in motherhood and more engaged, "for longer periods of their lives," in labor force activity (24). Yet an earlier generation, burdened with much higher fertility because of high infant and child mortality rates, did not therefore pull back from wage labor when compelled by economic necessity to work. To accommodate the need to work or starve, silk workers in Lyons, for example, typically "sent their infants off to nurses rather than break the rhythm of work in the shop"; and urban street peddlers, belonging to what Scott and Tilly call the "economy of make-shift," simply dragged their babies along (25).

Today, the general availability of easy, effective birth control methods (aside from their hazards, inconveniences, and various inadequacies) really does make the association between fewer children and more years spent working outside the home fairly clear-cut. It is well known that total fertility has dropped sharply in the United States since the early 1960s to the point where demographers now warn of the risk of "nonreplacement" (26) (see Figure 1). A number of general trends characterize this overall decline, trends

that apply to the majority of American women. For one thing, the steady drop in the U.S. fertility rate reflects, not that fewer women are becoming mothers, but that more women are having fewer children--that is, a reduction in average family size. In fact, more women than ever are married for some part of their lives, and more women than ever become mothers, at least once; childlessness, as a state of being for women, is increasingly rare (27). Moreover, women's childbearing is becoming concentrated within a shorter time span; it is usually over by the time they are in their early thirties if not sooner, leaving some thirty or forty years without young children in the home (28). Both of these trends contribute to a third: that childbearing today interrupts women's participation in the labor force much less than it used to. According to a recent Department of Labor report, "Young women now clearly stay in the labor force until they are within a few months of the birth of their first child, and frequently return to the labor force shortly after the birth" (29). These fertility patterns have been accompanied by a steep rise in women's labor force participation, especially of mothers of young children, and also by the rapid rise in woman-headed households. Fifteen percent of white families today and 42 percent of Black families are headed by women (30). What all these figures suggest is an overall picture in which more and more women are mothers, but in a social context that is different from the past. Today mothers are most likely to work outside the home continuously, or at least for some period, if not permanently. They are also more or less economically independent of men. (Of course, this is not a new pattern for Black women with whom white women are just now catching up in their labor force participation rates and their tendency to head households.) In other words, working women of childbearing age today function in a context wherein their relation to the economy is more direct, more pressing, and less mediated by men than previously. As a consequence, the need to establish sure control over their own fertility is a major priority for them.

But these general patterns overlay some very important differences. Indeed, if we analyze women's class position in relation to fertility as I am suggesting, it may be the case that, under present conditions in the United States, there are really four different classes of women, as measured on the scales of labor force participation and fertility: (1) a low-fertility, high-labor-force-participation group who are predominantly working class--that is, who work for most of their adult lives in clerical, service, or industrial jobs; (2) a low-fertility, high-labor-force-participation

group who are predominantly middle class--that is, who work in professional or managerial jobs; (3) a high-fertility, low-labor-force-participation group who are working class--who never or hardly ever work outside the home and are married to working-class men or receiving welfare; and (4) a high-fertility, low-labor-force-participation group who are mostly middle or upper middle class--married to high-paid professional men or executives and without the skills or economic need to make it worth their while to work outside the home for pay.

It is important to note that, whether or not the American female population actually breaks down in precisely this way, the categories nevertheless point to a distinct reality, one that generates major differences in experience, consciousness, and, I would argue, objective class position for many if not most women. One critical factor in this four-way class/work/fertility division among American women seems to be the question of early childbearing. Demographers have established a definite correlation between age at first marriage, age at first childbirth, a woman's total or cumulative fertility, and her total participation in the labor force during her life. Central in this complex set of factors is the effect on education, assumed by sociologists to be the most reliable indicator of class for women. The earlier a woman has babies, it seems, the more likely she is to drop out of school, the less education she gets, the more likely she is to remain peripheral to the labor market or unemployed altogether, and the more children she will have (between one and three more than her working counterpart). In a study published in 1977, Kristin Moore and Linda Waite showed that there is a close association between early childbearing and educational attainment. They point out that for every year that passes without the birth of a first child, a woman gets an additional year of schooling (31). Hal Benenson refines this picture further by stressing that "how far a young woman pursues her formal schooling has decisive importance for her immediate and long-term work life, in terms of not only the probability of her seeking employment, but also the kind of job, and earnings, she can obtain" (32). Missing out on those productive years prior to marriage and childbearing means that a young woman often forfeits a critical period of training and experience. This points to the reality Moore and Waite emphasize, that the effects of early childbearing and loss of education and work experience in early life are cumulative. The teenage mothers they followed over time "never catch up," never get out from under the weight of child care and financial responsibilities and lack of education to improve their situation. The result is what Benenson calls "a pattern of lifetime exclusion (from

the labor force), which is established very early on" (33). They become a permanent group of women whose relationship to the class structure is fundamentally different from that of the majority who work more or less consistently, either full time or part time, outside the home (34).

Thus we have to modify the oversimplified model of the working mother and recognize that, in a very real way, mainly working or mainly mothering are alternative courses for women and result in different structural positions with regard to class. But at the same time, either of these courses has very different implications depending on whether you are part of the working class or the middle-class groups that I described above. Benenson's analysis makes it clear that the consequences of early marriage and childbearing and high fertility for the middle-class group of professional men's wives are very different from those for working-class women who have similar fertility patterns. Among the former group, the tendency is to marry later, marry richer, acquire resources (such as education and connections) which, after a long period of withdrawal from the labor force, may be put to use later on (along with significant material and social resources acquired through marriage). The working-class wives who marry and have children early, on the other hand, are at an absolute disadvantage among the total group of women who do not work outside the home. They have less education, fewer skills, higher cumulative fertility, and less possibility of ever changing their circumstances (35). When they do work, they find themselves in the lowest paying, most dead-end jobs, and when they get divorced, they go on welfare. Lillian Rubin also emphasizes this class difference, showing how the working-class women she interviewed became pregnant and married early as the only available escape from their parental households, found themselves rapidly caught in the net of children, housework, overbearing financial difficulties, and, above all, total dependence on their husbands. As one of her respondents remarked:

I felt like I had no freedom, just no freedom. I had to depend on him for everything. Even poor as we were when I was growing up, I never had to ask my mother for money. She knew I needed lunch money and she gave it to me. She knew when I needed a pair of shoes; I didn't have to tell her. Now, all of a sudden, I had to ask him for everything, and he couldn't understand why that bothered me. I felt like I was a charity ward case or something. (36)

I think, here, of my middle-class and upper-middle-class suburban students in the Returning Women's Program at Ramapo

College. Some of them are in states of dependency on husbands that are hard to believe, not so different from the working-class women Rubin interviews. Their husbands may control their use of credit cards, their access to a car (in an area where no other mode of transportation exists), and their daily spending money. Yet they get support from their husbands to hire housekeepers and child care workers, and they are able to come to Ramapo College to take courses. Upgrading, or reentry as it is sometimes called (a funny term, as though suburban marriage is a kind of exit), is a commodity to be purchased, a class privilege. Benenson clarifies this class-based reality with great precision:

The experience of daughters and wives [must be seen] as shaped by working class [or middle class] economic and social conditions. The family and class dimensions are inseparable in the concrete life cycle processes. . . . An identifiable characteristic such as nine years of schooling or the bearing of five children does not have equivalent meaning for differently placed wives. . . . Class plays a critical role in determining when the surmounting of difficulties becomes possible, and when it remains beyond reach. (37)

It goes without saying, of course, that the same holds true for the differences between working-class working women and middle-class (i.e., professional and managerial) working women; the similarities in their fertility patterns do not efface the major structural and material divisions between them in terms of earnings, power over their lives and other people, and the ability to "surmount difficulties." At the same time, the grid that divides the high-employment/low-fertility women, both working class and middle class, from their opposites also seems important and more elusive. The reasons why these divisions among women emerge within classes--that is, why some and not others marry and have babies early, have more children, get less education, and so on--still need to be understood. Perhaps the difference has to do with different values, different patterns of gender socialization in the family, as Joyce Ladner describes in her analysis of different "images of womanhood" among young Black women whose class background is similar (38). But I assume that this division too is socially constructed, not just a result of individual personalities or family "preferences."

What are the social and political implications of this analysis of women as "fertility classes"? I would like to suggest just three which seem to me important--one pertaining

to Marxist theory of class, one pertaining to demography and women, and one pertaining to current feminist and antifeminist politics. First, I believe that this analysis gives weight to the theoretical argument made earlier, that reproduction and production are inseparable, that they form parts of a total social process. This can be seen quite clearly even if we only speculate about the different segments of the capitalist labor market--the "stable" sector and the various "reserve armies," the "floating," "latent," and "stagnant" pools that Marx, and more recently Harry Braverman, argue are necessary to capitalist production (39). What is the relationship of the various fertility patterns I was describing to the configuration and construction of these different pools? Do early childbearing and high fertility provide structural valves that channel women into the "stagnant" and "latent" pools of the unemployed and the very marginally employed?

Second, feminist theory must, I think, confront the reality that childbearing and child rearing as a calling, as a long-term preoccupation, and participation in production, may be two different courses for women, representing different populations of women, and that this reality cuts across class divisions (40). In a 1978 article in Family Planning Perspectives, Princeton demographer Charles Westoff presents such a scenario as though it were in the future rather than the present. Westoff is worried about the U.S. birth rate declining to below replacement level (below, that is, the Third World). As an answer to the problem of "future growth," he suggests to policy makers that women might be divided into two groups: (1) a class of "professional breeders," for whom "reproduction would become the specialized function" and who, goaded on by special "maternal incentives" (bonuses, child care, and so on), would be required "to reproduce at an average rate of 3 births per woman"; and (2) a class of women who "would never have any children" and who, presumably, would spend their time working in productive jobs (41). The question is, has Westoff's scenario already begun to happen? Is the decision of women workers exposed to reproductively hazardous toxins on the job to get sterilized rather than be fired symptomatic of the Hobson's choice between children and work that many women perceive (42)? Moreover, is the lack of any social supports for working mothers--that is, decent, publicly funded child care, decent jobs, flexible working hours for parents of both sexes--pushing women to view working and child rearing as incompatible? And will the loss of abortion and the rise in sterilization further contribute to this division between woman as "breeder" and woman as "worker" (43)? What

alternative vision do feminists have to offer that is not a variation on the "superwoman," the working mother who miraculously does it all?

It may seem as though we have gotten away from the subject of class divisions among women, and yet what I am arguing is precisely that an analysis of the relationship between reproduction and class for women focuses us on certain realities that both connect women of different classes and divide women of the same class (if we think of class in mainly occupational terms). My final point is that we need to address the political implications of these realities for the current feminist movement and particularly for that branch of the movement involved in the struggle for reproductive freedom. The analysis presented suggests that there is a distinct subpopulation of women, of all different ages and perhaps cutting across classes (though predominantly white), who may have a very material basis for adhering to traditional family forms and ideologies that certify women's primary function as homemakers and childbearers--the profamily, anti-abortion, and antifeminist ideology of the New Right. Indeed, the high-fertility, low-employment women--both the working-class and the middle-class segments--depend in a very real way for their survival on the family and on male providers, and we would expect them to have a distinct consciousness formed out of this reality. This makes it easier to understand, what to feminists has seemed inscrutable, the apparently large numbers of women who make up the grass roots of the anti-ERA, antiabortion, and anti-gay rights forces, the prime recruiting grounds for the organized right in their buildup for the 1980 elections (44). Given the actual conditions of these women, their pull to the Right seems not an anomalous development but predictable. The question is whether in the current political context of right-wing resurgence, or indeed any context, the divisions are not deeper between these women and the low-fertility, high-employment majority whose dependence on men is somewhat looser (in reality, if not in imagination) than they are among women divided along class lines as traditionally understood.

In other words, I am suggesting that reproduction, rather than uniting all women, divides them more at this time in history than production does, and that we have to look at those divisions strategically in terms of the different kinds of consciousness they are likely to generate. I do believe, however, that there is a basis for the majority of women--those of us who will be working for most of our lives, who will probably also have one or two children, for whom control over reproduction is an absolute necessity, and whose material survival, even if married, does not depend wholly on men--to unite. We form a "class-fertility sister-

terhood," and we include women of color and white women, lesbians and heterosexuals, young and old, women of different classes, cultures, and occupations. Our differences will continue to surface, but antifeminists, by attacking all women's right to decent jobs, sexual autonomy, and reproductive freedom, will not fail to remind us of our common condition.

Notes

1. Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1977), p. 70.
2. Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic In Women," in Toward an Anthropology of Women, ed. Rayna (Rapp) Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 163-64.
3. Laura Oren, "The Welfare of Women in Laboring Families: England, 1860-1950," in Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women, ed. Mary Hartman and Lois W. Banner (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 226-44; Heidi Hartmann, "Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex," in Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism, ed. Zillah R. Eisenstein (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), pp. 206-47; and Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work, and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978).
4. Tilly and Scott, Women, Work, and Family, p. 7.
5. Rayna Rapp, "Family and Class in Contemporary America: Notes toward an Understanding of Ideology," Science and Society 42 (1978):282.
6. Well-known examples of this literature included Margaret Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," Monthly Review 21 (1969), reprinted in From Feminism to Liberation, ed. Edith Hoshino Altbach (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1971), pp. 199-210; Mariarosa Dalla Costa, The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community (Bristol, England: Falling Wall Press, 1979); Wally Secombe, "The Housewife and her Labour under Capitalism," New Left Review 83 (1974):3-24; Jean Gardiner, "Women's Domestic Labour," in Capitalist Patriarchy, ed. Eisenstein, pp. 173-89; and Isabel Largaia and John Dumoulin, "Towards a Science of Women's Liberation," NACLA Newsletter 6 (1972):3-20.
7. See Shulamith Firestone, The Dialectic of Sex (New York: Bantam, 1971), Ch. 1; and Mary Daly, Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism (Bos-

- ton: Beacon Press, 1978), especially "Naming the Enemy," pp. 27-29.
8. Robert Coles and Jane Hallowell Coles, Women of Crisis (New York: Delta, 1978), pp. 271-72.
 9. See Veronica Beechey, "On Patriarchy," Feminist Review 3 (1979):66-82.
 10. Jackie West, "Women, Sex, and Class," in Feminism and Materialism, ed. Annette Kuhn and Ann Marie Wolpe (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 223, 228. See also Elizabeth Garnsey, "Women's Work and Theories of Class Stratification," Sociology 12 (1978):223-43.
 11. West, "Women," pp. 247-48.
 12. Coles and Coles, Women of Crisis, pp. 234-35.
 13. Rapp, "Family and Class in Contemporary America," p. 283.
 14. Harold Benenson, "The Theory of Class and Structural Developments in American Society: A Study of Occupational and Family Change, 1945-1970" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1980), esp. Ch. 5. I am enormously indebted to Harold Benenson for many of the ideas in this article as well as many of the references regarding a theory of women and class. Benenson's work is the most important recent contribution to a Marxist-feminist theory of class in the United States. The reader is referred to the complete dissertation and to forthcoming articles based on it, for the full measure of the power of this work.
 15. Tilly and Scott, Women, Work, and Family, p. 124.
 16. See U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, A Statistical Portrait of Women in the United States: 1978, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, no. 100 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980), Tables 8-1 and 8-3; and Emma Rothschild, "Reagan and the Real America," New York Review of Books 8 (5 February 1981):12-17.
 17. Juanita Kreps and Robert Clark, Sex, Age and Work: The Changing Composition of the Labor Force (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1975), p. 3.
 18. Sandra L. Hofferth and Kristin A. Moore, "Women's Employment and Marriage," in The Subtle Revolution: Women at Work, ed. Ralph E. Smith (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 1979), p. 115.
 19. Kreps and Clark, Sex, Age and Work, pp. 57-58.
 20. Lillian Breslow Rubin, Worlds of Pain/Life in the Working Class Family (New York: Basic Books, 1976), p. 174.
 21. Janet A. Kohen, Carol A. Brown, and Rosalyn Feldberg,

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25. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
26. See Maurice J. Moore and Martin O'Connell, Perspectives on American Fertility, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, no. 70 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1978), pp. 1-4; and Charles F. Westoff, "Some Speculations on the Future of Marriage and Fertility," Family Planning Perspectives 10 (March-April 1978):79.
27. Twenty-two percent of women born in the 1880s remained childless through their lives, whereas only 10 percent of women born in the 1930s did so; among the cohorts of women who are in their childbearing years today, the figure seems to have declined to around 5 percent. See Hofferth and Moore, "Women's Employment," p. 126;

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 30. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Household and Family Characteristics: March 1980, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, no. 366 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981).
 31. Kristin A. Moore and Linda J. Waite, "Early Childbearing and Educational Attainment," Family Planning Perspectives 9 (September-October 1977):222.
 32. Benenson, "Theory of Class," p. 166.
 33. Ibid., p. 188; Moore and Waite, "Early Childbearing," pp. 223, 225.
 34. A major exception to this pattern, however, is young Black women. For them, in many cases, early childbearing does not seem to have the same damaging effects on later education or work because of greater support for teenage mothers and their babies in Black families and communities (Moore and Waite, "Early Childbearing," p. 224).
 35. Benenson, "Theory of Class," pp. 181-82.
 36. Rubin, Worlds of Pain, p. 81.
 37. Benenson, "Theory of Class," pp. 185-86.
 38. Joyce Ladner, Tomorrow's Tomorrow: The Black Woman (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), Ch. 5.
 39. Karl Marx, Capital, vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1967), pp. 640-45; and Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital (New York: Monthly Review, 1974), Ch. 17.
 40. "[Data comparing fertility among currently employed and never employed wives] suggests that wives' responsibility for larger than average families, on the one hand, and their employment, on the other, remain

alternatives for many married women, rather than comfortably integrated long-term activities" (Benenson, "Theory of Class," pp. 173-74).

41. Westoff, "Future of Marriage and Fertility," p. 82.
42. See "Workers, Reproductive Hazards, and the Politics of Protection," Feminist Studies 5 (Summer 1979).
43. Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse, Women under Attack: Abortion, Sterilization Abuse, and Reproductive Freedom (New York: CARASA, 1979).
44. See Rosalind Petchesky, "Antiabortion, Antifeminism, and the Rise of the New Right," Feminist Studies 7 (Summer 1981):206-46.

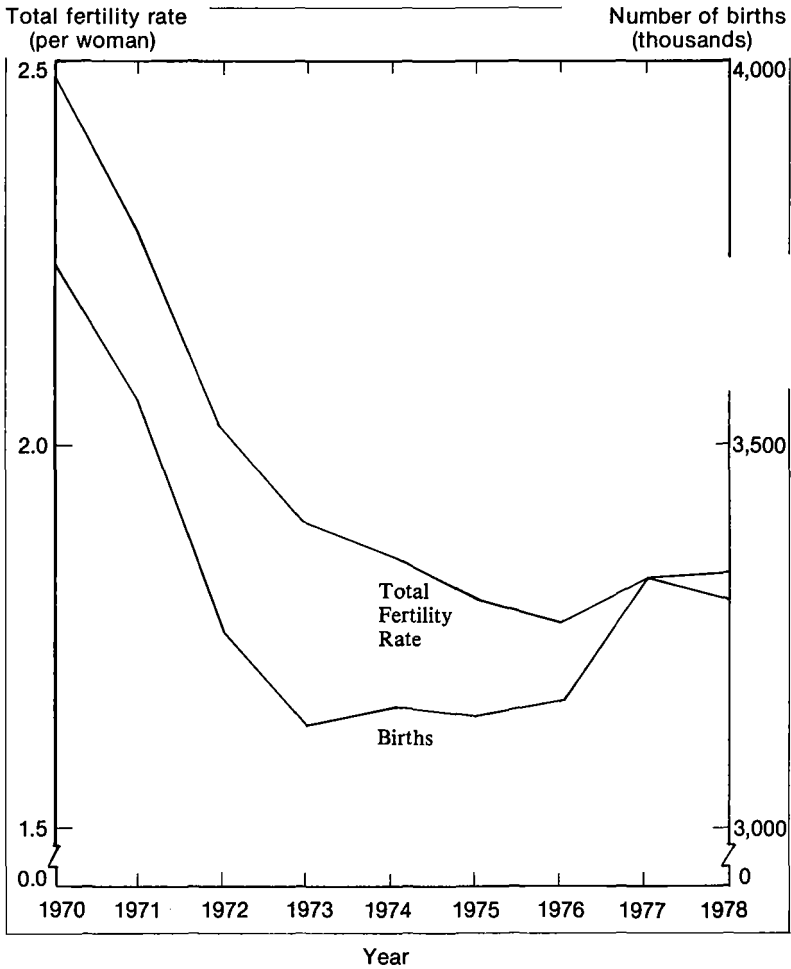


FIGURE 1. Total Fertility Rate and Number of Live Births: 1970 to 1978

Source: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, National Center for Health Statistics, Monthly Vital Statistics Report, vol. 27, no. 11 (February 1979 supplement). Data for 1978 are provisional estimates.

LOURDES BENERÍA and GITA SEN

Women's Role in Economic Development: Practical and Theoretical Implications of Class and Gender Inequalities (1980)

The decade of the 1970s was unique in the emergence of feminist issues at the forefront of social consciousness, theoretical conceptualization, and political action in the advanced capitalist countries. Simultaneously, and especially since the United Nations International Women's Year conference in Mexico City in 1975, there has been a growing concern in some circles dealing with development issues about the problems faced by Third World women. This concern can be found within the United Nations and in practically all the large international institutions (such as the International Labor Organization and the World Bank) as well as within governmental aid-giving agencies of the industrialized countries; the U.S. Agency for International Development is a case in point.

However, although general consciousness of the specific activities and problems of women in development has certainly increased, a feminist agenda has often been only superficially added to economic development projects. In this article, we will argue that an examination of the interaction of class and gender formation and gender relations is necessary to an understanding of the possibilities and limits of practical actions undertaken (by women themselves or by governmental and other institutions) to improve the conditions in which Third World women live.

Two important pillars for building such an examination are the concepts of capital accumulation and reproduction (1). An analysis of Third World women's problems that is based on these concepts is in contrast with traditional modernization theory. We will argue, first, that the standard developmentalist interest in the problems of Third World women (as often expressed by the international agencies, for example) is primarily motivated by a perception that women are instrumental to programs of population control, increased food production, and the provision of other basic needs. There is little concern, at the official level, with the subordination of women or with the impact of class processes on this

subordination. Second, while the analysis of an economist like Ester Boserup (2) is motivated by concern for the problems faced by women, it suffers from a conceptual eclecticism that generates policy prescriptions indistinguishable from those of the development agencies noted above. In particular, we argue that a concern for women, uninformed by an understanding of accumulation and reproduction, biases and limits both the analysis and the policies. Third, a class analysis that ignores gender relations is also inadequate as it leads to policies insensitive to the specific causes of women's subordination. Thus, socialist development programs attempting to radically transform the class basis of society are often oblivious to the impact of reproduction on gender-based domination. From a feminist perspective, only an analysis that integrates accumulation and reproduction can generate practical action fully adequate to the problems of women in the Third World.

