

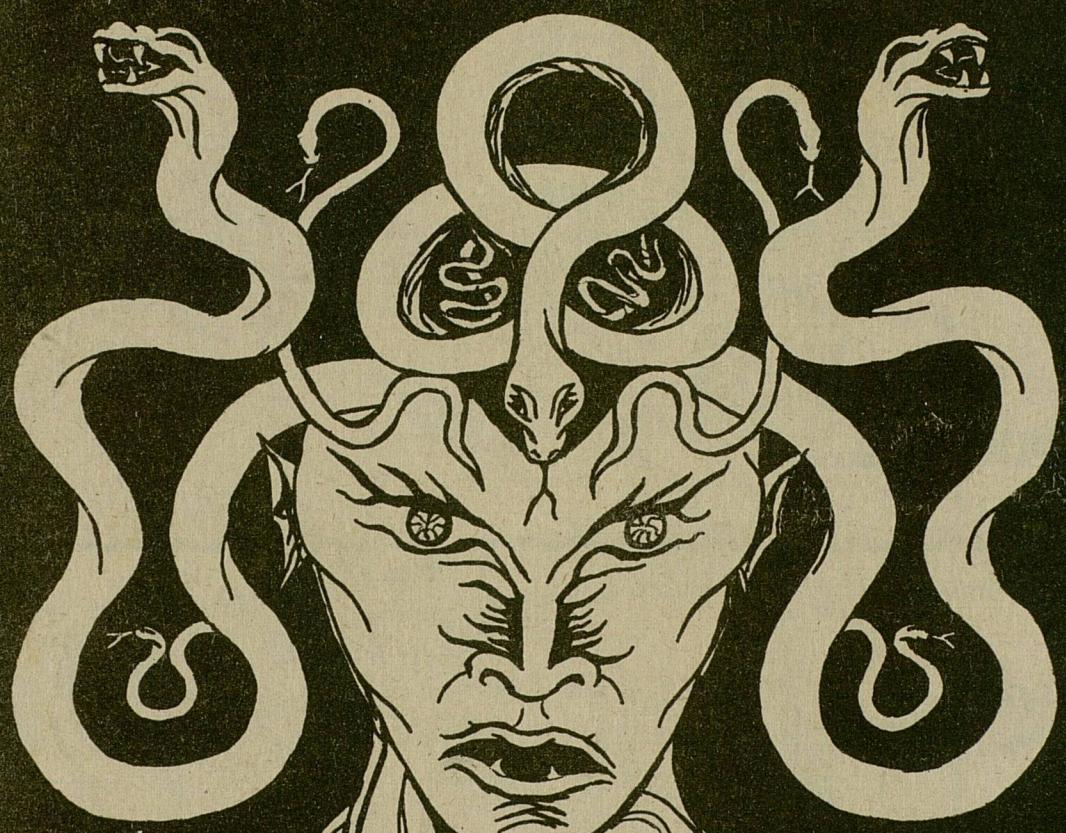
DYKES & GORGONS

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50¢



"I wish I had hair like
you, Gorgon-Dyke,
cause then it would be fun to walk the streets at night."

dyke-feminist
east
bay
queers

reduced
newspaper

dykes & gorgons

The Gorgons were a ferocious tribe of warring Amazons who maintained the high female standard of allowing no men into their midst. The Amazons were in a constant state of struggle against the invading patriarchal armies. Myths were perpetrated centuries later by the Greeks and other patriarchs to distort actual historical events, turning the Gorgons from the fierce warriors they were into legendary fearsome monsters. According to one myth there were three Gorgon sisters who lived on an island and were known far and wide for their deadly power. Two of the sisters were considered immortal, but the earthbound mortal, Medusa was supposedly slain by Perseus. Legend further says that the Gorgon sisters were creatures with great wings and bodies covered with golden scales, with snakes that grew from their heads like hair and that any man daring to look upon them was "mesmerized" -- turned to stone.

To the Greek world, the Amazons were wondrous warriors who were so astonishing in battle that they posed more of a threat to the city-states than all the other enemy nations combined. The Gorgons were an extreme feminist wing of the Amazons, fighting a last ditch attempt to maintain a matriarchal culture in the face of the growing patriarchy, spreading its violence everywhere. After the Amazons were systematically exterminated, their spirit continued to live on through their frequent portrayal in Grecian art. (It is from these often sympathetic sculptures and paintings that the memory of the Amazons is preserved.)

Dykes, we all know. Dykes, for some of us dykes, has the meaning of a lesbian strong in her Amazonal heritage. We are full in the midst of a war waged upon women. Dykes are present and future Gorgon/Amazons, struggling for the time when we are free of these war-inspired definitions, when we can exist freely as dykes in a female world.

"And they are three, the Gorgons, each with wings
And snaky hair, most horrible to mortals,
Whom no man shall behold and draw again
The breath of life."

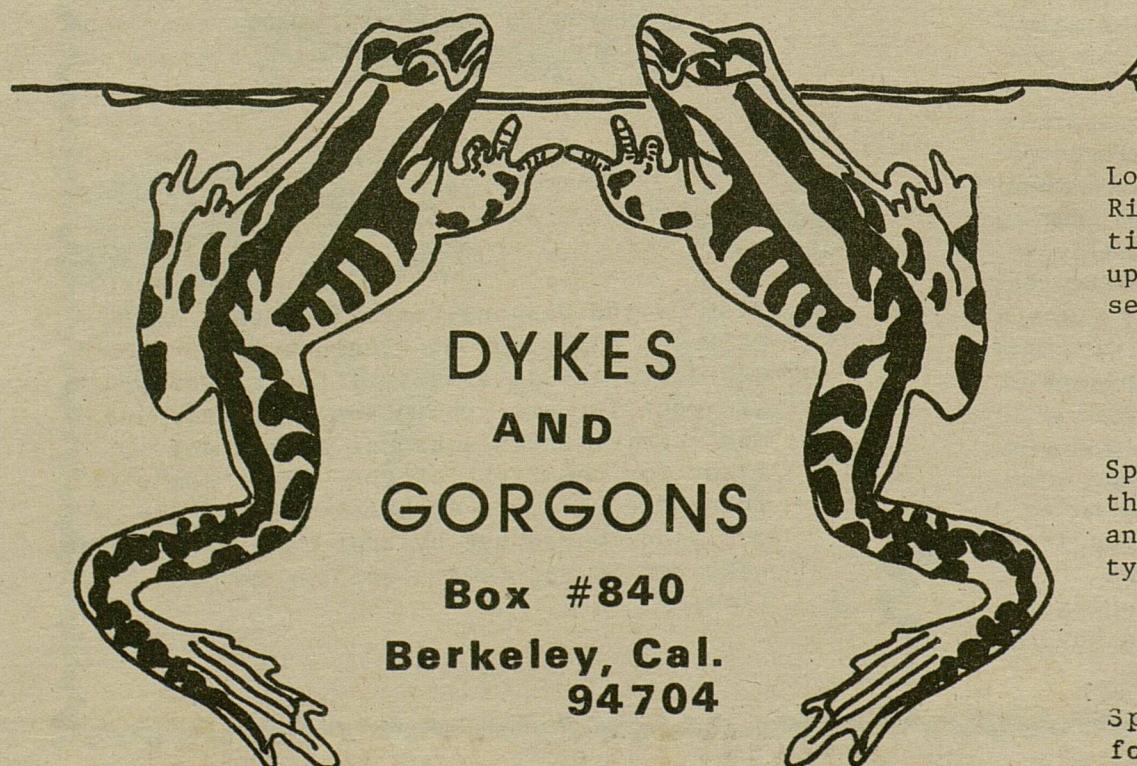


our gang

Gutter Dyke Collective
Aïda, Anne, Bev
Lebrón Collective
Helen, Rena, Val
Barbry
Cha
Kendra
Max

A GRAPHIC NOTEBOOK ON FEMINISM
SU NEGRIN

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Lolita Lebrón is a righteous Puerto Rican Nationalist who is still serving time in a U.S. Federal prison for shooting up some Congressmen in the House of Representatives in 1954.

Special thanks to that Lesbian house that provided us with their facilities and persevered through our numerous typing expeditions.

Special thanks to our good friend Jean for her support and encouragement.

OVER THE WALLS



photo by Barbara

The politics of this paper are representative of a growing movement of dyke/separatists expanding throughout the country. We come from many and varied backgrounds (a lower East side kid, the Mid-west, North West and the West; lower class, working class and middle class; Puerto Ricans and whites; some of us were dykes before the Women's Movement and some of us dykes came out through the Women's Movement.) But where we are now is what counts and where we are going is what really matters. At this time in history we must learn to band together for our own survival in order that we might consolidate our strengths to fight off the male supremacist society that surrounds us and continues to rape our world.

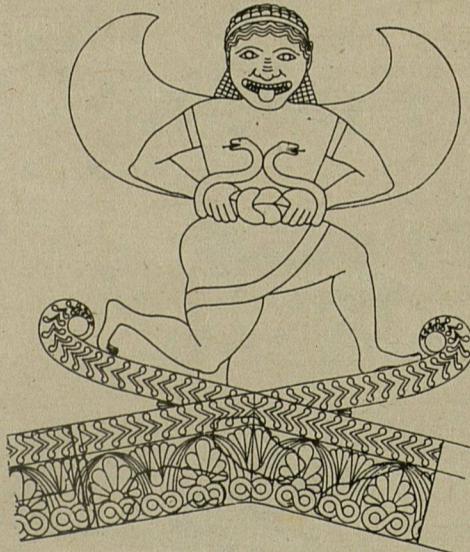
Because Lesbians have always been the outcasts from every patriarchal culture, we have been separated and isolated from one another. The time has come for us to build our own culture, to turn that "well of loneliness" into an underground river of strength. For many of us this will mean casting off the superimposed stereotypes of the patriarch's world, whether they be the learned female sex roles or the caustically inherited male scales of class and race.

The days of mass movements have come to an end. The straight women's movement continues to fight for the right to more heterosexual privilege, while the fear of their Lesbian "sisters" internally consumes them with guilt. Meanwhile, the visible Lesbian movement seems to get together around massive regional conferences focusing on "super star" speakers that only seem to further split and fractionalize one community from another. While perpetuating their own class privilege these speakers are able to go into a conference and use their acquired talents to successfully foment bad feelings within and between communities and then return to their isolated havens.

We believe that the time has come to redefine the structure of our movement. Rather than see a male linear mass movement which sacrifices the feelings of the minority for the "bigger" picture, we envision a network of small groups of Lesbians who want to struggle together and show a genuine commitment toward dissolving the barriers between us. In order for us to have some measure of control over our destiny we must begin to focus inwards upon our own oppressive attitudes toward one another and outwards toward dealing with the violent sick acts of the penis brain system that threatens to squash us all. After we have resolved some of our differences, they will no longer divide us but instead will become a source of strength towards creating a free female universe.

We hope this paper will be used as a vehicle for those dyke/separatists whose articles have either been chopped up and distorted or have been refused publication through other coast to coast Lesbian/Feminist newspapers and magazines. We are open to articles, comments, stories, graphics and poetry from dyke/separatists around the world. We barely scraped together enough money to print this first issue and would appreciate any and all contributions so that we can publish a second time.

