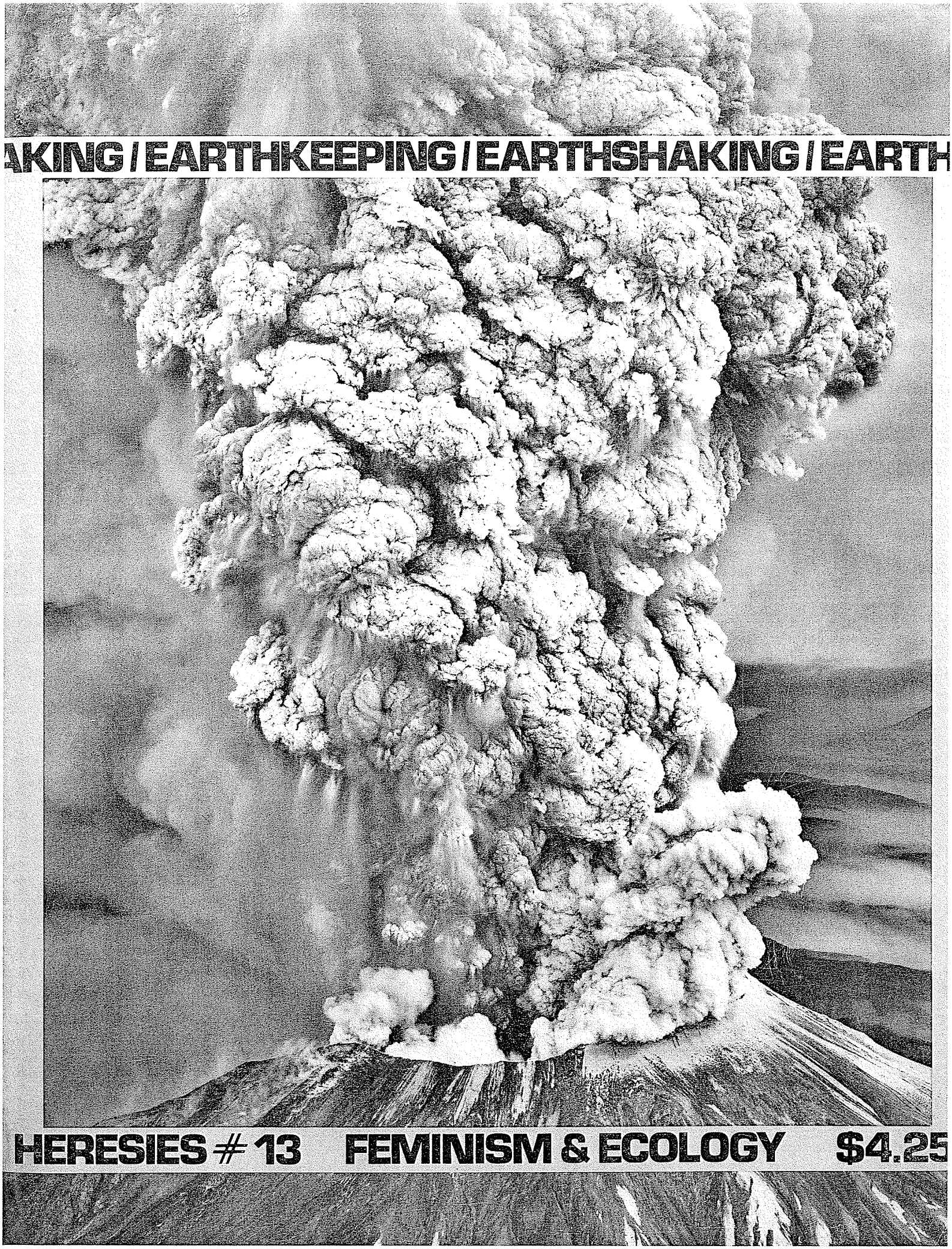
AKING / EARTHKEEPING / EARTHSHAKING / EARTH
HERESIES # 13 FEMINISM & ECOLOGY $4.25

Editorial Collective: Lyn Blumenthal, Janet Culbertson, Shirley Fuerst, Sandy Gellis, Phyllis Janto, Sarah Jenkins, Ellen Lanyon, Lucy R. Lippard, Jane Logemann, Ana Mendieta, Sabra Moore, Linda Peer and Merle Temkin.

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editorial statement 13

We had worked on this issue for some time before we realized exactly how huge our task was, and how inevitably we would not have room for much of what we wanted to include—even if we managed to find women to write it. We broadly defined ecology as the relationship between the organism and its environment. Even focusing on the human female didn't narrow things down much, females being over half the human race and taking up a lot of space in the natural world. If ever there was an area in which the personal and the political merged, this was it.

What can women do about the disastrous direction the world is taking? We looked both ways—into the past, at the earth and the earth mother images, at the current state of the ecology, at the future in all its dimness. We wanted to be active, to show that our province is both nature *and* culture. A few aspects we were determined to cover were: the necessity for a feminist theory to integrate social life, history and natural environments; the art women are doing in and about nature (and encouragement for that art to deal directly with issues); the equal importance of rural and urban ecologies; the contribution of women to our growing awareness of the needs, as well as the pleasures, of nature; the relation of women to militarism *and* to militant struggles for liberation; the callous exploitation for profit of Third World countries—people and resources—to feed the greedy maw of monopoly capitalism; the dangerous emphasis of the Reagan administration on militarism, at the expense of social services and the environment.

We had also hoped to deal in some new way with reproductive rights and to produce an extensive consumer information section. Since these didn't come together, we want to go on record as stressing the fact that woman's right to choose or refuse children and abortion is at the core of any progressive program. It affects population, poverty, psychology and land use, among endless other aspects of life. As we go to press, the Human Life Statute and the Family Protection Act threaten our most natural connections, while "scientific creationism" threatens our children's education, along with other reactionary ideological controls on culture from the New Right. Our responsibilities in the consumer area are also crucial, and here the burden is on us to educate, learn and, when necessary, to boycott and "ecotage."

The answer, of course, is organization. From article to article in this issue we hear women of all races discovering that if you don't do something yourself, it doesn't get done—in the world as in the home. You never expect "it" to happen to you, but when it does, it is a radicalizing experience. You *are* the others. It is happening to you often before you even know about it, even before it happens *directly* to you. The responsibility lies not only with those who would like to keep us powerless, but with ourselves. Communication and organization are at the heart of resistance. Art and culture are integral elements in resistance. Understanding this alone can help Us stop Them from moving mountains and changing the courses of nature.

Our cover is Mt. St. Helens because she is a connecting image—a hole into the interior and an opening out of that center—both nurturing and destructive. It is a female image because of the shape and the mythology. According to the traditions of the Klickitat Indians, the volcano is Loo-Wit, the old woman, keeper of fire. She mediated a dispute between the two peoples in the area by sharing her fire. When the dispute recurred, she and the two leaders were transformed into Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Hood and Mt. Adams. We called this issue of *Heresies* "Earthkeeping/Earthshaking" because we plan to do both. The eruption of Mt. St. Helens is our symbol of the "revolt of nature" because we know the important role feminist *culture* will play in that revolution.

open meeting— earthkeeping/ earthshaking

Tuesday, December 1 at 8 p.m.
Franklin Furnace
112 Franklin Street, New York City

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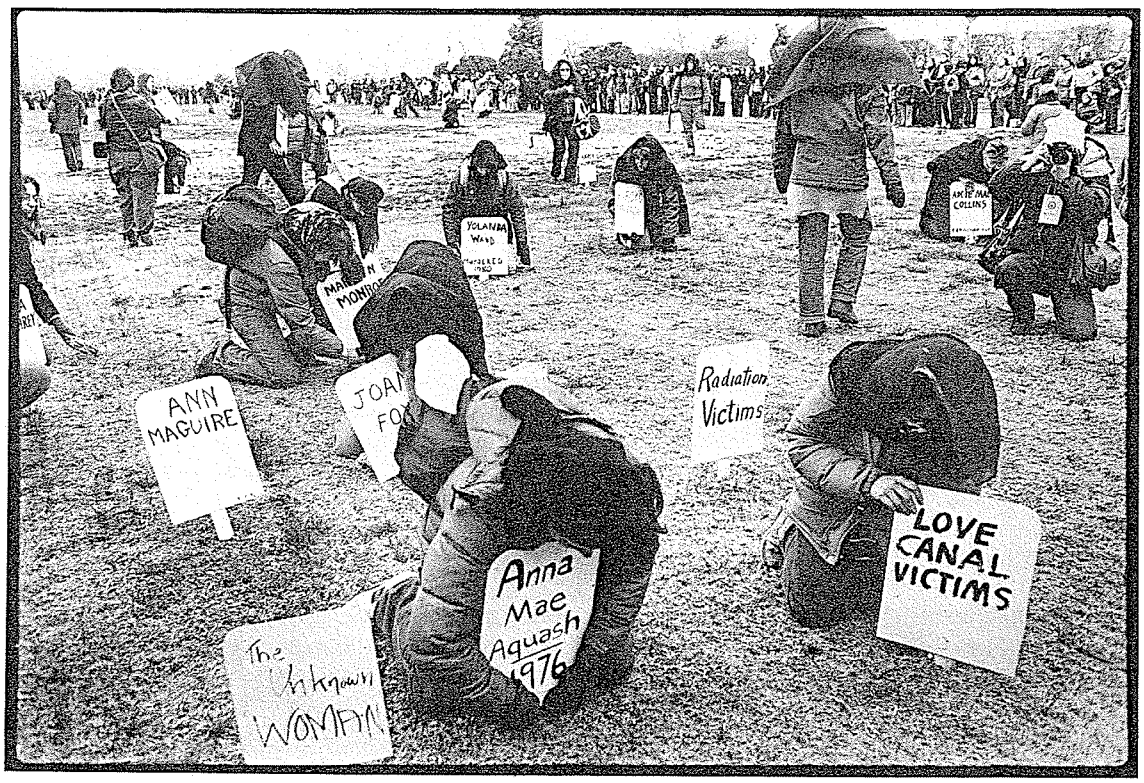
On November 17, 1980, 2,000 women encircled the Pentagon to protest the American war machinery; 140 women were arrested for blocking the three main entrances. Photo by Ann Marie Rousseau, a NYC photographer and writer who has recently published *Shopping Bag Ladies*. © 1980

Women's Pentagon Action



Women's Pentagon Action. Planting gravestones in front of the Pentagon for women victims of militarism. Photo by Diana Mara Henry, a NYC freelance photographer with work in the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College. © 1980

We dedicate this issue of *Heresies* to Rachel Carson and to Karen Silkwood. To Carson, for nestling humankind among the plants, rocks, sky, as part of nature, rather than apart, and for showing the effects of our mistakes upon the rest of the planet. To Silkwood, for following through with the scientific spirit of investigation to include her own workplace. Carson was rewarded by attempts to ruin her reputation, and Silkwood paid with her life. Each was affected by the fact of her sex, each transcended that experience to become a model of intelligent activism, working above all from conscience and caring.

RACHEL CARSON

A Corrective Memoir

by Shirley Briggs

Rachel Carson's success as scientist and writer in her government career stemmed from the fortunate fact that she was unusually capable, intelligent and well-trained, and so could take advantage of opportunities in a profession where women have to be much better qualified than men to achieve the same recognition and jobs.

After the publication of *Silent Spring*, the part of the chemical industry that felt itself threatened by the book went to great lengths to try to establish a public image of Miss Carson as an emotional, reclusive, unstable person. That this was a direct contradiction of her actual character did not deter them, any more than the contents of the book and its supporting scientific data prevented them from denying the truth of what she said and the things that they only claimed she had said.

The many honors she received in her lifetime, and even now, show the failure of these attacks to damage either her reputation or the validity of her writing. In this past year she has been given, posthumously, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and has had a postage stamp issued in her honor. Still, some industry spokesmen continue to parrot the old charges, and these are found in twisted form in some supposedly friendly commentaries. Study of this continuing belittlement and denigration shows how a woman in her position may attract a particular kind of opposition, especially when opponents cannot find substantive points to denounce.

Joseph B.C.White, in *Famous Men and Women of Pittsburgh*, writes that "much of the outrage was visited on Rachel Carson simply because she was a woman. Perhaps if Dr. Rachel Carson had been Dr. *Richard* Carson the controversy would have been minor and the book would not have had half its impact. At that period, anti-female fear lay at the base of a great portion of this controversy. The American technocrat could not stand the pain of having his achievements deflated by the pen of this slight woman."

Others suggest that being a woman was part of the relatively invulnerable position that made it possible for her to undertake *Silent Spring*. By then, she was financially independent, well established as an honored scientist and author, and the respect accorded her for her attainments and for her quiet, dignified character spared her the more brutal attacks suffered by some men who also spoke out on these issues.

A subtler distortion comes from those who seem unable to accept accomplishment from a woman who led a normal life, with the responsibilities, frustrations and pleasures common to most of us. They wish to make her a recluse, aloof from most people, or unnaturally attached to her mother. Many insist that she was a "lonely" child, kept home from school when ill by an "overprotective mother" and somehow forced into a withdrawn life. Just once, it would be nice to have Mrs. Carson given credit for managing to bring up a rather frail child under rigorous conditions. One author was sure that Rachel and her mother were obsessively close because the family moved to Baltimore while she was finishing her graduate studies there. In the depths of the Depression, it simply made sense for them to join resources where the best job possibilities were. When her father and sister died soon thereafter, leaving two small nieces to raise, Rachel got a full-time job to support the family. Mrs. Carson's role in Rachel's career has received too little appreciation. She must have regretted Rachel's giving up further graduate study as much as Rachel did, but they had no choice. Later, Mrs. Carson supplied the support that all professional people need. Men tend to have wives; women in well-paid jobs can hire housekeeping and secretarial help. Mrs. Carson did all of this, as well as take the main share of raising the young girls. She typed the manuscript for *The Sea Around Us* (said by Oxford University Press to be the only perfect manuscript received in their 500 years). I know many successful women who say they could not have done their jobs without such help from their mothers; in Rachel's case this was surely so.

Another writer claims she had no interest in parties or sports in school, though her letters from that time certainly contradict this, and he concludes, "she apparently was never close to anyone." We who were her friends shudder at the dour, intense person this conjures up—in such contrast to the boundless zest and humor with which she met each new situation, and shared so generously with us.

Shirley Briggs, a lifelong friend of Rachel Carson, is the Director of the Rachel Carson Council, Inc.: An Association for the Integrity of the Environment.

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KAREN SILKWOOD:

laundered news
by Florence Falk

Karen Silkwood died on November 13, 1974, because she would not get "snowed under by the white rain of laundered news" from big business and government "laundries." This is what happened to her when she tried to clean their dirty laundry.

Karen was born in 1946 amid the giant oil refineries of Nederland, Texas. Her father, Bill Silkwood, was a house painter. Her mother Merle is a bank clerk. They taught Karen to speak up when she saw something was wrong. In high school, Karen was accepted into the advanced chemistry class. Her mother discovered she was the only girl and balked: "I thought she should be in something like home economics, and I told the chemistry teacher I wanted her out. But he finally made me change my mind. He said she was a better student than the boys."

Karen wanted to work as a laboratory technologist in nuclear physics, because her teacher said nuclear power was cleaner, safer and cheaper than oil. She left school to get married and have three children instead. Seven years later, she wanted to go back to school, but her husband wasn't interested in sharing the household tasks, and Karen set off alone at age 26 to work for Kerr-McGee.

Kerr-McGee owns real estate, coal, natural gas; it processes helium, phosphates, asphalt, pesticides, potash and boron. It is the nation's largest uranium producer. Its banner flies over as many uranium mines on Indian reservations as it could grab, over oil firms and drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico, the North Sea, the Persian Gulf and off West Africa. In 1974, KM made $119 million in profits.

Perhaps you've heard of the KM Messa mines at Shiprock, Arizona, where Navaho workers swallowed radon gas for 16 years until in 1969 they learned they were getting lung cancer. By June 1974, 18 of the original 100 miners were dead, 21 were dying. Said a KM official: "I could not possibly tell you what happened at some small mines on an Indian reservation. We have uranium interests all over the world."

Karen worked at KM's plutonium plant on the Cimarron River, about 25 miles outside of Oklahoma City. Her job was testing plutonium fuel rods. When she started, she didn't know that plutonium is one of the world's deadliest poisons. A bag the size of a softball is enough to give cancer to every child, woman and man on earth. Once released, plutonium stays deadly for 250,000 years, concentrating its lethal energy in the food chain, and in the testicles and ovaries of humans and animals to pass on to future generations.

Karen didn't know yet that KM didn't care if its workers *ate* plutonium, as long as it made its profits. She didn't know yet that the plant was built in a tornado belt, or that KM dumped plutonium in the Cimarron River, which was used for drinking and recreation. And she didn't know yet that by July 1974, 73 workers would be internally contaminated by plutonium—or that she would be one of them. "The whole place was one big leak," said a former KM employee. "Everyone came out of there hotter than little red wagons." Between 1973 and 1974, KM amassed 3,333 violations (and was penalized by the AEC for only eight of them).

Soon after Karen started working, the local OCAW (Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union) went on strike against KM for better training, better working conditions, better health and safety standards. Karen joined, and was one of the last holdouts, but the strike failed. After seeing the workers defeated even though they should have gotten what they asked for, she became a strong union organizer and resolved to change conditions at KM.

In the spring of 1974 Karen noticed the assembly line speed up. The turnover of workers was nearly 60%. New workers were getting less and less training. Karen watched everything, listened to everything and took notes. On July 21, she discovered she had been contaminated by plutonium. For more than a year she had urged KM to buy a special respirator to fit her small face but it hadn't arrived.

The next month Karen won one of the three seats on the union steering committee. She went to Washington with two others to meet with OCAW International. They told the story of KM's abuses of workers and their suspicions that quality control records for plutonium fuel rods were being falsified. Union officials said they needed proof. Karen told them, "I can get it." They agreed, but told her, "Don't do anything to bring attention to yourself."

She went back to work. The first thing she did was to get experts to tell the workers about the hazards of plutonium. It was the first time they had heard the complete story. The more they learned, the stronger the union grew. Karen spent her free time gathering evidence against KM on the dangers of plutonium. By now, a friend recalled, "she was scared to death of the stuff." Karen started to lose weight. She couldn't sleep. Friends tried to convince her to quit. "They need me," Karen answered.

On Tuesday, November 5, Karen discovered she was contaminated again. The needle on the monitor went crazy. The next day she was given a nasal smear. It showed she had been contam-

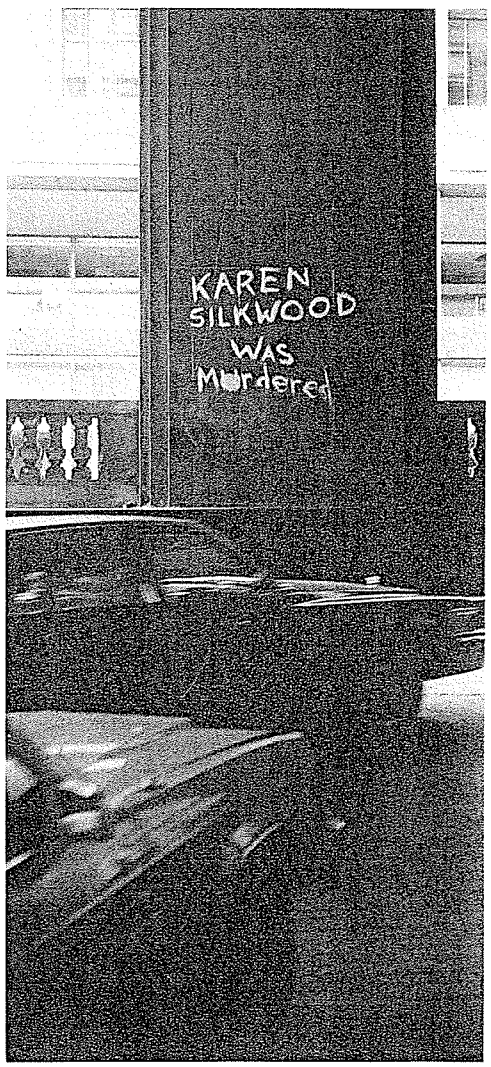

Photo by Sarah Jenkins.

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inated *internally*, but no one could find the source. Health inspectors checked the women's locker room, the employee's lunch room, Karen's car. Negative. That night a special inspection team went to Karen's apartment. The place was hot—with the highest levels of plutonium on the toilet seat and in the cheese and baloney in the refrigerator. The "inspectors" ripped up her apartment searching for documents.

Karen called her mother, who recalled, "The child was crying and saying she was dying." A few days later Karen took internal contamination tests. Doctors told her she was out of immediate danger, but she had some activity in her lungs.

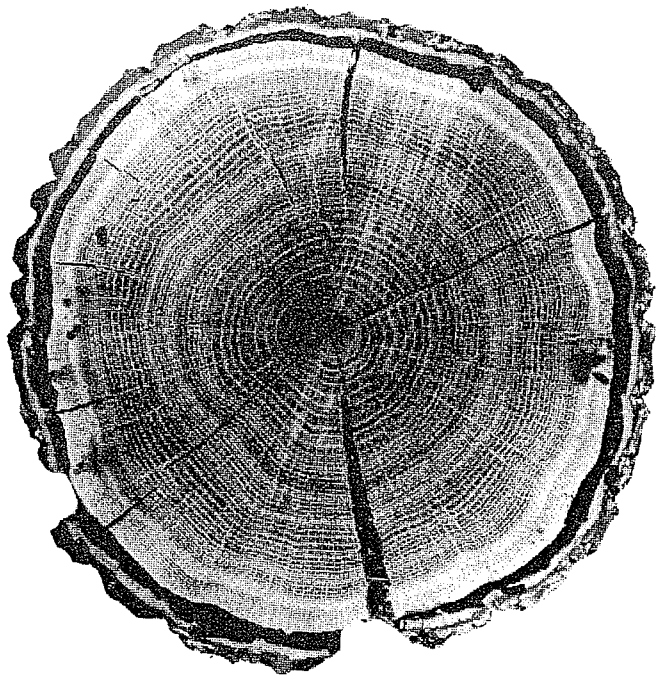
On November 13, 1974, Karen was scheduled to meet with OCAW official Steve Vodka and a reporter from the *New York Times* to turn over information she had collected against KM. People remember her holding a brown manila folder filled with papers, about an inch thick, and a reddish brown 8 x 10 spiral notebook. The meeting was scheduled for 8 p.m. at Holiday Inn Northwest in Oklahoma City. "She was very excited and looked forward to the meeting," her friend Drew Stephens later told the FBI. A union colleague, Jean Jung, remembers speaking with Karen before she left for the meeting. "Her eyes filled with tears. And she said she didn't know who could have it in for her so much as to contaminate her food and even her apartment. She said she had enough contamination to eventually kill her. She then said there was one thing she was glad about, that she had all the proof concerning falsification of records."

At 7:15 Karen drove down State Highway 74 South, the same road she traveled to and from work each day. But this time someone struck her car from behind, forcing it off the road and into a cement bulkhead. When ambulance drivers took the body to Logan County Hospital, Karen Silkwood was pronounced dead. Her car was towed to Ted Sebring's garage. He remembers opening up at 12:30 that night for four men who wanted to "inspect" the car. By the time the union and the *Times* reporter found out what had happened and arrived to claim the car, there was no 8 x 10 reddish brown notebook or inch-thick brown manila folder to be found.

But now we all know what she knew.

Florence Falk teaches and writes about contemporary theatre. Her articles have appeared in *WIN Magazine* and the *Soho Weekly News*.

On Healing the Nature/History Split in Feminist Thought • Joan L. Griscom



As I have considered the increasing discussion of the relation between women and nature, two important trends stand out, trends which appear to me strangely and seriously contradictory. This essay is an effort to help in healing this split in our thought.

The first trend involves the perception that there are four major systems of oppression in our patriarchal world: not only the domination of nature and women, but also domination by race and class. All four are thematically and historically interwoven. Sheila Collins echoed other feminist theorists when she wrote:

> Racism, sexism, class exploitation, and ecological destruction are four interlocking pillars upon which the structure of the patriarchy rests [1974:161].

Feminists are now exploring the nature of this interlocking or, as Rosemary Ruether (1975) calls it, interstructuring. What are the similarities and differences between these four forms of oppression? To what extent are they the same?

I pause for a note on terminology. *Sexism* and *racism* are fairly clear: each consists in regarding a group—for example, males or whites—as superior to another group—females or non-whites—on the basis of sex or race. *Classism* makes the same distinction on the basis of socioeconomic level; it operates nationally and, as in the relationship between the so-called developed and underdeveloped nations, globally. There is no one word that expresses the oppression of nature, but in accordance with these other terms, I would propose *naturism:* regarding humanity, one's own group, on the basis of nature, as superior to other groups, non-human nature. Admittedly, *nature* is a confusing word with many meanings. By *naturism*, I refer to humanity's domination of nature, which has resulted in the ecological crisis. It includes *speciesism*, the belief that humans are superior to other animals. There are other, subtler manifestations. For example, since *mind* is associated with human superiority and since *body* is associated with *animal*, naturism includes the belief that mind is superior to body.

The second trend which concerns me contradicts the first one. While feminists mostly agree that these four forms of oppression are analogous expressions of the patriarchy, there is a severe split between feminists who are primarily concerned with non-human nature and those who are primarily con-

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cerned with human history (race, class, sex). This seems to me a fundamental issue underlying what has been described as the split between "spiritual" (or "cultural" or "countercultural") and "political" or "political/economic" feminists (Bunch, 1976; Iglehart, 1978). So I use the terms *nature feminists* and *social feminists*. Nature feminists customarily derive their norms from nature, whereas social feminists derive them from history. Celebrating the close connections between women and nature, nature feminists affirm their biology; social feminists, intent on exploring social interconnections, are often deeply suspicious of biological explanations. Nature feminists, on the other hand, pay limited attention to social structures. At best, they are profoundly aware of racism and classism, and Third World and working-class women are part of the sisterhood, but nevertheless their journals normally lack analysis of such matters as race and class. Similarly, social feminists have paid limited attention to nature. For example, while they may discuss the ecological crisis, few incorporate it into their full social analysis, and some do not discuss it at all.

In general, the two groups have been far more hostile to each other than their common concerns might suggest. Social feminists may accuse nature feminists of avoiding resistance to the dominant culture and pulling together for comfort in a way that lacks political rewards. In their abhorrence of patriarchal social structures, many nature feminists assume a separatist lifestyle. In defense, some respond that they are not simply involved in personal liberation, that it is necessary to change the symbol system of a society as well as to develop social/political strategies for change (Starhawk, 1979). Those working to further a religion of ecology, such as feminist Wicca, are seeking symbols that can transform our consciousness and thus our culture. Social feminists point out that conditions of survival in other countries are worsening, and to siphon energy away from direct action to work on transformation of consciousness may bypass the need for human liberation.

The condescension implicit and often explicit in such attacks does not assuage feelings. The nature feminist seeks to preserve the planet as well as the species in the face of destructive naturism and calls on women's power to further the struggle. Elizabeth Dodson Gray (1979: 6) refers to naturism as "the most 'ruthless' mastering of all," for if the planetary ecology is destroyed, all sexes, races, and classes will also be destroyed. The historical bias of the social feminist all too often bypasses this fundamental consideration. Social feminists are clear that a historical materialism which omits the oppression of women is defective. But similarly, a social ethic which does not fully include nature in its analysis is defective.

As I observe this split between social and nature feminists, I find that each has hold of something the other lacks. Social feminists emphasize history and often disregard nature and biology; nature feminists emphasize nature and often disregard history and social structures. This is the nature/history split; and it is, of course, a false split, a false dualism. In actuality, one can derive norms from history and still include nature, for our relation to nature is *part of* our history. And one can derive norms from nature and still include history, for human history is *part of* nature.

One reason for this split is the traditional separation, observable in many disciplines, between history (human society) and nature (anything other than human). It seems especially acute within the behavioral sciences.[1] This is a type of subject/object split that considerably antedates Descartes; the relation of humanity and nature is perhaps the central question of all Western philosophy (Colwell, 1970). One problem is the puzzling fact that we are at once part of nature and yet somehow separate. On the one hand, humanity is part of the total ecology, the total interlocking systems of the planet, and beyond; and, on the other hand, we are able to use and exploit our environment, to mold and shape its systems to our own purposes. In some sense, our biology and our culture are in conflict with each other; but, paradoxically, without our biology, we would have no culture.

In the rest of this essay, I will set out steps that seem necessary if feminists are to heal this split in our theory. We need to build conceptual connections between the four forms of oppression, and it is particularly important to build them between sexism, racism, classism—the three modes of human oppression—and naturism. I will then sketch some special insights which nature and social feminists offer each other, and briefly discuss an important issue: whether women are closer to nature than men.

The Connections Between the Four Modes of Oppression

The philosophical roots of this oppression are found in the Western version of dualism, a mode of thought that divides reality, or aspects of reality, in halves. Patriarchal Western thought is pervaded with "hierarchical dualism" (Ruether, 1975), the tendency not only to divide reality but to assign higher value to one half. Simone de Beauvoir (1953) traces this to the primordial duality of Self and Other; she shares Hegel's view that every consciousness is fundamentally hostile to another consciousness, a curiously individual and ahistorical perception for so social a feminist. Many other argue that dualistic thought develops out of sexism; some assign it to social domination in general. Whatever its source, it is the most powerful conceptual link between the four modes of oppression.[2]

In this value hierarchy, the first half of the dualism understands itself as intrinsically better than the second. Women have been seen as defective males throughout history, e.g., in Christian thought and psychological theory. Treatises are still written to defend the proposition that Blacks are biologically inferior to whites. Human neocortical development, and the culture it enables, is understood as a clear sign of human superiority to animals. Since the first group is seen as intrinsically better, it is entitled to a larger share of whatever is divided. The higher socioeconomic classes are entitled to a greater share of wealth; and the myth persists that the poor are poor because they are either lazy or stupid. On a global basis, better food is reserved for men, for they are considered more valuable than women, and malnutrition is appreciably higher for Third World women. Nature is seen as so inferior to humanity that we have freely despoiled the environment for centuries.

Thus the superior half is entitled to more power than the inferior—power-over, needless to say, not power-for. The inferior groups become utilitarian objects, resources to be exploited and possessions to be enjoyed, a vast resource of profit and pleasure. Profit is reaped from the cheap labor of women segregated in pink-collar work or unpaid housework and child-rearing: pleasure is provided by woman as sexual object. Nature is also a convenient resource to be exploited for profit, as a source of energy or raw materials, or for pleasure, as a source of recreation. Since some

humans think it unethical to conduct medical experimentation on themselves, they displace the inconvenience and pain onto animals.

Interestingly, the lower part of each social dualism is associated with nature and regarded as somehow more "physical" than the higher part. Women are seen as physically weaker, more vulnerable to their physiology, and dangerously sexual, seducing men from higher pursuits. Actually, women, Blacks, and the lower classes all appear more sexual. The lower classes supposedly have less sexual control and hence have more children. The myth of the sexual "Negro" has caused great violence between the races in American history. Nature herself, sheer physicality, personified as woman, must be transcended through culture, personified as male (Ortner, 1974). Elizabeth Dodson Gray (1979), whose insistence on the centrality of nature sometimes gives her special insights, notes that nature is in turn demeaned by its association with women. Environmentalism reflects sentimental femininity, whereas anti-environmental politics are seen as masculine, realistic, efficient, and tough.

One difficulty with sketching parallels between the four modes of oppression is the inadvertent suggestion that they are identical. It is important to be aware that while there are fundamental similarities, there are also all kinds of intermediate contradictions; they are interstructured in complex ways, both as historical and contemporary processes. As Rosemary Ruether says:

> . . . they have not been exactly parallel. Rather, we should recognize them as interstructural elements of oppression within the overarching system of white male domination. . . . This intermediate interstructuring of oppression by sex, race, and also class creates intermediate tensions and alienations [1975:116].

Among these intermediate alienations are tensions between non-white and white working-class persons, between Black women and Black men, between working-class and middle-class women, etc. Historically, the Black Liberation movement has been male-dominated; until recently the tension between female and male has been suppressed. Similarly, feminism has been basically a white middle-class movement and has denied or suppressed the experience of poor, non-white women, both in the 19th and 20th centuries. Each liberation movement, it seems, has tended to gloss over the particular type of oppression within its own ranks. Thus we have the spectacle of a Black movement that has been sexist and a feminist movement that has been both racist and classist.

The Interstructuring of Naturism and the Three Modes of Social Oppression

This interstructuring is equally complex. Social and ecological domination are inextricably fused not only in theory but also in practice, as William Leiss (1972) has made clear; the exploitation of the earth is used to enhance the power of the already powerful. While Leiss speaks solely in terms of classism, the same points hold true for racism and sexism. In general, the oppression of nature has gained resources for the ruling class so that they have been able to perpetuate their exploitation of women, non-whites, the poor and the Third World in general. And similarly, of course, the exploitation of persons enables greater exploitation of resources; the four oppressions feed off each other to benefit those on top. Naturism flourishes in a context of social injustice.

However, the ecological movement, supposedly the antithesis of naturism, is itself a movement associated with the oppressors. The attack on naturism is frequently perceived by the oppressed as simply another means of preserving the elite's status and affluence. Many in the Third World perceive environmentalism as a conspiracy to deprive them of the technology they need so desperately for development; pollution controls, for example, both impede development and cost them money. Closer to home, the global problem is mirrored small in controversies like that around the Kaiparowitz project in Utah. To conservationists, the project meant pollution and infringement on precious wilderness; to local people, it meant jobs and survival, and the Sierra Club became their enemy. Bumper stickers which proclaim "Eat an Environmentalist" suggest great anger and alienation.

It is quite possible for ecology to be thoroughly co-opted by industrial capitalism, in the short run if not in the long run. This is part of Andre Gorz's thesis in *Ecology and Politics* (1980). As he explains, problems such as pollution and limited resources may be seen simply as technical constraints on capitalism. Technology can adapt; ecological costs can be absorbed; and the process of exploitation can continue unchecked. Gorz describes chillingly how, under Western capitalism, world leaders willing to use hunger as a weapon in the service of sociopolitical domination are developing a kind of ecofascism. Such weaponry was proposed by John Block, the current Secretary of Agriculture, in his first public statement.

Nevertheless, ecology, although cooptable, remains a potentially subversive science. Its conceptual underpinnings of interdependence and balance clearly confront the hierarchical dualism underlying the systems of oppression. At a social level, it provides a critique of the greed and waste implicit in industrial progress and the dangers of unlimited growth. But it has to make common cause with feminists and those seeking to liberate us from the oppressions of race and class. As Rosemary Ruether says:

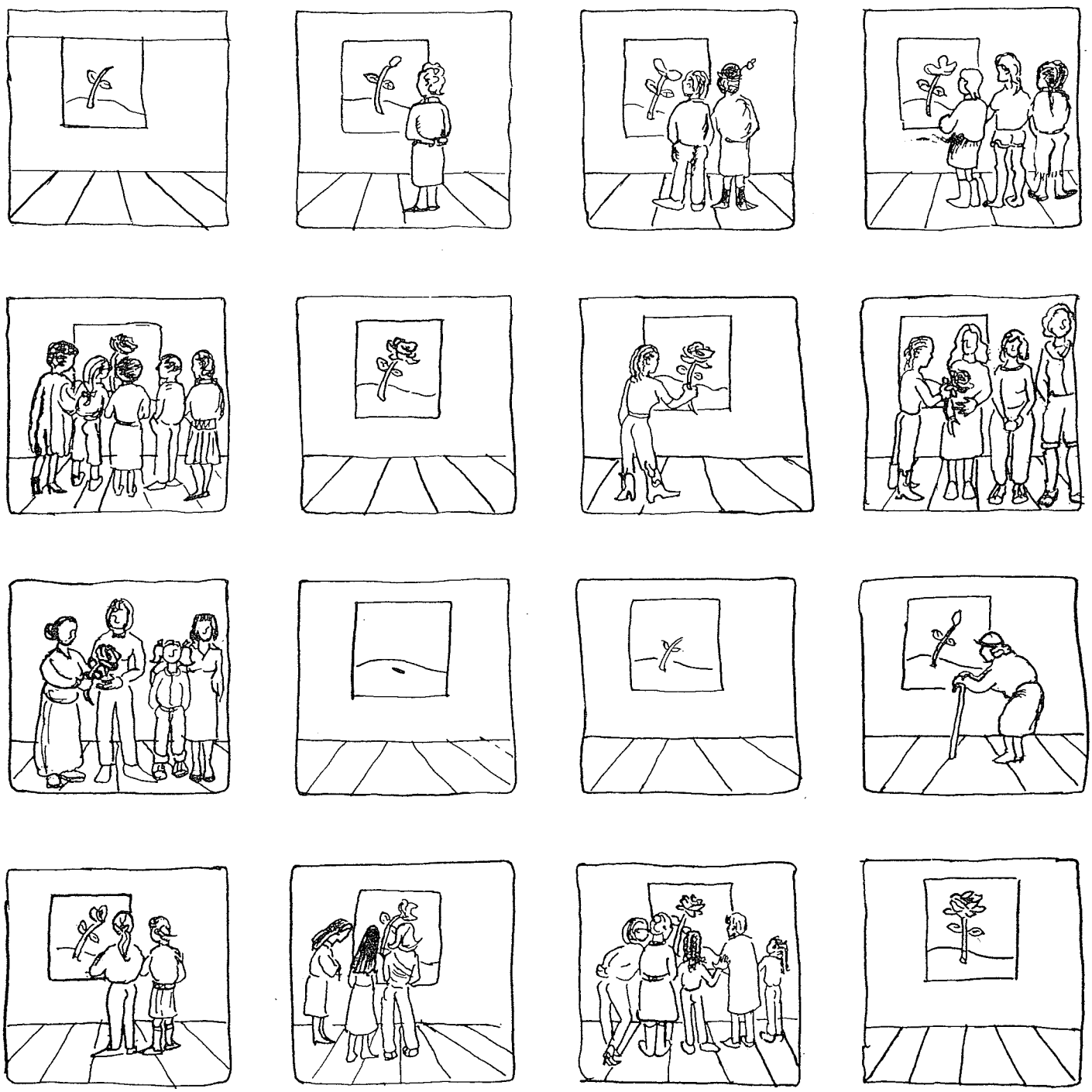
> The ethic of reconciliation with the earth has yet to break out of its snug corners of affluence and find meaningful cohesion with the revolutions of insurgent people [1979:51].

Some social feminists and various science-for-the-people groups have been working together on economic systems that can simultaneously benefit all persons and care for the earth. Both social and nature feminists have been working on the development of appropriate or alternative technology. Such cooperations are altogether vital if we are to avoid the catastrophic scene envisioned by Gorz.

What Do Social Feminists Have to Teach Us?

The question of what the four modes of oppression have in common includes the question of what societal mechanisms or structures keep them going. This is the kind of discussion lacking in works by nature feminists, such as Susan Griffin's passionate book *Woman and Nature* (1978), and it is a discussion to which social feminists have much to contribute. Social structures are, after all, just as imprisoning as individual consciousness. To a large extent, social structures condition our individual consciousness, and the transformation of consciousness is mediated by them. Nature feminists, of course, do not deny their existence, but in general they restrict their social analysis to sexism.

Social feminists teach us to add analyses of classism and racism to our attack on sexism. While it is possible to discuss women and nature without reference to class and race, such discussion risks remaining white and elite. Too much of



Michele Godwin. *Growth.* 1980. Pen and ink. Michele Godwin is an art student at the School of Visual Arts, NYC.

the suffragist movement of the last century became a struggle of white women for white privilege. And nowadays, what do discussions of women and nature mean to working-class women whose daily necessities include welfare reform, abortion, daycare, decent working conditions, and the like? To study sexism without reference to racism or classism is really the privilege of white women in higher socioeconomic classes. Only for this group is sexism the only problem (Ruether, 1975).

Gorz's analysis of the potential cooptation of ecology by capitalism suggests the need for women to make common cause with other oppressed groups and incorporate those experiences into their analyses and strategies. He suggests the possibility that before naturism destroys planetary ecology, and humanity with it, human suffering may increase greatly beyond its present dimensions. In the face of such an enemy, human liberation movements need to work together.

What Do Nature Feminists Have to Teach Us?

In poetry, art, dance, and ritual, as well as in expository prose, nature feminists repeatedly remind us that we are part of the earth and the universe, part of a great interdependent community of both animate and inanimate beings. Mary Daly invites us to rediscover "the cosmic covenant, the deep harmony in the community of being in which we participate" (1973:177). In 1978, at a feminist conference on social ethics, a substantial number of participants—persons very sensitive to modes of social oppression—nevertheless took for granted that non-human nature is here for our use. In general, social feminists

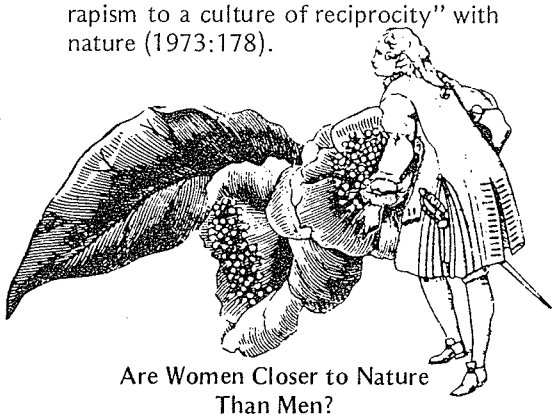
have been slow to preceive the parallels of naturism with the social dominations. To understand nature as a utilitarian object not only ignores the fact that we are part of nature but also sets up a false dichotomy between human and nonhuman nature. The ecological symbol of the Goddess, advanced primarily by nature feminists, has become a powerful symbol of the community of being for many feminists of different persuasions (Starhawk, 1979). At best, rather than returning to pre-technological primitivism, nature feminists can assist us to live within ecological limits, regulating our wasteful consumption and not polluting our resources.

In addition, nature feminists can teach us to celebrate our bodies. It is only very recently that social feminists have started to say much about the body; and concepts are sadly lacking to help us link our individual embodiment with our social relations. Alice Rossi (1977) is the sociologist most responsible for introducing biology into her field; and her pioneering efforts have been more attacked than facilitated. Traditionally, social feminists have been very suspicious of biology, in part because it has been used in reactionary ways against Blacks and women. Further, our biology is in large part the reason we have been confined to the domestic sphere throughout history (Ortner, 1974). "Anatomy is destiny" are fighting words in the sisterhood. Nevertheless, in our efforts to reclaim our bodies and affirm our sexuality, there is room for bridge-building.

Nature feminists could help to save social feminists from certain excesses. Some have responded to the misuse of biology by denying its realities: the final chapter of Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* is an extreme example. She asserts flatly that we must "free humanity from the tyranny of its biology."

> Humanity can no longer afford to remain in the transitional stage between simple animal existence and *full control of nature.* And we are much closer to a major evolutionary jump, indeed, to direction of our own evolution, than we are to a return to the animal kingdom from which we came [1970:193, italics mine].

So instead of succumbing to the "tyranny" of our biology, we will overthrow it and take total control. While Firestone traces most social domination to sexism, she does not extend this model to the relation of humanity and nature; indeed, she reverses it. In high contrast is Mary Daly's statement that we need to move "from a culture of rapism to a culture of reciprocity" with nature (1973:178).



Are Women Closer to Nature Than Men?

In a seminal article, Sherry Ortner (1974) argues that the universal devaluation of women (trans-historical and cross-cultural) has resulted from the association of women and nature. Men, on the other hand, are customarily associated with culture. Nature feminists are now reversing the logic and invoking women's closeness to nature in order to heighten our value. A powerful theme in their work is the idea that women are closer to nature than men. It is a short step, though not all take it, to the affirmation that women are therefore in important ways superior to men.

The topic deserves an article to itself. It is both deeply complex and deeply emotional, and it may well be one of the greatest stumbling blocks to an alliance between social and nature feminists. So I shall simply sketch out a few issues. Much depends on the meaning of the word "closer," whether it applies to biological or social-psychological matters.

Those who believe that women's biology allies us more closely with nature cite processes such as menstruation and childbirth. These relate us to Mother or Sister Earth, the rhythms and processes of life, the flow of future generations, in a way that men's biology cannot replicate. Some argue that menstruation brings women a knowledge of our limits early in life, which may assist us to live within ecological limits. Other take the whole argument further and say that the very possession of a penis—an organ they perceive as intrinsically dominating and patriarchal—limits male perceptions and capacities.

I have several difficulties with such arguments. First, simply because women are *able* to bear children does not mean that doing so is *essential* to our nature. Contraception clarifies this distinction: the ability to give birth can now be suppressed, and there are powerful ecological pressures in favor of this. In this context, it is important that our biology *not* be our destiny. Second, I find it difficult to assert that men are "further" from nature because they neither menstruate nor bear children. They also eat, breathe, excrete, sleep, and die; and all of these, like menstruation, are experiences of bodily limits. Like any organism, they are involved in constant biological exchange with their environment and they have built-in biological clocks complete with cycles. They also play a role in childbearing; I do not share the perception that the removal of semen from a man's body and its implantation in a woman's somehow turns fatherhood into an adjunct role. In reproduction, men's genes are as important as women's.

I find that Elizabeth Dodson Gray's argument for the limitations of "penis-bound bodily experience" is a contradiction of her central theme, her powerful affirmation of ecological interconnectedness. Consider her beautiful description of body-in-connection-with-the-world:

> . . . who-we-are is rooted in our kinship with the natural. The water of life flows through our tissues, and we are nourished, watered, fed, sustained, and ultimately return everything in our bodies to the world around us [1979:83].

Surely this is as true of men as of women. Besides, her vision of the penis as intrinsically dominating is contradicted by her own moving description of heterosexual intercourse, which indicates that a penis can be an organ of profound interconnection (1979:97). A culture may indeed condition men to use their penises as organs of domination, but they are not innately bound to do so.

There is a serious problem in freezing biological differences into a theory of two natures in which women are relatively "good" (closer to nature) and men relatively "bad" (farther from nature). This sets up a new hierarchical dualism, as much the reverse of male sexism as Firestone's analysis. Since Black is beautiful, white must be bad? Since Aryans are pure, Jews must be a danger to the race? Ultimately, the problem is ecological. In a true ecological vision, all participate equally, rocks as much as persons, males as much as females. All are part of the great community of being.

If the question is social-psychological, there may be more truth in the assertion that women are "closer" to nature: we may be potentially more

sensitive to it. Certainly our social roles have largely been defined in terms of bodily functions, and differing sex roles and psychologies have developed. Conditioned to greater emotionality and nurturance, possibly we are more likely than men to respond to the idea of sisterhood with non-human nature.

But finally, and most importantly, the question itself is flawed. Only the nature/history split allows us even to formulate the question of whether women are closer to nature than men. The very idea of one group of persons being "closer to nature" than another is a "construct of culture," as Ortner (1974) puts it. Since we are all part of nature, and since all of us, biology and culture alike, is part of nature, the question ultimately makes no sense.

Conclusion

As I contemplate the nature/history split, as it is manifested in the division and struggle between nature and social feminists, it becomes a Zen koan. Suddenly it becomes clear that our history is inseparably part of our nature, our social structures are inseparably part of our biology. As William Leiss wrote:

> . . . once the illusion of the separation between nature and society is abandoned, the true character of social development as a series of increasingly complex states of nature becomes apparent [1972: xii].

These are strange paradoxes, these seeming divisions between nature and culture, which dissolve into nothingness when one tries to take hold of them.

As has long been recognized, such either/or choices, such false divisions, are the curse of our patriarchal culture. When nature feminists assert that women are biologically superior to men, I think they are setting up a false split between men and women. When social feminists say that nature feminists are siphoning energy away from direct action if they choose to work on transforming consciousness, I think they are setting up a false either/or. A good ecological rule, when confronted with such a choice, is to ask if both/and is a possible response. This is in keeping with the ecological ethical imperative: "Maximize interconnectedness."

Certainly there is little point in choosing up sides between nature and social feminists since, as I have tried to show, we have much to give each other. I therefore share Charlotte Bunch's (1976) wish for a "non-aligned feminism" which refuses to attach automatically to an either/or choice. The feminist ethic spurs us to seek the truths in each other's positions rather than to assail each other's errors. This is easier said than done, of course, for we are all corrupted by the patriarchy; and *ad feminem* attacks, to coin a phrase, will remain in our literature. When such violence occurs between sisters it is doubtless well to look closely, for the issues that arouse the deepest emotions may be the most fertile to explore.

Social and nature feminists are part of each other. We have only just begun to study out the interstructuring of sex, race, and class. We need to work on understanding the interstructuring of naturism with the three modes of social domination. In working to heal the nature/history split, we may yet turn back the tide of ecofascism and advance our revolution.

1. History itself, as commonly taught and written, is chiefly human history. Rare indeed are books which set human history in an ecological context, such as Edward Hyams' *Soil and Civilization* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).
2. Most social feminists critique this dualism from a dialectical point of view, whereas many nature feminists are monist.

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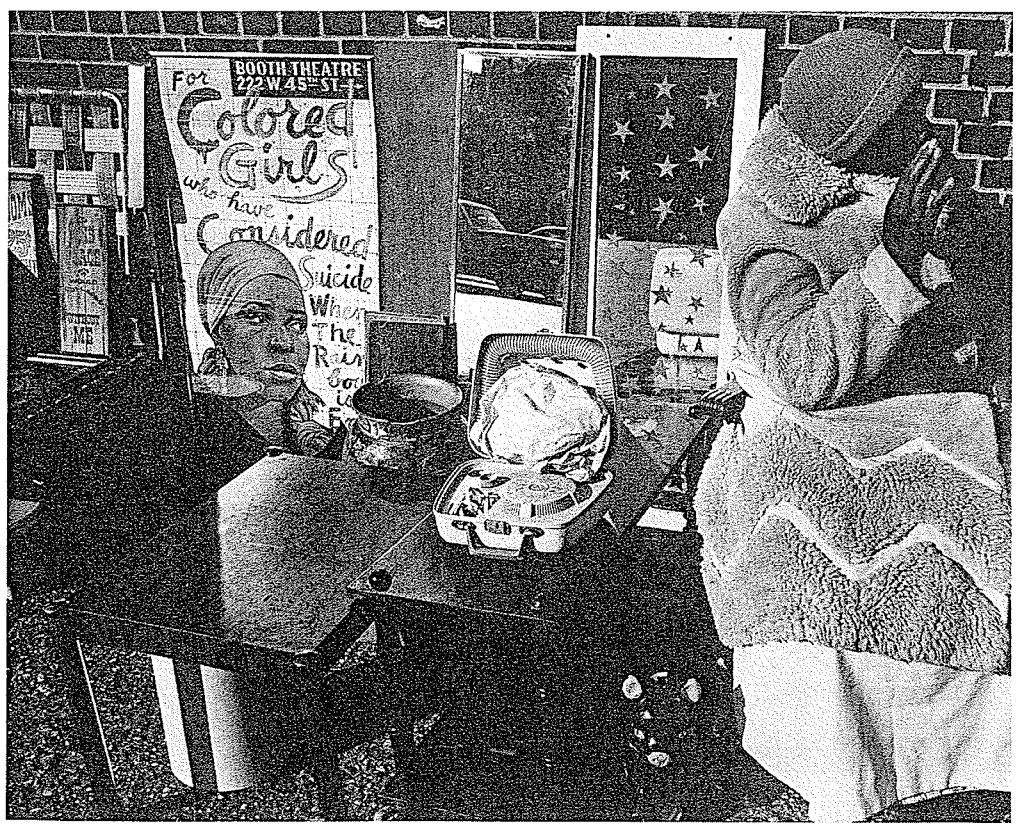
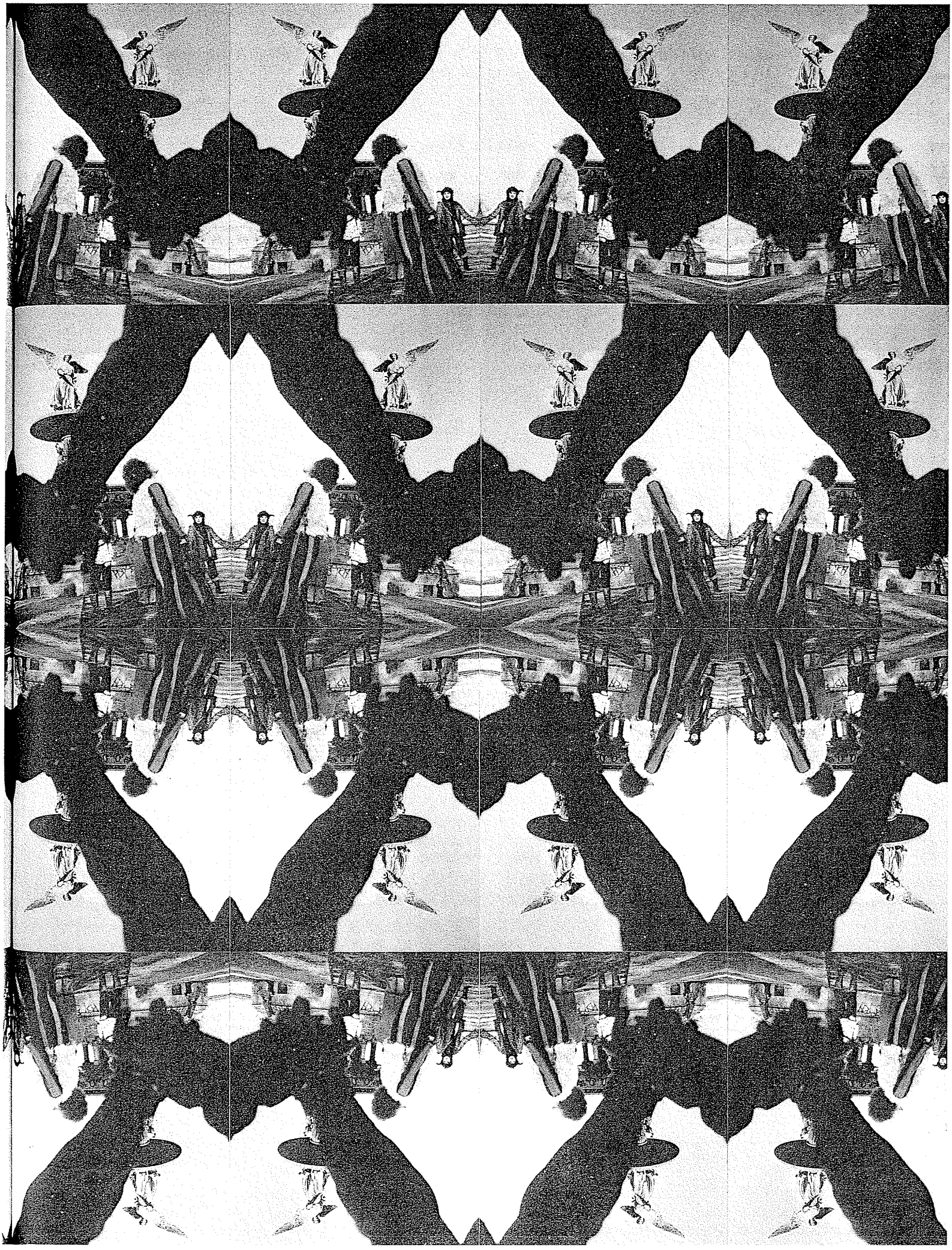
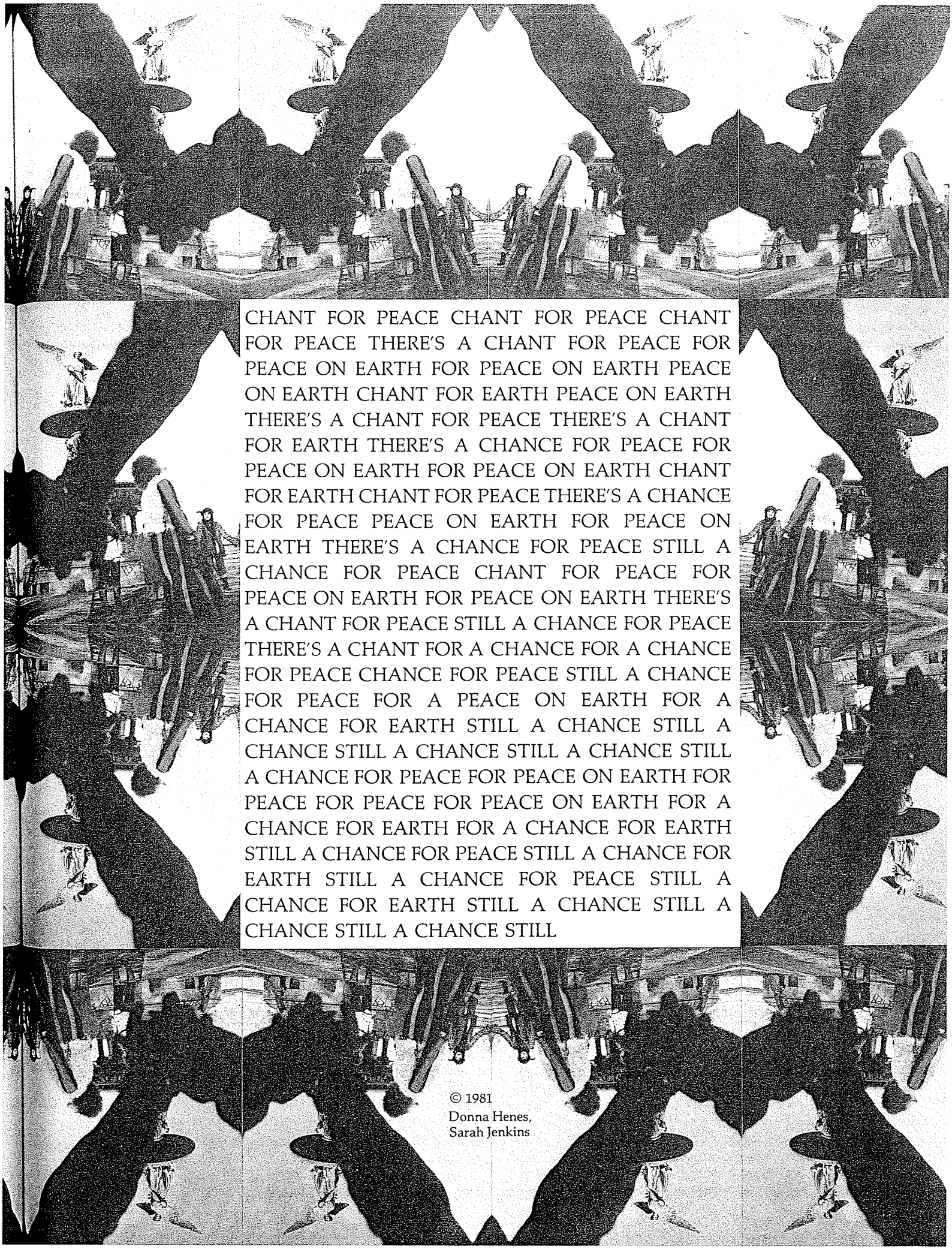


Photo by Lorna Simpson, an art student at the School of Visual Arts, NYC.





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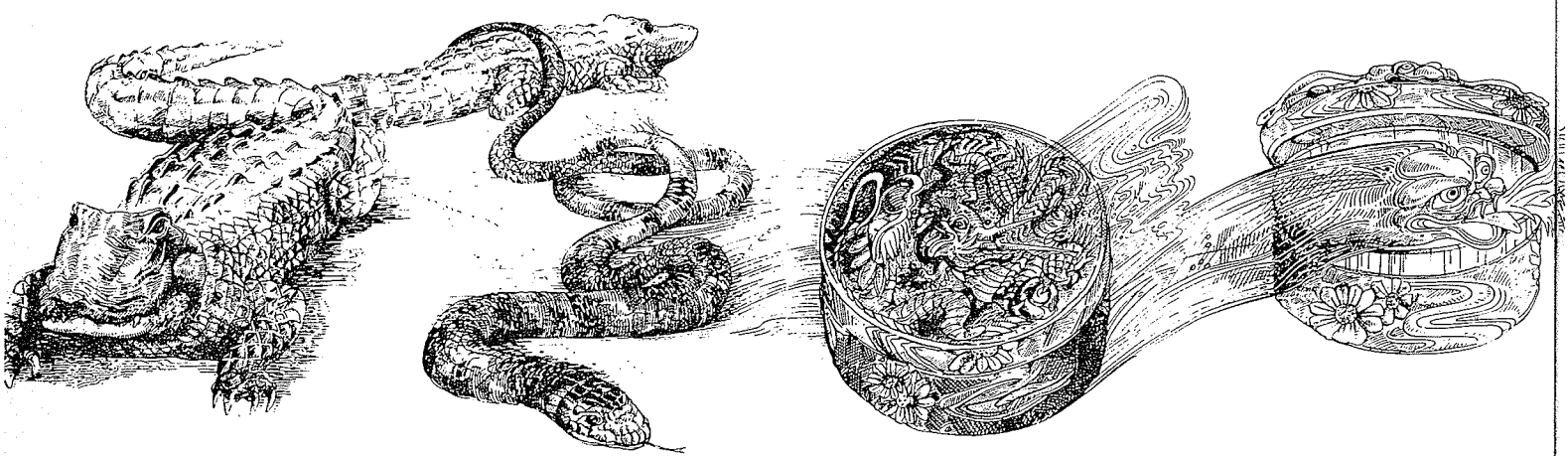
FEMINISM and the REVOLT

Ecology is a feminist issue. But why? Is it because women are more a part of nature than men? Is it because women are morally superior to men? Is it because ecological feminists are satisfied with the traditional female stereotypes and wish to be limited to the traditional concerns of women? Is it because the domination of women and the domination of nature are connected?

