

Bucking the System  
Rocking " " not the Cradle

Mother Blind

The Child Syndrome  
" Baby Bed "  
Mother

In the 50s ~~and 60s~~ when my friends were having children,

I began feeling their subtle nudges indicating ~~that~~ I was out of step.  
soon

Subtlety/gave way to "What are you waiting for?" and "You'll be sorry".

Some of their remarks took on an unmistakable misery-loves-company patina

I started asking them why they had children each time they sideled into  
why I didn't. Their answers troubled me. They still do.

Many

Most ~~were~~ seemed to feel it was a ~~vogue~~ matter of duty. To whom? Certainly not to the world since/were ~~already~~, aware of the problems of over-population. Duty to Family? Keep the line going at all costs? Apparently, as in one case, Even if it meant/perpetuating an incurable genetic disease. For most, the idea was: have 2 kids, put them in school and get on with your own life, after as soon as was the curtsy to tradition performed. Or, in 1 case it was have 1 kid thru which to vicariously live everything both parents ~~thot~~ they missed, clutch every breath the child draws, then have the whole thing blow apart when the child runs away at 16 never to be heard from again. Or have 5 kids because mother never outgrew dolls, then when they're not fun to dress or dandle anymore, abandon them all including the husband who didn't want them in the first place. Those maternal grandparents certainly got their wish for continued lineage, for they had to raise them.

One couple assured me their baby was an extension of their great love & I was convinced until they divorced, each bitterly accusing the other of neglect, each ~~saying~~ bitter the child supplanted him/her in the marriage & that the other was trying to turn the child against him/her.

Another pair kept talking about how they adored children & it was true.

Theirs were expected to constantly supply them with pleasure & pride. For the most part they did, but when they boy married he moved a continent away al-tho he didn't have to make that particular choice. The girl has never married, says she never will, & lives in another state.

Only 1 friend ever gave me what I thought was a good answer. "I think", & teaching. she said, "that everyone has a calling & mine is motherhood. I had wonderful parents & I want to pass it on. I've practiced for it since I was old enough to know what I wanted. Sure, I'll make mistakes, but with God's help I believe I can turn out solid productive members of society & the Christian community." At the time I'd have bet my life she'd succeed. I'd have won, too. She did & her offspring did. She's in her grandmother mode now & the special ingredients still run thru the generations.

In India, South America & other ~~parts of the world~~ countries, adults freely admit the they want many children--to help with the work, earning power, & to make sure there is enough care for them <sup>themselves</sup> when they're ~~old~~ elderly + infirm. Maybe it's a valid enough reason in the third world but it's the wrong answer. Yet a college mate from being lonesome once said she wanted "lots of kids to keep me company in my old age." I remember asking her how often she kept her own grandmother company. "Oh, that's different. I can't talk to her, she doesn't understand how things are today. Besides I don't have time", was the gist of her answer. This friend died in an auto accident recently. Only 1 daughter and 1 granddaughter showed up for the funeral, ~~out of a possible total of 7.~~

By contrast, another friend and her husband spent a lot of time thinking up ideas to get their elder son to move out of their house & to keep the younger son's kids from arriving to be kept.

Ego, selfishness, peer pressure & herd mentality are not good reasons for having children. Self centeredness begets more of the same. Parenthood is not for everyone. Some people have no business with children even if they want them. It goes without saying that no one should bring unwanted children into the world or without definite plans & a seeking of knowledge to prepare themselves for what's involved.

Two or three of ~~those who were most~~ vocal about

my decision to remain childless later

Weiss: 1985

JAN. SOUNDINGS, Lake Shore Press;  
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said they wished they'd done the same. Sadly, one said it in front of her teenagers. How tragic for people to realize they shouldn't have been parents ~~until~~ after they are. ~~My husband & I are thoughtful & give the question a great deal of consideration before it was too late. We've been very~~

Today there are numerous couples who realize that their careers, lifestyles, or other circumstances make them ill suited ~~for~~ personalities ~~are not suited~~ to parenthood. Even now certain friends may ~~suggest~~ ~~that~~ ~~our~~ baby will change all that, ~~but~~ <sup>but</sup> Most are mature enough to know better.

My young neighbor said it well: "After the novelty wore off, a child would get the leftovers of our lives. That's not what any child needs."

Fortunately, they don't have to defend their position <sup>nowadays</sup> - except, with ~~some~~ <sup>sometimes</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>their own</sup> parents. But parents have no right to urge their children into any life-long commitment ~~they~~ <sup>their offspring</sup> feel is unwise. That's another example of bad parenting. Its a decision for husband & wife, no one else. It needs careful soul searching & discussion of how various problems will be handled ~~long before they arise~~.

To those who are undecided, spending as much time as possible around kids <sup>own</sup> could be invaluable. Sit for friends. Keep the church nursery. Visit day care centers. One young couple takes in wards of the state for short periods.

(A) Find out how well ~~you~~ <sup>they</sup> cope. Children aren't amusements to be sent to bed when you tire of them. Children are for life. If they're yours, you are totally responsible for that life. ~~It shouldn't~~ <sup>Don't let it</sup> be an accident. ~~Don't let it~~ be a consequence of carelessness. "Whatever they decide, somehow I think it will be the right choice."