We encourage all local contributors to do your own layout in order to learn the skill of putting a paper together and to have the satisfaction of completing your work.



117 Running gorgon, from the ridge acroterion of a Ripe Archaic temple on the Athenian Acropolis.



Just as the Gorgons terrorized the males of their day and waged a life and death struggle against the emerging patriarchal revolution, we, too, must revive their Amazonian spirit and fight for the right of the "first sex". This, the struggle to break free of the collision course set by that male takeover is our female counter-revolution.

finally out of drag

Women are never given the real option of dropping out because they are the first building block of the male society: it is built on their backs. Whether it be economic or emotional, heterosexual women continue to support their men and continue to define their reality through their men's set of values, and continue to be used and abused by those very standards which set one woman against another. Those dykes who think they have dropped out of heterosexual society learn very quickly that "coming out" on the streets can be a culture shock, a frightening experience of stepping back into the prick's sphere of influence. We find ourselves standing up to a system of morality that labels us queers because we would dare to put our arms around one another in public. A system in which the masculinists have purposefully channelled women into a standard set of sexist values by which we judge one another.

We all are the products of rape. Most women continue to agree to that rape physically and psychologically, every day of their lives, and so hold a very low opinion of themselves because deep down inside they know they are being shit on.

By not relating to men on a personal level, the Lesbian or woman-identified woman likes to think of herself as not giving energy to men because they are of no concern to her, since her primary relationships are with other Lesbians. However, by continuing to invite men into their homes, bars, dances; by seeing whom you sleep with as being a personal issue rather than the crux of our sensuality, the politics which all Lesbians have in common; by perpetuating the sexist patterns which we have all grown up in -- calling one another bitch, chick, and so on; by continuing to be an invisible minority and trying to convince ourselves that we should look like all other women because looking like a dyke would threaten women with a real alternative; by continuing to kowtow to the same old male standards of beauty and feminine appeal -- searching for a blonde blue-eyed lover or judging another Lesbian by the layers of skin that wrap around her body; -- we too are being squashed by the male supremacist shitpile.

Sister Dyke Collective

However, we can choose to struggle with one another in the comfort of our havens and to fight that prick world out there by stepping out from the folds of the invisible feminized masses. We are Lesbians because we love women. We are Dykes because we choose to create a new and open lifestyle to redefine our own images of ourselves. We are daring to challenge those old sexist stereotypes and, in doing so, we open ourselves up to the full brunt of the male supremacist society.

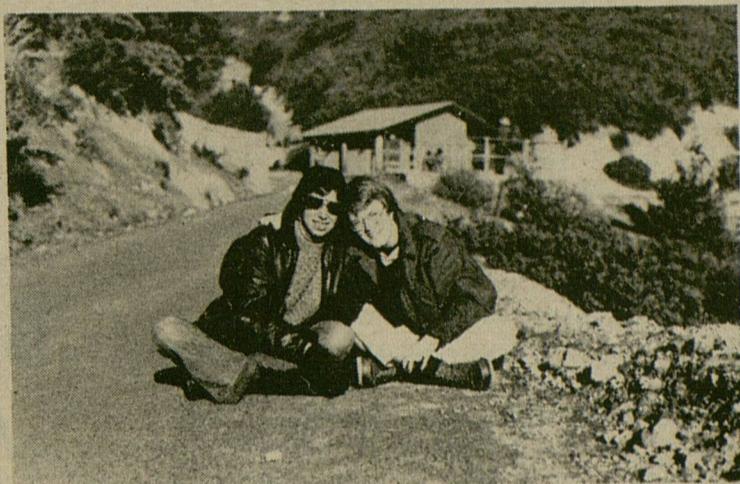


photo by aida

When I first hear the word Dyke it was in the early sixties. I was on a bus crossing town and a gang of tough looking, brassy big women bounded onto the bus. The straight men began whispering "diesel dykes" in their seats, "cunt-lickers" and other "cute" numbers like that. To the straight world, it is all black and white anyway. There are the butches and the femmes. All women are the femmes (otherwise they would be competing with the men) and those who try to break free of those stereotypes are called butches, or if they do fit into the grey matter inbetween, they're hippie chicks (meaning you can dress more freely but you are still attached to a man). It has taken many years of gay consciousness raising and struggle to take a derogatory word thrown at us for centuries and take it on in a positive sense. Because taking it on in a positive sense means we can redefine what it does indeed mean to be a dyke. We certainly can widen the definition. Dykes are springing up in every Lesbian community across the country and we sure do represent a varied cross-section of cultures merged into one dyke subculture. I am proud to be called a Dyke now. For me it conveys an image of a strong together Lesbian, one who can express her feminism in public. The time has come to stop blending in with the "feminized" masses of women, to stop being that invisible minority. Lesbians have gone beyond the concept of "woman" as so defined for us for eons by the male dominated societies.



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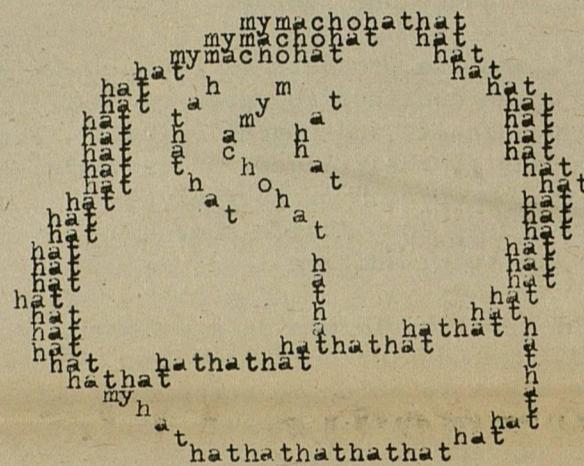
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hat by aida



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DYKES

4

For me, dressing like a dyke, has been wearing my inside feelings for the outside world to see. Some Lesbians have attacked me for looking like a man and playing the butch role. It's as if they are saying that I can have my choice, that of a man or a woman within the framework of this society. But then, who isn't playing a role? If you are dressed as a woman, whether she be old traditional, young fashionable, hip sex object, or unisexual, you are still identified as a woman personifying all those old stereotypes of femininity: gentleness, sweetness, delicacy and emotionally supportive, while the men are seen as forceful, dynamic, cool and independent. Why must it be either ... or? To me the men are but shadows of women who personify all of these characteristics anyway.

Until the last few thousand years, all of the positive traits, now defined as male, were attached to women. The negative male attributes have since been labeled "feminine" until we've come to believe it ourselves. In order to reverse the process, we must try constantly to visualize ourselves in extremely positive and strong ways. This threatens some women since they see this force as masculine, but since a woman is inherently female, a strong dynamic woman is multiplied "femininity". She is in no way male.

The clothes you wear are as much a part of you as your psyche. Articles of clothing have long been used by men as a weapon against women's bodies. From the slippers used to bind Chinese women's feet, westward to the corsets used to fit proper ladies into hour-glasses, to the 1950's brassieres that held your body in bizarre shapes causing cancer, to the modern style maxis that trip you up on bus steps and the minis that make you into a piece of meat.

The clothes a woman wears, regardless of where they come from or who they are intended for, are female because they are worn by a woman. Clothes traditionally made by men for women, however, are designed to restrain women and keep them in a vulnerable position. They are physically harmful, shoddily made, and leave women wide open for rape and assault. And the illusion around "feminine" clothing insures that a woman will spend an incredible amount of time concerned with her appearance -- rather than her oppression. This leaves us with the choice of making all of our own clothing, which can be time-consuming and expensive, or by wearing the cheapest, sturdiest, and most protective clothing we can find that is already made. That, for the most part, is clothing made for men.

Just as no woman can be masculine in her personality, there is no way a woman is male in her clothes. The clothing we dykes wear today reflects our desire to identify as lesbians to abandon male-defined "feminine dress", and to suit our own comfortability. We wear what makes us feel strong on the streets, gives us freedom of movement, and frees us as much as possible from sexist attacks by men.

There seems to be some fear in the Lesbian community that us Dykes who dress like Dykes are trying to institutionalize our manner of dress like a uniform. Perhaps this stems from the fear that all of us have developed from having grown up in the hetero-straight world in which every nationalistic and cultural value is used to create walls which divide one woman from another. I do not choose my clothes to set up a standard for other Lesbians nor to fit into a particular subcultural fashion set. I choose my clothes primarily for comfort, durability and what is available in my price range. Being limited by my income I am able (or forced, depending on your viewpoint) to forage in local freeboxes, search in thrift stores and make occasional trips to flea markets.

To shear or not to shear (your hair that is) has been one of the most cutting questions of the Lesbian movement for the last three years. I first cut my hair after a man attacked me and spun me around by my long hair because I repelled his advances. Then I discovered that the "butch" cut was one of my ways of making a statement. I cut my hair not just as a symbolic gesture of no longer being a sex object for men but as a way of aligning and identifying with other Lesbians. When I think back on it I know that it was easier to have long hair because it made me more acceptable. Where I worked I could fit in as one of the "girls." No one would pinpoint me too closely for being strange, a queer. After I cut my hair it became increasingly more difficult to hide my true feelings. I became a target for the curious straight women (who were attracted and repelled at the same time) and the pig men who were subconsciously threatened and belligerent. When the women in the cottage next door asked me why I cut my hair I was surprised to find myself becoming more and more up front about my Lesbian feelings. With the weight of my hair cut away I was liberated from the chore of spending two days a week washing and drying it and suddenly I felt very good with a cool breeze on my neck.

As a further definition of our feelings, ideas and lifestyle, we call ourselves man-hating dykes, which is not the negative, time-consuming declaration that it seems. To simply ignore men in this world is impossible. We are constantly bombarded with their pollution and destruction. It surrounds us -- from the air we breathe and food we eat, to the scarcity of jobs, to the subtle rape of our minds by their media and society, to the very real rape we meet in the streets, at work, and even in our homes. The privilege of ignoring men is not concretely feasible for most women.

My Macho Hat

just before i leave the house,
i plop my hat on my head,
my message to the world,
my protection against it.
it tells people where i'm at—
a Man Hating Dyke—stay away pricks,
i am a lesbian and proud of it,
it shades my eyes from the staring,
undressing eyes of men,
and lets me carry my gayness
with me into straight society.

BOSTON, 1971

Considering the majority of us were brought up to believe males to be superior and desirable, regardless of the other truths our inner sensibilities told us, it is important that we recognize them now for the real enemy and danger that they are. Although our anger has been suppressed, it is a good and healthy reaction to the way we are treated in this world. Our oppression is real. If we react the way we have been conditioned, we sublimate our rage and turn it into fear or suicide. Or else we throw it off onto each other and tear our friends apart. In-fighting and divisiveness have always been the primary weak points of the women's movement. We ridicule each other for our defense mechanisms and survival techniques and do the man's job for him. Our differences are real, whether they are race, class, age or lifestyle, but the oppressions we place on one another originate from men..