The feminist debate over ecology has gone back and forth and is assuming major proportions in the movement, but there is a talking-past-each-other, not-getting-to-what's-really-going-on quality to it. The differences derive from unresolved questions in our political and theoretical history, so the connection of ecology to feminism has met with radically different responses from the various feminisms.

Radical Feminism and Ecology: Radical feminists of one genre deplore the development of connections between ecology and feminism and see it as a regression which is bound to reinforce sex-role stereotyping. Since the ecological issue has universal implications, so the argument goes, it should concern men and women alike. Ellen Willis, for instance, wrote recently:

> From a feminist perspective, the only good reason for women to organize separately from men is to fight sexism. Otherwise women's political organizations simply reinforce female segregation and further the idea that certain activities and interests are inherently feminine. All-female groups that work against consumer fraud, or for the improvement of schools, implicitly acquiesce in the notion that women have special responsibilities as housewives and mothers, that it is not men's job to worry about what goes on at the supermarket, or the conditions of their children's education. Similarly, groups like Women Strike for Peace, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and Another Mother for Peace perpetuate the idea that women have a specifically female interest in preventing war. . . . If feminism means anything, it's that women are capable of the full range of human emotions and behavior; politics based on received definitions of women's nature and role are oppressive, whether promoted by men or by my alleged sisters.[1]



Other radical feminists—most notably Mary Daly and Susan Griffin—have taken the opposite position. Daly believes that women should identify with nature against men, and that *whatever* we do, we should do it separately from men. For her, the oppression of women under patriarchy and the pillage of the natural environment are basically the same phenomenon.[2] Griffin's book is a long prose poem (actually the form defies precise description; it is truly original).[3] It is not intended to spell out a political philosophy, but to let us know and feel how the woman/nature connection has been played out historically in the victimization of women and nature. It suggests a powerful potential for a movement linking feminism and ecology.

So how do women who call themselves radical feminists come to such divergent positions? Radical feminism roots the oppression of women in biological difference. It sees patriarchy (the systematic dominance of men) preceding and laying the foundation for other forms of oppression and exploitation; it sees men hating and fearing women (misogyny) and identifying us with nature; it sees men seeking to enlist both women and nature in the service of male projects designed to protect men from feared nature and mortality. The notion of women being closer to nature is essential to such projects. If patriarchy is the archetypal form of human oppression, then radical feminists argue that getting rid of it will also cause other forms of oppression to crumble. But the essential difference between the two or more types of radical feminists is whether the woman/nature connection is potentially liberating or simply a rationale for the continued subordination of women.

Other questions follow from this theoretical disagreement: (1) Is there a separate female life experience in this society? If so, is there a separate female culture? (2) If there is, is a female culture merely a male-contrived ghetto constructed long ago by forcibly taking advantage of our physical vulnerability born of our child-bearing function and smaller stature? Or does it suggest a way of life providing a critical vantage point on male society? (3) What are the implications of gender difference? Do we want to do away with gender difference? (4) Can we recognize "difference" without shoring up dominance based on difference?

Rationalist radical feminists (Willis' position) and radical cultural feminists (Daly's and Griffin's position) offer opposite answers, just as they come to opposite conclusions on connecting feminism to ecology—and for the same reasons.

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# of NATURE

Ynestra King

The problem with both analyses, however, is that gender identity is neither fully natural nor fully cultural. And it is neither inherently oppressive nor inherently liberating. It depends on other historical factors, and how we consciously understand woman-identification and feminism.

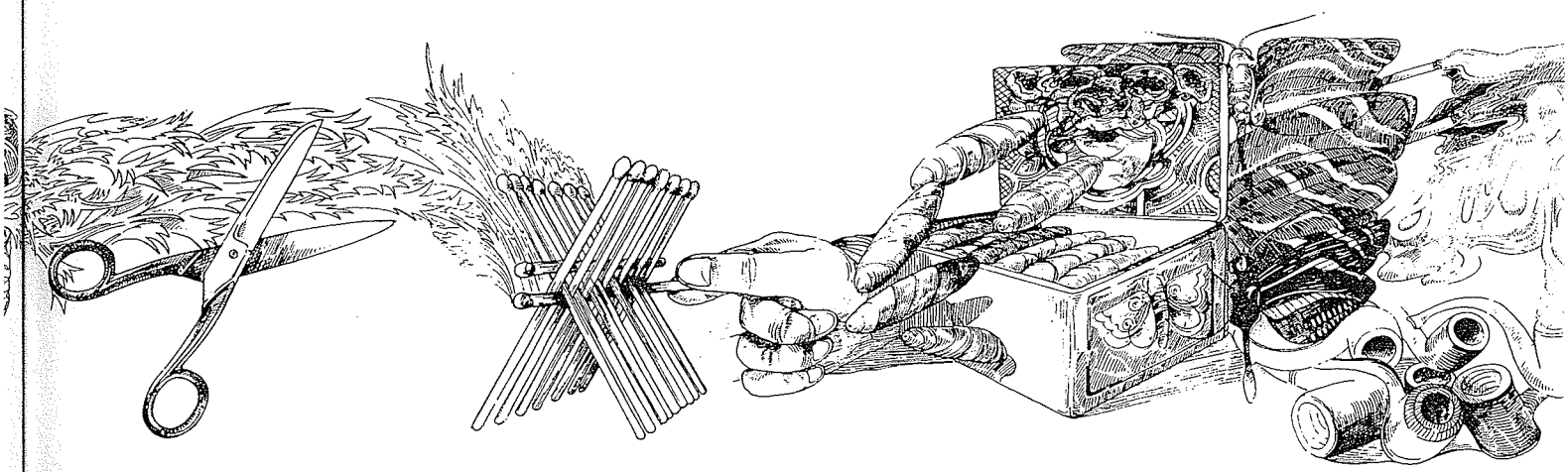
Socialist Feminism and Ecology:[4] Socialist feminists have for the most part yet to enter feminist debates on "the ecology question." They tend to be uneasy with ecological feminism, fearing that it is based on an ahistorical, anti-rational woman/nature identification; or they see the cultural emphasis in ecological feminism as "idealist" rather than "materialist." The Marxist side of their politics implies a primacy of material transformation (economic/structural transformation precedes changes in ideas/culture/consciousness). Cultural and material changes are not completely separate. There is a dialectical interaction between the two, but in the last instance the cultural is part of the superstructure and the material is the base.

Historically socialism and feminism have had a curious courtship[5] and a rather unhappy marriage,[6] characterized by a tug of war over which is the primary contradiction—sex or class. In an uneasy truce, socialist feminists try to overcome the contradictions, to show how the economic structure and the sex-gender system[7] are mutually reinforced in historically specific ways depending on material conditions, and to show their interdependence. They suggest the need for an "autonomous" (as opposed to a "separatist") women's movement, to maintain vigilance over women's concerns within the production and politics of a mixed society. They see patriarchy as different under feudalism, capitalism and even under socialism without feminism.[8] And they hold that nobody is free until everybody is free.

Socialist feminists see themselves as integrating the best of Marxism and radical feminism. They have been weak on radical cultural critique and strong on helping us to understand how people's material situations condition their consciousnesses and their possibilities for social transformation. But adherence to Marxism with its economic orientation means opting for the rationalist severance of the woman/nature connection and advocating the integration of women into production. It does not challenge the culture-versus-nature formulation itself. Even where the issue of woman's oppression and its identification with that of nature has been taken up, the socialist feminist solution has been to align women with culture in culture's ongoing struggle with nature.[9]

Here We Go Again, This Argument Is at Least 100 Years Old! The radical feminist/socialist feminist debate does sometimes seem to be the romantic feminist/rationalist feminist debate of the late 19th century revisited.[10] We can imagine 19th-century women watching the development of robber-baron capitalism, "the demise of morality" and the rise of the liberal state which furthered capitalist interests while touting liberty, equality and fraternity. Small wonder that they saw in the domestic sphere vestiges of a more ethical way of life, and thought its values could be carried into the public sphere. This perspective romanticized women, although it is easy to sympathize with it and share the abhorrence of the pillage and plunder imposed by the masculinist mentality in modern industrial society. But what 19th-century women proclaiming the virtues of womanhood did not understand was that they were a repository of organic social values in an increasingly inorganic world. Women placed in male-identified power positions can be as warlike as men. The assimilation or neutralization of enfranchised women into the American political structure has a sad history.

Rationalist feminists in the 19th century, on the other hand, were concerned with acquiring power and representing women's interests. They opposed anything that reinforced the idea that women were "different" and wanted male prerogatives extended to women. They were contemptuous of romantic feminists and were themselves imbued with the modern ethic of Progress. They opposed political activity by women over issues not seen as exclusively feminist for the same reasons rationalist radical feminists today oppose the feminism/ecology connection.



The Dialectic of Modern Feminism: According to the false dichotomy between subjective and objective—one legacy of male Western philosophy to feminist thought—we must root our movement *either* in a rationalist-materialist humanism *or* in a metaphysical-feminist naturalism. This supposed choice is crucial as we approach the ecology issue. *Either* we take the anthropocentric position that nature exists solely to serve the

needs of the male bourgeois who has crawled out of the slime to be lord and master of everything, *or* we take the naturalist position that nature has a purpose of its own apart from serving "man." We are *either* concerned with the "environment" because we are dependent on it, *or* we understand ourselves to be *of* it, with human oppression part and parcel of the domination of nature. For some radical feminists, only women are capable of full consciousness.[11] Socialist feminists tend to consider the naturalist position as historically regressive, antirational and probably fascistic. This is the crux of the anthropocentric/naturalist debate, which is emotionally loaded for both sides, but especially for those who equate progress and rationality.

However, we do not have to make such choices. Feminism is both the product and potentially the negation of the modern rationalist world view and capitalism. There was one benefit for women in the "disenchantment of the world,"[12] the process by which all magical and spiritual beliefs were denigrated as superstitious nonsense and the death of nature was accomplished in the minds of men.[13] This process tore asunder women's traditional sphere of influence, but it also undermined the ideology of "natural" social roles, opening a space for women to question what was "natural" for them to be and to do. In traditional Western societies, social and economic relationships were connected to a land-based way of life. One was assigned a special role based on one's sex, race, class and place of birth. In the domestic sphere children were socialized, food prepared and men sheltered from their public cares. But the 19th-century "home" also encompassed the production of what people ate, used and wore. It included much more of human life and filled many more human needs than its modern corollary—the nuclear family—which purchases commodities to meet its needs. The importance of the domestic sphere, and hence women's influence, declined with the advent of market society.

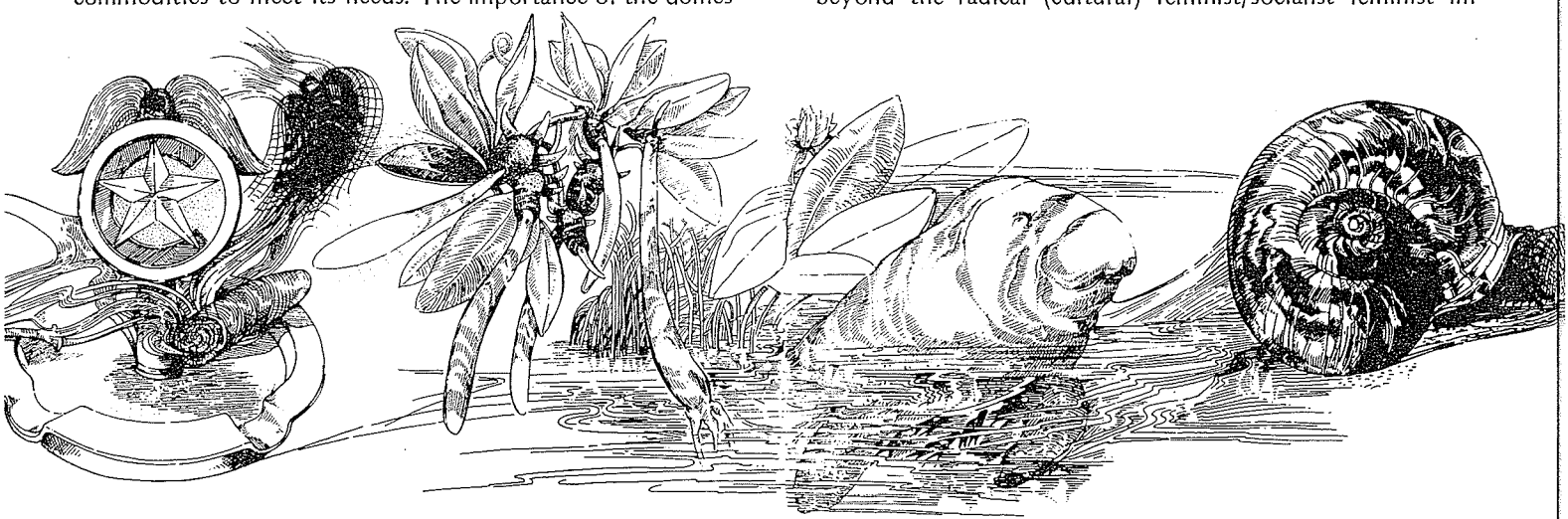
Feminism also negates capitalist social relations by challenging the lopsided male-biased values of our culture. When coupled with an ecological perspective, it insists that we remember our origins in nature, our connections to one another as daughters, sisters and mothers. It refuses any longer to be the unwitting powerless symbol of all the things men wish to deny in themselves and project onto us—the refusal to be the "other."[14] It can heal the splits in a world divided against itself and built on a fundamental lie: the defining of culture in opposition to nature.

The dialectic moves on. Now it is possible that a conscious visionary feminism could place our technology and productive apparatus in the service of a society based on ecological principles and values, with roots in traditional women's ways of being in the world. This in turn might make possible a total cultural critique. Women can remember what men have denied in themselves (nature), and women can know what men know (culture). Now we must develop a transformative feminism that sparks our utopian imaginations and embodies our deepest knowledge—a feminism that is an affirmation of our vision at the same time it is a negation of patriarchy. The skewed reasoning that opposes matter and spirit and refuses to concern itself with the objects and ends of life, which views internal nature and external nature as one big hunting ground to be quantified and conquered is, in the end, not only irrational but deadly. To fulfill its liberatory potential, feminism needs to pose a *rational reenchantment* that brings together spiritual and material, being and knowing. This is the promise of ecological feminism.

Dialectical Feminism: Transcending the Radical Feminist/Socialist Feminist Debate: The domination of external nature has necessitated the domination of internal nature. Men have denied their own embodied naturalness, repressed memories of infantile pleasure and dependence on the mother and on nature.[15] Much of their denied self has been projected onto women. Objectification is forgetting. The ways in which women have been both included in and excluded from a culture based on gender differences provide a critical ledge from which to view the artificial chasm male culture has placed between itself and nature. Woman has stood with one foot on each side. She has been a bridge for men, back to the parts of themselves they have denied, despite their need of women to attend to the visceral chores they consider beneath them.

An ecological perspective offers the possibility of moving beyond the radical (cultural) feminist/socialist feminist impasse. But it necessitates a feminism that holds out for a separate cultural and political activity so that we can imagine, theorize or envision from the vantage point of *critical otherness.* The ecology question weights the historic feminist debate in the direction of traditional female values over the overly rationalized, combative male way of being in the world. Rationalist feminism is the Trojan horse of the women's movement. Its piece-of-the-action mentality conceals a capitulation to a culture bent on the betrayal of nature. In that sense it is unwittingly both misogynist and anti-ecological. Denying biology, espousing androgyny and valuing what men have done over what we have done are all forms of self-hatred which threaten to derail the teleology of the feminist challenge to this violent civilization.

The liberation of women is to be found neither in severing



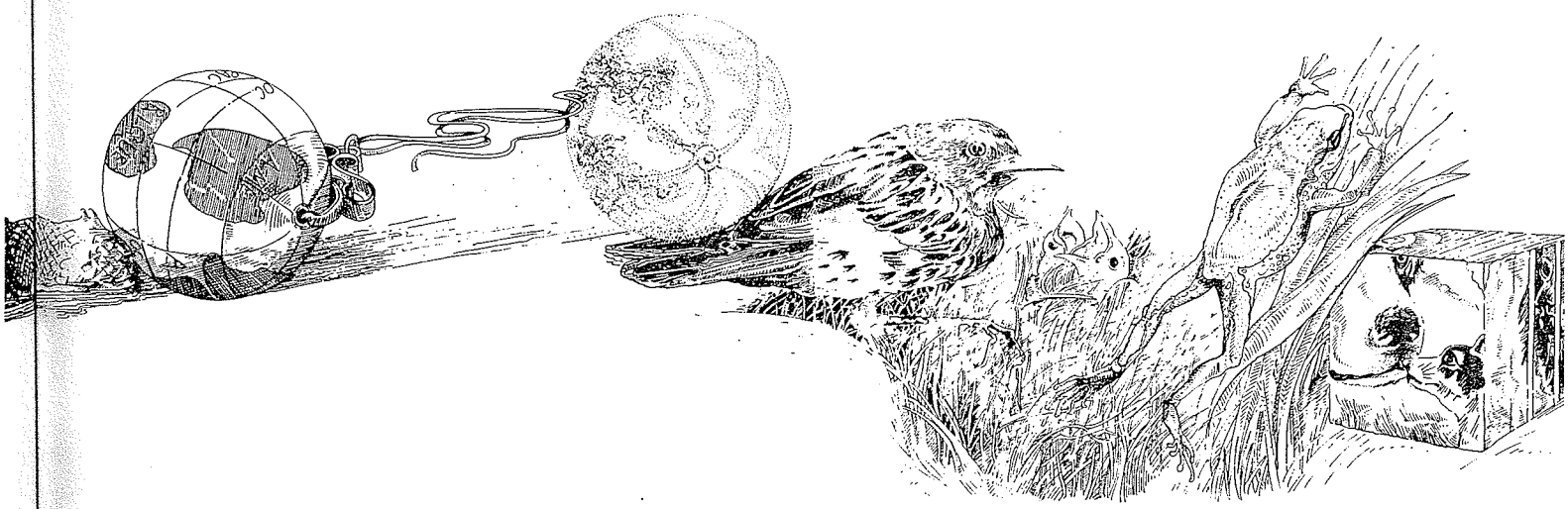
all connections that root us in nature nor in believing ourselves to be more natural than men. Both of these positions are unwittingly complicit with nature/culture dualism. Women's oppression is neither strictly historical nor strictly biological. It is both. Gender is a meaningful part of a person's identity. The facts of internal and external genitalia and women's ability to bear children will continue to have social meaning. But we needn't think the choices are external sexual warfare or a denatured (and boring) androgyny. It is possible to take up questions of spirituality and meaning without abandoning the important insights of materialism. We can use the insights of socialist feminism, with its debt to Marxism, to understand how the material conditions of our daily lives interact with our bodies and our psychological heritages. Materialist insights warn us not to assume an *innate* moral or biological superiority and not to depend on alternative culture alone to transform society. Yet a separate radical feminist culture within a patriarchal society is necessary so we can learn to speak our own bodies and our own experiences, so the male culture representing itself as the "universal" does not continue to speak for us.[16]

We have always thought our lives and works, our very beings, were trivial next to male accomplishments. Women's silence is deafening only to those who know it's there. The absence is only beginning to be a presence. Writers like Zora Neale Hurston, Tillie Olsen, Grace Paley and Toni Morrison depict the beauty and dignity of ordinary women's lives and give us back part of ourselves. Women artists begin to suggest the meanings of female bodies and their relationships to nature.[17] Women musicians give us the sounds of loving ourselves. [18] The enormous and growing lesbian feminist community is an especially fertile ground for women's culture. Lesbians are pioneering in every field and building communities with ecological feminist consciousness. Third World women are speaking the experience of multiple otherness—of race, sex and (often) class oppression. We are learning how women's lives are the same and different across these divisions, and we are beginning to engage the complexities of racism in our culture, our movement and our theory.

There is much that is redemptive for humanity as a whole in women's silent experience, and there are voices that have not yet been heard. Cultural feminism's concern with ecology takes the ideology of womanhood which has been a bludgeon of oppression—the woman/nature connection—and transforms it into a positive factor. If we proceed dialectically and recognize the contributions of both socialist feminism and radical cultural feminism, operating at both the structural and cultural levels, we will be neither materialists nor idealists. We will understand our position historically and attempt to realize the human future emerging in the *feminist present*. Once we have placed ourselves in history, we can move on to the interdependent issues of feminist social transformation and planetary survival.

Towards an Ecological Culture: Acting on our own consciousness of our own needs, we act in the interests of all. We stand on the biological dividing line. We are the less rationalized side of humanity in an overly rationalized world, yet we can think as rationally as men and perhaps transform the idea of reason itself. As women, we are naturalized culture in a culture defined against nature. If nature/culture antagonism is the primary contradiction of our time, it is also what weds feminism and ecology and makes woman the historic subject. Without an ecological perspective which asserts the interdependence of living things, feminism is disembodied. Without a more sophisticated dialectical method which can transcend historic debates and offer a nondualistic theory of history, social transformation and nature/culture interaction, feminism will continue to be mired in the same old impasse. There is more at stake in feminist debates over "the ecology question" than whether feminists should organize against the draft, demonstrate at the Pentagon or join mixed anti-nuke organizations. At stake is the range and potential of the feminist social movement.

Ecological feminism is about reconciliation and conscious mediation, about recognition of the underside of history and all the invisible voiceless activities of women over millennia. It is about connectedness and wholeness of theory and practice. It is the return of the repressed—all that has been denigrated and denied to build this hierarchal civilization with its multiple systems of dominance. It is the potential voice of the denied, the ugly and the speechless—all those things called "feminine." So it is no wonder that the feminist movement rose again in the same decade as the ecological crisis. The implications of feminism extend to issues of the meaning, purpose and survival of life.



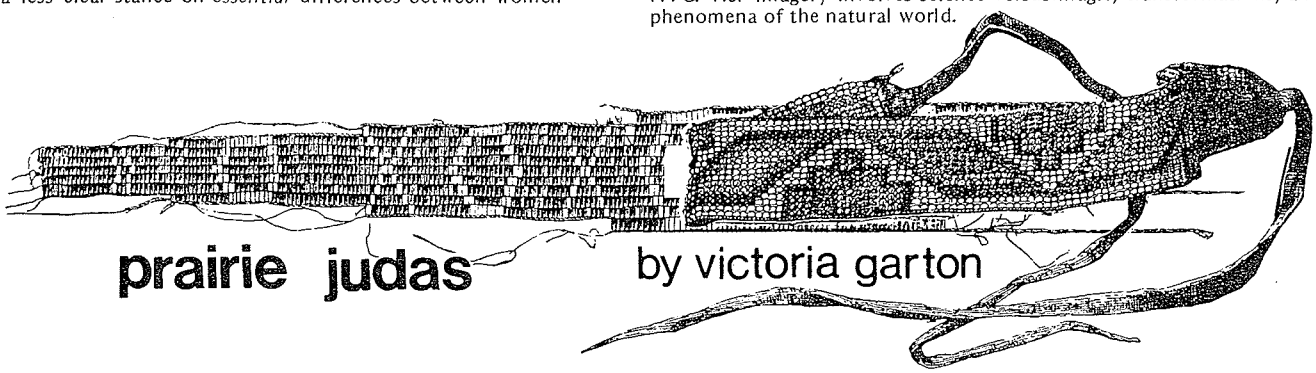
Ellen Lanyon. *Transformations II (Endangered).* Detail.

> Never to despise in myself what I have been taught
> to despise. Not to despise the other.
> Not to despise the *it*. To make this relation
> with it: to know that I am it.
>
> —Muriel Rukeyser, "Despisals" [19]

1. Ellen Willis, *The Village Voice* (June 23, 1980). In the *Voice* (July 16-22, 1980), Willis began with the question: "Is ecology a feminist issue?" and was more ambiguous than in her earlier column, although her theoretical position was the same.
2. Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Meta-Ethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978).
3. Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).
4. For an overview of socialist feminist theory, see Zillah Eisenstein, Ed., *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979).
5. See Batya Weinbaum, *The Curious Courtship of Women's Liberation and Socialism* (Boston: South End Press, 1978).
6. See Heidi Hartman, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," *Capital and Class*, no. 8 (Summer 1979).
7. The notion of a "sex-gender system" was first developed by Gayle Rubin in "The Traffic in Women," *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. R.R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975).
8. See Hilda Scott, *Does Socialism Liberate Women?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976).
9. See Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Woman to Nature as Man Is to Culture?," *Woman, Culture, and Society*, ed. M.Z. Rosaldo & L. Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974).
10. For a social history of the 19th-century romanticist/rationalist debate, see Barbara Ehrenreich and Dierdre English, *For Her Own Good* (New York: Doubleday/Anchor, 1979).
11. Mary Daly comes very close to this position. Other naturalist feminists have a less clear stance on *essential* differences between women and men.
12. The "disenchantment of the world" is another way of talking about the process of rationalization discussed above. The term was coined by Max Weber.
13. See Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980).
14. For a full development of the idea of "woman as other," see Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Modern Library, 1968).
15. Dorothy Dinnerstein in *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) makes an important contribution to feminist understanding by showing that although woman is associated with nature because of her mothering role, this does not in itself explain misogyny and the hatred of nature.
16. See de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*.
17. See Lucy Lippard, "Quite Contrary: Body, Nature and Ritual in Women's Art," *Chrysalis*, no. 2 (1977).
18. Alive, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Meg Christian, Holly Near, Margie Adam—the list is long and growing.
19. Muriel Rukeyser, *The Complete Poems of Muriel Rukeyser* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978).

Ynestra King, based in Northampton, Mass., is writing a book on feminism, ecology and survival entitled *Feminism and the Reenchantment of the World*. She works with Women and Life on Earth and the Women's Pentagon Action and teaches in the Goddard College "Feminism and Ecology" summer program.

Ellen Lanyon is a painter, printmaker and educator in Chicago and NYC. Her imagery involves science versus magic, transformations, and phenomena of the natural world.



prairie judas

by victoria garton

The coal company's shovel
has gobbled the prairie
and dropped it at my door.

You who have never been possessed
by land spreading from your years
know nothing.

What is hunger compared to this?
The sun no longer comes to my window.
The untamed wind has gone away.

As promised, I have thirty pieces
and my dirt.
It mounds a sad last kiss
covering my beggar's plot
burying me alive.

Victoria Garton's work has appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *Anima* and *Spoon River Quarterly*. She is the first woman elected to the three-judge commission which manages Vernon County, Missouri.

Christine Oatman. *Tying Oats (As If It Were Children's Hair)*. 1980. "In late spring and early summer, the fields of ripe grain are a pale golden color; from a distance the tall waving oats look not unlike blonde hair. I had a longing to tie the oats with ribbons, as one would tie children's hair, as my mother once tied mine./ In June of 1980 I placed a replica of my bedroom door—painted a gradated blue like the sky—in a field of ripe barley and wild oats on Otay Mesa. I passed through this door-of-my-dreams one afternoon with an armful of multicolored ribbons and proceeded to gather sheaves of oats, tying and braiding them with the ribbons. As I worked, the field of grain gradually seemed to be transformed into a flock of tow-headed children at play, symbolized by the colorful bows and fluttering ribbons./ In the early evening, my fantasy realized, I departed through the door-of-my-imagination and closed it, softly, behind me." Since 1970 Christine Oatman has done "Personal Landscape Fantasy" projects around San Diego.

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listening to native american women

The Long Walk arrives in NYC. Photo by Sarah Jenkins, a NYC photographer currently collaborating with artist Donna Henes on a book *Dressing Our Wounds in Warm Clothes* (Fall 1981).

Rocky Olguin

Rocky Olguin was a participant on the 1980 Longest Walk. She is of Zapotaca and Mexican descent and lives in Denver, Colorado. This conversation with Merle Temkin took place in New York in November 1980, after the marchers had rallied in Central Park.

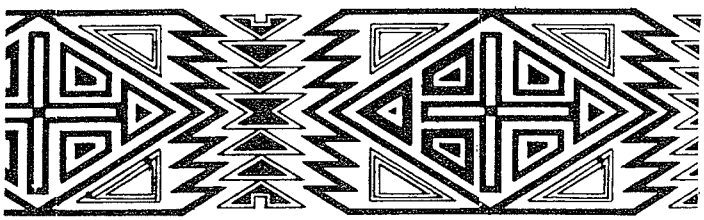
This walk is prophesied. We've already been this way before. Fifty years ago our people walked across the country to Washington. This walk started in June from California, with 250 people; some have come, gone. Myself, I'm not an original walker. It's not all Native people here. All peoples of color—white, brown, yellow people; men, women, and children—walking.

When we walk, it's a spiritual walk, it's a prayer, it's a sacrifice and a suffering. We walk to establish, even for five minutes, a dialogue. We stood outside in the rain all day yesterday at the United Nations. The UN is a farce. We want a world court so we can have our say. There's no justice for Native people in this country. All of us who are walking, we face repression—phones being tapped, murder; 300 people missing around South Dakota. This doesn't reach the news. When women are being sterilized, this doesn't reach the news. Wounded Knee was blocked out by Watergate. We walked two years ago to establish a dialogue with the President because the Department of Interior controls the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs). Carter then had the opportunity to meet with some of the greatest minds of our country, elders from six Nations. They could solve his energy problems because they understand the natural ways. He met with Fleetwood Mac instead. We are America's best-kept secret, the skeleton in America's closet, the Indian people.

We are walking to call an immediate end to the sterilization that's going on. There are 12 health facilities on our reservation and they are all controlled by the BIA. Women have gone in to have a baby and come out with their womb gone, or they are sterilized without consent or knowledge.

© 1981 Rocky Olguin

Women have cysts on their ovaries and doctors remove the ovaries or cut the Fallopian tubes. This is in epidemic proportion. We feel this is genocide. These things that are being done are against the United States Constitution, against our sovereign way, against the Geneva Convention. They are what the people in the Nuremberg Trials were tried for—war crimes. People don't believe it. Nobody believes it until it happens to them. A long time ago, there were orders given to annihilate the Indian people. We have documents to prove this. We feel this process is still being done and that's why they're sterilizing our women. You can't even go in for a pap smear without hearing two hours of rap on why you should be on birth control. Indian women, we're the guinea pigs. We have a high infant mortality rate and they have actually experimented on the newborn; when they die, we're told there are complications. In fact, our women live in places where uranium mining is going on, and the technology hasn't learned a way to store waste and mill tailings. Our children are drinking that water, breathing that air. This is causing our women to miscarry.



The Original Instruction

This is how we view ourselves from a traditional point of view: Everything that is round is a power—the Sun, the Moon, the Earth. The Moon is a female, our Grandmother. The Earth is our Mother. She's a female living spirit power. Our womb is like a universal transport system that brings unborn spirits here from the other world. When a woman goes to a hospital, if she has a D & C to scrape the womb, that universal energy is taken out. When a woman uses an IUD or even tampons, she's weakened. We are trying, through survival schools, through our traditional ways and the universal instruction, to bring our women back into balance. Our unborn are sacred. At one time, our people could guarantee that the unborn would inherit seven generations. Now we don't even know if our children are going to live.

We want to decide on our kind of health care. Our traditional medicine has always worked. They make it look like it's folklore, superstition. If people had the means and knowledge to heal themselves, that would kill capitalism within the AMA. If women knew the herbs, natural birth control to use, that would put the pharmaceutical companies out of business. I breathe, live and drink the polluted water. I haven't been sterilized, but my womb is threatened. I have a right, as a Native woman, to my generation.

On Women's Liberation

Women of color, Native women, face imperialism, racism, sexism, all the isms—and suppression, depression, oppression and repression. I feel I cannot call my brother "chauvinist pig" because he may be narrow-minded. That's where society has put men. For us, just as there's a Sun and Moon, there's a duality to everything in the universe, a male and female power. Everything, every grass, every tree, is either male or female. In this duality, I am masculine and feminine, he is masculine and feminine, but society has distorted our roles, our original concepts, and people are totally out of balance. How can our women be free when our men aren't free? Our nations aren't even free. It's not a woman's, a man's or a child's struggle, it's a people's struggle. I don't want to be equally unbalanced. I think the whole thing has to change. We don't support women's liberation because it makes a separation. But a lot of our people have been influenced by that. Women are trying to free themselves from the kitchen when they never understood the power in that kitchen to begin with. To make things with your hands, to cook food, is a power. We can make somebody sick. If you're in a bad mood, you might burn your bread. That's energy. Men doing the cooking, that's good too, that's the duality.

Traditionally, our women have a place in the universe, not just in the kitchen. That's what we're trying to learn, on what we call this Red Road. We are learning our original instructions on the Earth from the original teachers—the Earth and the Moon. Woman holds up half the sky. In this age, we're trying to hold up the whole thing because man's mind has been taken by society and put someplace else.

Every creature that lives on this planet has a walk to do. We're on our Longest Walk. It's good to walk; it keeps your mind straight. This society can put your mind anywhere. Everyone knows Reagan hates minorities. Like John Wayne, he seems to believe all his movies. This society doesn't care about the people living in the present, let alone the future. If they did, they would think about what they're doing to the Earth. They're not going to live on the Moon; they have plans to go there when the Earth stops. Grandmother Moon ain't accepting nobody, especially from America.

Betrayal and Assimilation

Through our traditional teachings, we are trying to keep our families together; but for us, it's coming apart because our children are institutional babies. If our women don't fit the standard for living, they take our children and send them to boarding schools to accept the white world. We're on government welfare that's designed to keep us like that. On some reservations, you can't own a home, you can't own a car, so you don't meet the standards. We're not allowed to be Red and we sure can't be White. All that causes many imbalances—physical, emotional, mental. The elders are the teachers of our children, but our own religious ceremonies are illegal.

We can doctor ourselves. We have herb stores, but who picked the herbs? Was it a woman on her Moon Time? Anyone white and rich can go to medical school, but it doesn't mean they can heal. All these things are like a traditional language, a sacred communication. It's not mystical or magical. It's just being in harmony with the natural laws of the universe, because they do exist. Just because Galileo and Newton didn't discover them, doesn't mean they don't exist. We don't follow men—except the traditional elders and medicine men, like Leonard Crowdog.

The BIA and tribal councils are men working under a law that men made up. Some of our people have been infected by power, money, status—the values this society teaches. We have people in our tribal governments who believe we should forget who we are and adapt, or believe we should have two cars and a home. They're selling us out. There's Dick Wilson in South Dakota who signed away an eighth of the Black Hills to the U.S. government without consulting the people. He's a puppet for the BIA. There's Peter McDonald of Navajoland, negotiating the rights to the minerals with OPEC. We know what is

going to happen at the end of this age. We know this is the last age we live in, but we walk to show people it's a time of survival, of purification. A time to clean up our minds and spirits and bodies. This government doesn't want us to control our destiny. They put us on reservations and expected us to turn into farmers with useless land. But now the land isn't useless, there's coal and uranium. The land is not for sale, except from those who are selling us out. We cannot sell our Mother. These people got away from their original instruction and started using the white man's tools. They call it red tape; I call it white tape, the bureaucracy. Nothing is proven until it's documented in black and white. File away the brain. It's a falsity of values. Women are taught a false femininity—nails, hair, I tried it. There's no strength in it.

Lois Red Elk

interviewed by Carol Stern

Lois Red Elk is active in the American Indian Movement (AIM) in Los Angeles, where she utilizes the media for change, hosting TV talk-shows on youth and ethnic communities. She is originally from Montana and her culture is Sioux (Dakota). I met Lois at a gathering in the Black Hills in 1979, when over 10,000 people planned large-scale resistance to the big corporations' transformation of the Black Hills into a "national sacrifice area," where extensive uranium and coal mining would devastate all life and land. At the gathering there was a large number of lesbians, some carrying a banner reading "Lesbians in Support of the Black Hills Alliance." A woman who said she was in AIM asked them to take it down. Although Lois is not a lesbian herself, she was supportive when I told her about the incident. She said that whoever that woman was, she must have been "touched by Christianity."

LOIS: Because in our culture, we have a word for people who make the preference of being gay or lesbian, and they are called "Winktah." They decided to be that way when humans were being created. Their role as humans in this cycle was to see both sides of a person's identity, both female and male. In my own particular band of Dakotas, the Winktah people picked our campsites to determine what was going to be best for the men and women, as far as being protected, as far as the geographical area, how the wind was going to blow on them and which way the rain was going to come.

Our whole concept of those people has always been that they are spiritual. That stopped when missionaries came. In translating the language from Indian to English, missionaries intentionally left out many words, many definitions of sexual roles. And they brought words to us. People living in one lodge needed to find separate rooms for the parents so the kids don't see them. Boys should be raised differently so that we don't have any ideas coming to them about having a preference. And the women, too, they should be placed in certain areas. It was an intentional plan to erase all of that out of our culture. Anybody who deviated from that, instead of spiritual, was considered weird. So Dakota or Lakota women showing any kind of discrimination about lesbian participation at the Survival Gathering—it's not really all their fault. We've got to consider how much exposure a rural community has had to gay people, lesbian people finding themselves, liberating themselves. Here in the city there's been a real fight for that recognition.

It was just like during the old period of the Indian wars with us, or the days after slavery. Constantly being put down, hunted, abused, jailed, to the point where it finally got enough people together to say, "We've got to pass some laws and do something about this." You need to write that kind of history down and present it to those rural country people who are "behind the times." I think when we go over to the Gathering this summer, we're going to have to send a message ahead of time, like a forerunner, a carrier—that we've dealt with this out here with cultural Indian women and lesbian people and this is what we've decided as a result of this meeting. Writing your history of your struggle in the city would help. I was in this community when there was a lot of bashing heads. People coming out and throwing bricks at lesbian and gay people, just for standing up for what they believe. This was about ten years ago.

CAROL: I tried to put an article in a feminist newspaper after the Black Hills Gathering last summer saying there was some correlation between other struggles and Lesbian Rights struggles, and they criticized it, saying that it was racist, that you couldn't compare struggles like that.

LOIS: Well, I've met a few gay Indian women in the city and they don't come around the Indian community. They don't go to the Pow Wows, they don't associate with Indian people in the athletic groups or with the church groups or anything. They identify with the gay community. Just recently there were about three or four of us who went out to a restaurant/bar type place. There was a pool table in the back and there was a Navajo woman there playing pool. I told her to come join us and she felt uncomfortable. So I said, "Well, it's o.k., come on, we're all Indians." And she said, "Yeah, you're all Indians, but the rest of us here are lesbians."

CAROL: Did you know that this was a lesbian bar?

LOIS: No. So I thought about that for a while and real quick it flashed, "How much does she know about her culture as far as our own concept of gay people?" And why would she feel comfortable being with the Indian community when there was a lot of prejudices left? So what was her choice? She finished her pool game and came over and we were all talking and we had a good time. I gave her my phone number and told her to call me. I haven't heard from her. It definitely is a community of people who think they have to leave other things behind. They think there's a boundary line they can't cross. You can compare that—that feeling of thinking you've got like

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a reservation with boundaries—to other struggles.

I can see where the gay community is still probably in the infant stage. You need to draw from the histories of gay cultures in Indian and African societies, and use those histories to help you determine your future in this present cycle. I believe this is the last cycle and that it's going to be hard. We need to look at our prophecies. And the gay people have prophecies too, and you need to start looking at those and using them.

CAROL: I wanted to hear more about what you were saying about the "last cycle." How long is a cycle?

LOIS: It's a Sioux prophecy, and our religious and cultural belief, that our people have lived before in different cycles, whether it be as human beings on this land or just as spirits. This past cycle has been 500 years. And it probably goes back further than that, how long the people have been in the Black Hills. I believe that the people were formed from the Earth there. That is my belief as a cultural Sioux woman. It has been a real battle over the past ten years between the two races of people in the Dakotas, between the Indian and non-Indian people who live there. Along the line somewhere it was revealed to them that basically their concern about living there is the same. There are certain powers that are threatening their very existence. They are going to have to come together in order to preserve the land.

We still have to consider, though, who the hosts are in that area. We need to look to the traditional, cultural Indians who maintained the communication with the Earth in spite of everything. But we shouldn't be afraid of the medicine people or the elders. We shouldn't be afraid to challenge them and give them ideas. They are very important to us, but they definitely are bodies through which spirit and culture are passed to us today to give us messages. They're supposed to be listeners. I think they're absolutely open to talking to you and giving you good ideas and histories. As a group, in writing your own lesbian history, you can utilize your experience with the Gathering to share.

I see you as working very hard to communicate with people. You can use the newsletter as saying, "This is our history and now we're going to meet with people who don't know what's going on." You can say to yourself, "I'm coming over here and how are you going to treat me? Is what you're doing here in the Black Hills going to be an education to my community or am I just going to have more experiences of discrimination?" You might put that in your forerunner letter. I think it would be a real asset for the Black Hills Alliance Survival Fair to say that we have a lot of input as to how to learn to survive from the gay community, instead of just saying "Environmentalists right here, Anthropologists right here," that kind of separation.

CAROL: The concern is that we'll alienate the people in the area and that the people living there will have to deal with these things. When we're gone, they're left with "Well, what about the queers?" or something.

LOIS: It's a big responsibility, on everybody, to dare to change. That's what it's all about. Survival. Where I am right now in my life is having to survive in two cultures, where I'm paying more attention to someone else's concept of survival but I know the Indian culture is there to draw from or to return entirely to, eventually. L.A. is the media center of the world, so I'm out there battling with the media daily. I enjoy it. I feel good about my culture. I draw from it for my sanity, for my health, for my children, all that. I'm a 500-year-old child. I think my spirit has been around for 500 years. Prior to that, I don't know what it was. I may have been a star at some time.

Carol Stern, a radical lesbian singer and musician, believes that music is power: "I dream of women and children of many cultures gathering together in contact with the land to begin birthing a new woman/child/earth culture."

MADONNA THUNDER HAWK: WARN (Women of All Red Nations) is an organization of activist Native American women around the country. It was organized three years ago, but we have been working for many years on local community issues that affect our people. Basically WARN deals with direct threats to our survival as a people on whatever level—international, national or local. The name of our chapter here, *Makoée Tehila Winyanpi*, means "women who care for the land."

Definitely the tie between women and the land exists. It's so obvious, so simple, that it's very hard for "intellectuals" to really understand it. What the American people call the peace pipe was brought to the Lakota Nation by a woman, the sacred White Buffalo Calf Woman, so even the basis of our spirituality is directly from a female. And although we are under constant threat of acculturation and assimilation into the American way of life, the basis of our way of life is respect for Mother Earth.

As Native American women we see what you could call "women's issues" more "up front," so to speak. Now—because of what happened at Three Mile Island, Love Canal and other places that make the news; things that are happening to the land through energy development; interferences with health; contamination—these issues are more "up front" in America too. But these things have been happening to *us* for years.

Back in the 1950s, a uranium mine operated in the Black Hills of South Dakota. When it shut down, they left radioactive tailings. The tailings eroded into the water table and eventually into the Cheyenne River and then into the ground water and creeks of Pine Ridge Reservation.

Also there was a gunnery range located on the reservation in World War II. They told the Indians that after the war they

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could have it back. We still don't have it. But worse, many chemicals were left in the water which have been traced back to the gunpowder and explosives they used. About one year ago, WARN women working in the hospitals as student nurses observed quite a few cases of spontaneous abortions among women two to four months pregnant. They also found stomach problems and breathing problems among the elderly and the children. In a small population it is easy to see patterns like these. So we had the water tested scientifically and found it was bad. Now, one year later, the federal agencies are getting involved, the Tribal Council is getting involved. And they realize we were right, the water is poison.

MARGIE BOWKER: In the spring of 1981, Union Carbide plans to mine uranium in Craven Canyon, one of the most beautiful places in the Black Hills. All our spirituality is there. The Black Hills to the Lakota people is like what the church is to white people, to Christians. Right where the exploration has begun there are pictographs and buffalo bones that show we've been here a long time.

MADONNA: Saving a sacred area and preserving these archaeological finds is irrelevant to politicians and the energy corporations. They have destroyed vast areas of other countries, Third World countries, in their quest for riches and energy. So we know we can't go on a humanistic or moral issue. The only avenue we have is through the courts. Yet in January 1981 the State Conservation Commission let Union Carbide go ahead with their mining exploration in this sacred area. And in this country today, with all this fantastic technology, there is no safe way of dealing with nuclear waste in any way, shape or form.

Fortunately, we have ties with our people in the Southwest. We know what's happened where uranium mining has taken place over the years and what will happen here unless the people become aware. There are vast areas of land that are uninhabitable; strip mining uses large amounts of water; they have radon gas being released. Now Citibank is looking at South Dakota. We see a boom town syndrome developing. We've worked closely with the Black Hills Alliance in Rapid City, South Dakota. They have research and documentation so we know what we're up against. For example, the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana had a Class I air status. After pressure and manipulation they lowered it in order to sign a contract with Shell Oil for coal strip mining on the reservation. It's a sad thing. But we realize when you have a large number of poor people, money talks. On the Cheyenne River Reservation, WARN has been getting activist people elected to the tribal government. They will give workshops on the Clean Air Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act and pushing for Class I air status on that reservation. Then they can try and apply pressure to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, where all this energy development is going on.

Today there is an organization called the Council of Energy Resource Tribes (CERT). Indian reservations with energy resources have gotten together to see how they can exploit the energy resources themselves, to get ahead of the corporations. At first it sounded like a good thing, but we saw the fiasco that happened in the Southwest where the Navajo people are now dying of cancer and other related things. It's contamination to the worst degree.

MARGIE: The people don't have any voice in CERT. The big wheels of the energy corporations are honored guests at board meetings of CERT. Only the chairman of each reservation is a representative. The chairman of the Navajo Nations, Peter MacDonald, is selling his people out. He is selling the land.

MADONNA: The people are looking desperately for work. You have an organization like CERT, your own Indian people telling you, look, you've got all these water rights here and these corporations want to do this mining and they need millions and millions of gallons of water per day. Look at all the bucks that can be flown in. The fact remains these five states are a largely rural area. We don't *need* vast amounts of energy. We don't need all the electricity the industrial areas of this country need. But all over the world whole areas have been sacrificed to provide dollars for the coffers of corporations like Union Carbide and electricity for Chicago and New York and someplace.

Not too many years ago, people in this rural area used a lot of solar and wind energy. I can remember that. Then they put in rural electric companies and all of a sudden the large corporations have decided that we need all the fancy things that take a lot of electricity. But in this area of the country renewable resources are available. We have strong winds and in the summertime we roast. Indians and not-Indians have ties to the land and that's the basis for a united struggle. It boils down to survival. Regardless of what color you are, we'll all be drinking the same water and breathing the same air. It is our responsibility to safeguard this land. We don't own it. We're guardians, stewards to look out for the land.

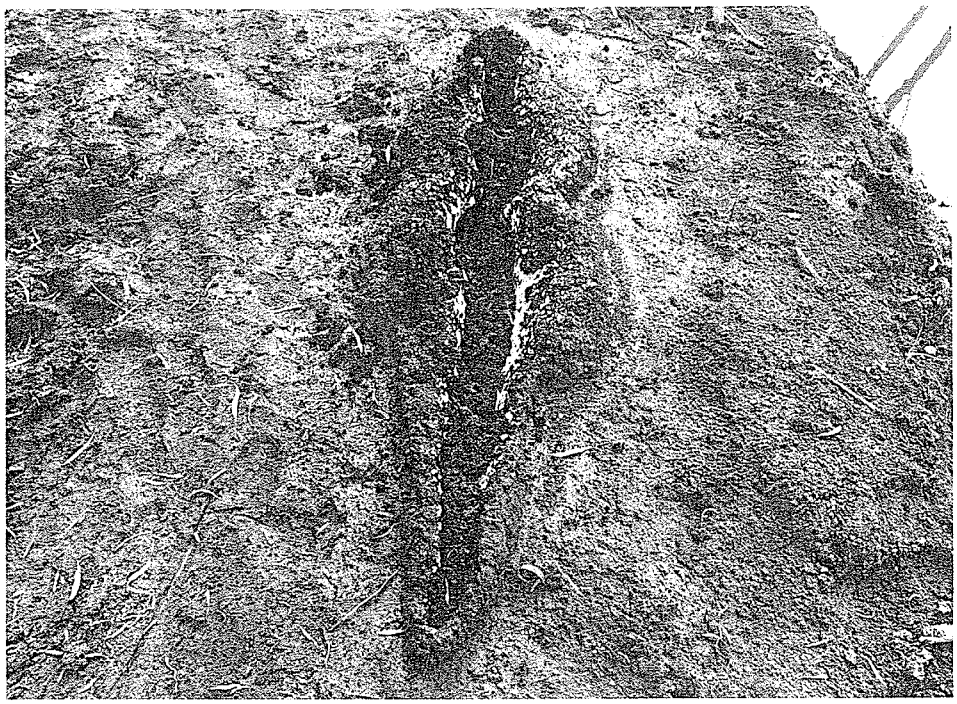
This whole uranium thing is very dangerous to our survival as a people. We have no other gene pool anywhere else in the world and this radiation and chemical contamination with all the herbicides and pesticides they're spraying—we know their effects on the genes. We know our very survival is at stake. We can't for very many years afford the spontaneous abortions, the sterilization abuse, the contaminated drinking water, the acid rain, the cancer rates, and that type of thing. And we are charging the energy corporations and the U.S. Government with genocide.

We are fighting this genocide full-strength. But our struggle can only continue on a day-to-day basis with our severe shortage of funds. Living on the reservation means living in poverty. WARN is appealing to women everywhere for donations of cash and supplies. Cheyenne River Reservation is about the size of Connecticut, with 10,000 people scattered over that area. We are very dependent on phones for our communication —those of us who can find cash to pay long-distance calls. More often we depend on gasoline for communication. If you think gas is high in the cities, you should see what we pay in these remote areas where a captive audience buys from stations facing no competition. We often drive 60 miles to get gas to be sure we can drive to a meeting the next day.

We could give example after example of the unique problems facing rural organizers. Our greatest asset is the power and drive of our people. If other people can send donations, we will surely appreciate it. Help us save our people.

Madonna Thunder Hawk, co-founder of WARN, and Margie Bowker, of the Blackfoot Tribe, live on the Cheyenne River Reservation. Thanks to Swami Sevananda of the Black Hills Alliance for use of this tape.

La Venus Negra, based on a Cuban legend.



Ana Mendieta. *Silueta Series*. 1980. Earth and gunpowder.

Ana Mendieta

Around 1817, when Spanish colonists first set foot on the *Cayo Loco*—a key off the South Coast of Cuba near the city of Cienfuegos—they found a sole inhabitant. She was a young Black woman, nude except for necklace and bracelets of seeds and seashells, and so lovely that "the most demanding artist would have considered her an example of perfect feminine beauty." She was a survivor of innumerable generations of the Siboney Indians, who had been extinguished by colonization. They called her the Black Venus.

At the sight of the Spaniards, she ran—from fear rather than modesty. They caught her and discovered she was mute. Living alone on the *Cayo Loco*, she was accompanied everywhere by a white dove and a blue heron. Spreading their wings, they would touch her mouth with their beaks, in silent caress.

When one of the colonists took her home with him, gave her food and clothing, he expected her to please him and to work for him in return. But taken from her island freedom, and unable to speak, she nestled in a corner, refusing to get up, work or eat. Finally, alarmed at the prospect of her death by starvation, they took her back to the *Cayo Loco* to live in freedom.

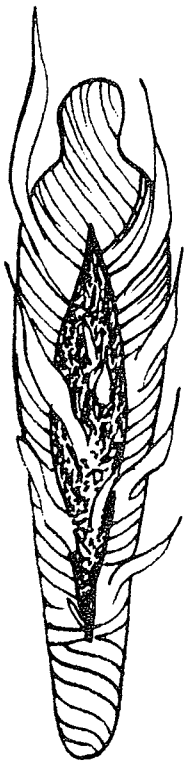
From time to time over the years, the citizens of Cienfuegos tried again to "civilize" the Black Venus. But each time her passive protests forced them to return her to the key, where she reigned in solitude with the blue heron and the white dove her only subjects.

The historian Pedro Modesto recalled that when he was a child, around 1876, an old Black woman, with hair like a huge white powder puff and naked except for a blue, red and white necklace, secretly entered his house. She refused clothing and was dressed only by physical force. She refused all the food offered her except for native products—yucca, bananas and sweet potatoes. The next morning she had disappeared, leaving the clothes behind. That was the last time she was seen.

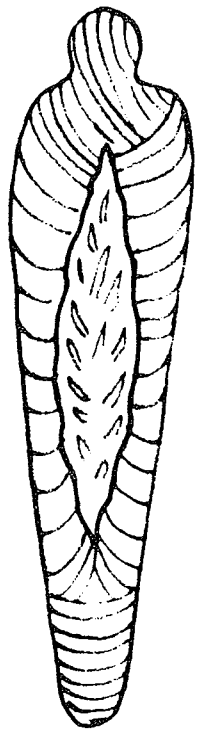
Today the Black Venus has become a legendary symbol against slavery. She represents the affirmation of a free and natural being who refused to be colonized.

Cuban artist Ana Mendieta has been making earth-body sculptures since 1973. She exhibits at A.I.R. Gallery in NYC and received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1980.

 © 1981 Ana Mendieta



SEED WORK by Faith Wilding



I am sending you these seeds from my ritual performance *Invitation to a Burning* performed for the Spring Equinox 1980, at the Woman's Building, Los Angeles. I made a wrapped wire, muslin and wax *body* filled with dried vegetation, to represent oppression, winter and our old selves. In a nighttime candle ceremony I set the *body* on fire and women leaped over the flames to gain new life and energy. Afterward we filled the *body* with earth, planted it with seeds sacred to women's heritage: flax, barley, wheat and poppies—and carried it into the Woman's Building, where the seeds sprouted and flourished, representing to us a new hope and life for women and the world.

I invite you to plant these seeds in ceremonies of your own, alone or with female friends, in *Liberty Gardens*, which will represent the new-growing, life-sustaining culture of women. Please send me a dried leaf, flower, seedpod, etc., from your garden along with a description of your ceremony and your names. I will use this material in a collage work, *Liberty Herbal*, which will represent women's world-wide efforts to reunite with all of nature against war and world destruction.

Seed Work was designed as an international piece for the United Nations Conference on Women in Copenhagen, July 1980. The seeds and flyer (reproduced here) were presented to the conference by Betsy Damon. My intention was to design a simple, strongly symbolic action which could be carried out by women anywhere in the world, and which reflected the life-sustaining heritage of female work. I continue to welcome any documentation, letters, pictures, descriptions, plant-parts, etc., from individuals and groups who wish to participate in *Seed Work*.

Faith Wilding is a feminist painter, writer and performance artist. Write to: 12 South Raymond, Pasadena, CA 91105.

PERFORMANCES WITH MY LIFE

by Shirley Cameron

I. From the Past: I take the total contents of my house, each chair, bed, carpet, radio, toy, book, photograph, art object, plant, etc., and feed them into the shredding machine that I have made (and painted like a '60s sculpture). With the grey pile I light a bonfire that lights up the whole area (all the way to London?) and then my children and I dance around it. Crowds gather, and when the flames die down we look to see who is still with us.

II. In the Present: My loved ones, R and C, help me with a performance idea I have—we build the structure together from my design, but with their encouragement and help. It is a cage, which I place in a public place (public art) and sit inside with my children. People look in and explain what they see to each other—"She's getting paid a lot for this"; "She is/is not a ratepayer/sex symbol/housewife/feminist/good mother/artist"; "It's all right, she's making a film"...

Only one person comes near, the postman. He gives me letters filled with straw and tells me to write back in gold—change the straw into gold—I am sure I can because I am an artist. I try, and more people strain to watch me. Is this a successful performance then? It's popular, and I can hear two people clapping to encourage me.

III. For the Future: I awaken in my garden to the sounds of the children both on the swing. Everything is growing, buds are opening even as I look. There is no door to the garden and so no letterbox, yet a letter is floating down from the sky, glittering like gold in the sunlight. "Art for the People" is the heading on it, and it contains news about work for me in London: the Tate Gallery has opened a section in the London Zoo, "because they thought this would reach a wider public." I have been selected; the area is 10' x 20', meals are included; the duration is 50 years; I can do whatever I like there.

(Grantham, Lincolnshire, 1st of May, 1980)

Shirley Cameron, a performance artist living in Grantham, England, works primarily in public places such as parks, bars, streets, agricultural shows, as well as galleries and theatres. She helps edit *Feminist Arts News* (*FAN*) and has twin daughters.

© 1981 Faith Wilding, Shirley Cameron

My mother died of cancer in 1973. In reading through the file folder of her notes, I began to understand that her disease was, in part, a response to a culture which did not support strong willed, intelligent women. Recently I have had recurring nightmares about missing her funeral. Every time that I hear the name of another endangered species, another dead lake, another tribe passing out of time, another wilderness area being covered with pavement, I have the same feeling an irrevocable event is occurring without the proper rights of passage.

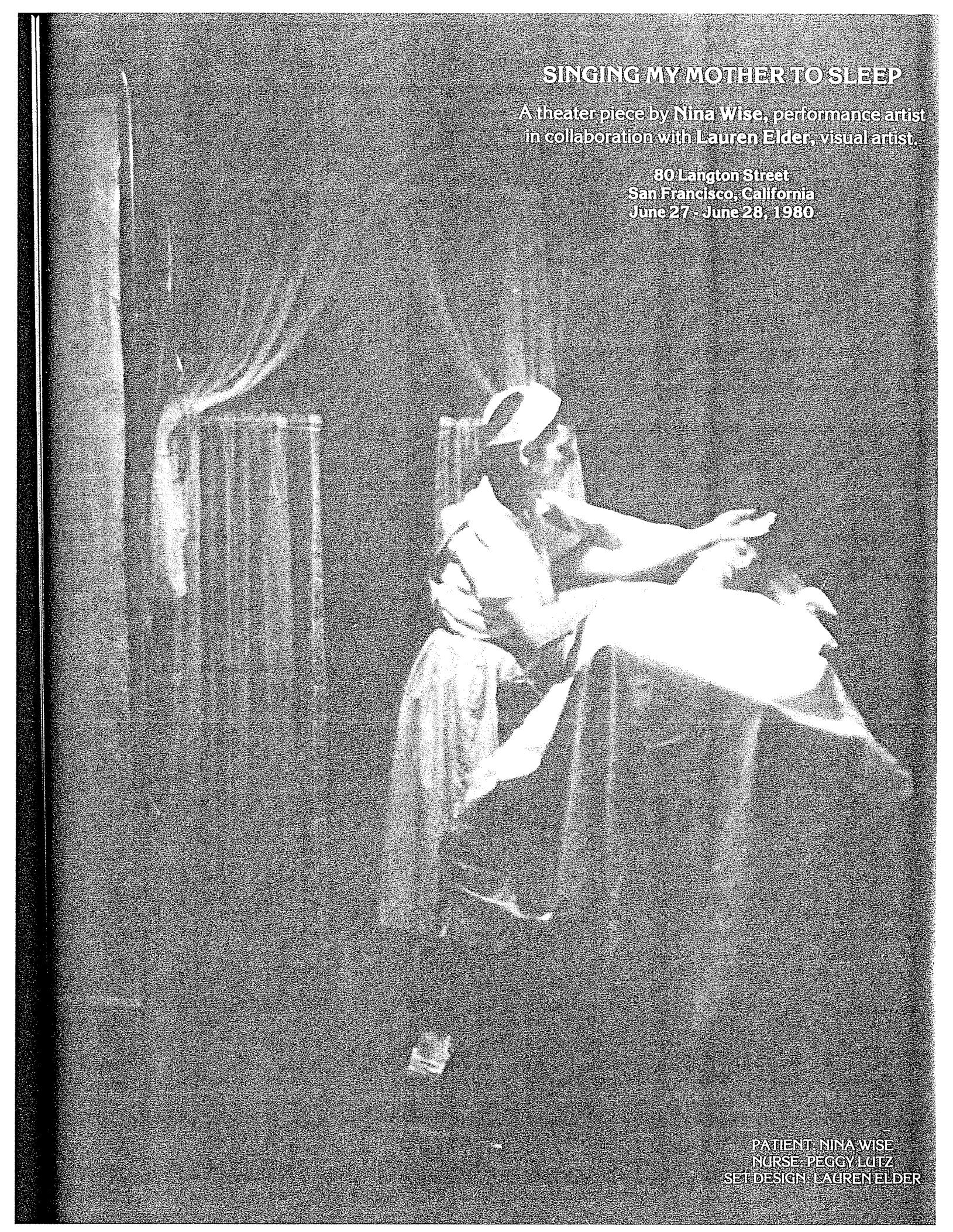
Lauren and I share a concern for the quality of the environment, and a commitment to addressing social issues through our art. SINGING MY MOTHER TO SLEEP is a celebration of our struggle to survive in an environment that endangers life.