Class Analysis and Women

In a speech given before the American Association of University Women in 1978, John Gilligan, the administrator of USAID, stressed the education of Third World women as the key to reduced population growth rates and increased food production in the Third World (3). Such a recognition of the importance of women in Third World agriculture, especially in food production, now underpins the international agencies' policies summarized, for example, in discussions around the basic needs strategy and the New International Economic Order. The basic needs strategy (4) evolved in the 1970s in response to the perceived inability of two decades of developmental efforts to reduce the pressures of growing unemployment and underemployment, inadequate food supplies, and growing absolute poverty among the broad masses of Third World people.

As enunciated by the ILO in 1976, this strategy gave central attention to alleviating the problems of poverty and unemployment and to meeting "the minimum standard of living which a society should set for the poorest groups of its people." Thus basic needs were defined as

the minimum requirements of a family for personal consumption: food, shelter, clothing; it implies access to essential services, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, transport, health and education; it implies that each person available for and willing to work should have an adequately remunerated job; it should further im-

ply the satisfaction of needs of a more qualitative nature: a healthy, humane and satisfying environment, and popular participation in the making of decisions that affect the lives and livelihood of the people, and individual freedoms. (5)

The ILO strategy represents the weakening of the belief that industrialization schemes based on foreign aid and private capital, and a Green Revolution in agriculture, would trickle down to the masses through increased employment, thereby leading to improved living conditions. What is not clear from the original formulation of the strategy is how these objectives would be met; the political significance of this approach ranges from interpretations that call for basic structural changes, such as land reform and measures geared to redistribution of resources, to mere lip service to basic needs within the limits of present political and economic structures.

The developmentalist interest in Third World women is derived from this strategy rather than from any inherent feminist concern with gender-based inequities. This is apparent in the narrowness of a focus that stresses the need to make Third World women more efficient as food producers, water carriers, cooks and nutritionists, and childbearers, but that neither questions the existing sexual division of labor nor calls for its elimination. Indeed, the agencies' emphasis on poor women may be seen as a largely instrumentalist one premised on the existing sexual division of labor. Its goal is not necessarily the elimination of women's subordination (6).

An analysis that is somewhat more attuned to the uneven gender effects of economic development is that of Ester Boserup, whose pioneering role it was to argue that developmental processes have systematically marginalized women (7). We have argued elsewhere that despite the many positive contributions of her book, the absence of a coherent theoretical framework limits Boserup's analysis (8). Further, we seriously question her use of an economic variant of modernization theory that implicitly accepts the dynamics of capital accumulation and the market, and in which improved techniques of production are perceived to be the main instruments of economic development. This process is viewed as an inherently beneficial one, whose social correlate is a growing entrepreneurial spirit and achievement orientation among the people.

Such an approach ignores the class processes of changing social relations of production and ownership of the means of production within which technical changes are embedded. Cap-

ital accumulation is a social process involving, on the one hand, the increasing separation of direct producers from the means of production and subsistence. It involves also the entry of commercial capital at various levels in the production structure, the growing reliance by large masses of the population on the sale of their labor power and on petty commodity production for their ongoing survival, increased migration, and the growth of a large reserve army of unemployed people swelling the urban slums. On the other hand, this process also includes a growing concentration of money wealth, the growth of enclaves of extractive industry and monocrop agriculture, and some degree of industrialization dominated by multinational capital.

These processes have been the bedrock of socioeconomic change in the Third World, especially in the twentieth century, with inherently contradictory tendencies; increased commercialization leads to growing wealth for small numbers of people often coupled with growing impoverishment and unemployment for a large proportion of the population. Bose-rup's inadequate recognition of the hierarchical nature of these processes leads her to false assumptions. For example, she views the colonial imposition of cash cropping in Africa as automatically beneficial except for the consequent decline in the status of women agriculturalists. This view ignores the history of indigenous resistance to forced cultivation by both women and men and the corollary changes in landholding patterns, class differentiation, and exploitation by commercial capital (9).

Alternative perceptions (Boserup's and ours) of the actual character of economic change in the Third World lead to opposing views of how that change affects women. In Boserup's analysis, patriarchal attitudes, when superimposed on a beneficial process, causes those benefits to be distributed differentially between men and women. This worsens women's economic position relative to men. However, it follows from this analysis that the chief barriers to policies designed to improve women's economic position are the policy makers' own blindness to women's work and their inability to alter established cultural patterns. This conclusion and its policy correlate of "integrating" women into the development process through education meshes very well with the programmatic strategy of the international agencies. Thus, although Boserup is more sensitive to the problems of women per se, her theoretical perspective leads her to policy conclusions that are identical to those of the international agencies.

In our analysis, on the other hand, the problems of Third World women do not arise from a lack of integration into the development process. On the contrary, the masses of Third

World women are indeed integrated into that process, but at the bottom of an inherently hierarchical and contradictory structure of production and accumulation.

Understanding the impact of this process on women requires a coherent analysis of the interconnections between capital accumulation, class formation, and gender relations. The following examples illustrate some of these connections.

First, as land and common sources of water, fuel, and food are lost to poorer peasants and landless laborers, women's work load in searching for fuel, carrying water, and processing food may be intensified. This is often exacerbated by changes in the sexual division of labor as men are forced into cash-earning activities and migration, as has happened in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa (10). Second, with the entry of commercial capital, women, as artisan producers, may lose control over economic resources, but may be integrated as temporary and seasonal laborers at the bottom of the labor hierarchy because of their primary responsibility for the reproductive tasks of child rearing and domestic work. Such a process has been detailed in Young's analysis of Oaxaca, Mexico (11). Third, although traditional patriarchal relations may be weakened as servile relations give way to capitalist relations of production based on wage labor, women may become increasingly dependent on male wage earners. This has been documented for the Cajamarca region of the Peruvian sierra by Deere (12). Fourth, new forms of capitalist patriarchy may emerge where young women are drawn in as migrant factory workers in the electronics and textile industries in Southeast Asia (13).

These examples illustrate the specific ways in which women are affected by the hierarchical and exploitative structure of production associated with the penetration of capitalism in the Third World. It is not a neutral process of modernization but one that is shaped by the forces of accumulation. Contrary to what Boserup implies, the problem for women is not just a lack of participation in this process as equal partners with men. In a system that makes use of existing gender hierarchies so as to generate and intensify inequalities, women tend to be placed in subordinate positions at the different levels of interaction between class and gender. For the poorer women, the implication is, among other things, overwork and undernourishment even relative to the exploited men of their class. For higher classes and strata of women, concentration on reproductive work generally means greater economic dependence on men.

Two implications concerning difference among women follow from our discussion. First, a woman's class position structures the concrete meaning of gender for her. The varia-

tions that exist between women of different classes are at least as important for their social position as the commonalities inherent in being a woman within a given society. Second, class defines the relations among women themselves. That is, class is not simply a differentiating mechanism that places women in varying social boxes. It is an antagonistic social relation which defines, for example, the oppressive relations between women domestic servants and their mistresses. It is also antagonistic in broader terms, going beyond the direct and oppressive relation of domestic servitude. For example, women of different classes often have opposing interests in social organizations and programs for social change. These two points are further illustrated below.

Class and Women's Organizations

The differential impact of capital accumulation described above leads to divergent class interests among women. In Chile, for example, during the three years of the Unidad Popular government under Allende in 1970-73, women were mobilized in an organization called El Poder Feminino (Feminine Power) with the explicit purpose of overthrowing the elected government (14). With increasing militancy, organization, and publicity in the months before the armed forces' coup, El Poder Feminino (EPF) organized pots-and-pans demonstrations against shortages of consumer goods, attacked alleged communist conspiracies to destroy the family and religion, and openly instigated the army's rebellion by ridiculing the soldiers' masculinity. Who were these women and what did EPF represent as an organization?

By and large, the leadership of EPF consisted of the wives and daughters of the Chilean bourgeoisie, of professionals such as doctors and lawyers, and some of the petty bourgeois sectors such as independent truckers, cab owners and shopkeepers. Although there were undoubtedly acute shortages in some consumer items, these were mainly due to an economic crisis engineered by sanctions imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) against credit to Chile and the economic and political pressures from the U.S. government and multinational interests (15). In addition, hoarding and black marketeering by precisely those whose wives were in EPF's leadership contributed in no small measure to the crisis. Further, the consumption standards of large sections of the working class in crucial items such as milk had actually improved with better distribution under Unidad Popular. The ruling-class bias of the "empty pots" demonstrations was

clear despite the fact that domestic servants were often brought to them to "prove" the mass following of EPF.

Overall, the activities and organization of a group like EPF during a crucial period in the Chilean class struggle points to the importance of understanding the class basis of women's organizations. All Third World women do not have similar material interests. Yet it is important to distinguish between the material interests of women and the particular ways in which those interests are recruited by class organizations. Despite conflicting class interests, it was possible for EPF to use the traditional woman's role in domestic work and her responsibilities for household consumption to recruit a large number of middle-class and poor women. This use of the ideology of domesticity was particularly ironic since the upper-class leadership of EPF was responsible for household management but not for the work itself, which was done for them by domestic servants. It was not, therefore, a common female role in domestic work that gave EPF its strength. Rather, EPF's strength was a direct corollary of the failure of Left organizations to recognize women's specific problems and capabilities and to organize around them.

Our second example shows that when mass organizations do draw upon poor women, they can become powerful instruments for addressing the joint problems posed by gender and class. This example is drawn from Western India, where, in the 1970s, there was a growing militancy among the poorest women on a variety of fronts (16). During the acute drought and famine of 1970-73, poor peasant and laborer women were at the forefront of many demonstrations against corrupt officials, meager and unequal wages, and the back-breaking labor of government "relief" programs of stonecutting and road building. "The reason (for the women's militancy) was not hard to seek: it was the women who directly faced the problems of expense and often unavailability of food as the managers of consumption as well as the backbreaking work on the projects" (17). In cities like Bombay, the United Women's Anti-Price Rise Front organized pots-and-pans marches against corrupt government ministers and local capitalists. Although similar in form to the actions of EPF in Chile, the class basis of these demonstrations was of poor and working-class women agitating against the ruling classes.

None of these organizations were feminist as such. Rather, they were premovements, as Omvedt calls them, which increased the interest of poor women in issues related to the liberation of women. The two examples illustrate the complexity of the relationship between material interest and political organization. What is clear is that the economic

concerns and pressures affecting poor women can be exploited by either side of the political spectrum. If the Left does not reshape its analysis to reflect those concerns and make them central to its organization, it leaves room for the Right to do so.

The modernization approach to women is, however, a far cry from these realities of class and gender. Its neglect of the class correlates of socioeconomic changes affecting women leads to solutions that are simplistic at best. For example, Boserup's and the international agencies' emphasis on educating women, although important, provides an incomplete and individualistic solution to social problems of class exploitation and gender subordination while leaving the social problems themselves untouched.

Reproduction and Feminist Analysis

In this section we argue that an analysis of women's role in the development process also requires a full understanding of their role in reproduction and of its consequences for women's involvement in all aspects of economic life. The emphasis on reproduction and the ideological aspects of gender is in fact a major contribution of the present feminist movement. It has developed in a number of directions including the analysis of sexuality and reproductive freedom, gender formation, domestic labor, and the sexual division of labor. In doing so, it has made the analysis of the relationships of dominance/subordination between the sexes in the household a focal point. It has also posed an important challenge to those approaches to the so-called woman question that view the solution to women's oppression as lying in the sphere of economic and social relations outside the household. The location of the roots of women's oppression in the domestic sphere adds a new dimension to traditional analyses—including the Marxist—that had neglected this aspect of human interaction. The following discussion on domestic work and population policies illustrates this point.

Domestic work is overwhelmingly performed by women across countries. This is so despite the fact that a clear distinction can be made between biological reproduction and daily family maintenance, and between childbearing and child rearing. Family maintenance and child rearing are socially assigned; they are not biologically determined tasks. Yet biological reproduction and the controls exercised over women's sexuality and reproduction activities in most societies have resulted in the reduction of women's mobility and in their concentration in the household as the primary area of their

activity. Consequently, it is also in the household that gender categories and power relations are formed. These power relations as well as a division of labor that attaches deeply ingrained, even if socially determined, roles to each sex are projected onto social relations outside the household (18).

The significance of this argument is that women's role and location in the development process is conditioned by their role in the reproductive sphere and its implications for the construction of gender. Women perform the great bulk of reproductive tasks; to the extent that they are also engaged in production outside the household, they are burdened with the double day. Even domestic work itself requires long hours of work and physically demanding chores. Any attempt to deal with women's subordinate and marginal role in economic development must confront this question. This requires a decisive effort not only to put an end to the ideological and statistical underestimation of women's work, but also to deal with all the implications that the double day has for women.

We now turn to a second aspect of reproduction--population policies and reproductive freedom--and the ability of women to control their own fertility and its consequences. Most of the available literature on this subject has not dealt with the possible contradictions between class and gender. In the Third World, this literature has focused on the issue of population control; although some authors have pointed out the class contradictions of such policies, very little has been said from a feminist perspective (19).

For example, Mamdani and others have argued that birth control policies are met with resistance in rural areas of India for sound economic reasons: children provide a critical source of labor to poor peasants struggling to subsist and hold on to land in the face of growing commercialization of agriculture, concentration of land, and mass impoverishment. Thus the uses of children's labor both on peasant farms and for wages can explain pronatalist tendencies. Indeed, decisions about childbearing may affect the household's capacity to survive and reproduce itself.

Although these decisions affect all family members, women are affected in a specific way since they carry the heaviest burdens of childbearing and child rearing. Multiple pregnancies affect the mother's health, work, and well-being as well as her capacity to participate in activities outside the household. The poor peasant household may survive at the expense of the continuous pregnancy and ill-health of the mother, which are exacerbated by high rates of infant and child mortality. Thus the mother's class

interests and her role as a woman come into severe conflict.

For policy makers, this implies that a clear-cut distinction needs to be made between the significance of population policies from the point of view of general development issues, such as employment opportunities or labor force planning, and questions of class interests and women's welfare. As Palmer has pointed out, "the best strategy for population control remains the advancement of the status of women so that they can make truly free choices" (20).

Yet the complexity of this strategy should be obvious, given that the advancement of women has both a gender and a class dimension. Women from poor peasant households will benefit from programs that improve their health and that of their children. They will also benefit from educational programs that increase their control over their environment and their bodies. To the extent that women bear the greatest burden of reproduction, policies concerning issues such as contraception, limitation of family size, and provision of day care facilities have a special significance for them. Yet this would only deal with one side of the problem. The other side requires the reduction of basic inequalities and poverty, that is, the tackling of class contradictions. For women, both dimensions are so tightly integrated that a feminist perspective cannot ignore either. In fact, ignoring one of them distorts the results of actions aimed at the other.

Reproduction and Development Strategies

The implications of the feminist emphasis on reproduction and gender formation are far-reaching. For example, the oft-repeated developmentalist goal of making women "equal partners with men" in the development process is unlikely to be reached unless policies address women's participation in both the productive and reproductive spheres together with the ideological aspects of gender inequalities. In this section, we want to illustrate this point by considering three examples from the development literature that speak to the need to understand the interaction between production and reproduction.

Our first example deals with the significance of the basic needs approach to development for women. The ILO's initial statement of the principles and program of this strategy recommended a focus on increasing the incomes of the poor through the generation of self-reliant productive employment. The ILO statement made specific mention of women in this context. Women's contribution to the satisfaction of

basic needs through household and subsistence production was recognized, and two aspects of a basic needs strategy for women were underlined:

One is to enable them to contribute more effectively to the satisfaction of their families' basic needs, within the framework of their traditional responsibilities. The other, which is a fundamental need for women themselves, is to ease their work burden while furthering their economic independence and their more equitable integration into the community, beyond the narrow circle of the family. (21)

As mentioned earlier, the framework of this strategy, although important in its recognition of women's economic role, is limited in that it does not question women's "traditional responsibilities." The objective of a "more equitable integration of women into the community" is expected to be achieved by relieving the drudgery of housework, that is, by an increase in household productivity. This suggests a picture of women's work in more developed countries where housework is less time consuming and physically demanding; however it does not necessarily undermine patriarchal relations and the sexual division of labor.

Higher productivity in the household and greater participation of women outside the "narrow circle of the family" can take place without dramatically altering the framework of subordination. Instead the result is usually women's double responsibility for domestic and nondomestic work. In the Third World, middle- and upper-class women deal with this problem by hiring maids to relieve them from domestic work. For example, in Latin America, domestic service accounts for the highest proportion of female employment in the urban areas. Domestic service in this case reduces gender tensions among the upper classes, at the expense of the double oppression of the domestic servants.

Although it is possible to argue that the basic needs approach is an important step toward recognizing women's economic role, it should be viewed only as a beginning. Since its goals are stated at a fairly general level, their specific implementation by countries could presumably incorporate more radical concerns dealing with the roots of women's subordination.

Our second example is drawn from an initial evaluation of the Ethiopian land reform. The Land Reform Proclamation of March 1975 "brought about significant political, legal and economic changes" (22). It abolished private ownership of land, assured peasants' use rights over land worked by them-

selves, and redistributed land while undercutting old inequities in land ownership. New peasant organizations were created to oversee these changes and to increase peasants' political power.

From the point of view of women, the proclamation's objectives were essentially egalitarian. Land was to be allocated "without differentiation of the sexes" (23). Yet, as Tadesse has pointed out, it is "internally contradictory when counterposed to the Ethiopian family structure" (24). Under the proclamation, land has been allocated to a "farming family" whose head, in accordance with the constitution, is automatically assumed to be the man. Therefore, land is essentially distributed and allocated to men while women receive it indirectly and in a relationship of dependency to the head of the family. In addition, the proclamation is based on the assumption of monogamous families; as a result, the land reform has created problems in polygamous areas where men have registered one wife while "leaving the others without access to land and other resources" (25). Consequently, despite its egalitarian objectives, the land reform is likely to perpetuate women's dependent condition and powerlessness. To be sure, they are likely to share with men the benefits of land redistribution--as members of a household--but within an unchanged patriarchal structure. Further, one may presume that divorce is now very threatening for the unregistered wives in polygamous areas.

Our third example is the egalitarian (in class terms) models of development that have been espoused in a number of socialist countries such as the USSR, China, and Cuba. Despite dramatic differences in the paths of transformation followed in each of these countries, for women there has been a common underlying focus on "bringing them into production." Productive labor for women outside the home is the perceived mechanism for their emancipation. Collectivization has required and provided for the incorporation of large numbers of women into the wage labor force. Women have also made important inroads into public life (26). Yet they are far from having achieved equality with men and continue to be overrepresented at subordinate levels of society and underrepresented in positions of authority, power, and control.

There are two major reasons for this. One is that the attainment of equality between the genders has not been, for the most part, a primary revolutionary goal; rather it has been viewed as derivative of a socialist organization of society. It has been assumed that the collectivization process together with efforts to increase women's participation

in nondomestic work and in public life will generate equality between the sexes. Insufficient attention to the issues of occupational segregation and the sexual division of labor outside the home have led to an instrumentalization of women's labor--a tendency to draw women out of the home or to push them back as dictated by the overall labor needs of the development process, without significantly changing the sexual division of labor itself.

The second reason, which is in part a consequence of the first, is the relative neglect of the area of reproduction. To be sure, in Cuba, China, and the Soviet Union, efforts have been made to socialize domestic production by promoting social services such as public dining rooms, day care centers, and food processing facilities. In addition, ideological campaigns were launched in both China and Cuba to make men share the burden of domestic work. Yet community services that relieved the pressures of women's work in China were among the first to be cut back when tensions over the pace of development appeared. Despite the ideological campaigns, women continue to bear the main burden of domestic chores in both China and Cuba. In the Soviet Union, such an ideological campaign has not even taken place.

The tensions raised by women's dual responsibilities in work inside and outside the home are compounded in the Soviet Union and parts of Eastern Europe by the efforts of the state to make women bear more children. Women are seen as essential to the pace of development in both the roles of workers and childbearers, and yet there is an unwillingness on the part of the state to increase funds to support services for child care or other domestic work. The absence of genuinely mass-based and autonomous women's organizations has made it very difficult for women to make reproduction into a serious political issue.

Relative neglect of the sphere of reproduction has thus placed limits on the progress of women in socialist countries. Despite the advances made in the area of women's participation in production and public life, women continue to "specialize" in unpaid work in the domestic sphere, and this in turn has placed constraints on their achievements in public life.

Concluding Comments

We have focused on the analysis of women's subordination from the perspective of the interlinking of class and gender hierarchies, underlining the practical implications of this

connection. Development strategies fall into several categories along these lines. They can (1) ignore class dimensions and also the effect of development on women (the traditional modernization approach); (2) specify that modernization has been detrimental to women and call for policies to make women "equal partners" to men in that process (Boserup's approach and many of the recent policies derived from the work of international agencies); or (3) place emphasis on class contradictions and the need for collectivization and redistribution of resources while at the same time relying on an effort to increase women's participation in nondomestic production (traditional socialist policies).

There is a fourth possibility suggested by our critique. It involves focusing on the interaction between class and gender at all stages of the struggle for a more egalitarian society. The meaning of women's mobilization along these lines and the attack on male privileges will undoubtedly take different forms in different societies. In the capitalist Third World, they would require a restructuring of mass organizations to reflect women's roles as wage workers and household workers. Such a strategy could then be accompanied by a fuller attack on gender and class differences.

Clearly, any strategy with a feminist perspective cannot be imposed from above; it can only succeed to the extent that women and men are conscious of the need to deal with deeply ingrained prejudices and practices. Since this requires a long process of change, we should expect that it will be conditioned by the historical circumstances and the form of social and economic transformation of given societies.

In the meantime, since the principal outcomes of the tensions between gender and class are the differential overwork and ill-health of women, we must support measures such as systems of water provision, electrification, sanitation and medical care, and other similar policies, but with strong emphasis on how such programs are implemented and whom they benefit. In this sense, a basic needs strategy, with all its ambiguities, could benefit women if it were energized by the self-organization of poor women from the bottom layers of the class hierarchy. This is true as well for the more radical development strategies of land reform and collectivization of the means of production. If women's subordination is to be addressed in its totality, we need not only an analytical recognition of all its aspects but also the practical counterpart of this recognition, the organization and struggle of women against class exploitation and gender subordination.