We can relate across our barriers if we take care not to deliberately use our man-made differences to hurt each other. We may first have to start with small affinity cells and struggle with each other in order to distribute power equally and not hold our privileges over one another, but we can do it without unleashing the major part of our anger. We can do it with understanding. But that anger we feel is still there. If we are "live" lesbians and are even half-aware, we have righteous anger and the way to deal with it healthily is to direct it at those who are destroying us and the planet-- men.

Again, we want to make it clear that this doesn't mean we spend our time with hate rising from us like steam, but rather that, by the very decision to consciously direct our rage at the deserving ones and not inwardly, we are freeing ourselves to relate with warmth and sensitivity to our own selves and to each other. By our defining the enemy as all males, we are freeing ourselves from forming any kind of energy draining and oppressive relationships with them, and do not give them even an impersonal friendliness in our daily confrontations with them. (And any necessary interaction with them is a confrontation and power struggle. They are used to tapping our time and feelings when they choose, whether it is starting a conversation on line at the store or expecting a smile on the street. When you resist responding with the appropriate gesture of humiliation and subordination, they meet you with hostility and even threats of violence.)

Some of us never experienced heterosexuality and so escaped personal pressure from men. Through awakening to our feminism and oppression, we awakened to our anger and hatred of men. Others of us experienced the rape on a more humiliating personal level and our loathing grew out of our heterosexual experiences. But for all of us it is necessary to define ourselves as women, a natural life force and an entirely separate category from men, the predominate death-force on the earth.

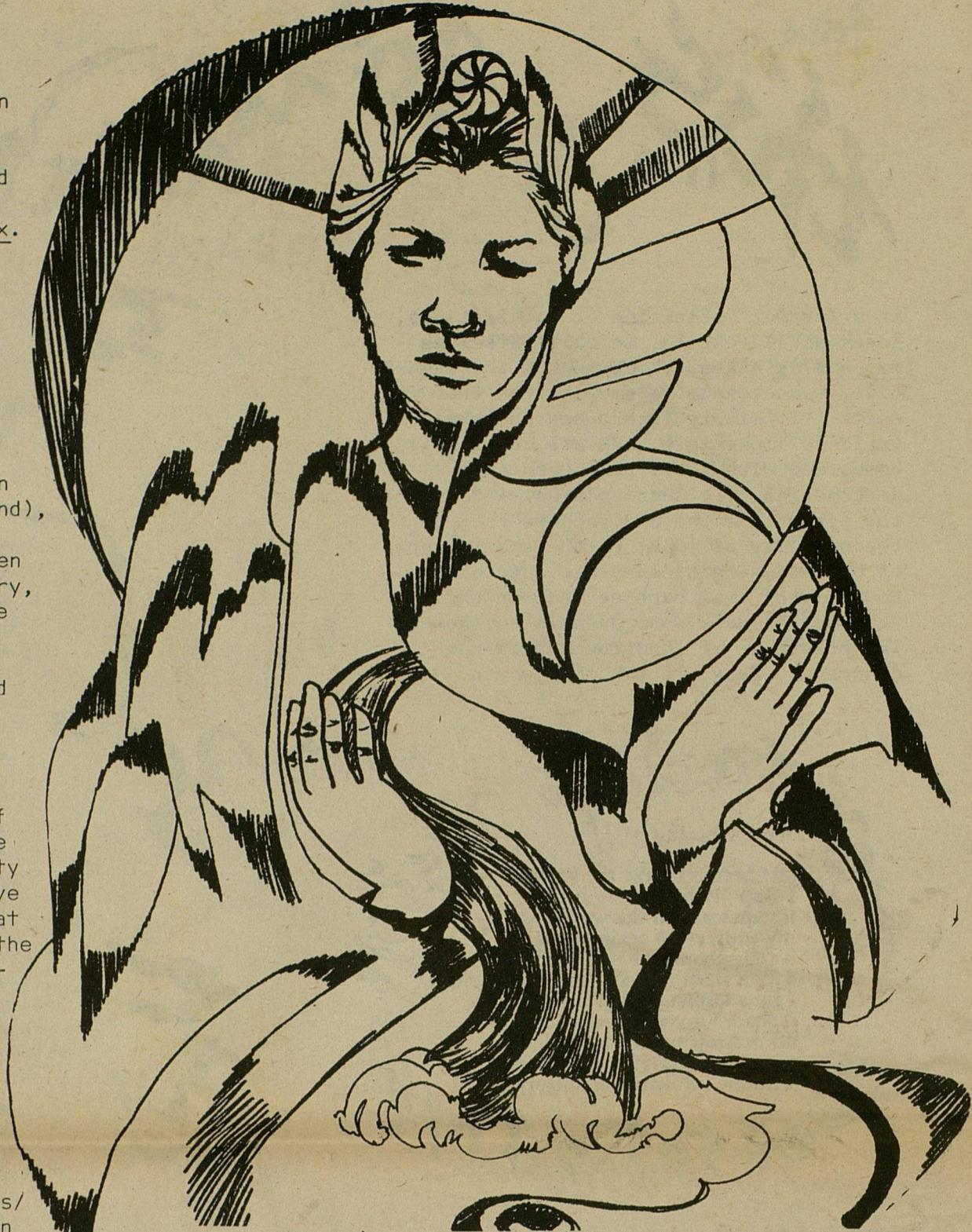
Gutter Dyke Collective

Even though the fund was too low to help us print this paper, we would like to thank Robin Morgan for setting up the Sisterhood is Powerful Fund - from which all money is sent back into the Women's Movement to any group of women who ask for it. Also, half the profits of Monster are being similarly recycled. Perhaps if some pressure were placed on feminist authors and personalities who have made large sums of money from the Women's Movement, then there would be enough financial support for needy feminist groups. So far, Robin is the only one we know of who has openly shared her resources with the larger Women's Community.

Patriarchy has been in existence for only .047% of the time we have been on the earth and in those few thousand years of upheaval males have almost succeeded in destroying themselves and all other life forms, according to Elizabeth Gould Davis in The First Sex. In an effort to eliminate every trace of the peaceful and civilized female culture that preceded, men destroyed whatever centers of knowledge and learning that they could and plunged the world into a Dark Age from which it has not yet emerged.¹ The few structures the patriarchs couldn't demolish (like the Great Pyramid and Sphinx² in Egypt, the Step Pyramids in the Americas, and Stonehenge in England), they claim are products of their own brilliant heritage. But even after ten thousand years of rewriting our history, they could not completely disguise the truth. Today's archeologists are admitting that all around the world breasts were chiseled from statues and female names obliterated from records and replaced with names of their murderers.³ Men equate civilization and progress with war and conquest. The few documented female societies of the past have been disregarded because they were times of peace and prosperity for the people. (Only the Amazons have been given any lasting mention and that is because, as the last defenders of the Old Way, they gave the invading patriarchal armies centuries of fierce fighting.)

Matriarchal women created the many mysterious "monuments" found all over the world, and the way the old legends/religions tell it, they were formed in mystical, magical ways which have long since been forgotten. But these megalithic structures that men admit they could not duplicate even today, such as the Great Pyramid, they tell us were tombs for men and built through slavery, thus exhibiting their incredible preoccupation with death. Anne Shellabarger, in her film, Days of Matriarchy, tells us that the Pyramid, as well as Stonehenge, were created by matriarchal priestesses as a complex astronomical observatory which reflected the workings of the universe, as well as measured the position of the equator and calendar time more precisely than today's patriarchal calendar.⁴ The modern death-oriented technology and science which man is so proud of today is a meager, perverse attempt at the imitation and distortion of woman's peaceful and creative technology of the past.

In another of her films, The Great Goddess, Anne Shellabarger gives us a faint glimmer of what the matriarchal "Golden Age" was like: The further back you go into any ancient culture and civilization the less you find male images until finally almost all the sculptures and paintings are of women and goddesses (or rather the many-named, multi-faced and multi-faceted Great Goddess.) Patriarchal



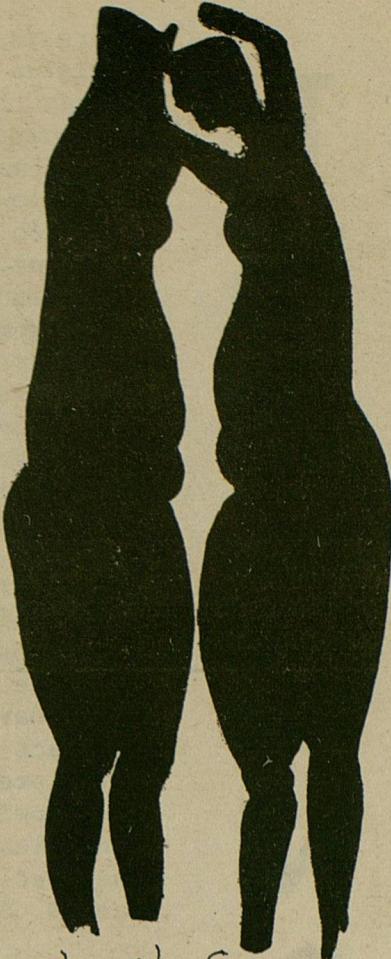
ONCE OUR SHINING BODIES UNFOLDED
FROM SEA WATERS STRETCHED TO THE SUN
WERENT WE WITH THE GODDESS?

OUR HIDDEN

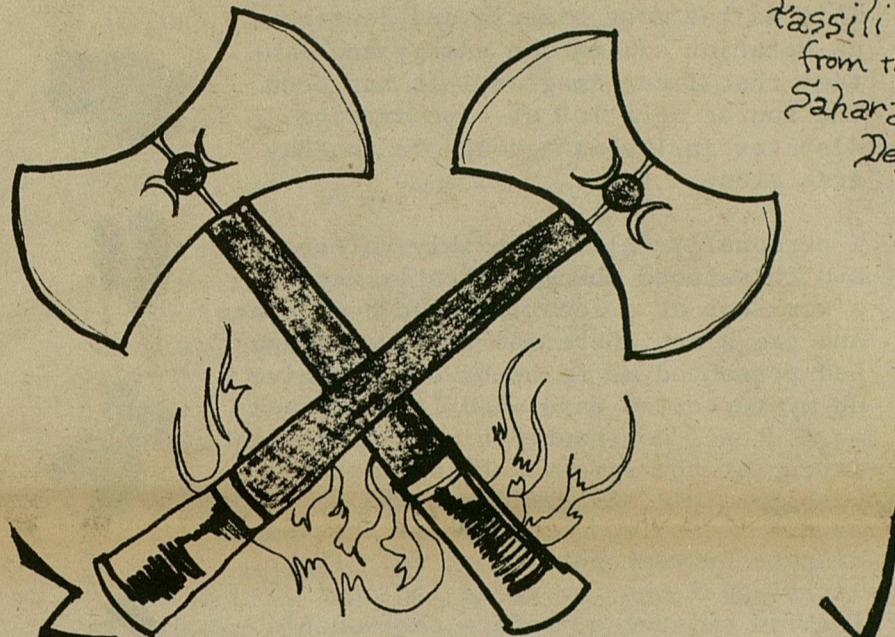
archeologists perceive these images as sex objects, rather than objects for the reverence of the Female Life Principle, and insist on labelling them "dancing girls" or "fertility goddesses."