Photo: Dan Ake
TIME-LIFE publications acknowledged for polar bear photo.

SINGING MY MOTHER TO SLEEP

A theater piece by **Nina Wise**, performance artist
in collaboration with **Lauren Elder**, visual artist.

80 Langton Street
San Francisco, California
June 27 - June 28, 1980



PATIENT: NINA WISE
NURSE: PEGGY LUTZ
SET DESIGN: LAUREN ELDER

gypsy women and the land

catherine kiddle

My mother said
I never should
play with the gypsies
in the wood.
If I did
she would say
naughty little girl
to disobey.

This rhyme accompanied a handslapping game that I played as a child. Together with the ballad of "The Raggle Taggle Gypsies,"[1] it represented for years my only knowledge of the traveling people.[2] I had seen them, of course. The clusters of trailer caravans shining with chrome and the piles of scrap metal which epitomize the roadside encampments were familiar sights, but I knew little about their lives. My attitude, which is still fairly common, was that of the songs—a combination of fear, suspicion and romance.

My own involvement with the travelers began about six years ago when I too was living in a caravan as a member of a traveling theater company and was forced to confront the active discrimination against travelers which exists in English law. I found hostility and suspicion directed against me purely because I lived in a trailer. While fighting this discrimination, I met gypsies and got on well with them. Finally I helped to set up a mobile school and visited unofficial sites as a literacy teacher. The gypsies' decision to involve outsiders was due to their increasing awareness that as they were forced more and more into contact with housedwelling society, bureaucracy was fencing them in and they did not have the skills to deal with it. I was fascinated by the differences between my own world and theirs, and angered by the treatment they received. They needed skills I could teach and direct professional exchange carried no hint of patronage. This was the only possible way for me to become involved.

The gypsies, believed to have come originally from India, have been living and traveling in Britain since the mid-15th century.[3] Yet largely because of their nomadism, they have remained an alien race, deeply attached to their own culture and values. They live adjacent to our housedwelling society and cull their living from it, but remain distinctly separate. We *gaujes* (as the travelers call housedwellers) hold certain beliefs about the gypsies: that they work and move on only when they feel like it; that they pay no rents or taxes; that without the overheads of housedwelling they have large amounts of cash in hand; that they are dirty, thieving cheats. From a distance, we both despise and envy the travelers' lifestyle. Overcrowded, overmortgaged and overgoverned, we often wish we had their apparent freedom of movement and freedom from financial and social responsibility. At the same time, we recognize that the tight fabric of our own social organization is our security and our protection, and we feel threatened by those who choose to live outside it. We store up resentment which breaks out in openly violent, bitter and irrational prejudice whenever travelers move into our neighborhood. Feared and scorned, the gypsies have become our scapegoats.

The facts of the gypsy woman's position in, or outside, our society are not generally understood. For centuries her life was lived close to the land. She traveled with her family in a *varda* (horse-drawn caravan), mainly in rural areas, following a seasonal working pattern. At harvest and in fruit-picking seasons, she would be working on the farms; in spare time, she would carve delicate flowers from elder saplings, make clothes pins from willow wands, pick white heathers for lucky charms, and make lace. In winter, she would move closer to the towns and go from house to house selling her wares, telling fortunes, reading palms and collecting rags for resale. The family would keep animals: Lurcher dogs (half collie, half greyhound) for protection and hunting, canaries and finches for their song, goats and hens for milk and eggs, horses to pull the *vardas*, to breed and to sell.[4]

Most of the gypsies' food once came directly from the land. They trapped rabbits, pheasants and hedgehogs for roasts and stews; they shot pigeons and sparrows for pies; vegetables were scrounged from the farms; fruits and berries were gathered from the hedgerows they passed. Wherever they were they made use of the resources and opportunities around them both to keep alive and to make a living. The families were virtually self-sufficient.

Over the last 30 years drastic changes have been imposed on this rural, nomadic lifestyle and now it is almost unrecognizable. The traditional rural occupations that supported so many families have gradually gone into decline with the increased mechanization of farm work and the scarcity of common grazing land. Forced to find other means for survival, the

 © 1981 Catherine Kiddle

gypsy families, one by one, have become motorized and moved closer to the cities. At the same time, the cities have grown outwards to meet them. Before there was such a pressure on space, the travelers were able to find places to camp without too much difficulty. Some pieces of ground were campsites of long standing, used by the same family over several generations. Our sprawling cities have covered many of these old established camping grounds, and gypsy families have been forced by this and by economic pressures to look to the cities themselves for work and for places to stop. The travelers have a talent for discovering the host society's needs for casual and mobile work. They scavenge the cities for scrap metal and anything of value to buy and sell. Now the women mostly buy their lace cheaply from Nottinghamshire factories and sell this and lucky charms from door to door, also taking advantage of their reputed psychic powers to make a fair living from fortune telling.

The gypsies were tolerated when they were largely unseen in the remote country areas, but as they moved closer to urban centers for economic survival, they faced increased prejudice and victimization. They were constantly forced to move on, even though there was no legal place they could move to. When they were driven into closer contact, clashes between the gypsies and the housedwellers became inevitable, intensified on both sides by fear and ignorance. Many families had literally nowhere they could camp without harassment and threat of eviction, even in areas that they had traveled through for generations. For as the cities have expanded, land has become more precious and expensive and planning laws have become tighter. No adequate provision has been made for the gypsies.[5]

All this puts immense pressure on the gypsy woman. She lives from day to day under constant threat of eviction and fine, often unable to work because the family is moved so frequently. The children have no access to proper education or health care. It is a struggle just to survive. Facing this harassment outside, the gypsy woman relies on the support of her own society. Here she suffers from a different kind of oppression. The travelers have survived in a hostile environment through resourcefulness, adaptability and the great strength of their family structure. Extended families travel together in groups, and by visiting other relations on occasions of birth, sickness, marriage or death, they maintain a countrywide network of kinship and mutual support.

Within the family, sex roles are traditional and strictly maintained. From girlhood, the woman's responsibilities are clear. As soon as she is old enough —say, seven or eight—she accompanies her mother as she goes from house to house asking for rags, old furniture or scrap metal, hawking lace, charms or flowers, reading palms. Whatever her trade, her daughter stands at her side as an apprentice. If she is the eldest girl in the family, she has demanding domestic responsibilities. It is her job to wash and dress the younger children in the mornings and take care of them on the campsite, releasing her mother to go out with the other children. She must also clean the trailer each day, polish the mirrors and the chrome, wash the lace and maintain the high standard of cleanliness expected. If the father of the family takes sole charge of earning the money, then she will share the domestic and caring role with her mother. In some Welsh families it is accepted that the woman both earns the money and fulfills all the domestic and mothering tasks with the help of her daughters. The man and his sons have no demands made on their time.

As a teenager the traveler girl lives under much stricter moral control than her *gauje* contemporaries. She is discouraged from taking drugs of any sort and is probably not allowed to go out with a boyfriend much before the age of 17. Sex is a taboo in conversation. Even at 17, her courtship may be chaperoned in the old style and will probably lead to an early marriage, when the cycle will begin again. In this domain, the gypsy families emphasize their separateness from the housedwelling society. They express great concern about the low standards of *gauje* morality and wish to preserve their children from its influence. Bill and Rita Price, for instance, disapproved of their 15-year-old daughter Googy's friendship with a girl from a house near their camp, and were anxious about her supposed promiscuous attitudes. When I asked Googy about it, she laughed at her parents' concern. "They just think that I shall want to have a boyfriend," she said. "They needn't bother. I know that I can't have that kind of friendship till I am about 18." Her parents had no need to worry. Their standards of behavior, preserved in their close community and absorbed since birth, were a complete part of Googy's approach to life.

The gypsy women were very curious about my way of life, and many found it hard to understand why I was happy to work quite separately from my family. Some of them, however, said how much they would appreciate the chance to do some things for themselves. Marge, who became my good friend, desperately wanted to write a novel. She had been in a foster home for a while as a child and so had learned to read and write. She was upset by the generally distorted and unsympathetic media coverage of the travelers and wanted to tell her story in her own way—to set the record straight. But there was no time or space in her life which would enable her to do this. Within the travelers' family pattern there does not seem to be any notion of the independent woman, or the woman on her own. A girl lives with her parents until her marriage, when she is set up in her own trailer with her husband. The young couple will continue to travel with her parents as part of the family group.

A daughter who does not marry, or a widow, may

have her own trailer, but will always travel with her relations. Babes, a woman in her mid-twenties, with three children, told me that she had never in her life been out socially without either her father or her husband in attendance. She did not expect social freedom, but just occasionally, she said, she would love to be able to go to see a film entirely on her own. She wanted the experience of being alone, which was completely denied to her.

Thus, a gypsy woman's life is entirely circumscribed by the needs of her husband and family. In return she can rely on the complete support and loyalty of that family, which extends to every member. I once had to appear in court as a character witness for a 13-year-old gypsy who had been involved in an incident with a *gauje* boy. Before the case was heard, we all gathered in the foyer of the court. On one side sat the *gauje* boy alone with his mother, silently waiting. Spread all across the other side of the large room was the gypsy boy's entire family—his mother and father, his brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts and cousins, a grandmother who could barely stand and a baby in a pram, busy with its bottle. They took over the whole place, anxiously discussing the case in a highly moving display of solidarity and concern.

In accepting these roles by which the family as a whole will survive on a stable economic basis, the traveler women demand that they be respected and maintained on their own terms. The trailer caravans are their palaces, and they take immense pride in the shining mirrors, gleaming chrome, priceless porcelain and cut glass. Whether they are illegally on the roadside or on the concrete pitch of an official site, the trailer itself, its condition inside and out, and the display of china and glass testify to a woman's current status, as does the gold jewelry she wears. The trailer is her security and the one part of her environment over which she has control. Despite the shortage of water (all water has to be collected and stored in milk churns and often has to be paid for by the gallon), there is a high standard of cleanliness. Nearly all the trailers are painted white and decorated with highly polished chrome, and they are kept spotless, even if it means using precious water to wash them each day.

All a woman's possessions—the trailer itself and all the contents—are for sale at the right price. I have visited families in the morning and in the evening have found them sitting comfortably in a completely different trailer. The gold, the china and the glass are even easier tokens of exchange. The constant dealing in these goods marks fluctuations in the family's fortunes. In good times, the traveler woman will save money to buy a new piece of porcelain for her collection—perhaps Old Imari Crown Derby ware with its brilliant reds, blues and golds, or colorful hand-painted Copeland china. She prefers "the pretty," as she says—the brightly colored and the highly decorated. In bad times, she will be selling.

At any moment, the gypsy woman is what she has and wears. She tends to be the keeper of the family wealth, whether it is housed in porcelain, gold jewelry, sovereigns or pound notes. This is a practical arrangement, as it is the man of the family who is most likely to be picked up by the police. If he should be taken away, his wife will be able to maintain the family until his return. This arrangement also provides the woman's status within her group. The display of china in her wall cabinets and the rings on her fingers may give her husband pride in possession, but they also give her matriarchal power. I once saw a grandmother holding court in her trailer; as she told a cluster of granddaughters and nieces of the things she had seen and the places she had visited, she cleaned her gold—rings, earrings, sovereign pendants, bracelets. One by one she dropped them into a cut-glass jug full of whiskey and swirled them around.

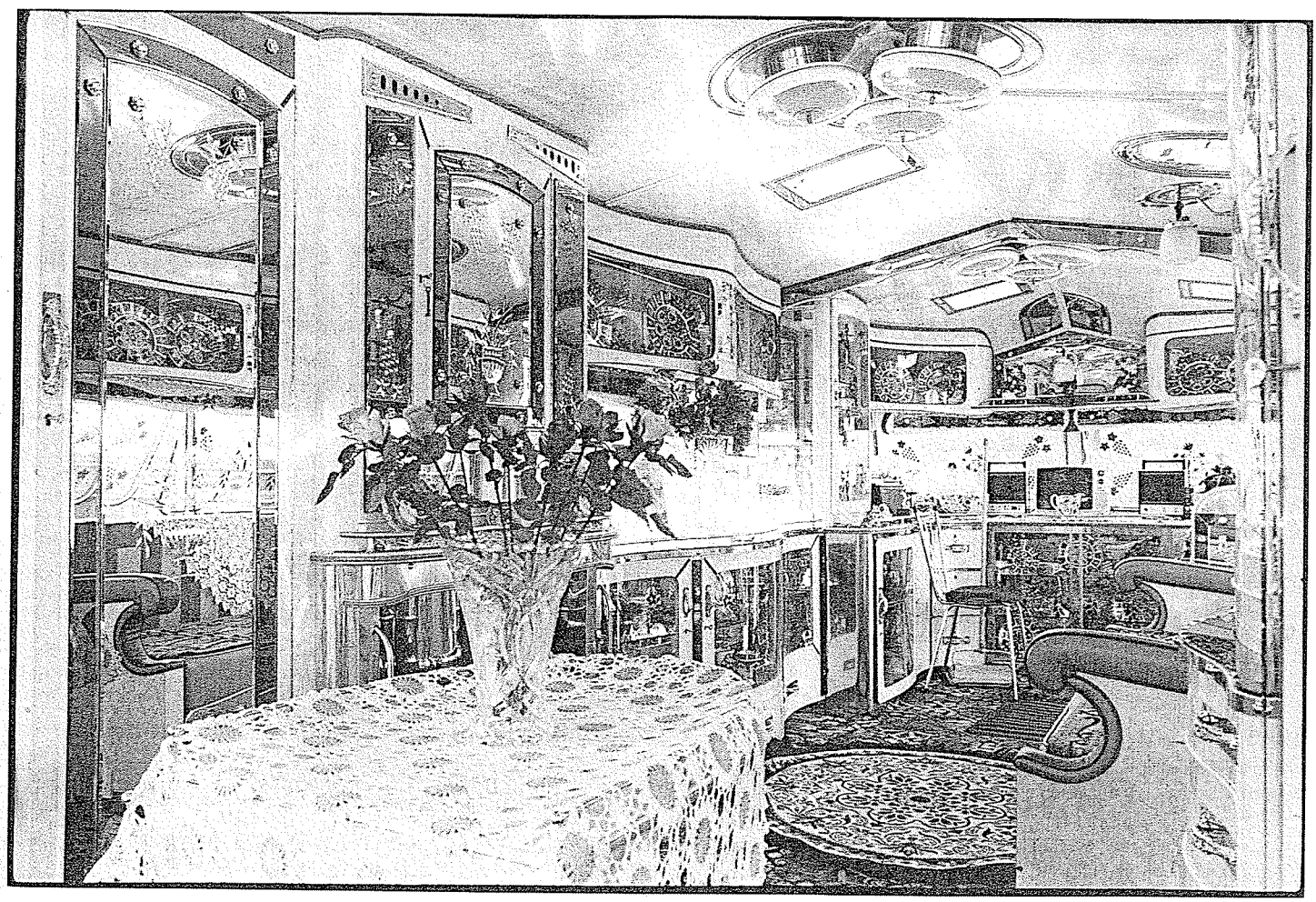
In the past 30 years, the gypsy woman's relationship to the land has changed. Once her life was very much in sympathy with her landscape—which was an extension of her home. Living in a trailer with a large family was not oppressive because almost every activity was done outside. The trailers were mainly used for sleeping. The woman made a fire outside wherever the family stopped, and this became the heart of the camp. All cooking was done here in big black pots hung from iron tripods. Washing was boiled up in a tin bath and spread around on bushes to dry. The children played around the fire, periodically homing in on it when the adults gathered to exchange news and tell stories. In the evenings everyone gathered there for warmth, to overhear gossip and to watch and listen to singing and step-dancing. Living close to the land also enabled the gypsies to keep the animals and find the food they needed. The women gathered herbs and the knowledge of mixing medicines and preparing oils and creams for healing was passed on from mother to daughter.[6] Most rubbish was burned on the fires and it was rare to find a messy camp.

Today little of this is possible. For those still on the road, there are few camping places available. Many of the old grounds have been built over; others have been fenced in; others have been trenched by bulldozers to prevent trailer access, so great is *gauje* prejudice against gypsy occupation. The few accessible places are likely to be cramped and in unpleasant or dangerous surroundings, close to sewage works, near main roads or on derelict waste plots. Denied physical or safe space, the traveler family is forced to spend far more time in the crowded trailer. It is often not safe to let the children roam and explore. I have seen toddlers roped to trailer wheels to protect them from traffic. Recently a child was killed by his own father's truck as he tried to back it around in a tiny waste plot.

In urban areas, campfires are often not tolerated. Housedwellers complain of the danger, dirt and smoke. The gypsy women use launderettes for their

Illegal site in South London.

Gypsy caravan interior (Photo: Roger Perry).



washing; they cook inside their trailers. But their trailers are more precious now, as they are the women's only welcoming space, the only places the women can call their own. Many have a second, older trailer which they use as a kitchen, rather than spoil the shine of the modern stove in their main trailer and let the smells and steam pervade their whole living space. Several middle-aged gypsy women I know keep and treasure their old black pots, often passed on from their grandmothers. Whenever they get the chance to have a fire outside, they cook in the old way, not only to keep from tarnishing their beautiful new stoves, but also because they want to keep in touch with the old life.

Though families without official site pitches have a place to be without threat of eviction, these sites too are usually unpleasant, out-of-the-way places. Built on dumps, disused airfields, industrial wastelands, they are often fenced concrete compounds—claustrophobic ghettos ringed with regulations, many of which actively prevent the families from earning their customary living; it is a rare site that incorporates a work area in its design. The travelers dislike living in such surroundings as much as any of us, but they have no options except to be illegally on the road again.

Faced with these restrictions and also with the fact that it is no longer economically feasible to travel the customary routes to find work, and lose the security of the site pitch, many families have been forced to apply for social security payments. The women hate this loss of independence which destroys their pride and self-respect. Yet for the sake of the children, the chance for them to have some security and to have a formal education, many stay on the sites.

The site policy also prevents family gatherings from being held in the old way. The number of pitches per site are limited and it is often impossible for relations to move on to a site with their trailers to share in mourning or celebration. The kinship network is being weakened. About five years ago, 300 gypsies gathered together to mourn a death on the edge of the main road north from London. They emptied the sites and defied eviction for the time of mourning. There was nowhere else they could gather and they were determined to give the old man the traditional rites he wanted. Many women see the sites as one step toward eventual settlement in houses and fear this gradual assimilation as the destruction of their lifestyle and culture. On the sites the women are becoming more isolated; they are cut off from their extended families but not integrated with *gauje* society. They derive no solace from their uncompromisingly barren surroundings. Many are severely depressed and have been given prescriptions for valium.

Another negative ecological change stems from the travelers' altered diet. There is an increasingly short supply of wild herbs and medicinal plants, and the knowledge of their use is being lost. I asked an old woman if she still used herbal cures. She said she couldn't find the plants anymore. Looking around at the barren concrete site that was now her home as if she saw it for the first time, she said, "It's all built on, see." No longer able to keep so many animals or to trap wild creatures for food, to collect wild foods, to receive vegetables from farmers in part payment for jobs done, the gypsies are beginning to rely on supermarkets. As these are inevitably more expensive, people are drawn still further into the cities to make money for food. I was once in a supermarket with a young gypsy woman when another shopper hit her in the face without warning or provocation, shouting at her to get out. Such hostility and abuse are not uncommon. The gypsy woman told me that she was used to such treatment; she regarded most *gaujes* as rude, intolerant, aggressively bigoted people.

With nothing but their families and trailers to rely on, the gypsies are coming to despise the land controlled by the *gaujes*, which once supported them. On unofficial sites today, rubbish is often left to lie where it was thrown from the trailer; paper, bottles and cans litter the ground. Inside, high standards of hygiene are preserved, but the land outside is no longer part of that home. It is ironic that now, when we are all becoming more ecologically conscious, when Schumacher's "small-is-beautiful" philosophy is growing in popularity, when the need for self-sufficiency and energy-saving is crucial, our society should be simultaneously destroying the lifestyle of a people whose versatility and resourcefulness could be a model for us all.

1. "The Ballad of the Raggle Taggle Gypsies" by Walter de la Mare, in which a young girl runs away from home to travel with a band of gypsies.
2. Throughout this article, the words "gypsy" and "traveler" are used as synonyms. There are many distinct groups of traveling people; the way of life described is that of the Romany people, but as those of nomadic habit of life are all treated the same under English law and English prejudice, the distinctions are not really relevant to this essay.
3. See Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald, *Gypsies of Britain* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973).
4. Appleby Fair, Barnet Fair, Cambridge Fair, Tavistock Fair, Stow-on-the-Wold Fair and Epsom Race Week are some of the largest surviving gatherings.
5. The Highways Act of 1959 and the Public Health Act of 1960 actively discriminated against the gypsies. In 1968, Part II of the Caravan Sites Act obliged local councils and boroughs to make official sites for all gypsy families residing in or re-sorted to their districts. When the Department of the Environment was satisfied that there was a pitch for every family, the district would be eligible for "designation." Those who stopped in a designated area outside of official pitches would be open to swift eviction and heavy fines. Yet only a few districts actually accommodated their families; others provided insufficient pitches for those who normally worked the area but still received "designation"; gypsies without sites were effectively outlawed from places where they had traditionally stopped. Other areas have not met their legal obligations at all. This happens even where there is no desperate shortage of land. Miles of corrugated iron and deep trenches encircle derelict waste ground where the travelers could easily camp if the housedwellers would tolerate them. Since the 1968 Act was clearly not being implemented, a report was commissioned in 1977 which advocated that government money be made available for site building and that eviction and harassment cease until adequate provision was made (*Accommodation for Gypsies*, by John Cripps). In 1980 only one-third of all gypsy families have places on official sites. Two-thirds must camp illegally wherever they stop and suffer eviction, harassment and fines.
6. Gipsy Petulengro, *Romany Remedies and Recipes* (London: Methuen, 1935).

Catherine Kiddle, an English writer, is a Devon County tutor responsible for gypsy families without site places. Her forthcoming book is on parents' involvement in their children's education.

Crossroads Community (the farm) is an alternative to alternative art spaces.

Bonnie Sherk

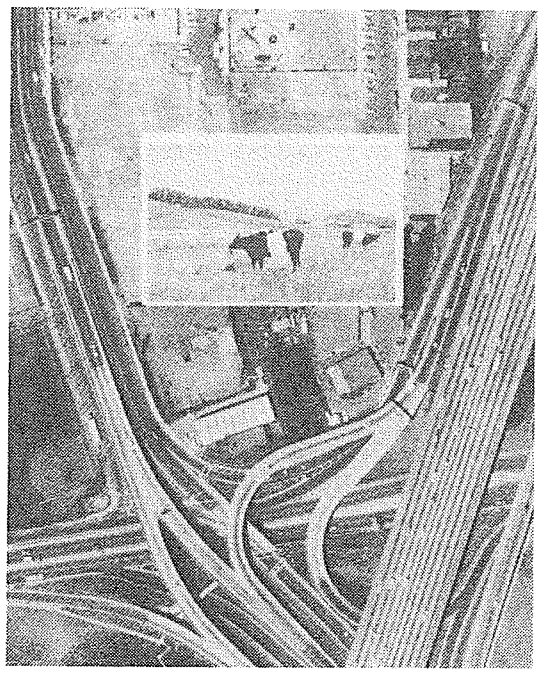
As an artist, I have tried to expand the concept of art to include and even be life, and to make visible connections among different aesthetics, styles and systems of knowledge. The most devotional vehicle for this coming together is a multicultural, agricultural collaborative artwork called Crossroads Community, or more simply, The Farm. This life-scale, environmental, performance sculpture, which is also a nonprofit public trust and a collage of local, state and federal sources, exists on a multitude of levels, including cartoon, metaphor, contradiction and action.

Physically, The Farm is a series of simultaneous community gathering spaces: a farmhouse with earthy, funky and elegant environments; a theatre and rehearsal space for different art forms; a school without walls; a library; a darkroom; a preschool; unusual gardens; an indoor/outdoor environment for humans and other animals; and a future cafe, international parlor and nutrition/healing center. Within these places many people come and go, participating in and creating a variety of programs and artworks which richly mix with the life processes of plants and animals. All of these elements are integrated and relate holistically with fascinating interfaces. It is these interfaces which may indeed be the sources of emerging new art forms.

The Farm, as a life frame, is particularly unusual, however, because it juxtaposes symbolically and actually a technological monolith with an art/farm/life complex. Crossroads Community sits adjacent to a major freeway interchange on its southern side, where four high-need neighborhoods and three creeks converge. On its northern boundaries, The Farm edges on a 5.5 acre open space which the City of San Francisco has acquired for a neighborhood park. (The Farm was instrumental in calling attention to the availability of this land and convincing the city to buy it.)

Part of The Farm's dream is to uncover the natural resources of the earth, like the water which flows underneath, and to recycle the concrete which currently covers the land, to create rolling hillsides, meadows, gardens, windmills, ponds, play and performing spaces, etc. This lush, green environment would connect The Farm with the public elementary school that borders the future park on the north, blur the boundaries between land parcels, and act on new possibilities for fluid interchange.

The potential for this project, which involves the creative integrity of its surrounding neighbors and schoolchildren, is astounding: as a model for other places, and as a possible series of solutions for the many urban errors specific to this site.



A TRIPTYCH, WITHIN A TRIPTYCH, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A COUNTERPOINTED DIPTYCH: technological/non-mechanized, etc. .(.)

THE THEORY

PROBLEM:
How to survive on the planet in the richest, most productive, and happiest way.

POSSIBILITY:
An ideal form for our current civilization(s) is to discover vehicles that create positive tensions between cultures, species, and places—

animal, plant, mineral. . .

SOLUTION:
Use art as a tool to create a whole by incorporating in an integrated fashion the elements of:

physical manifestation
concept
true feelings

THE PRACTICE

Between the abstract and the meadow hurls the chaos.
Between the diaspora and the crinoline sits the poem.

Bonnie Sherk was Founding Director/President of Crossroads Community (The Farm), 1974-1980. She is an environmental performance sculptor whose work includes the development of public and sometimes participatory site-specific works integrated with a variety of actions and/or programs which thereby create whole experiences. The Farm is at 1499 Potrero Ave., San Francisco, CA 94110 (Tel.: 415-826-4290).

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HATTIE CARTHAN: ROOTS GROW IN BROOKLYN

Ruth Mitchell and Hattie Carthan in front of Magnolia Tree Earth Center.

"I adopted that tree when I moved to Brooklyn. I wasn't about to let it die. Brooklyn has already lost too many trees and houses and people." That tree is the only Southern Magnolia Grandiflora north of Philadelphia. Brought as a seedling from North Carolina in 1885, it is now 91 years old and 40-feet high. Its savior is 80-year-old Hattie Carthan, who led the fight to get the magnolia declared a landmark in 1970. Her ten-year struggle to establish a permanent site for it culminated in November 1980 with the opening of the Magnolia Tree Earth Center (MTEC).

"Did you see that article about the Earth Center in the Exxon magazine? All that publicity is good because it helps our Center. A lot of my friends didn't like the title—'What One "Old Lady" Can Do',—but I *am* an old lady." Like many residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Mrs. Carthan has roots in a rural background. Her parents moved to New York from Virginia in 1928. In 1964—"before you children were born"—she saw her block on Vernon Avenue between Throop and Thompson Streets deteriorating. "I had managed to buy a house. I was retired and couldn't afford to move. I realized my block was becoming a slum, so I walked down the street writing down numbers and then I sent out postcards saying 'If you want to form a block association, please come to the meeting on Sunday.' So we organized the Vernon T&T Block Association. . . . And the next year we had a big block party. Some neighbor roasted a pig, we raised $200 and we thought we were rich. I wanted us to buy trees, but people said, 'Trees make leaves. Leaves make dirt. You have to sweep them up.' People call me the 'Tree Lady' or the 'Tree Nut,' and they picketed when we wanted to start the Center, but we stuck with it."

"Aunt Hattie" won out, and the original planting of 12 saplings grew to more than 1,500 trees, with the help of the Parks Department tree-matching program. Similarly, there are now more than 100 block associations under the umbrella of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Beautification Association. The great old magnolia has become the symbol of the Magnolia Tree Earth Center, housed in the fought-for and now renovated three brownstones at 677 Lafayette Avenue. A magnolia sapling donated by former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm is in an adjacent plot. In back is a garden designed by the young people who worked on the renovation.

"Hattie Carthan feels we should create a miniature Botanical Garden here in Bedford-Stuyvesant," says Ruth Mitchell, Director of MTEC. Plans include a greenhouse to be used for experimentation: growing early seedlings for community gardens, house plants to sell at the MTEC store, and more Grandifloras. MTEC also offers a tool-lending service, a library on growing plants, and is developing plans for eight community gardens (each with its own Grandiflora) and prototypes for backyard landscape architecture. "Earn and Learn"—via the Neighborhood Tree Corps ("Save a Tree, Save a Neighborhood"), "we hire youth workers, ages eight to thirteen, and they go out to the blocks and maintain the street trees. They learn how to clean, water, prune. . . . We want to train local people to help communities use their open space," says Mitchell, who also envisages a greenmarket and maybe even a county fair.

"You know, dreams don't come true without a lot of legwork and paperwork and meetings and phone calls. Sometimes I thought our tree would be strangled by red tape. But when I see it alive, I know that ten years of blood, sweat and tears have been worth it," says Hattie Carthan. At the beginning of it all, she told the Landmarks Commission, "The tree stands high and mighty and beautiful for us." —*Eds.*

"Leave The World More Beautiful Than You Found It"

Our Chicago Street ran perpendicular to the 63rd Street "L" and the commercial clutter beneath it. Our "countryside" was Jackson Park, and a tree in the backyard reminded us that somewhere out there was a vast green space. It was the Depression. A shortage of money forced people to invent ways to nourish the body and spirit. Home-grown gardens struggled to survive; the movie house was also games and giveaways. The fabric of life was preserved by women who tried to make their world a better place. My mother—Ellen M. Lanyon—was one such woman. Urban blight and economic despair threatened an aesthetic she had been reared to appreciate. Like so many others who demonstrated their worth as gardeners, naturalists, ecologists, through volunteer service to organizations, museums and schools, who banded together to denounce tree pillage and rape of the land, she sought a remedy in action. She joined the Chicago Outdoor Art League (COAL) and the ongoing struggle to protect our environment.—Ellen Lanyon.

The Chicago Outdoor Art League, organized in 1900, grew from the Women's Auxiliary of the American Park and Outdoor Art Association. One of its early efforts was to persuade railroads to beautify their rights of way; manufacturers also became interested in landscaping their grounds. In 1904 COAL began the sale of flower and vegetable seeds in penny packets to establish gardens for schoolchildren. Penny tree seedlings were sold for planting on Arbor Day and many of us senior citizens remember planting and nourishing our own special trees when we were in grade school. Until the war years of 1942, when the paper shortage and high cost of printing stopped this program, thousands of Arbor Day leaflets containing poems and prose suitable for recitation continued to be distributed to Chicago schoolchildren.

In early spring, packets of seed lists were sent to all the Chicago grade schools, one for each teacher. These lists were then returned to us, tabulated and turned over to a company which packaged and delivered seeds. In the fall, schools were encouraged to hold garden shows for the children; many were enlarged to include parent or family entries. COAL provided judges for these shows, usually park or garden personnel. A committee visited the school and provided satin ribbons for prizes: gold, blue, red and white, topped by a gold-printed medallion with our name. We met to cut ribbons and apply medallions. By 1956, we had awarded 10,000 ribbons; sold 100,000 packets of seeds and over 3,000 ten-cent tree seedlings.

In 1935 COAL voted to cooperate with the Garden Clubs of Illinois in building the Lincoln Memorial Garden on the shore of Lake Springfield near the State Capitol, and in 1938 COAL built the 15-foot concrete Council Ring, with flagstones and a fireplace, overlooking the lake. All through the seed program we sent contributions of native shrubs and trees and wildflower seeds for planting in the garden. In 1954 we began to plant 1,000 trees per acre in the Illinois Shawnee National Forest in memory of our deceased members and in honor of Jens Jensen, the distinguished landscape architect, and Lorado Taft, the great sculptor—both of whom had served on our advisory board. To date, over 80,000 trees have been planted in this program.

May C. Llewellyn, a Chicago schoolteacher, became interested in the group in 1944 through her work with children's Victory Gardens and, after her retirement, became active in the seed program. As president, she formed a new department of art. Through her direction, the seed and tree business escalated and gave us more income to devote to gardening, schoolchildren and ecology. We have art and music scholarships to the Allerton Park Art School (an Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs summer program) and to the State Conservation Summer School. Countless shrubs and bulbs were donated for planting on the grounds of schools participating in our seed program each year. Seeds were sent for children to plant in Sitka, Juneau and Haines House in Alaska. COAL helped in the restoration of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, joined the Save the Redwoods League and the Illinois Dunesland Preservation Society and became a charter member of the group sponsoring Channel 11 TV, an educational station. We were among the first to recognize the need for keeping our environment cleaner and distributed 2,000 litter bags when this movement first started. In 1958 the May C. Llewellyn Scholarship was created and for four years was awarded to women art students, one of whom went on to be an art teacher in the Chicago public schools.

In the next few years our income was the highest ever and it was used for such conservation projects as the purchase of a wooden bench for the Lincoln Memorial Garden; bird feeders, plants and seeds for the Hines Hospital, to be used in therapy for veterans; and extensive planting on the grounds of the Lighthouse for the Blind. In the fall of 1960, the Board of Education informed us that we could not continue our seed program. This was quite a blow, as it had been the main purpose, activity and revenue of the League for more than 50 years. The group carried on with the usual schedule of meetings but with quite a decrease in our program of scholarships and donations. In 1965 the first of our Annual Fall Programs began at the Garfield Park Conservatory, where musical groups entertained; a wrapped mum plant was given to every guest. In May 1970 we gave $1,000 to assist in the building of the Garfield Conservatory Garden for the Blind, with three fountains designed to flow in different sounds or tones, and raised flower beds marked by Braille signs. For the last ten years we have also given money for seeds and plants to be used by senior citizens in projects for underprivileged children, to show them the value of growing and caring for living things.

In 1974, our own dear Miss Alice MacKinley was honored with a Conservatory party—a centennial tea—having passed her one hundredth birthday in September. Eventually we had to give up our Conservatory parties due to a lack of finances and a changing neighborhood, but a raise in dues helped the treasury and we answered a plea for plantings around the cages of the Lincoln Park Zoo. The West Town Community Art Center was given help for students to paint outdoor murals of endangered species on the embankment of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad. The year 1977-78 was highlighted by a donation to the Lincoln Park Zoological Society for more signs identifying different species of trees and for garden benches at the Shriner's Crippled Children's Hospital. During 1979-80 we donated interior plants to a new Chicago Branch Public Library, to the Chicago Academy of Sciences fund drive and to the Lincoln Park Zoological Society and helped purchase two Crimson King Maple trees for a school where teachers and pupils will participate in the planting. We all try to carry out the work of our motto: "Leave the World More Beautiful Than You Found It."

Ellen M. Lanyon

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ENERGY MODES: TOWARDS A HARMONY OF THE BIOSPHERE

LORNA SALZMAN

Industrial society is now in the process of reinventing the wheel. Having extracted and converted most of the easily available fossil fuels, we are now reembracing the same renewable energy sources that fueled human societies and endeavors before the Industrial Revolution. Amazingly enough in those "Dark Ages," human beings accomplished tasks like farming, foreign exploration, war and the construction of ships, monuments, aqueducts and cities, by using flowing water, wind, geothermal sources, direct solar energy, biomass fuels (like wood, peat and manure) and human energy.

Looking back we can see that Nature has not been miserly with us, but that it is we, especially in the Western world, who have been profligate in our breeding habits and appetites. In the space of a little over 150 years we have almost exhausted the finite stock of energy resources which, aside from coal, were only discovered in the last century. Having done so, we have inflated our expectations and technologies to a degree that can be supported only as long as these resources last.

The abundance was misleading and relatively short-lived. While it lasted, it created the illusion that technology gave us the power to outwit Nature and overcome basic cosmic laws. At the same time we lost all sense of responsibility for our physical environment and came to rely more and more on experts, rather than on the common sense and evolved wisdom that enabled previous societies to live and flourish without such bounty.

But this era, in which people are called consumers instead of citizens, is ending. The utopian promises of industrial society—the end of poverty, disease, illiteracy and hunger—have not materialized, and it is doubtful that they ever will. If there was ever a golden age of industrialism, it is over. The abundance of material wealth that has slipped through the fingers of Western industrial society will never be possessed by the Third World. The finite pie will have to be sliced very differently, and this in turn will mean new political and economic structures and geographical relationships.

Now, it is not very pleasant to talk about the end of affluence. I prefer to call it an end to profligacy and a redefining of economics in its traditional sense—the science of efficient and equitable allocation of resources, not the science that maximizes private short-term profit at the expense of the public and of future generations. This may sound like the doomsayers condemning the masses to starvation, but it is really the reverse. The fact is that industrial, growth- and profit-oriented societies have not visibly alleviated starvation.

Traditionally, our religious faith in technology has made us see the biosphere's economy as an infinitely expanding one. Rejection of this faith entails rejection of many articles of faith—the marketplace, free enterprise, and other artifacts of the global consumer economy. It also means rejecting the Faustian bargain wherein we attempted to control the very processes of Nature—what ecologist David Ehrenfeld calls "the arrogance of humanism." Perhaps we need to admit that not only may we be unable to do anything we want, but that we may have to reject some desired things in their entirety.

If we wish to examine what the miracle-workers promise us in the future, we should look at what they have already wrought. They claim to have brought us affluence, but in so doing they have brought about resource depletion, with polluted air and water. Instead of ending starvation and social ills, they have created a world where inequities of distribution of material wealth and political power loom larger than ever. Instead of bringing the global population to a modest but decent standard of living, they have widened the gap between rich and poor. (The World Bank now says that it would take 100 years to bring the undeveloped world up to our Western standard of living, assuming no growth for us in that period.) Instead of conquering disease, eradicating dangerous working and living conditions, and ending unemployment, they have created new diseases to replace old ones, disseminated dangerous substances that threaten our lives and environment, and substituted energy and machines for human endeavor. In so doing they have methodically substituted what Edward Goldsmith calls the technosphere for the biosphere, and we have become reliant on non-renewable energy and technology-based life-support systems rather than on the renewable resources and natural systems. Having done this without having corrected the resulting inequities and environmental problems, can we really trust the technocrats to correct in the future what they have consistently refused to correct all along?

Somehow we have forgotten about the insidious nature of exponential growth. Somehow we have forgotten the dangerous side-effects of technology and seen it as a *deus ex machina* that would eventually extricate us from our predicament and permit untrammeled growth and infinite consumption. The truth is that we can no longer escape the fact of ecological scarcity—shortages of resources, limits of pollution in natural systems, population pressures and accumulation of waste—all of which are true constraints on human action.

We ignore these realities at our own peril, but the danger goes beyond the specific environmental impact of energy conversion, whether it be ionizing radiation, CO_2, sulfur oxides or carcinogens. The real danger is that instead of deciding ahead of time what kind of society we want, and matching our technologies to our social and ethical goals, we are doing it backwards, and choosing technologies because they fit our present value system.

The case of nuclear power is a perfect example. Nuclear scientists have posed as impartial experts while acting as political promoters. Failing at both, they have perverted the scientific method beyond recognition. They have selected the pro-nuclear hypothesis (that nuclear energy is cheap, safe and necessary), discarded all others, and then gone to desperate lengths to find data to support this hypothesis.

They have also used a double standard in judging nuclear and non-nuclear energy sources. They claim that solar energy, our oldest, best-known energy source, is "esoteric," remote, expensive and inappropriate. Yet they fail to apply the same criteria to nuclear power and ignore the facts: that nuclear power, even after 20 years of force-feeding from public funds,

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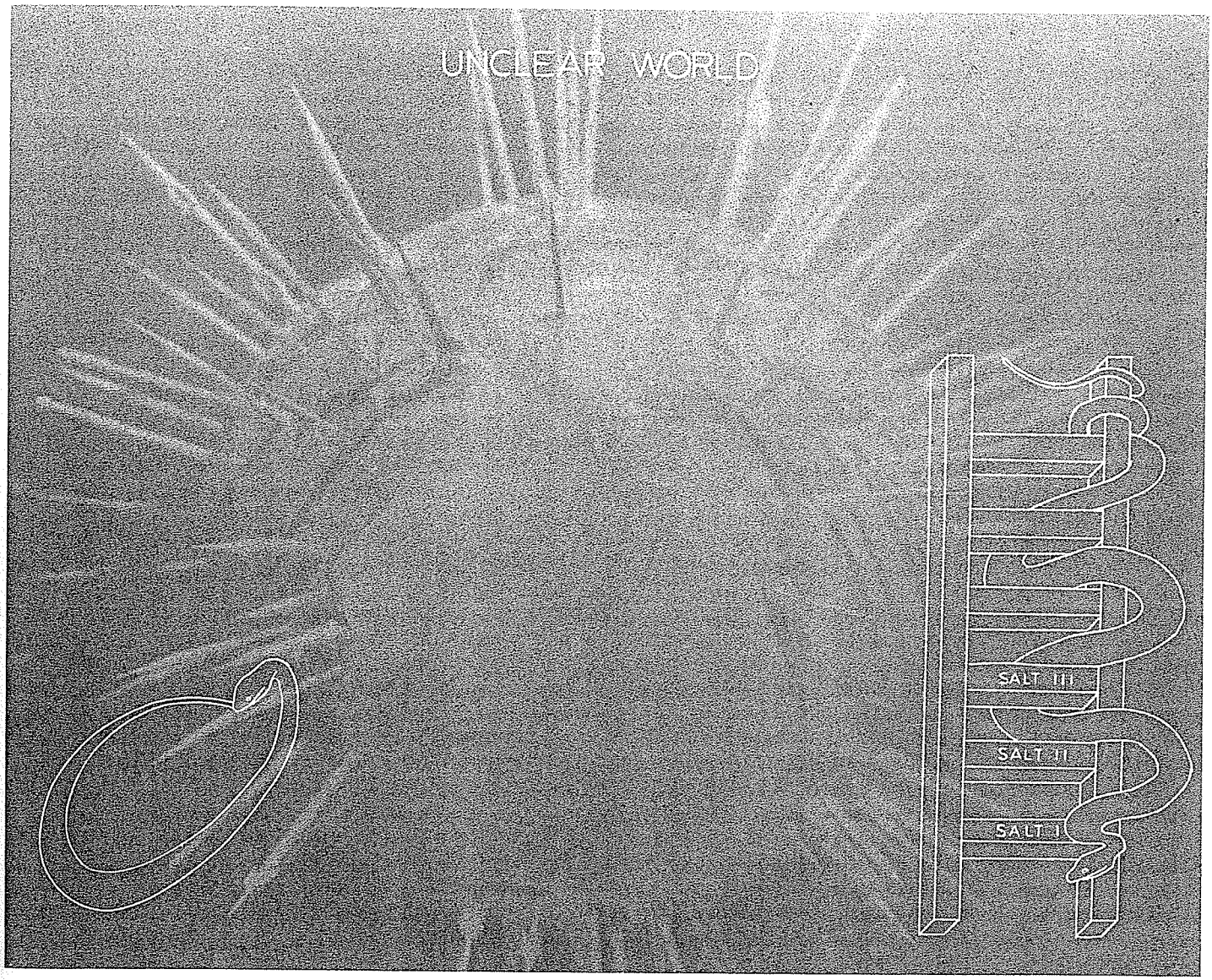
is still immature and unreliable: that it produces dangerous waste products whose safe storage and isolation for eons no engineer or geologist has yet resolved; that it is a barely working and unpredictable technology which readily lends itself to military purposes; that it is vulnerable to accidents, human errors and malicious acts that can cause irreversible catastrophe on a cosmic scale. Also ignored is the fact that nuclear plants are extremely capital-intensive and thereby exacerbate unemployment. Indeed reactor construction monopolizes investment capital so other sources cannot compete on the market. Finally, no one points out that the inherent dangers of nuclear plants are so enormous that they necessitate stringent regulation and centralized control by technocratic elites in decisionmaking processes which effectively exclude citizen participation and control.

Now if you look at solar energy, you come up with a very different picture. If you fall off your roof and break a leg repairing your solar collector, your neighbors will not be endangered or much inconvenienced. If your wind generator stops, only one freezer full of food will be lost and a Public Service Commission investigation will not be required. If you insulate and renovate commercial buildings to conserve energy, you will create jobs and reduce electric demand. Instead of relying on computer codes, engineers and regulatory commis-



Margaret Benyon. *Unclear World I.* 1979. Reflection hologram made at Royal Military College, Canberra, Australia. 8" x 10"

"A hologram is a three-dimensional photograph made with a laser. Unlike other methods, its image is seen as though a real object were present, because a hologram allows the re-creation of the light wavefronts originally coming from the object.

The laser is used for sinister purposes. If it is also used to make art, will this offer a countermeasure? Perhaps the infiltration of artists into technological areas not traditionally ours can effect change. Working with a medium like holography from the beginning of its development, it should be possible to influence the direction of its use.

There are many ways in which we can say that no nuclear arms should be made, and that the existing ones should fall to rust. It has been said with a lace doily. But it seems particularly appropriate to speak out from within technology itself, with a technological medium. There are those working with technology who share concern for its social misuses, who are unwilling to accept the division of work into male/female roles, but who see no harm in the rigid polarization of art and science. The hologram, with its ability to record all the details of light information about an object, can be seen as a model for integration, for undivided wholeness. If a hologram is broken, each piece still shows the whole image from the perspective at which it was made. This suggests that there is such a thing as non-fragmentary thinking. It seems a superb model to strive for, in our language, our behavior, and the way we go about our business. With high technology we could raise the ceiling on humanity . . . or record Doomsday."—MB

Margaret Benyon, born in Britain in 1940, began making holograms in 1968, and from 1976 to 1980 worked with the Department of Physics at the Australian National University.

© 1981 Margaret Benyon

sions, you can turn to electricians, plumbers and carpenters. A solar collector war between the superpowers won't threaten future generations. And the money you save by putting in storm windows or insulating your home will be freed to be spent in other ways in your community. In fact the real challenge is simplicity. How do you tell highly paid engineers that they must become plumbers? How do you turn a high-tech society, reliant on specialization and compartmentalization, into a society reliant on semi-skilled labor? How do you change social values so that progress is measured by how little energy we use to accomplish a task rather than by how much?

Scientists are fond of comparative risk assessment, first telling us that no society is risk-free and then comparing actual risks, like the incidence of lung disease in coal miners, to the potential of nuclear accident or the imperceptible (but certain) long-term effects of low-level radiation. However, they are not really giving us a choice but forcing us, by inaccurate growth projections for energy consumption, to assume both risks. In effect they are asking us whether we would rather die by a knife or a gun.

The social, economic and environmental costs of centralized energy production based on fossil and nuclear fuels have been cleverly concealed by underpricing, hidden subsidies and the illusory freedom to choose among 20 brands of air conditioners. What we have *not* been offered, however, is the freedom *not* to be exposed to radiation or to choke on dirty air or to eat chemically contaminated food. In exchange for short-term affluence and mobility, we have traded our political power, an unknown number of molecules in the human gene pool, clean air and water. The British economist Ezra Mishan has said that as the carpet of increased choice is unrolled before us by the foot, it is being rolled up behind us by the yard.

We have not really asked the right questions about energy and thus have received the wrong answers. Rather than assuming we will need more energy for unspecified purposes, we should be asking: How much energy do we need and for what purposes? Who pays for it? Who benefits and who is at risk? What are the alternatives?

The push for nuclear energy and coal, for example, assumes that we need more electricity; that, after all, is all these plants produce. Yet we do not have an electricity crisis in this country but a crisis in liquid fuels. Electricity will not grow our crops, run our cars, build our roads or run our petrochemical industries. Right now we have a 35% excess generating capacity nationwide—more electricity than the utilities can sell and more than people can afford to buy. Even if we did need more electricity, we would have to ask whether in fact nuclear energy could do the job: after 20 years, nuclear power still provides only about as much of our energy as wood. The 20 years nuclear power was unopposed were years of untrammeled development with easy-to-get money, acquiescent regulatory agencies, favorable tax treatment, high energy demand, low prices and initial consumer acceptance—conditions that no longer exist. The next 20 years are likely to provide *negative* electric growth.

Nuclear opponents and solar proponents are often described as "radicals," dreamy idealists, head-in-the-clouds optimists, while nuclear proponents are depicted as pragmatists living in the "real" world. A closer look, however, reveals that it is nuclear energy and synthetic fuels that are hypothetical, untested, high-risk, and replete with unknown problems, while solar energy is really the low-risk, empirically tested conservative technology. The definitions of "radical" and "conservative" have somehow become reversed. Those who urge caution and impartial assessment are called "radicals," while those who urge full-speed-ahead on economic and technological decisions are called "conservatives."

On a broader level, another dichotomy exists. There are those who perceive pollution, ill health, unemployment, resource depletion, waste, and wildlife destruction as inevitable byproducts of capitalism, and who see the remedy lying in a system of centralized economic planning and distribution of resources. On the other side are those, myself included, who see far deeper underlying causes, which are not unique to capitalism, but common to all industrial consumer-based economies. These causes do not lend themselves to political rhetoric or easy solutions, for they involve reexamination of the very nature of our universe and the laws under which all creatures and systems operate.

Thus, for some, a simple change of leadership and control of resources will solve the problem; certain socialists oppose nuclear power in the U.S. but not in socialist countries where, presumably, greater central control eliminates human error and technological failure.* However, if in fact the roots of our environmental crisis are embedded in our relationship to Nature, the limits to growth and our use of the earth's resources, then all societies—socialist, capitalist, anarchist or whatever—must come to recognize this and adjust their goals accordingly. Some cherished values and institutions will have to be discarded not merely because they are distasteful but because they cannot be sustained in a world of physical limits. Without recognition of the root causes, we will be subjected to cosmetic patchwork that will make the problem worse.

The concept of constraints connotes to many a loss of personal liberty, choice and mobility, and the onset of hardship, deprivation and sacrifice. I prefer to look at it another way, one in which we expend effort to prevent problems in the first place rather than expend billions to mitigate them once they appear. In this way people would have real freedom: not to be guinea pigs in global radiation and chemical experiments, not to ingest toxic chemicals, not to eat synthetic foods, not to be deafened by off-road vehicles while walking in the woods, and so forth.

If all this seems like a harsh indictment of our society, then look around you, and ask yourself some questions. Do you see things getting better as a result of material economic growth? Are social systems becoming more stable? Do you think your children will have a better life than you? Is science reducing risks to society or creating new ones? Do you think you control your life and future? Do you trust the technocrats to control it for you?

When you have answered these and other questions, then ask yourself which available technologies and energy sources fit in with your paradigm of society. Then go fight for them.

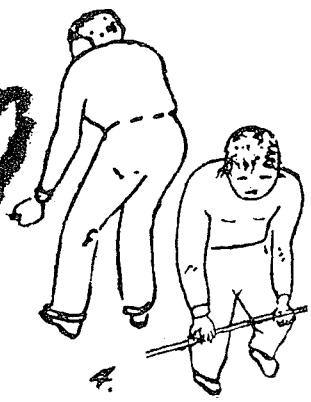
*In the Soviet Union, for example, nuclear reactors have been built in proximity to cities and without containment buildings. What may be the worst nuclear accident ever occurred in the highly industrial Ural region in the mid-50s, with thousands of square miles devastated, unknown numbers killed and irreversible contamination of the area. In addition, severe pollution by paper and pulp mills and other industries of the once-pristine Lake Baikal has been documented by scientists the world over. Also, in Great Britain, where energy is state-managed, the dumping of radioactive wastes into the North Sea continues year after year. This country has perhaps the most repressive law on the books—the Official Secrets Act—which prohibits publishing, disseminating information or talking about even trivial nuclear accidents.

Lorna Salzman, Mid-Atlantic Representative for Friends of the Earth in NYC, writes and lectures on energy policy issues while working to save wildlife, wetlands and pine barrens in Suffolk County, LI.

Working

women and issues of health & safety

by milagros padilla



I would like to turn your attention toward the workplace, to connect the threats and assaults on our communities and our environment with the ways they affect all working women. Forty-two percent of the workforce is women. Lois Gibbs has spoken about the toxic waste in Love Canal. We should also start thinking of those of us who work in the factories and plants that produce some of this toxic waste. How do these chemicals that eventually end up in a dump affect those who work with them directly? And we should start thinking of ways to clean up the workplace, ways in which we can eliminate those chemicals from the working process *before* they end up in a dump and help destroy our communities.

Randy Forsberg has talked about militarism. I think we are very aware that most of the military products—nuclear submarines and everything else—are built in factories and that, as new frontiers are opened, some of us will be working in those factories, building those submarines. I don't know if anybody is familiar with the EB (Electric Boat) workers in Connecticut, but presently more workers are going to die from *building* those submarines, due to asbestos, than men died during World War II or the Vietnam war. As new jobs open up, we have to start thinking: Are we going to be the victims again? Not only of wars, but before those wars? Are we going to be victims because we are, supposedly, helping produce equipment for our defense? We have to start saying we don't need that equipment, and we won't work under conditions that are going to kill us.

Marian Lowe spoke about radiation. I'm sure that all of us are very aware that occupational segregation continues to exist no matter how hard we fight to do away with it, and that many women work as X-ray technicians, many women work as dental hygienists, dental aides, and that we are constantly exposed to radiation; and that presently, not too many people take the time to tell us what these dangers are. I recently met a woman who is eight months pregnant and she has been working with a dentist all during her pregnancy. She has been staying in the operating room holding the films while people are taking X-rays, but the dentist never bothered to tell her that radiation might affect her baby. We have to start thinking of how it affects us in the workplace.

We have also heard from Terri Goldberg about genetic manipulation. This has touched all of us recently. It has great implications for Third World women. I'm sure that all of you are familiar with the fact that many plants are screening Black workers for sickle-cell anemia. It's another form of discrimination, and a form of paternalism that tells us: "We are taking care of you. We don't want you to go into these jobs that are dangerous for you." Well, that's a bunch of bullshit! They don't want us to work there and they have found a new way of telling us not to do it. That's one of the reasons why women need to start building alliances.

You need to start extending your hands to those of us in the Third World, and start realizing that it isn't only us that's discriminated against, that they do it to all women. Just look at the place you work. Everyone has been reading in the paper lately how women have been kept out of factories that deal with lead. In 1978, five women at American Cyanamid in West Virginia were asked either to be sterilized so that they could work with lead or accept lower pay for another job. Lead has been found to affect fetuses, so they say that because we are able to produce children, they need to take care of us again, they need to make it safe for us. Therefore, as we move into the jobs that men have traditionally held—high-paying jobs—they suddenly have started to worry about our ability to reproduce. It hasn't happened before. Hospital workers, who are mostly women, are exposed to far more dangerous factors: radiation, infections, miscarriages from anesthetic gases. Nobody has tried to protect *us* from those things. They haven't even told us that they *could affect* us.

Also, when American corporations started moving to Puerto Rico and other Third World areas, they needed cheap labor, so what did they send out but an American corporation to test birth control on our women. Therefore, by 1968, a third of all Puerto Rican women of child-bearing age had been sterilized. It's a way of making sure that women who work for miser wages don't get pregnant and interrupt production. And presently electronics plants have moved to Mexico. Electronics plants in the States employ mostly women. They pay the minimal wages. A lot of bad things go down in the shops, so the law in the United States has started to put a little bit of pressure on these companies to clean up the workplaces. So they have decided that it is a lot better to transplant to Mexico and Taiwan, where they can employ Third World women. I mean, it's no problem if *we* die, I guess. American women have to be protected and the rest of us can die.

Some women who have joined the labor movement have found it very unreceptive to them and have decided: Well, it's about time we made an impact on it—and they have built allegiances between unions and have formed different unions that deal with women's problems. They have asked companies to have better maternity benefits; they have tried to force companies to clean the lead out of the place and make it safe for everyone. It isn't only women who get affected by lead. Men also get affected, but we could instead be the ones that would help clean up those places. We need to pay attention to the unions that women are in, because they are controlled by white males; they are company-owned unions, and they really don't look out for our interests and if we keep saying we don't want to deal with them because they have never answered to women, they will continue to *not* answer to women. Those American women who are presently working in factories can be a great help by asking that the workplace be cleaned up. You need to start organizing. Everybody knows that 20 can speak louder than one, and as long as we keep trying individual solutions for our problems, we are never going to get anywhere.

Milagros Padilla, born in Puerto Rico, has worked in a neighborhood health center and is now a labor educator. This speech is from a panel at Women and Life on Earth, 1980.

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LAND OF THE GYPSIES

anne pitrone

FROM THE REAL HOOKER STORY

The Company

As a child, when Karen used to play in the clay in the summer, the flies would buzz around her head. That was when she first began to think that she was a piece of shit. During the heat, she would play close to the ground and name all the flies names and call them back to her one by one. Whenever she got punished they'd keep her company in the backyard of the trucking company, where Karen would have to play alone. In winter, the flies would come indoors and her mother would kill them even if they landed on Karen's head. Her mother would swat them anywhere, oblivious to Karen saying she'd just killed her friend Anthony.

It wasn't her real mother who was doing all of this to her, so Karen didn't feel bad. Her real mother had real green skin and was a gypsy. She saw her on her deathbed a few times, but never after that. Never saw her dead. She couldn't tell later if her mother had green skin because she was dying or if it was just her natural coloring. She was glad when the lady at Merle Norman said it was natural and she should wear green eye shadow to match it.

Her new mother hadn't told her anything about makeup. Her new mother was too old to even think that there was such a thing as makeup. Her new mother was married into a trucking firm, and you'd think she was a truck if you weren't careful. Karen was already positive that her older sister—about thirty-five already—was really a truck. She'd park herself up in the third floor dispatch room over the garage and make dirty truck sounds to the drivers all day. Answer the phone like: "Yeeee-aaa-Ace . . . A-A-A-c—e. . ." Drawn out like it was the only code she could answer to, and if the guys recognized her voice over the radio and she theirs then they could "talk." Not Talk, explained her new mother patiently, talk like fucking. Not fuck.

Karen thought that the real story behind this was what was inside the trucks. She'd smelled it coming in every day. They'd park in the back lot; her older sister would turn on Elvis Presley real loud over the dispatch radio while all the trucks were loading so that nobody would have to pay very much attention to the loads. They'd come into the office, they'd say "What am I loading?" "Can't hear you," she'd say. "*Suspicion* is on the radio."

One day little Anthony fly just whizzed up underneath a truck from a shiny pile of shit and lit a flame by reflecting some sunshine off one of his wings. Boom! It was something on that truck that wasn't supposed to be there—dangerous, flammable, carcinogenic, etc. But they always told her she had to play near it. Never said a word when she started mixing up the dust from the trucks and giving herself "beauty masks" like she saw in the magazines.

She was only trying to improve herself. She was only trying to be modern. A modern girl was shiny from head to toe and had full-length new plastic everything on in colors that would melt the eyeballs, so why not herself? From her place in the dirt of the backyard she could hear plastic calling as clear as a billboard ad for lipstick in the desert. Nothing else around as red as those fake red lips in the brown desert and blue sky. But in order to achieve this plastic image, she had to work hard because there was no way that she could afford any real plastic from head to toe.