Notes

1. For a clarification of these concepts, see the longer version of this paper published in Feminist Studies (Winter 1982).
2. Ester Boserup's book, Woman's Role in Economic Development (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), gave major impetus to the debate about the effects of development on women in the Third World.
3. John Gilligan, speech at the Conference of the American Association of University Women, excerpted in the Washington Post, 24 June 1978.
4. International Labor Organization, Employment, Growth and Basic Needs: A One-World Problem (New York: Praeger, 1976).
5. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
6. Important exceptions may be found in some of the literature published by the ILO and the UN. See, for example, many of the papers sponsored by the Programme on Rural Women, World Employment Programme, ILO, Geneva.
7. Boserup, Woman's Role, passim.
8. Lourdes Benarfa and Gita Sen, "Accumulation, Reproduction and Women's Role in Economic Development," Signs 7 (Winter 1981).
9. See H. Bernstein, "African Peasantries: A Theoretical Framework," Journal of Peasant Studies 6 (1979):421-43; Judy van Allen, "'Sitting on a Man': Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women," Canadian Journal of African Studies 6 (1972):165-82; A.T. Nzula et al., Forced Labor in Colonial Africa (London: Zed Press, 1979).
10. Jette Bukh, The Village Woman in Ghana (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1979).
11. Kate Young, "Modes of Appropriation and the Sexual Division of Labor: A Case Study of Oaxaca, Mexico," in Feminism and Materialism, ed. Annette Kuhn and Anne Marie Wolpe (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).
12. Carmen Diana Deere, "Changing Social Relations of Production and Peruvian Peasant Women's Work," Latin American Perspectives 4 (1977):48-69.
13. Rachel Grossman, "Women's Place in the Integrated Circuit," South East Asia Chronicle 66 (1979):2-17; Diane Elson and Ruth Pearson, "The Internationalization of Capital and Its Implications for Women in the Third World," in The Subordination of Women and the Development Process (Sussex: Institute of Development Studies, in press); Barbara Ehrenreich and

- Annette Fuentes, "Life on the Global Assembly Line," Ms., January 1981, pp. 53-71.
14. Michéle Mattelart, "Chile: The Feminine Side of the Coup or When Bourgeois Women Take to the Streets," NACLA Report on Latin America and the Empire 9 (1975):14-25; Maria Crummett, "El Poder Feminino: The Mobilization of Women against Socialism in Chile," Latin American Perspectives 4 (1977):103-13.
 15. Salvador Allende, "Speech to the United Nations," in International Firms and Modern Imperialism, ed. Hugo Radice (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975); Andre Gunder Frank, "An Open Letter about Chile to Arnold Herberger and Milton Friedman," Review of Radical Political Economics 7 (1975):61-72.
 16. Gail Omvedt, "Women and Rural Revolt in India," Journal of Peasant Studies 5 (1978):371-403.
 17. Ibid., p. 394.
 18. A summary of this argument can be found in Lourdes Benería, "Reproduction, Production and the Sexual Division of Labor," Cambridge Journal of Economics 3 (1979):421-43.
 19. See, for example, Mahmood Mamdani, The Myth of Population Control (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972); Bonnie Mass, "Puerto Rico: A Case Study of Population Control," and Martha Gimenez, "Population and Capitalism," Latin American Perspectives 4 (1977):66-81 and 5-40; Nancy Birdsall, "Women and Population Studies," Signs 1, no. 3, pt. 1 (Spring 1976):699-712; Sandra Schwartz Tangri, "A Feminist Perspective on the Ethical Issues on Population Programs," Signs 1, no. 4 (Summer 1976):895-904; see also Adrienne Germaine's reply in Signs 2, no. 4 (Summer 1977):924-27.
 20. Ingrid Palmer, "New Ideas on Women and Development," unpublished manuscript, p. 10.
 21. International Labor Organization, Employment, Growth and Basic Needs, p. 61. Emphasis added.
 22. Zene Tadesse, "The Impact of Land Reform on Women," in Women and Development: The Sexual Division of Labor in Rural Economies, ed. Lourdes Benería (ILO/Praeger, 1982).
 23. Ibid., Ch. 2, no. 4.
 24. Ibid., p. 15.
 25. Ibid., p. 17.
 26. See Phyllis Andors, "Social Revolution and Women's Emancipation: China during the Great Leap Forward," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars 7 (1975):33-42; Elizabeth Croll, Women in Rural Development: The People's Republic of China (Geneva: ILO, 1979), and

"Socialist Development Experience: Women in Rural Production in the Soviet Union, Cuba and Tanzania" (Brighton: University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies, 1979); C. Bengelsdorf and A. Hageman, "Emerging from Underdevelopment: Women and Work in Cuba," Race and Class 19 (1978):345-60; Gail Lapidus, "Sexual Equality in Soviet Policy: A Developmental Perspective," in Women in Russia, ed. Dorothy Atkinson et al. (London: Harvester Press, 1978).

Part IV
Control through Institution
and Ideology

NADINE TAUB

Defining and Combating Sexual Harassment (1981)

The experience of sexual harassment at work or at school is not a new one for American women. Masters routinely claimed sexual services from slave women. Even in colonial times, sexual demands were an occupational hazard of domestic service. As women began working for wages outside the home, they regularly encountered sexual harassment. Unions organizing at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries were concerned with the issue. Yet until recently there was little societal recognition that sexual harassment is, and has been, an important means of controlling women. As women gained consciousness of that fact, they have compelled the courts and the public at large to acknowledge that the problem is a serious one, requiring legal and social sanctions (1).

The last five years have seen a dramatic shift in the legal principles governing sexual harassment. Between 1974 and 1977, numerous cases involving claims of sexual harassment were brought under various federal and state laws. With one or two exceptions, these claims were rejected by the trial courts. However, a series of appellate court decisions, starting in 1977, recognized sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination forbidden on the job by Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and by state fair employment laws (2). By 1978, these decisions resulted in relief being granted to complainants appearing before trial courts and administrative agencies. The initial decisions concerned firings and other adverse job consequences when the woman refused to comply with her supervisor's sexual demands (3). More recent decisions have upheld the right of women to work in environments free of supervisor and coworker harassment (4). State courts have also come to recognize sexual harassment as violating common law tort and contract principles.

The early cases were accompanied by a great deal of media attention and organizing. Women spoke out increasingly about their sexual harassment experiences and their under-

standing of those experiences as sexual discrimination. As more and more groups took up the issue, governmental and quasi-governmental bodies held hearings and issued reports, policy statements, and regulations. The litigation successes recorded since 1977 reflect the collective change in consciousness produced by all this activity. So long as this energy level is sustained, the legal principle that sexual harassment constitutes an impermissible barrier to equal opportunity for women appears relatively secure (5).

Having established, at least temporarily, the initial premise that it is both wrong and illegal to subject women to coercive sexual advances, feminists can now afford to consider questions that arise in consolidating and securing the earlier victories. Two of these problems--how to specify the type of conduct we wish to eliminate and how to keep the issue of sexual harassment from being another device the existing power structure can use in dividing its opposition--are addressed here.

The Definitional Problem

When a boss writes his secretary a letter offering her more money if she has an affair with him and then fires her when she turns him down, few would deny that the woman was subjected to clear sexual coercion. But when the demands come half-disguised as jokes and remarks about other people's behavior and when the retaliation comes in the form of negative work evaluations, it is a far more difficult question. Similarly people probably agree that it is intolerable for a supervisor or coworker to grab a woman between the legs, but there is far more confusion when a supervisor or coworker repeatedly puts his arm around a woman, leans over her, and brushes his body against hers. Conditions affecting the general work environment, like constant sexual banter or prominent girlie calendars, are even harder to evaluate.

Behavior of this kind cannot be assessed in a vacuum. Not only must we consider our purposes in seeking to define sexual harassment, but we must also consider the dynamics of contemporary heterosexual relationships, the nature of work environments, and the current political climate. The starting point of any attempt to categorize sex-related behavior in the workplace must be the understanding that women occupy a subordinate position politically, economically, and socially in our society and that sexual harassment contributes to that subordination. An important way men continue their dominance is by invoking women's traditional sexual role through sexual demands and allusions. Thus combating sexual

harassment is an essential part of the effort to end women's subordination.

Women struggle against sexual harassment by seeking to handle the situation informally as individuals, by seeking to educate others about it, and by invoking formal processes such as litigation. Having a definition of sexual harassment is important to each of these efforts. First, being able to draw a line between the acceptable and unacceptable helps the individual woman form her response. Many incidents of sexual harassment are attributed to "natural attraction" or to seductive behavior on the part of women or to the notion that "boys will be boys." For this reason, it is easy for women to feel themselves responsible for unwanted sexual attentions and to blame themselves for being overly affected by them. Understanding that the conduct to which they are subjected is sexual harassment allows women simultaneously to acknowledge its debilitating effect and to see the experience in terms of power relations, rather than as a matter of personal failing. With this understanding, women can choose to deal individually with the offender, seek group support, complain to the employer, or invoke more formal remedies.

Second, establishing categories of the permissible and the impermissible helps women see common features and parallels between their experience and those of other women. Educating receptive males likewise requires being able to explain what behavior exceeds permissible limits. And finally, courts and other agencies need to understand the nature of the experience and be assured that a meaningful line can be drawn between legal and illegal conduct. The past failure to find sexual harassment in violation of statutory prohibitions is due at least in part to judicial fears that legitimate interactions between men and women would be chilled. That same fear may now lead courts to adopt an overly restrictive definition of sexual harassment.

Despite this strong need for a workable definition of sexual harassment, we must not underestimate the difficulty of the task. A number of factors complicate the problem. First, there is the genuine ambivalence and confusion that surround sexual interchanges today. In some cases, women are able to understand only in retrospect that they did not welcome particular advances. In other cases, the advances are both welcome and unwelcome at the same time. Furthermore, it may be a conceptual impossibility to distinguish neatly between desired, uncoerced sexual interchanges and unwanted, imposed sexual attentions, given the contemporary reality that is power and authority that often make men attractive to women.

Problems of communication also add to the confusion. On the one hand, it may be very difficult for men to understand women's feelings in the absence of explicit statements. Changing mores make it hard for even well-intentioned men to know what they are hearing. In the past, women were expected to protest coyly even over sexual attentions they wanted. Now it is more permissible for women to take the sexual initiative and express their sexual desires openly. Yet not all women feel free to do so, and it is not at all apparent that a fixed set of social rules governs even a particular relationship. On the other hand, the draining effect of harassment, societal attitudes trivializing sexual harassment, and women's general socialization all make it very difficult for women to assert themselves against offensive conduct. Moreover, men screen out much of what women say, particularly regarding sexual matters. Therefore a standard that obliges women to convey their displeasure successfully is unworkable. A man may never hear a woman's objection or he may punish her for objecting. The threat of punishment has a particular credibility because women who attempt to put things tactfully are often disregarded. As their expressions become more forceful, they are suddenly perceived as hostile; hostility then justifies retaliation.

Problems surrounding work further compound the difficulties in delineating the activities to be forbidden on the job. For most people, work provides no inherent satisfaction; if work is to be bearable, much less enjoyable, there must be a fair degree of spontaneous human interchange. Even apart from the quality of interactions at the work place, people encountered through work are an important source of one's nonwork social life.

Finally, a particular political context colors any contemporary discussion of sexual harassment. We now confront an increasingly effective right-wing effort to suppress sexuality generally. Overbroad demands that fail to make comprehensible the distinction between wanted and unwanted sexual interchanges will strengthen the hand of those seeking to suppress all sexuality.

Read against the background of these considerations, the inadequacies of current definitions are apparent. Activists offer a shorthand definition of sexual harassment as unwanted sexual attention experienced on the job. In the interests of securing victories in extreme cases first, legal advocates for harassment victims have thus far felt compelled to propose a somewhat restrictive approach when explicating this shorthand definition. Unless the conduct directly relates to adverse job consequences or is absolutely egregious (as when the employer grabs the woman's breasts or plays

with himself during an interview), they suggest courts might well give considerable weight to the woman's failure to let someone know she found the man's behavior unacceptable (6). Yet in seeking to give the notion of unwanted advances content, this approach ignores the economic and psychological vulnerability of women, the absence of mechanisms for dealing with these problems, and the other difficulties already outlined. Expecting women to carry this burden without further guidance is simply being insensitive to their needs and the complexities of the problem.

The federal government has attempted to provide further guidance in spelling out the behavior prohibited by Title VII. Federal regulations thus provide that

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. (7)

These regulations make clear, then, that sexual considerations cannot form a basis for any adverse personnel action, and that many seemingly hard-to-define cases are simply a matter of proof--were sexual considerations a factor or not? But while they also indicate that both substantial interference with the individual's work performance and offensive work environments are impermissible, the regulations do little to specify the content of these terms. One of the most serious problems with terms this general is that they suggest that it is impermissible to bother or offend anyone, no matter how supersensitive, touchy, or prudish she may be. Such an interpretation, however, may result either in a strict puritanical code for the work place or a rule that is completely disregarded. Thus it is important for those formulating sexual harassment codes and otherwise seeking to enforce the regulations to propose alternatives to total, undifferentiated deference to individual sensitivities.

It is fairly usual, especially in the noncriminal context, for laws and other norms governing behavior to be expressed in rather general terms, largely because it is necessary to be able to account for situations that may arise in the future without having to visualize them precisely. As a re-

sult, the law has developed certain techniques for filling in the interstices of broadly phrased behavioral norms. The "reasonable person" construct is one legal device for avoiding a subjective, individualized standard without attempting to enumerate and evaluate every possible circumstance. When the reasonable person construct is used, for example, in determining whether people have been negligent, decision makers are not asked whether the individuals thought their actions were reasonable. Rather they are supposed to consider what an idealized person on good behavior would do. In this way, decision makers are being asked to apply current community norms. Nevertheless, in deriving these norms, it is almost inevitable that decision makers will draw on personal experience and the experiences of their friends and acquaintances.

Using the reasonable person construct to decide whether a given incident constituted sexual harassment would mean shifting the focus from the individual woman's subjective reaction to the particular circumstances to the more general question of whether the conduct in question would offend a reasonable person. Thus a woman trying to evaluate the legitimacy of her feelings, an employer trying to decide how to respond to a grievance, or a lawyer trying to handle a legal claim might each try to estimate how a hypothetical reasonable person would react to the events in issue. Difficulties with the approach are immediately evident. First of all, however idealized, there is simply no sex-neutral reasonable person to serve as a standard in this context. Since ingrained gender roles make the meaning of actions depend so much on the sex of the actors, it is absurd to ask how a reasonable man would react to the experience in question. If we assume we are talking about an idealized reasonable woman, we still have to consider the sex of the decision maker, for it is precisely the problem that, wittingly or unwittingly, most men would not even notice the behavior at issue, let alone find it contrary to community norms. Although female decision makers are far more likely to be aware of the type of conduct at issue, they may also believe that reasonable women shouldn't make a fuss about it. A reasonableness standard has inevitably a conservative effect, and at a time when community norms are in a process of transition, such a standard neither protects the needs of individual women nor enhances the process of transition.

Listing elements or particular factors of concern is another conventional legal technique for discerning the content of norms expressed in general form. In using this technique, the woman trying to evaluate her feelings, the employer trying to respond to a grievance, or a lawyer trying

to handle a legal claim would attempt to gauge the presence or absence of factors that contribute to making conduct offensive. Although the thinking about this approach is just beginning, the Working Women's Institute, a New York-based national resource and research center with a program focusing on problems of sexual harassment and intimidation in employment, has recently put forward some promising formulations. One set of proposed considerations refers directly to the conduct; another focuses on the victim's feelings about her relation to the perpetrator. The actual mix of these factors will vary from case to case, and the strength of one may compensate for the absence of another in particular situations.

Characteristics of the conduct itself might include the circumstances of its occurrence, such as its physical intrusiveness, coerciveness, and frequency. Physical intrusiveness refers primarily to how hard it is to avoid the questionable behavior. For example, a wall poster or calendar near the water cooler may be easier to avoid than obscene jokes at obligatory work meetings or a drawing on the top of a memo sent to the whole staff. Physical touching may be the most intrusive of all, both because it is impossible to avoid and because it violates one's bodily integrity. Focusing on physical intrusiveness in the sense of one's ability to ignore the conduct is probably more fruitful than attempting to distinguish between public or private areas in contemporary work places. In picturing the modern insurance company, as in the movie, 9 to 5, with its vast, unpartitioned floors full of desks, we can immediately understand how difficult it is to distinguish the public from the private and how important it is to allow individuals control over their own work space so long as the control doesn't intrude on others.

Coerciveness refers most clearly to how powerful the person generating the attention is in relation to the recipient. The relevance of this factor is immediately obvious when a supervisor threatens adverse job consequences for failure to comply with his sexual demands. But its relevance is also apparent when someone who has the boss's ear makes suggestive remarks or goes in for brushing up against others. Like physical intrusiveness, power determines the victim's ability to avoid the troublesome behavior; the more powerful the actor, the greater his ability to compel her to deal with it head on. The extent and frequency of the occurrences are likewise important factors often affecting the necessity of confronting the behavior. It should be stressed, however, that recurrence is not essential; one traumatic incident can be sufficient.

It does not, however, appear sufficient in delineating the elements of offensive conduct to consider the circumstances surrounding the incident without also attempting to analyze the content of the behavior. It seems important, for example, to think about how degrading the behavior is to the victim. Yet, particularly in this time of changing norms, there may be no objective meaning to the notion of degradation. Moreover, even where there is a consensus that particular conduct is humiliating for a woman who is exposed to it, it may be almost impossible to articulate why this is so.

Thinking about a particular case may help, however. The pattern of harassment that formed the basis for one discrimination claim (8) included a cartoon left on the desk of Cleo Kyriazi, a middle-aged single woman who worked as an electrical engineer in an entirely male department. The cartoon showed the backside of a woman with enormous buttocks; pressed between her cheeks was a scrawny, helpless fellow. The cartoon was devastating, though the reason is not clear--perhaps because it implied so sharply that Kyriazi had totally failed to meet the standards of appearance and behavior prescribed for women. Yet even remarks purporting to compliment women on their appearance are frequently put-downs, since measuring up as a woman often means failure as a person in our society.

Sexual harassment, then, may be humiliating because it reaffirms our role as sexual objects rather than as actors and whole people. That these roles are prescribed for an individual woman by someone else is no comfort since those "someone elses" are the ones with power. Women's values, as well as their humanity and individuality, are negated by sexual harassment, and when women are expected not merely to submit to harassment, but to submit cheerfully, they are being asked to assent in their own subordination. The relevant question to ask of any situation may be, does the challenged conduct use sexual attentions or sexual allusions to annihilate their subject as a person by categorizing her as a female body? Answering this question requires thinking about the societal definition of the woman's role and examining the conduct in relation to the definition.

However, even if it is possible to analyze the circumstances and content of particular conduct meaningfully, it may still be necessary to consider the subject's feelings about the actor as well. The same remark or action, delivered in the same objective setting, may have very different impacts. Here it may be easier to delineate what makes behavior acceptable. The Working Women's Institute proposal suggests three dimensions to be used in analyzing the relationship:

(1) degree of intimacy or closeness between the subject and the person making the advances; (2) mutuality or the degree to which the subject wants to respond in kind; and (3) reciprocity or the degree to which she is able to respond. Although obviously related, these factors do seem distinct. For example, a woman might be genuinely fond of a coworker, but be extremely troubled by his touching her or by his constant obscene jokes. Similarly, a woman might want to engage in a certain sexual banter but be constrained by her position; if she senses she cannot reciprocate, she may find continued sexual attentions oppressive despite her desire to respond.

These aids to analyzing the subject's feelings should help individual women who seek to understand their situations. They should also help women as a group be clear on their entitlement to resist sexual oppression in the work place. But unlike considerations of circumstance and content, whose analysis may depend on externally observable factors, these subjective considerations can rarely be evaluated by others. For this reason, the assessment of certain potentially offensive conduct may be beyond the purview of formal mechanisms of redress. When, for example, a woman decides in retrospect that a male coworker's behavior was actually offensive because she felt unable to respond in kind, there are few tools available to test that determination. As a result, a court may view the assessment as beyond its competence. In the final analysis, it may not be possible to propose a definition of sexual harassment that is sufficient for legal purposes while also encompassing the full scope of women's experiences. Nevertheless, women may achieve a satisfactory political resolution if they can label those experiences and organize accordingly.

The Problem of Deflected Energies

The very fact that we can now be concerned with the definitional problems associated with subtleties in coercion shows just how much progress has been made in combating sexual harassment. This progress is truly an instance of woman regaining control, for sexual harassment has served as an important means of controlling women both as workers and as sexual beings. Moreover, the struggle against sexual harassment has been waged not only for women, but by women. As Catherine MacKinnon suggests, sexual harassment may be the first legal wrong to be defined by women (9).

Retaining the control women have thus obtained now may well be another matter. In identifying a wrong that they

ask the existing power structure to right, women have given white males, who after all still control that structure, a weapon to direct against men they also wish to subordinate. Not surprisingly, then, women working to combat sexual coercion often find that established institutions are willing to discipline and even fire Third World and politically radical white men. Complaints about men who are more firmly entrenched may be vigorously defended or handled discreetly by the institution. At Yale University, for example, the Women's Caucus alleged that the only faculty member even covertly disciplined for sexual harassment was a Black teaching assistant who was not rehired following complaints by students. By contrast, the institution staunchly denied any misconduct by the faculty members identified in the sexual harassment suit brought by five women students. When the Yale sports coach named in the suit became the subject of subsequent internal complaints, he resigned, claiming he needed more time to write.

The selective recognition of sexual harassment claims is exceedingly effective in creating dissension among those bidding for power. The recent conflict at Clark University is a case very much in point. There, an exiled Chilean woman who had not been rehired complained to the university administration about physical and other harassment by her department chairman, a prominent leftist active in the movement against the war in Vietnam. The university appeared to respond to the complaint in an ad hoc and harsh fashion. As a result, the Left community, which included feminists on both sides, split into two camps. Both groups continued to expend enormous amounts of organizational effort. Ultimately, without consulting the woman or her counsel, the university signed an agreement with the man that limited some of his prerogatives and otherwise barred further consideration of the charges. Subsequently the day after the agreement was signed, the man filed a libel action against the woman and her supporters, who also claimed harassment from the chairman. Equal employment litigation against the university on behalf of the women was also initiated.

It is crucial, then, that women develop strategies to prevent their energies from being deflected into such divisive struggles over individual cases. The first step is, of course, to be clear about one's goal. Since sexual harassment is an obstacle to equal opportunities for women, it must be stamped out across the board. Institutions must be held responsible not merely for individual instances of abuse but also for tolerating more extensive, though perhaps less well-known, patterns of harassment and for promoting an atmosphere that condones abuse (10). Focusing on the need

for across-the-board action would allow individual men to defend themselves against harassment charges by claiming they had been unfairly singled out, or "selectively prosecuted." This type of defense, however, appears to be more of a theoretical possibility than a realistic resolution to a real political conflict. Despite the prevalence of such abuse, men charged with sexual harassment will rarely concede that they have done what they are charged with, as the selective prosecution defense requires. More typically, such men and their supporters will blame the complainant, if not for inviting sexual attentions, then for misunderstanding them or for being so politically foolish as to complain.

To some extent, conflicts between supporters of particular women and supporters of particular men are inevitable. However, the diversion of energies into a struggle between the have-nots may be minimized if women's groups can find ways of posing their demands in broader terms. One technique may be to attempt to identify and bring forward a number of complaints at one time. If concern about the harassment issue has been triggered by an incident involving a single victim, just as her case against the particular man will be bolstered by identifying his other victims, the larger case against the institution will be bolstered by identifying other perpetrators. Work place activists should develop organizing devices that seek to heighten general consciousness about the issue and to elicit information concerning specific incidents. One suggestion, for example, is a check-off list that enumerates types of harassment as well as categories of supervisors and coworkers and asks female employees what kinds of experiences they have had with whom (11).