In the oldest ruins found on the earth you see references only to females and the Great Goddess. The images also become more and more lesbian in nature. In the diggings on Crete and at Catal Huyuk in Anatolia and also in South-East Asia there are even a number of statues of women embracing and holding hands. One picture of a particularly beautiful statue we've seen is a combination of two pairs of women in a loving embrace. But these few revealing remnants of our matriarchal

past were some of the only things that escaped the male systematic and brutal obliteration of our culture and the almost total penis brain re-education pattern that followed. And when that failed, they attempted virtual genocide: From the continual wars on the Amazons to the constant pogroms and executions of the witches, (priestesses who maintained matriarchal culture and female knowledge of the secrets of the universe)⁵ to the lobotomizing of psychic "psychotic" women in mental hospitals at the present time. Men have tried to wipe out our past and render us powerless. And they have the nerve to re-write our history before our eyes even today, especially today- In amerikan public schools the work of such renowned women as Marie Curie is being credited to their husbands. And what about those creative women whose names are not known at all because they were never entered into the males' history books!



It is obvious that man is but an out-growth of woman, and a distorted, incomplete one at that. Even the concept of Goddess with son, carried through to christianity, is a later perversion of the Goddess and daughter "myth." But the ludicrous, blatant re-writing of the original truths enabled our conquerors to form their own religion based on a hierarchy of power, aggression and fear, with women at the bottom. Religion was used to explain male dominance and our inferiority, and then became the rationale for race and class oppression as well. Whenever men want to war on one another, to kill, rape, and conquer, they use religion -- from the Crusades, to the Inquisition, to the pogroms in Eastern Europe. Missionary zeal was the excuse to colonize Africa, the Americas, and Asia, and always woman, the life-giver, was the most persecuted of all; and always the god served was a patriarchal god of death and punishment, whether it was the god of judaism, christianity, islam, hinduism, etc.



Tassili frescoe
from the
Sahara
Desert

Matriarchy DYKE HERITAGE

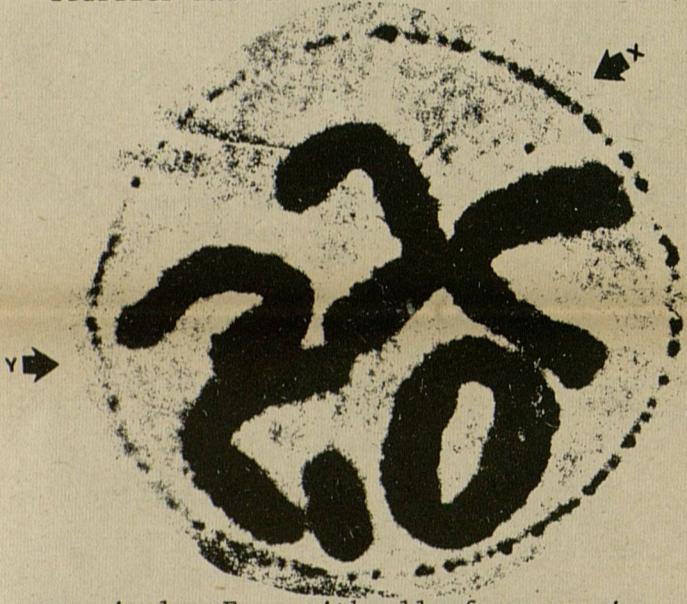
The most devastating act of all was the patriarchal re-writing of religion and myth (ancient unwritten history). Life comes from the female and most of the "lower" (earlier developed) species and many mammals, including humans, reproduce parthenogenically, without the aid of males. Religion has always been our sphere -- "religion" meaning a reverence, awe, and enjoyment of life and energy and the gyrations of the universe. But when the patriarchs began their brutal revolution they re-wrote the myths and religion into the most ridiculous of concepts -- that of a male god creating life, male life, with woman as an after-thought. Athena supposedly sprung full-grown from the head of Zeus and Eve was plucked from the rib of Adam; but Eve and Athena are both names of the first and universally worshipped deity -- the Great Goddess.

Matriarchy DYKE HERITAGE

1. The library of Alexandria, containing ancient matriarchal records, was burned to the ground in 640 A.D. by rampaging patriarchs.
2. Past historical textbooks have always referred to the Sphinx as "he" but now even the male historians are acknowledging that she is female.
3. One famous example is Nefertiti who is finally being credited for her accomplishments as ruler of Egypt. After her death, her husband systematically changed all records of her reign so that he would appear as the innovative genius.
4. Stonehenge - an intricate astronomical instrument... Stonehenge Decoded, Hawking, Delta publishers, 1965.
5. "...From the 15th to the 18th centuries nine million witches were executed..." -Sisterhood is Powerful, ed. R.Morgan.

It is known biological and scientific fact that in many species more males are produced during times of catastrophe and crisis, such as famine or war. And the condition of the human race since the patriarchal revolution has been one of constant catastrophe. Thus, the males are insuring their production by their own continual violence. Besides, for the past few thousand years it has been world-wide practice to eliminate or starve the female babies if there was a lack of food. But there is reason to believe that the male as a whole developed as a mutation resulting from a natural catastrophe and that the y chromosome is really a broken x. Due to missing gene loci on the y chromosome, males are lacking a complete genetic makeup and are therefore inferior physically, psychologically and psychically to us.

As an incomplete female, the male is totally different from woman in ways that go far beyond the socialization he has perpetrated on us. From the moment of conception, females are sturdier and have more of a chance of



survival. Even with all of our regimentation into passivity we are by the males' own standards more capable intellectually and more complete emotionally. The fact that men took control of the earth and changed it from a peaceful productive world into a conglomeration of societies founded and continued on rape, war, exploitation and destruction is not an accident: By their very nature, by their very emptiness of female qualities, men are a death-force. Sensitivity and love are shadow concepts to them, and however hard they try, whatever their socialization, they can only seem to alter their penis-brain natures for a short while.

The "exceptional" male of today who struggles with sexism, may stop overtly oppressing women for a time and even begin raping other men instead, but once he is cut off from the energy of women willing to struggle with him, he falls back into his original exploitative nature and then uses his knowledge of "effeminism" to syphon more energy from women. He may say he is a philogynist (lover of the Female Principle) and he knows he is inferior and oppressive but eventually he again wants to be near women and preferably lesbians. The exceptional man is a male who knows what to say to get the most liberated fuck (rape).

THE NON-INFERIORAL

S8

There is an even more vicious and divisive trend of men draining lesbian energy that is now happening across the country: Men with xy chromosomes and "normal" male hormones who decide they are actually women, but since they too hate men, they want to be lesbians. (This is a different phenomenon from people who possess xxy chromosomes or some other variation, are not fully male, and were socialized as females, with all the accompanying oppression.) Some of these heterosexual males who want lesbian energy and love are actually taking female hormones and are planning to have a sex-change operation. (Even after the operation I would still consider them oppressive since they grew up with male privilege continue to use it against women, and still have the incomplete xy.) But the fact is that some of these men, still pre-operative and still with their pricks attached, manage to convince lesbians that they are women. They get into lesbian organizations, dances, and even acquire lesbian lovers.

This is the most bizarre and dangerous co-optation of lesbian energy and emotion that I can imagine. It has been the source of a lot of time-wasting disputes in lesbian groups in the Bay Area alone.

I personally felt incredibly vulnerable and threatened when I recently went to a workshop at a local lesbian conference and saw a man there who four years ago had pressured me to be bi-sexual, give up my perverted ways, and let him fuck me. When I confronted him, he left, but later, at the larger meeting, other lesbians told me that I was the one who should leave, and that it was a personal dispute between the two of us! (Four years ago I was living an isolated lesbian existence, before the Women's Movement, with my lover being the only other lesbian I knew, and I was getting no heterosexual privilege; I never thought then that the man who was urging me to go straight with him would someday turn to me at an all-women's meeting and tell me he was a lesbian too. Or that I, who have always been a lesbian, should be told to leave a lesbian meeting so that a prick could stay. In fact, he now claims he suffered oppression as a female, when I am at least one woman who feels oppressed by his heterosexual male power position.)

This particular man is incredibly dangerous because he managed to become vice-president of the San Francisco D.O.B. Chapter and caused a split in that organization. He has been published in three lesbian-feminist publications on the West Coast, as a lesbian, and as of March, 1973, printed his own "lesbian-feminist" publication with the aid of a group of lesbians.

This same man, posing as a lesbian, caused an incredible amount of division at the Los Angeles Lesbian Conference in April of 1973. He was scheduled as a lesbian celebrity-singer, as well as being the Northern California representative for the Conference, so that lesbians seeking information or help concerning the Conference would have to go through him. When a lesbian called him up to ask him not to appear in Los Angeles since it was obvious he would drain time and energy, he called

the district attorney to have her indicted by the Federal Government for conspiracy! This same blatant penis-brain (and prick-body) was defended at the Conference as a "right-on sister and feminist." A group of us attempted to explain to all lesbians attending the Conference that this was a biological (as well as emotional and spiritual) male, but the issue was clouded and passed over by the skillful manuvering of certain conference organizers. The high energy of thousands of lesbians gathered together and lack of information about the man was used to vote us down.

If certain lesbians want to push the issue of lesbians working with men, then a specified Lesbian Conference that brings dykes from all over the country should not be the medium used. We came because we wanted to be with lesbians.

The fact is that some real lesbians could not perform because of lack of time and space on the program -- while this man was given support to sing his "lesbian" songs. If even one woman had objected to his presence, it should have been enough to have him removed. As always, a "struggling" man is given precedent over any lesbian.

It is totally absurd that this is an issue -- that lesbians who refuse even to admit straight women into their meetings will let this man in. The truth of the matter is that certain lesbians have been so taken in by his pathetic lie of "growing up female" trapped in a male body that they will stand behind him and fight for him -- even against other lesbians.

The male trick of pitting women against one another to fight men's battles has been used since the beginning of patriarchy. This is not an isolated incident but part of a growing phenomenon and we must be prepared to deal with it as it arises in our communities. It is the ultimate subversion and denial of our right to build our own culture free from male influence.

The other extreme -- that of men isolating themselves and bonding together to form oppressive misogynist power cliques -- has been around as long as patriarchy. Even when men get together under the pretext of struggling against sexism, they are creating an atmosphere which will strengthen their hold on power, as well as giving them more of an "in" to fuck over (literally) women. This is one of the dangers of "men's liberation" that even the "effeminists" themselves have admitted.