Around the corner from the trucking company was Main Street, and Karen would sometimes take herself out of the backyard and walk along the shop windows to look at how she might improve herself. The displays would be solid colors reflecting the sunlight back at her. As she passed from window to window her face would take on the color of the sunlit backdrop. It was just dropped from a roll like they had all the plastic in the world, just lavishly dropped from ceiling to floor to obscure any idea that this might be something other than a dream you were looking at, certainly not a store. The sweet translucent light inspired Karen to just about gobble all the stuff down. One time she couldn't stop licking at a half-dozen bright blue bangle bracelets that jangled up and down her bony arm. She also used to suck on small multicolored see-through pink-and-yellow earrings and often had to hold back the attempt to swallow them all. A perfect suicide for Karen would be to scarf the contents of somebody's junk jewelry box instead of some shiny sleeping pills. Before her insides could be lacerated by the stuff, she'd be lying down on satin pillows dreaming about how she would be so pretty even down to her soul, and including her body. The plastic would float in smoothly and in perfect color-coordination lend brightness to her belly, which otherwise she'd be really scared of. She thought it was the most democratic thing—the fact that anyone, even she, could be beautiful in seconds. That anyone, especially she, could die within minutes because of their beauty.

She thought about her beautiful dead mother not dead but dying slowly in her gypsy bed that was about chemical cancer. How could a gypsy get such a disease? This country was like an open wound wherever you traveled, and she'd found it everywhere.

Conscience Brought the Bootstrap Out

I was a worker, an inspector, a father, a motorcycle rider, but before I encountered the bootstrap my mind was not satisfied. I was trying to pull myself above the rank and file, I was trying to act better than all the other workers who had to breathe the stuff every day. It was the bootstrap that pushed me back down where I belonged.

One day at work I fell off a ladder into the catalyzer and there was an explosion and all the other workers fled. I was left alone inside the vat where the chemicals came together and I knew I was going to die. Pictures of the beginning of the plant flew across my mind.

It was my fifth birthday and my grandfather had just bought a new car that was rusting under the floorboards. I could see the road whiz by underneath the car as we sped along gravel roads to the plant. We were going to visit the factory on my birthday. Back roads would get thicker with strange color smoke as we approached. The smell would get stronger. Within sight of the plant I held up my arms in front of my face, but Grandpa picked me up and held me up to the smokestacks.

"They won't destroy you. You've got the bootstrap behind you."

Then he silently carried me into the plant on Sunday and set me down inside this catalyzer vat. It had just been cleaned out by a boy not a high school graduate, the most dangerous job in the plant, the most dangerous spot. Grand-

 © 1981 Anne Pitrone

pa left me there and ran to the end of the line for the controls. Then he started the whole factory.

As I lay at the bottom of that mixer, smoke began to come in and twirl around me like snakes that were circling with a purpose. Big specks of dust looked like birds that were moving in strong but staying in one place because of the wind, their wings spread still and the green wind flowing around them. The swirling didn't stir me, nor did the ominous black dust bits, nor did the hum of the motor as the catalyzer zapped on, nor did the bright sparks of light that jumped from the top of the transformer down to the bottom of the vat, getting closer and closer to my head. It was my conscience they were after, it was my ambition they were trying to make immune.

The lightning sparked closer till I glanced quick up the walls of the vat, where light fooled with the smog to make an image. There I saw a constellation and recognized the boot, the strap, the bottom of the toe and the heel of the boot, where Grandpa had come from, the bottom of the boot that was covered with chemical dust or sulfur, depending on which country you were in. Dry sulfur in the old one, wet and flowing sulfurous chemicals in the new. I recognized the boot, the toe, the heel, the strap; then the strap lifted up and struck me across the forehead like a hot slap of steel. It wrapped around my head quick and burned into my hair, it seared my skull and transformed me into a true conscience, crying, screaming, not like a baby, not like a woman, not like a man, but like a worker that I was meant to be, a worker that could recognize money from afar and a good job up close.

I woke up in the plant like the worker I was and cleared my way through the smoke easily, though the others had left me behind for dead. It was my dead grandfather who worked in this same factory years ago who was still haunting it, who had stayed waiting after he died watching me work until this day when I'd be deserted by everyone. He was the one that reminded me of the bootstrap, the constellation, and the conscience that was attached to it. As I walked outside, the crack and the crackle of the burning plant sounded like the time before the strap marks I used to get as a child, just before the leather strap hit my white and unworked bottom. It was the crack, the crackle, the scream, the tears, the building falling down and the no jobs that did it. It was the crack, the crackle of electricity, the scream, the tears of no work, the factory falling down, the hunger, the no jobs, the lesson to be learned by conscience.

Anne Pitrone (born 1951, Niagara Falls) lives in NYC and has published *The Recession Diary and Other Economical Writings* (1981). "The Real Hooker Story" is a work-in-progress about the chemical company.

HARRIET KORMAN

Harriet Korman. *Untitled*. 1978. Ink on paper. 18" x 24".

Harriet Korman, a NYC painter for the last 12 years, believes in the transforming experience of painting.

DISBAND is an all-girl band of four women artists who all have flourishing independent careers.

HEE SUN

BLACK LUNG

NEW YORK

BAD FOOD

NO BREAD

CAT CALL

BED BUG

WELL HUNG

NO HEAT

BLUE MOOD

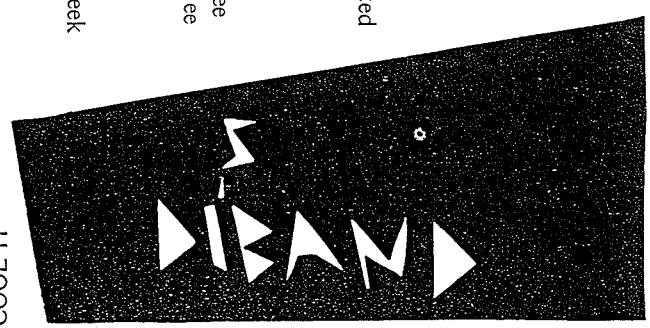
BIG HIT

BOO HOO

LAST CHANCE

COOL IT

Get rebel Get rebel Get rebel
Get rebel Get rebel Get rebel
Don't take that abuse
Don't take that abuse
Radiation in your food
Radiation in your hair
Radiation in the air
Your connection's gone
Lights blink off an on
Rebel rebel
Cause your channels burnt out
You can't twist you can't shout
And your current can't flow
Your resistance is low
Get rebel rebel
Intimidation gets you meek
The future is bleak
We'll all go insane
It's a powerful strain
It's a disease you can't flee
It's a disease you can't see
For rebel
That they'll find a cure
But the doctors are sure
Plutonium needles injected
My system's infected
Get rebel
From a radiation leak
We caught it last week
that nobody kicks
We got a disease
The clinic can't fix
I've got a disease



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ACTION FROM TRAGEDY

WOMEN AT LOVE CANAL AND THREE MILE ISLAND

Lois Gibbs and Pat Smith Interviewed by Celeste Wesson

As a radio journalist since 1973, I have reported dozens of environmental struggles. Everywhere I looked, women were leading their communities, organizing the fight for survival. Many were politically involved for the first time, in response to threats to their traditional concerns: families, homes and future generations. It is startling to hear ordinary women casually discussing genetic questions and toxic exposure. "If I have a child, will it be deformed?" That question raises the same issues about our technology/culture/society as do those of the laboratory scientists who would make life in a petri dish. Both point to the political, ethical and ecological implications of our efforts to control nature. The scientists are deciding how we will use technological knowledge; the women are dealing with the consequences of past decisions.

To quibble about whether ecological issues are feminist issues is to ignore the question of control over our bodies which will shape the rest of our lives as women. Meanwhile, women who have never been involved in feminism are being propelled into public life by these questions. As surely as the lives of middle-class feminists were transformed by other issues (such as whether to have children or how to break into the professions), the lives of these women, concerned primarily with their children and their homes, will be transformed by their commitment to change.

I have edited the two talks below to focus on this transformation. —*C.W.*

I. LOIS GIBBS/LOVE CANAL

Lois Gibbs is President of the Love Canal Homeowners Association, which was in large part responsible for the August 1978 declaration of the health emergency there, for the government's eventual evacuation of worst-hit areas and for state and federal compensation to homeowners. The following is a revision of Gibbs' speech at the "Women and Life on Earth" Conference at Amherst, Mass., in March 1980. Since then, researchers have found evidence of chromosome damage among Love Canal residents.

The women of Love Canal are much like myself—housewives, mothers. Most have a high school education. We are lower-middle-class families with our biggest investment our home, and our most precious asset our children. The majority did not work but remained home tending to houses, gardens and growing children. Since the Love Canal exposure, this way of life has changed. Women are no longer at home, because it is unsafe; we're not allowed to go near our gardens. The decisions have changed too, from normal everyday questions such as: What are we going to have for dinner? Where are we going on vacation? What color shall we paint the walls? Now the decisions are: How can we afford a new home? Will my baby have leukemia? Will my daughter ever have a normal baby? What will we do with our sick child? We can't move and we can't stay here.

Women prior to the Love Canal disaster were very sort of square, I guess. Women who at one time looked down on people picketing, being arrested and acting somewhat radical are now doing those very things. Now women who would never have volunteered for anything have given up two years of their lives to try to save their families, working in our office, conducting phone surveys, going from door to door.

Up until August 2, 1978, when the New York State Health Department declared an emergency, the majority of the people living around the canal did not know there were toxic wastes buried in their neighborhood. We became suspicious in June, when the state began to investigate. My son had experienced health problems since he attended the 99th Street School, and I began to go from door to door trying to close the school, not realizing myself the extent of the danger. That changed quickly when I received the education of a lifetime. People were very open and willing to talk. They began to tell of health problems, crib deaths, cancer and children crippled with brain damage and deformations. Everyone signed my petition with almost no resistance, but they were still not willing to actively participate in a group form. They were waiting until the state studies were completed. The truth of the matter is they did not quite believe *they* were affected yet. The families had a blind faith in the government. They refused to believe the Board of Education would *build* an elementary school or that the city would *allow* them to build their homes in a dangerous area. They knew there were strong odors, black gunk and other strange substances on the canal, but did not realize the dangers they represented.

When the state held an open public meeting in August, in Albany, 500 miles away, and released their study results, people became involved. At this meeting the Health Department recommended that the 99th Street School be closed, that pregnant women and children under two leave the neighborhood, that families not eat food from their home gardens and limit the time spent in their basements. The results showed air readings in some homes around the canal to be above OSHA standards and the miscarriage and birth defect rates to be above normal.

The first few days after this announcement it was mass panic. The residents were scared to death and did not know where to turn. This made my job easier. I had a familiar face because of my door-to-door campaign and now everyone wanted to be involved. I held the first Love Canal Homeowners Association meeting that same week to organize an effective pressure group to force the government and Hooker to protect our families. We had at that time over 500 people as members. We now have over 500 families—thousands of people. We had many advantages—a large number of people who felt their lives were being affected, and dedicated people, like Dr. Beverly Paigen, who were willing to work long hard hours without payment to make sure Love Canal was properly evacuated and cleaned up. These people I believe deserve a medal.

In February 1979, the Health Department ordered the evacuation extended to a six-block area, but only after constant prodding and pushing by our association. Through our own health surveys, we have found the birth defect rate in the outer Love Canal neighborhood to be 56% and the miscarriage rate to be between 50 and 75%. Defects range from mental retardation to disfigurements: triple ears, double rows of teeth, extra fingers and toes. This is very frightening to a good

 © 1981 Celeste Wesson

portion of our neighborhood, which consists of young adults starting their own families. Although most women do not intend to conceive, because of the known risk, there is always the fear of accidental pregnancy. They must now wonder: "Am I going to have a normal baby? Will it live? Should I have an abortion?" Pregnancy is supposed to be a happy time.

This is just one of the problems. Many of these toxic compounds remain in the body. We have to wonder whether just moving from Love Canal will be enough to allow us to have normal babies; whether our children will be able to have normal pregnancies—my daughter, for instance. And these are just the obvious effects of the chemicals. There are many others, like diseases of the central nervous system, including nervous breakdowns, migraine headaches and epilepsy. We have not conducted a cancer survey, but we have found many women with breast or uterine cancer, and it is not just middle-aged women. A 12-year-old child had to have a hysterectomy. There are people with urinary problems, brain damage and so on. Almost every organ of the body can be affected.

Many women, especially the active ones, have been faced with another major problem—their marriages. Most of them were homemakers. Dinner was ready at five, laundry was done, and children were properly cared for. Now, in many households, dinner is not ready at five, laundry is not quite done, and the neighbor is taxiing the children around. The husbands are forced to do these things—to be satisfied with hamburgers at McDonald's three times a week, with taking care of the children more. The husbands feel helpless because they cannot protect their families and are also jealous because their wives are now working with other men in the office. The result of all this is stress, which leads to arguments and in many cases divorce. Among families who relocated in August 1978, approximately 40% have ended in separation or divorce. There are pressures and decisions that no normal marriage is subjected to: Will we walk away from our homes and our savings to protect our children? It's easy for you sitting in the audience to say, of course. But think about it. Think about packing the clothes in your closet and walking away to start all over again with nothing—no savings, no furniture, no money, children who are always hungry and ten thousand dollars a year.

The first thing we learned when we started organizing was how valuable the media can be. We learned what would get us national attention, like our survey on women who became pregnant during the construction of the containment system on the canal proper. During this period there was additional air contamination from open trenches. There were 15 pregnancies during this time. Of the 15, only one normal baby was born. All the rest ended in miscarriages, birth defects or diseased children.

We organized rallies and protests around times when coverage was slow throughout most of the state. We found that numbers, long chemical names and statistics confused people, so we arranged a series—a horror story of the day. One family, in their home, would tell of their problems: a mother would explain how her baby died or had three major birth defects, or a family would reveal that state officials told them not to go into their basement, their son's bedroom or their kitchen because of chemical readings—and then the state would publicly announce there was no problem there. This was very successful and we received a large response. Readers became furious with the government for allowing this to continue.

We also found the media very helpful in pushing the government to do what is right. In August 1979, Governor Carey was running for reelection. We held a public meeting and asked: Where is the Governor? Is he campaigning instead of taking care of the emergency situation in his state? What are his priorities? Two days later Governor Carey visited Love Canal, stood on stage in front of hundreds of people who were screaming "Murderer, help our children," with both men and women crying. Cameras rolled. The whole state watched, so he told everyone that the state would buy their homes at fair market value. Now he was a hero. He was reelected. We found that one thing government cannot stand is a confrontation of men, women and children out in the street protesting and pleading for help in front of the press.

We have also found the media a good source for getting information from the Health Department, Department of Environmental Conservation, etc. We would write a letter requesting information. If we received no answer (or a political answer, which is the same), we would give both letters to the press. If they couldn't get an answer either, the reporter would get angry and write an adverse article on the department and the person heading it.

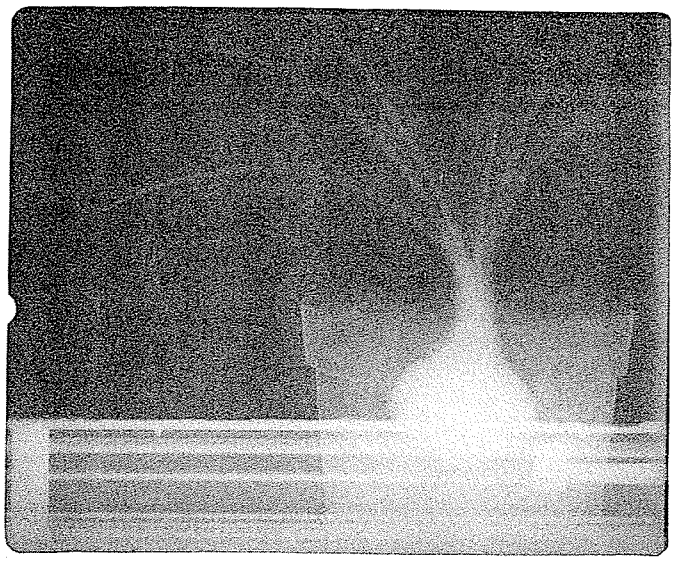
Within our own organization we had some minor problems because of the large number of people involved, but never anything serious. One thing we found very important is communication between the office and residents. We found the more communication you have, the more people will become interested and involved, and it eliminates suspicions and gossip. We try to send out newsletters as often as possible, even if we have nothing new to say. We had block representatives for residents to call if they had a question. This was also a way to involve more people actively and give a job to someone who felt left out.

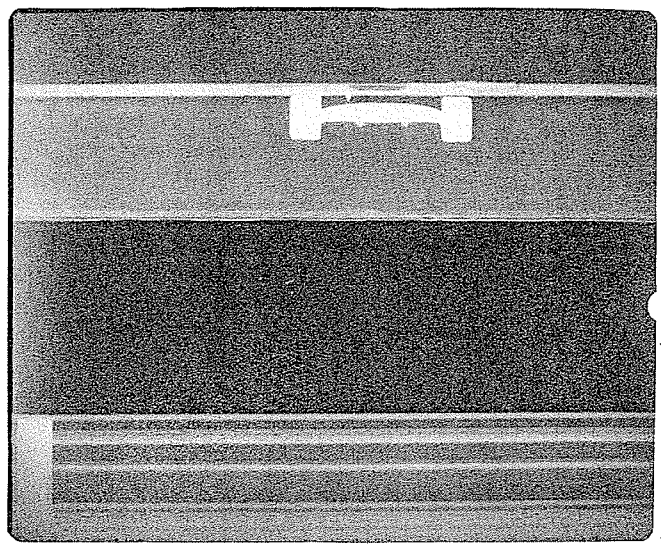
Although Love Canal may be the first, it is definitely not the only real toxic waste problem. Because we have received national media coverage, citizens call us from all over the country. Many of them tell us of wastes buried in their backyards and health problems they believe are not normal. The whole toxic waste issue affects everyone. There are thousands of known poisonous dumps across the country and many unknown ones. These dump sites are invading our land, air and drinking water, and they must be cleaned up. Because of the cost involved to clean and monitor each site, both government and industry would like to ignore them. Meanwhile, innocent people are being hurt and profits are being made by industry.

The only way to clean up the sites properly and to avoid new Love Canals being built is for people to force the government to implement laws to stop careless disposal of toxic wastes and force industries to clean up their own dumps. We, the taxpayers, should not bear the costs of clean up while the responsible party is sitting back making a profit. The one thing you must understand is that *it does affect you*—you, the taxpayer; you, the consumer; or you, the victim! Unless you have thoroughly checked out your backyard and your drinking water, you are not safe. We never knew about Love Canal when we moved in eight years ago. Your children may move into an unsafe area as we did, unaware and innocent, only to suffer.

II. PAT SMITH / THREE MILE ISLAND

Pat Smith lives in Newberry Township, not far from Three Mile Island. She can see the nuclear plant's cooling towers from nearly every window in her house. Since March 28, when the worst accident in the history of commercial nuclear power took place there, she has become very active in the anti-nuclear movement, first in local groups demanding that Metropolitan Edison shut down the nuclear facility and now as a speaker at national and international rallies. The following is





Carla Liss. *Windows* (from *Secrets of Three Mile Island*, a series of 42 x-rays taken in Harrisburg, Pa.). 1979. 14" x 17". Carla Liss is a NYC artist.

a combination of an interview and a speech she gave in April 1980 in Newark, N.J.

Exactly 12 months ago, I was a homemaker, I was a mother. I was golfing five days a week. I had the ideal part-time job. I had the perfect life. I was always happy, bubbly. Now such a seriousness has taken over my life. God knows I'd give anything to go back to the lifestyle I had, but I can't—if I want to sleep at night. Anything is less important than closing down Three Mile Island.

We used to have a boat, and we'd always pull up right below the plant, turn the motor off and let it drift out. We'd take all our guests. "Got to show you these beautiful pyramids." You have to look straight up in the air, that's how tall they are. We just thought this was like a tourist attraction.

Wednesday, March 28 was the beginning of the drastic change in my life. I was horrified at the news of radiation releases on that day, and by the time my two daughters, 14 and 11, returned home from school, I was in tears. All my caution through the years—like not allowing my family too many dental X-rays—suddenly was undone. I was relieved when my husband agreed to take the girls north about 50 miles away that same evening.

But then on Friday the 30th, about 10:30 in the morning, I looked outside and saw a state policeman going from door to door, telling residents to stay indoors, close all windows, turn air conditioners off. He never stopped at my house because he did not see a car in my driveway. But I called a neighbor and found out what he was doing.

I was alone, as were many other homemakers. How long would I be a prisoner in my own home? Would my husband be able to return to me that day? Suddenly I was scared—real scared. And I decided to get out of there while I could. I took the car out of the garage, threw the suitcases in—not knowing if I should breathe the air or not—and drove away as quickly as I could. I didn't dare turn the air conditioner on. I thought, at least if anything dreadful happens, I'll be with my daughters.

There was a lot of tension at my sister's house. We watched the news every time it was on. Mental patients are always wringing their hands. I found myself doing that all the time. The least little thing would start an argument; you could hardly have a decent conversation. There was no conversation except Three Mile Island. I made a vow that if I ever returned, I would devote my full time to closing down that nuclear plant.

I went back home close to a week afterward. My husband, he's a township supervisor, was invited to speak on the capitol steps for our very first rally. My husband and I are staunch Republicans and always believed what the government said. The only thing I ever did before was work at the polls twice a year. It was something for my strait-laced husband to speak at a rally. He was the first to declare he was anti-nuclear. He said, everyone go home and form your own little anti-nuclear groups and, in turn, join together. Other people were obviously thinking the same thing, because when I returned home the phone started ringing, with people saying, "Put me on your list to fight Met Ed."

Now I go all over the country knocking the NRC and the federal government. I love America and I get tears in my eyes when I sing "America the Beautiful." But I think we've let it get out of hand. I think our government needs a good housecleaning. And it's got so bad I told my two kids, maybe someday your mother will end up in jail.

I always said I could control my life, and I have. I went away to college; I knew when I wanted to get married. I wasn't going to have kids for so many years. A perfect mother's supposed to stay home and raise her kids, so I did that for almost 13 years. It wasn't the happiest time, because I thought I had a lot to give, but my husband came from a broken home and he wanted our daughters to know their mother's always there. Then I knew I was going to get that perfect part-time job. I was going to be the best golfer around. Suddenly I can't control it anymore. All I can see in the future is going out and speaking like this.

Q.: Does that make you think differently about yourself—speaking in public?

Very much so. I'm told that I can reach people, perhaps emotionally. I didn't know I had this within me. And if that is a talent, indeed, I must use it. I was sheltered to a point. Now I'm so happy because of the people I've met. I'm so aware of so many more things politically.

They try to tell us we're emotional. Yeah, I'm emotional about the whole thing. It's been hell living there for 12 months. If my kids come down with leukemia, I can't say what I'm going to do. I might do something irrational if my kids are jeopardized. All I am is an average American homemaker. Just trying to protect my young. Like any other animal.

Q.: How has the accident affected your daughters?

My oldest is 15. She said, "You know what I want for my birthday, Mom? Not one word on Three Mile Island." And we went out to eat and, honest to God, I couldn't live up to it. She didn't complain. . . . When I spoke at our anniversary rally,

she had tears running down her cheeks the whole time. . . . She fusses with me and says, "Oh, stop it, let's make it go away." But she knows I have stood before ten thousand people and told them I loved her. I love her and I'm doing it for her.

Now my 12-year-old, she likes to wear T-shirts; she doesn't think as much about it. But she talked to me recently about *her* kids. Now what's this? A 12-year-old talking about "the kids I'm gonna have and what do they have to look forward to." I don't think they can comprehend having a deformed child. They just know leukemia, cancer. If they think it, they don't tell me. Honest to God, part of the problem is I'm so busy I don't have time to sit down and talk to them like I should. I wonder if my kids will think some day, "Yeah, Mom was helping other people, but look how it took her away from us." I don't want that to happen.

Every once in a while the energy level gets pretty darn low. The other day I heard a fire siren. I was so tired, I thought, that better be just a fire. If it's anything else, I almost don't care. If it's gonna be, let it be.

But I'm very strong. I have an inner strength that will never quit. They're going to take an awful lot to wear me down. I do worry for my life. If I am such a threat, this ordinary homemaker, would they ever do something? I already said to my sister (because I don't know how my husband is, he's so conservative), if anything ever happens to me, don't you stop digging into it. If there's the slightest doubt, dig and dig and dig.

I want my kids to enjoy what you're supposed to be able to enjoy in life, and we genuinely feel we've been robbed of that. And I think that's why mothers are so involved. When you mess with mothers in any cause, they say you're messing with fire.

I think a book should be written about people who are really involved. It's going to sound different than the usual writers. Because we have the feeling. We've experienced it. Trapped, we feel very trapped. My neighbor says we are hostages. And that's what makes us mad at Carter. Oh, he's so worried about the 50 hostages, but we have thousands of hostages in our area. We can't afford to leave. It's history in the making. I think if we reread our history books, we'd find that many other things came across about as this did.

Remember that Harrisburg trial with the priest and the nun? They specifically picked Harrisburg because it's so complacent. If God made a nuclear accident happen, we swear he made it happen to us for a specific reason—*to wake us up.* I'm guilty. I'm guilty. I didn't do anything before this. More people have to get involved. We can't let the government jam it down our throats. That's all I can say.

Mary Celeste Wesson is a former news director of WBAI (NY) and producer of National Public Radio's "All Things Considered." She was on the planning committee for the "Women and Life on Earth" Conference (1980).

we all live
in a tomic submarine

my father works
for the navy
the naval research lab
the naval
is his financial
placenta
they make atomic bomb-
carrying submarines there
he repairs them
they promise him
they're for defense
like they promised
him in manhattan
manhattan project
35 years ago
the A-bomb
was for defense
would never be used
they said.
now he repairs some tiny
insignificant part
clever of them to arrange
how so many are
doing only a tiny part
with hardly a tiny guilt
to create
perhaps
the last day
when the umbilical cord
all umbilical cords
are severed finally
for the last time

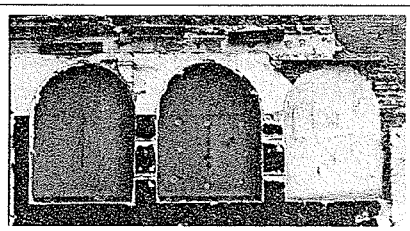
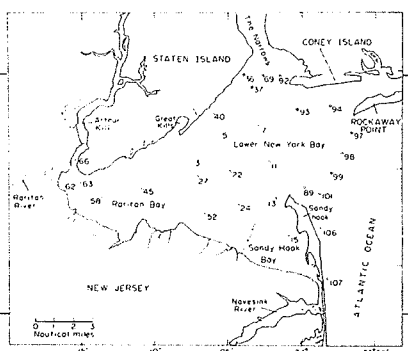
I grew up in the
fifties
when fallout shelters
were the rage
of the Age of
the Bomb.
atomic bomb dreams were
my only recurring ones
the bomb would be
falling falling about to fall
and there were no more
umbilical cords to
hang on to
I'd crouch
and wince
and wake up to the
real world
where the bombs still
swim silently in the heads
of submarines
like brains
schools of them waiting
waiting at their docks
while submarine-doctors
like my father
repair their carbon brushes
that keep corroding, sort of
from some
benevolent substance
in the silent
green
brine

by chris domingo

Meeting at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in New Mexico are former directors of the organization and a nuclear scientist. Before them is a reproduction of "Little Boy," the atomic bomb that was dropped over Hiroshima, Japan, Aug. 6, 1945.

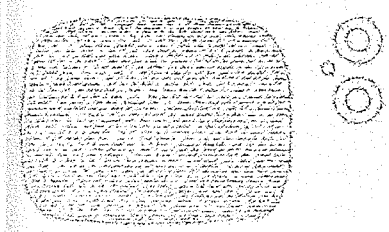
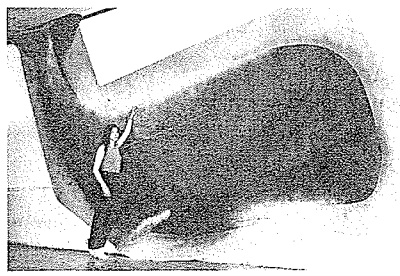
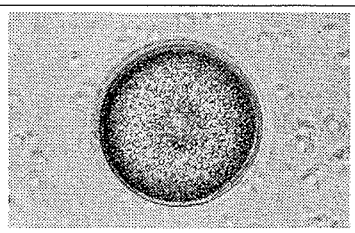
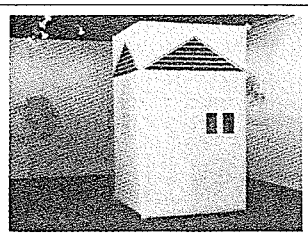
© 1981 chris domingo is a california poet.

INTERVIEWS: ART/SCIENCE

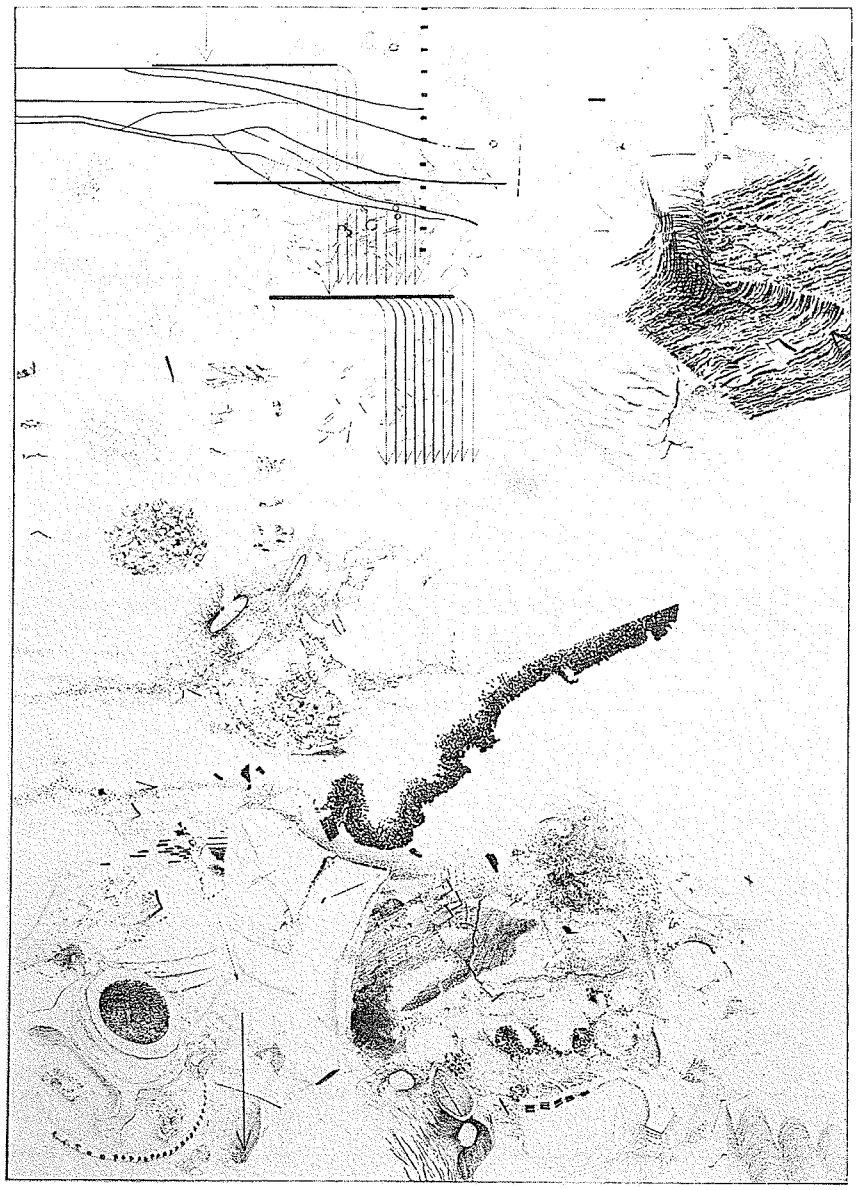
	RUTH WALDHAUER	SUSAN SMITH	ARLENE BLUM
	Marine biologist, Sandy Hook Laboratories, North East Fisheries Center. Presently studying lead and copper in the waters of the Raritan and lower New York bays.	Artist, New York City. Does large paintings and wall drawings that deal with architectural marks left on walls adjacent to demolished buildings. Her current paintings use found objects from the demolition sites.	Biochemist, mountain climber. Led first women's expedition to Annapurna (1978).
1. Do art and science interact with each other? How?		I think they do. Art benefits from science directly in the form of the restoration and preservation techniques that have been developed, that is, speaking of art materials and tools.	Both are creative processes where truly original contributions often are associated with an "intuitive leap." I'm interested in interdisciplinary actions between the public policy questions concerning science on the one hand and art on the other. Channels of communication must be built between citizens and the government—maybe art can help here.
2. What are the advantages or disadvantages in being a woman in your field?	My schooling was so long ago. There were few women and therefore we posed no threat. Only when the percentages increased did the issues become more visible and more discriminatory.	Art departments are making more of an effort to hire women, probably because tenure has been given to so many men, and enough women have made an issue of the problem. I feel that gender is not the problem right now—but whether or not you are exhibiting, what gallery you show at, if the work is "hot" and if your dealer is diligently representing you.	One advantage is added visibility—that is, women stand out because of their scarcity. But we still suffer from exclusion from the "old boy" network. We are not really part of the "group."
3. What changes are occurring due to increased interest in pollution? What is your specific concern?	The growing concerns with pollution have to do with the general population. "Recycling plants" as an alternative method of disposal must be developed. The existing volume that is dumped contain PCBs which could be collected and burned in a controlled atmosphere instead of posing a threat to the environment.	I think that artists pollute the environment and themselves by using toxic materials. They usually have fallen in love with the material and continue to use it despite its effects. Industry commits the same atrocity because of profit enhancement.	I work on environmental agents causing cancer and am very concerned about effects of synthetic organic chemicals on people. I was instrumental in discovering that tris, a flame retardant used in children's sleepwear, was a mutagen capable of causing cancer. As a result, tris was banned.
4. Do ethical issues enter your work?	Ethics enters into science in the back-biting that goes on in publishing papers, not in the kinds of work being done.	I try to be as honest as I can in my work.	Of course. There are risk-benefit questions about the cost to society of cleaning up the workplace and the loss of useful but biologically harmful chemicals.
5. Are there diverse or sexually defined styles?	No, just personal ones, not divided along sexual lines.		I see women as more people-oriented and less goal-oriented.
6. Does intuition play a part in your work?		My initial motivation and ideas come from my intuition and I act on it. After the work is completed I think about what it all means. I respond through my visual intuition—feelings directed to a particular wall—and then I return to draw. The discovery process happens through confronting and dealing with this information.	
7. The tension between childbearing and the workplace has ecological and political implications. What are your views?	My family is very important to me.		

© 1981 Jane Logemann, Sandy Gellis

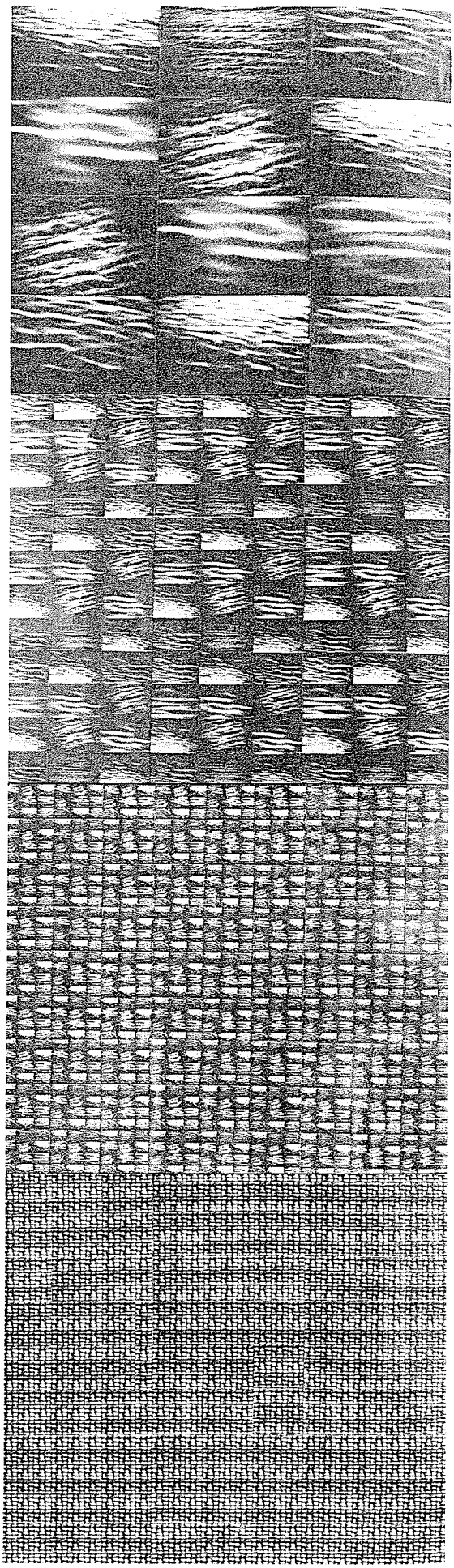
by Jane Logemann - Sandy Gellis

MIMI SMITH	MYRA COHEN	SYLVIA PALACIOS WHITMAN	
Artist, New York City. Concerned with sociological art. "My work deals with situations, objects, and events in society and how they interact with contemporary life."	Biologist, Middle Atlantic Coastal Center, Sandy Hook, N.J. Expert on red tides.	Performance artist, New York City.	
I'm personally not too interested in science, except for its social applications. In fact it makes me angry that so much information and knowledge are not put to better uses. I don't think art and science mutually benefit each other; they could, but don't. Everyone is in their own specialized area and doesn't venture out very often.		Each one goes in different directions and meets at certain points.	1. Do art and science interact with each other? How?
	Women are not equal to male scientists. I became involved with equal rights through my daughter's questioning and have been working for increased female employment at Sandy Hook. One problem has been in publishing scientific papers, where the first-mentioned author gets major research credit. It seems the male sometimes gets top billing simply on a gender basis.		2. What are the advantages or disadvantages in being a woman in your field?
My work is about issues that occur in daily life, and pollution and the environment are major issues for everyone today. Specifically, my work comments on how the presence of pollution seeps into every aspect of our lives, from our health to the noises that invade what we hear, and even to the colors that we see in the sky.	I am most concerned about dumping of wastes in waterways because of the connection to phytoplankton "blooms" or "red tides."	Pollution affects all of us—water is not beautiful when you know that fish are dying below from the effects of dumping poison into their milieu. There is more consciousness now—people are trying to clean up, but there are still too many institutional money-making machines that pollute and don't care about people.	3. What changes are occurring due to increased interest in pollution? What is your specific concern?
Ethics brings me back to why I started making art in the first place. I wanted to say something about contemporary existence.	Of course. They enter into the work of all scientists.	Ethics is about having an idea about how things should be and then following through on it. Critics and galleries impose *their* ethics on *your* art. . . . you have no choice but to do what comes from you and your thinking.	4. Do ethical issues enter your work?
		No difference in results, but women approach their work with a different time sense—they are more durable in their commitment and see events and works in longer time-frames. Some male work is like dropping a bomb—it doesn't come or go, it just stays—it involves a different sense of time.	5. Are there diverse or sexually defined styles?
	Very little. Science is an exact discipline.	It guides; you select, choose, elect—all these words come later, but they are based on intuition. It seems to me that scientists must relate to their intuitive sense a lot—they really need it. They take big risks—maybe the thought is not clear—demanding that they blindly follow their intuition.	6. Does intuition play a part in your work?
Having children helped my view of time. My time became more precious. My work became more directed.	I feel there is a strain on younger women today, i.e., they feel a demand to be too much and to outdo themselves. Career constraints sometimes cause childbearing to be delayed until it's too late.	In art, as elsewhere, having children enriches life. They aren't competing, but rather are doing the same thing—they go together.	7. The tension between childbearing and the workplace has ecological and political implications. What are your views?

Jane Logemann, a painter, and Sandy Gellis, a sculptor, live in NYC.



Eve Ingalls. *Deviations* (from the series *Earth Watch Drawings*). 1979. Ink and graphite on canvas. 80" x 56". "I draw to orient myself on the earth's surface. Under my feet are older horizons, stratified memory surfaces which store traces of both human activity and of natural processes. My sense of existing here and now is challenged by these memory surfaces. No unified landscape invited me to rest and to take stock of where I am. Discontinuities of time, space and formation tear the incomplete, shaky tripod of my body loose from a single time-space. I map and diagram this faulted landscape. Lines probe the rough terrain of raw canvas . . . and reweave its linear structure into fragments of earth formations, artifacts and measuring systems that confront each other across near-blank space. I am compelled to test ways of locating myself in such an environment." Eve Ingalls, a member of Soho 20 Gallery in NYC, has shown at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Aldrich Museum and Yale Museum.



Suzanne Spater. *Waves*. (From a series of color photographs repeatedly re-photographed.) Suzanne Spater is an artist working in San Francisco.

ECOTAGE!

JANET CULBERTSON

In Pennsylvania I often drove with my family to a relative's farm—a farm with rich volcanic soil, situated on rolling hills surrounded by dense forests. On the way we passed miles of smoldering slag heaps—strip mines. They remain fixed in my mind as an image of hell.

Why does "development" of the land have to mean its destruction? As a child, I felt outraged and helpless. I still feel outraged. Today the destruction is so widespread that most people have at least some consciousness of it. Yet few people do anything about ecological problems until something happens in their neighborhoods. Then, however, they may act dramatically. What interests me are those activists who have risked their freedom and even their lives by performing "ecotage."

"Ecotage" is a combination of "ecology" and "sabotage." It refers to the use of guerrilla tactics ranging from civil disobedience to overt sabotage that can be executed "without injury to life systems."[1] These acts are performed by people who hope to stimulate public awareness about environmental issues and to gain press coverage that exposes polluters and exploiters. Ecotage started around 1970 with "The Fox" in Illinois, the "Billboard Bandits" in Michigan and the "Eco-Commandos" in Florida. These ecoteurs' actions have taken many forms—from the dramatic destruction of billboards and sugaring of bulldozer tanks to the simple application of stickers reading, "BOYCOTT: this company is a polluter." They also advocate idealistic gestures such as sending memorial donations to ecology groups instead of cards and flowers to the deceased.

Ecotage seemed to originate in 1970 in Aurora, Illinois, with a man calling himself "The Fox." Taking his name from the polluted Fox River, he executed a series of well-planned actions to expose the pollution of Kane County's waters and countryside. He repeatedly plugged the illegal drains of soap companies and capped their smoking chimneys. Pursued and shot at, the Fox persisted, sending notes to the media to call attention to the polluters. He even appeared on a television interview wearing a black mask. His most publicized action was the presentation of the "Fox Foundation for Conservation Action Award," given to the U.S. Steel Corporation. The prize was a 50-pound jar of foul, polluted sludge—a sample of water taken from Lake Michigan, where the company dumped its refuse. The Fox poured the contents of this jar on the office carpet of a company executive. He commented, "They keep saying that they aren't really polluting our water. If that is true, then it shouldn't hurt the rug, right?"[2] By his example, the Fox inspired a decade of ecoteurs.

Also in 1970, a series of actions was taken by a Miami group calling themselves Eco-Commandos Force 70. A woman and five men celebrated Earth Day by staging raids on six sewage plants that released dangerously high concentrates of pollutants in town waters. The method used was simple—at night, dressed in black, they slipped past plant guards and threw a highly visible but harmless yellow dye into the sewage holding tanks. The dye released its telltale color in a snakelike trail, proving that the sewage purification treatment was not only insufficient, but that the sewage lingered around the city.

One of this group's last direct actions was to motor about two miles out into the Atlantic Ocean, where 40 million gallons of raw sewage were pumped daily from Miami. Here they released 700 drift bottles containing the message to finders: "This is where the sewage goes." Within 12 days, over 70 of the bottled messages were returned from as far as 140 miles away.[3] The Eco-Commandos' communiqués to the press documented health hazard incidents, such as "swimmers bumping into lumps of human feces," and revealed that pollution tests were being conducted only during favorable tides and winds in order to reassure the tourists. A lawyer was consulted prior to each action, and since the Eco-Commandos were a nonviolent group, they faced only a trespassing charge. They maintained anonymity and, according to a report by Peter Harnick in the book *Ecotage*, they are now rumored to be working within the system—preparing law suits, writing research reports and informing the public.

Other individuals leading normal lives have suddenly been "impressed" into becoming activists by circumstances and conscience. *Ms. Magazine* (November 1974) reported on Thelma MacAdams of British Columbia, who noticed that a gas-masked pilot was spraying herbicide in her neighborhood. Resulting bird deaths showed the substance to be toxic. MacAdams found a biochemist—Merriam Doucet—and together they were able to stop the spraying by accruing information and sending protest letters to the newspapers. On another occasion, when letters didn't work and spraying was to be resumed, they called in neighborhood women, filled balloons with helium gas and floated them high above the area as obstacles to the airplane. This imaginative ploy succeeded.

In 1979, another spraying was protested by Joanne Rossell of Wolf Creek, Oregon. She enlisted neighborhood women to act against the Bureau of Land Management, which had developed a herbicide that produced abnormal growth in certain plants (they actually "grew themselves to death") although it left intact the valuable Douglas fir seedlings. The women suspected that this toxic substance would produce a similar accelerated growth in animals and humans. People in heavily sprayed areas began to report headaches, dizziness and gastrointestinal illnesses. Pregnant women experienced an abnormal number of fetal malformations and miscarriages. At this point protesters took direct action to protect themselves. Pregnant women threatened to chain themselves to trees while other activists camped and tethered balloons on target sites.[4] Although the problem has not yet been resolved, the battle lines are drawn. Private citizens, particularly women, are taking responsibility for their environment.

Marlene Lakin, the Fund for Animals agent in Canada, has led many active protests. Recently, in 1980, she organized a "chain-in" and hunger strike at the office of the federal fisheries in Toronto to protest the jailing of seal hunt opponents. The opponents were six women who had sprayed harp seal pups with a harmless dye that made their pelts commercially worthless. Each year many groups gather to attempt to foil the seal kill—sometimes covering the pups with their own

© 1981 Janet Culbertson

bodies. Each year the jail sentences and fines grow stiffer.

Earlier, in 1978, Lakin appeared at the Toronto celebrity fur show to present a leg-hold trap to the astonished, befurred Attorney-General, Roy McMurtry. She was forcibly escorted off the stage by Scottish regiment cadets. At another Canadian fur show, Lakin was dragged off the stage by police for distributing anti-fur information. [5]

Lakin feels the issue is not whether or not animals are a "renewable resource," but that animals should not suffer or die for human vanity. This belief has led her to become a vegetarian and to confront issues ranging from the factory farming of animals to the mistreatment of circus animals. Once, in attempting to hand out pamphlets exposing the circus' use of deformed and abused animals (such as a two-headed calf and a bear trained by fear to twirl a fire baton), Lakin was pushed in front of a moving car by a circus guard. Although the guard was charged with assault, Lakin could not prosecute unless she paid for the guard's transportation back to Canada. [6]

One group of animal rights champions has regularly obtained false passes to the yearly furriers' conventions. At these lavish displays of furs they check for endangered animal skins. In 1978, at the New York Coliseum, Bianca Beary and her companion from the New York ASPCA discovered illegal furs and turned in the owner, a West German. The coats were confiscated and the exhibitor fined and barred from the convention. Yet Beary and her companion were also barred from the convention and had their passes taken away.

The following year another activist, Miss X, attended with a companion. Their pockets were loaded with transparent capsules—stink bombs. As they moved through the Coliseum, they unobtrusively dropped them on the floor, where they were crushed underfoot by the crowd. Outside, animal rights activists picketed with signs such as: "It took 137 animals' lives to make your fur coat." The furriers came and went, suffering the jeers and chants with astonished looks (Doesn't *everyone* want a fur?!).

A decidedly provocative gesture was made by Fay Funnell of Camberly, England. She bought an "on sale" mink coat, threw it in a trashcan outside the fur store, doused it with gasoline and set it ablaze. Her comment was: "I hope mink will eventually cease to be looked upon as a status symbol." [7]

If you have a fur in your closet but prefer a less dramatic way of disposing of it, the Fund for Animals will recycle it to the Eskimos. [8] A unique advocate of animal rights through its publications and the eco-acts of its members, the Fund for Animals has enlisted the support of celebrities like Katherine Hepburn, Mary Tyler Moore, Doris Day and Lola Redford, who have renounced wearing real furs in favor of fake ones.

Britain, long regarded as a country of animal lovers, has a number of animal rights activist groups, such as the Hunt Saboteur Association, the Animal Liberation Front and the Earth Kids. These groups attack the hunts through their publications and do sabotage activities, for which they often suffer beatings and injuries from the hunters. The Sabs' main effort has been to stop otter and fox hunts, as well as rabbit coursing events. Their success rate is high—partly because by deflecting attention from the hunt, the Sabs become substitute targets for the hunters.

For a sporting hunt event, a volunteer group arrives at the site armed only with hunting horns (to call the hounds away from their prey) and with antimate—a chemical that disguises the fox scent to the dogs and thus allows the fox to escape. Marlene Lakin, "on vacation" in England as a hunt saboteur, describes how the hunt began:

Marlene Lakin is "escorted" off stage at fur show in Toronto.

> We ran across the field in front of them—I heard a shout, "It's the bloody Sabs." They tried to maneuver the horses into running into us. They struck at us with their whips. We used our hunting horns to bring the hounds to us away from the huntsmen. Our hands were sprayed with antimate and we patted the dogs, rubbing it into their coats. [9]

One of the most dramatic recent acts of ecotage was the blasting and sinking of a pirate whaler called the "Sierra." Defying international law the Sierra illegally massacred whole herds of whales, including nursing mothers and infants. On February 7, 1980, a militant group of ecoteurs, funded by unknown sources, sank the Sierra. No one was caught—no one was injured. [10]

Dolphins in particular have captured our imagination, but not yet our concern and protection. They are being mercilessly slaughtered. In 1980 Reuter News reported on an episode on Iki Island, Japan:

> In an unexpected act of almost human vengeance, about 4,000 dolphins have massed around this island, forcing fishing boats back to port. Just 24 hours earlier fishermen from the island slashed and stabbed about 200 dolphins to death after trapping them in nets. There was no explanation for the massing of the dolphins. But the dolphins' behavior will probably be viewed by environmentalists, who consider the mammals to be almost human, as a deliberate act of revenge or protest. [11]

It was almost a dolphin declaration of war—a bloodless, futile war. Futile because the Japanese government still pays an $80 bounty for each dolphin killed and still supports a $140,000 dolphin grinding machine at Iki Island to turn the animals into fertilizer.

One ecoteur on the dolphins' behalf is Dexter Cate, a marine biologist and field agent for the U.S. Fund for Animals. Cate traveled to Japan in 1978 and attempted to persuade the fishermen and government agencies to find an alternative to the annual dolphin slaughter. He even exposed a secret Japanese government report proving that dolphin meat contained high mercury levels—10 to 50 times higher than the level allowed for human consumption. Unable to forestall the kill, he reported: "The harbour water was blood red. . . . I watched a fisherman . . . throw a spear into the milling dolphins. A dolphin convulsed. . . . The uninjured would not abandon the wounded ones. . . . Whistling in distress, they flopped about on the concrete, gushing stomachs slashed open,

fully conscious and in terrified agony."[12]

At dawn on February 28, 1980, Cate risked his life to paddle two miles through rough, freezing surf in a small, inflatable kayak. In the Iki harbor, 500 dolphins were trapped in holding nets for fishermen to kill that day. Cate cut ropes and coaxed about half the dolphins to freedom. Threatened by enraged fishermen, he was subsequently arrested, held without bail and, after a month, tried. He was given a six-month sentence, suspended for three years. In a recent Channel 7 interview (Summer 1980), Cate spoke of his efforts and discussed studies on dolphins' extraordinary intelligence and intuitive faculties: "It is a tragic irony that even as some humans are attempting to communicate with these huge intellects of the sea, others seek to eradicate them."

In yet another action, a group of four New York University students, angered by needless experiments on animals, staged a rescue raid in March 1979. They stated: "We did it because we wanted to save these animals and to dramatize the horrible experiments that go on." The animals were photographed in an exposé released to the press.[13]

If women knew about the cruelty inflicted on lab animals in cosmetic testing, would they boycott certain cosmetic companies? For instance, rabbits restrained in stocks have concentrates of shampoo and other cosmetics dripped into their eyes—sometimes over a period of several days. Their eyelids are clamped open and no anesthetic is used. Each rabbit is observed for eye ulceration, hemorrhaging and cornea damage, all of which cause the animal extreme suffering. The nine-billion-dollar-per-year cosmetic industry is preoccupied by its quest for new beautification items; as a result, the industry performs endless new tests on animals. There *are* alternatives; we can use fewer cosmetics or buy natural (not chemically based) products, such as those made by Beauty Without Cruelty and Tom's of Maine.

Many perfumes are made with musk taken from a gland on the ventral face of the genital organ of the deer, civet cat or beaver. The cats are kept in small cages and periodically have their musk sacs scraped with a spatula. Musk is also obtained from small Himalayan deer, which are "lured by music into an open area where they are then shot."[14] Women could easily prevent the exploitation and death of these animals by refusing to buy specific vanity products.

There have been many exemplary acts on behalf of the environment over the last decade. A new consciousness is spreading of what our individual responsibility is toward this earth. We can decide for ourselves what we can appropriately do. Not many women have chosen to blow up pirate whalers or seal off polluting chimneys or kayak into a dolphin holding pen. This is probably because of the emphasis in our past on being "ladylike," in combination with paternalistic indoctrination. Still, a number of women have taken calculated risks and found that moderate lawbreaking gets its point across, and brings little or no retaliation.

Women should be ready to take on any vital issue, to boycott or question any ecological exploitation. For instance, as an artist, I question environmentally destructive art. As much as I respect the artist's personal freedom to create, I cannot see the value in an art piece that wraps two miles of coastline in plastic without regard for the plant and animal life underneath that plastic. Nor can I respect "the killer artist who videotaped himself as he shot a small dog to death," a dog which he had recently "rescued" from the local dog pound.[15] The problem continues. As recently as this spring, a French artist asked the Israeli government for permission to paint a mountain peak with blue paint!

Direct ecotage certainly has dramatic impact. But "no action" can also be effective. For example, women can maintain control over their bodies and refuse to overpopulate the earth. We have tremendous power as consumers. We can refuse to buy cosmetics that utilize lab tests on animals, refuse to wear or buy furs, refuse to overequip our homes with wasteful gadgets. We can also refuse to contribute to the exploitation of animals by not taking our children to the circus and rodeo. We can stop buying "decorated" paper products (which aren't as biodegradable as white ones), stop using detergents that are not biodegradable and complain about the overpackaging of supermarket products.

We can write letters to the media and to political leaders (each letter counts as the unuttered opinion of 100 other people). We can vote for ecologically active politicians; watch for nuclear plants or chemical companies slated for our neighborhoods; do a little consciousness-raising on environmental issues among friends; cooperate with efforts to recycle newspapers, bottles and tins. And we can lend support—moral and financial—to groups who work for us, such as the Friends of the Earth (who fought the building of 47 nuclear power plants), the Sierra Club, the World Wildlife Fund and Nader's Public Citizens.

We can resist the message of public figures such as Jesuit priest James Schall, who calls ecology heresy and claims that "the nation's growing commitment to the environment is a 'dangerous' and 'unbalanced' trend."[16] He argues that "an emerging African country with a choice between a clean environment and a steel mill would rightfully choose the steel mill." Advocating quantity over quality of life, he proposes that we increase population growth to create a larger intellectual base. Schall is just one of the many leaders who support these ideas. The interrelationship among all things—animals, plants, earth, air and water—seems difficult to grasp. The right of species simply to exist, rather than to become utilitarian "tools" or "things for profit," is an even harder concept to accept—for it questions the old Judeo-Christian belief in "man's" right to "dominate" nature.

The concept of conservation used to be considered reactionary—an elitist program to save wilderness parklands for those who had the time and money to use them. Today the ecologist (conservationist) is seen as a radical— for resisting "all-out" progress, condemning "growth at any cost" and attempting to protect the earth for the future.

A feminist therapist claims that we are now living in a woman's world. Certainly women are a majority. We should use our numbers politically. If we can raise consciousness about the environment and its problems, we can also take a further step—that of intelligent action to protect it.

1. See *Ecotage*, ed. Sam Love & David Obst (NY: Pocket Books 1970).
2. *Newsweek* (Oct. 5, 1970; Jan. 11, 1971).
3. Love and Obst, *Ecotage*.
4. Elaine Weiss, in *WIN*, vol. 16, no. 16 (Oct. 1, 1980).
5. *Globe and Mail* (Sept. 16, 1978); *Toronto Star* (Oct. 5, 1978).
6. *Etiobicoke Advertiser-Guardian*, Canada (July 20, 1977).
7. *Fund for Animals Newsletter*, vol. 12, no. 1.
8. The Fund for Animals is at 140 West 57th St., NYC 10019.
9. *Howl*, no. 7 (Fall 1976).
10. United Press International (Feb. 7, 1980).
11. Reuters, Canada, *Sunday Sun* (March 9, 1980).
12. *Fund for Animals Newsletter*, vol. 12, no. 1.
13. Steven Cocheo, in *Washington Square News* (March 19, 1979).
14. Jon Evens, *Focus* (Alternatives to American Research pamphlet).
15. This video was shown repeatedly on Manhattan Cable TV on December 25, 1979 (James Norman, reporter).
16. *Time* (June 23, 1971).

Janet Culbertson is a nature artist concerned about endangered species and places.

HOME ECONOMICS

LUCY R LIPPARD

© 1981

Which came first: the blade of grass or the blade of a knife?

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is now producing war toys. They are funded by tax dollars and rationalized as educational for personnel. *Skirmish* is a game about a terrorist seizure of a uranium shipment. *Ambush* is about terrorists trying to blow up a nuclear power plant.

"The Administration has asked Congress for $696 billion in Federal Funds for fiscal 1981; of this amount 47% goes to the military. This includes interest on the national debt, two-thirds of which can be conservatively estimated as war-incurred" (Dr. James Anderson, Employment Research Associates).

"The U.S. may buy itself two things with its $1 trillion defense budget of 1981 to 1985. The first is an economic decline that comes about once or twice in a century. The second is nuclear war" (Emma Rothschild, MIT).

Melanie Sherwood. *Italian Spaghetti Man*. 1978. Paper, plaster, cardboard in a soup can. 11" x 3¼" x 3¼".

"The situation in the Middle East is dangerous and difficult, and *not* selling arms would not make it any less so" (Secretary of Defense Harold Brown).

"I am a revolutionary and a member of the atomic age. I cannot disavow people who use bombs. I hate bombs but we might have to use them. Until my last breath I will fight for liberation and freedom of Puerto Rico" (Lolita Lebron).

Tacitus referred to black-clad women who hindered Paulinus' attack on Anglesey in 61 A.D. by rushing among the troops brandishing blazing faggots and cursing and confusing the enemy in the name of the Black Raven Goddess.

"An acquaintance of mine, who was interning in an obstetrics-gynecology service, was assisting at a hysterectomy. The chief resident performed the operation with impeccable style and skill. But just afterward, as the patient lay unconscious upon the table, the physician held the newly detached uterus aloft. My friend glanced at his face and said quizzically, 'You look ... pleased?' 'Ah yes, I am,' he answered. 'Another small victory in man's unending battle against the womb' " (Maggie Scarf, *New York Times*).

In New Zealand, women cannot even have abortions in cases of rape. In Peru, backstreet abortions account for 60% of the deaths of Peruvian women. In Italy, abortions are left to the discretion of the doctors, and 94% of the doctors refuse to perform abortions. In Australia, there is widespread sterilization abuse of Aboriginal women. In Kentucky, the Proctor and Gamble Company gave away hundreds of bars of Ivory Soap at the Right-to-Life convention. Does that mean cleanliness is next to bigotry?

As part of a recent anti-ERA conference, workshops were held to improve the public image of the women campaigning against women's rights. These included the use of makeup, tips on speech-making and seminars on how to get elected.

"Creating a body is nature's work. Keeping it beautiful is Jeanne Piaubert's" (Ad for body-care lotions).