The demand for an institutional grievance mechanism flows naturally from the demand for action in a number of cases. But for several reasons, it is an important focus for activism even where it is not possible to demonstrate a pattern and practice of abuse. Even apart from its use, the mere existence of a grievance procedure has an important effect. That a procedure is established to handle complaints speaks more plainly than any abstract policy statement that certain conduct is disapproved. Moreover, once in place, a grievance procedure makes it easier for victims to come forward, which enables the true scope of the problem to be understood. Finally, procedure is an area in which complainants and defendants have some ground in common. A settled grievance mechanism deters ad hoc arbitrary vindictive actions against especially vulnerable defendants. At the same time, it makes clear how victims can gain institutional redress of the problem. By letting both sides know what they can expect, a definite procedure gives both sides the basis for

protesting what they see as unfair treatment (12). This may, in fact, be why those in power generally prefer to handle things in a "gentlemanly" and quiet fashion while those on the outside prefer that the rules of the game be specified in formal procedures.

A settled procedure does not, of course, ensure fairness. Complaints against upper-echelon white men may have much more difficulty making it through even an established system. Thus it is important that activists see detailed figures about how the procedure is actually being used. They need to know the numbers and types of men who are disciplined as compared to those who are exonerated. Although it is possible that an ongoing monitoring mechanism may be built into a grievance procedure, this will be successful only if a group of activists remains alive and well to respond to the information as it is produced.

The only resolution of potential conflicts centering on disputes between individual complainants and individual defendants that can be acceptable to women's groups is one that emphasizes the need to combat all sexual harassment. Posed this broadly, the struggle should enlist the support of those who rally to the defense of minority and radical men whose conduct is questioned. If so, it may be possible to make an incursion into the existing white male establishment.

Notes

1. See generally, Goodman, "Sexual Harassment: Some Observations on the Distance Travelled and the Distance Yet to Go," Capital U.L. Rev. 10 (1981):445.
2. Title VII refers to the fair employment provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. See 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq.
3. See, for example, Barnes v. Costle, 561 F.2d 983 (D.C. Cir. 1977); Tomkins v. Public Service Elec. & Gas Co., 568 F.2d 1044 (3d Cir. 1977).
4. Bundy v. Jackson, 641 F.2d 934 (D.C. 1981); Continental Can v. State of Minnesota, 297 N.W.2d 241 (Minn. 1980).
5. As part of President Reagan's general attack on governmental regulation, a task force has been established to consider rescission of overly burdensome provisions. See Executive Order 12291 of 17 February 1981, Federal Register, vol. 462, no. 125, p. 34263, 30 June 1981. On 12 August 1981, the federal sexual harass-

ment guidelines discussed below were added to the list of regulations to be reviewed.

6. See, for example, Taub, "Keeping Women in Their Place: Stereotyping Per Se as a Form of Employment Discrimination," Boston C.L. Rev. 20 (1980):345; Vermeulen, "Employer Liability under Title VII for Sexual Harassment by Supervisory Employees," Capital L. Rev. 10 (1981):499, 529.
7. 29 C.F.R. §1604.11 et seq.
8. See Kyriazi v. Western Electric Co., 461 F. Supp. 984 (D.N.J. 1978).
9. MacKinnon, "Introduction Sexual Harassment Symposium," Capital U.L. Rev. 10 (1981):i.
10. The argument for holding institutions as well as individuals responsible for harassment is beyond the scope of this piece. See Vermeulen, "Employer Liability under Title VII for Sexual Harassment by Supervisory Employees," Capital L. Rev. 10 (1981):499; and Taub, "Keeping Women in Their Place: Stereotyping Per Se as a Form of Employment Discrimination," Boston C.L. Rev. 20 (1980):345.
11. It goes almost without saying that organizers must take care to safeguard complainants' confidentiality until they are sure they want to go public.
12. This is not to say that complaints and defendants will not have different perspectives on the specifics of the procedures to be employed.

BETTYLOU VALENTINE

Women on Welfare: Public Policy and Institutional Racism (1981)

This essay will explore briefly the persistence of certain ideas about "the poor," who they are and what they deserve, and it will attempt to identify and trace the influence and effects of racist and sexist ideas on American welfare policy and practice. With a clear idea of how and why current policies evolved, it will be possible to suggest what we as women can do about these problems.

I will concentrate on a single category of the income assistance social welfare programs set up by the 1935 Social Security Act. Title IV of that act established the federal-state program for aid to dependent children (1). At the present time, Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC) (2) involves the largest number of people receiving public assistance, and in a few years it will be the costliest categorical program (3). The most recent figures available from the Social Security Administration indicate that, as of July 1980, there were 3,704,489 families representing 10,733,700 persons receiving payments under the dependent children program (4). Although overall monthly expenditures passed the billion-dollar mark for the first time in that same month, this represented only an average monthly payment of \$277.48 per family (5). In 1970 when 6 percent of all American children were beneficiaries of AFDC, benefits cost \$5 billion for the year, or .5 percent of national income (6).

Ninety-three percent of all the children in this category of assistance lived with their mothers, whereas only 13 percent had fathers at home in 1977. Between 1965 and 1974, female-headed families with children increased ten times as fast as two-parent families in the United States. Half of all female-headed households are poor.

In the decades since the passage of aid-to-dependent-children legislation, the make-up of the recipients has changed from a small number of white widows and their children (61 percent when the program was initiated) (8) to the current situation where many AFDC families are members of racial minorities. As of 1979 the largest single group of families

with dependent children (43 percent) was Black. Just under 41 percent were white, and a little over 12 percent were Hispanic families (9). In commenting on the change, one author points out that "the popular image of the chief beneficiaries has changed from that of old, respectable white people to that of young, immoral Negro men and women" (10).

Parentage and Birth

Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected to the presidency in 1932 with the largest electoral majority since the Civil War. The country was in the midst of the worst economic conditions it had ever faced when the administration proposed and passed legislation that overturned two hundred years of American relief-giving.

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) broke all precedents. . . . For the first time, the federal government assumed responsibility for relief and appropriated substantial funds to carry out that responsibility. . . . And while the act stated that the federal administrator should cooperate with state and local agencies, it also allowed for the federalization of state programs that failed to conform with federal standards. . . . Of all the new programs it was FERA that reached those who were most in need. . . . Since blacks got little from (or were actually harmed by) most programs, 30 percent of the black population ended up on the direct relief rolls by January 1935. (11)

Direct relief was short-lived. The first grants were made to the states in May 1933. In June 1936, FERA was replaced by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) (12). It has been suggested that the change from a direct relief program to a work relief program went far toward moderating civil disorder. Direct relief may permit disorder to worsen since it is not unemployment alone that leads to disorder but the deterioration of social control normally asserted through work. This argument holds that the chief function of relief programs is to regulate labor by absorbing and controlling enough of the troublesome unemployed. Then when the turbulence subsides, these people are expelled to populate the low-pay labor market (13).

Before FERA was killed, the staff attempted to influence the Social Security legislation then being drawn up. Congress rejected the FERA staff proposal that simple lack of money should be the basis for coverage under the Social Secu-

rity Act. Instead the absence of a parent was imposed as a condition for aid to dependent children.

In addition, FERA's history and influence were deeply resented by southern politicians and economic interests. Congressmen from the South were influential enough to set a number of conditions for passage of the act. For instance, wording that would have required grants to be "compatible with decency and health" was eliminated, thus allowing local administrators to set grant levels. Unlike FERA, the Social Security Administration was to be given little authority over the states. The main push for narrow coverage and local autonomy was successful. "The Southerners were accommodated as the price of peace, because, as always they were in strategic positions in the Congress and because the permissible range of federal authority was still very much in doubt" (14).

It is also important to note that all the categorical programs were of minor importance in the framing of the Social Security Act. They were included because of special pleading by interest groups, such as the Children's Bureau and local associations for the blind.

The designs of FERA planners to utilize the AFDC program as the entering wedge for a federally subsidized general assistance program were nipped in the bud. AFDC was expected to remain a rather small part of the overall public assistance picture, providing aid mainly to the children of widows. From 1935 to as late as 1950, little attention was paid to AFDC.

Growth and Change

In a report describing the first decade of Social Security service, the chairman of the Social Security Board had only this to say of AFDC: "More fatherless children are receiving benefits under old-age and survivors' insurance than are receiving aid to dependent children because of the death of the father" (15).

In part, at least, the complexity of state eligibility requirements, a conscious lack of information about the availability of the program, and racial discrimination kept the AFDC population small and white from 1935 to 1950. Only after World War II did the aid-to-dependent-children picture change greatly. During the war, women moved into the labor force in great numbers and were laid off when the war ended. Large numbers of Black women and their families moved north and west. As soldiers returned from the war, there was an

increase in marriages and births but also a rise in divorces. Women, both Black and white, turned to the dependent-children program for assistance. The AFDC rolls kept climbing through the 1950s and into the 1960s.

"What fueled this growth was a surge in the number of mothers who had to turn to public assistance not because of the death or incapacitation of their husbands, but because they either had no husband or were separated from him" (16). In 1937, unmarried mothers accounted for only 3.5 percent of children on ADC and five states had no unmarried mothers at all on the program (17). In 1940, ADC desertion cases were catching up on death cases, and both were more significant problems than illegitimacy (18). By 1950, the AFDC rolls had doubled nationwide. Between 1960 and 1967, the AFDC rolls jumped by 2 million individuals and then doubled again in the next four years. Various reasons have been advanced to explain this growth.

Scholars still dispute whether this occurred because of a basic change in the family patterns of the poor produced by urbanization, or because of the disappearance of low skill jobs for the latest urban immigrants, or because of an increase in participation rates prompted by better welfare benefits. (19)

Public opinion, supported by some academic analysts, turned increasingly against welfare mothers and the poor. Sociologist Walter B. Miller began to apply the idea of a "culture of poverty" to describe AFDC families (20). Academic-politician Daniel Patrick Moynihan issued a highly publicized report on the Negro family in which he asserted that "the steady expansion of . . . [the AFDC] program, as of public assistance programs in general, can be taken as a measure of the steady disintegration of the Negro family structure over the past generation in the United States." This report maintained that the Black family had become so disorganized that "the present tangle of pathology is capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world" (21).

This explanation of the welfare increase was challenged by many academics (22). A Brookings Institution economic evaluation of AFDC concluded that even if all female-headed families that came into existence between 1959 and 1966 had applied for and received AFDC (which they had not), only about 10 percent of the increase would have been accounted for (23).

Frances Piven and Richard Cloward suggest that, rather

than indicating a "tangle of pathology," the AFDC explosion signaled a change in the national political scene brought about by rapid economic change which included mass unemployment, forced urban migration, and a diminution of social control.

In the 1960's, the growing mass of black poor in the cities emerged as a political force for the first time, both in the voting booths and in the streets. And the relief system was, we believe, one of the main local institutions to respond to that force, even though the reaction was greatly delayed. (24)

The intellectual and political concentration on racial rather than gender aspects of the welfare population went on even though Blacks were still a numerical minority of the AFDC rolls in the 1960s and 1970s. Unfortunately, this meant that

Other factors that might have made for a more thoughtful assessment of the problem got little attention. It did not seem to matter, for example, that divorce and separation were also reaching unusually high levels among middle-class families; . . . or that public policy encouraged the departure of fathers from poor families by making such departure the major requisite for receipt of public assistance. The mothers of dependent children on public assistance still took the blame, altering significantly the traditional concept of who was deserving of public aid. (25)

Suitable Homes, Substitute Fathers, and Surprise Visits

State and local administration of the AFDC program was designed to penalize the welfare mother and her children, not only by supplying low levels of aid, but by making eligibility a complicated and negative process, by applying rules of "fitness," by prosecuting recipients for adultery, fornication, and neglect when children were born out of wedlock, and by threatening to take children from their mothers (26). This process of intimidation began immediately after passage of the Social Security Act, but state rules proliferated as the AFDC rolls grew. Legal reforms of these abuses were not successful until the late 1960s when many challenges were brought by the legal services program of the Office of Economic Development (OED) as part of the War on Poverty program (27).

"Character" and "morality" rules were often applied to AFDC recipients though never to the beneficiaries of other

categorical programs or to the recipients of Social Security insurance programs in which men make up the majority of the recipient population. Only in 1960, when Louisiana enacted a retroactive suitable-home law that would have cut thirty thousand people from the welfare rolls, did the federal government become involved. Even then federal involvement was delayed until after the November election of the liberal John Kennedy. The Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, charged with federal supervision of public welfare, ruled that states could not discharge families with illegitimate children from the rolls unless provision was made for placement of the children in an institution or foster home (28). This rule was added to the Social Security Act in 1966. Despite the law, states still discouraged potentially eligible recipients by threatening them with state "neglect" statutes (29).

Implicit in the provision of aid to dependent children is the assumption that men are expected to provide for their families and that the government steps into that role only because of the man's "death, continued absence from the home, or physical or mental incapacity" (30). The government becomes the father and as a requirement for continued aid specifies that no other man may have a relationship with the mother or children. For instance, in 1950, South Carolina policy stated that children would not be considered "deprived" if there was "any man with whom the mother had a common-law relationship." In 1952, Georgia adopted a regulation that applied to substitute fathers "in or around the home." Michigan had a similar rule. Massachusetts said that no male other than the woman's father or brother could live in her house. Alabama prohibited AFDC mothers from "going with" a man (31).

The prohibition against "substitute fathers" was enforced through surprise investigations that were mandatory and degrading in the extreme. Such visits by social workers might occur at any hour of the day or night. Women protested and attempted to secure the same privacy generally vouchsafed to men and those not receiving welfare support. By arguing an interpretation of the "person's home is his castle" principle women learned that they could refuse to let investigators enter and search their homes. But the welfare agencies pointed out that in such cases aid could be cut off for "refusal to cooperate" (32).

Although the suitable-home and substitute-father provisions are often stated in moral terms, Piven and Cloward point to an economic function for these and similar measures.

Their economic effect is to ensure a pool of marginal workers. . . . When a large pool of low-paid labor is

needed by economic enterprises, men alone may not provide a sufficient supply. Consequently, relief arrangements will be adjusted to keep women in the labor pool; according to a recent study, fully 87 per cent of the welfare mothers in one Northern city had been or were working. (33)

Women, Welfare, and Work

"Whether work was compelled through administrative demand or a result of personal choice, a great deal of work was done by ADC mothers in the first twenty-five years of the program" (34). Black women on AFDC had always been expected to accept domestic work or work in the fields in the North as well as the South. New Jersey and Illinois as well as Louisiana and Georgia refused to aid women when seasonal field work was available. Employment training programs under welfare auspices often gave women "work experience" in dishwashing and heavy cleaning (35).

Despite the low-pay, dead-end jobs available to most AFDC mothers, many women do work. Studies about AFDC mothers who work show that such women have a long association with the labor market but short employment periods. For example, one study shows that 30 percent of AFDC mothers had been working just before receipt of AFDC (36). A New York City survey in the late 1960s found that eight of ten AFDC mothers had work experience (37). In 1970, a federal government survey of AFDC found that 61 percent of mothers had been employed previously and approximately 15 percent work while receiving assistance (38). A national survey conducted in 1977 showed that "about one in seven AFDC mothers had full or part-time jobs. One in ten was seeking work. Four out of ten mothers, however, could not work because they were needed at home to care for small children" (39).

Nevertheless, the politically potent image persists that AFDC mothers shirk work. This is the image that led Congress to set up the Work Incentive Program (WIN) in 1967. This program made work a requirement for all adult AFDC recipients except those incapacitated or needed in the home because of the illness of another family member. Most important,

The 1967 amendments in effect officially reclassified mothers of dependent children from the deserving to the non-deserving category of the poor [emphasis added]. The assumption was that sizable numbers of these mothers could be put to work, an assumption that overlooked the

fact that many already did work but earned too little to take themselves out of poverty. (40)

The WIN program offered 120,000 training slots to the 1,320,448 parents on the rolls in 1967 (41). Gender discrimination was written into the WIN program. The Department of Labor, which jointly administered the program, gave highest priority to unemployed fathers. When women were allowed into the program, they were trained as clerks and typists while the men were taught higher paying crafts and skills. "As a result, in 1974 more than twice as many women as men entered jobs through the WIN program, but more men than women got off welfare as a result" (42).

In 1971, after women won a sex discrimination suit filed against HEW and the Department of Labor, Congress amended the WIN program to exclude most of the training and education aspects. However, Congress blamed the failure of the WIN program on "federal and state officials who did not share this objective [Congress's desire to get able-bodied welfare recipients into work and training] with equal enthusiasm" (43). The National Welfare Rights Organization president, Beulah Sanders, declared, "We have no problem with mothers working. We do have a problem about not paying them adequately" (44).

What Needs to Be Done?

Poverty in America is increasingly becoming the poverty of women and of Blacks (45). Nonwelfare women, Black and white, need to work with welfare recipients to oppose budget cuts, to eliminate unreasonable restrictions, to expand minimum standards, to provide child care for those who choose training and work, and to push for training programs that do not keep women in the same low-pay, low-skill jobs that are a central factor in creating the welfare crisis. These are issues women should understand.

As middle-class and professional Black and white women, we should be making these connections with other women across race and class lines. The need is certainly well documented. For instance, the National Urban League found that "over half of all poor black households receive no welfare assistance. Fifty-six percent of all black households with incomes under \$6,000 are not on AFDC or General Assistance (GA)" (46). One immediate task is to help those who are eligible to receive their entitlements.

Although such short-term work is vitally necessary, it is not enough, as Carol Stack has said.

It is clear that mere reform of existing programs can never be expected to eliminate an impoverished class in America. The effect of such programs is that they maintain the existence of such a class. Welfare programs merely act as flexible mechanisms to alleviate the more obvious symptoms of poverty while inching forward just enough to purchase acquiescence and silence on the part of the members of this class and their liberal supporters. (47)

A review of the last 450 years of Western welfare theory and practice shows that present day welfare has been altered in form but not in philosophy (48). Then as now our economic and social system held that poor people should be taught that they have no claim of right on society. And policy makers continue to believe, in the face of continued evidence to the contrary, that the private labor market as presently constituted can provide sufficient income to those considered employable. Despite federal and state commitments to full employment, the labor market in the United States cannot provide jobs for all the people who want to work. This is particularly true in periods of crisis such as the 1929 Depression and our current massive unemployment. We must recognize this and move forward to build a society that can and will provide work and support as a matter of right.

In conclusion, this advice from Rosa Luxemburg seems especially appropriate:

I see with depressing clarity that neither things nor people can be changed--until the whole situation has changed. . . . That's how I see matters, but the chief thing is to keep your chin up and not get too excited about it. Our job will take years.

Notes

1. Social Security Administration, Social Security Bulletin Annual Statistical Supplement 1977-1979 (Washington, D.C.: Social Security Administration, 1980), pp. 44-46.
2. When passed in 1935, the program was titled Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) and gave no money toward the support of the caretaker of the children. In 1950, this was changed when the program was retitled Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC) and payment for

- an adult caretaker, usually the mother, was provided. The AFDC name will be used throughout this paper.
3. Gilbert Y. Steiner, Social Insecurity: The Politics of Welfare (New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1966), p. 31. Categorical programs, unlike social insurance programs, define a category of people to be helped (blind, disabled, orphans) and specify a needs test to determine eligibility and rate of compensation. Lester M. Salamon, Welfare the Elusive Consensus (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978), p. 11.
 4. Social Security Bulletin 44 (May 1981):5.
 5. Payment levels differ greatly from state to state.
 6. University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty, The "Deserving Poor" (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1973), p. ix.
 7. Salamon, Elusive Consensus, p. 105.
 8. Lucy Komisar, Down and Out in the U.S.A.: A History of Social Welfare (New York: Franklin Watts, 1973), p. 65.
 9. Family Assistance Studies Staff, AFDC: A Chartbook (Washington, D.C.: Social Security Administration, 1979), p. 28.
 10. Steiner, Social Insecurity, p. 7.
 11. Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare (New York: Random House Vintage Books Edition, 1972), p. 76.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 348.
 14. Steiner, Social Insecurity, p. 246.
 15. Social Security Bulletin 8 (August 1945):2.
 16. Salamon, Elusive Consensus, p. 83.
 17. Mildred Rein, Work or Welfare? Factors in the Choice for AFDC Mothers (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 8.
 18. Steiner, Social Insecurity, p. 114.
 19. Salamon, Elusive Consensus, p. 83.
 20. Walter B. Miller, "Implications of Urban Lower Class Culture for Social Work," Social Service Review 33 (1959):219-36.
 21. Daniel P. Moynihan, The Negro Family (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1965), pp. 14, 17.
 22. Eleanor Leacock, ed., The Culture of Poverty: A Critique (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971); Piven and Cloward, Regulating the Poor, pp. 189-98; William Ryan, Blaming the Victim (New York: Random House, 1971); Charles A. Valentine, Culture and Poverty:

- Critique and Counterproposals (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).
23. Irene Lurie, An Economic Evaluation of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1968), p. 131.
 24. Piven and Cloward, Regulating the Poor, p. 196.
 25. Salamon, Elusive Consensus, p. 84.
 26. Komisar, Down and Out, pp. 72-90.
 27. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-34; Piven and Cloward, Regulating the Poor, pp. 306-20.
 28. Piven and Cloward, Regulating the Poor, p. 140f.
 29. Komisar, Down and Out, p. 77.
 30. Family Assistance Studies Staff, AFDC, p. 10. Although the Title IV legislation covers children under age sixteen "deprived of parental support" and specifies that the child may live with "a father, mother, grandparent" or six to eight other categories of relatives, the program has always been seen as a program for women and their children. In 1979, four of five AFDC families had only one adult recipient; usually it was the mother.
 31. Komisar, Down and Out, pp. 79-81.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
 33. Piven and Cloward, Regulating the Poor, p. 128.
 34. Rein, Work or Welfare?, p. 9.
 35. Komisar, Down and Out, p. 83.
 36. Elaine M. Burgess and Daniel O. Price, An American Dependency Challenge (Chicago: American Public Welfare Association, 1963), p. 250.
 37. Lawrence Podell, Families on Welfare in New York City: Preliminary Report (New York: Center for Social Research, Graduate Center, City University of New York, 1967), p. 16.
 38. U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Services to AFDC Families: Annual Report Submitted to the Congress 1971-1972 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1973), Table 38.
 39. Family Assistance Studies Staff, AFDC, p. 10.
 40. Salamon, Elusive Consensus, p. 89.
 41. U.S. Department of Labor, Perspectives on Working Women: A Databook (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Labor Statistics, October 1980), p. 78.
 42. Komisar, Down and Out, p. 151.
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 151. Komisar presents 1972 census data to support the view that poverty in the United States is largely a problem for women and their families:

People in Poverty by Family Head

White male	10,635,000
Black male	3,367,000
White female	7,145,000
Black female	4,129,000

46. National Urban League Research Department, The Myth of Income Cushions for Blacks (New York: National Urban League, 1980), p. iv.
47. Carol Stack, All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 127.
48. Komisar, Down and Out, pp. 1-42.