Men have banded together in "faggot" organizations using one meaning of that word to ally their "struggle against sexism" with women (homosexual men were used as faggots, sticks of wood, kindling for fires to burn witches.) They also call themselves "effeminists," differentiating themselves from the "gay men" who they refer to as extreme sexists. The "effeminist" line is deceptive -- they seemingly deal with the male supremacist in themselves, all the while creating the illusion that there are some men who are salvageable. They profess to wanting their separate movement, so as not to take energy away from women -- while they live in houses with lesbians and take that richest of female

energy, the emotional energy. Their current line justifies heterosexual men by creating a new revolutionary "acceptable" category for them to fit into, -- the "proto-effemintist," which sanctions these rapists to continue their leeching off women -- as if they don't get enough support from this prick society! The "effeminists" contradict themselves; while appearing to be sincere, these parasitic males are taking energy from women and lesbians on whatever level they can. And they will fight for their sexist survival to the detriment of women's lives.

The primary reason that the males managed to take power from the matriarchies at all was that force and power were concepts foreign to women in a time when there was no hierarchy or oppression. And when the threat became apparent, the women hesitated because it was not in our nature to fight or kill. In that split second of hesitation, the males gained control.

It has taken us ten thousand years to be aware again of the danger and to decide once more that we must not hesitate in the unleashing of our incredible anger that all females possess when life is threatened. Once we stop believing in the naive and liberal myth that men are oppressed also and will gladly give up their patriarchal rape-roles and dominance -- if only we will waste our time trying to educate them -- then we can expand our energies and creativity into one another. And the righteous anger that fills us each time we hear of another friend being raped will cause us to move our peaceful and loving lesbian bodies to protect ourselves and even to kill those who attack us. (Killing for the protection of life has always been part of our female nature.)

M U T A T I O N

Gutter Dyke
Collective

excerpt from a friend's letter

--- hey, I've just got to tell you what happened the other night. - a friend of mine wanted me to go to this dance with her. - I didn't really wanna go cause I don't like mixers, but anyway, while we were there, when my friend was in the bathroom a faggot dressed up like a "woman" said to her "do you wanna ball?" So I got really pissed off and went in there and said "stay out of the women's bathroom and don't ask any more women if they wanna ball." Like a typical prick he yelled "cunt!" That's when the shit started flying. I grabbed his wig, then he hauled off and hit me in the jaw. I countered with a swift kick which floored him. I brought the wig back to the table like a scalp. It was quite a scene. Later on his boyfriend came over to the table, all dressed up with a white wig and red paint on his face. He got down on his hands and knees, begging for his wig and forgiveness!! Do you believe it? Those pricks'll stop at nothing!

Life comes from the Female Principle and the final, most incredible indig-
nity men have perpetrated on us is the myth that we need them and their rapist
bodies to reproduce our own kind. Then, they force us to reproduce their parasi-
tic selves. Parthenogenesis, female self-reproduction, has always been a reality, and may have once been the only method of human reproduction. Even male scientists admit its existence as a natural occurrence. (An egg will split and begin to divide into an embryo, due to a chemical change in a woman's body; sometimes small cells called "polar bodies" that have full genetic material and are clustered around an egg, will fuse with the egg and fertilize it.)

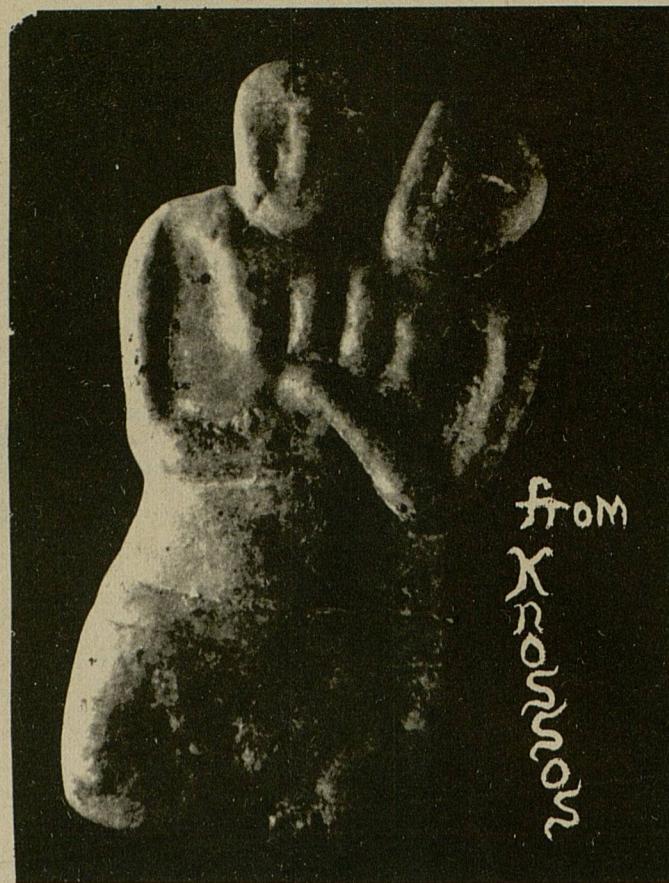
But we have no idea how often parthenogenesis happens. How many women in the world do not relate to men, and how many women, if pregnant, will assume it is because they have been fucked? And how many women who become pregnant, yet insist they have never related to men, will be believed? If they tried to tell the truth in the past they were burned as witches or heretics, or were raped to make sure they were no longer virgin. But a few women today managed to prove they were virgin and were indeed pregnant.

Female Species

Women's greatest strength and mystery, her power as life-giver, is now being co-opted by the penis-brains. The male scientists are trying as quickly as possible to perfect test-tube reproduction (if they haven't already succeeded). So they can finally duplicate themselves without women or maybe by still using us as incubators. They can produce a million little Hitlers or Nixons. (If they like one of their kind enough, they make a dozen.)

But we too can utilize cloning, and we can reproduce ourselves alone or with two women. Each cell in our body contains all of the genetic information to create a full human being. The genes in human beings are distributed amongst our 46 chromosomes. These 46 chromosomes exist in the nucleus of every cell in our bodies except for our sex cells. These cells, called ova in women, contain only half the normal amount, 23, and so are called haploid. In heterosexual reproduction a sperm with 23 chromosomes is surrounded by an egg also with 23 chromosomes and together they make up a full complement of 46. The fertilized egg then begins to undergo spontaneous division into two, four, eight, and finally billions of cells that constitute and differentiate the human body. However, in the last 35 years, the scientists have been finding alternatives in their laboratory research to sexual reproduction. When the egg cell is stimulated (chemically or mechanically -something as simple as a pin jab) start the division process that leads to the adult form even though the egg has not been fertilized. This virgin birth or parthenogenesis has been demonstrated in laboratories: beginning with carrots, later African clawed frogs were used, and then in 1939, a whole rabbit was

Gutter Dyke Collective



reported created from an unfertilized egg. (Because the unfertilized sex cell was haploid the rabbit was not identical to its mother.)

We could even perfect artificial placentas (commonly known as exogenesis - test tube reproduction) so that we would not have to distort and stretch our female bodies to bear our children. (It is also known that women have certain biological defenses against disease, some of which no longer function after pregnancy and childbirth.) By the year 2001, exogenesis will be a real alternative for women who wish to have children.

But men will not just stand by and allow us to reproduce our own kind. They do not wish to use their newly discovered information to benefit women. They are maintaining control of the knowledge in their laboratories and are devising new methods of using it against us. If this sounds like an Amazonial fantasy here's a short list of the well documented research: A concise and well written article on Cloning in the Furies, a lesbian/feminist newspaper from Washington, D.C., May 1972, Vol. I, Issue 4.; Brave New Babies, Rorvick; Utopian Motherhood, Francoeur; Esquire Magazine, - A League of Joe Namaths, April 1969, (rather sensational and sexist); and the New York Times Magazine, March 5, 1972.

If we wanted to live in a world of only women, if we wanted to finally eliminate that great death-force, the parasitic penis-brains, we can do it. And we don't even have to soil our hands by fighting them: without using our female bodies to make more of the rapists, the males would all die out after seventy years or so. We are the totality of the species. We are the means by which we continue ourselves.

Most of us are aware, somewhat of how Third World lesbians/women are subject to racial oppression. Race is not an issue that can easily be dealt with or eliminated. There is a deep-rooted stereotyped racism in each of us that usually never surfaces or only when one is actually pushed up against a wall. I feel that race is a matter of grave importance that should not ever be overlooked or slighted. Third World women are often the victims of very painful experiences that come from white peoples' insensitivity and unawareness - feelings that will always be a part of us.

My own racial background is still a rather confusing aspect of my identity. My mother and grandmother were born and raised in Puerto Rico. My mother's father came from Spain. My father's family all originate in Italy. As a child a very clear distinction was made (by my mother) between white and black Puerto Ricans. Naturally, my sister and I were told that we were white. Since we are all light-skinned, I never questioned her.

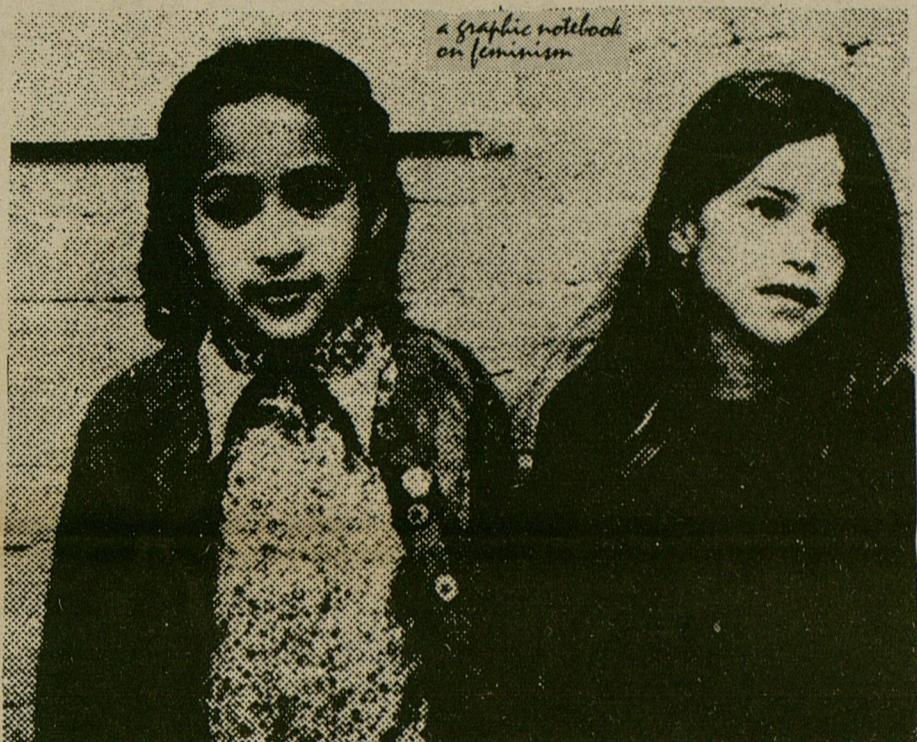
From a very early age I learned it wasn't cool to say that I was Puerto Rican. In my catholic school and all over new york being Puerto Rican was tantamount to being Black. Anyone with a Spanish surname or accent was constantly hassled. However, it was okay to be a dark-skinned Italian or Irish or Polish, or even Greek. The neighborhood was very ethnic. There was a tremendous push in school to identify with one's nationality. I suddenly realized that I would have to cover up my mother's "nationality", if I wanted friends, by saying she was Spanish. I also developed a great pride in being one half Italian and felt very lucky in having an Italian surname. My secret didn't last too long. It was a small community and my mother was compelled to go to the school a lot for various reasons. The girls that now knew who I was never let me forget and made it a point of making nasty comments about Puerto Ricans in my presence. However, I was in no position to defend anyone. My mother had drilled into me that there were good and bad Puerto Ricans and that everyone else was naturally bad. Fortunately, I was able to see through some of it.