"The makeup ads proclaim 'You never looked so good.' But a few years ago, when one of those ubiquitous cancer-causing nitrosamines was found in a wide variety of cosmetics, female consumers never felt so bad" (*Science 80*).

Now Avon is introducing a new line of cosmetics called Envira. It claims to protect women from the ravages of pollution.

"Women are needed in scientific work for the very reason that a woman's method is different from that of a man. All her nice perceptions of minute details, all her delicate observation of color, of form, of shape, of change, and her capability of patient routine, would be of immense value in the collection of scientific data" (Maria Mitchell, 1876).

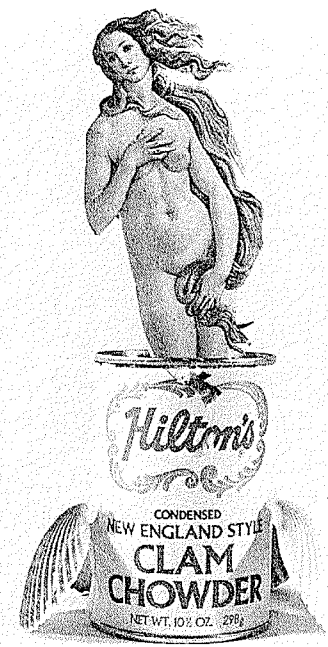
"Politics based on received definitions of women's nature and role are oppressive, whether promoted by men or by my alleged sisters" (Ellen Willis, *Village Voice*).

"What on earth sense is there in trying to make it 'trendy' to link environmentalism with feminism? Women's Libbers are the same hard-driving type as the men of a century ago (and before and since) who have wreaked such havoc on the environment for their own selfish purposes. What hell-bent-on-a-career-with-all-the-male-privileges woman is going to make minor sacrifices like taking time to recycle or use mass transit or care for her children or cook from scratch or try to save any energy except her own? Why don't you look for more environmental friends, instead, among conservative, homeloving Christians? The only connection between feminism and environmentalism is that both break certain traditions and conservatism. You have too good a publication going to desecrate it with feminist yowlings" (Miriam Murdock, letter to *Environmental Action*).

"Selfish career women who behave like the hard-driving men of a century ago aren't environmentalists . . . and they certainly aren't feminists either. Feminism is antithetical to male domination—whether of natural resources or women—and the competition and aggression which our male society rewards" (Victoria Leonard, in reply to above).

"SAVVY: The Magazine for executive women . . . SAVVY is a way to see how other women live, to identify at a high career level with them. SAVVY is a celebration of success—a demonstration that a good salary is not unfeminine. How do *you* compare? Adwoman Mary Wells Lawrence made $225,000 in 1977; Roberta Kraus, nuclear engineer, makes $25,000" (Ad).

A Pension Rights study finds that more than two million women, or 16% of those 65 and older, are living below the poverty level. The median income for men 65 and older is $5,526, while women 65 and older receive only $3,008. Older



Melanie Sherwood. *Venus Clam Chowder on the 1/2 Shell*. 1979. Paper, plaster, cardboard, sea shells, seaweed in a soup can. 11" x 5" x 5".

women are the poorest group in this

A. Carl Karcher, owner of the Carl's Jr. chain of

Paper, plaster, cardboard in a soup can. 11" x 3¼" x 3¼".

1/2 Shell. **1979. Paper, plaster, cardboard, sea shells, seaweed in a soup can. 11" x 5" x 5".**

women are the poorest group in this country (Washington Spectator).

"The television and radio industry feeds on health, or more precisely, on disease. . . . Almost all the commercial announcements, in an average evening, are pitches for items to restore failed health. As a people we have become obsessed with health. There is something fundamentally, radically unhealthy about all this. The new danger is in becoming a nation of healthy hypochondriacs. And we do not have time for this sort of thing anymore. We should be worrying that our preoccupation with personal health may be a symptom of copping out, an excuse for running upstairs to recline on a couch, sniffing the air for contaminants, spraying the room with deodorants, while just outside, the whole of society is coming undone" (Dr. Lewis Thomas, *The Medusa and the Snail*).

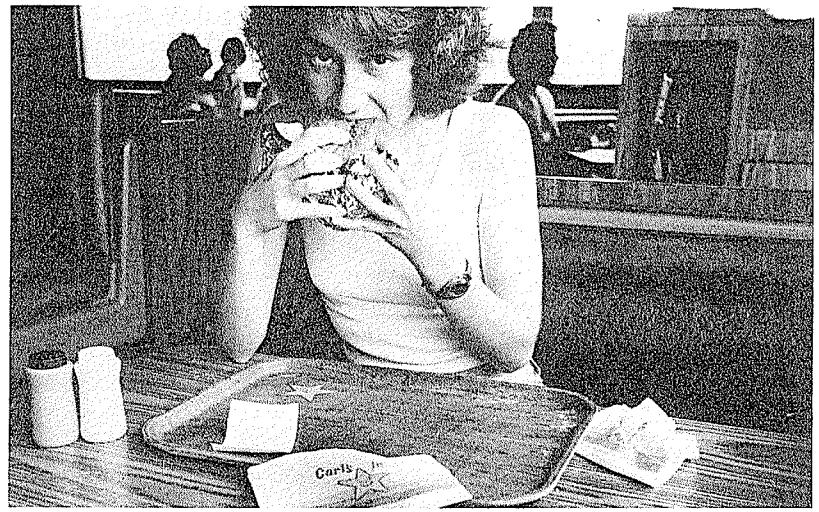
"The biggest surprise for Dr. Srole and his associates . . . came when they found that much of the overall improvement among New Yorkers' mental health could be attributed to a huge change in women. The 1954 study had shown that, in the 40-49 age group, 9% of the men and 21% of the women suffered from an emotional impairment sufficient to interfere with everyday living. For the comparable age group in 1974, the impairment rate for men had remained steady at 9% but for women it had fallen to 8%. 'I think what we're seeing here,' says Dr. Srole, 'are the effects of the feminist movement' " (*New York Times Magazine*).

Sane minds do not prevail. But what has art got to do with sanity? What indeed?

****

"Looking upwards from the Yosemite Valley, the eye follows tall redwoods and cedars to the summits of towering granite cliffs, over which silver ribbons of water fall from dizzying heights. But at the horizontal, the field of vision is filled with hot asphalt, slow moving lines of cars and buses, and crowds of tourists, some visibly irritated by the heat and congestion. . . . The national parks, sometimes called the 'cathedrals' of American civilization, are in serious trouble. . .excessive use and deteriorating facilities . . . exposed to threats from the outside, especially energy exploitation and other developments on adjacent private land. . . . Nor have they escaped some of the social problems that have been troubling the nation's urban areas for years. These elected.

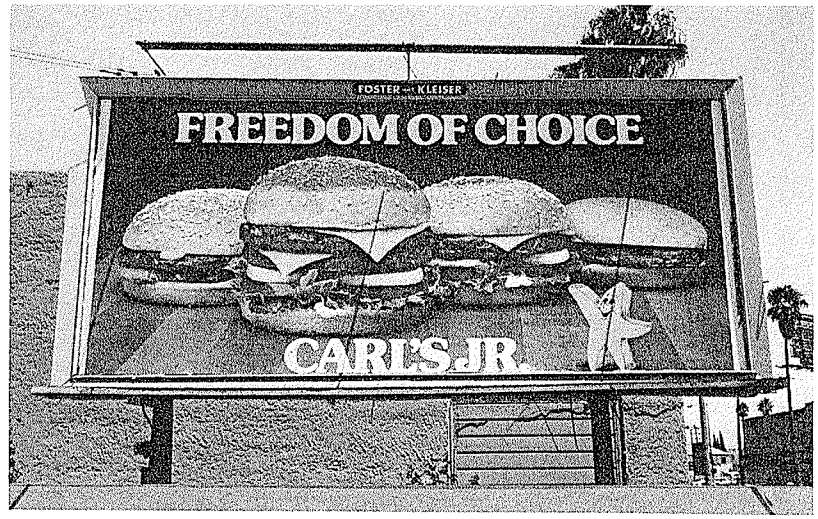
"Creating a body is nature's work. aren't environmentalists . . . and they certainly aren't feminists either. Feminism



A. Carl Karcher, owner of the Carl's Jr. chain of fast food restaurants is a staunch supporter of the Right-to-Life movement. This increasingly powerful national movement has launched a far-reaching attack on women's rights. Their platform opposes abortion, contraception, publicly funded childcare, gay rights, and the ERA. Among other things, they are working towards the passage of a Human Life Amendment which could result in the prosecution, as murderers, of women who seek or receive abortions. As long as women are denied control of their own bodies, accurate medical help and information, safe birth control, and sufficient emotional and financial support for rearing children, the right to a safe, legal and affordable abortion is a must for all women. Think about where your money goes next time you get hungry for a hamburger.

A Know Your Corporations Artwork © 1980 Margolies/Hughes

Q. How is this Carl's Jr. hamburger a threat to Women's Rights?



A. The irony of these billboards which saturated Southern California during the summer of 1980 is in the political ideology of Carl Karcher, owner of the Carl's Jr. chain of fast food restaurants. Carl is a staunch supporter of the Right-to-Life movement whose platform opposes abortion, sex education, contraception, publicly funded childcare, gay rights and the ERA. Among other things, they are working towards the passage of a Human Life Amendment which could result in the prosecution, as murderers, of women who seek or receive abortions. This far-reaching attack on women's rights continues to deny women accurate medical help and information, safe and effective birth control, as well as sufficient emotional and financial support for rearing children. For Carl, "Freedom of Choice" means the right to choose between a hamburger and a cheeseburger. For women, "Freedom of Choice" must mean the right to control their own bodies and to choose when to have children. Think about where your money goes next time you get hungry for a hamburger.

A Know Your Corporations Artwork © 1980 Margolies/Hughes

Q. Where is the irony in this Carl's Jr. billboard?

Mary Linn Hughes and Barbara Margolies discovered Carl Karcher's association with the Right-to-Life movement at a June 1980 march against the R-t-L convention in Anaheim, Cal. Carl's Jr. is a local counterpart of McDonald's and has over 300 restaurants. At the time, Southern California was being swamped with a new Carl's Jr. media campaign—huge billboards proclaiming "Freedom of Choice" with an image of four different kinds of hamburgers. The artists leapt into action, printing up 1,000 copies of the two postcards reproduced here, posting them in the streets and restrooms, distributing them to women's health clinics, family planning centers, feminist bookstores, artists' postcard publishers, mail-art shows and individuals. They also sent them to "the people who work at Carl's Jr." and stamped them "Please Post." "We figured it was possible that many of the Carl's Jr. employees might not be aware of their employer's politics."

Response to the cards has been enthusiastic, and in one case they were used in a successful city council fight to keep a new Carl's Jr. from opening. They have been published locally and nationally and have shown up in unexpected places, like the bulletin board at an engineering firm. Under their "Know Your Corporations" logo, Margolies and Hughes are planning more politically effective postcard art.

Personal Products Company
Milltown, NJ 08850

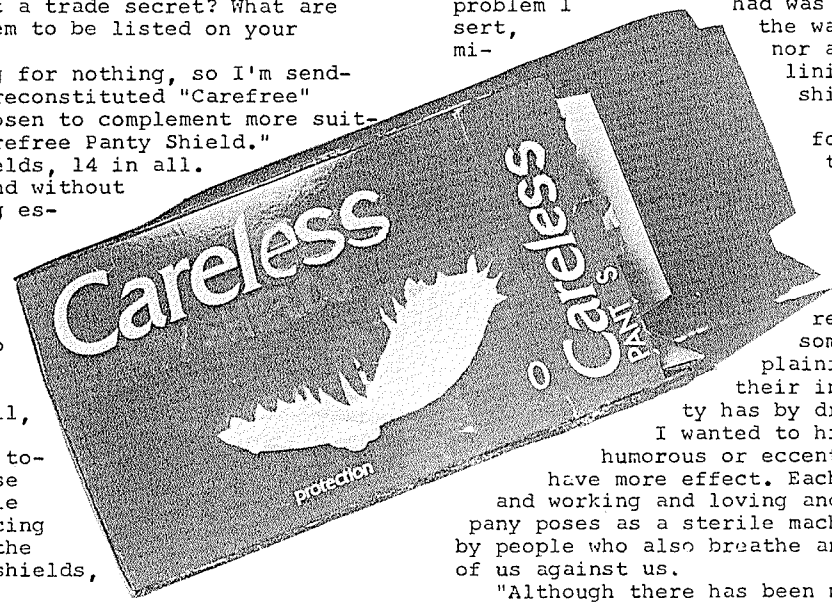
Dear Personal Products President:

Thank you for such a marvelous, modern, convenient product. A salubrious contribution to humankind (and of course, quite secondarily, a source of honest profit). The "Carefree Panty Shield" is endowed with so many wonderful qualities, I'd like to mention my favorites.

Obviously, one can't ignore the incredible fragrance emitted by every shield. This fragrance lingers on a woman's body for a minimum of three days and, exposed to the air, for at least two weeks! I love it. Just think, anyone, anywhere, can detect that you are wearing a "Carefree Panty Shield" by a casual sniff. Can you blame me for asking what your formula is? Or is it a trade secret? What are some of your ingredients? (They don't seem to be listed on your boxes.)

Now I certainly don't expect something for nothing, so I'm sending a small token I hope you can use--a reconstituted "Carefree" package and contents. This design was chosen to complement more suitably the myriad possibilities of the "Carefree Panty Shield."

I enclose a rich array of colored shields, 14 in all. The shields soak up the pigment evenly and without distortion of their original shape. Being esthetically machined, these shields lend themselves to all sorts of interesting geometric designs. And the spongy texture accepts all forms of collage most readily. My only regret is not fully utilizing the permanent glue which you so lavishly apply to the back of each panty shield. I did try to use it as a method for attaching the shields to a studio wall, but when I tried to remove them the wall fiber crumbled away. When I stacked them together, they instantly bonded like Siamese quintuplets. Foreseeing this as a possible consumer problem, I put an additional facing over the back of each shield to protect the shields from themselves. (Shielding the shields, you might say.)



I can see the shields serving a dual purpose: not only as sanitary devices, but also as versatile, low-cost art works (also sanitary). Both men and women could now buy your product. Bachelors would be free to inexpensively and colorfully decorate their condom-iniums. And women could choose between wearing the shields or decorating with them. Try them on the car dash, the frigidaire, the TV top. Use them as a dazzling centerpiece for the dining room table, or as ornaments for the family Christmas tree.... The possibilities outlive the imagination (and one's lifespan). And since "Carefree" comes already scented, the need for expensive fresh flowers is virtually abolished.

So I want to show my appreciation by giving you an original version of the "Careless Pant" and a hand-crafted set of 14 "P-U" shields.

Signed with lingering emotion and utmost sincerity, I am

C. Fanny Burnstein

"For the past few years I've been watching the Personal Products Company in New Jersey. I'd been suspicious of the materials and chemicals which allowed their napkins and tampons to be infinitely absorbent. There was also that "bouquet." Somewhere along the line, I found out that there were particles (asbestos, according to gossip) in feminine hygiene products which caused uterine cancer and ultimately death. I had also heard that chemicals were added that increased and extended the menstrual flow. At that time, I devised an alternative hygiene method using a sterilized sea sponge. Immediately, I noticed several changes: my period decreased from a five-day to a three-day duration; the blood shifted from a grotty maroon color to a beautiful bright red; those little tissue fibers disappeared; the gripping cramps abated. For the past three years, I've not had any real pain. The only problem I had was when I'd rinse out the sponge and reinsert, the water dampened my underpants. This was a minor annoyance and I thought I'd solve it by lining my underpants with a commercial mini-shield.

"Having been away from these products for some time, I had become overly sensitive to every aspect of the shields. Their smell and texture became monstrous. I could almost see the poisons leaking from each and every shield. My first reaction was to trash the whole box. My second reaction was to make a ridiculous art piece from them. My last reaction was to reconstruct the package in some persuasive way. Instead of merely complaining, I wanted to constructively criticize their industry the way the anti-nuclear community has by drawing up plans to convert the reactors. I wanted to hit home, but I felt that if I could be humorous or eccentric or ironic, then my complaints might have more effect. Each and every one of us is really breathing and working and loving and suffering. The Personal Products Company poses as a sterile machine out of our reach, but it is manned by people who also breathe and work and love and suffer. It's a case of us against us.

"Although there has been mention of the danger of commercial feminine hygiene products, and the RELY scandal woke a lot of women up, there are still too many unaware of these dangers."

--Claudia Hollander, July 1980

(Hollander received a prompt reply from Claire B. Snow of the Personal Products Consumer Response Center, complimenting her on her "creativity," and regretting her displeasure with the product and its scent. The letter was accompanied by a free package of Stayfree Minipads (unscented) and a "napkin purse case." It also promised another response from the "Director of Outside Suggestions," but this was not forthcoming.)

centers of scenic splendor have their own | von Park's boundary: a long list of com- | noonday sun, and it may also have been | erans and handicapped urged to apply"

centers of scenic splendor have their own jails" (Philip Shabecoff, *New York Times*).

The Rolls Royce, which you can buy for a mere $77,000 and which gets all of ten miles to a gallon, has won an exemption from the laws requiring energy conservation. Rolls is also asking the Treasury to absolve it from paying the gas guzzler tax.

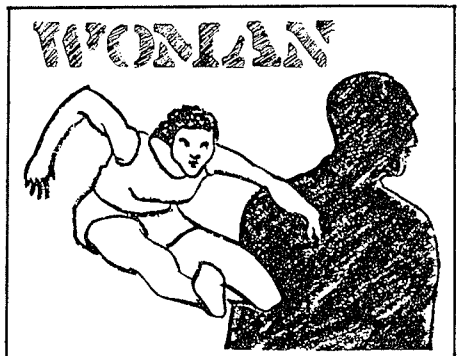
"In Bryce Canyon, Utah, a planned 8,300-acre strip mine just outside the park would destroy one of the greatest views in the country and blasting could topple the fragile limestone spires within the park. . . . In New Mexico, drilling rigs for uranium have already been erected only a quarter mile from Chaco Canyon Park's boundary; a long list of companies including Arch Minerals, Consolidated Coal and Tuscon Gas and Electric Company have applied for leases to strip mine coal near the park. . . .Resulting pollution will cut down on visibility, already lowered by particles emitted from power plants in the Four Corners area. . . . Air pollution would bring an acid rain that would devastate the ruins of the Anasazi civilization that flourished 1,200 years ago. Drilling and digging have already harmed some of the 'outliers'—ruins of Chacoan culture situated outside the center of the Canyon. Chaco Canyon may become an island surrounded by development" (Philip Shabecoff, *New York Times*).

The Anasazi were farmers expert enough to urge three crops from recalcitrant semi-arid soil. Like today's Pueblos, they divided into clans and their lineage was traced through women. Nature's seasonal changes provided their practical and religious structure. "Near the top of an isolated butte in Chaco Canyon, three large stone slabs introduce sunlight in vertical patterns on two spiral petroglyphs carved on the cliff behind them. The light illuminates the spirals each day near noon in a changing pattern throughout the year and marks the solstices and equinoxes with particular images. At summer solstice a narrow vertical form of light moves downward near noon through the center of the larger spiral." At winter solstice two of these daggers of light come down to embrace, or hold, the spiral. This Anasazi calendar is the only one known in the world to employ the noonday sun, and it may also have been used for lunar observations, consistent with the Pueblo culture's emphasis on the moon, seen in a dual role with the sun (Anna Sofaer, Volker Zinsser, Rolf Sinclair, *Science*).

"To create the ideal light, we had to improve on the original" (Ad for Westinghouse: a picture of the sun and a fluorescent tube).

The Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory "provides excellent working conditions and opportunities for advanced research. Our location in the mountains of Northern New Mexico offers a pleasing lifestyle in a setting of great natural beauty. . . . An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer; minorities, women, veterans and handicapped urged to apply" (Ad in *Science*).

Farmington, New Mexico, near the entrance to Chaco Canyon Park, is an energy boomtown where Exxon is negotiating with the Navahos for one of the largest uranium leases in the country. Men wear T-shirts saying "If You Ain't an Oil Worker, You Ain't Worth Shit," and "Boilermakers Do It Better," and "I'm Oil Field Trash and Goddamn Proud of It." Child abuse, rape and spouse-beating especially are reaching epidemic proportions. "For them being drunk is absolutely normal. . . . The only thing I can compare it to is the attitude of the conquering GI" (Tom Stuart Bush, Director of Family Crisis Center in Farm-

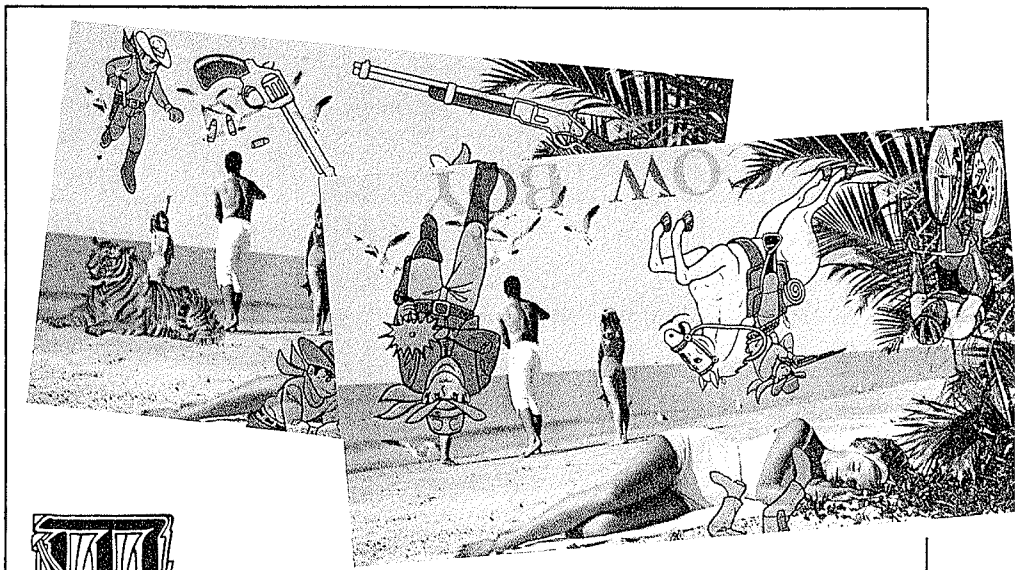


On a diet where most protein is provided by meat, a 120 lb. woman requires 16.8 g. less protein per day than a 160 lb. man, or 79.6 lb. less meat per year.* If the meat is beef raised, as in the United States, on high protein feed, it takes 21 lbs. of protein in feed* to produce one lb. of beef protein, which is contained in about six lbs. of meat. To produce 79.6 lbs. of beef requires 278.5 lbs. of plant and fish protein, or enough to feed five 120 lb. women and a child on a diet where most protein is provided by plants.*

A 120 lb. woman also requires 1/4 less calories per day than a 160 lb. man.** And in all but a few jobs requiring very heavy labor, she can do as much work as a man. Even in those jobs requiring heavy physical labor, women are more productive than men in relation to the amount of food they consume.

So remember, when you think ecology, and economy, think WOMAN.

*Calculations from information in *Diet for a Small Planet* by Frances Moore Lappe (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), pp. 6-46.
**Figures from *The Natural Foods and Health Foods Calorie Counter* by William I. Kaufman (New York: Pyramid Communications, 1973), p. 10.



MAY THIS BE THE LAST "AD" YOU EVER READ.

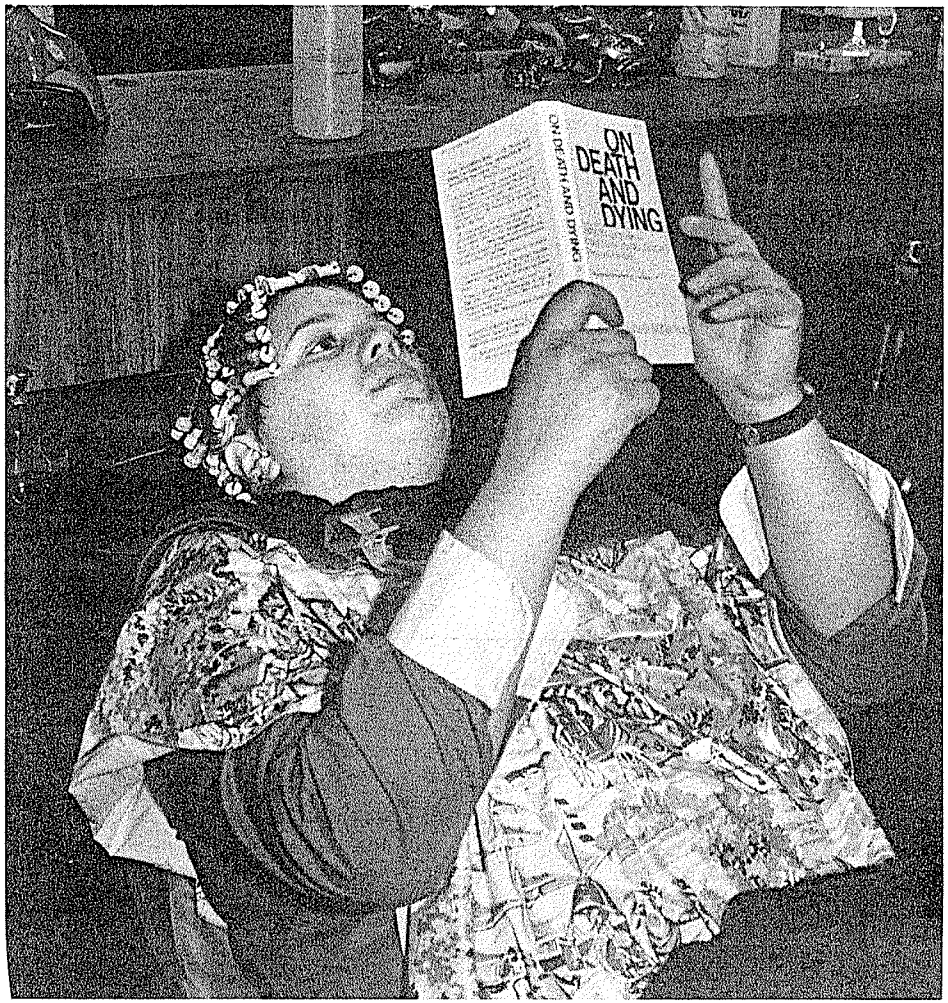
PRESCRIPTION FOR VISUAL PRIVACY: Taken as directed, this ad will produce temporary, beneficial blindness when the user (*not* the consumer) is confronted with commercial visual assault. A balm for the eyes and mind, this "ad" will induce a euphoric feeling of mental power which will render all subsequent graphic assaults powerless, as the "consumer" is emancipated from the slavery of insidious commercial exploitation (the daggers which find the achilles heel of personal insecurity).

DOSAGE: One

INDICATIONS: Use carefully when walking in public places.

DIRECTIONS: Now, close the eyes (to this, and all other advertisements).

These two ads (right, by Sally Heller and Judy Kanin; left, by "Anonymous") are part of Heller's project to solicit from artist-friends "personally conceived advertisements which are not degrading to self-awareness and intelligence." In her cover letter, she wrote: "Through social organization, it is possible to study how well women adapt to their environments. Because societies are man-made, women who do adapt well are women who pay heed to social standards. Through the use of consumer goods, one can feel more strongly a member of her community, hence a greater asset to society. It is amusing to think Tickle deodorant can induce such feelings of adequacy, but not so amusing to realize how little input the actual product has. The key word of course is *Advertising*, or, as Jules Henry puts it, 'pecuniary truth.' 'Truth is what sells. Truth is what you want people to believe. Truth is that which is not legally false.'"



Joanne Leonard. *Television/Daycare.* **1978. 7 3/8" x 7 1/8". From "Impact of Technology on the Lives of Women" series, a study of "a woman's place" and the machines and gadgets that inhabit it.**
"My feeling is that some things, like electric can openers and Mr. Coffee machines, have been placed before the consumers to become like mountains—they exist, and so must be tried and conquered. (Consider the victory implicit in the photograph showing a Mr. Coffee machine surrounded by the *tea* the woman makes in it; and what of getting *Mr.* Coffee to make the coffee—isn't that a conquest too?). . . . There may also be some analogies within the house to the technological control systems and monitoring devices seen in Chauncey Hare's oil company photographs. For those whose main theatre of operations is the home, TVs and phones monitor the world outside, and in each household busy lives are represented by the phones and memo centers which help keep lives running and ordered. . . . TVs can be seen almost as home robots, offering companionship, entertainment and childcare—traditionally the woman's roles" (Joanne Leonard, from a June 1979 statement).

Left: Caroline Summerwood. *Your Hairdresser Can Do It for You.* **1979. From an unpublished book on beauty and aging.**

ington). "There's no sense of community here" (Diane Paolozzi, Family Planning Council). "A lot of relationships are going to pot here because of shift work. Couples just don't see each other anymore because of the long hours, and a lot of women end up stranded, divorced or in very painful positions" (Adelle Richards, resident of Farmington). "Anglos have always been organized to do all kinds of things, but when minorities do it, it's a threat. Somehow we become militants" (Pauline Gonzaleas, resident of Rawling, Wyoming, coal boomtown). "There are tremendous problems for women here, but there would be lots of opportunities too. If women organize there can be a future, but then, that's the antithesis of transience" (Barbara Bush-Stuart, Farmington).

San Antonio's Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) is a primarily Mexican American group that has accomplished an amazing amount since it began in 1974 over the issue of local drainage. It has since tackled the schools, health care, utility rates, pollution and urban sprawl. Former president Beatrice Gallego at first resisted recruitment into the group. When the organizer who had spotted her as leadership material called her, she told him, "I don't like you. You're the kind of person who goes on marches." Now she has an office in her home, lobbies in Washington and speaks to citizen's groups around the country. "I have given courage to other women," she says. "One woman said to me, "Nobody can be like you'; and I said, 'That's not true. I was like you. I used to wear pants suits so no one could see my knees knocking" (*New York Times*).

"A large pool of female labor, low cost, unskilled, trainable, with dexterity" (Ad for industrial expansion of Corpus Christi, Texas).

A Boston woman trying to get into a construction union was offered only work at Seabrook; another woman already working there had her car with its no-nuke sticker towed out of the employees' parking lot. "Leave your politics at home," they told her. Women were thrown out of a construction union apprentice program for swearing and fighting (as one survivor put it, that was "actually great on-the-job training"). Women's union contracts are beginning to include clauses on sexual harassment. One union official said, "They shoved Blacks down our throats. Now they're shoving women down our throats. What next—imbeciles?"

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"Rockwell International is more than the builder of America's space shuttle. Much more. Total sales for 1978 were $5.67 billion . . . Rockwell International —where science gets down to business" (Ad).

"The Three Mile Island accident killed no one, but *inconvenienced* many thousands of those evacuated from the area, and frightened millions" (Victor McElheny, *Science 80*, my italics).

Britain's Secretary of State for Energy told an audience in Washington, D.C., that the new Conservative government has no qualms about developing nuclear power . . . his reaction to the accident at Three Mile Island was a feeling of *reassurance*: "It showed that when some stupid errors were made, and the system was put under great stress, safety was still maintained" (*Science*, my italics).

"Call toll-free: 800-225-1572 for New England Nuclear. As Easy as 1·2·5" (Ad).

****

Hey, can you take a joke? "Our mother who art the earth, hollowed be thy name. Thy springtime come, winter be done, on earth as it is both above and below. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us for eating it without thinking of those who have none. Lead us into revolution and forgive us our righteousness. For thine is the power and the glory for ever and ever. Ah, Women!" Can you take a joke? What's funny about the birth defects and brain damage caused by Hooker Chemicals at Love Canal? Only the names. Only the fact nothing was done about it. Come to think of it, nothing is funny about the birth defects and brain damage caused by Hooker Chemicals at Love Canal. And it's not any funnier when it happens in Queens.

Southwestern houses often have door and window frames painted blue or turquoise. This is to help keep witches out of the home. Blue is the color of the Virgin Mary and turquoise is the Indian color for good luck.

For three years, my 73-year-old mother has been collecting and cataloguing all the wild flowers on the island. She is often seen by roadsides and in fields and marshes, with her little basket over her arm, hunched over like a witch to see what hides in the grasses.

During the course of excavations at the Puye ruins, the men from San Ildefonso Pueblo were frequently assaulted by skeletons they uncovered. "One Indian was digging when something seized his foot and called, 'Don't take me from this ground.' The terrified fellow yelled, 'I don't know who is talking to me underground,' and shortly afterward he became sick and died. Bones talked to other workers, pleading 'Don't take me out.' " (Marc Simmons, *Witchcraft in the Southwest*).

"In Eugene, Oregon, 50 senior citizens go into the fields to fight inflation and food stamp cuts. They have gleaned more than 11,000 pounds of produce that was going to waste on the vine. They have filled freezers and cupboards and shared their bounty with more than 2,000 Lane County families" (*Washington Spectator*).

When a mortuary was planned to be constructed just outside Leisure World, a furor ripped through the community. Leisure Worlders picketed the construction site. "Yes, where we live is almost heaven," the posters suggested. "Just don't remind us of it" (*Flying Colors*, airline magazine).

"Paradise, as we now understand it, was surely the invention of a relatively leisured class. In the peasant's dream, work is still necessary. Both the bourgeois and the Marxist ideals of equality presume a world of plenty; they demand equal rights for all before a cornucopia . . . to be constructed by science and the advancement of knowledge. . . . Closely connected with the peasant's recognition, as a survivor, of scarcity, is his recognition of man's relative ignorance. He may admire knowledge and the fruits of knowledge, but he never supposes that the advance of knowledge reduces the extent of the unknown. This non-antagonistic relation between the unknown and the knowing explains why some of his knowledge is accommodated in what, from the outside, is defined as superstition and magic. Nothing in his experience encourages him to believe in final causes, precisely because his experience is so wide. The unknown can only be eliminated within the limits of a laboratory experiment. These limits seem to him naive" (John Berger, *Pig Earth*).

All over the world, crops are planted when the tide is coming in. It is said that people die on the ebb tide and are born on the flow. But why? Is that what happened to Eva and Ree and Elaine? To Suzy on Ocean Front Walk? The *tide* just went out? Well, then, we'd better get in touch with the moon, take the stripes off, and leave her to the stars.

Anonymous *is* a woman, who has "very conflicting feelings about the relationship of politics, propaganda and art" so she "committed parthenogenesis, as some feminists recommend," so she can do two different kinds of artwork. She lives in NYC.

Sally Heller and Judy Kanin were both born in 1956, in New Orleans and Milwaukee, respectively. They both attended the University of Wisconsin, Madison, as art students. Kanin moved to Chicago, wrote for the *New Art Examiner* and is now concentrating on her art. Heller went to graduate school and is working as an artist in NYC.

Claudia Hollander was "born 1951, Worcester, Mass., Polish Catholic, guilt-laden oldest child of five." Although she has a BA and an MFA, she considers herself a self-taught artist, "living and working happily in Seattle" and teaching "political, non-elitist undergraduate art" at the Cornish Institute.

Mary Linn Hughes is a lesbian-feminist artist-activist, whose forms include postcards, posters, books, installations, workshops and slide lectures.

Joanne Leonard, a photographer based in Ann Arbor, Mich., had a ten-year retrospective in 1980 at the Laguna Gloria Art Museum in Austin, Texas.

Lucy R. Lippard is a cultural activist who co-founded *Heresies*, Printed Matter and Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD). She writes fiction and essays about art and politics, has a monthly page in the *Village Voice*, and makes amateur comics, posters and performances.

Barbara Margolies is a graduate of the Feminist Studio Workshop at the Los Angeles Woman's Building. Her work deals with personal and autobiographical material, as well as feminist and social issues, and includes graphics, performance, hand-made books and miniature tableaux.

Melanie Sherwood is an artist doing video and performance about the kitchen. She presently lives and works in Iowa.

Caroline Summerwood is "a 40-year-old ex-housewife with a strong Southern heritage. Above all, I am a woman, a mother and a searcher. The past few years have been spent in unweaving and examining the threads that define a Southern lady. Presently I am a MFA graduate student at Florida State University."

Drought: god-sent or man-made disaster?

"women the worst victims"

by The Manushi Collective

Why are you writing about drought? What has that got to do with *Manushi*, with women? We were repeatedly confronted with this kind of question while some of us were working in different libraries, trying to collect information on drought.

This question springs as much from ignorance as from the arrogance which leads men to assume that not just running the affairs of the country but also messing around with the problems they have created are their prerogatives; that women, if they are to speak at all, should confine themselves to "women's issues" such as dowry and birth control.

The attitude behind this question is one that pushes women into invisibility. Are not women 50% of the poor, the Harijans [Children of God, the name Gandhi gave the Untouchables], the Adivasis [non-Hindu, tribal people] and every other oppressed group in this country? Are not women in rural India affected even more disastrously by drought—the first to be hit by malnutrition and disease, the first to die, the first driven into destitution and prostitution? And is it not the woman in the cities who is suffering the worst consequences of scarcity and price rises? For the middle-class woman, this means every kind of drudgery from unraveling old woolen sweaters to reknit them, to cutting down on her own consumption and needs so that the children's school fees can be paid or shoes bought. For the poor woman, it means standing in endless queues to buy kerosene, fetching water from distant and erratic taps, being forced to turn from the kerosene stove to the cowdung *chulha*, getting up earlier to grind the wheat herself in order to save a few *paisas*, walking miles just to buy at a slightly cheaper market and cutting down on her own food so that there is enough to go around.

While in the cities soaring prices and artificial scarcities are taking a heavy toll of women's lives and labor, in the rural areas want takes a much more brutal form. Two hundred million people, that is, one-third of the total population, have been in the grip of famine for the last ten months or more. In the seriously affected areas, villagers have no food stocks left, no employment and no money with which to buy anything. They are just starving, stilling the pangs of hunger by chewing leaves and digging up roots (*Hindustan Times*, Dec. 6, 1978).

As people are forced to live in subhuman conditions, as human lives are systematically devalued, degraded, it is women who suffer most, are the first to be sold or exchanged for food, the first to die. It is not surprising then that an overwhelming number of the starvation deaths so far reported have been those of women (*Hindustan Times*, March 31, 1980). Here is an example of how this comes to be. This is how Ratna Chamar described the death of his wife to Inder Malhotra of the *Times of India* (Sept. 1979):

> Ratna claimed and others confirmed that on the day of her death the poor woman had worked on the canal relief project all day and then had collapsed on reaching home. "If you have survived all this time why do you say that she starved to death?" he was asked. His reply was: "We get very little grain and we get it very late. . . . It was her habit to feed me first, then the children, and not eat enough herself."

In every family, women eat the last and the least. No wonder then that the mortality rate among women even in "normal" times is much higher than that among men. (Between 1951 and 1971, the number of females per 1,000 males decreased from 946 to 930.)

As all sources of food went more and more out of reach of the rural poor, families had to sell their last possessions, from domestic animals to utensils to even doors and windows (*Patriot*, May 16, 1980). In parts of East Uttar Pradesh, one ragged sari has to be shared by all the women in a family so that if one goes out wearing it, all the rest must hide in the hut. And finally, when there is nothing left to sell, the least-valued human beings, that is, the girls and women, are sold. Year after year, newspapers report how the sale of women into prostitution shoots up during times of drought.

In Nawapara, Orissa, girls in the age group 10 to 14 are reported to have been sold for anything from 15 to 55 rupees (*Patriot*, May 7, 1980). [A rupee is about 12.5 U.S. cents.] Businessmen from Madhya Pradesh purchase these girls and sell them to vice dens in the cities at very high prices. One Raja Jayak of Komma Village sold his eight-year-old daughter Premlata to a businessman for 40 rupees: "I could not give her food for days together and my entire family starved so I preferred to sell her. She can now survive on the food given by her master and my family can survive for a few days on the money I got by selling her."

The Tripura government recently uncovered a major interstate racket in which about 2,000 tribal men and women, mostly unmarried girls, were exported from Bihar every week, and many more from Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, to work in privately owned brick fields in Tripura. The women were sexually exploited as well (*Organiser*, June 22, 1980). "Other women are being trapped by unscrupulous contractors . . . who lure them by promising them a daily wage of Rs 10. . . . This year's drought has made the task of the contractors even easier . . . the girls are sent to brothels or dumped in private homes to do domestic work. In most cases they are not paid anything except two meals a day. Failure to obey orders of the master invites torture and beating . . . there are also instances where girls have been sent back to their homes after their 'utility' in brothels is over" (*Statesman*, Nov. 27, 1979). These cases are the mere tip of the iceberg because big newspapers either systematically underreport or never report what is really happening to the poor, especially women, in this country.

The government has been piously promising relief on a "war-footing." But how have the much-vaunted Food for Work programs been functioning? Reports from all over the country show that those who work on the relief projects are being cruelly cheated of their rights. The wages which actually reach the laborer's hands are far lower than what is allocated on paper, and women are being paid much less than men—by

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the same government which boasts of having passed the Equal Remuneration Act!

In Madhya Pradesh, the landlords are reported to have sent their bonded laborers (known as *Kamia Mazdoors*, since the *term* "bonded," though not the *fact*, has been banned) to work sites; they have then pocketed the wages of the laborers and given them the usual meager ration of food. In other places, the workers are not paid. In Kundra, for instance, the only relief work undertaken was the construction of a five-kilometer-long dirt road. This was completed within three weeks last September, but the wages had not been paid as of March.

Worse still, in Bundelkhand region, all the food was reported to have been diverted to the open market, where it was sold at high prices, the profits being pocketed by contractors and government staff. In other cases, good-quality foodgrains were sold off by contractors and ration shop owners, and inferior grain distributed (*Patriot*, Feb. 14, 1980).

That the drought is not a mere "natural" calamity is evident from the fact that even though Punjab and Haryana had no rainfall last year, they have on the whole maintained their level of production. This is because rich farmers in these states are relatively better off and have irrigation facilities.

Drought, like price rises and inflation, has its own politics and there are powerful vested interests which seek to perpetuate such misery because they gain by it. The government has computed the loss in farm incomes due to the current drought at 1,000 crores of rupees [1 crore = 10 million rupees]. But it is the poor peasant and landless laborer who seem to have almost exclusively borne this loss because it is they alone who produce for consumption and not for market. The rich farmers who can hoard the surplus and later sell it at higher prices have actually benefited from scarcity. The government officially admits that there is no absolute scarcity of food in the country, that tons of food are lying in state godowns [storage places]. It is also known that tons of foodgrains lie hoarded by private traders.

The rural poor have been driven further into debt and forced to mortgage or sell what little land they have left. Thus, the stranglehold of the landlord-moneylender combine has been further strengthened and the concentration of assets and land increased. Today 12% of the richest rural farmers own more than half of total rural assets, including land.

More than 70% of the people in this country live below the poverty line—the government's idea of the poverty line being an income of 30 rupees [about $3.75 U.S.] per month for urban areas and 20 rupees [about $2.50 U.S.] for rural areas—an income, even at this level, unequally distributed. It is in this context of increasing pauperization of the mass of the people that the phenomenal price rises and inflation acquire the aspect of life and death issues.

Is it true, then, as the government would have us believe, that the state is trying to help people, that it is only inefficiency and corruption which prevent schemes from working? If one looks at the policies and programs of the whole governmental setup, it becomes clear that all its efforts are directed toward perpetuating inequality and strengthening the position of the economically powerful. How else would one explain the government's attempt to go in for color television—a project that might cost anything up to 300 crores of rupees—at a time when more than 150,000 villages are without drinking water, when water is at places selling for three rupees a bucket (*Patriot*, April 19, 1980), when millions are dying of starvation? Why is it that the government can afford to go on buying more and more sophisticated arms from abroad but cannot show the same keenness in procuring deep-digging bores to provide much-needed water?

In spite of the utter destitution and powerlessness to which the mass of people in this country have been reduced, there have been attempts—some spontaneous, some organized—to express their anger and demand their rights. One way in which people expressed their anger was to keep away from the recent state assembly elections. Many villages boycotted the elections *en masse*. Here is one of many examples: "Residents of drought-hit Khandekama village of Barmer district refused to vote unless drinking water was provided to them immediately. Not a single voter turned up at the Sundara polling station until 1 p.m." (*Statesman*, June 29, 1980).

In Chattisgarh region (Madhya Pradesh), attempts were made by the people to march to the local Food Corporation godowns (where food was lying rotting in the open because of lack of storage space) with the demand that food be distributed to the hungry. But the protesters could not reach the food godowns because of the heavy police guard.

In another area:

> 40 women belonging to the Anti-Price Rise Committee for 15 minutes *gheraoed* [surrounded] V.P. Sathe and demanded proper distribution of kerosene and other essential items and steps to bring down sugar prices. . . . In Faizabad district, Kisan Sabhas and the Khet Mazdoor Sabha jointly led a demonstration of 2,000 peasants and agricultural workers in Akhbarpurtehsil, demanding a proper running of the state tubewells in view of the drought conditions, ending blackmarketing and strong steps to check price rise [*Times of India*, Feb. 29, 1980].

In an even more revealing case:

> In Karwi subdivision where a population of 3.92 lakhs [392,000] has been affected, only 35,000 were employed in relief projects. A mob of starving Harijans allegedly raided the shop of a grain dealer Baijnath Shivhari, looted 4 quintals of grain at Bira village, Banda district, and *distributed it equally among themselves.*

the chipko movement

The word *chipko* originates from a particular form of nonviolent action developed by hill women in the 19th-century forerunner of today's movement. Women would embrace (*chipko*) the trees to prevent their being felled, and some women were killed while thus protecting with their own bodies the sources of community life. The modern movement is a phenomenon of the last seven years. In April 1974, women threw out the men sent by the government contractors to fell trees. Even the police were often forced to retreat before the women's nonviolent strength.

Since women are the gatherers of fuel, fodder and water, it is they who feel the first impact of soil erosion. Mindless destruction of the forests has badly upset the hill people's economy. Men often migrate to the plains—women are left to cope with an ever more impoverished existence and to provide for the old and the children. Many women have been driven to suicide because of the increasing pressures on them. Therefore it is women who have seen through the government "planning" on which crores of rupees have been spent during the last 33 years. Women have repeatedly challenged administrators and politicians with their slogan: "Planning without fodder, fuel and water is one-eyed planning."

They said: "We were starving and this greedy profiteer was selling his foodgrains across the district border."

And what was the state's response? "A case of *dacoity* [robbery] was registered against the Harijans at Shivrampur police station" (*Times of India*, Nov. 12, 1979)!

Does this not clearly show that the laws of our country are weighted in favor of the propertied? Why is it that starvation deaths, when there is plenty of food rotting in godowns, both private and state-owned, are not treated as "murder"? Why is it that all the laws of the country protect this unfair ownership of resources by a few?

We feel that a lot more is happening by way of people's resistance, protest and efforts to create change than ever gets known through the established mass media. For instance, on June 30, 1980, all the traffic at India Gate (in New Delhi) was stopped for an hour by thousands and thousands of poor Adivasis who had come to the capital and braved the pouring rain to protest against their deteriorating economic, social, cultural conditions, and demand a separate Jharkhand state. This got only a few lines on the third page of national newspapers.

This lack of coverage in the mass media helps isolate people's struggles so that they do not get forged into a widespread movement. It is this isolation of small local struggles which demoralizes them on the one hand, and on the other, breeds the feeling of helplessness and despair among all of us. We have to collect and disseminate this information on our own. We must do this vigorously, systematically. This is an important way in which we can win back for ourselves the belief in our own power to change things. Only thus can small local struggles get linked and grow into a widespread movement.

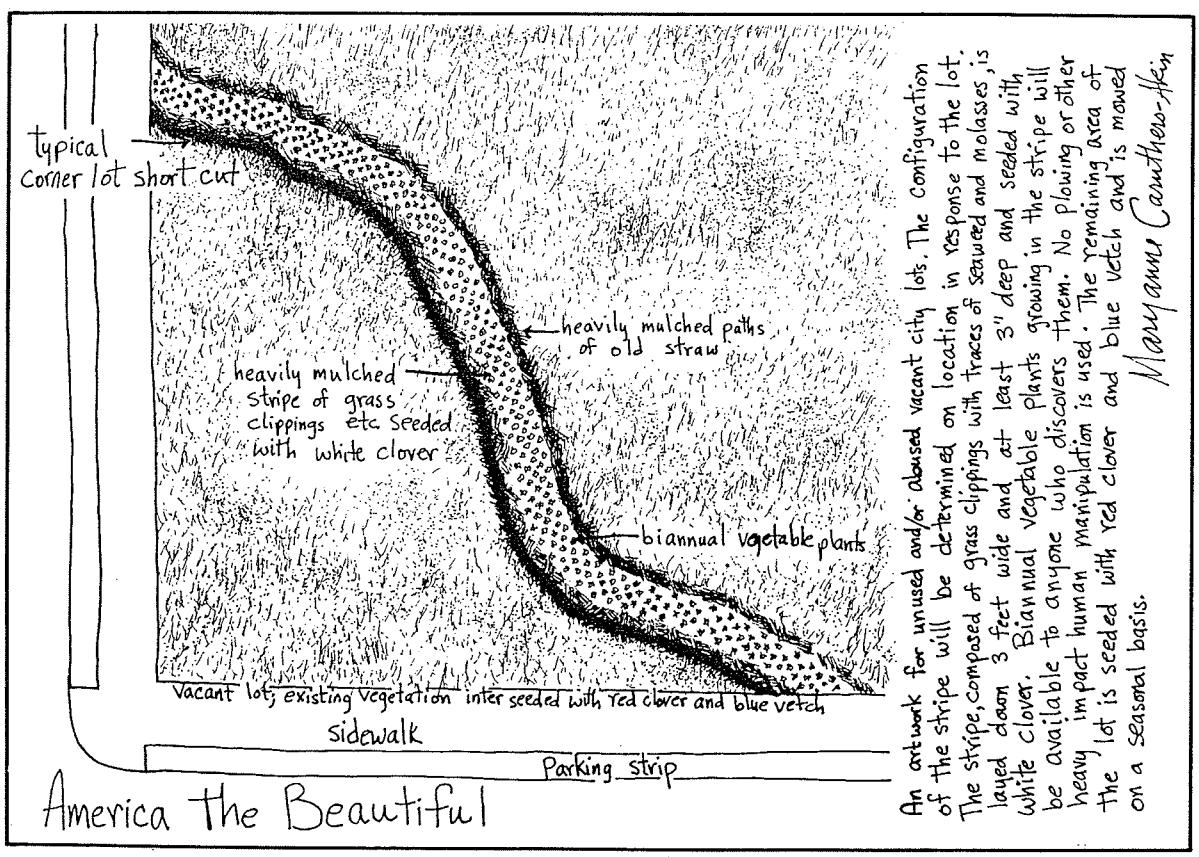
We must also ask ourselves why the local agitations against food scarcity in villages and against price rises in cities remain fragmented. What is it that has prevented the anger and discontent from exploding into a widespread movement? What are the factors that act as a hurdle or as safety valves? It is in this context that we hope that *Manushi* readers will help us gather information on this drought.

Since all of these problems—poverty, bondedness, lack of living wage, unemployment, landlessness—affect women much more, since women bear the major brunt of poverty and exploitation, must not these issues also become "women's issues"? Can women not organize around these issues? What role can women's organizations play in taking up these issues? We invite our women readers to send their views, especially those based on experience of struggle and women's participation in struggle.

What form should the struggles take? We have seen, over the years, the inadequacy of protest demonstrations, submitting demand charters which are aimed at reforming the government and pressurizing it into becoming more "considerate," and since political parties have so far organized in this direction only, there has been a growing cynicism about the effectiveness of mass action itself. But in places the poor and landless have tried other means, as for instance the Harijans in Karwi subdivision, who raided the local merchant's shop and distributed the grain equally among themselves. Or the poor villagers in Jhakni and Jaurhari who physically restrained rich farmers from taking their wheat stocks to sell in neighboring markets (*Patriot*, Oct. 18, 1970). Perhaps these instances point to the direction in which the solution lies—in people realizing and asserting the need to exercise collective control over "privately" owned resources.

Excerpted from *Manushi*, No. 6 (1980).

Manushi, the first feminist magazine in India, began publishing in January 1979; it now has a circulation of 10,000. Subscriptions are $15 (individuals), $21 (institutions). Send to Manushi Trust, C1/202 Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi, India, 110024.



Maryanne Caruthers-Akin, an artist from Portland, Oregon, has been working with earth-related forms since 1973.

Where should land art go?

Harriet Feigenbaum

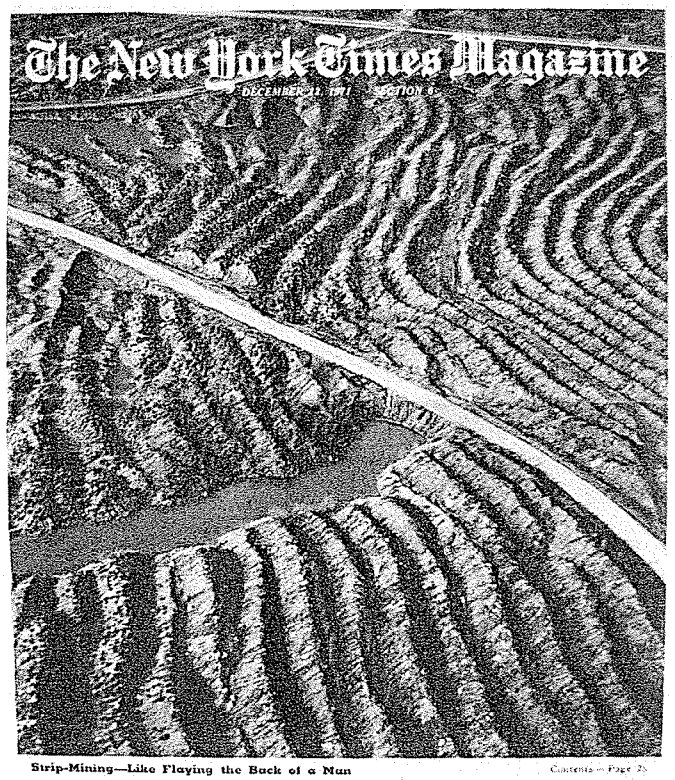
In 1977 Congress passed the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, which for the first time gave the federal government the right to impose uniform reclamation standards on the states. The intent was to prevent wanton destruction and endangerment of the environment, especially land erosion and water pollution. Section 715.13 of the Act states that land is to be "restored to the capability of supporting uses which it could support prior to any mining, or to a higher or better use." It is this last phrase that opens the way for artists to contribute to the reclamation process.

The law intends that reclamation be carried out in conjunction with surface mining as the most expedient and economical way of protecting the eco-system. Clearly it is easier, and far less expensive, to eliminate such violations as hundred-foot-high walls and spoils banks while the giant earth movers are on site. Artists using the existing materials are automatically well equipped for reclamation projects. Not only can they work more economically but they should be able to satisfy the requirement of compatability with surrounding areas. At a minimum, any form of so-called "land art" should be in rapport with its environment.

This consideration becomes crucial if we are ever to rehabilitate existing devastation. Prior to the 1977 Act, many operators, including some of the biggest companies, habitually abandoned surface mines after the coal had been removed. These stripped and unreclaimed areas are referred to as "orphan banks." There are currently 30,000 acres of such scarred land in West Virginia alone, most of it no longer life-supporting. The 1977 Act provides for an abandoned mine reclamation fund, essentially derived from fees of 35 cents per ton of surface-mined coal. Based on past coal production information, the Department of the Interior estimated that about $140 million would be collected by the end of the fiscal year on September 30, 1978.

Grants are made to the states for reclamation projects at specific sites. These sites must be public property and the grants are given to projects considered beneficial to the community. Those that can be shown to improve the land visually are likely to inspire greater effort on the part of government, community and industry to make the orphan banks genuinely life-supporting. Perhaps structures suggestive of natural habitation would inspire habitation—both human and nonhuman.

Harriet Feigenbaum, a NYC sculptor, has been creating land art for over 10 years. She is currently involved in the aesthetic rehabilitation of scarred land.



Strip-Mining—Like Playing the Back of a Man

Perception of this scarred land might be altered instantly if forms such as grapevine trellises were built along the spoils bank crests.

Harriet Feigenbaum. *Land Waves*. 1980. Proposed rehabilitation of Appalachian spoils banks over 25 years (or more). First stage: wood trellises; second stage: grapevines.

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PATRIARCHAL PUZZLE: STATE FORMATION IN MESOPOTAMIA AND MESOAMERICA

by RUBY ROHRLICH and JUNE NASH

The emergence of patriarchy was a crucial element in the formation of the state in Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica. This factor is generally ignored in contemporary theories on the origin of the state, which explain the pivotal processes of economic and political stratification primarily by ecological and demographic phenomena. The omission of gender stratification and, consequently, of the interrelationships among the several hierarchical structures of male supremacy, socioeconomic class and political centralization accounts for the failure of current theories to solve the riddle of the rise of the state, characterized as "the most far-reaching political development in human history" (Carneiro, 1970:733). This omission derives from the mainstream scholarly view that the inferior social status of women is a biological or cultural given, even in societies paradoxically defined as "egalitarian."

What need, then, to examine the role of the patriarchy in the processes that led to state formation? First of all, the specific historical circumstances will illuminate the characteristics of these processes. Secondly, a comparative analysis of the processes can help explain how specific types of patriarchy are formed, thus avoiding the categorization of patriarchy as a universal and invariant structure. Thirdly, by showing its development out of economic and political (public) institutions, we demonstrate that patriarchy is not *rooted* in the family (private, domestic sphere) but is *reflected* in the family and reinforced by the process of socialization.

In ancient Mesopotamia (beginning c. 4000 B.C.) and Mesoamerica (beginning c. 800 A.D.), regions widely separated in time and space, the archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence indicates that women were preeminent in the early phases of these civilizations, as well as in the Neolithic societies that gave birth to them. Changes in the relationships between women and men were linked to changes in the modes of subsistence and in the political structures that led to the rise of the state.

In both Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica, state societies gradually emerged from democratic, peaceable, agricultural communities, apparently organized in matrilineal, matrilocal clans with women playing prominent roles, as indicated by the prevalence of female figurines and other artifacts. Women were gods and priests, rulers and warriors, doctors and scribes, weavers and potters, sowers and reapers. In both areas, civilization was initiated by a theocratic managerial class in which women continued to play important roles. However, a class society was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the kind of state that evolved in Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica. Women were also preeminent in the class society of Minoan Crete, which lasted for about 1500 years. But Cretan society evolved peaceably and power remained widely dispersed (Rohrlich-Leavitt, 1977). In Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica, women's status declined in the course of class interactions, chronic warfare and political centralization, supported by changes in the family structure and religious ideology.

The Mesopotamian and Mesoamerican states evolved out of advanced agricultural societies in which women played crucial roles. It is now generally accepted that women invented plant cultivation (Beals, Hoijer and Beals, 1977:260). In the New World, plant cultivation was the subsistence mainstay in the absence of domesticatable animals except in highland South America. In the Old World, plant cultivation seems to have led to animal domestication, initiated not by hunters, but by women and children keeping pets (Reed, 1960:124). As gatherers, women had long since discovered how to extract the medicinal values of plants. When religion became the principal symbolic means of integrating Neolithic communities, woman's role as healer was intimately related to that of religious practitioner and of deity itself. From Southwest Asia to Britain, "a goddess appears to have been venerated and was made visible in the form of clay figurines" (Hawkes, 1963: 227). In the New World Formative period, the midden deposits are "literally stuffed with thousands of fragments of clay figurines, all female" (Coe, 1962:72).

Mellaart's excavation of Catal Huyuk in southern Anatolia established the high status of women in a very advanced Neolithic society—the earliest Old World prototype of the cities that emerged in Sumer in southern Mesopotamia. By the seventh millennium B.C., Catal Huyuk was a city of about 10,000 people practicing intensive irrigation-agriculture and trade and creating sophisticated arts and crafts. The principal deity was a woman and it was primarily women who ministered to her. The burial of children with the women suggests a matrilineal and matrilocal clan structure.

Despite the advanced level of occupational specialization, grave offerings from Catal Huyuk suggest communal ownership of primary resources and show no signs of social stratification beyond the special ritual burials, mainly of women. Nor is there any evidence of animal sacrifice, violence between individuals or groups, or any massacre or deliberate destruction during its thousand-year existence. Similarly, the early Formative cultures in the Valley of Mexico seem to have been egalitarian and peaceable. Skeletons excavated at El Arbolillo and Zacatenco "show no marks of death by war or sacrifice" (Vaillant, 1966:58).