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From Slavery to Social Welfare: Racism and the Control of Black Women (1981)

The control of Black women in American society requires special reflection in the light of their history in a racist society. For the mass of Black people, America's recent turn to the right represents a reinforcement of traditional structures and attitudes shaped by racism. Black people, as perpetual outsiders, live an existence exploitatively separated from the mainstream of American society. Black women share that separate existence, and their historical roles as workers, women, and activists have been shaped by this separate reality. Black women's political actions behind and beyond the color line have contributed to an intergenerational legacy on behalf of "the race," fostering relationships of a special character among Black women and Black men. The modifications of women's roles within the Black community as a result of, and as a response to, racism have exposed Black women to a wide variety of ideological punishments; these stereotyped images have developed as extra dimensions of control, further isolating Black women as punishment for their creative activism and their skill at survival. The image of Black people as dangerous takes a peculiar twist when it is applied to Black women.

These special dimensions in the control of Black women are important to understand with reference to the racial divisions, or apparent color lines, in the popular mainstream of the women's movement. Does the reinforcement of traditional modes of racism and the retrenchment in the face of the gains of the civil rights movement mean that the gap between Black and white women's struggles will widen further? The threat of the New Right to the solidarity of women is a function of the degree to which the New Right is able to reinforce the old wrong of racism. This paper analyzes the nature of racism and the control of Black women by examining the structures and processes that shape and determine the struggles of Black women. I submit that the threat of the old wrong of racism is one of the most important tools in the hands of the New Right in its renewed war against women.

Perpetual Outsiders: Racism as a System of Social Control

When the votes of 4 November 1980 were tallied, Black people, according to David Broder, "ended up as the most conspicuous outsiders at the new government's victory celebration--the only group in the country to give 90% of its vote to the losing candidate" (1). However, Black people presently are only outsiders to a more extreme degree than in recent years. While fulfilling an historical role vital to the development of capital and the stabilization of class relations in the United States, Black people have been an isolated and contained community within white America. They have been perpetual outsiders.

Outsiders, according to Howard Becker's analysis of deviance and social control (2), are people who elicit reactions from others designed to isolate, to separate, and otherwise to contain the group in a morally stigmatized status in society. Society initiates the process of social control--a power contest whose aim is to confine socially and physically the deviant group. In the normal language of deviance and social control--and these two concepts are usually linked--we often speak of police officers, psychiatrists, and prison wardens as being the agents of social (usually criminal) control. When viewing racism as a system of social control, it is important to understand that the process of creating and maintaining group subordination is an act of social control. Thus, depending upon the historical period, Black people have faced a varied cast of characters as agents of social control--plantation owners, the Ku Klux Klan, Dixiecrats, sheriffs, White Citizens Councils, policemen, schoolteachers, welfare investigators, employers (male and female), housing authorities, and intellectuals. These and many, many more determine, directly and indirectly, the quality of everyday life in the colony-like urban and rural ghettos where the masses of Black people still reside.

The agents of control in a racist society represent the principal focus of struggle for members of the subordinate community. For Black people in America, their everyday lives and their political struggles are defined by the specific techniques of repression associated with racism in a given historical period. The threat of the New Right represents a resurgence and re-creation of dominant culture strategies to maintain the isolation and containment of the Black community. Thus the Reagan administration symbolizes a more determined push to maintain the historical oppression of a total community. Black women are now and always have been pivotal figures in the Black community's response to racism. Until recently, Black women have been positively

sanctioned by the total Black community in their various insurgent roles.

Black Women: A Separate Experience

In order to understand the dynamics of control in the lives of Black women, one must take into account the ways in which they experience racism and racism's impact on their roles as women--women workers, the biological and social reproducers of the Black community, and peculiarly situated agents of social change. Occasionally, Black women have been required by force or economic circumstances to participate in the social reproduction of the ruling class as well. The special nature of Black women's relationships to dominant culture settings has made them a very special threat to the structure of racism and the ideology of patriarchy.

The work history of Black women has been in total opposition and contradiction to the central themes of patriarchal ideology. Black women have a work history over 3 1/2 centuries long. During slavery, Black women participated fully in every facet of plantation labor as well as town and city work. It is unfortunate that the life of Linda Brent (3) is the only major female slave narrative sold in feminist bookstores; it misses the modal realities of slave women's existence on large plantations as field hands. The vast majority of Black women on plantations did precisely the same work as men.

Black women's roles as biological mothers and children's caretakers were performed in addition to their central tasks at the cutting edge of capitalism. Eugene Genovese's examination of plantation records showed that women were named as the best field hands as often as men (4). There existed no material basis for sexual division of labor in the central tasks of slave work.

Angela Davis's seminal analysis of the Black woman's position in the slave quarters community helps us not only to understand the roots of Black women's separate experience but also to reflect upon the quality of the social roles they have shaped through resistance (5). The slave woman shouldered major responsibility for the quality of the slaves' in-group life. Davis states:

It was the woman who was charged with keeping the home in order. This role was dictated by the male supremacist ideology of white society in America. . . . As her biological destiny, she bore the fruits of procreation; as her social destiny, she cooked, sewed, washed,

cleaned house, raised the children. Traditionally the labor of females, domestic work is supposed to complement and confirm their inferiority. [Instead] . . . [the slave woman] was performing the only labor of the slave community which could not be directly and immediately claimed by the oppressor. (6)

The implications of her work within the slave community were such that the Black woman became "the caretaker of a household of resistance--of the degree to which she could concretely encourage those around her to keep their eyes on freedom" (7). The equal work of the fields and other plantation chores combined with her domestic leadership roles in such a way as to share with Black men "the deformed equality of equal oppression" (8). The model of womanhood developed in the slave community was in direct contradiction to patriarchal ideologies which defined the images of free white women (9).

The roles of Black women within the slave community and within the slave labor system magnified the threat they posed to the entire system. As workers, Black women availed themselves of the same opportunities for work stoppage and sabotage as men; both Davis and Aptheker show clearly that Black women participated fully in these forms of slave resistance, as well as rebellions (10). Additionally, as the caretakers of children, Black women were required to socialize their children to act as if subject to a system in which death was a price on noncompliance. Women had simultaneously to teach their children to hope for change and to adopt a countercultural commitment to their immediate Black community.

The special terrors of repression that were reserved for slave women represented an admission by the slave-holding class that Black women represented a special threat if they chose to fight. Thus the forces of control became rape and murder along with forced separation of families. Davis cites examples of Black women being singled out for particularly brutal punishments when they resisted along with men: the men were usually hanged while the women were burned alive (11).

The work roles of Black women are often cited to explain their assertiveness, independence, and self-reliance, but it is also important to examine the historical roots of their political roles within the Black community. Davis asserts, and rightly so, that the impact of racism during slavery was such that

the black woman has been continually constrained to in-

ject herself into the desperate struggle for existence. . . . As a result, black women have made significant contributions to struggles against racism and the dehumanizing exploitation of a wrongly organized society. In fact it would appear that the intense levels of resistance historically maintained by black people and thus the historical function of the Black Liberation Struggle as harbinger of change throughout the society are due in part to the greater objective equality between the black man and the black woman. (12)

Response to Racism: Black Women's Legacy of Struggle

The threat Black women pose to the oppressive structures of American society is an outcome of the peculiar shaping of their historical role. The Black woman is a threat to racism in the labor force and she is a threat to sexism in the labor force. Additionally, through her own children, her sister's children, and her shared life with Black men, the Black woman is a threat to every variety of racism expressed in the quality of life of the Black community and in the distorted or nonexistent opportunity structure for Black children.

Black women became a well-organized force early in the political history of the Black community. Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman are famous examples of many other less famous women who participated in the building of Black abolitionist movements. After slavery, these women organized attempts to alleviate the sufferings of freedmen and freedwomen. By the end of the nineteenth century, Black women had formed two organizations, the Colored Women's League and the National Federation of Afro-American Women. These groups were merged after their national conventions of 1896 to form the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (13). Although the early twentieth century begins with a Black community ideologically divided between the arguments of W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington, Black women, insisting that "a woman's movement is a movement led by women" (14), diligently addressed both sets of concerns as part of their club work. Although this was an era of feminism in American society, Black women focused largely on the problems of "the race" which included the problems of both working men and women, lynching, unionization, prisons, family life, and mutual aid, to name a few. These women sent professional organizers into areas lacking affiliated clubs and initiated surveys on the status of Black women in the professions, industry (factories and domestic work), and the home (15). The

color bar in most white women's clubs of that era, and the accommodationist views toward lynching espoused by noted white feminists, served to exacerbate the legally ordained separation between Black and white under a system of "separate but equal."

From these early organizing efforts, Black women launched a large number of women's organizations concerned with economic, educational, political, family, and religious issues. These organizations provided the basis upon which Mary McLeod Bethune organized the National Council of Negro Women. By the middle of the Depression, Black people's migration to northern and midwestern industrial centers had again placed civil rights on the national agenda. Mrs. Bethune, a former president of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, along with other Black women leaders, felt it necessary for Black women to maintain a centralized response and pressure point at the national level. Along with the founding of the council, Mrs. Bethune's work within the Roosevelt administration, within the board rooms of national Black organizations, and as the founder-president of a Black college, resulted in a visible and effective Black women's lobby in Washington, D.C. Her efforts also created an effective network of communication to and among the masses of Black churchwomen and clubwomen (16).

Whereas the motto of the previous generation of clubwomen had been "Lifting as We Climb," reflecting Black women's consciousness of their position at the bottom of a people sorely oppressed, the motto of the Depression generation was "Women United," reflecting the ties Black women had forged across class, age, and cultural lines. In the two journals published by the council, The Aframerican Woman's Journal and Women United, Black women discussed and advanced strategies concerning southern rural women, urban women in industry and domestic work, Black professional women, higher education, unionization, economic and social problems affecting the Black family, birth control, juvenile delinquency, women and children under colonialism, and apartheid (17).

Both of these Black women's movements grew out of and reinforced intergenerational and localized Black community networks of women who were acknowledged leaders in the local and national public affairs of Afro-Americans. The writings and the activities of these women were both race-conscious and women-centered. While mindful of the concerns of white women, Black women could not ignore the "Jane Crow" of the women's world nor could they tolerate the open collaboration of white women with the color line. (The desegregation of women's organizations were events duly noted in their publications.) While feminist in their ideals, philosophy, and

activities, Black women were always conscious that racism was a system perpetuated by the total white society against the entire Black community.

Black women earned the praise of the national Black community and the local communities in which they did the bulk of their work, but they earned the enmity of white society. Their assertiveness in the labor force and public affairs resulted in a consistent set of stereotypes, born in slavery and transformed to fit the facts of each successive era of racism. Thus Black women's political history included the additional tasks of combating stereotypes reserved especially for them. These stereotypes--dangerous women and deviant mothers--highlighted the double threat posed by Black women to the oppressive organization of American society.

Dangerous Women and Deviant Mothers: The Controlling Images

Black women's assertiveness and their use of every expression of racism to launch multiple assaults against the entire fabric of inequality have been a consistent, multifaceted threat to the status quo. As punishment, Black women have been assaulted with a variety of negative images. Pictured as the arch-fiends of Black family life, Black women have emerged from their 3 1/2 centuries of struggle bearing the historically consistent labels of dangerous women and deviant mothers. It is this imagery that those in power bring to bear when they construct policy affecting recipients of welfare and the working poor. These images are widely shared throughout the society and have been at the core of the most recent state attacks in the war against the Black family.

Black women emerged from slavery firmly enshrined in the consciousness of white America as "Mammy" and the "bad black woman" (18). Their image as a "nation of prostitutes" was widely communicated in the media at the end of the nineteenth century (19). By the end of World War II, Hollywood and the television industry provided a variety of roles that all served to reinforce the overpowering image of the black mammy and the tempting image of the brown or tan seductress (20). The most popular of these images was "Sapphire," the overbearing wife of Kingfish on "Amos 'n' Andy." Millions of Americans watched Sapphire daily excoriate Kingfish's stupidity, ineptitude, and delusions of grandeur. Like the overromanticized mammy of plantation life (21), Sapphire was efficient, strong, and hard-working. She became the most pervasive image white people shared at that time; she became a

popular epithet to be used in place of less jovial ones.

The more sinister side of Sapphire became legitimated through social scientific ideology at the end of the civil rights movement, as Black Power ideology began to lead to larger questions of economic justice and to provide a linguistic paradigm for women's rights. This sinister Sapphire--the castrating matriarch--was presented by social policy makers as a contributing cause of Black inequality. Just as the women's liberation movement began to publicly question the gender-based arrangements of American society, Daniel Moynihan issued a government report criticizing the participation in the labor force of Black women (22). Insisting that the "matriarchal structure" of the Black community "imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male," he asserted, "Ours is a society which presumes male leadership in private and public affairs. The arrangements of society facilitate such leadership and reward it" (23). He went on to imply that the high unemployment rates of Black men were attributable to the overrepresentation of women in the labor force, particularly those Black women who "have established a strong position for themselves in white collar and professional employment" (24). Black male unemployment also stemmed from the socialization practices of castrating Black women matriarchs, who crippled their sons to the point where only ". . . military service . . . an utterly masculine world . . . a world away from women, a world run by strong men of unquestioning authority" could undo the damage (25). Dangerous Black women and deviant mothers had so crippled Black men that they were unfit to be nurses and secretaries!

The report itself acted as a powerful mechanism of social control. Unlike the media images that could be laughed at, the matriarchs of the Moynihan report were presented as legitimate social science and public policy. Like all widely shared negative stereotypes of deviant groups, the report created a situation of moral isolation and status degradation. However, unlike previous eras of Black community struggle, Black women experienced the effects of isolation and degradation within their own communities. Capable Black women administering programs and agencies within Black communities were asked to "step aside and let a man take over," not because they were incapable but because their being female and competent "looks bad for 'the Race'" (26).

The Moynihan Report managed to degrade the status of Black women within the Black community in a way that popular myths and media images had failed to do. Because of its appeal to male supremacy, there erupted what Pauli Murray called a "backlash of new male aggressiveness against Negro women" (27). After reviewing the image of Black women in the Black

Power literature, Murray offered the following analysis. She said:

Reading through much of the current literature on the Black Revolution, one is left with the impression that for all the rhetoric about self-determination the main thrust of black militancy is a bid of black males to share power with white males in a continuing patriarchal society in which both black and white females are relegated to a secondary status. (28)

In a later analysis, she highlighted the retreating support of Black women evidenced in Ebony. Commenting on the editorial thrust of its 1966 special issue honoring Black women, Murray stated:

After paying tribute to the Negro woman's contributions in the past, the editorial reminded Ebony's readers that "the past is behind us," that "the ultimate goal of the Negro woman today should be the establishment of a strong family unit in which the father is the dominant person," and that the Negro woman would do well to follow the example of the Jewish mother, "who pushed her husband to success, educated her male children first, and engineered good marriages for her daughters." (29)

The legitimacy of the source of the report--an administration friendly to civil rights--and the stated purpose of the report--to help impoverished Black families--all combined to force a public departure by Black men from the earlier and more supportive traditions of W. E. B. DuBois and others.

Until the Moynihan Report, the special problems of Black families and Black women were usually viewed in terms of their relationship to discrimination and economic injustice. The writings of DuBois, Frazier, Miller, and others tended to describe Black women as victims of oppression. The media's uncritical acceptance of Moynihan's description and the rather energetic public relations by the Johnson administration in support of the report helped to create an atmosphere in which Black women were called upon to justify and to defend their traditional roles in the public and private affairs of the Black community. These activities, in addition to the time invested in civil rights and community welfare activities, became another focus of struggle on an already overburdened public agenda. The public depiction of Black women as unfeminine, castrating matriarchs came at precisely the same moment that the feminist movement was advancing its public critique of American patriarchy. The image

of dangerous Black women who were also deviant castrating mothers divided the Black community at a critical period in the Black liberation struggle and created a wider gap between the worlds of Black and white women at a critical period in women's history (30).

Regardless of the objective realities faced by Black men and women as they attempt to create and raise families in a racist society, the policy framework advanced by the Johnson administration's War on Poverty accomplished, more than anything else, the public labeling of Black women as officially deviant persons in American society. The report used ideologies of patriarchy to divide Black men from Black women and to reduce the credibility of a thirty-five-year-old women's lobby, albeit Black, at the federal level. Using the racism inherent in the traditional images and stereotypes of Black women, the report misrepresented the position and role of Black women in the labor market and stifled the leadership potential grounded in 3 1/2 centuries of Black women's labor history. This double-pronged attack of patriarchy and racism foreshadowed the rise of those ideologies from which the present administration gains its strength and legitimacy.

Separate Spheres of Struggle: Will the Gap Widen?

Repeatedly, questions have been raised concerning the visibility of Black women in the contemporary feminist movement. Both white and Black women have noticed the movement's reflection of the racial status quo throughout its popular mainstream. Often explanations are advanced that focus on the Black woman's hostility to some of the women's movement's more frivolous concerns; some explanations actually take into account the divergent material realities governing the focal concerns of these women's groups. However, viewing the struggles of Black women in historical perspective, we are forced to realize that those in power have always seemed to recognize the double danger that politically conscious Black women pose to the racist and patriarchal arrangements of American society. One fairly popular white-supremacist leaflet, cited by Marian Wright Edelman, warns, "This paper is not to get into the hands of any Negro mothers" (31). Black women, through their own social movements and those of the wider Black community, have been a formidable force for social change in America. To advocate change in the institutional arrangements of American society is to be dangerous and deviant indeed.

The meaning of the New Right to Black women cannot be sepa-

rated from its meaning to the entire Black community as an historically isolated, contained, and deprived people in the political economy and institutional life of this nation. For Black people in America, the rise of the New Right represents a vigorous reassertion of the old wrongs of economic and political regression and an atmosphere facilitating racial violence. The resurgence of violent racism is compounded by the ideological consequences of a nation that has perpetually lied to itself concerning the nature of racism and that has, in the face of every change wrought by those who refuse to believe the lie, changed the lie to fit the new facts while preserving the old order. Thus we have reached a fraudulent state of affairs in our society where the ideology of racial equality can be fully asserted while economic exclusion effectively maintains the structural consequences of historical racism (32). It is no accident that we now have a president whose campaign was launched near the graves of civil rights workers murdered in the state of Mississippi, which still symbolizes the most violent racial oppression in this century. We must also recognize that his antichoice and antiwoman supporters who now lead Congress are the same cast of characters who fought the Voting Rights and Civil Rights Acts of the 1960s. These same supporters wish now to repeal the Voting Rights Act, to restrict affirmative action, and to resurrect the death penalty.

The structural and historical racism that defines American society is ultimately a system of social control. Any analysis of class in this society--and not simply analyses of social class within the Black community, but any holistic analysis of class and class consciousness--must ultimately confront the problem of the color line. The analysis must also confront the role that the various expressions of institutional racism--the control and containment of Black people and their labor in every historical period--has played in shaping and mystifying the existing structures. The experience of Black women as objects of control in this society cannot ever be separated from the facts of this history. Thus the victimization of Black women because of their class and their victimization because of their sex must be interpreted, perceived, and ultimately understood through their victimization as members of an historically oppressed community, isolated and contained to serve a variety of purposes in the history of this racist political economy.

W.E.B. DuBois, one of the best ideological allies Black women have ever had, stated at the beginning of this century that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" (33). For Black women, the rise of the New Right means a recasting of their victimization by class and

gender through the prism of racism. The old wrong in the form of the New Right may mean that the problem of the color line will remain their principal struggle--the struggle around which activist Black women organize their precious time and their consciousness--at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Black women, specially equipped insurgents with a wide variety of creative experiences, will remain at the cutting edge of the Black struggle. The reinforcement of racism by the New Right may exacerbate the existing racial divisions among women and thus continue the separation of important spheres of struggle.

Notes

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2. Howard S. Becker, Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance (New York: Free Press, 1970).
3. Linda Brent, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973).
4. Eugene Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York: Random House, 1974).
5. Angela Davis, "The Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," Black Scholar 3, no. 4, pp. 2-15.
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7. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
9. Bonnie Thornton Dill, "The Dialectics of Black Womanhood," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 4 (Spring 1979):543-55.
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13. Elizabeth Lindsay Davis, Lifting as They Climb: A History of the National Association of Colored Women (Washington, D.C.: Moorland Spingarn Research Center--Howard University, 1933); Emma Fields, "The Women's Club Movement in the United States, 1877-1900" (Master's thesis, Howard University, 1948); Mary Church Terrell, "The History of the Club Women's Movement," African American Woman's Journal 1, nos. 2-3, pp. 34-38.
14. E. Davis, National Association of Colored Women.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Rackham Holt, Mary McLeod Bethune: A Biography (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1964).

17. The National Council of Negro Women published The Aframerican Woman's Journal between 1940 and 1948; the council published Women United after this time. A detailed analysis of the contents of these journals may be found in C.T. Gilkes, "Living and Working in a World of Trouble: The Emergent Career of the Black Woman Community Worker" (Ph.D. diss., Northeastern University, 1979).
18. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, "Black Women's Work as Deviance: Social Sources of Racial Antagonism within the Feminist Movement," Working Paper no. 66 (Wellesley, Mass.: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women).
19. E. Davis, National Association of Colored Women.
20. Jeanne Noble, Beautiful, Also, Are the Souls of My Black Sisters: A History of Black Women in America (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 75-89; Edward Mapp, "Black Women in Films," Black Scholar 4, nos. 6-7.
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22. Lee Rainwater and William Yancey, The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1967), pp. 39-124.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
26. C.T. Gilkes, Black Woman Community Worker.
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28. Pauli Murray, "The Liberation of Black Women," in Voices of the New Feminism, ed. Mary L. Thompson (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), pp. 354-55.
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FRANCINE QUAGLIO

Religion as an Instrument of Social Control (1981)

There may be culled from the documents of history numerous self-incriminating statements that support the feminist analysis of the dynamics of patriarchal society. They not only reveal the network of relations and structures that form the context of all our lives but suggest that the control of women is a central factor in the maintenance (or dissolution, should the control fail) of whatever social fabric is at stake. Montague Summers, in the introduction to his translation of the fifteenth-century text Malleus Maleficarum, provides an example. The heretics (by which he means women [1]), he informs us, were up to something:

. . . the abolition of the monarchy, the abolition of private property and of inheritance, the abolition of marriage, the abolition of order, the total abolition of religion. (2)

This is Summers's one accurate statement in his commentary of praise for a blatantly misogynist text and in his support for the solution to the danger of witches--extermination. Summers suggests that the political, economic, interpersonal, and religious structures are connected and interdependent. In fact, such structures do form a relational dynamic which maintains social reality. And patriarchal social reality depends for its survival on the control of women's autonomy and their participation in the total social network. To keep the power realities of patriarchy functioning, women must be controlled and made to conform with its needs and aims.

I would like to explore these connections by focusing on religion as a mechanism for the control of women. Although I will take my working examples from the symbolic and doctrinal content of the Roman Catholic tradition, I feel that the implications I draw from my analysis can be extended to other religious traditions, to the degree that they also embody the patriarchal value system. The oppression of women

is the result of all such traditions, but the character and degree of the oppression will differ according to the ethnic, economic, and racial context in which each woman exists.

