

everything to the creation or amplification of protectionary laws that are pretexts to mask our real situation of dependence on men and second-class citizenship.

From all kinds of ideological pressure, expressed in the terror most of us feel about joining feminist organizations, under the assumption that if we do so, we must be "against men." From the fear of being ridiculed or insulted as "tomboys," "whores," or "dykes."

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*Statistics affirm that few women are workers.
Out of the home and onto the production lines!
Working women also carry the burden of the home!
Communal eating-places, day-care centers and laundries—to create new jobs and lessen the load of unpaid workers in the home.
Being a mother and being fulfilled shouldn't be a contradiction.
We want family planning in hospitals, accessible to everyone.*

Against whom must we struggle?
Against the Patriarchal-Capitalist System which determines an unjust society, fostering exploitation, abuse, discrimination, hunger,

wars and massacres; a system which transforms woman into a beast of burden (if she is proletarian), or into a luxury sex-object (if she is bourgeois). Capitalism has also reviled love, reducing male-female relationships to economic factors or to mere social appearances. It is a system in which children are the responsibility of individual couples and, in actual practice, of the women alone.

Against all sexist ideology which gains by reinforcing our situation as "different" and which is expressed in the cult of "femininity"—sweetness, weakness, virginity and motherhood as woman's only aim and destiny.

And finally, against all threats to the liberation front whose ultimate goal is the *Monolithic Unity of Revolutionary Women*, and of those men who integrally support the cause of our liberation.

*Excerpts (slightly rearranged) from the booklet of this name distributed by "Accion para la Liberacion de la Mujer Peruana," April 15, 1975, Lima, Peru. This text was taken from the first half of the booklet; the second half deals with a specific program for practical revolutionary work. The following are listed as the group's coordinators and "honorary members": Cristina Portocarrero Rey, Ana María Portugal, Amor Arguedas, Dorelly Castañeda, Beatriz Ramos, Lucía Parra, Margot Loayza, Edith Alva, Carmela Bravo, Dora Ponce, Flor Herrera, Leo Arteaga, Diana Arteaga, Dora Guerrero, Bertha Vargas, Inés Pratt, Adela Montesinos, Estela Luna López.

On Woman's Refusal to Celebrate Male Creativity*

Rivolta Femminile

*Rivolta Femminile is an Italian group of radical feminists founded in Rome in July 1970, now associated with other feminist groups in Milan, Turin, Genoa and Florence. They have consistently resisted hierarchal structures and male-dominated institutions and their development of feminist theory has been detailed in publications such as Carla Lonzi's *Sputiamo su Hegel* (1970) and *La Donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale* (1971), the collective's *Sessualita femminile e aborto* (1971) and *Carla Accardi's Superiore e inferiore* (1972). The latter records the author's dismissal from her job after discussing the *Rivolta Femminile* manifesto with her female high school students. All publications are available from *Rivolta Femminile*, Via del Babuino 16, Rome, Italy.*

We in *Rivolta Femminile* refuse to pay tribute to male creativity because we are aware that in the patriarchal world—that is, in a world made by men and for men—even the liberating force

of creativity is the prerogative of men. Woman—in so many ways a subsidiary being—is denied every role which could effect a recognition of these inequities. For her, there is no prospect of liberation.

The creativity of men speaks to the creativity of other men while woman, as client and spectator of that dialogue, is assigned a status which excludes competition. Woman is locked into a role which, *a priori*, assures the male artist an audience. While *creating* art is seen to have a liberating function, art as an institution insists that woman be the neutral witness to the work of others. Man's energy, even in art, is spent by competing with other men. Only the contemplation of art invites woman's involvement.

This is the nature of patriarchal creativity: to depend upon aggressive competition with male rivals and on the passive appreciation of women. Man, the artist, feels abandoned by woman as soon as she abandons her archetypal spectator's role; their mutual solidarity rests solely on

the conviction that, as a spectator gratified by creativity, woman reaches the highest possible point in the evolution of her species.

But, on the contrary, woman is discovering that the patriarchal world *needs* her—that man's self-liberating efforts absolutely depend on her—and that *woman's* liberation can only be realized independent of patriarchal provisions and the dynamics by which men liberate themselves. The artist depends upon woman to glorify his work and she, until she begins her own liberation, is happy to oblige. The work of art cannot afford to lose the security inherent in her exclusively receptive role.