Since Catal Huyuk is a highly significant site in the development of Western civilization, it is illuminating to observe how it is treated in anthropology textbooks claiming to provide value-free knowledge. For example, Pelto and Pelto (1976:466) refer to statuettes and figurines without mentioning that they are predominantly female. Others describe them as "fertile mother goddesses" or as "fat" or "pregnant" (Hoebel and Frost, 1976:96; Barnouw, 1975:233; Ember and Ember, 1977:152), and Mellaart's evidence for the preeminence of women is omitted.

Similarly, Mesoamerican archaeologists generally emphasize the steatopygous aspects and reproductive role of the female figurines in the Formative period; Phillips, however, ridicules this emphasis:

> A great deal of nonsense has been written about figurines as expressions of an "earth mother" or "fertility" cult. True enough, in El Arbolillo I/EarlyZacatenco times they were exclusively female, but it is noteworthy that the interest is centered on the heads, with an endless variety of hair style and headdress, rather than on those portions of the female anatomy devoted to procreating [1974:226].

In the pre-state Ubaid culture of Mesopotamia, the hair style of the prevalent female figurines was also emphasized. Roux (1963:69) describes them as "slim, standing women with a

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snake-like head crowned with a coil of hair made of bitumen."

The mere presence in Tlatilco (late Formative) of a few male figurines wearing only a simple breechclout suggested to Vaillant that "theology was becoming more complex" (1966: 33). The image of Huehueteotl, which first appears then, is described as "the oldest god ritualistically shown in Mesoamerica, even though the mother goddess of corn and growth may represent an earlier concept." Similarly, by denying the status of "true deity" to female "objects of household devotion," Coe (1962:72) affirms the ethnocentric "civilized/barbarian" dichotomy.

In southern Mesopotamia, even in the late Ubaid period, significant differentiation in grave wealth was almost entirely absent, indicating the continuing communal ownership of essential resources. As occupational specialization and long-distance trading increased, a managerial class arose both in Sumer and Mesoamerica which developed as a theocracy, deriving from the integrative function of religion. The construction of monumental and increasingly embellished ziggurats and temple-pyramids on greater and greater tracts of land testifies to the expropriation of communal land and of surplus labor from farmers, artisans and artists. The expanding trade consisted primarily of luxury goods for the new elites, creating a merchant class. Eventually the drive to gain control over resources and trade routes led to chronic warfare. Standing armies were used not only to secure trade and tribute, but also to maintain internal order in societies that were becoming rigidly stratified and oppressive.

The institutionalization of militarism had a number of drastic effects. It led to secular controls, validated by a religious ideology, and to the consolidation of the state. Successful war-leaders entrenched themselves politically and became rulers. Although slavery may have been initiated by the expansion of commodity production, when debtors and their families were sold as slaves, chronic warfare between the city-states in Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica brought the enslavement of captives as well. At first these were mainly women, contributing to the degradation of female status. As military decisions became paramount, women were also pushed out of public roles and prostitution was institutionalized.

These processes could have occurred only through the erosion of the egalitarian kin-based clans. The clan leaders were incorporated into the hierarchical structures, and the clans became patrilineal and patrilocal as men were legally enabled to transmit private property to their descendants. Morgan recognized the connection a century ago:

> When property began to be created in masses, and the desire for its transmission to children had changed descent from the female line to the male, a real foundation for paternal power was for the first time established [1974:458 (originally published 1877)].

Women were wrested from their own kinship groups, and from their economic, social and religious solidarity in the clans. The socialization of children into the domestic gender hierarchy reinforced male control over the public domains, and this in turn perpetuated the male-dominant family. Men who had themselves lost their autonomy were compensated by the legal and socioeconomic power they were given over women and children in the domestic domain.

Female Deities

In both the Old and New World civilizations, the reverence for natural forces through the intermediacy of females was followed by the propitiation of these forces, represented by both females and males, and then by subservience to male-headed, hierarchical pantheons in which the more numerous male gods played the principal roles. In Sumerian myths we see the first attempts by male gods to seize and assume the principal role in procreation. During the late Aztec period the predominance of male gods was reinforced by the Spanish conquerors, who projected their unmitigated patriarchal image of the world on the Aztec cosmology. Sumerian cosmology underwent similar distortions when contemporary European and American scholars assumed that ancient society must have resembled their own.

In the early Sumerian myths, the female deities were the creators of all. Nammu, who personified the primeval sea, was "the mother, who gave birth to heaven and earth," the "ancestress who gave birth to all the gods" (Kramer, 1961:39, 114). Toward the end of the fourth millennium B.C., as occupational specialization increased, the Sumerian deities tended "to divide into different aspects, each with the power in a particular basic economy" (Jacobsen, 1976:26), but female deities were still "more popular than male deities . . . in the proportion of sixty to forty" (Fish, 1942-43:318). However, the procreative role of the male deity began to be acknowledged; humanity was described as "the product of the combined efforts of Nammu, of the goddess Ninmah . . . and of the water-god Enki" (Kramer, 1961:75).

Initially "An was the sky seen as female" (Jacobsen, 1976: 137), which contradicts the notion that sky gods have always been male. Then the power in the sky was seen "as both male and female," in a unified dualism particularly marked in Mesoamerican cosmology at a similar socioeconomic stage. Then the god An was distinguished "from the goddess An . . . to whom he was married" (*Ibid.*:95), no doubt marking the institutionalization of marriage as a legal contract in human affairs. In later myths the female An disappeared and the male An became the sky god, viewed "as a major source of fertility," leading "naturally to the attribution of paternal power to him" (*Ibid.*:96). Nammu, the original progenitor, became the consort of the male An.

"As the rocky ground and the power in birth," the female deity Ninhursaga was on a par with An and Enlil "as a decisive power in the universe" (*Ibid.*:109). The myth "Enki and Ninhursaga" tells how she brings into being eight plants which have been fertilized in her body by Enki's semen. Enki eats the plants and the enraged Ninhursaga puts the curse of death upon him. He becomes very ill, "since as a male he was not built to be pregnant" (*Ibid.*:113), and Enlil, the king of the gods, persuades Ninhursaga to heal Enki. She places him in her vagina and gives birth to eight healing goddesses, who are named for the various parts of Enki's body where they had developed. Although Enki was unsuccessful in this mythic attempt to take over the female role in procreation, he was acknowledged to be a participant in the process. Throughout the second millennium B.C., Ninhursaga lost rank until Enki completely supplanted her (*Ibid.*:109).

Inanna (Ishtar) was too deeply entrenched in Sumerian religion to be supplanted by a male god, but even her roles changed drastically with the emergence of militarism and patriarchy. Initially she was associated with the date, one of the earliest domesticated plants in Mesopotamia, and was also the "goddess of the communal storehouse . . . which can take care of the life of all lands" (*Ibid.*:39), wherein were stored the surplus dates, grain, meat and wool. Inanna was also the deity of thunderstorms and rain, controlling the thunderbird and the lion, emblems of the thunder gods. She was the goddess of both evening and morning stars, in charge of lighting and extinguishing fires, of causing tears and rejoicing, of enmity and fair dealings. "She seems to have had a hand in almost everything and is rightly termed . . . 'Lady of a myriad offices' "

(*Ibid.*:141). Yet Jacobsen deplores the fact that Inanna's multiple roles are all in the public domain:

> We see her, in fact, in all the roles a woman may fill except the two which call for maturity and a sense of responsibility. She is never depicted as a wife and helpmate or as a mother [*Ibid.*:141].

In Mesoamerica the female figurines predominated not only in the late Formative but also at La Venta—the heartland of the Olmec, the first Mesoamerican civilization. They were succeeded in the Classic period by a great diversity of male and female deities which personified the principle of dualism in unity. Spanish priests and indigenous intellectuals trained in the Christian missions tended to obliterate both diversity and the equilibrium achieved between the dual forces. This has continued in modern scholarship. Vaillant describes the ten-foot statue of the goddess of the waters from the Teotihuacan period as "a sort of monolithic building that symbolizes the implacable force of nature," and the far larger sculpture of Coatlinchan, still anchored to its rocky matrix in a ravine near Texcoco, as representing "the paralysis of Indian civilization" (1966:74, 75).

The monumental stone image of Coatlicue, found in the central plaza of Tenochtitlan, is a female or androgynous deity encompassing the entire Aztec cosmology, just as Inanna encompassed that of Mesopotamia. The Spaniards referred to it as "The Lady of the Snaky Skirt," and treated it as a mother earth symbol. But Justine Fernandez (1950:230) demonstrates that Coatlicue—the link between sky and earth, the mediator between dry and wet regions—is an amalgam of various deities, both female and male. The skull over the umbilicus, paired with the skull in the rear, may well represent Mictlantecuhtli and Mictecacihuatl, lord and lady of the dead, of night and day; and the talons and feathers below the skirt of snakes relate the image to Huitzilopochtli, god of war, and to Tonatiuh, god of the sun or fertility.

A subtle transmogrification occurs with Chantico, the goddess of fire and water, whose name means "inside the house" or "the place where fire is," and also signifies the fiery chili plant eaten at every meal and immediately after a fast. As a symbol of food, it draws the faster back over the threshold from the liminal state to human existence. However, Seler (1963:224) interpreted this as the eternal Eve seducing man from holy ways as she delivered him over to temptation.

The European notion of the earth as female and the sky as male made it difficult for soldiers enculturated in that tradition to recognize the sexual representations. The divine pair, Ometecuhtli and Omecihuatl, creators of the world and of the other gods, were often reduced to Ometecuhtli, the Lord of Duality, thus negating the androgynous essence of Aztec cosmology. The moon was also both male and female. But translators of the Florentine Codex tried to overcome their confusion by arbitrarily deciding to refer to the moon as male alone, as it is in the fable of the rabbit and the moon. The 20 divine couples of the Codex Borgia bear witness to the duality of male and female representations; they are shown eye to eye—a clear sign of equality with the status-conscious Aztecs. Vaillant comments that the appearance of the female deities seems "as if the idea of reproduction of male and female principles was dawning in Aztec theology" (1966:175). It is more likely the final stage in the segmentation of androgynous forces.

Despite their loss of status in the iconography of state and empire, female deities and those associated with crops and rain survived in the domestic and local pantheons. The three goddesses venerated by the common people, along with the god of rain, were Chalchihuitlicue, the deity of sweet or inland water; Chicumecoatl, the deity of food; and Uixtociutl, the deity of salt. Thus the subordination of female deities was specific to class, correlated with the male dominance of the elite ranks of the military, nobility, priesthood and bureaucracy.

Rulers, Warriors

Combined with the archaeological record, historical documents shed some light on women as rulers and warriors. "Matriarchy seems to have left something more than a trace in early Sumerian city-states" (Thomson, 1965). Women ruled alone or with sometimes nameless consorts. Ku-Bau, a female innkeeper, founded the Third Dynasty of Kish (c. 2500 B.C.) and became a legendary figure. Later queens shared their rule with high priests who were their husbands. They sometimes had their own courts and carried on long-distance trade in their own names. Queen Shagshag, married to Urukagina, was also referred to as a goddess, though she was eventually subordinated through her husband's law code (see below).

As warfare became predominant in Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica, women, continuing the Neolithic tradition, seemed to favor peaceful means to resolve conflicts, though initially they also participated in defensive combat. The Sumerian myth "Inanna Prefers the Farmer" may symbolize the tensions between settled farmers and nomadic herders, whose raids probably initiated warfare in the Middle East. Inanna chooses to give her hand to the conciliatory farmer Enkimdu rather than to the bellicose shepherd Dumuzi, whom her brother the sun god is urging on her. In other myths, Inanna is credited with a "warlike character and skill with weapons" by which she kills the dragon Kur (a feat later attributed to male gods); in the "Epic of Gilgamesh" she offers the hero "love . . . and peace," both of which are rejected. By this time the kings of Sumer were waging incessant war.

In Mexico, warfare was endemic from around 800 A.D. until the Spaniards arrived, and women participated in combat until at least the 11th century. Soustelle (1962) has inferred that "women had the supreme power in Tula"—the Toltec capital which led the prosperous and creative Golden Age of Mexico from the 9th to the 12th centuries. Shortly before their decline, the Toltecs became imperialistic and for the first time in Mexico, fortified towns were necessary (Coe, 1977: 112). Their successors, the Aztecs, rejected "old fashioned methods" like sorcery and magic to "bring them glory and power" (Codex Ramirez; Séjourné, 1956:21) and the war god Huitzilopochtli urged the men to depend instead on the "valor of arms and their courage" to conquer Tula.

As women were gradually ousted from military and decision-making activities, they began to be the scapegoats for the constant warfare, and the goddess of discord was created. A striking example of this process was the transmogrification of Civacoatl, goddess of earth and birth, "she who plants root crops," often called "our mother"; she became "a presage of war and other disasters," representing the souls of women who died in childbirth and those protesting the loss of their men in the mounting tolls of the late Aztec wars. Yet traces of matrilineal heritage persisted even with the advent of militarism. The Aztec emperor was known as "the father and mother of the people" (Soustelle, 1962:182-83), and the male vice-emperor was called "Woman Serpent," as representative of Coatlicue.

Prostitution

Contrary to the cliché, prostitution is not the oldest profession. In Mesopotamia and Mexico it emerged after the professions of priest, warrior and merchant had become predomin-

antly male, when women had been made legally dependent on men; prostitution is associated with the patriarchal family and expanding militarism.

In protohistorical Sumer, there were no goddesses of love. Only in the later, militaristic period did Inanna become goddess of love—and prostitution. Prostitutes in Sumer were at the bottom of the hierarchy of temple women. The warrior king Gilgamesh (c. 2700 B.C., visited prostitutes—referred to as "virgins"—in a brothel called the "Family House," located in the marketplace where women were bought and sold along with other commodities. Overlooking the economic gains the prostitutes brought to the temple, here is how Woolley sentimentalized the "profession":

> The underlying idea must have been that of real devotion, of sacrifice; the devotee gave to the service of the god the virginity which, as plenty of clauses in the law prove, was no less precious to the Sumerian woman than to others [1965:107].

But to what idea were these women devoted? Why were they called upon to "sacrifice"? Why their virginity? Since virginity was of no greater value to women than to men in egalitarian societies, it must have become "precious" to Sumerian women when they became commodities.

In the later Aztec state, the link between prostitution and militarism was marked. Boys attending military training school routinely visited the "house of singing and revelry," where they were encouraged to indulge in sex. Men who took prisoners in war received a share of the tribute and gained entry into the war councils; women were part of the booty shared by the victors. Male sexual aggression toward women is symbolized in the figure from the Codex Borgia, which shows the dual deities of love—Xochiquetzal and Zochipilli—facing each other, as in the representations of the other 20 paired deities, but with the male god's hand firmly fixed on the breast of Tlaculteotl, the deity of carnal love, like Inanna.

Centralization and Masculinization of the State

As warfare became the primary concern in both the Old and New Worlds, new political and ideological structures came into being, leading to the consolidation of the state in the hands of an increasingly male ruling class. In Sumer, the fourth millennium B.C. had been peaceful, judging from the networks of open villages in the central regions. By the Early Dynastic period these villages had for the most part disappeared as the inhabitants sought protection from predatory armies behind the walls of the cities.

By the beginning of the First Dynasty of Ur (c. 2900 B.C.), there was evidence of human sacrifice in the Royal Tombs, and as the Aztecs became imperialistic they practiced human sacrifice on an unprecedented scale. Sacrifice was used as a gross instrument to centralize power in the hands of the rulers, and new art forms were ideological means to the same ends.

> In art the old ritual motifs receded before representations of war and victory; in literature a new form, the epic tale, took its place beside the myth. In the epic, man, represented by the ruler, is the hero, and the tale celebrates his prowess and his cleverness, even to the point of challenging the authority of the gods [Jacobsen, 1976:79].

Meanwhile, the female deities were not only challenged, but eventually subordinated.

According to Jacobsen (1970:164), Sumerian mythology is based in historical events. The assembly of the female and male gods, in which Inanna speaks with as much wisdom and authority as the male gods, reflects the democratic assembly of women and men. *Ad hoc* temporary kings were elected to deal with wars of limited duration, and at this stage rape was still considered a heinous crime, punishable by exile, even for a king. This is reflected in the tale of Enlil, who rapes the prepubescent goddess Ninlil and is banished to the nether world: "The lord speaks to her of intercourse; she is unwilling; my vagina is too little, it knows not to copulate; my lips are too small, they know not to kiss" (Kramer, 1963:146).

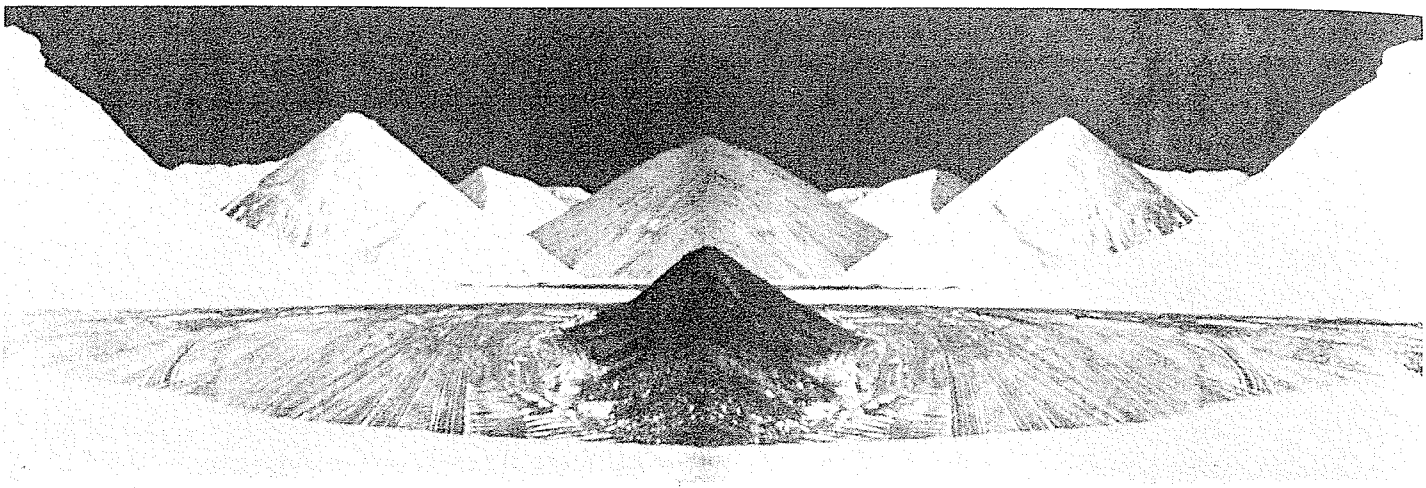
By c. 2700 B.C., the assembly of Uruk consisted only of men—the basic step in the breakdown of the democratic process. Moreover, Gilgamesh was no longer elected, but ruled by "divine appointment," and could overrule the assembly's vote against war. His right of sexual access to every woman's body demonstrated his power over men as well as women (Mason, 1970:15). Not only was this "epic hero" a rapist and a tyrant, but he grossly insulted Inanna, his matron deity (by then demoted to goddess of prostitutes).

By the end of the third millennium B.C., "the king had become the sole and absolute ruler of the land" (Kramer, 1969:12). The *Enuma Elish*—the Babylonian epic of creation composed during the latter half of the second millennium B.C. and performed at the New Year festival every year for nearly two thousand years—shows that before the king could assume absolute power, women had to be totally subjugated. In it the assembly asks the god Marduk to destroy the goddess Tiamat—the original progenitor and creator of all, once equated, like Nammu, with the primeval sea, but now associated with inertia, chaos and anarchy, opposed to the emerging forces of activity and order. Marduk ridicules the gods' fear of Tiamat: "What hero has forced battle on you? Only a female thing" (Sanders, 1971:30). With military technology in male hands, Marduk defeats Tiamat "not because he is stronger, but because he is better armed" (*Ibid.*:21). This is undoubtedly the first historical use of the equation "woman is to man as nature is to culture," the ideology that rationalizes the subordination of women in patriarchal societies by presenting woman and nature as regressive forces that have to be subjugated by the progressive alliance between men and civilization. The price men paid for the power they acquired over women was complete servitude to their earthly rulers.

In Mexico, transformations in the Aztec cosmology were also inspired by changes in the social relations of the developing state, and the new myths also provided the rationale for concentrating power in the hands of a male elite. As in Sumer, the archaeological record of the pre-state Mesoamerican societies shows no evidence of gender and class distinctions, or of warfare, before the latter part of Toltec hegemony. The *calpulli*, or territorially based kinship groups, with their corporate ownership of the land and redistribution according to the needs of each family, ensured egalitarian relations. Between c. 1248, when the Aztecs entered Chapultepec, to c. 1345, when they moved into Tenochtitlan, they transformed themselves from "belligerent agriculturists" to "an organization of priest warriors" (Peterson, 1959:112). This meant a structural shift from a tribe based on clans to a theocracy based on class.

Following their move to Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs learned the skills of warfare as mercenaries in the Culhuacan and Tepanec armies. In the next century, although the tribal council persisted, a royal lineage deriving from the conquering general provided the leaders of the developing military and bureaucracy. By Itzcoatl's reign (1429-1440) the Aztecs had emerged on their own as a predatory militaristic state. The right of the ruling dynasty to practice polygyny also weakened matrilineal succession.

When the Aztecs defeated the Tepanecs, the lands they



Georgiana Kettler. *Goddess Mounds, Arena.* 1977 Photo lithograph. 15"x 35". Georgiana Kettler, a Minneapolis-based artist, is a member of W.A.R.M. Gallery.

acquired were distributed among members of the royal lineage, with special allotments to warriors and leaders of the military and bureaucracy. The titles given the new lords show the Aztec glory in blood and battle: He of the House of Darts, Man Cutter, Shedder of Blood, Lord of the House of Blood. The institutionalization of the royal dynasty in title, land and tribute labor marked the final break with the *calpulli.*

During Itzcoatl's reign, history, and the ideology drawn from it, were reorganized to conform to changing social structures. He ordered all the historical picture manuscripts of the region to be burned (Sahagun, 1938:vol. 3, book 10, ch. xxix, 137-38). Recent interpretations of the Aztec and Spanish sources suggest that he also commissioned the rewriting of a mythology that validated the wars of conquest (Erdheim, n.d.). The "flowery wars" to "acquire the hearts of captives, to feed the sun and keep it in motion," were used to validate the predatory search for tribute and loot. The hierarchical pantheon was now headed by a single male god, mirroring the royal council at Tenochtitlan. Led by the war god Huitzilopochtli, the council had the sacred mission of bringing all nations into the service of the sun. As the Aztecs drenched the sunstone with blood, they glorified the cult of male dominance, even victims being encouraged not to act "like a woman."

The female deities related to fertility, nourishment and the agricultural complex were eclipsed (as in Sumer some 4000 years earlier), although they persisted as central figures in the worship of the submerged commoners. There is also evidence that the *tlamatini,* or intellectuals, resisted the transformation of the central hierarchy; some continued to believe in the Lord and Lady of Duality. Aztec women, though their status was in decline, retained a productive role and rights in the now relatively powerless *calpul.*

The hegemony of the nobility and the military came to a peak in the reign of Moctezuma I. The elites encroached upon the lands of the commoners, and debt peonage increased. Plebeians participated less and less often in state feasts and ceremonies. In the latter days of the empire the nobility literally began to consume the commoners. Pippin (1967:98) accepts the testimony that Moctezuma had young boys fattened up and served with squash to his lords and priests. Yet the Aztecs never succeeded in consolidating the state under military rule either in the provinces or within Tenochtitlan. The rejection of the balanced duality that characterized their earlier history may have undermined their ability to defend themselves against the Spaniards. In the final days of the siege of Tenochtitlan they could not mobilize the populace for the defense of the city, nor could they draw on support throughout the empire.

The Laws

The codification of the law was a crucial factor in the centralization of the state, as indicated by Marduk's demand for total power as law-maker when he defeated Tiamat. Laws were codified when a state had the coercive means to enforce them. Thus Urukagina's Code, enacted after he defeated Lugalanda as high priest of Lugash, protected the property of the ruling elite. By regulating status and behavior in the gender and class hierarchies, it isolated the individual and weakened the local community, while the state was strengthened.

One of Urukagina's regulations imposed monogamy on women only, creating the new crime of adultery, punishable by death. The regulation noted that women "used to take two husbands," indicating that in the recent past property was still owned communally by matrilineal clans. The identity of the biological father was not considered necessary until it affected the accumulation and transmission to children of private property. The imposition of monogamy on women only probably institutionalized patrilineal inheritance and descent, patrilocal residence and the patriarchal family. Another decree in Urukagina's Code stated that:

> The woman who has sinned by saying something to a man which she should not have said . . . must have her teeth crushed with burnt bricks [Kramer, 1963:322].

This legalized woman-beating and helped enforce the monogamy regulation. The draconian penalties surely indicate the strength of women's resistance to these decrees.

It is a startling fact that Sumerologists and students of ancient laws fail to deal with the impact of these regulations on women. Kramer, for example, praises the Code as "one of the most precious and revealing documents in the history of man and his perennial and unrelenting struggle for freedom from tyranny" (*Ibid.*:79). In fact, the Middle Eastern laws became increasingly repressive toward women, as well as toward the lower socioeconomic segments. Compared with the Sumerian laws, Hammurabi's Code, enacted about 1750 B.C. in the name of the war god Marduk, tended to exact severer penalties for offenses against what Woolley terms "the sacredness of the family tie" (1965:92). For example, a wife who "sets her face to go out of doors and persists in behaving herself foolishly, wasting her house and belittling her husband,"

could be divorced without receiving divorce money; or her husband could marry another woman and his first wife "shall dwell as a slave girl in the house of her husband"; or the wife could be thrown into the river (Driver and Miles, 1955:81). The later Assyrian laws were even more repressive.

In Mexico, Nezahualcoyotl, crowned ruler of Texcoco in 1431, codified 80 laws that were crucial in centralizing power and consolidating the empire. He elaborated regulations against drunkenness and adultery to provide different punishments for offenders of different social class, occupation, age and sex. This code was probably a model for the laws passed by the Aztec rulers when they were centralizing their power in the 15th and 16th centuries. An Aztec woman could obtain a divorce if her husband failed to support her or educate the children, or (grounds not available to Sumerian women) if he abused her physically. A divorced woman could marry the man of her choice, but a widow had to marry a brother of her dead husband or one of his clansmen—no doubt to keep the property within the clan. Women could own property within the *calpul*, enter into contracts and go to court to obtain justice. Girls were required to be chaste and wives to be faithful to their husbands, whereas "a man transgressed the rules of propriety only when his illicit relations involved a married woman." Polygyny was legalized, the first wife having the highest status, and concubines were permitted. A man had the right to cast out a wife who was "barren, ill-tempered, or neglected her household duties" (Vaillant, 1966: 126, 125). Thus in Mesoamerica, as in Mesopotamia, laws with severe penalties were enacted to control women's sexuality and to locate them solidly in the household.

Conclusions

The factor of patriarchy as a crucial variable is omitted in contemporary mainstream theories on state formation. Scholars have dealt with the existence of male dominance in human society in a number of ways: by positing a matriarchal period against which men successfully rebelled when they discovered biological paternity; by asserting that male supremacy was the consequence of private property and the generational transmission of wealth; by claiming that it always existed, that women were never even equal to men, let alone their social superiors, and that even in matriarchal societies women's brothers ran the show. This last approach brings together strange bedfellows: the general run of both bourgeois and Marxist anthropologists, some feminists, and structuralists. The implicit or explicit assumption that male dominance over women is a biological or cultural given underlies the omission of patriarchy as a critical variable.

What we find in Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica are class societies becoming increasingly competitive over the acquisition of commodities and over the control of trade routes. Chronic warfare led to the elimination of women from public decision-making. Egalitarian relationships in the kin-based clans were destroyed by militarism, the centralization of political power, class structures, and patrilineal, patrilocal lines that ensured the transmission of private property through the male. These changes were supported by religious/ideological changes transmogrifying the female deities, stressing the military hierarchy in the male deities, and paralleled by laws that destroyed women's sexual autonomy and confined them to the household.

Thus while we cannot state definitively that patriarchy was a necessary condition for the development of the state in all cases, the evidence in Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica is overwhelming. Patriarchy, and the inheritance by males of the means of production and the right to command in the domestic and public sectors, provided the structural basis for channeling leadership and authority. Just as important, it fostered an ideology supporting a structure of superordination and subordination—contradictory to the egalitarian principles of preexisting kinship units—and provided a model for socializing succeeding generations into the domestic unit. This model effectively subverted the individual's sense of the right to personal autonomy and freedom.

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La Madre

se ha cambiado de ropa.
La falda se ha convertido en pantalón,
los zapatos en botas,
la cartera en mochila.
No canta ya canciones de cuna,
canta canciones de protesta.
Va despeinada y llorando
un amor que la envuelve y sobrecoge.
No quiere ya solo a sus hijos,
ni se da solo a sus hijos.
Lleva prendidos en los pechos
miles de bocas hambrientas.
Es madre de niños rotos
de muchachitos que juegan trompo en
aceras polvosas.
Se ha parido ella misma
sintiéndose—a ratos—
incapaz de soportar tanto amor sobre
los hombros,
pensando en el fruto de su carne
—lejano y solo—
llamandola en la noche sin respuesta,
mientras ella responde a otros gritos,
a muchos gritos,
pero siempre pensando en el grito solo
de su carne
que es un grito más en ese griterío de
pueblo que la llama
y le arranca hasta sus propios hijos
de los brazos.

The Mother

has changed her clothes.
Her skirt has turned into pants,
her shoes into boots,
her pocketbook into a knapsack.
She no longer sings lullabies,
she sings songs of protest.
She goes unkempt and she cries
for a love that envelops and frightens her.
She no longer loves only her children,
nor does she give only to her children.
She clasps to her breast
thousands of hungry mouths.
She is a mother of ragged children
of little children who spin tops on
dusty sidewalks.
She has given birth to herself
feeling—at times—
unable to support so much love on her
shoulders,
thinking of the fruit of her flesh
—far off and alone—
calling her in the unresponsive night,
while she responds to other shouts,
to many shouts,
but always thinking of the one and only
shout of her flesh
one more shout in that clamor of the
people who calls her
and pulls from her arms
even her own children.

Gioconda Belli

Claribel Alegría

Translated by Gabriela Dreyer and Electa Arenal

Gioconda Belli was born in 1948. Her poetry led her to actively resist the Somoza regime, and in 1975 she was forced into exile in Costa Rica. She then worked for the FSLN in Puerto Rico.

Claribel Alegría, born in 1926 in Nicaragua, was exiled to El Salvador as a child. After the Sandinistas' triumph, she returned, and with her husband is writing a book on the revolution. Alegría and Belli received the 1978 Casa de las Americas poetry prize in Cuba.

Gabriela Dreyer is involved in feminist theatre, music and ceramics. She has spent time in Guatemala, Isla Margarita, and Venezuela, and now lives in Puerto Rico.

Electa Arenal, a feminist writer, translator and activist, teaches Spanish and Women's Studies at CUNY/Staten Island. She is working on a book about 16th- and 17th-century Hispanic nuns.

Photo by Margarita Montealegre (courtesy of BARRICADA: Organo Oficial del FSLN).

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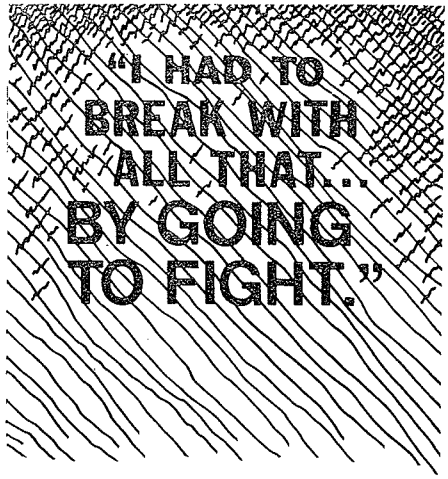
Soy Espejo

Brilla el agua
en mi piel
y no la siento
corre a chorros el agua
por mi espalda
no la siento
me froto con la toalla
me pellizco en un brazo
no me siento
aterrada me miro en el espejo
ella también se pincha
comienzo a vestirme
a tropezones
de los rincones brotan
relámpagos de gritos
ojos desorbitados
ratas que corren
dientes
aún no siento nada
me extravío en las calles:
niños con caras sucias
pidiéndome limosna
muchachas prostitutas
que no tienen quince años
todo es llaga en las calles
tanques que se aproximan
bayonetas alzadas
cuerpos que caen
llanto
por fin siento mi brazo
dejé de ser fantasma
me duele
luego existo
vuelvo a mirar la escena:
muchachos que corren
desangrados
mujeres con pánico
en el rostro
esta vez duele menos
me pellizco de nuevo
y ya no siento nada
simplemente reflejo
lo que pasa a mi lado
los tanques
no son tanques
ni los gritos
son gritos
soy un espejo plano
en que nada penetra
mi superficie
es dura
es brillante
es pulida
me convertí en espejo
y estoy descarnada
apenas se conservo
una memoria vaga
del dolor.

I Am Mirror

Water sparkles
on my skin
and I don't feel it
water streams
down my back
I don't feel it
I rub myself with a towel
I pinch myself in the arm
I don't feel
frightened I look at myself in the mirror
she also pricks herself
I begin to get dressed
stumbling
from the corners
shouts like lightning bolts
tortured eyes
scurrying rats
and teeth shoot forth
although I feel nothing
I wander through the streets:
children with dirty faces
ask me for charity
child prostitutes
who are not yet fifteen
the streets are paved with pain
tanks that approach
raised bayonets
bodies that fall
weeping
finally I feel my arm
I am no longer a phantom
I hurt
therefore I exist
I return to watch the scene:
children who run
bleeding
women with panic
in their faces
this time it hurts me less
I pinch myself again
and already I feel nothing
I simply reflect
what happens at my side
the tanks
are not tanks
nor are the shouts
shouts
I am a blank mirror
in which nothing penetrates
my surface
is hard
is brilliant
is polished
I became a mirror
and I am fleshless
scarcely preserving
a vague memory
of pain.



DAISY ZAMORA
INTERVIEWED BY
MARGARET RANDALL

Song of Hope

One day, the fields will stay green
and the earth black, sweet and wet.
Our children will grow tall on that earth
and our children's children. . .

And they'll be free as the mountain trees
and birds.

They'll wake each day, happy to be alive
knowing the land was conquered once
more, for them.

One day. . .

Now we plough dry fields
*each furrow wet with blood.**

In Managua, a woman and a man have just adopted a baby girl. In Managua, like anywhere else. Yet there are things that make this case different. The woman—in spite of talking about wanting a daughter for years—failed to show up four times in a row for the necessary interview. "Work. . .," she told me, "and that sense one develops about not wanting to abandon the Revolution's problems in order to attend to something personal. . . ."

The woman is Daisy Zamora, Vice-Minister of Culture in the new National Reconstruction Government of Nicaragua. Her husband, Dionisio Marenco, is Minister of Internal Commerce. Daisy, like the great majority of her comrades in struggle and in reconstruction, is very young. And she looks even younger than she is. She's known as a poet—a very good one. As we begin our conversation, I stop for a moment and look at her desk, piled high with papers, projects, plans, problems and solutions; I can't help thinking that this woman with her tender but penetrating gaze must wish at times to hide in the seclusion of the poem, to remove herself—if only for a moment—with pencil and paper. . . .

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[In the first half of this interview, (omitted here, but to be published in Margaret Randall's forthcoming book We're All Awake: Testimonies from Nicaraguan Women in Struggle *by New Start Press, Vancouver), Daisy describes her childhood in a well-off liberal family. Her grandfather was a great influence on her; he and her father were involved in an early plot against Samoza (1954). Daisy went to the university in Managua in 1967, studying psychology and writing poetry. She was radicalized by involvement in student politics with her husband-to-be. In 1974, he was working as an engineer in a sugar mill near Chinandega and she was teaching at a school for workers' children—unheard of for a woman of her class in that time and place. They soon became involved in a Sandinista revolutionary network; they left the mill after one of their comrades was murdered and others were arrested. At the end of 1975, they returned to Managua.]*

My comrade always worked as an engineer. I had a job doing translations for a magazine and worked voluntarily mounting exhibitions for Nicaraguan painters. My work for the Organization was limited mainly to cover tasks: transports, errands and the safehouse. The comrade responsible for us here in Managua was Oscar Pérez Cassar—now dead. Dionisio and I also participated in several operations around that time.

Look, I think this is something that has to be talked about. The people like us who were taking part in Managua around that time: we were all legal cadre. The men were mostly professionals, sometimes the women as well. And I began to feel a kind of discrimination. At the meetings I began to talk about the dissatisfaction I felt with my level of participation. I spoke about this with other women involved, but in general it didn't seem that they felt the same as I did. I don't think this discrimination came from my being a woman as much as from my class background. Maybe it was because of my social class that they didn't trust me with other kinds of work, with another kind of role.

I remember talking a lot about this with Dora María at the time. [Dora María Téllez is now Commander and Vice-President of the Council of State.] I'd often tell her that it was hard for me to get over a kind of inferiority complex I felt with the comrades who came to my house, in terms of my class background. I was clear on the role the petty bourgeoisie was called upon to play in the development of the revolutionary process, but I was also clear about the fact that that role didn't satisfy me. I wanted more participation, and on a different level. And it wasn't really until I left home completely, threw myself into the struggle full-time and went to fight alongside the other comrades, that I was able to totally overcome that feeling.

One of our comrades had managed to introduce a scanner into the country, and so we were able to intercept all the Guard's radio communications. They spoke in code, but it was a pretty simple code. And we were able to break it and understand everything they were saying. So part of my job at that time was sitting by that scanner, listening to everything the Guard said. That's how we found out about their operations before they carried them out—if they were heading for one of our comrades' houses, if they were going to set roadblocks up on the highway. We also had an arsenal of weaponry at our house-submachine guns, rockets, dynamite—in a room we called "the toy room." So that was more or less what I was doing then: listening to the scanner, keeping a safehouse, keeping arms—purely operative tasks.

I had to break with all that, by going to fight.

Let Us Forget (1974)

Let us forget
that this is the time for our cells to grow
and separate and die and once again
(with millions of transparent leaves)
renovate themselves and fall,
perennial autumn, perennial spring.

Let us forget the words,
let us forget.
The hills born into trails, move.

We were in the insurrectional tendency then, and we had developed a strategy beginning with the attack on San Carlos, Masaya and Granada in 1977. We were preparing for the final insurrection. . . . It was during this time that we also began to plan the attack on the National Palace. We made a thorough investigation; we were able to obtain a detailed plan of the building; we got the uniforms, the resources; we bought the trucks; we were able to obtain information about every move the representatives made, and we got photos of the most important ones so that the members of the commando could become acquainted with the physical appearance of those hostages imperative to the action's success.

Just imagine the difficulties of housing the entire commando. It was a large group and almost everyone involved was taking part in this kind of an operation for the first time. The comrades came to my house on a weekend. They arrived one by one. We had lined the windows with paper. We distributed all the comrades in three rooms, and all this made for a food problem as well. We went to a nearby Chinese restaurant and bought take-out dinners three times a day for everyone. The comrades couldn't move or talk much, because the house had to keep its appearance of a normal family dwelling. Shortly before the operation itself, Hugo Torres went to another house, where the other half of the commando was staying. Dora María, Edén Pastora and 14 others remained with me.

We lived on the Southern Highway. We pretended to close the house up, as if Dionisio and I had gone away for the weekend, so that if someone came looking for us and didn't find anyone they wouldn't think it strange. The comrades had to keep their voices down at all times and be on the alert for strange noises, anyone who might drive up. I remember one of the countless incidents was when a sister of mine came to visit with a friend, and it happened that she saw me through a window. And since I knew she had seen me, I had to come out. She kept asking me what the matter was. She said she thought something seemed strange. And I had to invent a whole story about having stained the floor with something and that just as I heard her knocking I had been going to get something to clean it with. . . . It was a double life and at times it was hard to manage, right? Especially with the repression which was really heavy by then.

On the day of the attack—the 22nd—Dionisio was to call Dora María and confirm the fact that everything was ready to go. The code was "Don Chinto is getting married at 12." Don Chinto was Edén. The comrades began to get ready; they put their uniforms on. Up to the very last minute the members of the commando didn't know what the objective was, they only knew it was going to be an important operation. So when everyone was ready, they all filed out and sat down on a row of benches I had in the garden there, and we began the explanation. We put up a map, and Edén began to explain the action in detail. We passed out files to everyone too, with photos of the representatives, and we told them to memorize the most

important ones: Luis Pallais, Irma Guerrero, Argeñal Papi and the other Somoza people. It wasn't until then that the comrades really understood the magnitude of the operation planned.

Then Polo came with the truck. I often think that if the Guard had been a little smarter they would have seen that the truck was a fake. We had painted it at a movement garage and we hadn't been able to get just the right color green: it was a little brighter than it should have been. And then we built a frame in back and we had to tie a canvas we'd bought at a sporting goods store over the frame and secure it on both sides and in back. But when we went to tie this canvas down, we suddenly realized the frame was too high and there was a space on either side between the bottom of the canvas and the truck bed. All the comrades would be visible! Just then I remembered that in the "toy room" I had some boards. Two of them turned out to be just the size we needed; we rushed to nail them into place.

When everything was ready, I was supposed to give the order to set out. But just then the woman next door decided to go out and water her plants! Imagine, the truck was hidden behind the house, and we didn't want there to be any witnesses to its driving off. But the woman just wouldn't budge, and finally I had to give the departure order anyway. And the truck set off.

I went right away to the scanner to try to follow the operation through the Guard's communications, and be able to know if everything went as planned. Later Dionisio told me that around 11:30 he was too excited and he left work and went to the plaza, where he parked his car and saw the trucks drive up. He saw them park, he saw the comrades getting out and getting into a perfect military formation, and he saw them entering the palace in perfect order. When the last comrade had disappeared inside those doors, he returned to work. He knew the operation would be a success.

For my part, I stayed glued to the scanner. There was a moment when the Guard was completely disoriented. They began to say, "There's a shoot-out over at the Communications Palace." When I heard that, I was confused, because I thought maybe they'd been stopped along the way and hadn't been able to reach their objective. The Communications Palace was before the National Palace, coming from the direction of our house. But it turned out to be a mistake on the part of the guard who was talking. He was nervous, I guess, and then he corrected himself. He said no, that the shoot-out was at the National Palace. And I heard them saying: "Careful, they're dressed like EEBI" [the Infantry Basic Training School, a kind of Green Beret outfit run by Somoza's son, which became an elitist repressive force against the revolutionaries]. That's when I realized the commando had arrived all right, and that the operation was going to work.

Commander Two (February 1979)

Dora María Téllez
22 years old
small and pale
with her boots, her black beret
her enemy uniform
relaxed.

Behind the railing
I watch her talking to the comrades.
Beneath the beret her white neck
and the newly cut hair.

(Before she left we embraced each other.)

Dora María
the warrior girl
who makes the tyrant's heart
tremble.

Then, in September, it seemed the time was ripe for the insurrection. We had instructions to form a squadron from the same support network that had functioned for the previous actions. There were ten men. I had been training with them the whole time, and I insisted on going with them. For me it was an absolute necessity, and the only way of overcoming the problems I mentioned before.

It was decided that 13 squadrons would simultaneously attack each of the city's 13 police stations, later regrouping in order to carry out further actions. Not until the very last minute, when the attack plan was being drawn up, was it decided whether or not I would be included. I had convinced my comrade, Dionisio, and he agreed that I should come along. But it had to be a collective decision. So I told the comrades that I was determined to go, that I had participated in all the tasks assigned to me up to that point, that I thought I had shown sufficient discipline and that I didn't see any reason at all for them to leave me behind. They agreed.

I was in the first car, the attack vehicle. There were four of us in that car. Another comrade and I had to jump out and cover the highway at the moment of the attack. All the assaults on the police stations were coordinated for six sharp. We went into action exactly at six. But our preparation had been pretty rudimentary in many ways. There was a lot of confusion at first and a bit of chaos. The 11 of us had numbers from zero to ten. I was "number 7." We planned on destroying the station in ten minutes, and in fact we were able to burn it to the ground in seven. When we were getting back into the cars, the station was a mass of flames.

Two things stand out in my mind. One is the solidarity of an old man who just happened to be nearby. One of the commando members was wounded in the arm, and suddenly I saw this old man waving to me, waving a handkerchief. I could see him from where I was positioned behind a wall. Imagine, there we were and he stood up to wave at me, and I crossed over and took the handkerchief and was able to bandage the comrade's arm. I can't forget that gesture, that old man risking his life at a time like that.

The other was at the end. The operation was a success, but we didn't know there was an EEBI barracks near there. It was an error on our part, a lack of information we should have had to begin with. And the guards came out of their barracks, crossed the highway and began to take their positions. The comrade in charge of our squadron told Dionisio to cover our retreat, that we'd have to try to get to some houses around there. Dionisio was firing from behind our car and I was in several different spots: first near one of the houses, then behind a small wall. I remember at one point running into Dionisio and asking him what he thought our chances of escape were. And he said, "Look, forget it. There's no way out of this. We're surrounded. I don't see how we can break the circle they've thrown around us, so be prepared to die." We calculated between 150 and 200 guards in all.

So that's just what we did: prepare to die. We tried to save as much ammunition as we could, defending our positions and waiting for them to move in and finish us off. Maybe it was the other attacks, in other parts of Managua, that saved us there. Because if ours had been an isolated action, I don't think we could have escaped. But it seems that the Guard was disoriented. We began hearing their commander telling them to advance, but they didn't advance. We could hear gunfire over by San Judas—the attack spot nearest us—and we real-

ized that battles were taking place in different parts of the city.

I remember all of a sudden we began shouting out our numbers: we had instructions that in case we found ourselves scattered, we should shout our numbers so we could know how many of us were still alive. I listened to the numbers and I shouted out "7," and I thought there were only four or five of us still alive. And then I began hearing "64," "65," numbers that I knew didn't exist. And I realized it was a tactic to confuse the Guard, so they wouldn't be able to figure out how many of us there really were.

I don't know why, but suddenly there seemed to be a sort of truce. I wasn't hearing shots anymore. And we began to shout out our numbers again and began coming together in a small rocky area. There were five of us. We thought we were the only survivors. We began to try to figure out what to do and we came to the conclusion that the only thing we could do would be to try to join up with the comrades over at San Judas. We tried to make our way through a hilly area behind us. The trail was practically vertical, and very difficult. We spent all night trying to get through that way. At one point we came close to some houses but a couple of dogs smelled us coming about a kilometer away, and every time we moved to get closer, those dogs began to bark.

We finally had to keep still and not move any further that night. I remember there was a beautiful moon, and for the first time I cursed the moon because it was almost like daylight. One of the Guard's helicopters passed overhead, but they didn't see us.

That night we were all exhausted. We had to decide who was going to do the first guard post, and I offered. I spent the whole night awake and when I saw that it was getting light, I woke up the rest of the comrades and suggested I try to go out to the highway. Being a woman, I thought I might be able to say I had been caught in the middle of the previous night's battle, and they might believe me. Then I could go for help. We had a short discussion about that. The comrades claimed that it was obvious I had taken part in the battle; we were all wearing dark pants and shirts, with a colored ribbon—a different color for each day—so no one would be able to infiltrate us (we were the only ones who knew which color was for which day). We carried a small knapsack with first-aid items, the colored ribbons and some red and black neckerchiefs we were going to distribute among the rest of the comrades when we joined up with them. What held me back a bit was the blood I had all over my clothing—because of having bandaged that comrade's arm. Since I had crawled along the ground, the blood and earth and all was a single mass of dark stains, and I said it didn't matter. But the others said it did, that with laboratory tests they could easily tell I had blood on my clothing. In short . . . I was firm in my decision to try to go for help, but Dionisio said he wouldn't let me go alone. He said he'd come with me, and we could pretend we were a couple who had been trapped there. It sounds ridiculous, but that's what we ended up doing.

We began to walk, and of course the dogs began to bark. I didn't let them stop me, I went up to the first house, someone looked out and I made signs that we needed help. But he told us to get out. At the next house the same thing happened: the people went inside and closed the door. Dionisio said we shouldn't try anymore, that it was dangerous because those people might turn us in. But then I saw a little house where a family of caretakers lived, peasants who watched over one of those estates. Dionisio called out to an old man, we told him the story of our being trapped in the battle, and he said: "Sure, friend, that was a terrible battle all right." And he told us to come on in. Poor as those people were, they did everything they could for us. We told them we had some friends who had also been caught in the same place. I think those people knew who we were; we were all scratched up, covered with mud, filthy. But they pretended to believe our story. They told us to go get the others.

Then one of the young women—the old man's daughter-in-law—came up to me and asked what had happened. I could see that they didn't really believe our story, but they wanted to help us. So I told her the truth, that we were the ones in the battle the night before, and that I needed her to help me, to let me wash and lend me a change of clothing so I could go out on the highway and look for help. She began to cry and said of course. She and another young girl got out their best things. I remember they gave me a yellow blouse, a pair of tan pants and red tennis shoes. And they brought me a cup of coffee. I cried, and every time I think of those people I cry: their attitude, risking their lives to help us.

When the rest of the comrades came, I was totally transformed! I insisted on the idea of my going out on the highway, but Dionisio kept saying he didn't want me to go alone. Because of my physical appearance, we thought I might be able to pass for a foreigner. Finally another one of the comrades—blond, with blue eyes—who could also pass for a foreigner, went with me. One of the sons of that peasant family took us as far as one of the nearby estates, and from there we made our way out onto the highway. I spoke English and the comrade spoke German, and we just walked right past the guards—who were spread all over the asphalt—me speaking English and the comrade answering me in German, saying whatever came into our heads. And we managed to get through. . . .

When the war ended and I returned to Managua, one of the first things I did was to visit the peasant family that had taken us in that night. They were happy to see me and they gave me a huge sack of green mangos. But the young woman wasn't there, the one who had helped me change clothes.

In Jinotepe, a few days after the triumph, there was a tribute to Arlen Siu. I had to speak. I had only spoken before that for Radio Sandino, and I was nervous about speaking in public. When I finished, I saw someone coming toward the stage, from out of the crowd, and I heard her say: "It's her. . . It's her." I leaned down, and at first I didn't know who it was. But she said, "Don't you remember me? You came to my house one night, and I gave you clothing." She was with her mother. And she told me, "Take off your glasses"—I was wearing dark glasses—and she said to her mother, "See, Mama, I told you, look at how pretty her eyes are." She gave me a big hug, she was so glad to see me. And she asked me if we'd all managed to come out all right. I was able to tell her we were all alive.

*All the poems in this article were written by Daisy Zamora.

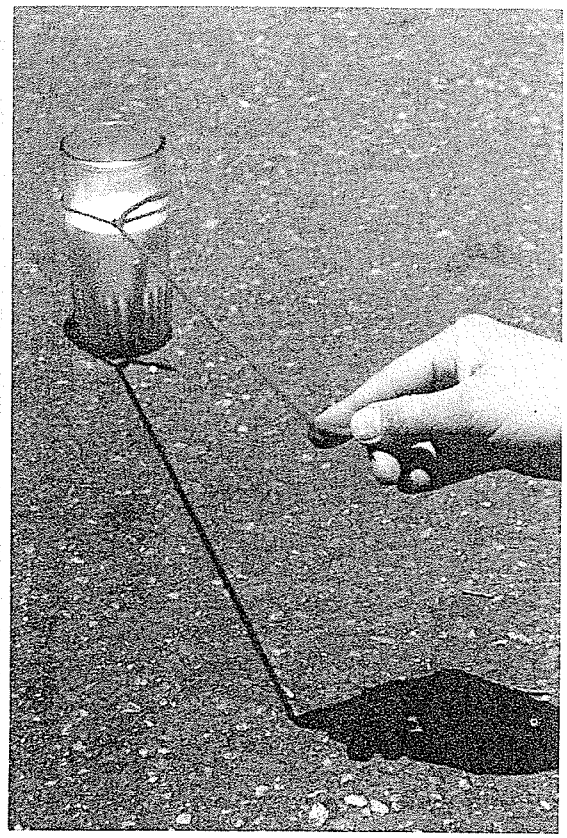
Daisy Zamora is a poet and Vice-Minister of Culture in the National Reconstruction Government of Nicaragua.

Margaret Randall, the author of several books on Cuban women, lives in Cuba and is now working with the Cultural Ministry of Nicaragua. Her interview with Daisy Zamora is excerpted from *We're All Awake: Testimonies from Nicaraguan Women in Struggle* (in press).

GLASS OF MILK SPILLED UNDER A BLUE SKY

by Cecilia Vicuña

(Bogotá, September 1979)



The cow
is the continent
whose milk (blood)
is spilt.
What are we doing
to life?

Photo by Oscar Monsalve

Street posters announce the spilling of milk in front of the "Residence of Simón Bolivar"—The Liberator.
The poem is written on the pavement, the milk is poured out.

(It is estimated that every year 1,920 children in this city die from drinking contaminated milk produced in the country itself. Although a lawyer and journalists denounce the distributors responsible for the contamination, the government takes no action to stop the "milk crime.")

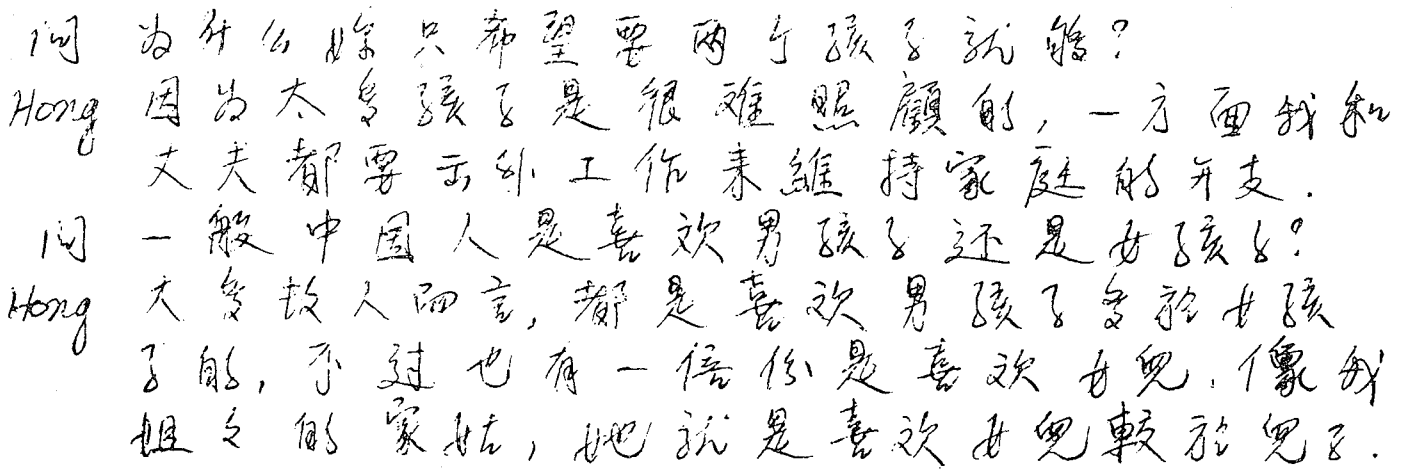
This piece, carried out by invitation from the Collective of Art Actions (a group of artists, writers and sociologists organized in Chile in 1979), is part of the action "Not to Starve to Death in Art," presented in Santiago, October 1979.

Given the overall scarcity of milk in Chile, the collective performed a series of actions:
—They distributed 100 liters of milk in a working-class neighborhood in Santiago.
—They sealed 20 bags of milk into a plastic cube in an art gallery.
—They inserted a blank page surrounding a short text in a popular magazine.
—They broadcast a recorded speech in front of the Latin American Economic Commission of the United Nations in Santiago.

(Documentation: videotape, texts and photographs; translation by Anne Twitty)

Cecilia Vicuña is a poet and artist from Santiago, Chile, who lives and works in New York. She has published two books of poetry—*Sabor A Mí* (1973) and *Siete Poemas* (1979).

© 1981 Cecilia Vicuña



LIKE A TROPHY OF LOVE

Tran Hong, Huynh Thien Anh, Wong Tai-Tai with Linda Peer

People often talk about population control as if everyone would have fewer children if only they understood the benefits of small families and had the means available for controlling fertility (female fertility, that is). However, if the social, economic, religious and personal reasons for people's wanting children aren't taken into consideration, how can any program of population control work without being coercive?

The following conversation about the social and personal motivations for having children is taken from several interviews with Tran Hong (who has two children), her sister-in-law Huynh Thien Anh, and her mother-in-law Tran Xao (Wong Tai-Tai), who was born in China and emigrated to Vietnam in about 1949. Hong and Anh were both born in Cholon, Vietnam. Their families were middle class in Vietnam, which meant they had a motorbike and bicycles and cold (but not hot) running water in their homes. They left Vietnam in 1978 by boat, and arrived in New York in 1979. They all live together and all have relatives in Vietnam, with whom they communicate frequently. Anh was not satisfied with her ability to express herself in English, so she wrote a number of questions and her answers in Chinese. These were translated by Po Hing and are included here in Chinese and English. Anh also wrote an introduction about herself:

> *Freedom. It makes people realize and feel, it increases the meaning of their survival. Like a fish cannot live without water, a person cannot live without freedom. Especially if you lost it before, now it becomes more valuable to you. I come from Vietnam like all of the other refugees and have to be taken in by America. Because in 1975 Vietnam was "liberated." The Communist government is too tight, so that is why I would rather suffer all this pain and give up everything, all the comfort and the nice and loving and warm and comfortable home, and never go back to my home, and go and look for the future in the freedom country—America. Here I can begin to enjoy a free life again. This is the big critical turning point in my life.*

Hong, when you had Helena, did you want a boy or a girl?
HONG: I think I want to stop now.
ANH: She doesn't want any more children.
HONG: Before I had Helena I wanted a boy.
Why?
HONG: Because a boy gets married and lives together with me.
Like your mother-in-law lives with you and your husband Tuan?
HONG: Yes.
Does the mother ever live with the daughter?
HONG: When a daughter marries she does not live in the same family.
Hong, do you think you will have more children?
HONG: My husband wants four or five children. He wants one boy.
What happened to old people who had no family to take care of them?
ANH: They can live in a nursing home.
Was that before or after the liberation?
ANH: That was before. Now I don't know. The government may be too poor. Before, some rich people contributed to the nursing homes. The government does not collect any tax, so it is poor.
Do you think that in this country the parents will live with the sons in Chinese families?
HONG: Yes.
Hong, why do you only want two children?
ANH: She says in this country if she has many children and wants to work there will be no one to care for her children, and both parents must work to make enough money for the family.
So will you have many children?
HONG: Yes, but I don't like.
How many children do people usually have in Vietnam?
ANH: Usually they want four—two boys and two girls—but usually they have more because they don't know how to control birth. I knew someone with 14 children. In 1978 the government began to introduce birth control in Saigon.
Why do people want four children?
ANH: If you have two boys and two girls you are lucky. This is a good number. Also your neighbors think you must be lucky (wealthy) to be able to feed so many. People who are rich want more children—as many as they can have.
We have been talking about the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam. What about the Vietnamese?
ANH: Vietnamese men don't care how many children they have because if they can't take care of them their mother-in-law must take care of the children. Vietnamese family is opposite from Chinese. When a Vietnamese girl gets married she does not leave her family, and she is supposed to take care of her parents when they get old. A Vietnamese man would make his mother-in-law take care of his children, but a Chinese

 © 1981 Linda Peer

man would not make his mother take care of his children. The relationship is different.

Anh, if you have children do you want to have boys or girls?

ANH: I hope it's a boy.

Why?

ANH: Because I wish I was a boy. I remember when I was little, my elder brother and the neighbors' son were playing on the ground with little pebbles. I wanted to join them but they said no, they wouldn't let her, because that was not for girls. Other times when she was feeling very happy and glad, she would forget herself and run around and make lots of noise and act happy and her father would shake his head with disapproval and talk to her mother and say he had never seen such a girl and her mother should tell her to be more sophisticated and ladylike.

Because at that time my young heart or little mind, the beginning forming of ideas, took for my model the little boy. As time went on, the inconvenience of the woman, and the bothers of childbearing and the pain of it. . . it is the path of a woman. I don't think this means I'm in any way psychologically abnormal or weird, or queer. I'm just talking about my hope and my idealism, and my wish. But god of fate says this is what you're going to be, this is the part you're going to play, so I think that we should take the challenge bravely.