Religion is a meaning structure which is embodied in language, image, doctrine, attitudes, and institutions. It conveys patterns of perception, interpretation, behavior, and value. And it incorporates these patterns in its own multidimensional organization and reinforces and supports compatible patterns in the larger social network. It is commonplace today to note the way in which religion is influenced and conditioned by its cultural context. I am concerned with the way religion shapes and conditions, that is, enters into the relational dynamic of social reality. Here I use the term religion (1) in the common-sense meaning of a religious tradition, a community of shared beliefs, symbols, and institutional forms (referring to hierarchically structured patriarchal traditions); and (2) as a comprehensive understanding of the character of reality, the "really real." This second meaning includes as well the behavioral approach toward and the value implications that derive from the "really real." Religion in this second sense functions as

. . . an integrating experience whereby knowing-experience, affective-experience, aesthetic-experience--in short, all forms of experience--are brought into a relatively cohesive whole which is expressed in the life of the person. (3)

I would add that this integrating cohesive whole may also be expressed through symbolic representation in the varied structural dimensions of social reality. The imprint "In God We Trust" on our coins is one trite, but not insignificant, example. It is important as well to specify whether the "integrating experience" of some is achieved at the cost of fragmentation and truncation of others.

In twentieth-century America, religion as religious tradition and religion as the social notion of the "really real" have much in common. It is precisely through the shared notions of the character and meaning of reality that religious traditions and the social fabric work together to sustain and foster their mutual belief systems. This shared framework can be described as a sexist, hierarchical division of reality which has as its organizational form compulsory heterosexuality and as its fundamental ethic the oppression, control and truncation of women. In this reciprocal framework, women's autonomy is denied and their participation severely limited.

This shared framework is orchestrated according to the fluctuating circumstances of the patriarchal social fabric. Economics is a prime determinant of the score. There is a correlation between the relative ferocity of sexist propaganda and society's economic needs. There is greater toleration of societal participation by women when a scarcity of labor arises through a crisis. The large influx of women into the labor force during World War II is a case in point. As the crisis diminishes, women's participation is constricted and redirected to the continuing needs of the economy—population growth. Our societal model is built on the premise of continued economic growth and national defense and dominance. We need bodies not only for production but to fill the ranks of the military. The "good housekeeper" image of the 1950s and the profamily image of the 1980s are meaning structures developed and transmitted through patriarchal tradition to ensure that this need be met. They appeal to, and receive support from, the patriarchal religious traditions.

Sexist images, attitudes, and ideology are the stuff of our cultural context. Thus, they permeate every dimension of social reality, and they can be activated and organized for the purpose of manipulation our actions, choices, and values. The institutional power structures carry and project these meaning patterns and make them concrete within politics, business, schools, law, media, and religion. All cultural structures converge to effect the control of women. Religion has been and remains a primary agent for such control. It is not accidental that as the Moral Majority mobilizes its forces for God, country, and family, the Roman Catholic hierarchy convenes a bishops' synod on the family and the pope delivers six major homilies on the nature of sexuality within marriage.

The main elements of Roman Catholicism's definition of women can be elicited from a brief analysis of a recent statement by Pope John Paul II. The selection is taken from his address to women religious which he delivered during his 1979 visit to America. His subject was Mary, who she is and what she means.

The woman dominates all history as the Virgin-Mother of the Son, as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit . . . the woman who becomes by association with her son . . . (4)

The deception comes first, almost eased in: "the woman dominates." And she dominates not only as mother, the omnipresent image of the dominating (though powerless) mother, but as Virgin Mother of the Son. Mary as the ideal role model for women is a disembodied woman. She is ideal because she

produces the desired result, the son, with no taint of her own sexuality, no contribution of her own body except that of a nutritional culture. Even her "yes" is a "be it done unto me." With this as a model, all women are set up for failure. To be real women they must be mothers. To be good real women they should be virgins. All this must be accomplished within the context of marriage: Mary as the spouse of the holy spirit. In this context, Mary represents the church, always "she" in Roman Catholic discourse. Mary as bride, nuns as brides, the church as bride--even a celibate "she" must still be defined through her relation to a male.

The image of the church as bride of Christ emerges from and reinforces the patriarchal heterosexual structures of marriage and of all societal power relations between men and women. The church is bride (woman) because she is dependent, submissive, obedient, filled by, and existing at all only because of, the spirit of Christ (the son of the father) (5). The derivative status of woman is mirrored on earth as it is in heaven. The church as bride, Mary as spouse, projects as ontological reality the derivative status of women. She is receptive, passive, noncreative. The spirit is creative, active, life-giving; the semen is the child, the penis is the channel of power. The entire hierarchical structure of Roman Catholicism (male priests) reflects this judgment. The woman cannot ejaculate semen, therefore, she cannot dispense grace (6). As if determined not to leave the point ambiguous, Pope John Paul continues, ". . . the woman becomes by association with her son" (7). Disembodied and derivative, she has no power of being in herself. Without the son she would not become at all, she would be nonexistent, unreal.

The woman who was inserted . . . into the mystery of the Church . . . without herself being inserted into the hierarchical constitution of the Church . . . And yet this woman made all hierarchy possible, because she gave to the world the Shepherd and Bishops of our Souls. (8)

The passive tense is the only appropriate one. Autonomy is not attributable to a woman. She is inserted and not inserted at someone else's discretion. Defined by others, she is determined by others. She can be used for the church but she cannot exercise the hierarchical function. This, not because of any individual personal inadequacies, but because of the fact that she is a woman. The use made of her is service. She gave. It is indeed this role of the self-emptying woman that makes all hierarchy possible. Behind (beneath) every great (sic) man is a great woman. As the pope says,

She prefigures and anticipates the courage of all women . . . who concur in bringing forth Christ [9] in every generation . . . never to leave Him, never to abandon Him, but to continue to love and serve Him through the Ages. (10)

The function for which she was inserted is clear. She con-curs to serve as a conduit for the generation and regeneration of sons and of the structures that sustain and maintain the world of the sons. As long as the control mechanisms are successful, "never to leave him," the "really real" of patriarchy will continue through the ages--"The woman who speaks to us of femininity," as the pope says (11). No comment.

The pope's short discourse on Mary relies for its impact, not only on the cultural responsiveness to the common sexist definitions and expectations of women, but on the total theological network of the Catholic tradition. It is important to grasp the depth and mechanics of the reinforcement and support provided by religion if we are to undo and disorder its effects. I can briefly sketch this rather extensive content by focusing on four categories for approaching the notion of God: substantially, relationally, salvifically (redemption), and eschatologically (the end times, the consummation of the world). Substantially, in terms of being and attributes, God is male. He, father, active, pure rationality, sovereign, all-powerful--these attributes (which carry patriarchal connotations) and nouns and pronouns solidify the identification of divinity with maleness and, thus, the male with God. Relationally, there is the trinity--father, son, spirit. In God's reality, in him-self, God is male. The trinity portrays this reality as dynamic and relational. But the interpersonal matrix of the dynamic is all male. The spirit, a symbol that some think, though I do not, is ambiguous enough to transform into a feminine image, is the spirit of the father and son. The spirit has functioned in the Catholic tradition as a male image--the impregnation of Mary, the spirit of Christ in the church, and so on. The trinitarian menage à trois is a male domain. Salvifically, we have Jesus the Christ, the second person of the trinity, the son. We are redeemed, saved, through Jesus. Even if focus were placed less on the fact that Jesus was a man (a difficult trick given the emphasis placed on this by the tradition) and more on the humanity or personhood as the significant factor in the doctrine of the incarnation, we are still left with the personhood of a son. Theologically, the person of the incarnation is the son of the father. We must go to a male through a male to be saved. And in the Roman Catholic tradition, with its

sacramental structure, there is a third male to pass through, the priest. Finally, if we turn our gaze from all this and look to the future, the end times of salvation achieved, we find the reappearance of all we have just left. The eschaton is envisioned as the return of the son, the second coming of Jesus. In this consummation, there will be all in all in Christ, union with God achieved. St. Paul's apparently soothing remark that in Christ there is neither male nor female is fundamentally a negation of distinction. This is said not because of any egalitarian notion but because there doesn't need to be any distinction. In the end, as in the beginning, there is only one reality, a male reality.

This theological network projects ultimate reality, the "really real," as male. Woman in this context is unreal, and, in terms of attributes, she is oppositional and inferior. Mind/body, reason/emotion, light/dark, active/passive, creative/receptive, autonomous/derivative. The woman becomes only insofar as she associates with the real persons. She gains validation only to the degree to which she conforms to and serves the operational structures of patriarchal reality.

Such a theological framework, and the implications deriving from it, supports and fosters the oppression of women. To the extent that religion is patriarchal, it will align itself with those other social forces seeking similar aims and projecting similar images of control. The pervasive urgency exhibited by groups such as the Moral Majority, the New Right, Catholic charismatics, and our current legislators on the issues of abortion, family, birth control accessibility, lesbian/gay rights, sex education, and textbooks is not a spontaneous outburst of religious zeal unconnected to the political, economic, and military needs of the total social fabric. The positions upheld by such groups on these and other issues are "orthodox," that is, "right teaching," according to patriarchal tradition. Whatever theological, doctrinal, or organizational differences exist among these various groups, there is agreement on patriarchal orthodoxy. As religion reinforces this framework, it reinforces the prevailing economic, political, interpersonal, and racist power dynamics. In much the same way that Hitler's anti-Semitism and genocidal racism ignited because it resonated with an already present and accepted view of reality, so too the symbolic doctrinal content of patriarchal religion resonates with the sexist structures of social reality.

Notes

1. The text clearly uses women, heretics, and witches interchangeably and presents women as the most numerous destroyers, the evil ones who must be controlled.
2. H. Kramer and J. Sprenger, Malleus Maleficarum, trans. Rev. Montague Summers (New York: Dover, 1971), p. xviii.
3. Eugene Fontinell, Toward a Reconstruction of Religion (New York: Cross Currents, 1979), p. 86.
4. Pope John Paul II, "Mary . . . the Woman of History and Destiny," in The Pope in America (New York: Wanderer Press, 1979), p. 71.
5. "And yet the institution of the church, as opposed to the ideological construct, is powerful, active and male dominated." Hanna Lessinger, editorial correspondence, 1981.
6. For an example of the use of this sexual analogy see Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood (Vatican City, 1976).
7. Pope John Paul II, p. 71.
8. Ibid.
9. Read sons.
10. Pope John Paul II, p. 71.
11. Ibid.

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Women, Media, and the Dialectics of Resistance (1981)

Chinese-Americans, outraged at the revival of a demeaning comic stereotype, disrupt filming of Peter Ustinov's Charlie Chan movie and later picket theaters where it is shown. Women's antiviolence groups join the Gray Panthers in demonstrations against a punk-rock Christmas song celebrating the murder of Grandma. Black actors, as well as a number of community organizations, object to the television film Beulah Land, with its depiction of contented slaves on the old plantation. The Native American who plays Tonto in The Legend of the Lone Ranger is pleased that his character is an equal and no longer silent partner of the masked hero, but regrets that the film perpetuates myths about the subservient status of Native American women. Homosexual groups organize against the distribution of two antigay films: Cruising, about sado-masochistic gay men, and Windows, about lesbian violence against women. Feminists picket the Broadway opening of Lolita and protest the use of a real-life nymphet to sell designer jeans. The Moral Majority also mobilizes against the sexual suggestiveness of that Calvin Klein commercial.

All these incidents occurred within the past two years. Since the mid-seventies, almost every organized political, ethnic, religious, sexual, generational, and regional interest group has taken a public stand against its treatment by the media. All the poor, beleaguered industry has by way of comfort is the increasingly shaky conviction that if you're attacked simultaneously from the Left and the Right, "courage" consists in making no meaningful change at all--that conviction and, of course, the profits.

From its inception, the women's liberation movement has identified, analyzed, and (hence) often protested representation of women in mass media. Moreover, I think it is fair to say that the militant concern with media images on the part of an entire spectrum of social movements has, consciously or not, been influenced by the initial feminist approach to media. Essentially, this is an approach that in-

volves a more comprehensive view of what is at stake than previous critics recognized, a view founded on the realization that media images serve not only to inform or misinform an undifferentiated society at large, but also contribute to the individual's own sense of identity and possibility.

Prior to the rebirth of the women's movement, organized protest against media content tended to be more limited in its nature and goals. For example, Black groups regularly picketed revivals of Birth of a Nation, whose portrayal of southern history falls little short of an incitement to racist violence. At the same time, these groups were demanding more roles and less stereotyped ones for Black performers. Protest focused on the outright lies and blatant stereotypes fostered by the media, from Birth of a Nation through Amos 'n Andy and Gone with the Wind to Beulah. In the absence of these, there tended to be an absence of Black images of any sort; that vacuum was also decried (1).

On the Right, McCarthy-era investigations of subversion in the entertainment industry always paid extravagant tribute to the ideological influence of the media. This repeated assertion of an insidious though pervasive mind control being exercised on an unwary public can hardly be dignified by the name of criticism. It is, however, a vision of what is wrong with the media that has powerful descendants on the current scene and shapes the context in which feminist protest takes place.

In this essay, I examine the original feminist critique of the mass media, considering both the circumstances under which it developed and the details of the indictment, as well as the extent to which positive and negative changes have occurred, the present feminist position with respect to the media, and some directions that I believe it is essential to pursue. Moreover, as my reference to witch-hunting antecedents implies, I think that in evaluating the changes that have taken place, it is insufficient to consider only the media images themselves. The arena in which a feminist campaign around media can be conducted is also defined by changes that have occurred in the media as an industry under capitalism, and by the renewed virulence of attacks on both media and feminism from the far Right.

The new feminism began with, and as, cultural criticism; examples from high culture, as well as those from mass media, served simultaneously as reflections of women's status in our society and illustrations of the ideological control responsible for establishing and maintaining that condition. Texts from all levels of our intellectual and literary history were cited as sources of stereotypes and norms about

the female sex, reflecting and confirming damaging social myths (2).

Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique was an influential precursor of this approach to culture and is particularly important for the present discussion because it is rooted in mass culture. Friedan devoted a full chapter of her book to the evolution of the "happy housewife heroine" in the fiction published by women's magazines. Drawing on her own experience as an editor, she was able to trace the deliberate policy behind the eclipse of other possible roles for the heroine and to cite plot after plot in which that policy was implemented (3). Although her professional bias may have led Friedan to exaggerate the limiting influence of these stories upon women's lives, the fiction in McCall's and Ladies Home Journal only echoed and reinforced the messages about women communicated by television, Hollywood films, popular music, "serious" novels, the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, and contemporary psychological dogma. And that combined impact, the newborn women's movement was to declare, could hardly be overestimated.

Women's liberation came into being, moreover, in a climate in which ideas about the pervasive impact of media and its effect on individual consciousness were fairly generally accepted by those working to change society. The role of mass media in shaping people's lives was analyzed along lines that combined the social theory of the "culture of the spectacle" with the view of the individual hypothesized in Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man (4). Coexisting with this Left critique--and only partially contradicting it--was a strain of the New Left that identified with certain elements of the media explosion. The Yippies, for instance, not only designed their political actions around the culture of the spectacle, but believed in the revolutionary potential of rock music and the youth community created around it (5).

Although these various radical approaches to mass culture were very much in the air during the late 1960s and early 1970s and although the emerging women's movement drew certain charter assumptions from them, there were, from the outset, some significant differences. For one thing, generalizations about the role of the media in mass society had tended to be based on a sociological, even a phenomenological approach to the experience; the psychological effects of television, for example, were not supposed to be determined by anything that television is specifically about, but rather by the way that people sit passively and watch the screen. Content is manufactured to fit this form. By contrast, feminist criticism of television has always been explicitly organized around content, what the various stories

and images, be they intentionally fictitious or purportedly factual, are telling us about women.

Even more important, feminists never perceived the media audience as being essentially someone else, as the New Left tended to do. We could testify to the influence of the media image of woman precisely because we as women had been subjected to it. Not only were the media the carriers of stereotypes and norms for the society in general, they were also an important force in shaping women's own sense of ourselves, who we were and what human avenues might be open to us.

This identification of ourselves with the media audience was by no means absolute, of course. The generation that created the women's movement probably always suspected that Father did not know best. Most of us knew that families like Donna Reed's (or Beaver Cleaver's for that matter) were tinny fabrications long before we came to criticize the particular patriarchal ideal they fostered. But, by the same token, we could recognize which media myths had made incursions into our sense of the way things are in the world. Certain lessons about female sexuality had been learned from Seventeen, Mademoiselle, Cosmopolitan, and The Ladies Home Journal. And the prevailing norms about heterosexual behavior--what it is like to fall in love, as well as what kind of woman is loved and what sort of relations subsist between men and women in that state--had, we realized, been communicated to us through popular music. Here again, there was a sharp break with male exponents of Woodstock Nation. For many women, too, rock music had represented--indeed, embodied--sexual, cultural, generational rebellion. Acknowledging that this music offered women a familiar subservience disguised as liberation entailed a sense of personal and political betrayal. With that sense of betrayal came enhanced understanding of the extent to which at least one area of mass culture had indeed informed our consciousness.

Recognition that mass media carried the message of sexism preceded any feminist critique of the media as such. On the contrary, we tended to assume that "society's" ideas about women were identical with the content of the mass media. Instead of producing an intrinsic analysis of the means and results, as reflected in media, we would cite examples from the media to substantiate our arguments about the sexist nature of our society. Around 1969, if an activist in one of the burgeoning women's organizations was invited to speak to a community group, what could be more immediately effective than a series of slides showing how magazine ads use women's bodies, accompanied by a tape of songs like "Under My Thumb" and "Stand by Your Man"? It is not my intention to dismiss

this early activity or even its rather facile use of media images. The conclusions we drew may have been superficial, but they were not fundamentally inaccurate. And they were to lead to more systematic criticism, as well as to efforts to use media to redress the situation in the media (6).

What was the substance of the original feminist critique? As transmitters of stereotypes, first of all, the media told us that certain qualities were typically and innately characteristic of the female sex. Women were, by and large, supposed to be flighty and not very bright. Even those who had some claim to intellectual status were (quite properly) governed by their emotions. Assisting the domination of feeling over reason and compensating for the absence of ratiocination was a feminine command of supernatural powers. (For instance, in the same viewing week in 1971 that a female physician on a soap opera moaned "How can I think like a doctor at a time like this?" I watched Samantha the housewife-witch and her bitch-witch mother, Jeanie the NASA genie, that egregiously flying nun, the psychically potent English nanny, and an animated teenage sorceress who plied her trade in the Saturday cartoons.)

The list of stereotypical traits was much longer, of course, but the important thing about their function in dramatic or comic situations was that they helped underline the primacy of gender definitions. That is, the fact that a character was female summed up her entire identity. This "naturalization" of women often accompanied a more explicit sexualization, but it was a prior and more comprehensive phenomenon (7). It goes almost without saying, however, that the initial feminist attack on the media was more concerned with the blatant use of women as sex objects. Female sexual attraction was associated with a whole spectrum of salable commodities, a practice that not only turned the commercial enterprise into a passive-aggressive seduction but that, at the same time, reproduced a stereotyped ideal of female desirability. The sex-kitten perched on the hood of a new convertible not only sold the car to the man, she communicated a clear message to both sexes about what a woman was supposed to be and to look like--in a conceptual universe where these were, in any case, identified. Advertisements for "beauty" products could then move in to reinforce the ideal image.

Moreover, from the editorial content of both fashion and "service" magazines, girls and women assimilated norms about women's role calculated to leave them especially susceptible to the specific sales pitch. All women were supposed to be interested in becoming and remaining the most attractive

possible specimens and all women were capable of this sort of self-improvement. Furthermore, since winning and holding a man was the chief goal of all women, manufacturing oneself through diet, posture, coiffure, wardrobe, cosmetics, and scent acquired a kind of existential primacy. Ultimately, it was not only women's sexuality that was alienated in this way, but, through it, their whole being.

In this matter of the norms conveyed by mass media, there has usually been a certain specialization of function. Thus, although the norm of achieved attractiveness as female identity is widespread in the mass media (and nowhere contradicted in them), explication of ways and means is mainly to be found in the pages of magazines addressed to women. Similarly, norms for family life are most insistently purveyed by television, those for love relationships by popular music.

The normal and normative family, as it used to be represented on TV, is not hard to reconstruct. Fathers worked, mothers--indeed, married women in general--did not. There tended to be one competent member of the parental couple and one rather silly one, but if the father was the bumbler, the mother's demonstrated competence still never extended outside the realm of domestic affairs and personal relationships, and it yielded no dividends in terms of acknowledged power. Parents, even those who were otherwise inept and incompetent, understood and sympathized with their children's problems. Families lived in small towns, not, usually, in cities or suburbs, and fathers were either self-employed or worked for small firms whose boss was likely to be assimilated into family life. Those rare families that were not identifiably WASP belonged to clearly stereotyped white ethnic groups. If questions of race and class played any part in the early feminist critique of media, it was rather by default, through our observations about the lily-white, middle-class nature of these happy, daddy-defined families. Relationships within the family were governed by misunderstandings and tricks, but never love or hate. Domestic help was available and white and/or male. "Family" and "sexuality" were almost diametrically opposed concepts. The dramatic conventions employed by continuing series, in particular, effectively implied that all this--white frame house, teasing siblings, breadwinner dad--was both normal, the way things are, and normative, the way they should be.

Even deviations from the familial norm--and hence the limits of possible deviance--were dictated. The history of television up through the mid-seventies is full of series centering on a single parent, where that parent is male (usually, be it noted, one with the means to hire someone to help with the custodial aspects of child-rearing). This was

the situation in series like Bachelor Father, My Three Sons, Family Affair, Nanny and the Professor, and The Courtship of Eddie's Father. Households headed by a woman--always a widow, never a divorcée--were much rarer, and far less of the fun or drama, as the type of program dictated, was derived from the donnée of a woman raising her children alone.

Sexual love, as I have suggested, tended to exist in a different dimension from that of family life and relations. Marital jealousy was the motive force of a great many comedy plots, but it was usually the only sexual emotion married adults experienced. The rest was for the unmarried, chiefly adolescents, and the norms for it were laid out in music, the medium addressed to the young. Women's expectations about the probability, the imminence in their lives of romantic love, as well as what it feels like, how it is experienced, and what its internal politics are, were conditioned and fed by song lyrics. The rise of rock and roll altered certain conventions governing the content of lyrics, but the changes in this area were less thoroughgoing than may be imagined. Female sexuality was more out front in rock than in the pop music that preceded the cooptation of rhythm and blues by whites. A certain saving irony was sometimes admitted, but rock music continued to present a predominantly male view of relations between the sexes and a male interpretation of sexuality itself.