My main problem was not having any culture to identify with. I wasn't taught Spanish or familiar with anything relevant to the culture. There was much resentment towards me by most Puerto Rican females because I could "pass" so easily. An immediate barrier would also be created since I didn't know the language (that being one of their bonds and an effective way of cutting up honks in front of their faces).

After leaving grammar school and going to high school, I didn't have any more problems concerning my background. All I had to do was lie, since my mother was not expected to attend high school parent-teacher meetings. My home was also not the place where I could bring friends -- for fear of them meeting my mother and then avoiding me. I didn't perfectly understand, either, what I was hiding, because I believed that being Puerto Rican was just another nationality and shouldn't warrant so much discrimination. But I was also aware of the pain my mother felt when people didn't under-

stand her (verbally) and then would make snide remarks at her. Seeing all the shit that was thrown at Puerto Ricans all over the city, I knew I didn't want any of it.

No one had ever confronted me for not dealing with my background until I moved into a women's collective a few years ago. We were all trying to struggle with the ways we oppressed each other so I thought I could be honest for the first time in my life. Some of the women wouldn't believe that I didn't know the difference between Puerto Ricans and white people. It suddenly became obvious that Puerto Ricans were part of the Third World. (I had actually began questioning things when the Young Lords (a Puerto Rican liberation group) said it in new york.) Now fully conscious of my new identity, I didn't know how to relate to it. Being a woman and a feminist I didn't want to belong to an organization that sought to equalize Third World men's power with the white man while leaving the women down in the dumps.



feelings

The dilemma I face is one which most Third World feminists face also -- that of not having an organization where we could belong, to discuss ways of dealing with the racism that surrounds us through a female perspective. There have been various Third World women's and lesbians' groups. But although they are not male-dominated, they are usually male oriented in that they visualize a united front of Third World peoples (male and female) fighting the oppressor (white society). It would be good if lesbian/feminists could get together around our Third World identity.

So, here I am, still without a real identity living in a dyke collective and relating mostly to white women. My sympathies and fears (fears of being crushed and annihilated because of racism) lie with Third World women; however, usually overcome by guilt, I can't work and struggle with them. Because of the inherent racism in the community, I'm not upfront with most dykes --although very defensive when I catch a racist comment. My ideal would be to have a super utopia amongst dykes, but that isn't realistic at this time. Therefore, we are compelled to say who, what, and why we are because we do oppress each other. And the only way to eliminate oppressions is by forcing lesbians to face it and struggle around it.

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UNCLASSING

For me, class has been a rather explosive issue in recent times. I have been told that I am divisive when all of us lesbians should be "getting together" - that it places guilt on middle class lesbians, who are also oppressed by the upper classes. And since women are all classless anyway, discussions of class oppression only create more useless distinctions between us. (Some of those women who want to ignore our differences/oppressions will even go so far as to say also that race is an inconsequential issue. Needless to say, they are WHITE.) The fact that a lesbian can choose to ignore class indicates that she doesn't feel that kind of oppression.

Many of us never had the privilege of disregarding our class, since the oppression was an everyday part of our existence. I was usually aware of how much other kids had only because I had very little. It was a continual reminder when I didn't have the appropriate dress to wear to a school function - when I was shut up for being too loud in public - when I visited friends and was shown their toys and their parents' possessions - when my diet consisted mostly of starches and canned goods - when roaches crawled up my leg as I stepped into the bath (no shower) - when the fact that my father died meant we would have a steady income from social security (comparable to welfare, but more respectable).

It's true that the class we grow up with comes from our parents and that basically the class a woman holds is dependent upon the class of the man she is associated with, and therefore, lesbians are free of this. But as far removed as we lesbians may be from the lifestyle of our parents, there are privilege carry-overs that relate to survival ability and ways of interaction. As actually "classless" as we all are now, in being separate from men (the originators and perpetrators of the class system), there are privileges some of us have retained from our background or schooling that are used against other women. It is very difficult to dispense with all of our privileges when we exist in a society that demands that we be one up on the next person in order to survive (and any strengths and techniques of survival that we have developed we should certainly retain and expand). Therefore, I am referring only to the ways we interrelate in our lesbian community.

Identifying with the middle or upper classes can be dangerous if you're not dealing with all the negative aspects. By that I mean dealing with your relating in a condescending manner to other lesbians, using your school-learned intellectual capacities to cut up lesbians or taking for

The Lower Caste

granted whatever privileges you may have, such as possessions or mobility, are common to all lesbians. Then, acting surprised when you hear otherwise is one more trash on lower class lesbians. Judgements on the way other lesbians talk or move is another instance. Acting in a quiet, refined (usually unnatural and stilted) manner freaks me out when I can't control my emotions, anger or frustrations. It's a well learned tactic to help one pass in society.



Puerto Rico, 1931.

It's difficult to explain the extent of the oppression if you don't know what I mean, and if you don't feel it yourself. It is possible to experience class oppression without being able to define it, without knowing exactly why you feel uncomfortable and uneasy in your relationships with some people. This entire statement shouldn't be taken as an attack on middle class lesbians or working class lesbians who desire some security and stability in their lives (as long as their upward-mobility doesn't cause them to oppress others by forgetting their own oppression). Lesbians who aren't aware of the forms that class takes in their interpersonal relationships can develop some sense when it is happening, and learn how to deal with it, just as we all awakened to the sexism and heterosexism all around us. It's a progression, and as painful as the growing awareness can be, it does enable us to struggle around classism and eventually eliminate it. The idea is not to condemn and raise guilt, but to recognize and struggle.

ONESELF

Class from a

For many lesbians, their "class" is ambiguous and confusing. Lesbians who have considered themselves middle-class may find with a growing class consciousness that it is not that clear-cut. If most of us (loosely defined middle class dykes) examine our backgrounds we will find that we grew up with middle class values in a not so middle class environment and with our parents being upwardly mobile, but definitely working class. Of course, it varies from city to town to rural communities, from the east to the midwest to the west, and according to the individual culture and religion or non-religion of the family.

I grew up relating to myself as middle class, but upon examination of my family, I discovered that my father was very upwardly-mobile working class - finally becoming middle class. But my mother was and is working class, insofar as she maintains definitely non-middle class values (she believes in being upfront and is "uncultured and uncouth" as my father put it). She has been considered inarticulate and stupid, if not outright insane, most of her life. However, she has a clear sense that poor people are mistreated, that rich people tend to cheat and are snobs, and that the police are sadistic and dangerous.



I grew up in Ohio in a neighborhood with mostly working class people. We felt more secure economically since I was an only child. Looking back, I realize how I oppressed my friends by not understanding that they had less privilege (toys, candy, and confidence) than me. On the other hand, I was oppressed by my class-mates (not my friends) because they had more than I. I had the security of food, and a fair amount of possessions but little confidence since I was "different" (there was an underlying sense that I was lesbian from my earliest days). When my middle and upper middle class schoolmates met my mother, they never came back to visit. Needless to say, my identifying with my father's upward mobility oppressed my mother too.

"Middle Class"