And why did you want to be a boy?

ANH: If I was a boy I'd feel very free and could do some things I want.

What do you want to do?

ANH: I could leave my family and live alone.

How many children do you want to have?

ANH: Well, some people think children are like a souvenir showing the love, like a trophy of that. Everybody wants to have boys and girls. When the kids grow up, through your kids, it reflects you, reflects your youthful times. I hope I can have two children, but I want them both to be sons. Because then, besides their parents, their mother and father and friends, they won't be lonely because they will have a brother to talk to. [Po Hing adds that "brother" in Chinese means "arms and legs": "She calls it arms and legs to talk to, a brother is like an arm and a leg. . . . The word for sister doesn't mean anything else. Women are non-persons, not substance. They don't count. . . . There is no metaphor for sisters, but brothers are arms and legs to each other because they work together, help each other out."]

问 黄太太，为什么你想要孙子

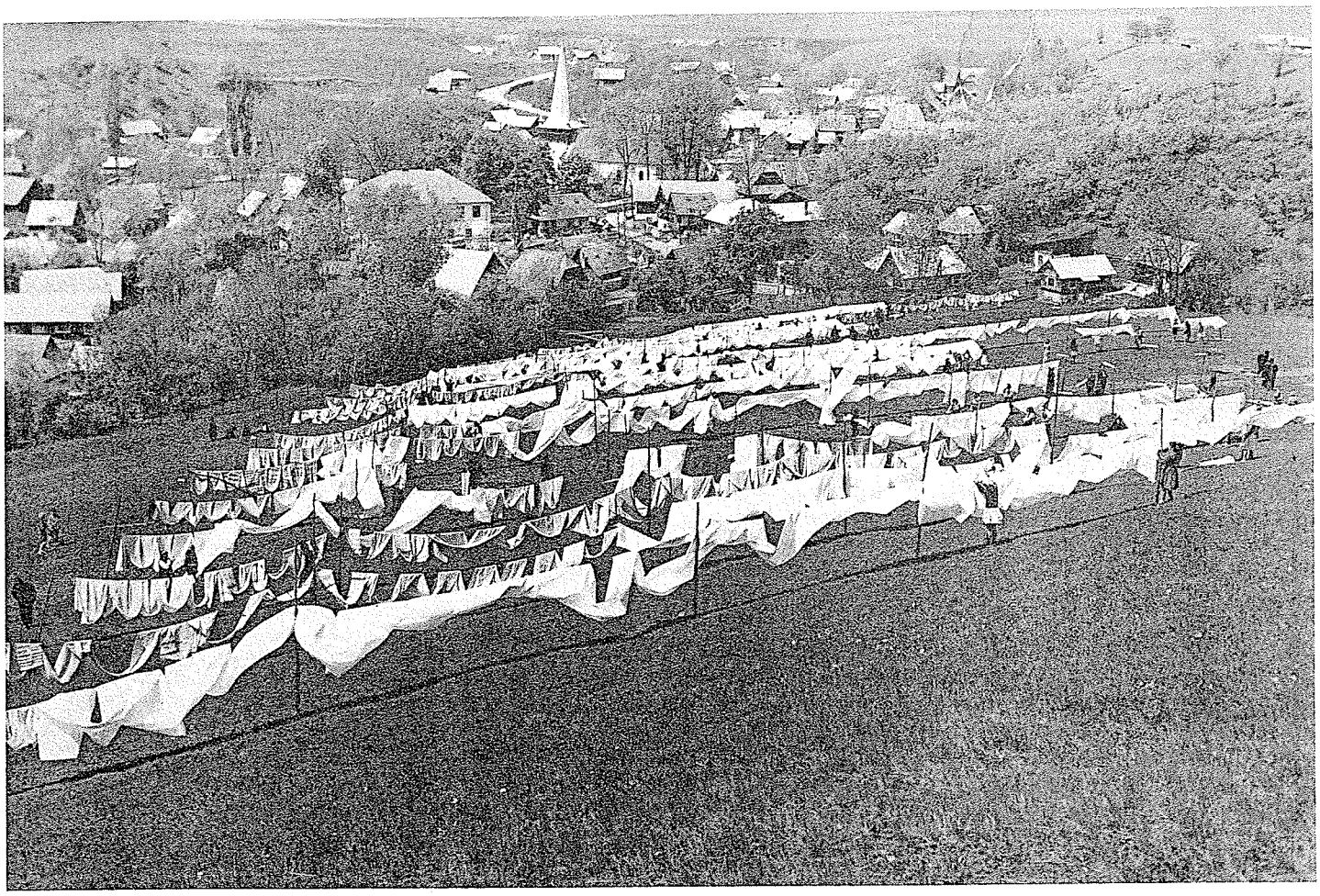
Wong Tai-Tai, why do you want a grandson?

WONG: Chinese tradition. Most people don't want girls, because when girls marry they must leave the family, but a boy stays in the family and his wife comes. Also, if you have a grandson, he has the family name. If you don't have a grandson, the name is gone.

Why do people want the name to continue?

WONG: It is the Chinese tradition.

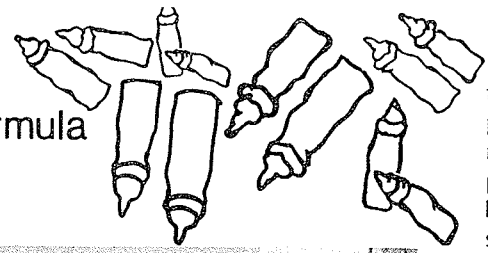
Linda Peer is a NYC sculptor who exhibits at Blue Mountain Gallery.



Ana Lupas. *Flying Carpet/Symbol of Peace/Object Obtained by Happening with Holy Character.* 1973. Linen. 7 acres. Ana Lupas works and teaches in Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania, Rumania and heads the city branch of the Union of Plastic Artists. A communist collective near Cluj helps construct her large sculptures, which reflect indigenous bread-making and hay-stacking forms.

the *HAZARDS* of infant formula

by sally austen tom, c.n.m.



Woman passes Bebelac ad in Taipei, Taiwan, 1978 (photo: Rebecca Cantwell and INFACT).

On May 21, 1981, the United Nations World Health Organization voted 118 to 1 to ban advertising that tends to discourage breast-feeding. The sole dissenting vote was cast by the United States. The resolution does not forbid the sale of infant formulas, but it does restrict the more aggressive forms of marketing and advertising, including the practice of using saleswomen dressed in white to promote use of the formula in maternity clinics. It is entirely voluntary, and its adoption and implementation are left to the individual nations (Eds.).

Infant formula presents a profound disruption to the normal physiology of childbearing and child-rearing. When infants are not breast-fed, they are exposed to the hazards of not receiving breast milk's immunological substances, of developing allergies to synthetic proteins (which cannot be modified enough to be compatible with a newborn's digestive system) and of being without the psychological closeness which breast feeding brings.

For babies in the developing world, the use of infant formula is usually the beginning of a cycle of diarrhea, dehydration and malnutrition, leading to permanent disability or death. Over ten million infants are affected by "bottle baby syndrome" each year, and many of them die. These are babies of mothers who are persuaded not to breast-feed by the promotion tactics of infant formula companies and who do not have clean water, refrigeration, adequate income, fuel for heating water or literacy—all of which are necessary before infant formula can be safely used.

Breast feeding is also beneficial to mothers. Immediately after childbirth, it helps control uterine bleeding and speeds the delivery of the placenta. The uterus is aided in returning to a healthy nonpregnant state by the action of hormones stimulated by breast feeding, and mothers and babies are significantly strengthened in their task of bonding to one another. In addition, in developing countries, the delay in ovulation after childbirth caused by breast feeding is often the only available method of child spacing. Breast feeding is a source of sensual pleasure for many women, and it is the most economical way for all women to feed their infants.

Despite the benefits of breast feeding, mothers all over the world choose not to breast-feed because they have been convinced that infant formula is more modern, more convenient, as good as or better than their own breast milk. The infant formula industry capitalizes on the male control and medicalization of childbirth by using health care authorities to promote infant formula. When a mother receives samples of an infant formula from her doctor or nurse, it carries with it their authority. Infant formula manufacturing companies also send women sales personnel to offer advice on infant feeding to mothers. Advertisements suggest that infant feeding is a complex process for which a mother must consult an expert—who is usually a doctor and usually male. Formula advertisements show pictures of plump, supposedly healthy babies with smiling mothers. In developing countries, these pictures often show the mothers and babies in affluent Western surroundings, suggesting that bottle feeding is the choice of the economic elite. The intention of these advertisements is to associate infant health, successful mothering and wealth with infant formula use.

Any analysis of the infant formula industry must confront the issue of a woman's freedom to choose how to feed her baby and to choose to be away from her baby. Unfortunately, infant formula is usually the only available alternative to breast feeding. However, a variety of wet-nursing arrangements could exist among lactating women. For instance, a lactating mother can provide milk which is later fed to her baby in a bottle by another care provider (if she lives in a place where milk can be refrigerated and bottles safely used). Women can develop community breast milk banks so breast milk is available for infants whose mothers choose not to breast-feed. Babies and breast feeding do not themselves keep women from working. Employers who do not allow breaks in the work day for breast feeding and who do not provide childcare actively discourage breast feeding, and these policies benefit the infant formula industry.

Women often do not have the opportunity to make an informed choice about infant feeding. There is no corporate profit to be made from breast feeding and its advocates do not have the resources to compete against the wealthy formula industry. No commercials or labels compare the contents of breast milk with the contents of artificial baby foods. Infant formula manufacturers are not championing the liberation of Third World women by providing them with the opportunity to buy expensive infant formulas. The choice between a healthy breast-fed infant and a malnourished, dehydrated infant is what women are offered by the infant formula industry—and that is no choice at all.

Infant formula has been marketed all over the world without the careful premarketing studies necessary to evaluate the risks and benefits of new drugs, and without assessments of the impact that artificial baby milks will have on any given community. As Dr. Bo Valquist, a pediatrician at Sweden's University of Uppsala, observed: "The widespread abandonment of breast feeding for artificial feeding is the largest uncontrolled experiment in the his-

 © 1981 Sally Austen Tom

tory of the world."

Citizens around the world are working to force infant formula companies to end promotion of breast milk substitutes to people who cannot use them safely. Since 1974, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, an arm of the National Council of Churches, has directed actions at the promotion behaviors of the three American exportation companies—Ross Laboratories, Bristol Myers and American Home Products. These three companies recently launched an all-out attack on the code of ethics for infant formula promotion being developed by the World Health Organization and UNICEF. In 1977, a coalition including women's, church and health care groups formed the Infant Formula Action Coalition (INFACT) and began the Nestlé Boycott, a grassroots boycott of all Nestlé products. Nestlé, a Swiss company which is the world's largest multinational food corporation, is responsible for almost half of all infant formula sales in the developing world—approximately one-half billion dollars annually. The Nestlé Boycott is now the largest non-union boycott the U.S. has seen, and it is the first international boycott in history, with organizations in eight countries.

The demands of the Nestlé Boycott are fourfold: an end to direct consumer advertising, an end to company "milk nurses," an end to free samples, and an end to promotion through and to members of health care professions. INFACT demands that promotion end, not that Nestlé stop selling its products in developing countries altogether. INFACT is pledged to continue monitoring promotion activities until the demands of the boycott are met.

Stardust, June 1979

NESTLÉ PRODUCTS: BOYCOTT THEM!

Nescafé
DeCaf
Taster's Choice
Sunrise Coffee
Pero
QUIK
Choco-Chill
CRUNCH
Nestlé Chocolate
Nestea
Souptime
Maggi
Swiss Knight Cheese
Stouffer products
Iona skincare products
Beringer Bros. wines
Los Hermanos wines
Libby, McNeill & Libby
Crosse & Blackwell
Deer Park Spring Water
Lancôme cosmetics
L'Oréal cosmetics
Contique lens cleaner

Sally Austen Tom, CNM, MS, is a certified nurse-midwife. She teaches nurse-midwifery at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, and is a member of the national board of INFACT.

ASK A STUPID QUESTION
SUSAN SAXE

(For the FBI agent who, inquiring about a sister, asked "Who is in her network?")

Who is in my network,
what links us, to be exact?
Better ask to understand the force
that cuts through rock the water's course,
and binding like to like
makes also opposites attract.

Who guides the earthworm underground,
and makes the stubborn ants persist?
When wind and rain erode the land,
who calls the rootwork to resist?
And what clandestine hand inscribed
the coded message in the seed?
Who masterminds the spider's web,
and plans the strategy of the weed?

What inspiration could invent
the infrastructure of the vine,
the grass revolt against cement,
the rebellion of the dandelion?
What force undermines the walls
to make them crack,
or makes the branches of the tree
when cut grow back?
Who conceals the passages between death and birth?
Who leads the revolution of the earth?

Who is in my network,
what links us, to be exact?
Better ask to understand the force
that cuts through rock the water's course
and binding like to like
makes also opposites attract.

Investigate the daisies for invasion of the lawn,
or the ivy for trespass where it wants to grow.
Indict the sky for pouring out its rain,
contributing to the river's overflow.
Arrest the seagull for unlawful flight,
impose a boundary to confine the sea,
demand a mountain modify its height,
dare my woman-spirit to break free.

Susan Saxe is a political prisoner, poet and organizer. This poem was inspired by a real-life incident.

© 1981 Susan Saxe

MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES / MAINTENANCE ART WORKS: #3
with the cooperation of the NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION

"Re-Raw Recovery"
COMPETITION

- For SITE PROJECTS for RECLAMATION of New York City's solid waste landfills (completed and/or completed sections of active landfills) that face residential and commercial areas and thruways. JURIED.
- Open to artists, architects, landscape architects, environmentalists, earth dreamers, socio-political ecological creators, sanitation workers--world wide.
- OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO FEMINIST/ECOLOGY/SITE/CREATORS.
- Garbage sanitary landfills are extraordinary urban sites composed of all the things we want to forget, public space-forms we have all made, sort of an inner-city outer-space. Envisioned as potential testing grounds for all kinds of site and earth creators, set into the real everyday context of New York City life.
- This is a staged competition. Stage One is this juried projects' competition leading to an exhibition of winners. Stage Two will be for actual construction.

- THIS PROJECT IS SUPPORTED BY A GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS IN WASHINGTON, D.C. A FEDERAL AGENCY.

✂ ——————————————————————— ✂

☐ I am considering entering "RE-RAW RECOVERY" Site Projects Competition. Please send me a detailed description, instructions and rules for submission.

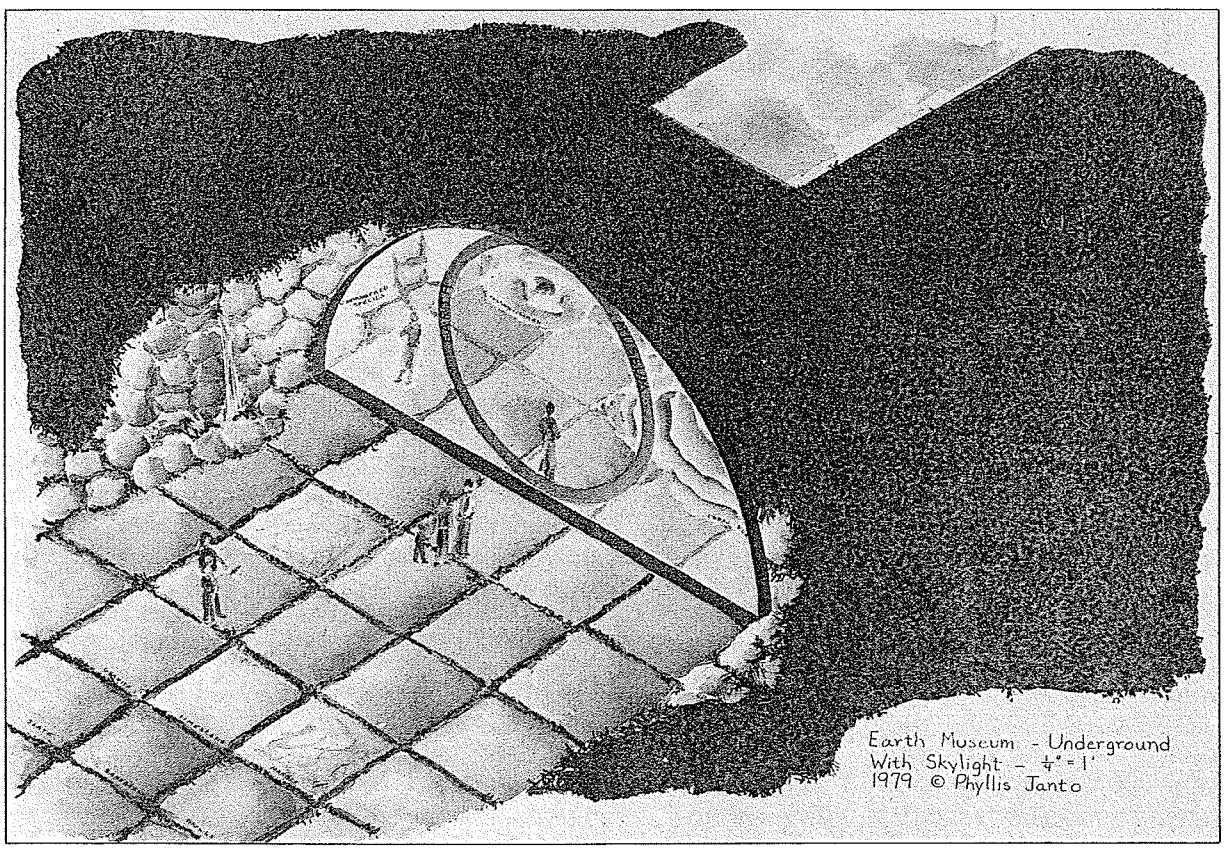
☐ I am interested in working on the "RE-RAW RECOVERY" Projects Competition.

Name..... Phone (...).....
Address..... City.....
State..... Zip..... Country.....

✂ ——————————————————————— ✂

✉ Mail to: MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES, c/o Resource Recovery, Rm. 830, 51 Chambers Street, New York, New York 10007

Mierle Laderman Ukeles has been working in cooperation with the NYC Sanitation Department on a series of public Maintenance Art Works since 1977.



Phyllis Janto. *Earth Museum*. 1979. "The Earth Museum is a proposed underground museum of ecology, designed to be conserving of energy, and an 'eye' into nature. It is a living museum, envisioned to be a place where the processes of growing, changing and decay will be perceived directly. Further, the museum will be a place to chart changes in the environment world-wide, keep tabs on endangered species, and in general conserve natural resources." Phyllis Janto is a NYC-based sculptor.

LOGBOOK FOR DISGRACE

MICHELLE STUART

IN THE BEGINNING

1593. Port Desire, near Tierra del Fuego.

Ten miles down the coast from Port Desire, there was an island, the original Penguin Island; the sailors from the ship Desire, returning to England, clubbed twenty thousand Penguins to death. They had no natural enemies and were unafraid of their murderers. The captain, John Davis, the most skilled navigator of his time, ordered the Penguins dried and salted and stowed fourteen thousand in the hold. Homeward bound and upon the Equator, the Penguins came alive. In them bred a long 'Loathsome worme.' The worms consumed everything: clothes, bedding, boots, hats, leather lashings and live human flesh. The worms gnawed through the ship's side. When the rotten hulk drifted into the harbor of BANTRY BAY, Ireland, only five men out of seventy-six could work the ship Desire.

1913. South Georgia Island. *Logbook for Grace.* Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy.

We have often remarked upon the extraordinary few dead penguins encountered among the large populations. Now I have discovered their romantic sepulchre.

Near the summit of a coastal hill I came upon a lonely pond in a hollow of ice-cracked stones. Several sick and drooping penguins were standing at the edge of this pool of snow water, which was ten or twelve feet deep. Then, with a tingling of my spine I perceived that the bottom was strewn, layer upon layer, with the bodies of Gentoo penguins that had outlived the perils of the sea to accomplish the rare feat among wild animals of dying a natural death. By hundreds, possibly thousands, they lay all over the bed of the cold tarn, flippers outstretched and breasts reflecting blurred gleams of white. Safe at last from sea leopards in the ocean and from skuas ashore, they took their endless rest; for decades, perhaps for centuries, the slumberers would undergo no change in their frigid tomb.

1957. Baja California. *Tampico Maru*: 60,000 barrels of diesel oil, nearly total devastation of marine life.

1967. Scilly Isles. *Torrey Canyon*: 120,000-ton supertanker wrecked on rocks, fully laden, devastating results to English Channel.

1968. Capetown, South Africa. *Esso Essen*: 4,000 tons of oil, killed 14,000 to 19,000 penguins and 3,500 gannets.

1968. Near Cape Town, South Africa. *Andron*: destroyed South-West African fishing grounds.

1968. Durban, South Africa. *World Glory*: tons of oil into Agulhas Current, killed albatross, penguins and marine life.

1969. Dassen Island. Unidentified tanker pumped oil into sea. Dassen Island is an important penguin breeding ground.

1969. Dyer Island. Unidentified tanker slick wiped out the entire penguin population (8,000). Was important penguin breeding area.

1969. Table Bay. *Kazimah*: sludge from ship killed thousands of birds and penguins.

1969. Falmouth, Massachusetts. 170,000 gallons refined oil. 95% of the fishing catch dead. A year later, seabed life was still dying.

1970. Muxierio, near Vigo, Spain. *Polycommander*: ran aground, black rain fell upon coast killing crops and cattle.

1971. Cape Agulhas, South Africa. *Wafra*: 63,000 tons of crude oil. The area is one of the principal breeding grounds for the bird and penguin species of the Antarctic seas. Thousands of birds and penguins killed.

1972. Dyer Island. *Texanita-Oswego Guardian*: killed thousands of birds and penguins foraging in the sea, hundreds of them came ashore oil-soaked, along a stretch of coast several hundred miles long.

1974. Cape Agulhas. *Oriental Pioneer*: hundreds of penguins killed.

1974. Bantry Bay, Ireland. *Universe Leader*: spilled more than 2,000 tons of crude oil over the surface and along the shores of Bantry Bay. Twenty-two miles of coastline were affected. Rocks and beaches were coated with oil and fish were killed for many seasons.

1975. Bantry Bay, Ireland. *African Zodiac*: leaked 450 tons of oil into Bantry Bay. It ruined the scallop, clam and winkle fields that were at any rate still declared suspect by marine biologists. The herring population was decimated.

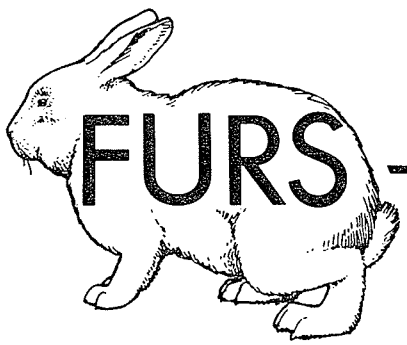
IN THE END

In a coincidence both mysterious and terrifying, Gulf Oil chose BANTRY BAY, cemetery of the sailors of the *Desire* and one of the most beautiful places in Ireland, as a terminal for its sextet of 326,000-ton supertankers. Bantry Bay is now an oil transit port for the largest tankers in the world.

Michelle Stuart is a NYC artist concerned with the earth and women.

© 1981 Michelle Stuart

Chris Millon. *Death Drawings: Hunting in the Suburbs*. 1980. (From a photo series on hunting begun in 1976. The "spoils" from a family hunt are documented annually on Thanksgiving Day only.) Chris Millon is a site-specific artist based in Chicago.



FURS—WHO REALLY PAYS?

BY CYNTHIA BRANIGAN

As long as animals are the sentient beings they are, they deserve freedom from fear and pain at the hands of humans—especially when the reasons for such inhumane treatment are unnecessary vanity and fashion.

In prehistoric times, people hunted for survival. Every bit of the killed animal was used—the meat for food, the bones for tools, the furs and leather for clothing and shelter. Today, hunting is considered recreation and furs have become the ultimate status symbol. A growing number of people, however, see both hunting for "fun" and the wearing of furs as immoral and barbaric.

Trapping

In 1823, Samuel Newhouse invented the leg-hold trap. Since then, it has accounted for the painful death of billions of animals and the maiming of millions more. The leg-hold trap is a simple device consisting of two spring-loaded steel "jaws" with a pan to hold the bait in the center. When an animal steps forward to get the bait, its paw is caught between the jaws. The more the animal (or human) pulls away, the tighter the jaws grip. In what trappers refer to as the "wring off," many animals chew or twist off their own legs in their desperation to be free or to return to their dependent offspring. Leg-hold traps are not selective—they catch whatever crosses their path. Endangered species (birds, as well as reptiles and mammals) are caught in traps. Dogs and cats are caught in traps. Trappers refer to unwanted animals caught in traps as "trash." It is estimated that seven out of every ten animals trapped are unwanted.

Should an animal escape from a trap, the chances are it will die of gangrene as a result of the injury. Yet the fate awaiting the imprisoned trapped animal is even more gruesome. Many animals die of thirst, starvation or exposure. Others are sitting targets for predatory animals. While laws vary from state to state as to how often a trapper must check the traps, these laws are practically unenforceable. Moreover, there are no laws governing how the trapper should kill the animal. Many trappers are unwilling to "waste a bullet" and choose a cheaper method of killing, such as bludgeoning.

In Pennsylvania, as in many other states, young people are actually encouraged to trap. It is promoted as good, clean fun, as well as a way to pick up a few extra dollars. In that state, when children between the ages of 12 and 16 check their traps and find a live animal, they are practically forced to destroy it with the crudest means available because they are not allowed to carry firearms (except when accompanied by an adult). If a child decides to check the traps after school, without an accompanying adult, the choice is either to kill the animal inhumanely or to go back later. Either alternative is extremely painful for the animal.

For the most part trapping is a leisure activity in the U.S. Only *one* percent, or 2 million trappers, are professionals who sell pelts for a living. The remaining 99%, which includes chil-

 © 1981 Cynthia A. Branigan

dren, are "sport" trappers. Often these people lose interest in trapping and never even return to check the traps they set.

Ecological Unsoundness

Trappers and furriers frequently refer to animals as a "renewable resource" on the order of trees. They claim that real furs are a more ecologically sound choice than fake furs with their petroleum base. In a report for the Fund for Animals done by research engineer Gregory Smith, such claims have been found to be without substance. The newly collected data prove that fake furs are more ecologically sound, cost the consumer far less money and cause no suffering to animals.[1] (It takes approximately 40 raccoons to make one fur coat.)

"Ranched" Furs

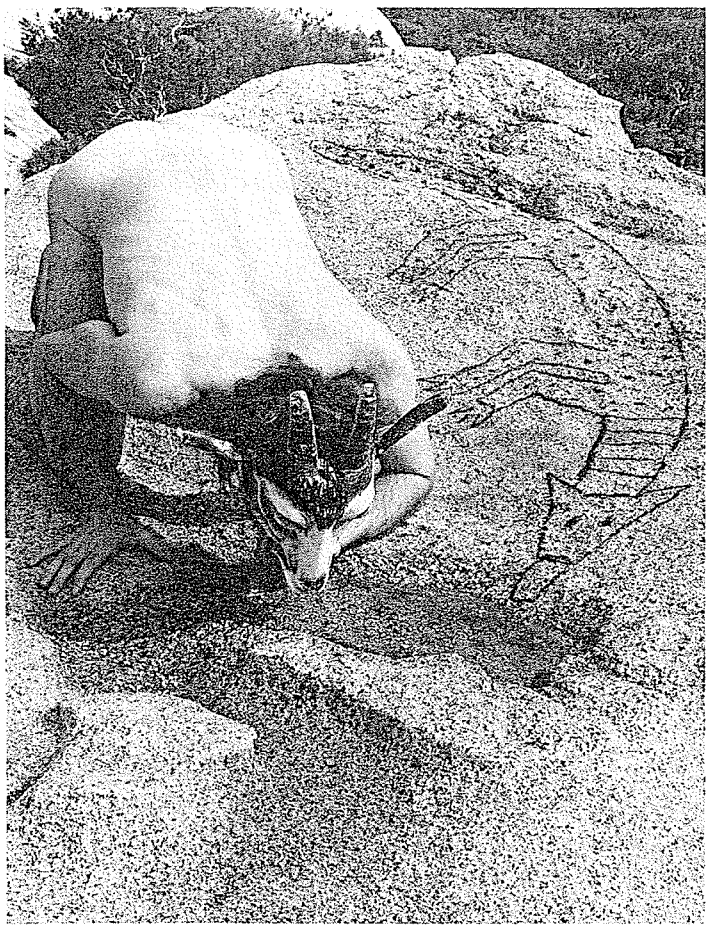
Not all fur-bearing animals are trapped.[2] Yet, contrary to what most people think, "ranched" animals do not escape a painful death. In addition, they are subjected to a painful life. While the expression "ranched mink" gives one the impression that the animal roams the range, the reality is quite different. As is so often the case, the people who raise animals are primarily concerned with profit; the needs and feelings of the animals are rarely considered. Ranched animals spend their entire lives in cages, which on the average measure 10" x 12" x 24". They have been inbred and overbred to the point that they suffer from serious birth defects such as deformed sex organs and internal bleeding. Because they are always confined, they also exhibit stress signs such as nervous head-jerking.

The death of ranched animals is usually accomplished by the cheapest methods available. Killing techniques include crude electrocution, decompression or twisting off the animals' heads by hand. Often, if animals have been drugged, they are presumed dead when in fact they are not. These animals are skinned alive.

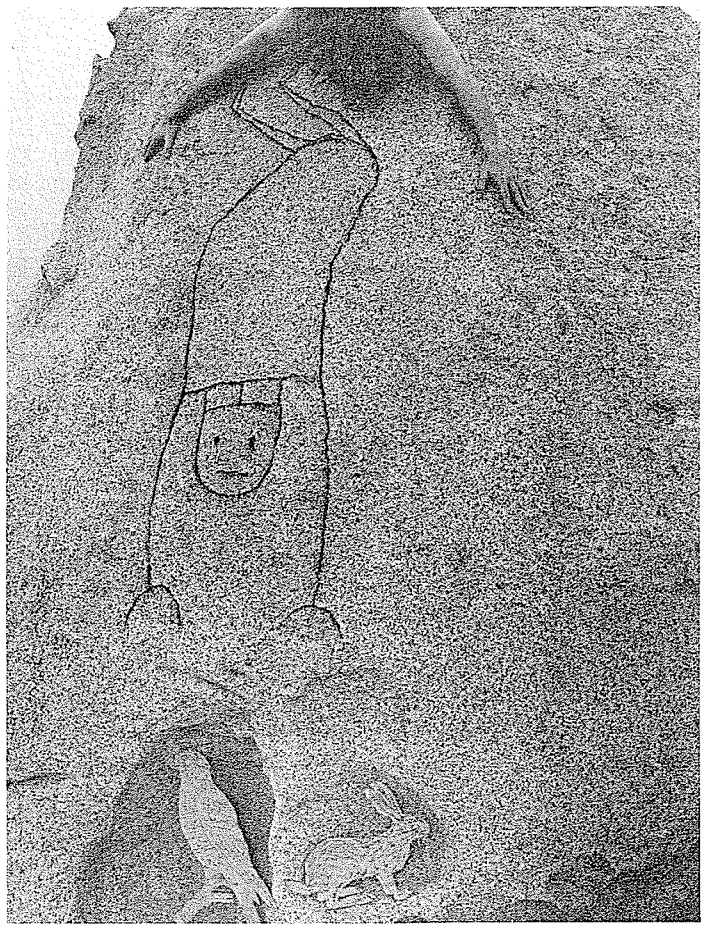
Once we become aware of the real cost of an article of fur clothing, in terms of both money and suffering, we can no longer plead ignorance. Along with everyone in the fur industry, from trapper to designer, we must share in the guilt.

1. The report concludes that the energy content of a real fur coat is at least three times that of a fake one. The total BTUs expended for one coat are: fake fur 120,300; trapped fur 433,000; "ranched" fur 7,965,800.
2. The only exceptions in this country are chinchillas and some minks.

Cynthia A. Branigan, Director of Governmental Relations for the Fund for Animals (NYC), has published articles on animals in the *New York Times* and *New Jersey Monthly*.



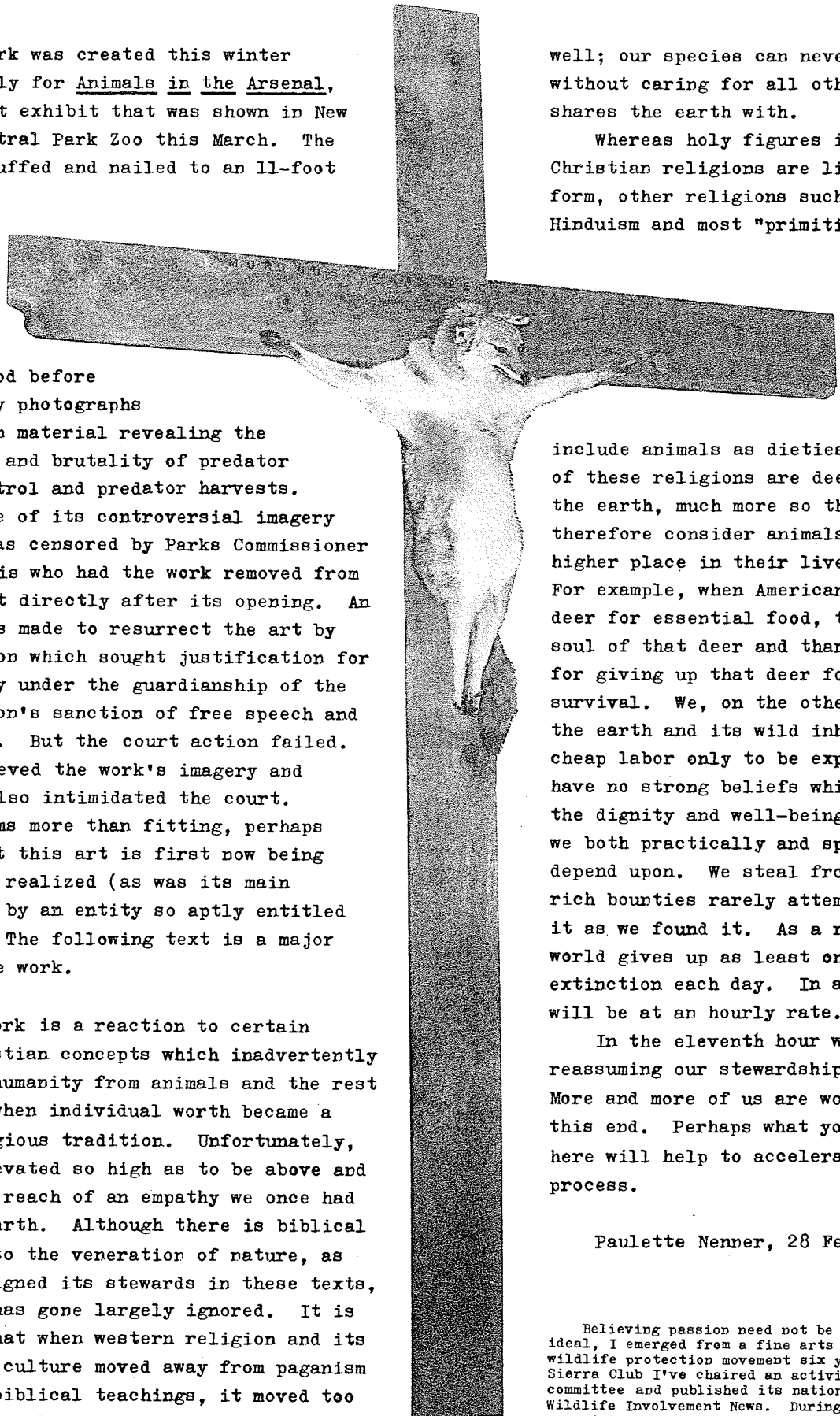
People could change from animals and birds to humans at will.



We never look at the moon when game has been shot, at risk of getting lost and dying. The game would want to take us away to a waterless place. We would go to die of thirst, while it led us astray.

Barbara Strasen. From *Desert Notes*. 1979. (A series of images and statements about the tension between scientific research into how people and animals respond to heat, desolation and lack of water; and the psychic realities of desert experience as revealed in the myths and legends of traditional desert dwellers—Australian Aborigines, African Bush people, Navajo and Hopi people.) Barbara Strasen is a Brooklyn-born artist currently living in San Diego.

CRUCIFIED COYOTE: He Died Because of Our Sins



The work was created this winter specifically for Animals in the Arsenal, a group art exhibit that was shown in New York's Central Park Zoo this March. The coyote, stuffed and nailed to an 11-foot cross, stood before documentary photographs and written material revealing the inequities and brutality of predator damage control and predator harvests.

Because of its controversial imagery the work was censored by Parks Commissioner Gordon Davis who had the work removed from the exhibit directly after its opening. An attempt was made to resurrect the art by court action which sought justification for its display under the guardianship of the Constitution's sanction of free speech and expression. But the court action failed. It is believed the work's imagery and politics also intimidated the court.

It seems more than fitting, perhaps fated, that this art is first now being publically realized (as was its main intention) by an entity so aptly entitled Heresies. The following text is a major part of the work.

This work is a reaction to certain Judeo-Christian concepts which inadvertently alienated humanity from animals and the rest of nature when individual worth became a major religious tradition. Unfortunately, we were elevated so high as to be above and beyond the reach of an empathy we once had with the earth. Although there is biblical reference to the veneration of nature, as we were deigned its stewards in these texts, the maxim has gone largely ignored. It is possible that when western religion and its reflective culture moved away from paganism and older biblical teachings, it moved too fast, too impulsively, too thoughtlessly and too far. In evidence is our recent rediscovery of what the ancients knew so well; our species can never survive without caring for all othe life it shares the earth with.

Whereas holy figures in Judeo-Christian religions are limited to human form, other religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and most "primitive" religions include animals as dieties. The people of these religions are deeply linked to the earth, much more so than we, and therefore consider animals in a higher higher place in their lives than we do. For example, when American Indians kill deer for essential food, they pray for soul of that deer and thank the deer god for giving up that deer for their survival. We, on the other hand, treat the earth and its wild inhabitants as cheap labor only to be exploited. We have no strong beliefs which consider the dignity and well-being of other life we both practically and spiritually depend upon. We steal from the earth its rich bounties rarely attempting to leave it as we found it. As a result, the world gives up as least one species to extinction each day. In a few years it will be at an hourly rate.

In the eleventh hour we are slowly reassuming our stewardship of nature. More and more of us are working towards this end. Perhaps what you experience here will help to accelerate that process.

Paulette Nenner, 28 February 1981

Believing passion need not be limited to a single ideal, I emerged from a fine arts background into the wildlife protection movement six years ago. Through Sierra Club I've chaired an activist wildlife committee and published its national newsletter, Wildlife Involvement News. During the past two years my art has amalgamated itself into the politics of environmental defense with wildlife in the forefront of these concerns. My goal has been to make my art as public as possible in order to arouse and strengthen our commitment to environmental integrity.

Photograph by Lisa kahane

 © 1981 Paulette Nenner

FACTORY FARMING

BY SHIRLEY FUERST

The domestication of animals resulted from an implicit agreement. The animals gave up their perilous lives in the wild for the certainty of food and protection. For humans, this exchange resulted in an assured supply of meat and animal food products in return for caring for and insuring the animals' well-being.

In modern food production, however, this agreement no longer holds. Mammals and birds are not treated as living, sentient creatures but as production units. Indeed, the largest-scale cruelty to animals is practiced by the food industry. Some 150 million mammals and 3 billion birds are slaughtered annually in the United States. In addition to being killed in such large numbers, most of these animals endure dreadful living conditions. They are confined in cages too small to allow them to turn around in, heavily dosed with chemicals, deprived of natural stimuli and even mutilated.

Most layer hens spend their one year of life in cages housing four to five birds. These cages have sloping wire mesh floors and range in size from 12 by 12 inches to 18 by 20 inches. Typically, a single layer house contains 90,000 hens arranged in tiers. When hens wear out under these conditions, egg production is stimulated by "force molting" of the flocks—stopping food and water and cutting back the hours of light. Some birds die of shock from this procedure, but the increased egg production makes it worthwhile for the owner.

Broilers live their eight to ten weeks of life in areas smaller than one-half square foot. This crowding produces such stress that the birds would peck each other to death if their beaks were not removed. A hot-knife machine is used to remove half of the upper and lower beak. As thousands of birds are quickly sent through this machine, inevitably many of the birds suffer torn mouth tissues and burned tongues. Birds raised by these methods have brittle bones, difficulty standing and a pale, washed-out appearance. To counteract this, some large producers use feed additives to create golden chicken parts.

Grain-fed beef cattle are crowded for several months in buildings with slatted floors. As the animals move around, the manure is forced through the floor slats. While this eliminates a lot of work for the farmer, the flooring is hard on the animals' hooves. Hormones are added to the grain to fatten up the animals as quickly as possible.

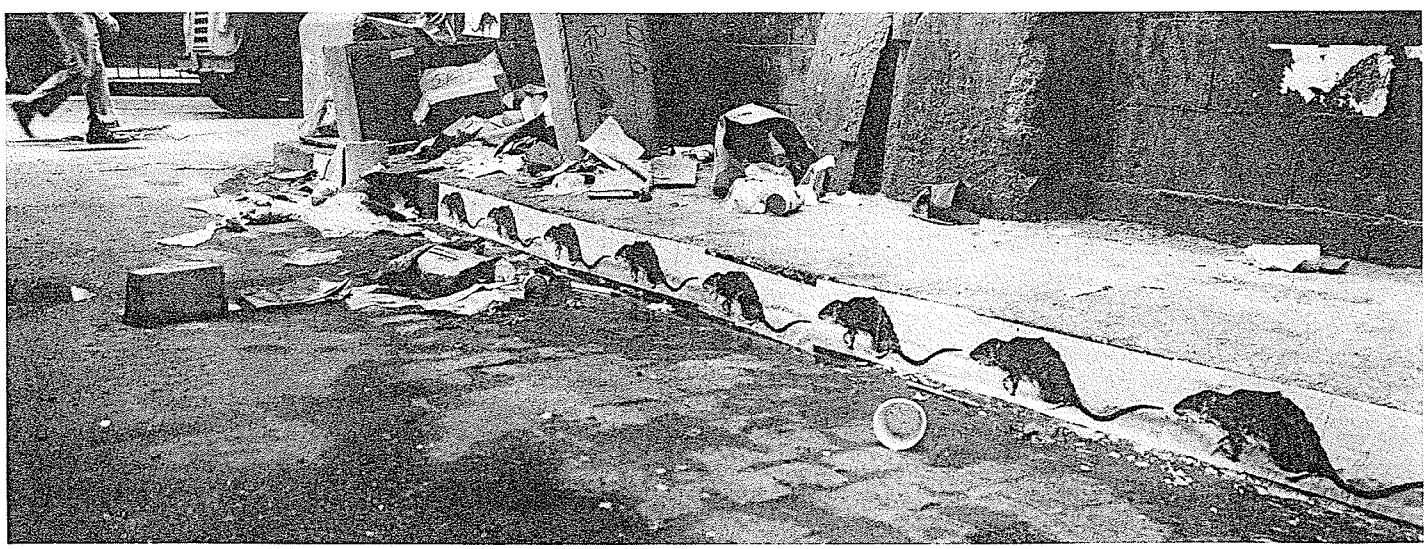
Increasing numbers of dairy cows are also confined in buildings with slatted floors. Feeding, milking and waste disposal are automated. When power failures occur, there is great distress among the animals.

The goal of calf production is to produce a large animal with tender, pale-pink flesh (the milk-white veal we see advertised). This is done by restraining the calves in stalls only slightly larger than their bodies to prevent the animals from using their muscles. They are fed only a high-fat artificial milk to keep the flesh pale. The deprivation of iron weakens the animals so much that as many as 10% of the calves die despite widespread use of antibiotics and other medications.

Hog farmers are also increasingly turning to factory farming and are raising their animals in confinement systems. Gestating sows are kept in stalls two by six feet. Often they are strapped to the floor while waiting for their piglets to be born to prevent them from crushing their offspring by turning around in the narrow space. The babies are removed two to three days after birth and placed in individual wire cages, where they are fed with automatic nipples. After that, they are sent to finishing pens for four to six months to be fattened up. Again, the severe overcrowding produces considerable stress: the pigs begin to bite their ears and tails. These stress symptoms are controlled with drugs and by cutting off the pigs' tails.

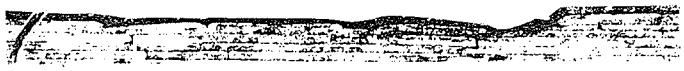
Who is to blame for these practices? How can they be altered? Ultimately, it is our buying and consuming habits which are to blame. The producers have devised these methods to provide us with what we want—a large quantity of animal food products at the lowest possible price. We can thus have an effect by changing our consuming habits. To begin with, let us eliminate prime veal and grain-fed beef from our diets. Let us eat meat every few days instead of every day. And finally, let us try to find animal food products which come from non-factory farming sources such as small farms or health food stores.

Shirley Fuerst is a NYC sculptor.



Christy Rupp. *The Rat Patrol* (making visible during the day something which is nocturnal). 1979. Christy Rupp is Director of City Wildlife Projects, which disseminates visual information about the city environment.

© 1981 Shirley Fuerst



When I go to visit my Mother, I rummage through her closets. My Mother "keeps" everything. One year, I found two small books, Texas school textbooks that I had read as a child. The one I use in these drawings is called *In Animal Land*, by Mabel Guinnip La Rue, printed in 1928. Mother is a schoolteacher; she first taught school in a seven-grade, one-room schoolhouse in "the country." She was the teacher and Daddy was the principal when they first married, and this book may have come from there, or from my own grade school at a much later date. In Texas, old books and classical books seem to stay around. (By classics, I mean Greek and Norse classics, a formal sense about learning, the country habit of capitalizing important words, the use of Greek and Roman given names like Augustus, etc.) This book has a particular flavor to me as an object. Its cover is ripped down to the cardboard, the pages are torn and passionately scribbled over by a child (or children) and big words are printed over the little typed words of the pages—words as physical objects. I remember the importance of the choice of tablets when we learned to write. I liked to use "Big Chief" tablets; their covers were pale red, like merthiolate, with red lines. My other favorite tablets had photos of Esther Williams, Dale Evans or Trigger on their covers. The pictures remind me of a game the girls played, "horses." We would whinny and run in a herd at school recess; this was strictly a girls' game.

But to return to the book, it has the physical presence I describe. I feel a sense of recognition—not memory, but pleasure and attachment—when I turn to specific stories in the book. It is one of these pictures and pages I chose to use in my drawings. The story has a particular appeal. It is called "Playmate." It is a retelling, with what I believe to be an American twist, of the Cinderella story.

I heard a lot of fairy tales as a child. I believe fairy tales are told mostly to girls and mostly interest girls for two reasons: they prepare us for the idea of a prince, and make him particularly desirable; they give us a sense of our own potential magical powers. For example, Snow White, Cinderella and Rapunzel are special girls who have gone unrecognized, the way many girl children feel. While they all get power in the end through a (worldly) alliance with a prince who saves them from poverty or stasis, he needs them because they are allied with magic earth-powers, and this is one way a girl can think of herself.

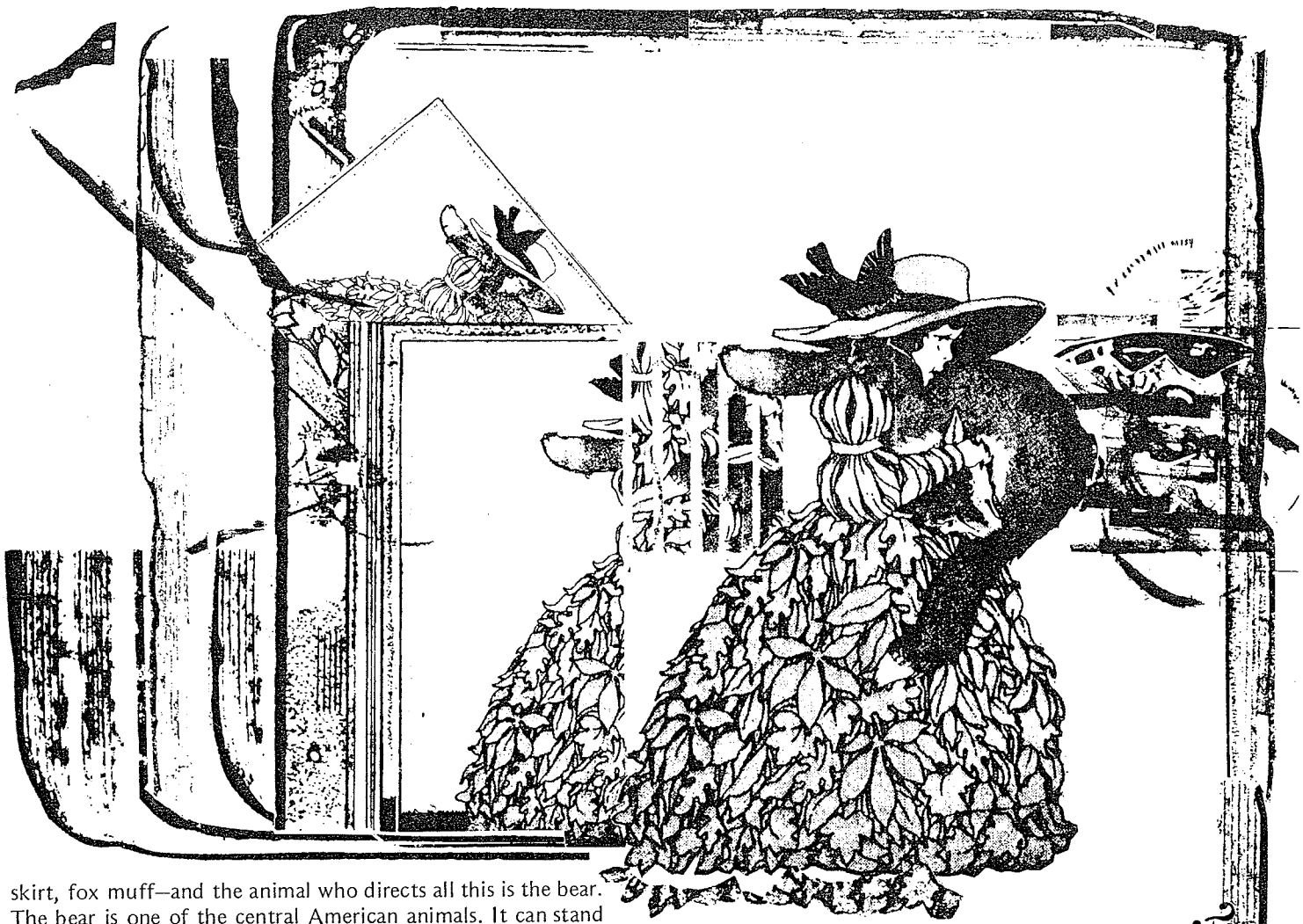
In my childhood, I played a lot of games with insects and animals which reinforced my feelings of "magical connection" to the earth. These games were encouraged by my Mother. Among them were: making homes for ladybugs, collecting brown bees, catching turtles, playing with doodle bugs (sticking a twig in a doodle bug hole until the doodle bug came out, a game played in Florida too), pulling bag worms off cedar bushes (pushing the end of the bag until the worm came out), giving water to baby horned toads in bottle caps. Mother played the role of releasing the captives during the night (although once she forgot to release the bees, and they died). Some of these games helped the adults (the bag worms were killing the cedar bushes); some of them made us feel like caretakers or domesticators of small wildlife. We also had games with caterpillars and I was allowed to dress my cats in doll clothes. These were games I played alone, or with my sister. As for boys' games, we knew of boys who pulled legs off June bugs, and boys also threw June bugs at girls. Both boys and girls played mud pies.

What seems American to me in this story—"Playmate"—is the woods it describes. The fairy tales I heard were mostly from Germany (Grimms). The German woods were destroyed a long time ago. Rachel Carson mentions in *Silent Spring* that almost all the present-day European forests are replanted ones. We still have some of our original forest. In rereading Cinderella, I realized how few of the grisly parts I had remembered. The details I had forgotten are all physical ones: Cinderella's magical powers come from her dead Mother's grave. She weeps for her, and this physical watering of the earth which contains her Mother allows the twig, from her Father, to grow into a magical tree. It's a complicated image—literally, Mother Earth coupling with Father Twig—and the daughter who hasn't forgotten her Mother gets clothing from this, the magical dresses she wears. The images are enclosing. Instead of the flight from the body that is learned in Christianity—Christ rises from the grave, Christ overcomes his body—the Mother stays in the ground; her intercession with the earth encloses her daughter in clothes that are elaborate, jewelled (rocks, metallic threads), and lead to sexual union. The clothes are also clues for the man (Prince). They define her for him. (He knows she is there, but he doesn't know who she is without her slipper.) It's almost a parody for the present—the object versus the person. Our clothes still "symbolize" us. (My Mother used to say she wanted me to "look like a lady," because she came out of a farm culture where the women did most of the hard work; women can move "up" in class and assume the class of their husbands.)

In the drawings, I reproduce a picture of little Playmate, clothed in her "magical" clothes, the living animals. This is a little girl who gets along well with the animals in the forest. Like Cinderella, she is poor, but her parents are poor too. They are a disenfranchised class. The early history of North America (for Europeans) romanticized the woodsman. These people cleared the forests; they planted crops. My own Grandfather had been a logger in Oklahoma. There's a photo of him driving the last mule team, his wagon filled with logs and the woods depleted, out of this particular piece of forest. When we were children, my sister and I played on that wagon; it had a huge wooden tongue. Now his farm is gone too, sold to ranchers, and the land is used for grazing. This is recent history, recent enough for there to be a guilty conscience. If the farmer is gone, you tell stories about the farmer; if the Indians are killed, you make statues of them on public buildings in big cities; if the buffalo is gone, he lives on a coin; if the animals are killed and the woods are cut down, they become toys and fairy stories. In this culture, a fairy story is another way of saying someone is lying. It is also a way to keep something that is recent enough to remember. In the cities, we dress as all the recent cultural myths—the worker, the cowboy, the railroad man, the Indian.

Playmate's dress is a wishful one. Because the animals love her, they clothe her with their living bodies—bird hat, leaf

 © 1981 Sabra Moore



skirt, fox muff—and the animal who directs all this is the bear. The bear is one of the central American animals. It can stand up like we can, and it dwarfs us. It lives where we cannot live, deep in caves—earth holes, holes inside mountains. Its habits give it fetal associations, as it returns to dormancy for a period in a womb/cave, then reemerges. We cannot do that (though some of us have "dens"). But we can take little bear-replicas to sleep with us during childhood, and part of their appropriateness may come from the bear's hibernation. (I had a brown bear named Jimmy whose yellow muzzle I kissed off as a child, leaving a distinguished straw mouth where the little red tongue had been.) The toy bear's name, "teddy bear," comes from the hunter and conservationist Teddy (Theodore) Roosevelt. Playmate's Bear may replace Cinderella's Mother in this tale. It shows how much we women have lost, in terms of association. In the old tale, life is hard, cruel even, and matter-of-fact. The Stepmother can counsel her natural daughters to cut off a heel or a toe, because "you won't need to walk" when "you marry the Prince." Cinderella is openly pushed out; if there is only room for two, the third won't have any. But the European coming here expected to reverse those rules; he/she wanted to wear the fox muff and have the fox too. ("We had to destroy the village to save it.") In this story, there is clothing without violence. In fact, we live from the earth. Vegetable fiber (clothes, cotton), animal skin (leather), meat, all food and clothing involve some being's sacrifice. Without that recognition, there can be no sense of obligation.

And there is little Playmate herself, hoping to get adopted by the Prince. She is a childish model for the more recent "Playmate" centerfold, herself a "rabbit," the staple food of bigger animals, who has the sort of amiability the animals exhibit in this story. Like the animals, she needs no additional

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clothing. To have no clothing means to have no protection.

Let us go backwards in our tale, symbolically. Mabel Gunnip La Rue rewrote "Cinderella" to make the tale more palpable. I learned to read with some of these books. Like all children, I approached the words physically, like actual things, and I marked and tore at the book. As an adult, I can reclaim the pictures and make changes in them, and as women, we can reclothe ourselves. In practical ways, we can keep a sense of reciprocity about what we take from the earth—animals need their own clothes; clothes made out of good cloth can be taken apart, resewn, given away or bought second-hand. We can reuse the traditional female skills—plant sharing and gardening, housekeeping, sewing, all the maintenance jobs women perform—on a broader public scale, to garden in the city or to stop nuclear power and the spread of pollutants. We can also use our "clothes," this time for a different end—not to gain admittance to the Prince's castle, making it bearable for him to live apart from Nature through our presence. We should stay outside and break up things.

Sabra Moore is an artist who exhibits at Atlantic Gallery, NYC. She was born and raised in East Texas.

Yvonne Mary Pepin, *Female Symbol*

TOWARDS A NEW LANGUAGE, CONSCIOUSNESS & POLITICAL THEORY: The Utopian Novels of Dorothy Bryant, Mary Staton and Marge Piercy

by Carol S. Pearson

"Let us step off the edge," Robin Morgan proposes in "Metaphysical Feminism."[1] To truly articulate the basic demands of the contemporary feminist movement, she suggests, we must learn to think and to use language in a new way, so that we are not limited by hidden, dualistic assumptions. Morgan's models are the 17th-century metaphysical poets, whose great achievement was a "peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination," a "unified sensibility" that preceded the Cartesian split between head and heart, mind and body, from which Western civilization is only beginning to recover. This unified consciousness expresses itself in metaphor, conceit or paradox, and is thus a suitable expression for the articulation of a truly radical feminist theory. Both Susan Griffin (in *Woman and Nature*) and Mary Daly (in *Gyn/Ecology*) combine theory with poetic language, beginning the sort of inquiry Morgan calls for. They are developing a mode of consciousness and an approach to political theory that does not artificially separate personal, political and metaphysical concerns, but presents them as various dimensions of a single, unified reality.

Many serious works of feminist theory also appear in the guise of fantasy literature. I focus here on three contemporary feminist utopian science fictions: Dorothy Bryant's *The Kin of Ata Are Waiting for You*, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* and Mary Staton's *From the Legend of Biel.*[2] These novels unselfconsciously express political theory in poetic, "metaphysical" language.

An advantage of fantasy literature for asking fundamental questions about the basic assumptions of our culture is its freedom from conventional ideas of reason or possibility. These novels posit social institutions and cultural modes based on major changes in consciousness, in language and in ways of understanding "reality." There is rather surprising agreement about the sort of societies women want. The feminist utopian ideal is a decentralized, cooperative anarchy, in which everyone has power over her or his own life. There are no laws and no taboos, except for cultural consensus against interference in others' lives. The basic unit of social organization resembles an extended family, but without biological basis. People do not live together because they are related, but because they choose each other. Bryant's Ata has roughly 144 people; Staton's Lir, about 100. Neither has a central government or big cities, but there are highly developed communication networks between social units and great opportunities for horizontal mobility. Within the microcosmic units, people know and cherish each other as in an ideal family; the good of the individual is not opposed to the good of others because no one profits at the expense of those they love.

The basic values of these societies are the growth and autonomy of the individual, yet individuals understand that no one is an island, that all personal growth occurs in the context of relationship with others. Luciente, in Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, explains that to the people of utopian Mattapoisett: "The gift is in growing to care, to connect, to cooperate. Everything we learn aims to make us feel strong in ourselves, connected to all living. At home." This sense of community includes the natural as well as the social world. "You might say our—you'd say religion?—ideas made us see ourselves as partners with water, air, birds, fish, trees." Decisions for collective action are made by town councils, chosen by lots and serving short rotating terms. The councils also include advocates of animals and the earth chosen by dream. Decisions are made *not* by majority rule forced on the minority, but by consensus (like the Quakers). Council members simply keep discussing until everyone agrees. This process, although time-consuming, is ultimately efficient because everyone will implement the plan. Under majority rule, the people of Mattapoisett explain, much energy is spent trying to thwart the majority's will.

Consensus is particularly important in anarchist societies so no one is forced to do anything. Those disagreeing with the collective will are expected to act according to their consciences. In Bryant's Ata, people are guided by their dreams, shared every morning, on the assumption that everyone's dreams are valuable and authentic. If someone dreams that the crops should be planted in a certain way and then crops fail, they question their interpretation of the dream, but not the dreamer. In Staton's Thoacdien civilization, a computer network gives advice on the most sensible solutions, but no one is compelled to take its advice. The Thoacdiens, moreover, communicate telepathically, and community consensus can be arrived at in minutes.