\* It's not true that marriage is nothing without children. Some of the closest ones of all ~~are~~ <sup>best +</sup> ~~marriage~~ <sup>are children</sup>. It's not true that it takes children to make a family. A family ~~is~~ <sup>begins</sup> two people who care for each other. All families begin ~~and~~ thus, if they end thus they are clearly ~~if they may~~ Some remain thus - with or without additional members.

May 1, 1985

Dear Verna Lee,

I can't resist! Your conference looks so good in the brochure I called tonite & reserved my room at the Hilton & my Super-Saver flight to Little Rock. ~~If~~ A friend told me about that, it would have been out of the question at regular fare. I should arrive in time for the luncheon on Friday, May 31. What I don't know is - what is available to get me from the airport to the convention or how far it is. Plane gets in 10:15 a.m. United Airlines.

Most likely I'll visit a friend in Hot Springs ~~on Sunday~~. She may be able to come over as my guest <sup>to</sup> the Sat. nite dinner if that's impossible. In which case I'll go home with her ~~afterward~~. But if I check out Sat. morning, I'm wondering if the Hilton provides a courtesy room for luggage, etc. during that day & a place to dress for dinner. I hate to pay for a second night's lodging if I'm not going to sleep there.

## Bucking the System

Adult society sorts itself into various substructures reflecting enormous numbers of people who ~~work~~ work their life on cue. Miss a cue or 2 and you're <sup>hopelessly</sup> out of sync with the crowd. Many people do indeed hear a different ~~drummer~~ beat all those other feet around them. Some are afraid to buck the rhythm of their platoon. Is there ~~more about them~~ like peer pressure & herd mentality for some ~~not~~ enough to keep them in step. For those whose drummer is more insistent, life is different. We may or may not marry after or during our period of higher education. But if we do, we don't necessarily have children. That's the operative word is necessarily.

THIS DAY, THIS SHORE

There's no division of morning and sea:  
A monotone of pewter palls the sky  
Like painters' canvas, primed and left to dry  
For Van Gogh's palette, Gauguin's potpourri.  
The mind demands delineation be  
Apparent; order seems to go awry  
When borders vanish. Our insistent eye  
Will furnish lines, avoid anomaly.  
Yet often we erase the clear-cut guides  
And substitute a blur like smeary chalk.  
Our own horizon, out of focus now,  
Awaits firm definition in the tides.  
Between the high and low, we'll mark this walk  
And draw a faithful chart on morning's brow.

There is nothing sacred re motherhood. Some women do imbue their process with holiness & dedication worthy of saints <sup>station</sup> personal a saint, but it's ~~an~~ individual attributes not belonging to the institution itself. All merits should be credited to the individuals who earn them, not <sup>the</sup> subjects in which they are engendered. So many myths surround Motherhood it's almost impossible ~~for anyone~~ to look at it dispassionately.

It is supposed that mothers are good, wise, kind & patient. The fact that a woman is his example of virtue herself makes her none of the above if it isn't already part of her nature. Nor does her bio-ability have <sup>mean</sup> any bearing on whether <sup>that</sup> she should use it anymore than her ability to ~~hit~~ <sup>hit</sup> high C means she should be an opera singer.

One of my neighbors has 8 kids. ~~That's all~~ There is a tendency for other mothers ~~the best~~ to call & consult her on a wide range of matters on the presumption that all those kids have made her all knowing. If they knew her better they would discover that she is one of the worst mothers possible & they would go better to a <sup>con</sup> lady writer down the road who has no kids at all but does possess a wealth of know. & find. of humans of all ages. Why do people <sup>repeatedly</sup> ~~raise~~ children <sup>of</sup> the woman knows what she's doing when it comes to raising it? Pregnancy is a matter of odds, <sup>chemical connections</sup> not an expression of cleverness.

"She must be a good woman. She's raised 3 kids."

~~To did Ma Barker~~ What utter garbage.

Pregnancy is a chemical lottery, not an act of will. That may result from an act of will or bone, but no woman can

## MOTHER FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Do you notice  
how many times  
I forget your  
needs, your birthday?

My disregard  
for your wishes  
in some matters  
must make you wince.

Unpaid visits,  
calls undialed  
are bound to make a dent

will conception anyone than she can will the sex of the Con-  
ceived. Most pregnancies are surprises. even  
if not ~~surprised~~ uneventful.

If a woman is a bad mother, why should anyone respect her just because she gave birth? Yet many women expect that alone to win respect & admiration. Why?

People from all over the world are acquainted with Georgia's Stone Mountain. Speculation about its origin has flourished for decades. But few people, even among natives, are aware of Georgia's even more fascinating stone mysteries.

Scholars are still puzzling over the two Eatonton effigy mounds in Putnam County. The larger one, called Rock Eagle, now lends its name to the beautiful 4-H Club Park where it nests. From the ground it looks like a pile of rubble. You must climb a to