As we survey the changes that have occurred in the world of mass media over the past dozen years, it is important to stress that most of those that feminists consider positive are not directly attributable to the existence of a feminist critique of media. By the same token, where matters have worsened, it is a mistake to assume that the backlash effect is a reaction to our immediate complaints about media. Rather, just as the feminist movement began with general social analyses based on cultural criticism, so, too, its primary impact has been general and cultural. The media have tended to be less concerned with the concrete issues raised by the women's movement than with questions of consciousness and life-style. From this perspective, the positive changes might be regarded as moves to assimilate a new consciousness, whereas the negative ones represent a deliberate defiance, but a defiance, again, of a general force or direction associated with feminism, rather than any particular demand or issue.

Moreover, where the media have improved by feminist standards, it is not usually by eliminating items on the original list of complaints. Conventions have changed, but it

would be hard to maintain seriously that media women are no longer treated as sex-objects or that real women are no longer advised on the technique of making themselves into reasonable facsimiles of such objects. Nor have stupidity, flightiness, jealousy, and overemotionality been excised from the register of salient female qualities. Where alternative possibilities have been suggested--either in these stereotypes or in the more complex matter of personal and societal norms--these alternatives have usually been added on to the existing media universe. The range is thus broadened, and by implication, certain norms are no longer universal. But the effect is at least arguably more one of a spurious pluralism than of revolutionary human vistas.

One of the new possibilities is simply that of strength in a female character, whether this strength is reflected in active moral courage or solid endurance. The shift has been most impressive in Hollywood films, coming, as it does, in the wake of a period in the 1970s when it was apparent to the most casual observer that male characters and male relationships had become central in American movies and that there were almost no good roles for actresses. In the past few years, not only have juicy parts abounded, but many of them have involved portraying characters who, in one way or another, are trying to take control of their own destinies. From Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore through An Unmarried Woman and Julia to Norma Rae, the impression is not always that of a classic feminist role model, but it is equally far from traditional notions of the female as exclusively the man's lover, subordinate, sex goddess, or victim.

The term strength takes on a somewhat more diffuse meaning when we consider images of women on television or in popular music. Nonetheless, here, too, the past decade has seen the promotion of women to far greater prominence, accompanied by a certain greater freedom of exploration in the matter of the female personality, its range and variations. In terms of the "good roles for actresses" model, this was most notable in those years when the movies seemed determined to explore every facet of male-bonding, and when film, therefore, could be defined as a man's medium, television as a woman's. Mary, Rhoda, and Phyllis, taken together or severally, Annie Romano and Alice the waitress, LaVerne and Shirley, Edith and Maude and Florida and Gloria--all of them have a certain two-dimensionality when placed beside the "strong" women of films, not to speak of the heroic women we all know on this side of the screen. But, in terms of the history of their medium and of their specific genre of situation comedy, they represent a striking conceptual breakthrough. A similarly impressive development can be noted in

country music, which not only became more mainstream--that is, more commercial--in the seventies but where women singers came into their own both as Nashville stars and as more nearly independent personae in their songs.

The decade that witnessed this expansion of female roles also brought to the media a new awareness of the ethnic and class diversity in American society. Sometimes, the two intersected, to provide new visibility to women who were working class, Black, or both. The struggles of working women crossed the line from documentaries like Union Maids, Harlan County, With Babies and Banners, and Rosie the Riveter to feature films like Norma Rae and Nine to Five. Movies on Black themes also became commercially viable and ranged from low-budget "Blaxploitation" vehicles to a few more politically and artistically ambitious films. (Of the latter, I am familiar with only one, Claudine, that centered on a believable Black woman and her problems.)

Just as with definitions of female strength, the meaning of ethnic and class diversity becomes blurred when we turn from movies to television. Yet here, too, measurable progress has been made. On programs like LaVerne and Shirley and Alice, we saw working women who were not employed in offices or hospitals. (Of course, we are still waiting for a realistic portrayal of either an office or a hospital.) After a false start with Julia in 1968, the networks also came up with several series centering on Black families: Sanford and Son, Good Times, That's My Momma, and The Jeffersons (8). It is hard even to write this list without flinching at the inadequacies and failures it reflects with regard to Black life and concerns, but these are programs that filled a decade-long vacuum following the withdrawal of racist series like Amos 'n Andy and Beulah.

Blacks have also been featured in series like On the Rocks, Barney Miller, and Welcome Back, Kotter, whose continuing characters are a deliberate ethnic mixture; the only one of these series to give any prominence to ethnic women was the short-lived Colucci's Department. The "rainbow" programs are, by the way, almost the only television series that have featured Hispanic or Asian characters on a regular basis. One unfortunate result of the "one-of-each" cast of characters is, of course, its tendency to reinforce rather than challenge or alter existing stereotypes. This phenomenon is apparent, not only with the various ethnic identities that are put into play, but also with the gay men who are sometimes included on the ethnic spectrum. (Lesbians are not--or not yet--an ethnic group, and there is no single stereotype that has made it into "respectable" media, except for the occasional ironic hint that lesbians are rich [9].)

It is partially because of this greater ethnic and class diversity that the media family is also changing. Basically, it is far less likely to be a family, nowadays, in the terms to which TV accustomed us. There are couples who live together without marriage, gay male menages, divorced mothers raising and supporting their kids, singles whose narrative equivalent of family life is the gang at the office. The pendulum has swung away from the complete nuclear or extended family that used to be the norm to make a norm of what used to be deviant; and the range of cute deviances has broadened accordingly.

As more television women are portrayed as holding jobs, work life becomes an alternative locus for the kinds of relationships that television taught us to expect within the family (10). Hence, even when the script includes a husband, the wife is likely to have a job as well, and in the nontraditional family her working is taken for granted. The case that convinced me that women had definitively entered the television labor force was the emergence, in the spring of 1981, of The Brady Brides, a long-distance sequel to The Brady Bunch, which was, in its time, one of the most conventional of family comedies. In this clone of a series, the two eldest Brady daughters have married, and both couples--here a nod to the contemporary real estate market, as well as to script flexibility--share a house. It is a matter of course and not even the pivot of a comic plot that the young wives have careers. Indeed, one is pursuing her stepfather's profession of architecture. Now, when a blonde Brady daughter becomes an architect, combining her profession with marriage and no inspiring invidious comment, a revolution has taken place. A revolution of sorts.

I use the qualifier, not only because the extent of social upheaval and real resultant change is so limited, but precisely because such changes tend to be packaged by the media in such a way as to imply that social change, whatever its tempo, is a natural phenomenon. Certain developments consistent with some version of feminism make their appearance. They are never depicted as reflecting the demands, much less the gains, of a living movement; rather, they are simply there, accepted facts of life, however radically different from yesterday's facts. If struggle is represented, it is the private struggle of a single individual. Not only is the personal political, but the political is thoroughly and exclusively personal.

From this perspective, certain potentially revolutionary notions can be introduced in such a way that they, too, are assimilated into the media status quo. One interesting example of this cooptation is evident in the appearance in almost all women's magazines of articles about issues and pre-

occupations of the women's movement--child care, sexual harassment on the job, domestic violence--all of this material being seamlessly interwoven with the same old articles and ads about fashion, beauty, and heterosexual strategies. Moreover, the women's movement has had its moment as a media phenomenon itself. So, although the issues and the general consciousness associated with feminism may receive positive treatment, the women's movement and individual feminists, when their existence is acknowledged, are almost invariably caricatured. Social change is thus defined as an essentially asocial occurrence.

Even more dramatic is the process of denaturing undergone by homosexuality in its assimilation into television comedy. When the residents of the Hot L Baltimore piously concluded, apropos of a reconciliation between two gay men, that "It's love that matters--whatever kind of love," the primary effect was acceptance not so much of homosexual love as of the male homosexual as a usable character. Yet that episode, aired more than five years ago by now, went further in acknowledging that homosexuality does involve love relations between men than subsequent television comedy or drama has usually done. In the initial programs of that series, as in several other situation comedies, gay men were introduced as members of what newspaper critics revealingly call the "character-family." In a series like On the Rocks, they tended to be part of a spectrum of characters stereotypically representing various racial or ethnic groups. Hence, "gay," too, was chiefly a cultural designation. An alternative convention was the attractive male visitor who dates a woman character, appears to be leading up to a romantic seduction, and then announces that he's gay. (Rhoda's fling with Phyllis's brother back in 1973 was, to the best of my knowledge, the first of these; on Alice, a few years later, the issue was only slightly complicated by the heroine's changing her mind about letting the gay Lothario take her young son on a fishing trip. In neither case was homosexuality much more than a gimmick around which something else happened.)

As I write this essay, a controversy is raging about whether Tony Randall will get to play a middle-aged homosexual on his new series. The far Right Coalition for Better Television has expressed outrage that the situation as announced involves a household made up of the gay man, a single mother, and her young daughter. The network has courageously retorted that homosexuality does not, in fact, come into the series, although Randall himself has insisted that the character is, indeed, openly gay. There is something archetypal in the way this issue is being fought out, for it reflects the extent to which, although the idea of homosexuality is

a threat to profamily reactionaries, its television image can actually be contained in a conventional "odd-family" series.

The problem is not unlike that of divorce which, now that it is admitted onto the home screen, is invariably justified--typically to the children in the case--as creating a new and better family, one that is more of a true family than before. The family as traditionally conceived may have been destroyed, but the familial values to which lip service is paid remain intact. The television children and all of the viewers are thus doubly deprived: we have neither the inadequate old institution nor the support and confidence that comes of building an alternative to it. Essentially, to the liberal media, homosexuality is "all right," as long as it is stripped of its liberatory potential; it is "all right," therefore, when it is conceptually desexualized, represents no challenge to the ideology of the family, and serves as an alternative cultural identity. Its assimilation--in very small doses--into television morality parallels the assimilation of the (hetero-) sexual revolution, which, when not embodied in platitudes about new and better families, tends to be reduced, on the tube, to a sly jiggle.

That jiggle is, of course, one salient element in those media changes that feminists consider negative, for such changes do undoubtedly coexist with the limited and equivocal advances I have been outlining. The prominence of female characters whose sole function is to look cute whatever the ostensible plot, is by no means a novelty. What has increased is its explicit association with sexual arousal. Charlie's Angels are supposed to be competent detectives, selected out of the ranks at the police academy because of their highly developed skills, but it is hard to believe in the skills themselves or that they are responsible for attracting viewers. Rather, the Angels reflect the adoption of the sexual revolution-Playboy-Cosmopolitan ethic into the "family" (which is to say, repressed) medium of television. The rhetoric acknowledges sexuality and favors its expression, but the appeal remains strictly voyeuristic.

On Charlie's Angels, the sexual innuendo is carried out in an atmosphere dominated by rapid movement and violence, often threatened or directed at one of the lovely young detectives. This motif characterizes all the series involving female police: their relation to violent crime, even if they are now law enforcers rather than victims, is entirely sexual. In this sense, there is little difference between women as cops or detectives on their "own" programs and as victims of crime on the still far commoner male-dominated po-

lice shows. And it goes almost without saying that on the medium as a whole the level of violence against women has increased phenomenally over the past decade. For every television film about rape or wife-battering that is sympathetic to the problems of women, there are probably a hundred emphasizing only the details of the crime and the consequent search, chase, and capture.

Television violence has certain peculiarities, of course. What is most shocking about it is not any single act or reference, but rather the rapid and insistent accumulation of shootings, fistfights, and dramatic accidents. Liberalized standards about sexual matters have introduced a greater proportion of crimes against women into this scene: rape, exhibitionism, prostitution, murder of prostitutes, mutilation of the female body. However, these crimes tend to be lip-smackingly described more often than they are shown; they simply provide the woman-damaging occasion for an enhanced level of shootings, fistfights, and bloody accidents.

It is in films that explicit violence against women has reached epic dimensions and where this violence is quite overtly linked to sexual arousal. Moreover, the pornography industry, in both its hard- and soft-core avatars, has contributed magazines, still photos, and filmstrips, as well as advertising, to this association. And the music business--from brutal Rolling Stones billboards to vicious New Wave lyrics--has also fed and fed off the sex-violence connection.

Another area in which media and pornography have come to be almost synonymous is the sexual exploitation of children. On the sleazier side of the connection, this has meant a growth in all porno forms of depictions of children engaged in sexual acts, almost invariably with adults and for the titillation of an adult male audience. The above-ground version involves a systematic decline in the age of the actresses and models presented in all the many dramatic or commercial roles calling for a female sex object; since the ante on sexual explicitness has also been raised, the result is a situation in which pubescent girls are placed in far more suggestive situations than adult women were just a few years back.

The heightened and explicit violence against women and the rise of "kiddie porn" have become the joint objects of current feminist campaigns against mass media. What might be called the traditional sources of outrage--woman as sex object, dumb-broad stereotypes, crippling social norms--are far from dead issues, and feminists continue to make sweeping references in political analysis and discussion to the well-known destructive role of "The Media." But active mili-

tancy is directed elsewhere to the grosser, nastier target, because of both the immediate threat it represents and the violent, woman-hating culture it simultaneously represents and shapes.

In describing the current thrust of feminist action, I have consciously adopted the rhetoric of the antiporn, antiviolence campaigns. The dialectic to which I allude in the title of this paper is recapitulated in my own mind and that language reflects one side of it. The other side is less clearly articulated, because it is the perspective that acknowledges the contradictions and is uncertain about their implications for concrete practice. Media images are clearly being used for a direct and brutal sort of social control at the same time as they continue to fulfill their more familiar ideological and manipulative roles. The problem is to devise an analysis and a strategy adequate to the dimensions of that brutality, in a situation where the most powerful voice calling for censorship of sex and violence is not that of the feminist movement but that of the New Right and its fundamentalist ideologues.

Since I wrote my opening paragraph, not only has the controversy arisen about the new Tony Randall series, but Procter & Gamble, citing right-wing pressure, has withdrawn its sponsorship of programs featuring "gratuitous sex and violence," and producer Norman Lear has announced a liberal counteroffensive proclaiming free choice in matters of taste. What is frightening and confusing is the extent to which feminist and reactionary protests have similar targets and apparently seek the same sort of censorship. How, in even the shortest possible run, can feminists be on the same side as the people who, when they are not censoring television, are pulling Our Bodies, Ourselves off library shelves and calling for a return to the days when Ozzie Nelson knew best? Yet how can we tolerate the continued use of media images--old style or new--to define woman's place and keep her in it?

With the Moral Majority and its epigones as a frame of reference, there are three logical responses to the fact that the feminist and ultraconservative positions share a certain common ground. We could welcome the added muscle for campaigns against pornography and violence, taking care to emphasize the differences between our understanding and the Right's of what the real problem is. Alternatively, we could decide that the program of the far Right represents a serious enough threat to women's collective gains and aspirations to make it incumbent upon us to defend the media as they are. A third course, which does not lie between the

two extremes but runs parallel to them, is to continue to demand the elimination of whatever is violent or otherwise offensive to women, while ignoring the echoes from the strange bedfellow on our right. None of these seems to me to be an option that will serve the interests of women, particularly at a time when those interests are under more direct attack, as well, from the Right and from the state itself.

The solution, I think, lies in separating our long-range strategy from immediate tactics and shaping that strategy according to a more thoroughgoing analysis of mass culture than is currently available. The strength of the feminist approach to media has always been its concreteness, its grounding in actual content. But unfortunately there is a dialectic at work here, too, so that such a critique has the defects of its qualities. Concentration on what the media tell us about women leaves too much to conjecture regarding the media's influence on the audience. Although we have become increasingly detailed and sophisticated in our descriptions of what the media, considered strictly in their own terms, do, we have remained on a highly subjective or hypothetical level when it comes to how people use media. That conscious subjectivity, again, was one of our initial strengths, but it has also been the source of a certain solipsism. Words like manipulation go only so far in defining women's (or, for that matter, anyone's) response to media images. My own assumption is that the range of possible reactions is a great deal wider than our mechanical metaphors would imply. Certainly, some members of the audience simply assimilate whatever the media expose them to, allowing the images to desensitize them to their own experience. But others transform what they see, making it actually function in their lives--to provide social alternatives or solve problems in ways that are very different from those suggested by the media "models" themselves. And many people, I am convinced, consciously resist the media, either by withdrawing from their assigned role as audience-consumer or by actively struggling against the ideas and images projected. What is needed, instead of these assumptions and convictions, is scholarship about how the masses to whom mass culture is addressed make use of the images, the information, and the myths the culture generates. I do not expect that the results will indicate that there is really nothing to worry about, after all--especially as far as children and their media experiences are concerned--but I do believe that research of this sort is a necessary basis for long-term resistance.

Mass culture cannot be comprehended by intrinsic study of

media "texts," even if these are placed in some sort of relation with the society within which they have developed; the audience that "receives" the text is, as I have indicated, another important aspect of the experience. But mass culture is not simply an interaction between media and audience, either. It is the product of a powerful industry, and it is essential for us to comprehend the nature of mass media as a business in the capitalist system--with all that that entails in terms of process, product, and profit--in order to understand why it projects what it does about women and what remedies are available.

The past decade has seen the creation of larger media conglomerates and the absorption of a number of these into multinational corporations for which media represent only one area of investment. This period has also seen new relations emerge between the corporate sponsor and the time he buys. A new style of media management has become the dominant one. Each of these phenomena has both direct and indirect impact on the content and modalities of what we see on the screen, hear on records, and read in magazines. A rigorous analysis of the connections between selling time, selling soap, and selling ideology is an urgent necessity if we are to understand, as well, the image of ourselves currently being sold and be able, finally, as scholars and feminists, to stop things from somehow getting worse while they are supposed to be getting better.

Notes

1. In 1963, for instance, the playwright Lorraine Hansberry, noted nine points anyone would "learn" about "America as Seen Through the Eye of a TV Tube." The last two are especially pertinent to this discussion:

8. Women are idiots.
9. Negroes do not exist.

Lorraine Hansberry, To Be Young, Gifted, and Black (New York: Signet-NAL, 1969), p. 226.

2. The textual criticism of society as practiced by such feminist thinkers as Millett, Firestone, Figs, Jane-way, and Heilbrun is discussed in the second chapter of a book of which I am one of the co-authors: E. DuBois et al., Feminist Scholarship: Challenge, Discovery, and Impact (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1983).
3. Betty Friedan, "The Happy Housewife Heroine," in The

Feminine Mystique (New York: Dell, 1963), pp. 28-61.

4. See, for instance, Norman Fruchter, Todd Gitlin et al., "The Movement and the Culture of the Spectacle," Liberation (Summer 1970) and Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).
5. See Jerry Rubin, Do It! (New York: Ballantine, 1970); Abbie Hoffman, Revolution for the Hell of It (New York: Dial Press, 1968); and Woodstock Nation (New York: Dial Press, 1969).
6. I am thinking, here, primarily of the emergence of feminist media, an aspect of resistance that this paper, which is concerned with mass culture does not otherwise address. In addition, the early 1970s witnessed feminist protests through "zap" attacks and publicity about what was offensive to women, with tactics ranging from challenges to FCC license renewals to the "takeover" of the Ladies Home Journal, which resulted in the special "feminist" insert in the Summer of 1970.
7. I first learned the concept of "naturalization," reducing the female to her biological identity, from a lecture by Serafina Bathrick focusing on Busby Berkeley's Gold Diggers of 1933 (State University of New York at Buffalo, Spring 1976).
8. Although it was a "limited series" and did not deal with the contemporary family, Roots should also be mentioned here.
9. Lesbians on television tend to be successful business or professional women; in confession magazines, they are also likely to be the employer of the straight woman who has been their prey. In both cases, they possess male power. There are also lesbian images that surface only in one particular medium; see, for instance, Bonnie Zimmerman's article about lesbian vampire movies in Jump Cut (Winter 1980).
10. For a fuller discussion of "family" relationships in the televised work place, see Lillian S. Robinson, "A TV Guide to the Working Woman," Working Paper no. 5 (University of California at Berkeley, Center for the Study, Education and Advancement of Women, 1982).

ELLEN WILLIS

The Challenge of Profamily Politics: A Feminist Defense of Sexual Freedom (1981)

The traditional patriarchal family maintains sexual law and order on two fronts. It regulates the relations between the sexes, enforcing male dominance, female subordination and the segregation of "masculine" and "feminine" spheres. It also regulates sexuality per se, defining as illicit any sexual activity unrelated to reproduction or outside the bounds of heterosexual, monogamous marriage. Accordingly, the New Right's militant defense of the traditional family and its values has a dual thrust: it is at once a male-supremacist backlash against feminism and a reaction by cultural conservatives of both sexes against the "sexual revolution" of the past twenty years.

There is, of course, an integral connection between sexism and sexual repression. The suppression of women's sexual desire and pleasure, the denial of our right to control reproduction, and the enforcement of female abstinence outside marriage have been--together with our exclusion from equal participation in economic and political activity--primary underpinnings of male supremacy. Conversely, a restrictive sexual morality inevitably constrains women more than men, even in religious subcultures that profess a single standard. Not only is unwanted pregnancy a built-in punishment for female participation in sex (assuming the prohibition of birth control or abortion on the one hand, and lesbianism on the other) and therefore a powerful inhibitor; it is visible evidence of sexual "delinquency," which subjects women who break the rules to social sanctions their male partners never have to face. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that the Right's opposition to sexual permissiveness--as expressed in its attacks on abortion, homosexuality, "pornography" (defined as any sexually explicit material), sex education, and adolescents' right of access to contraception, abortion, or treatment for venereal disease without parental consent--has consequences for both sexes. Gays and teenagers are obvious targets. But the success of the profamily agenda would also impinge on the lives of adult heterosexual

men, who would have to contend with the unwanted pregnancies of their wives and lovers, women's increased sexual fears and inhibitions, restrictions on frank discussion and public legitimation of sex and sexual fantasy, and a general chilling of the sexual atmosphere. Although some men are willing to accept such constraints on their own freedom in order to reassert certain traditional controls over women, many are not.

At present, our opponents have us at an enormous disadvantage. The profamily movement has a coherent ideology and program whose antifeminist and antisexual aspects reinforce each other. In contrast, feminists are ambivalent, confused, and divided in their views on sexual freedom. Although there have been feminist sexual libertarians in both the nineteenth-century and contemporary movements, for the most part women's liberation and sexual liberation have developed as separate, at times even antagonistic, causes. The sexual libertarian movement that began in the 1950s was conspicuously male dominated and male supremacist. Though it advocated a single standard of freedom from sexual guilt and conventional moral restrictions, it displayed no insight into the social reasons for women's greater inhibition and conformity to moral norms. On the contrary, women were blamed--often in virulently misogynist terms--for adhering to the sexual prohibitions men and a patriarchal society had forced on them. At the same time, male libertarians intensified women's sexual anxieties by equating repression with the desire for love and commitment, and exalting sex without emotion or attachment as the ideal. From this perspective, liberation for men meant rebelling against the demands of women, while liberation for women meant the opportunity (read obligation) to shuck their "hang-ups" about casual sex.