These societies are not materialistic. On Mattapoisett and Ata, resources are scarce, but scarcity is not considered very important. There are no differences in material wealth by race, sex or class, and no one needs much. Material goods lack importance when everyone has the same amount and when goods do not confer status. Production in itself is not a value, and attitudes toward work differ from those of capitalist society. Individuals and the collective group are on a journey of consciousness. People work because dependence on others' work is not conducive to one's own growth of consciousness, and also because the process of work itself is valuable. The people of Ata learn that a certain amount of physical labor improves their dreams, but to work past that point is "denagdeo"—does not produce good or enlightening dreams. Piercy's Luciente explains, "after we dumped the jobs telling people what to do, counting money and moving it about, making people do what they don't want or bashing them for doing what they want, we have lots of people to work. Kids work, old folks work, women and men work. . . . With most everybody at it part time, nobody breaks their back and grubs dawn to dusk."

Finally, truth, even reality itself, is seen as an ever-changing process. As Mary Daly explains in *Beyond God the Father*, God is not a noun, but a verb; people, nature and the cosmos are all God, individually and collectively evolving and changing. Thus the kin of Ata do not write down their sacred myths because writing freezes language. Even if language could adequately symbolize reality, that reality would have changed by the time it was written down. The one time they attempted a written history of their myths, it had a deadening effect on the culture; people stopped dreaming "high dreams," believing

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that the static myths were truth, and ultimately they stopped dreaming at all. "One by one they stopped the writing and the reading. They went back to the old way of telling the dreams in spoken words that rose like smoke and disappeared into the air to intermingle there, where there was room for an infinite number of dreams, which could change and grow and become closer to reality."

These cooperative, decentralized, ecological, process-oriented societies emerge from ideas that are in the air today. They are based on women's experience in patriarchal society,[3] and they also reflect modern psychology, the occult tradition, modern science, philosophical romanticism and, of course, the ideas and experience of the cooperative anarchist movement.

First, and foremost, people in these fictional cultures do not think dualistically. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in her pioneering utopian novel *Herland*, originally published in 1915, rejected the "theory of the essential opposition of good and evil; life to them was Growth; their pleasure was in growing and their duty also."[4] In Staton's utopian village of Lir, morality is based on the single question: "How do we manifest potential?" "A person's natural involvement" is assumed to be "in the self." Morality "is focused on the pleasurable discovery of the possibilities in selfness. It means doing, not possessing." In feminist utopias, the goal is not to rid the self of bad or inappropriate qualities or to transcend the self (as it often is in patriarchal societies); rather, it is to be whole. The denial of any qualities, Staton explains, leads to "dis-ease." The people of Lir have learned that "equilibrium is the natural state for persons, and ultimately inevitable, once the screen of systems has been removed." Systems are "Basic Tenets, Constitutions, Morals, Law, Belief, Ethics—any construct which presumes to decide what is appropriate human behavior. . . . Only slaves will maintain a system." As they do not deny parts of themselves, the people of Lir do not avoid disease; rather, their goal is "to stay in balance." Similarly, in Ata, they believe that ill health results from the "imbalance" that occurs when people deny their dreams.

The major focus of Bryant's and Staton's novels is the journey from a primitive, linear mode of consciousness, marked by internal repression and external oppression, to a more complex, multiple mode of thinking that results from the integration of thought and feeling, ratiocination and intuition, conscious and unconscious minds. Bryant describes the process of the integration in Jungian terms, as a confrontation with a series of shadow figures. Her central character is an initially very macho murderer. In Ata he dances with a series of repressed shadow-identities, culminating with the shadow of the repressed woman within him. When he lets her "dictate the dance," their integrated movements become "great sweeps of joy." Freed of possession by the caged and angry woman within, he has no more need to oppress women.

Staton's Biel has not been patriarchally socialized to repress parts of herself; nevertheless, she confronts the patriarchal Higgite band in a dream quest as a way of exploring her "primitive brain" and the "violence it contains." Rather than suppressing these elements, she acts them out in a dream psychodrama so that she can experience their consequences. Among other events, she experiences the death of the person

Mary Beth Edelson. *Up from the Earth*. 1979. Series of three photographs taken at midnight in Iceland. Mary Beth Edelson, object and ritual maker, published *Seven Cycles: Public Rituals* in 1980.

she most loves, her mentor, Mikkran. By "surviving the death of that which means most" in her life, she is "released . . . to love and be loved with sovereignty" and without dependence. There is no longer any need to possess or oppress anyone else. The balanced psyche can see others without projecting and can experience their full humanity. Children in Piercy's Mattapoisett, therefore, learn both "inknowing" and "outknowing," so they can "feel with other beings" and "catch," empathically and telepathically, without losing their own sovereignty. In Staton's and Bryant's novels the attainment of equilibrium results in telepathic abilities.

Language is modified to reflect thinking processes beyond dualistic, linear patterns. In the simplest of terms, people in these societies are never referred to by gender. In Mattapoisett, the pronoun "per" replaces "he" or "she" and words like "grasp" and "fasure" replace the dualistic "think" and "feel." All Atans are simply "kin." In all these societies naming is associated with the discovery of identity; it does not confer identity. Children, then, discover their true names in the process of individuation. The Thoacdiens explain that the "thorough and bloodless" revolution that created their culture occurred when language was transformed to recognize the impossibility of owning or controlling anything, and to affirm the power of human intelligence to "embrace all concepts and all reality." Before, "sickness was manifest in and encouraged —[in] language. Hidden deep in the sounds of their words was despair and fear—these ill people spoke of owning each other, of owning land, ideas, animals, everything."

A culture whose language and technology are based on principles of division fragments the human psyche, whereas one based on ideas of wholeness, flux and interrelations encourages psychological health. Consistent with contemporary scientific ideas about time, this consciousness recognizes that even past, present and future are not discrete, separate entities. In Staton's words, "Times past, present, and future are simultaneous. Space is nothing more than that through which time passes. Space is the wake of time." Staton's astronaut Howard Scott listens to a disk about "The Legend of Biel," who is a woman of a future civilization, at the same time he is affecting Biel's journey. He is simultaneously shaping and being shaped by the future. Similarly, Piercy's Connie "catches" telepathic communication from the future, and in this way "visits" the future. She visits two future worlds: one utopian anarchy and one distopian horror, which exaggerates the classist, sexist, dehumanizing aspect of our present system. She learns that she has been contacted because these two futures are at war, and the "past is a disputed area." Luciente, a woman from the utopian future, explains, "Those of your time who fought hard for change, often, they had myths that a revolution was inevitable. But nothing is! All things interlock. We are only one possible future. . . . Yours is a crux-time. Alternate universes co-exist. Probabilities clash and possibilities wink out forever." Connie's trip to the future gives her hope, courage and new concepts of human possibilities, and thus transforms the way she thinks and acts. She decides that she must be a guerrilla warrior for Mattapoisett, and by killing the doctors who are engaging in experiments with mind control which could lead to a distopian world, she alters the future.

To time-travelers used to thinking in terms of linear progress, these societies even appear primitive or anachronistic. Ata is so simple that it takes the protagonist months to discover that he is not living with primitive people. When Connie first visits Mattapoisett, she is disappointed at seeing small, old-fashioned buildings and cows grazing, and asks, "You sure we went in the right direction? into the future?" In Joanna Russ's *The Female Man*, the narrator comments that "Whileaway is so pastoral that at times one wonders whether the ultimate sophistication may not take us all back to a kind of pre-Paleolithic dawn age, a garden without any artifacts except for what we would call miracles."[5]

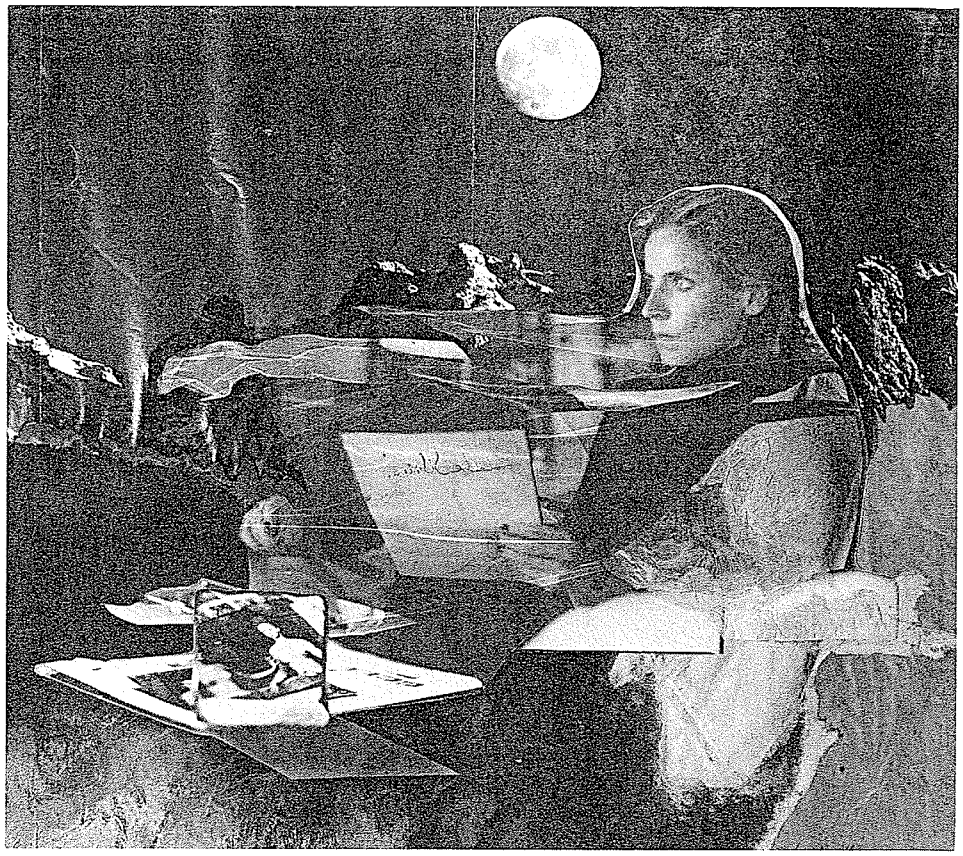
Staton explains that the Thoacdien revolution began with faith that "one human brain can embrace even creation itself." In our culture we experience the expanded consciousness this requires only in mystic and visionary moments. Thus journeys to the future in Staton's and Bryant's works are described in mystical terms. These heroes are propelled into the future by their own yearnings. Staton describes Howard Scott as standing "before an invisible but tangible barrier—his time on one side, and an entire new civilization on the other. Willingness to change was the key to passage through."

The rebirth or conversion experience occurs after a dark night of soul in which the individual realizes that in leaving the old self and old world behind, she or he loses nothing of value. Bryant's journeyer and Staton's Scott are both eminently successful men of their time, disgusted with their bankrupt heritages. Piercy's Connie rids herself of any emotional allegiance to her time because as a poor Chicana and mental patient, she is one of society's victims. Had the culture left her anything—self-respect or merely someone to love—she "would have obeyed" and been as quiet and passive as she was socialized to be. She became a revolutionary because, "I have nothing."

After the emptiness and despair comes rebirth and this rebirth leads to a mystic vision of oneness. Howard Scott is literally reborn an infant in the new society. Connie gives her life for Mattapoisett, but it is the daughter she sees as herself reborn who will live the utopian future: "People of the rainbow with its end fixed in earth," she says, "I give her to you!" Bryant's hero, on trial for his life, fearing that Ata was only a hallucination, understands that the only way to find out is to believe, and to act on that belief. With a laugh, he makes a leap of faith, confessing in court that he committed the murder. There is a silence "and then there was light. Indescribably warm, glowing light. . . . I was full and whole. I was part of the light and all other things that shone in and with the light. All were one. And Whole." In Staton's novel, when Biel and Howard Scott dance in neutral time before separation, they decide to step off the edge, "turn around and try to go" to "the light."

To the dualistically minded, it might appear that these works, informed by a spiritual or romantic vision of oneness, cannot also be political. Yet Bryant's Augustine, who lived so well tuned to her dreams that a tree lit up when she merely imagined it, also made songs "in the front of protest against injustice, and many marched to her song." Piercy credits the feminist movement and liberation movements in general with the creation of Mattapoisett, and notes that change occurred because of "all the people who changed how people brought food, raised children, went to school. . . . Who made new unions, withheld rent, refused to go to wars, wrote and educated and made speeches."

The point is, of course, that through literary forms, these theorists have found a way to avoid the dualistic assumptions that limit and divide even feminist debate. For example—the way we have learned to phrase questions: Should women work within the system to change it *or*, turning our backs to it, create alternative systems? To change society, is it more crucial to change institutions *or* to change culture and consciousness? Is class *or* gender the root of oppression? Are men and women essentially different *or* similar? Is the cause of women's oppression in biology *or* in culture? Should we adopt



Sarah Schumann. *Collage*. 1977. Sarah Schumann, a Berlin artist, has worked with feminist groups in Europe since 1971.

a power analysis *or* a cultural analysis? Does feminist spirituality siphon off energy from political action?

The very wording prevents us from formulating more useful questions, such as: How can we be effective within traditional institutions *and* outside them? How can we conceptualize the complex interactions between institutions and consciousness? Or how can we weave theories that include understanding the variations of women's constant oppression, and the modes of power historically or presently available to us?

As we learn to respect individuals and the processes of their (and our) growth, it often becomes apparent that perspectives apparently in opposition are true at different levels of truth—or at different points in an individual's experience: for instance, Robin Morgan's example of the apparent irreconcilability of general male oppression and her love for her husband and son—her politics and her personal feelings. Beyond such dualisms is a paradox. Men oppress women, the capitalist class oppresses the proletariat, *and* we are all kin. The question is not which understanding to choose, but how to develop theories and strategies which are adequate to the paradox. My own belief is that each century's political theory follows on the heels of the last century's science. The concepts of modern physics employed in these novels provide models for nondualistic questioning; the mathematicians move from "real" numbers to "imaginary" ones. Beyond the concept of realism versus "unrealistic" fantasy is a recognition of alternative reality systems. The mode of analysis in the works discussed here is based on the single question: What if? In modern physics, the breakthrough occurred when Einstein hypothesized a new "imaginary" view of the universe. We test this new understanding by acting as if it were real.

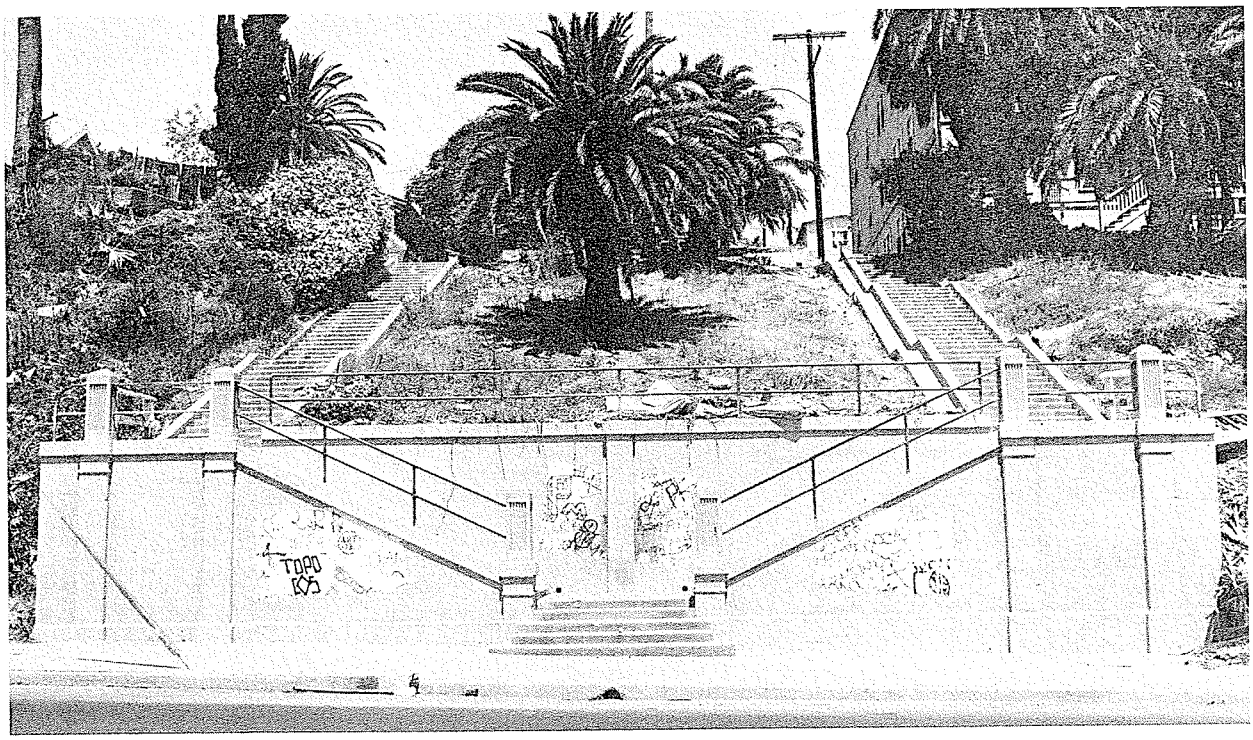
In searching for the ultimate building blocks of subatomic matter, scientists have discovered that when they expect them to act like waves, they do. When they expect particles, they get particles. As a result, they have been forced to move away from the concept of scientist as "objective observer" to the dynamic model of researcher as "participant."[6] If the universe is ultimately composed only of waves of probability, if time is relative and if space and time are a continuum, then it is possible that alternative futures and pasts do exist simultaneously with the present. In that case, we may want to rethink our assumption that we can best understand how to create an egalitarian world only by analyzing the historical roots of women's oppression. We may also be able to alter society by having theories about it. Perhaps to articulate feminist theory is not merely to describe and explain "reality," but to engage in an interrelationship with the phenomenon we seek to understand, which alters both the theorist and the "reality" studied. The very difficulty of developing a political theory that reflects these understandings makes the utopian novels of writers like Bryant, Piercy and Staton important to the movement. They provide us with the conceptual tools to move on to new levels of analysis and political action.

1. Robin Morgin, "Metaphysical Feminism," *Going Too Far*: *The Personal Chronicle of a Feminist* (New York: Random House, 1977), pp. 290-295.
2. Dorothy Bryant, *The Kin of Ata Are Waiting for You* (New York: Random House, 1976); Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (New York: Knopf, 1976); and Mary Staton, *From the Legend of Biel* (New York: Ace, 1975).
3. See Carol Pearson, "Women's Fantasies and Feminist Utopias," *Frontiers*, vol. 2, no. 3 (Fall 1977), pp. 50-61.
4. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*, serialized in *Forerunner*, vol. 6 (1915); reprinted by Pantheon (New York, 1980).
5. Joanna Russ, *The Female Man* (New York: Avon, 1974), p. 14.
6. This new mode of analysis would also keep in mind the basis of interrelatedness of the universe. Fritjof Capra explains in *The Tao of Physics* (New York: Bantam, 1977, p. 157) that as we penetrate into matter, nature does not show us any isolated "basic building blocks," but rather appears as a complicated web of relations between the various parts of the whole. These relations always include the observer in an essential way.

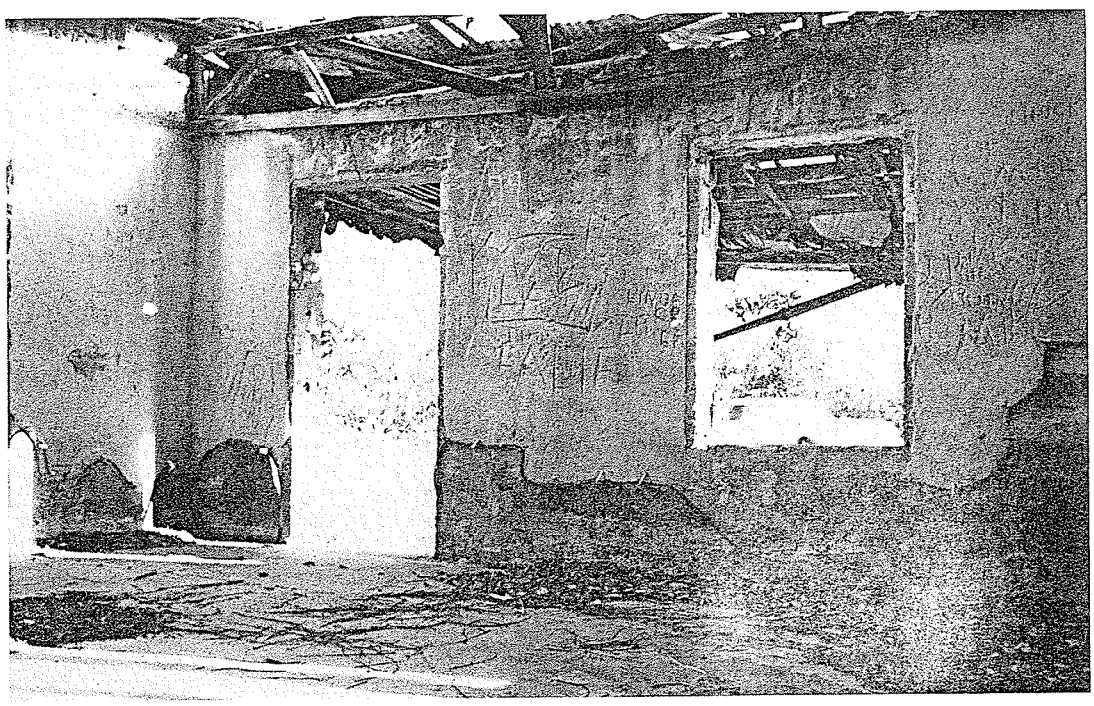
Carol S. Pearson, Associate Professor in Women's Studies at the University of Maryland, has co-authored two books with Katherine Pope.

Yvonne Mary Pepin is Arts Administrator at the Mendocino Art Center.

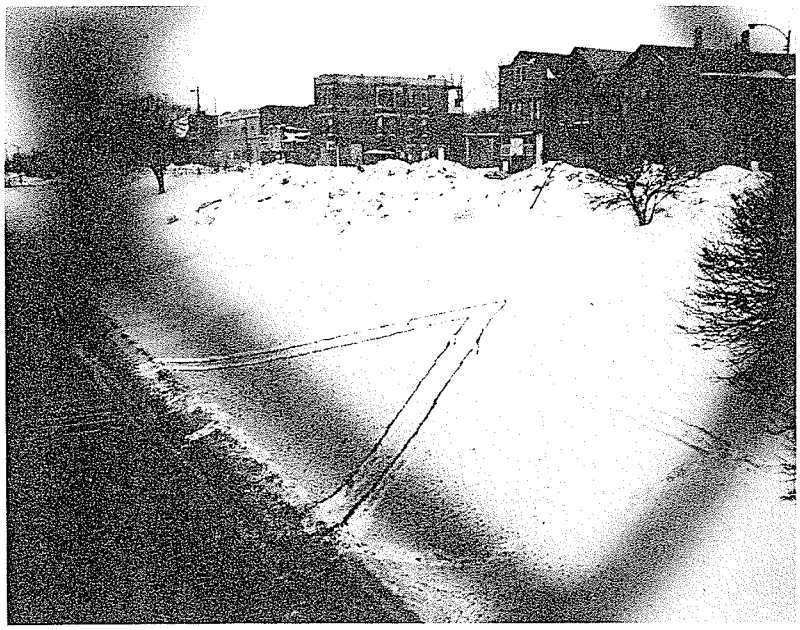
Environmental Sculpture



Judy Simonian. *Wall Exposure No. 1.* Los Angeles 1978. Sand-blasted concrete retaining wall. 60' x 15' (photo: Grant Rusk). "I sand-blasted the walls to the original construction material. What remains acts as a document to the life span of the building. I hold my artmaking devices up against the randomness of deterioration and decay. My markings attempt to assert themselves against something tougher, more primitive and vital—an art of survival."

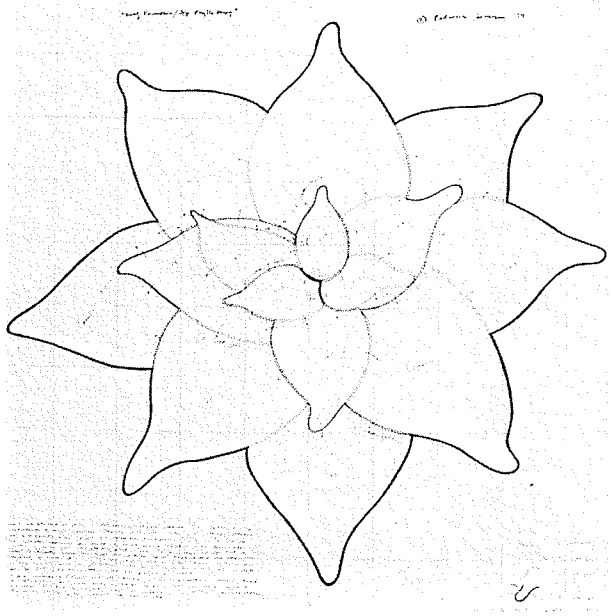


Cynthia Coulter. *Untitled.* 1979. Paper, sticks, wax at plaster line. 25' x 25'. "The inside of this abandoned house has been plastered with mortar and Oklahoma red clay. I followed and defined the bottom line of the plaster around the four walls with black paper tape which was held in place by bits of scrap sticks glued together with wax. The years of graffiti, mixed with the natural eroding environment, made this a rich and complex enclosure."

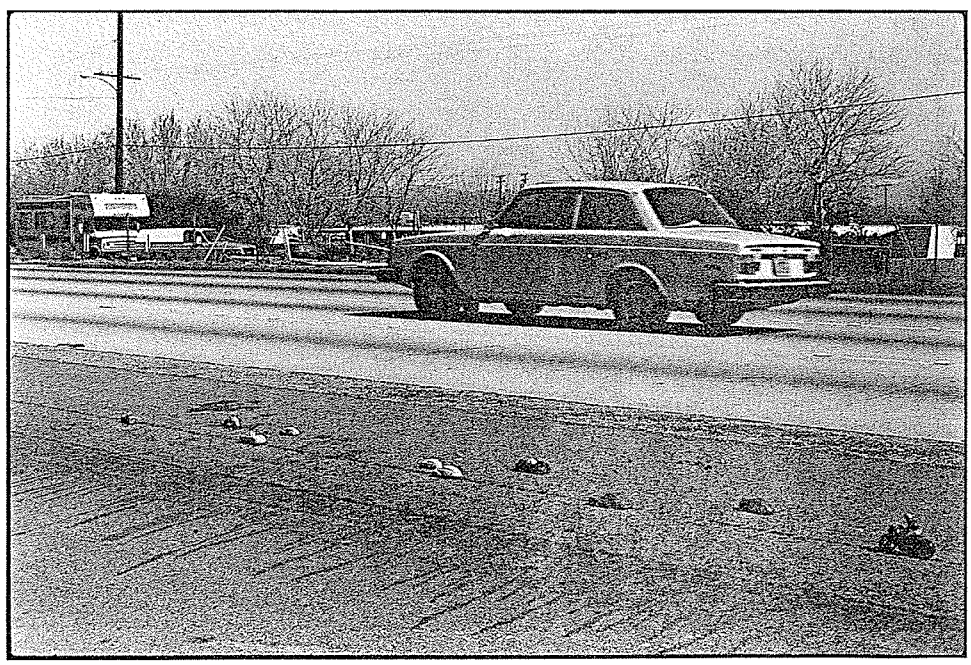


Left: Jan Sullivan. *Good Prospects*. Chicago 1979. Blue and yellow powdered pigment in snow. 75' x 100'. "My work is highly transient public art. The pieces are not meant to be physically eternal, but must succumb to the environment."

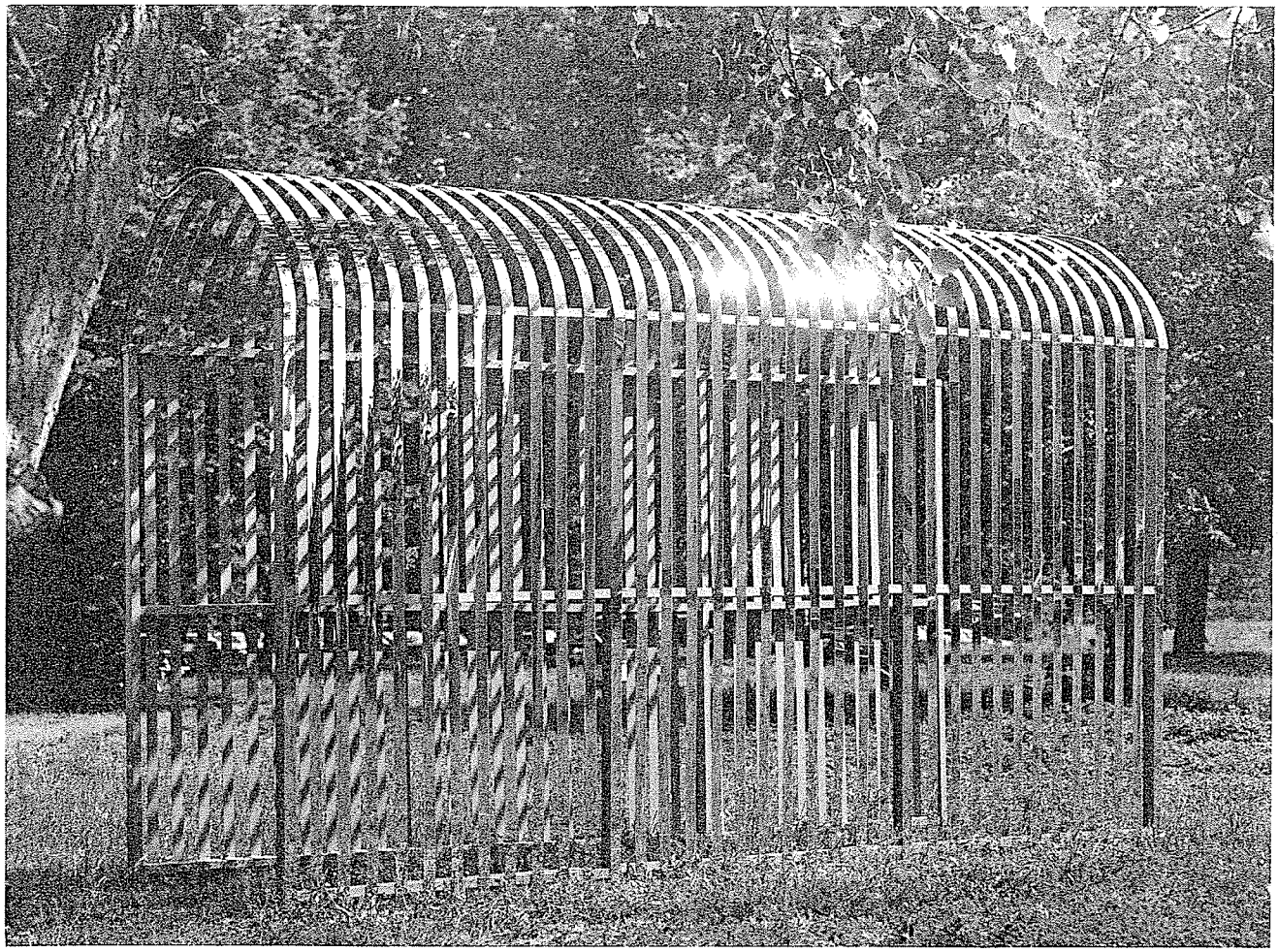
Maren Hassinger. *Forest*. 1980. Steel cable. 28' x 28' x 6' (photo: Nicki McNeil). "I use wire rope in my work—a product of our advanced industrial technology, the same technology which is fast making us extinct. Yet my work has an organic presence in spite of the origins of the material. I think that in some way all my work expresses a nostalgia for a lost natural space, a perfection that is past."



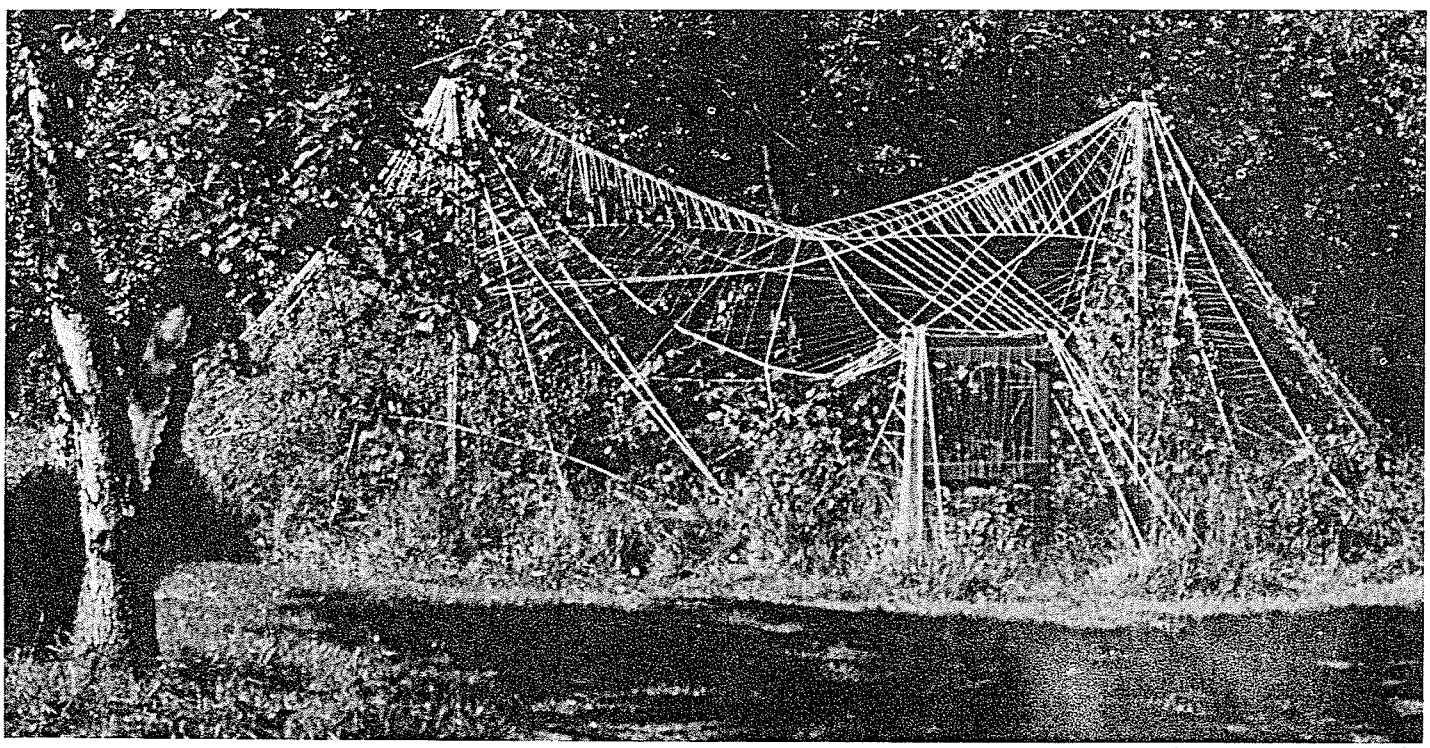
Patricia Johanson. *Leaf Fountain/ 3/8 Phyllotaxy*. 1974. Ink and charcoal. 30" x 30" (photo: Eric Pollitzer). "Alberti, Leonardo and Palladio were all interested in 'divine proportions' variously based on math, the human body and musical harmony. This is a similar effort to concretize the 'ideal' by translating numerical relationships into falling water."



Ann Preston. *Toy Cars*. 1980. "This is the purest piece I have done."

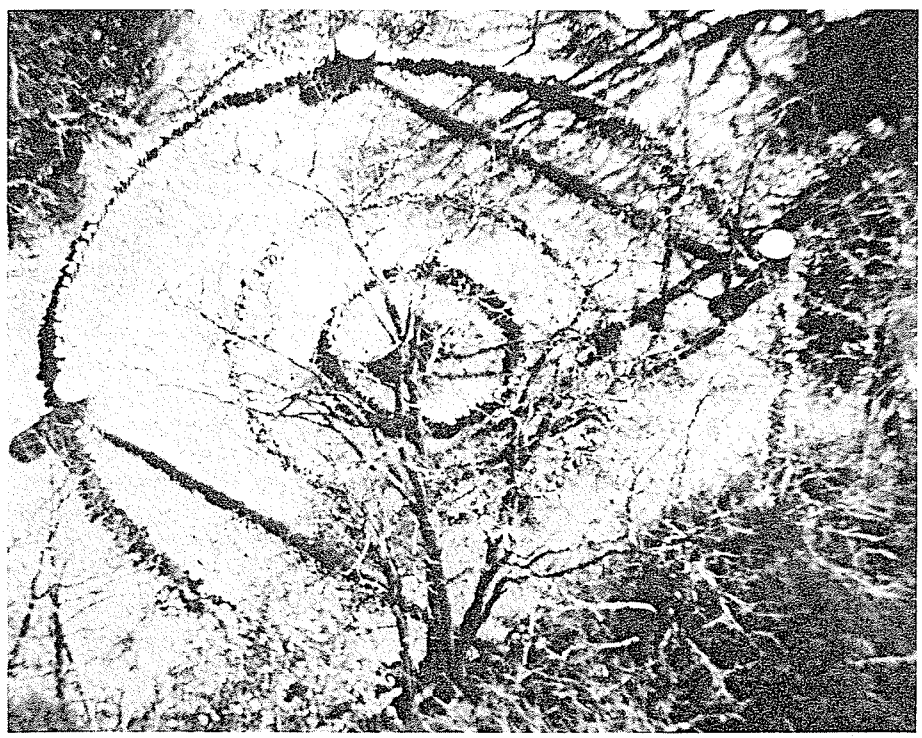


Merle Temkin. *Walk-Through*. Wards Island, NY, 1981. Flexible plastic mirror strips, wood and metal frame. 6' x 15' x 10' (photo: Scott Hyde). "This piece made of mirror strips is built across a path in the grass. One sees the reflected landscape in the mirrors and the actual landscape in the narrow spaces between the mirrors. I like the confusion that results while trying to distinguish between the two . . ."



Audrey Hemenway. *Garden Web*. 1977-78. Synthetic fibers, cedar posts. 25' x 45' x 12'. "The link between light, air, growth and environmental sculpture is fundamental. I needed a fence for my vegetable garden and this piece I built not only looks good, it provides protection and support for the best damned garden in Ulster County."

Christine Burr Correa. *Cumulative Piece.* 1978-79. Sticks. 6' x 10' x 15'. "My original reason for going into the woods was to make a room away from the house for the times when I felt confined, dull and crowded by my family. During the seasons of moving sticks, I have had the opportunity to experience nature obliquely. There is a spirit from this place which I carry around with me always and my determination to share this sensation with others is my driving force now."



Dr. Margaret K. Hicks. *Hicks' Mandala.* Corsicana, Texas, 1974. Natural materials. 32' diameter. "Based on the mandala symbol which has been used in all cultures, this work was constructed as a visualization of my philosophy—that of a unity of all things, people, space and time. The earth will remain until humans or the elements of nature change it. One day it will not be apparent that the work ever existed."

Christine Burr Correa, an artist/wife/mother, lives on Westport Island, Maine.

Cynthia Coulter lives in Norman, Oklahoma, and works in three dimensions.

Maren Hassinger, a Los Angeles artist, recently did an installation of "angry bushes" for the LA County Museum of Art. She received an NEA Artists Fellowship in 1980.

Audrey Hemenway: born in Brooklyn, 1930, crying, "No! I want light, air and grace!"

Dr. Margaret K. Hicks, a Texas artist, "lives her art."

Patricia Johanson is an artist and architect who draws inspiration from the natural world.

Ann Preston is a Los-Angeles-based artist working with contextual issues.

Judy Simonian lives in Los Angeles and has been doing site work around the country.

Jan Sullivan is an environmental sculptor from Chicago.

Merle Temkin, a NYC sculptor, recently did a large mirror project at Artpark.

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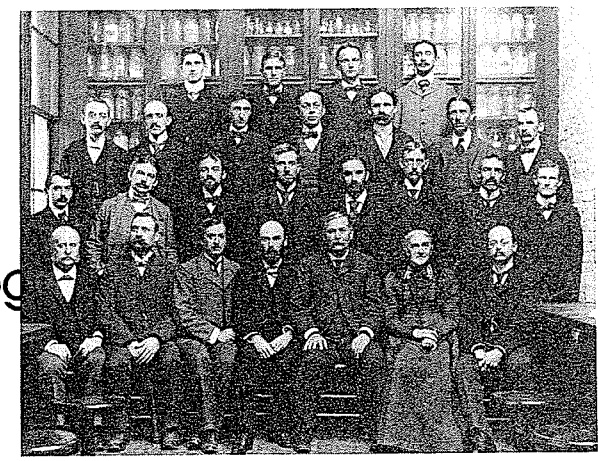

Ellen Swallow Richards, first MIT woman graduate and teacher, with colleagues. She is credited with developing the concept and coining the word "ecology."

ORGANIZATIONS

Association of American Women in Science, 1346 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 1122, Washington, DC 20036.
Beauty Without Cruelty, 175 W. 12th St., NY, NY 10017.
Clarke Fork Confluence of Feminist Environmentalists, 315 S. 4th St., Missoula, MT 59801.
Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA), 17 Murray St., NY, NY 10007.
Committee to End Sterilization Abuse (CESA), PO Box A244, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10003.
Consumer Action Now, 355 Lexington Ave., NY, NY 10017.
Council on Environmental Alternatives, 355 Lexington Ave., NY, NY 10017.
Environmental Action, 1346 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 731, Washington, DC 20036.
Exchange Project, 329 E. 52nd St., NY, NY 10022.
Feminist Resources on Energy and Ecology (FREE), PO Box 6098, Teall Station, Syracuse, NY 11317.
Infant Formula Action Coalition (INFACT), 1701 University Ave. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.
National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), 825 15th St. NW, Washington, DC 20005.
New Alchemy Institute, 237 Hatchville Rd., East Falmouth, MA 02536.
North East Women's Alliance Against Nuclear Weapons (NEW Alliance), 8 Chapin Pl., Hartford, CT 06114.
Women and Life on Earth, c/o Butterfly Arts, Inc., 25 Main St., PO Box 754, Northampton, MA 01061.
Women and Life on Earth (London), 82 Lady Margaret Rd., London N19-5EU, England.
Women and Technology Network, Women's Resource Center, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812.
Women in Solar Energy (WISE), Box 778, Brattleboro, VT 05301.
Women in the Wilderness Network, Bldg. 312, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123.
Women of All Red Nations (WARN), PO Box 2508, Rapid City, SD 57709.
Women's Health Forum, 175 5th Ave., NY, NY 10010.
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1213 Race St., Philadelphia, PA 19107.
Women's Occupational Health Resource Center, American Health Foundation, 320 E. 43rd St., NY, NY 10017.
Women's World, PO Box 702, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

AN OPINION:

I was not convinced by Pat Califia's article that S/M is a *consensual* affair. Neither was I convinced that it *isn't* sexist, *isn't* fetishistic, *isn't* mocking the oppressed; that it *isn't* violence, *isn't* dominance and submission, isn't misogyny—and why is *speaking out* against this practice called MORALISTIC????

I tried *very* hard to understand. Really I did. I read Pat's article over and over again. I do not understand why she contradicts herself over certain things. Quote: "An essential part of the oppression of women is *control* over *sexual* ideology, mythology and behavior." Surely, PORNOGRAPHY (*images* of us, through *male*-defined ways of "sex," *media* images of *us*, etc.)—surely this *controls us*—why did PC dispute this later on in her piece? (Re: anti-porn women.)

I found the patronizing tone of PC's views of *WLM* very disturbing. Why is she so sweeping in her statements about FEMINISTS? And why is it "ROMANTIC" to want "gentle" sex? I don't feel "SENTIMENTAL" about wanting to *make love* to a woman (rather than "dress up" in leather gear/fist-fuck/etc.). I feel *loving*—I also feel *equal*. Pat states she doesn't enjoy oral sex UNLESS *she's* receiving it: what exactly justifies a claim that a woman who acts as a SLAVE, for god's sake, is in a "relationship"? Playing *games*, more like. *Men have been playing this game for centuries.* (I think of my mother, *beaten up* for 10 years of her *"marriage,"* I think of *myself*, hit by and raped once by a man, kicked around, generally fucked up by men. Never again.) Women will *not* be co-opted by other women into practicing S/M by claims that it is a kind of ULTIMATE sexual "freedom."

I will *not* be DECEIVED into believing I am *not* making the most of my sexual capabilities.

How MORE traditional, exploitative can you get? How more patriarchal can we THINK?

Dolores
A Woman's Place, England

Dear Women Heretics:

I was really glad to see Sandra Whisler's "The Celibacy Letters" in the most recent *Heresies*. Celibacy has been a neglected topic in the feminist community and, as a result, many celibate women have felt isolated, if not freaks. Dana Densmore's 1968 essay "On Celibacy" was widely anthologized, but seems to have had little long-term influence. The *only* other article on celibacy I've seen before Whisler's is by Susan Yarbrough; it appeared in *Sinister Wisdom* No. 11. The feminist community *must* accept celibacy as an honorable alternative.

In sisterhood,
Eleanor Schwartz

Dear Heresies:

I found your Sex Issue enlightening and entertaining. I was provoked to reconsider many of my prejudices and at times moved almost to tears. I also felt a bit left out, for among the many points of view represented, I was unable to find one with which I could identify wholeheartedly. It's hard for me to believe that there are no others who share my situation, and I wonder why we were not proportionately represented. Aren't there as many unintentionally celibate women in New York as there are S/M enthusiasts and radical feminist lesbians?

I know it's an unpopular situation, one which women are unwilling to admit to. This is the issue which I would like to address: Why, in 1981, are celibates (asexuals) the only ones left in the closet? No self-respecting gay would be left cowering in the darkness, so why are we so embarrassed and ashamed?

Watching the Gay Pride parade march up Fifth Avenue, I felt jealousy and a hunger for the unashamed joyful solidarity and open celebration of self that these people felt. They were proclaiming to the world that they were sexual persons, and proud of it. The fact that they happened to be *homo*-sexual persons seemed to be secondary.

I realize why I was envying them. It has to do with the high value our society places on sexuality, whatever its expression. A person with a sexual partner (or one temporarily between partners, but with a proven ability to find them) is seen as a normal, healthy, fulfilled human being, while the lack of a sexual partner, and especially the lack of a history of sexual partners, is seen as a negativity, a lack, an expression of the incompleteness of a human being.

It took me several years of feeling bad about myself to begin asking why the lack of a lover, boyfriend or girlfriend, was defined as a negative thing. Why did I see the difference between myself, who always walked alone, and those who walked arm in arm as a reflection of some inadequacy in myself? Why did I endlessly go down the list to find the inadequacy: was it lack of beauty (no), lack of intelligence (no), lack of charm or initiative (no), shyness (no) . . . ?

Why, then, the feeling of inadequacy, of otherness? Its sources were all around me, in the messages I had been receiving since childhood from my family, from my teachers, from TV, movies, books and ads. The messages are somewhat jumbled and confused, but they say something like this: Any adult woman (to be a *real* woman) needs a lover to complete her life . . . so she can take vacations for two to exotic places and eat in good restaurants . . . so she can have her beauty and sexuality confirmed . . . so she can have diamonds and fur coats, or whatever her lover can afford to give her . . . so she can have someone's hand to hold, to spend holidays and share memories with, to give her children. She ought to have the ability to attract a good many lovers so she can pick the right one. To help her do this she must fit society's definition of a beautiful and sexy woman (or, the modern feminist version of this clause: she must feel she is beautiful and sexy regardless of whether or not she fits the stereotypes of beauty and sexiness). Perfume, cosmetics and clothes help. It's OK and fun to play around a lot and not marry for a long time,

Drawing by Marilyn Fox, a NYC artist.

but the point is to always be involved with, or in search of, a lover.

(The above is written from a heterosexual point of view, since that is where my inclinations lie, but I suspect the messages could apply to homosexuals as well with only a few changes.)

It would be a lot easier to refute these messages, to say, "I am what I am and there's nothing wrong with it," if we asexuals had the help of a support group such as lesbians and gay men have. The problem is that asexuals don't organize to support each other; most of us are ashamed to admit our situation even to close friends, let alone march up Fifth Avenue shouting it to the world. And yet how much more we need this support, how good it would be if we could have it!

Most of my friends are asexuals. I didn't know this when I met them, and it never had any bearing on our friendships. I didn't know until I got very close to them, which took a long time. I can quickly name at least six friends without sexual partners, and if I think a few minutes I can name even more. Can you? Couldn't most people?

Being without sexual involvement while living in this society in this time is an unavoidably depressing way of life, unless this situation is freely chosen, which is not the case for me or my friends. For me, the thing that helps most is talking it out with them and realizing that others feel like me. If more of us could make contact with each other, it would help immeasurably in finding ways to deal with the problems in our lives. These problems are so complex and varied, I could write a book about them, for I know them by heart. They range from naturally uninhibited sexual desire perpetually unfulfilled (and how sexual desire is intertwined with all the other aspects of life), to how to go out gracefully alone on Saturday night and have a good time without feeling guilty about dressing up, to the strange irrational paroxysms of jealousy when everyone around you seems to be holding hands.

Honest discussion might help us to define the fulfilling aspects of our lives—our careers, goals, talents—and to concentrate on them. It could help us to see our friends not as substitute lovers/families but as the most important sources of strength in our lives, sources we are often afraid to tap because of the fear that *their* primary concern should be their lovers.

As long as people are ashamed of their inability to attract lovers and form sexual relationships, an honest sharing of feelings and experiences is impossible. If we can attack these feelings of shame at their roots and get rid of them, then I believe we will see that there are just as many asexuals in the world as heterosexuals and homosexuals, that our lifestyle, while not our choice, is just as real and valid, and that we deserve a fair and equal representation.

Catherine Kobaly

Dear Editors,

Heresies has delighted me since its inception. HOWEVER . . . I found the issue on SEX not so much dull and boring, which it was, as dirty and pornographic. It didn't make me laugh either, as most pictures of naked MEN do.

In fact the photography made me sad. Sad, because it was no better than the worst of men's pornography. Sad, because it emphasized the *fantasies of men as they think women should feel* about sex.

I also felt embarrassed and ashamed that we have come so far limited by the decisions of men, and have, still, so terribly far to go. The limitation of our sexual needs as compared to men's uncontrollable readiness was so misinterpreted and confused as to lead me to think that perhaps prepubescent children had written most of it.

I had thought *Heresies* would have been among the first to be aware of the false interpretation society (male-oriented naturally) gives our sexual needs. Unfortunately the issue reflected only the misunderstood image that has been put on us.

Surely *Heresies* is aware of the overemphasis on sex in our media. In art, literature, theatre, dance and even music, pulsing at us with sexual overtones as well as verbal vulgar isms, 48 hours a day we are sold a bill of goods.

I thought the issue in bad taste. I thought it careless to publish the majority of the articles with no careful scrutiny of women's values and sensibilities. They should have been thoroughly explored before publication. They surely exist: beautiful, spiritual, sensual, and totally different from men's.

I can only hope that some day women will learn that they have been conned into forgetting the awareness of their *own very special oestrus.* Some tribes in Africa today, uninfluenced by ads from television, magazines, radio, billboards—you name it—still refuse admission to men except at the special time of their particular need. *Once a year.* (Admittedly once a year is infrequent, considering our menstrual cycle, which is altering to far longer periods in our evolutionary process.) Another tribe in Mexico carries the same tradition in their matriarchal society. These women welcome men when there is a real need to propagate.

I felt that *Heresies'* SEX ISSUE catered to the sex-oholic, who, like the food-oholic, follows the road of least resistance, which ultimately is a crime against the mind, to say nothing of the visual mess (and overpopulation) it creates.

I hope *Heresies* will not publish another issue so thoughtlessly. Let there please be no more issues that are as denigrating to women as this one with its sadly false issues, false truths, and its transvestite macho-male voice coming out of beautiful women.

J.D. Unwin says in *Sex and Culture*: "Any human society is free to choose either to display great energy or to enjoy sexual freedom—the evidence is that it cannot do both."

You may have guessed by now that I did not enjoy the sex issue. I do enjoy sex. Not, however, encrusted with festering scabs of male lies.

Laura Laki

Please send us more letters. We want to hear your reactions and to print them, and thus generate an ongoing dialogue.

UPCOMING ISSUES

No. 14: Women's Groups—Time to Raise Hell! What actions/projects/plans are you working on? Why? What are your suggestions for organizing, mobilizing, grasping the public imagination? We're looking for action-oriented material from progressive political and cultural groups all over the world. Please contact us NOW.

No. 15: Racism Is the Issue: What is racism to you—personally/analytically? What are its historical, economic, institutional, media, mythic roots? Where does it get tracked (homes, bedrooms, workplaces)? How is it used (e.g., cultural imperialism)? If it isn't racism, what is it—light/dark, nappy/straight, etc.? How does racism affect women's relationships? And how can we unlearn it from both sides? Deadline: Nov. 1981.

Guidelines for Contributors. Each issue of HERESIES has a specific theme and all material submitted should relate to that theme. Manuscripts should be typed double-spaced and submitted in duplicate. Visual material should be submitted in the form of a slide, xerox or photograph. We will *not* be responsible for original art. All material *must* be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope for it to be returned. We do not publish reviews or monographs on contemporary women. We do not commission articles and cannot guarantee acceptance of submitted material. HERESIES pays a small fee for published material.

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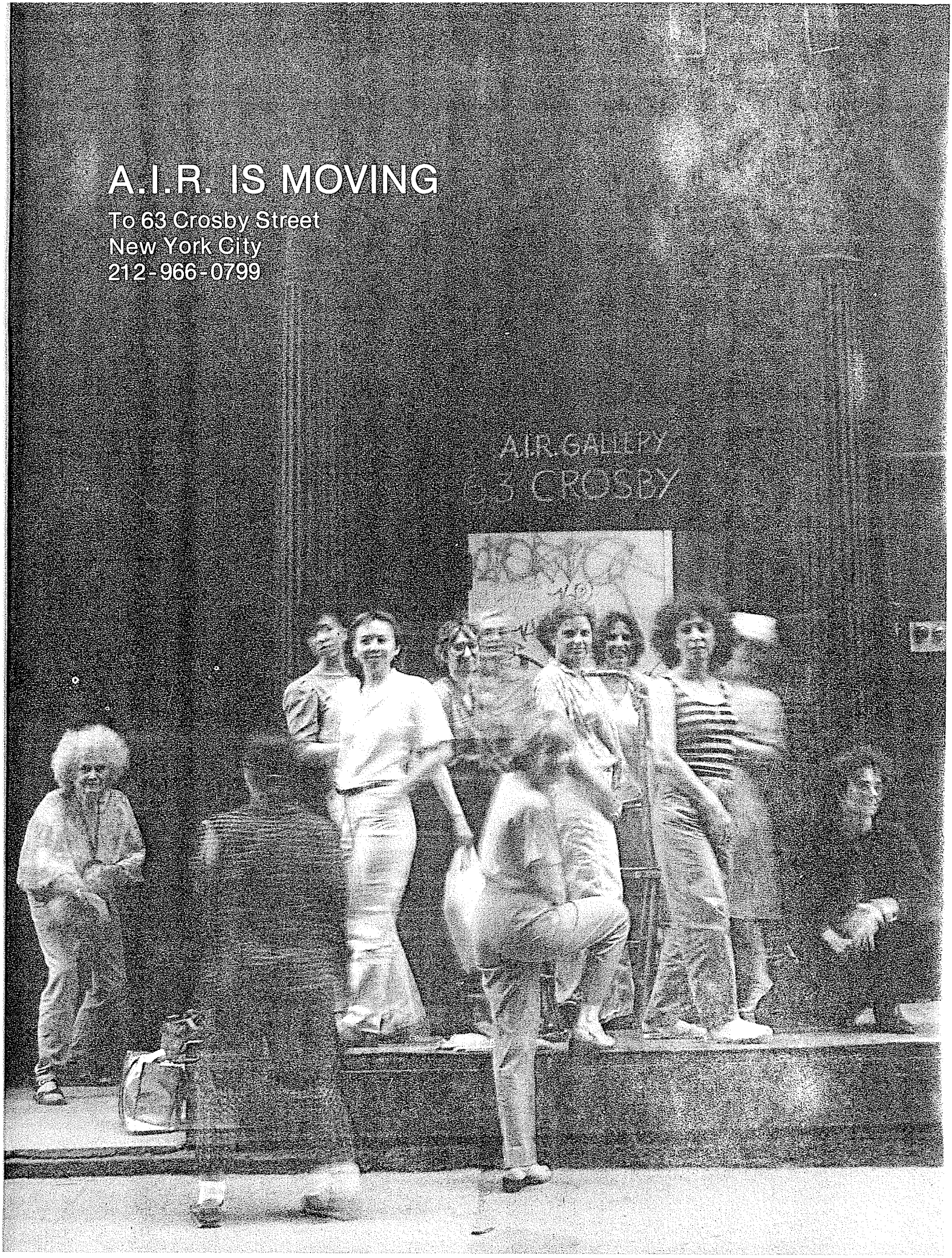

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JOAN BRADERMAN

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HERESIES is an idea-oriented journal devoted to the examination of art and politics from a feminist perspective. We believe that what is commonly called art can have a political impact, and that in the making of art and of all cultural artifacts our identities as women play a distinct role. We hope that HERESIES will stimulate dialogue around radical political and aesthetic theory, encourage the writing of the history of *femina sapiens*, and generate new creative energies among women. It will be a place where diversity can be articulated. We are committed to the broadening of the definition and function of art.

HERESIES is structured as a collective of feminists, some of whom are also socialists, marxists, lesbian feminists, or anarchists; our fields include painting, sculpture, writing, anthropology, literature, performance, art history, architecture, and filmmaking. While the themes of the individual issues will be determined by the collective, each issue will have a different editorial staff made up of women who want to work on that issue as well as members of the collective. Proposals for issues may be conceived and presented to the HERESIES Collective by groups of women not associated with the collective. Each issue will take a different visual form, chosen by the group responsible. HERESIES will try to be accountable to and in touch with the international feminist community. An open evaluation meeting will be held after the appearance of each issue. Topics for issues will be announced well in advance in order to collect material from many sources. Letters will be printed to continue the discussion from previous issues. In addition, HERESIES provides training for women who work editorially, in design and in production, both on the job and through workshops.

As women, we are aware that historically the connections between our lives, our arts, and our ideas have been suppressed. Once these connections are clarified they can function as a means to dissolve the alienation between artist and audience, and to understand the relationship between art and politics, work and workers. As a step toward a demystification of art, we reject the standard relationship of criticism to art within the present system, which has often become the relationship of advertiser to product. We will not advertise a new set of genius-products just because they are made by women. We are not committed to any particular style or aesthetic, or to the competitive mentality that pervades the art world. Our view of feminism is one of process and change, and we feel that in the process of this dialogue we can foster a change in the meaning of art.

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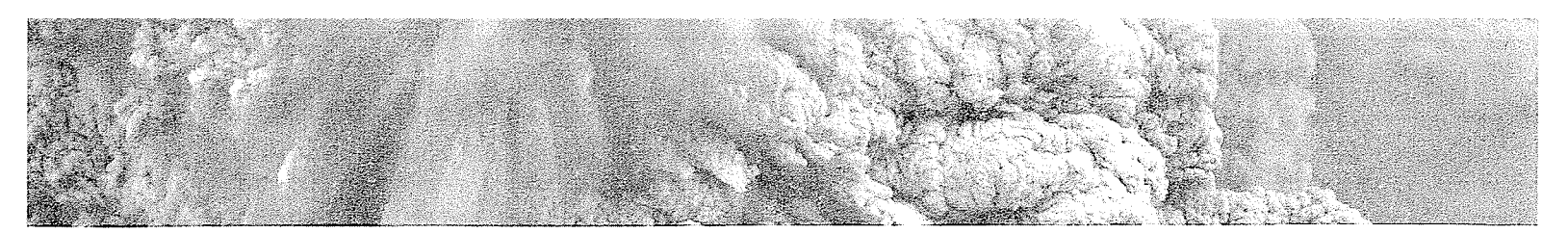

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