Once aware of her position in relation to male creativity, woman is left with two possibilities: the first—until now, the only available option—of distinguishing herself within the creative hierarchy historically defined by men (which alienates her from other women while men recognize her only indulgently); or—the feminist alternative—of autonomously recovering her own creativity, nourished by her awareness of past oppression.

To celebrate male creativity is ultimately to submit to the historic sovereignty of men, to that patriarchal strategy which deliberately subjugates us. But let woman remove herself, and the struggle for male supremacy becomes not man lording it over woman, but merely a struggle between individual men.

By refusing to celebrate male creativity, we are not judging creativity, nor are we contesting it. Rather, with our absence, we are refusing to accept it as defined; we are challenging the concept of art as something which men graciously hand down to us. By ceasing to believe in a refracted liberation, we are unleashing creative energy from patriarchal bonds.

With her absence, woman performs a dramatic act of awareness, creative because it *is* liberating.

*Text written by Rivolta Femminile, March 1971; free translation by Arlene Ladden from Carla Lonzi, *Sputiamo su Hegel: La Donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale e altri scritti*, Scritti di Rivolta Femminile, 1,2,3, Milan, 1974.

Assata Shakur (Joanne Chesimard) has been associated with the Black Panther Party and other political groups, including the Black Liberation Army, which she has said "is not an organization. It is a concept. A people's movement, an idea" emerging from conditions in the Black community. She is currently a political prisoner being held in New Jersey, ostensibly on charges of bank robbery.

WHAT IS LEFT?

Assata Shakur

WHAT IS LEFT?

AFTER THE BARS AND THE GATES AND THE
DEGRADATION

WHAT IS LEFT?

AFTER THE LOCK INS AND THE LOCK OUTS AND THE
LOCK UPS

WHAT IS LEFT?

I MEAN, AFTER THE CHAINS THAT GET ENTANGLED
IN THE GREY OF ONE'S MATTER

AFTER THE BARS THAT GET STUCK IN THE HEARTS
OF MEN AND WOMEN

WHAT IS LEFT?

AFTER THE TEARS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

AFTER THE LONELY ISOLATION

AFTER THE CUT WRIST AND THE HEAVY NOOSE

WHAT IS LEFT?

I MEAN, LIKE, AFTER THE COMMISSARY KISSES

AND THE GET-YOUR-SHIT-OFF-BLUES

AFTER THE HUSTLER HAS BEEN HUSTLED

WHAT IS LEFT?

AFTER THE SAD FUTILE MANEUVERS

AFTER THE SHRILL AND BARREN LAUGHTER

AFTER THE CONTRABAND EMOTIONS

WHAT IS LEFT?

AFTER THE MURDERBURGERS AND THE GOON SQUADS
AND THE TEAR GAS

AFTER THE BULLS AND THE BULLPENS AND THE
BULLSHIT

WHAT IS LEFT?

I MEAN LIKE, AFTER YOU KNOW THAT GOD CAN'T BE
TRUSTED

AFTER YOU KNOW THAT THE SHRINK IS A PUSHER
THAT THE WORD IS A WHIP, AND THE BADGE IS

A BULLET

WHAT IS LEFT?

AFTER YOU KNOW THAT THE DEAD ARE STILL
WALKING

AFTER YOU REALIZE THAT SILENCE IS TALKING
THAT OUTSIDE AND INSIDE ARE JUST AN ILLUSION

WHAT IS LEFT?

I MEAN, LIKE, WHERE IS THE SUN?

WHERE ARE HER ARMS AND WHERE ARE HER KISSES?

THERE ARE LIP PRINTS ON MY PILLOW

I AM SEARCHING

WHAT IS LEFT?

I MEAN, LIKE, NOTHING IS STANDSTILL AND
NOTHING IS ABSTRACT

THE WING OF A BUTTERFLY CAN'T TAKE FLIGHT

THE FOOT ON MY NECK IS A PART OF A BODY

THE SONG THAT I SING IS A PART OF AN ECHO

WHAT IS LEFT?

I MEAN, LIKE, LOVE IS SPECIFIC

IS MY MIND A MACHINE GUN?

IS MY HEART A HACKSAW?

CAN I MAKE FREEDOM REAL? YEAH,

WHAT IS LEFT?

I AM AT THE TOP AND BOTTOM OF A LOWER-ARCHY

I AM IN LOVE WITH LOSERS AND LAUGHTER

I AM IN LOVE WITH FREEDOM AND CHILDREN

LOVE IS MY SWORD AND TRUTH IS MY COMPASS

WHAT IS LEFT?

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