The question that remained unasked was whether men had sexual hang-ups of their own. Was the rejection of any link between sexual desire and tenderness really an expression of freedom--or merely another form of repression? To what extent did men's demand for "pure" sex represent a predatory disregard of women as people--an attitude that could only reinforce the conventionally feminine sexual reluctance, passivity, and unresponsiveness that men found so frustrating? There was also the touchy issue of whether sex as conventionally initiated and orchestrated by men was pleasurable for women. In theory, there was much concern with female orgasm and the need for men to satisfy women; in practice, that concern often translated into a demand that women corroborate men's ideas about female sexuality and protect men's egos by acting satisfied, whether they were or not. Nor did the

sexual revolution seriously challenge the taboo on lesbianism (or homosexuality in general).

At its inception, the contemporary women's liberation movement was dominated by young women who had grown up during or since the emergence of sexual libertarian ideology; many radical feminists came out of the Left and the counterculture, where that ideology was particularly strong. Unsurprisingly, one of the first issues to surface in the movement was women's pent-up rage at men's one-sided, exploitative view of sexual freedom. From our consciousness-raising sessions, we concluded that women couldn't win, no matter how they behaved. We were still oppressed by a sexual double standard that, while less rigid, was by no means obsolete: women who took too literally their supposed right to sexual freedom, assertiveness, and pleasure were regularly put down as "easy," "aggressive," or "promiscuous." We still lived in fear of unwanted pregnancy; in 1968 abortion was illegal--except in the most dire circumstances--in every state. Yet at the same time, men were demanding that we have sex on their terms, unmindful of the possible consequences and without reference to our own feelings and needs. In addition to suffering sexual frustration from the inhibitions instilled by pre-sexual-revolutionary parents, fear of pregnancy, and men's exploitative behavior, we had to swallow the same men's humiliating complaints about how neurotic, frigid, and unliberated we were. Unfortunately, the movement's efforts to make political sense of this double bind led to confusions in feminist thinking about sexuality that are still unresolved.

At least in theory, organized feminism has been united in endorsing sexual freedom for women, including the right to express our sexual needs freely, to engage in sexual activity for our own pleasure, to have sex and bear children outside marriage, to control our fertility, to refuse sex with any particular man or all men, to be lesbian. Almost as universally, feminists have regarded male sexuality with suspicion if not outright hostility. From the beginning, radical feminists argued that freedom as men defined it was against women's interests; if anything, men already had too much freedom at women's expense. One faction in the movement strongly defended women's traditional demands for marriage and monogamy against the anti-nuclear-family, sexual-liberationist rhetoric of the counterculture. Proponents of this view held that the sexual revolution simply legitimized the age-old tendency of men in a male-supremacist society to coerce, cajole, or fool women into giving them sex without getting anything--love, respect, responsibility for the children, or even erotic pleasure--in return. At the other ex-

treme were feminists who argued that, under present conditions, any kind of sexual contact with men, in marriage or out, was oppressive, and that the issue for women was how to resist the relentless social pressure to be with a man. Later, lesbian separatists elaborated this argument, claiming that only women were capable of understanding and satisfying women's sexual needs.

Although the idea that in order to achieve equality women's sexual freedom must be expanded and men's restricted has a surface common-sense logic, in practice it is full of contradictions. For one thing, the same social changes that allow greater freedom for women inevitably mean greater freedom for men. Historically, a woman's main protection from sexual exploitation has been to be a "good girl" and demand marriage as the price of sex--in other words, relinquish the freedom to spontaneously express her sexuality in order to preserve its bargaining power. Furthermore, this traditional strategy will not work for individual women unless most women adhere to it, which implies the need for some form of social or moral pressure to keep women in line. If the assumption is that women as a group will voluntarily exchange their increased freedom for security, why bother to demand freedom in the first place? In practice, relaxing social condemnation of female "unchastity" and permitting women access to birth control and abortion allays social concern about men's "ruining" or impregnating respectable women, and so invariably reduces the pressure on men--both from women and from other men--to restrain their demands for casual sex. Thus the feminist critique of male sexuality tends to bolster the familiar conservative argument that a morality restricting sex to marriage is in women's interest--indeed, that its purpose is to protect women from selfish male lust.

Another difficulty is that judgments of men's heterosexual behavior necessarily imply judgments about what women want. Dissenters within feminist groups immediately challenged the prevailing judgments, arguing with monogamists that they wanted to sleep with more than one man or that they didn't want the state messing into their sex lives, and arguing with separatists that they enjoyed sex with men. As a result, assumptions about what women want were soon amended to authoritative pronouncements on what women really want/ought to want/would want if they were not intimidated/bought off/brainwashed by men. The ironic consequence has been the development of feminist sexual orthodoxies that curtail women's freedom by setting up the movement as yet another source of guilt-provoking rules about what women should do and feel.

That irony is compounded by another: the orthodoxies in

question dovetail all too well with traditional patriarchal ideology. This is most obviously true of polemics in favor of heterosexual monogamy, but it is no less true of lesbian separatism, which in recent years has had far more impact on feminist thinking. Here it is necessary to distinguish (though of course there has been considerable overlap) between two tendencies in lesbian feminist politics: the first has emphasized lesbianism as a forbidden erotic choice and lesbians as an oppressed sexual minority; the other--aligning itself with the separatist faction that surfaced in the radical feminist movement before lesbianism as such became an issue--has defined lesbianism primarily as a political commitment to separate from men and bond with women (1). The latter tendency has generated a sexual ideology best described as neo-Victorian. It regards heterosexual relations as more or less synonymous with rape, on the grounds that male sexuality is by definition predatory and sadistic: men are exclusively genitally oriented (a phrase that is always used pejoratively) and uninterested in loving relationships. Female sexuality, in contrast, is defined as tender, nonviolent, and not necessarily focused on the genitals: intimacy and physical warmth are more important to us than orgasm; we like to kiss and hug and hold hands a lot. The early prelesbian separatists argued that celibacy was a reasonable alternative to sleeping with men, and some suggested that the whole idea of a compelling sexual drive was a male invention designed to keep women in their place: women didn't need sex, and men's lust was less for pleasure than for power. In short, to the neo-Victorians men are beasts who are only after one thing, while women are nice girls who would just as soon skip it. The inescapable implication is that women who profess to enjoy sex with men, especially penile-vaginal intercourse itself, are liars or masochists; in either case they have chosen (or been forced) to be victims and to uphold an oppressive system. Nor are lesbians automatically exempt from criticism; gay women whose sexual proclivities do not conform to the approved feminine stereotype are assumed to be corrupted by heterosexism.

Though neo-Victorianism has been most militantly promoted by lesbian separatists, in modified form (one that concedes the possibility that men--some men at least--can change their ways and be good lovers) it has also had wide appeal for heterosexual feminists. (Conversely, lesbians have been among the loudest critics of this stance; this is not a gay-straight split.) Its most popular current expression is the antipornography movement, which has seized on pornography as an all-purpose symbol of sex that is genitally oriented,

hence male, hence sadistic and violent, while invoking the concept of "erotica" as code for sex that is gentle, romantic, relationship-oriented--in a word, feminine. Clearly, this conventional view of female as opposed to male sexuality is consistent with many women's subjective experience. Indeed, there are probably few women who don't identify with it to some degree. But to take that experience at face value is to ignore its context: a patriarchal society that has systematically inhibited female sexuality and defined direct, active physical desire as a male prerogative. Feminist neo-Victorians have made the same mistake--only with the sexes reversed--as male libertarians who criticize female sexual behavior while adopting stereotypical male sexuality as the standard for judging sexual health and happiness. In the process, they have actively reinforced the larger society's taboos on women's genital sexuality. From a conservative perspective, a woman who has aggressive genital desires and acts on them is "bad" and "unwomanly"; from the neo-Victorian perspective, she is "brainwashed" and "male-identified."

Overtly or implicitly, many feminists have argued that sexual coercion is a more important problem for women than sexual repression. In the last few years, the women's movement has increasingly emphasized violence against women as a primary--if not the primary--concern. Although sexual violence, coercion, and harassment have always been feminist issues, earlier feminist analyses tended to regard physical force as one among several ways that men ensure women's compliance to a sexist system, and in particular to their subordinate wife-and-mother role. The main function of sexual coercion, in this view, is to curb women's freedom, including their sexual freedom. Rape, and the tacit social tolerance of it, convey the message that simply by being sexual women are "provocative" and deserve punishment, especially if they step out of their place (the home) or transgress society's definition of the "good" (inhibited) woman. Similarly, sexual harassment on the street or on the job, and exploitative sexual demands by male "sexual revolutionaries," punish women for asserting themselves, sexually and otherwise, in the world.

The current feminist preoccupation with male violence has a very different focus. Rape and pornography (defined as a form of rape) are regarded not as aspects of a larger sexist system but as the foundation and essence of sexism. Sexual victimization is seen as the central fact of women's oppression. Just as male violence against women is equated with male supremacy, freedom from violence is equated with women's liberation. From this standpoint, the positive aspect

of freedom--freedom for women to act--is at best a secondary concern, and freedom for women to assert an active genital sexuality is, by the logic of neo-Victorianism, a contradiction in terms.

Whatever its intent, the objective effect of feminists' emphasis on controlling male sexuality--particularly when that emphasis is combined with a neo-Victorian view of women's nature and the conviction that securing women's safety from male aggression should be the chief priority of the women's movement--is to undercut feminist opposition to the profamily backlash. It provides powerful reinforcement for the Right's efforts to manipulate women's fear of untrammelled male sexuality and intimidate women into stifling their own impulses toward freedom in order to cling to what little protection the traditional roles still offer. The convergence of neo-Victorian and profamily ideology is most striking in the recent attempts by so-called feminists for life to argue that abortion is "violence against women" and a way for men to escape responsibility for their sexual behavior. Although this argument did not come from within the feminist movement but from antiabortion pacifists seeking to justify their position to feminists, it is perfectly consistent with neo-Victorian logic. No tendency in organized feminism has yet advocated outlawing abortion, but one does occasionally hear the argument that feminists should spend less energy defending abortion and more on educating women to understand that the real solution to unwanted pregnancy is to stop sleeping with men.

Neo-Victorians have also undermined feminist opposition to the Right by equating feminism with their own sexual attitudes, in effect reading out of the movement any woman who disagrees with them. Since their notion of proper feminist sexuality echoes conventional moral judgments and the anti-sexual propaganda presently coming from the Right, their guilt-mongering has been quite effective. Many feminists who are aware that their sexual feelings contradict the neo-Victorian ideal have lapsed into confused and apologetic silence. No doubt there are also thousands of women who have quietly concluded that if this ideal is feminism, then feminism has nothing to do with them. The result is widespread apathy, dishonesty, and profound disunity in a movement faced with a determined enemy that is threatening its very existence.

The foregoing suggests that feminists are at a theoretical impasse. If a feminist politics that advocates restrictions on male sexuality leads inexorably to the sexual repression of women and the strengthening of antifeminist forces, such

a politics is obviously untenable. But how can we support sexual freedom for both sexes without legitimizing the most oppressive aspects of male sexual behavior? I believe our hope for resolving this dilemma lies in re-examining certain widely shared assumptions about sex, male versus female sexuality, and the meaning of sexual liberation.

The philosophy of the sexual revolution as we know it is an extension of liberalism: it defines sexual freedom as the simple absence of external restrictions--laws and overt social taboos--on sexual information and activity. Since most people accept this definition, there is widespread agreement that we are already a sexually emancipated society. The easy availability of casual sex, the virtual lack of restrictions (at least for adults) on sexual information and sexually explicit material, the accessibility (for adults again) of contraception, legal abortion, the proliferation of massage parlors and sex clubs, the ubiquity of sexual images and references in the mass media, the relaxation of taboos against "deviant" sexual practices--all are regularly cited as evidence that this culture has largely overcome its antisexual history. At the same time, it is clear that sexual liberalism has not brought nirvana. Noting that "liberated" sexuality is often depressingly shallow, exploitative, and joyless, many men as well as women have concluded that sexual liberation has been tried and found wanting, that it is irrelevant or even inimical to a serious program for social change.

This is a superficial view, in that it focuses on the quantity and variety of sexual activity, rather than on the quality of sexual experience. Political opposition to restrictive sexual mores is ultimately based on the premise that a gratifying sexual life is a legitimate human need, whose denial causes unnecessary and unjust suffering. Certainly, establishing people's right to pursue sexual happiness with a consenting partner is a step toward ending that suffering. Yet as most of us have had occasion to discover, it is entirely possible to participate "freely" in a sexual act and feel frustrated, indifferent, or even repelled. From a radical standpoint, then, sexual liberation involves not only the abolition of restrictions but the positive presence of social and psychological conditions that foster satisfying sexual relations. And from that standpoint, this society can hardly be considered sexually free. Most obviously, sexual inequality and the resulting antagonism between men and women constitute a devastating barrier to sexual happiness. I will argue in addition that sexual liberalism notwithstanding, most children's upbringing produces adults with profoundly negative attitudes toward sex. Under these condi-

tions, the relaxation of sexual restrictions leads people to try desperately to overcome the obstacles to satisfaction through compulsive sexual activity and preoccupation with sex. The emphasis on sex that currently permeates our public life--especially the enormous demand for sexual advice and therapy--attests not to our sexual freedom but to our continuing sexual frustration.

It is in this context that we need to examine the male sexual patterns that feminists have protested--the emphasis on conquest and dominance, the tendency to abstract sex from love and social responsibility. Sexual liberalism has allowed many men to assert these patterns in ways that were once socially taboo. But to conclude from this fact that male sexual freedom is inherently oppressive to women is to make the uncritical assumption that men find predatory, solipsistic sexual relations satisfying and inherently preferable to sex based on love and mutuality. As I have noted, some feminists argue that male sexuality is naturally sadistic. Others grant that men's predatory tendencies are a function of sexism, but assume that they are a simple, direct expression of men's (excessive) freedom and power, the implication being that anyone who has the opportunity to dominate and use other people sexually will of course want to take advantage of it.

This assumption is open to serious question. If one pays attention to what men consciously or unwittingly reveal about their sexual attitudes--in their fiction and confessional writing, in sociological and psychological studies, in everyday interactions with women--the picture that emerges is far more complicated and ambiguous. Most men, in fact, profess to want and need mutual sexual love, and often behave accordingly, though they have plenty of opportunity to do otherwise. Many men experience both tender and predatory feelings, toward the same or different women, and find the contradiction bewildering and disturbing; others express enormous pain over their inability to combine sex with love. Often men's impulses to coerce and degrade women seem to express not a confident assumption of dominance but a desire to retaliate for feelings of rejection, humiliation, and impotence. As many men see it, they need women sexually more than women need them, an intolerable balance of power. Furthermore, much male sexual behavior clearly reflects men's irrational fears that loss of dominance means loss of maleness itself, that their choice is to "act like a man" or be castrated, to embrace the role of oppressor or be degraded to the status of victim. None of this is to deny men's objective social power over women, their reluctance to give up that power, or their tendency to blame women for their unhap-

piness rather than recognizing that their own oppressive behavior is largely responsible for women's sexual diffidence. My point is only that the behavior that causes women so much grief evidently brings men very little joy; on the contrary, men appear to be consumed with sexual frustration, rage, and anxiety. With their compulsive assertions of power, they continually sabotage their efforts to love and be loved. Such self-defeating behavior cannot, in any meaningful sense, be described as free. Rather it suggests that for all the undoubted advantages men derive from "acting like a man" in a male-supremacist society, the price is repression and deformation of spontaneous sexual feeling.

The view that untrammelled male sexuality must inevitably be oppressive is rooted in one of our most universal cultural assumptions: that the sexual drive itself is inherently antisocial, separate from love, and connected with aggressive, destructive impulses. There is, however, another possibility, advanced by a small minority of utopians, romantics, and cultural radicals: that sexual desire, tenderness, and empathy are aspects of a unified erotic impulse, that the split between sex and love and the attendant perversion of sexual desire into exploitative, solipsistic lust are an artificial social product. This thesis has been most systematically and convincingly elaborated in Wilhelm Reich's radical critique of Freud, which has provided the basis for much subsequent cultural radical thought. In Reich's view, parental condemnation of infantile genital desires and sensations--quite harmless in themselves--forces the child to split (bad) sex from (good) affection. The child reacts to this thwarting of its sexual expression with frustration, rage, and a desire for revenge; thus its sexuality becomes sadistic. If the sadistic feelings are also forbidden they turn inward, producing guilt and masochism. People's guilt at their own overt or repressed sadism, as well as their observation of other people's antisocial behavior, is behind the conviction that sex is inherently destructive. Yet that conviction rests on a piece of circular reasoning: repression creates the destructiveness that is then cited as proof of the eternal need for repression. Reich saw sexual repression as the self-perpetuating basis of a sadomasochistic psychology which was in turn crucial to the maintenance of an authoritarian, hierarchical social order. He argued that people with an antisexual upbringing tend to uphold established authority--even when the practical conditions for rebellion exist--because that authority fulfills several functions. It reinforces people's inner controls over their sadistic impulses and protects them from the uncontrolled sadism of others; it invites people to ex-

express sadistic feelings vicariously by identifying with authority; and it permits people to vent those feelings indirectly on those below them in the social hierarchy. Thus the anger that should inspire social rebellion is transformed into a conservative force, impelling people to submit masochistically to their oppressors while bullying their "inferiors." Yet even for ruling classes, Reich maintained, power is at best a substitute for genuine fulfillment.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to attempt to prove that the cultural radical view of sex--or Reich's specific formulation of it--is correct. Rather, I propose this view as the only hypothesis that is wholly consistent with a feminist sexual politics. I have tried to show how efforts to control male sexuality undermine women's struggle for freedom and equality, and vice versa. To take the argument a step further, if the sexual impulse is intrinsically selfish and aggressive, there are two possible explanations for why men's sexuality, far more than women's, has displayed these characteristics. One is that sexual desire, per se, is inherently male; the pitfalls of this idea have been discussed at length. The other is that women have simply not been allowed to be as selfish and exploitative as men. To adopt this notion puts feminists in the position of agreeing with conservatives that liberating women from the feminine role would destroy the social cement that keeps civilization going. If, on the other hand, sexual destructiveness can be seen as a perversion that both reflects and perpetuates a repressive system, it is possible to envision a coherent feminist politics in which a commitment to sexual freedom plays an integral part.

If we accept the premise that parents, by rejecting their children's genitality, atomize the erotic impulse and direct infantile sexuality into a sadistic mode, the source of the difference between "masculine" and "feminine" sexual patterns seems clear. While boys are permitted, indeed encouraged, to incorporate their sadistic impulses into their sexual identities and to express those impulses in socially approved ways, girls' aggression is no more tolerated than their genitality. Like men, women experience a split between lust and love, but the lustful component of their sexuality is subjected to severe inhibition. Women who do not suppress their lustful feelings altogether--or sublimate them into disembodied romanticism or mother love--usually feel free to express them only in the relatively safe and socially validated context of marriage or a quasi-marital commitment. Thus what looks like women's superior ability to integrate sex and love is only a more hidden form of alienation.

I am suggesting, then, that sexual repression and sexism function symbiotically to transform male and female children into masculine and feminine adults. To understand this process, it is useful, in my view, to take another look at two Freudian concepts that feminists have generally rejected or interpreted in purely symbolic terms--castration anxiety and penis envy. Children in this culture absorb two sets of messages about their genitals: that to desire genital pleasure is bad (indeed, the prohibited desire is soon contaminated with actual "badness," i.e., vengeful aggression); and that there are two classes of people, one superior and dominant, one inferior and subordinate, distinguished from each other by the presence or absence of the penis. From these facts, it would be quite reasonable for children to infer that girls have been castrated and devalued for bad sexual desires, and that boys risk being punished for their badness in similar fashion. There is also reason to assume an enormous emotional difference between fear of mutilation and the conviction that one has already been mutilated. A boy's fear of castration would be mitigated by the knowledge that so far he had been bad and gotten away with it. A girl, in contrast, would imagine that her defiance had already provoked terrible retribution, and that worse might be in store if she persisted. The boy's fear could be expected to stimulate his sexual aggression. It is only by "acting like a man" that he can assure himself he is not a woman; besides, he must vigilantly maintain his control over those deprived beings who surely must hate him and covet his precious organ. But the girl's observation of men's power and sexual hostility would only add to her terror and confirm her in the belief that whatever her feelings of hate and envy, she must be good at all costs.

If women's childhood experience leads them to associate their sexuality with violation and doom, it is no wonder that many feminists are more preoccupied with their fears of male violence than with their hopes for sexual freedom. The idea that women who are sexually mistreated have "asked for it," while those who behave will be protected, still has an enormous hold over women's minds. It not only discourages women from rebelling but often moves them to defend rigid standards of sexual morality and resist any blurring of the line between good and bad women: the clearer the rules, the more likely that obeying them will ensure safety. Yet of course "goodness" does not ensure safety and never did. In practice, women can never be good enough, for both women and men know that in their secret hearts all women are "bad"--that is, sexual. This knowledge gives men 'license to consider all women fair game--their goodness is after all just a

hypocritical facade--and impels both sexes to blame women for being raped. Finally, the only way women can escape this trap is to repudiate and destroy the association between sex and badness.

Despite the cultural upheavals with which we are familiar--of which we as feminists are a product--the basic ingredients of a patriarchal upbringing remain. For all the erosion of sexual roles and improvements in women's status, there are still two unequal classes of people distinguished by the possession, or lack, of a penis. Despite (and in part because of) the spread of sexual liberalism, most people--including most feminists--are still too deeply afraid of the sexual impulse to fully accept their babies as sexual beings. As a result, the symbiosis of sexism and sexual repression continues to re-create a complex of patriarchal attitudes that exert a strong pull on our emotions even as they increasingly conflict with both our rational ideas and aspirations and the actual conditions of our lives. It is in fact the social instability and psychological tensions this conflict produces that have made people so receptive to profamily ideology. The Right proposes to resolve the conflict by changing social reality to conform to our most conservative emotions. Feminist politics, in contrast, often seem to embody the conflict instead of offering an alternative solution. Nor is this any wonder, if such a solution must include a fundamental transformation in people's sexual psychology. Yet however dangerous and uncharted the territory, it is precisely this task that we must somehow begin to address.

The first step, I believe, is to affirm the validity, in principle, of sexual liberation as a feminist goal. This in itself will clarify many confusions and contradictions in current feminist thinking and indicate practical political directions. For instance, my analysis suggests that crusading against pornography as a symbol of male violence will impede feminism rather than advance it; that focusing primarily on issues of women's safety (like rape) is more problematic and less effective than focusing on issues of women's sexual freedom (like abortion rights); that it is important for feminists to defend people's (including men's) freedom to engage in consensual sexual activity, including acts we may find distasteful. In short, it is a losing proposition for feminists to compete with the Right in trying to soothe women's fears of sexual anarchy. We must of course acknowledge those fears and the legitimate reasons for them, but our interest as feminists is to demonstrate that a law-and-order approach to sex can only result in a drastic curtailment of our freedom. In the long run, we can win only if

women (and men) want freedom (and love) more than they fear its consequences.

Note

1. For a lucid exposition of this distinction, I am indebted to Alice Echols's "Cultural Feminism: Feminist Capitalism and the Anti-Pornography Movement" (unpublished paper). A shorter version of this paper will appear in Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality, ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, to be published in 1983 by Monthly Review Press.

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