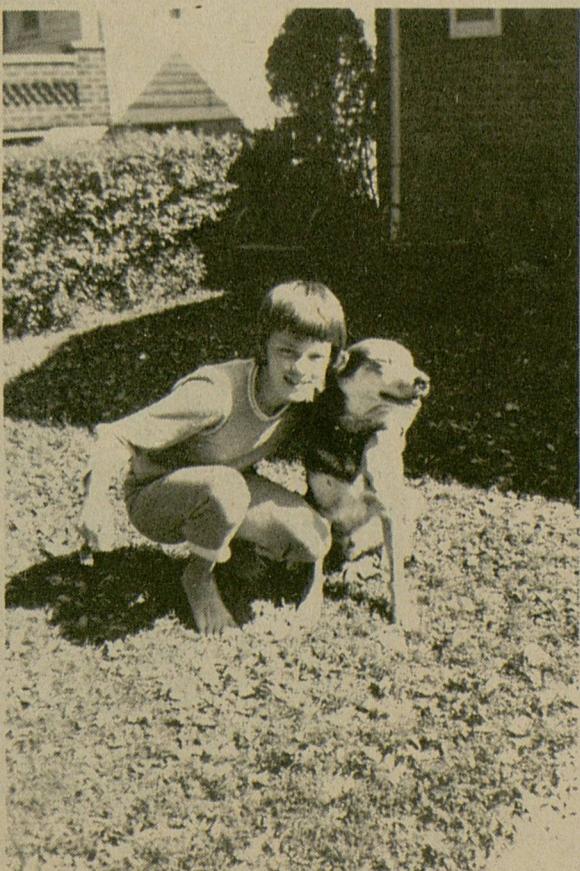
Gutter Dyke

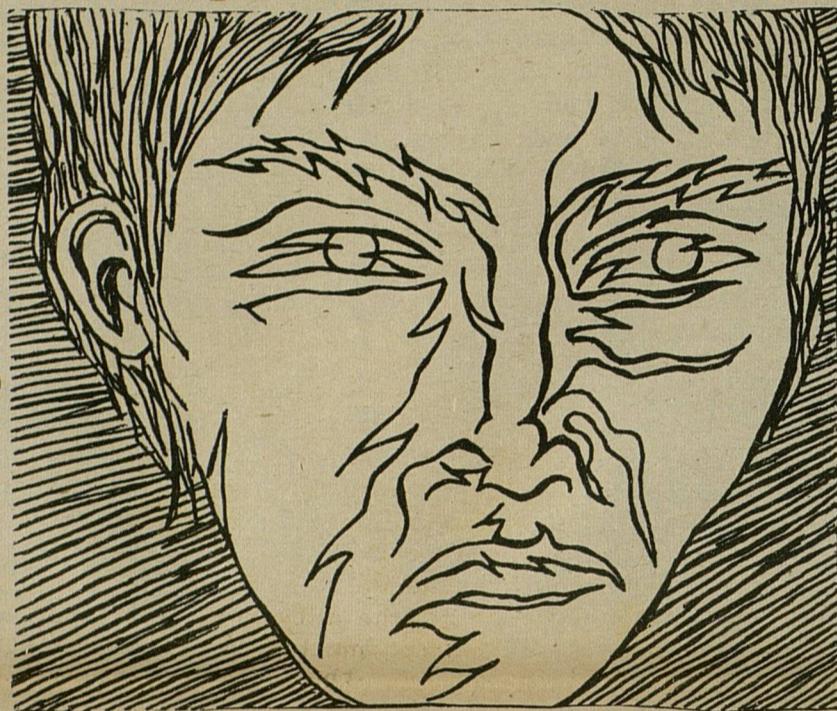
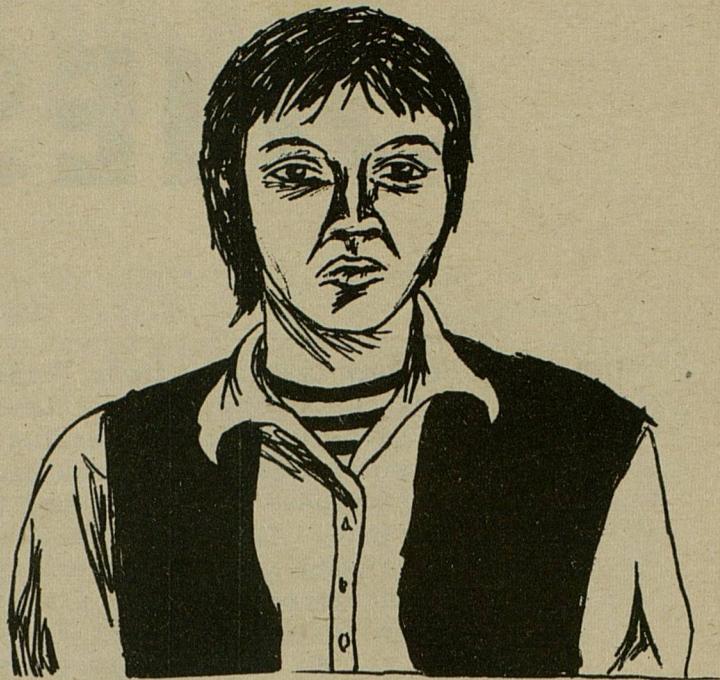
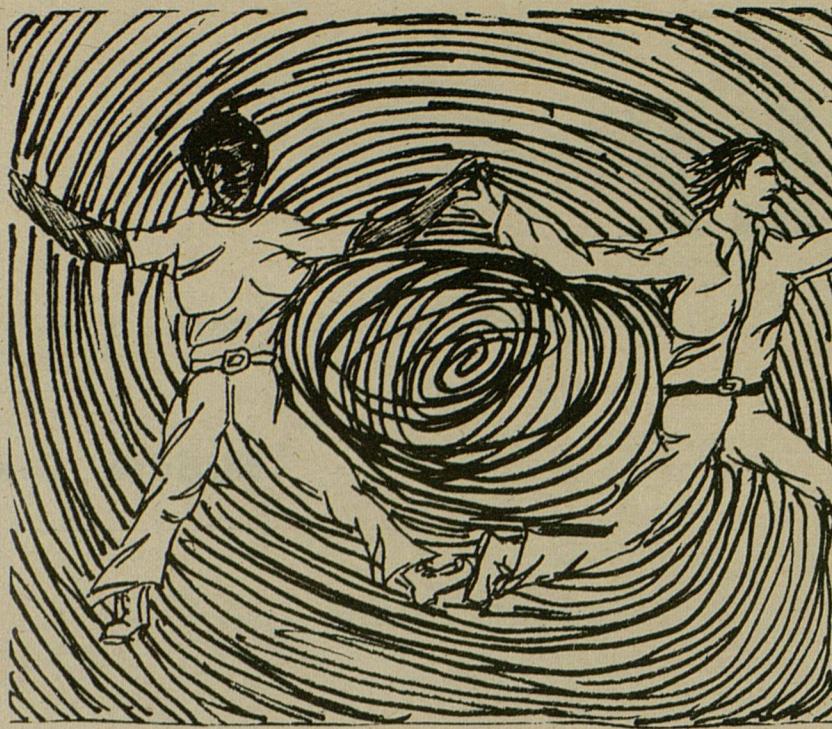
Perspective

So, in a way, I feel in a class limbo. I am closer to my mother now, but I don't feel oppression to the extent she does, or to the extent my lower class friends do. But by keeping my senses open I am becoming aware and angered by the blatant classism all around me, and dealing with it in the lesbian community is hard! For one thing it is not clear-cut and it's very touchy.

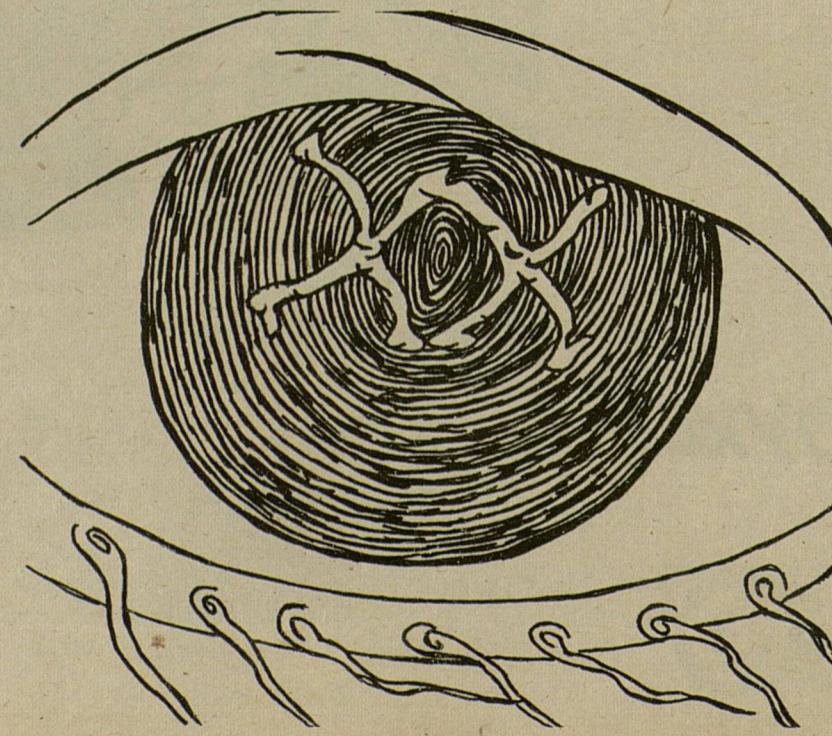
If each one of us could be aware and personally outraged by the classism that affects us and our friends we could begin to be able to deal with our own classist attitudes. Awareness of class is not a categorization and evaluation of our backgrounds so we can play the "more oppressed than thou" game. It is the acknowledgement and understanding of the unequal power relationships that exist between us now, we can stop oppressing one another and work together in trust.

DYKES

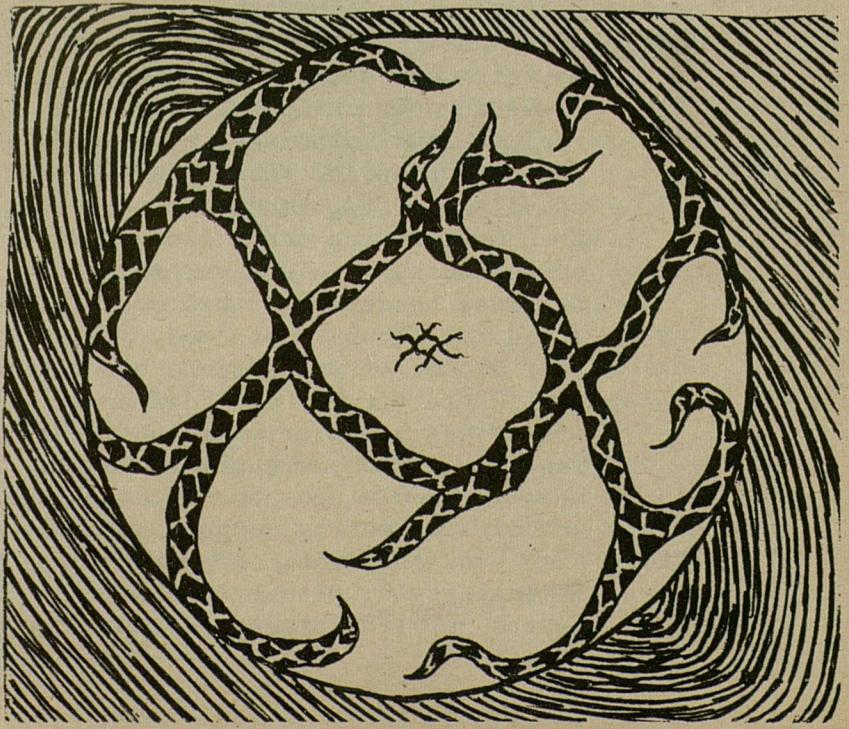




J E A N S



graphite 2001



inside
my hide
lotsa cells
hold it all
together
with each other

every cell
hugs another

every cell
is a mother
and a daughter
and a lover
of another
little cell
and they stick so well
together

holding tight
adding up just right to me!

inside
each cell
X and X
go so well together

every X is female

every X
hugs the next
one to it
and they do it
all the time

every cell is gay!
& every female, if she looks at it that way
is a whole lesbian community!
a body of unity
a billion groovy X's
kissing
hugging
loving
a million little dyke cells
hugging all those next door
building more:
making organs, bones and teeth
that hug the tissues underneath
until i'm XX saturated
feeling real integrated
I'M A WOMAN & I LIKE IT!

i feel pretty lucky
with a million cells that love me

& EVERY WOMAN
IS AN XX
UNISEXED
SELF-SUFFICIENT, REPRODUCING
FEMALE FEMALE

now each of us can take a cell
treat it well
it'll grow
split from one cell into two
cause they multiply & divide
inside and outside
all alone
on their own
& that's all it takes us
to make us!

but don't stop there --
each cell rebuilds itself
once every seven years
we're immortal!
chromosomal
XXXX
schizo phrenic parthenogenetic
unisexed lesbian cells!

one cell fucked up
X broke & changed to Y
& we let it grow anyway & it looked weird
but we thought it might
be okay if we treated it right
(that is to say if we kept our eye on it)
AND IT'S TAKEN 50,000 YEARS OF OUR TIME
keeping our eye on it

it was weird
ugly
incomplete
hairy chest bad breath smelly feet
having no flesh where it ought to
but having flesh where it ought not to
it was so strange that it knew it
& it committed itself to institutions!
(that was the first thing he did)

he couldn't make it on his own
so he dragged a woman home
to be his wife. & then he took another
he thinks every X should be his mother!
cause he had only one X
we had two
& he knew he couldn't do what we could do:
we could grow food; he could only kill
we made each other strong; he made us ill
we raised animals; he ate them
we sailed ships; he sank them
we made peace; he made war
but now he tells us he did more!

everything we did he laughed at
& then to make up for what he lacks
he learned to think in what he calls "abstracts"
which is just his clever way of saying
that while we're working, he's out playing
so he "abstractly" must invent
a reason to convince us he should live at our expense
& this is how he does it:
he tells us that he loves us.
Big Deal.

we don't need him
we just feed him
& while he laughs at what we do
he knows its use
cause he consumes what we produce

X and Y
just don't add up
each man
hooks up
with a woman
looking for one that he can rip off of a spare X
to replace his broken, fucked-up, maladjusted sex.

well every single man
in every single cell
is xy
heterosexual
fucked up
and he thinks he's part of us!
the nerve!
he is the only kind on earth
to make another kind give birth
to him. the only species that's aggressed
on our sex
the only animal to impinge on everybody's evolution
spreading his pollution
everywhere he fucks
he'll jerk-off in womencowsgeese
horseschickenstrees
& ducks

& WE'RE PUTTING A STOP TO THIS
AIN'T GONNA BREED HIM NO MORE

he's already so degenerate
if we leave him he'll disintegrate
cause he can't reproduce like we can
(being nothing but a man)

and that bastard kid, xy
only takes 68 years to die

XX will inherit the earth
& the sky
& give birth
to a universe
of dykes!

— barbry

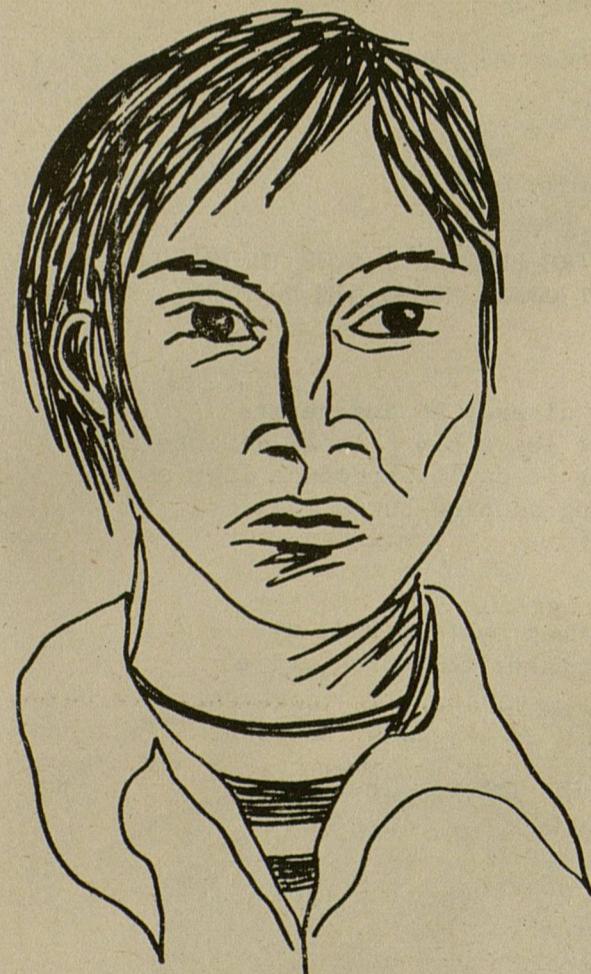
SEPARATISM

Since we do not relate to men at all and never will, this is not aimed at them but instead towards certain lesbians and women.

SEPARATISM, as a position, is the way in which we relate to other lesbians, women and the enemy.

The only mention I will make of straight women who relate to men on a close sexual level is that it is up to the straight feminists to reform them. Straight/heterosexual women can't be trusted in any real situation because they will sell you out if it gets too heavy for them - men are the focal point of their lives.

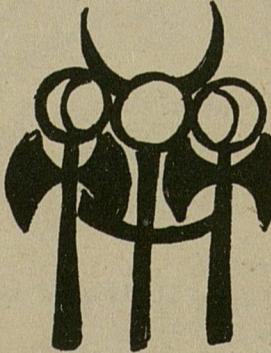
Bisexual women have a similar problem with men. Even though they are partly in touch with their feelings in that they are loving women, they have not given up their heterosexual privilege. Male approval and identification is still primary to their existence. By being "liberated" enough to relate sexually to women, they are giving men an extra amount of titillation. Any woman who has tried to explain her lesbianism to a man realizes how ex-



citing and challenging she becomes to him. This is even more dangerous when women who relate only to women are brought into contact with men through their relating to bisexuals. The lesbian is pressured in one way or another to maintain a facade of friendliness to the prick so that her relationship with the bisexual isn't threatened. Not to mention she is sharing this woman with a man.

As far as straight women are concerned, or those who are celibate now but foresee giving their energies to men after they supposedly have overcome their sexism, we have found that it is very difficult to maintain an equal relationship with them. If they have a strong feminist background and accept the fact that true feminism should ultimately lead to lesbianism, then they view us, the lesbians, as more perfect, stronger persons than themselves. Therefore much weight is laid on our actions and decisions, giving us the greater burden of responsibility. The straight feminist will tell us how much she should want to love women but she's still afraid, etc. In this manner the straight woman is relieving herself of numerous oppressions by not identifying as a lesbian. She usually does not want to hear about our depressions or hassles with other women because that would ruin her lesbian fantasy. So we are left with her sad stories and miseries, but goddess forbid we should comfort her with a warm hug. Anyway we look at it we are expected to maintain an image and live up to it for the sake of lesbianism. We can't be truly honest and real with a straight woman. Casting aside some feminists, most straights still bear the old stereotypes of lesbians. There's something wrong or weird about you. You've got "problems."

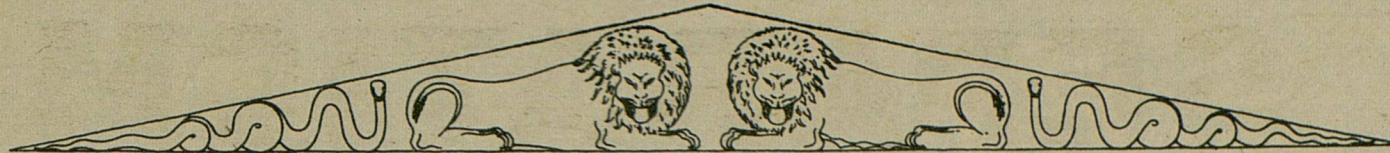
Another way that straight women treat lesbians is in the role of observer. Rather than partaking in an experience, they sit back and watch. We feel it is essential to develop close, binding relationships with those lesbians whose motivations and feelings are similar to our own.



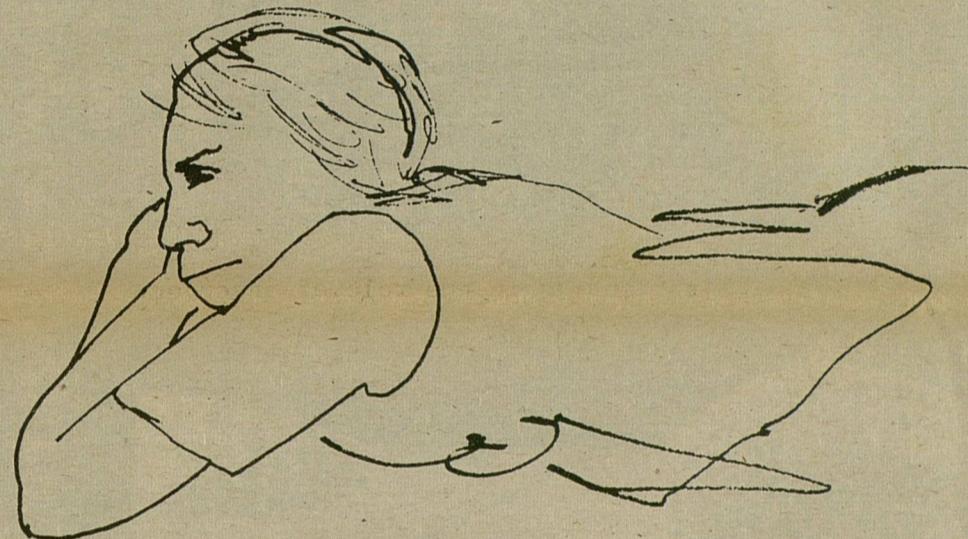
Although we feel lesbianism is the only natural way for women to interrelate since we are physical as well as emotional beings, we realize that for many women now, in this male supremacist shitpile, intense emotional and sexual relationships are difficult and can be destructive.

Therefore, women who consider themselves celibate, not lesbian, fighting for a loving female world and recognizing that there is no reconciliation with men, are our allies.

Some lesbians feel a separation from the celibate since they see that she will not open herself completely to them. But that is a valid option for each of us. We also tend to be selective in our sexual and emotional relationships, and many of us who call ourselves lesbian do spend the greater part of our lives as actually celibate. If a matriarchal celibate views lesbianism as a good and viable choice for her future, and doesn't feel alienated from us dykes, then we respect her opinion to identify as a celibate and value her friendship.



BECAUSE WE WANT TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS ON A MUCH MORE INTERPERSONAL LEVEL AND GROW, WE HAVE FOUND IT NECESSARY TO SEPARATE OURSELVES FROM CERTAIN LESBIANS. By separating, we don't mean it in the alienating way it sounds. We usually relate in a friendly manner to most lesbians we know. However, there is no desire to develop close, binding ties with those lesbians whom we have major clashes with. For the most part, we want to withdraw ourselves from very oppressive, negative situations into more positive ones. This is the basis of our politics. When you have little or nothing in common with someone, you tend to argue over what you might consider very obvious and elementary -- there is usually not much room left for any other interaction. We would prefer to avoid a lot of fighting and start dealing with the "fine" lines between us, as well as support each other in our agreements. We are not out to build a mass movement. We have seen the futility and unreality of that dream at this time. There is too much struggling to be done internally before we can deal with other women.



Major differences begin with the extent of one's feminism. Lesbians who do not see all women as a strong, motivating force in creating change are very difficult to build real relationships with. To convince a lesbian that women are the "first sex" and are responsible for all of the technology, inventions and structures of the past can be almost impossible, considering most people are skeptical of the few books that lead into these facts. Many lesbians are also fearful of believing that a plot has existed amongst all men to subjugate women, continually telling us lies about our heritage and culture, and suppressing our capabilities (talents, skills, and knowledge). Unfortunately, there are also those lesbians who have low opinions of women, in general, and don't see men using us to their own advantage as homemaker, babymaker, and sexmaker. We feel it is also very important to view all men as being part of the conspiracy, since they all obtain privileges from the system and would all fight to maintain it. Therefore, it is also rather trying to be with lesbians who support their "exceptional" male friendships. Some lesbians even go so far as to inquire about one another through past male acquaintances. For those lesbians who have stopped relating to all men, this kind of forced interaction creates a dangerous vulnerability.

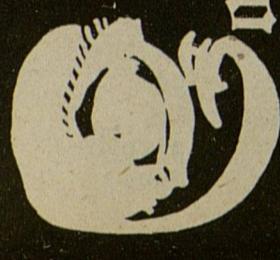
It is obviously difficult to get together with those lesbians whose political ideologies are concerned with exchanging one male hierarchy for another. We see sexism as being the basis of all of our oppressions - all the other "isms" that continue to perpetuate themselves (capitalism, nationalistic socialism, imperialism, racism, classism, etc.) Just as sexism is the source of all of our other oppressions, maleness is the source of sexism. In order to rid the world of sexism we must first rid the world of men. But obviously we must also begin to deal with the racial and nationalistic and class divisions that men have created between us. We must strike back at the cancerous growth of their male defined structures, specifically the insidious infiltration into our Lesbian communities by their various "liberation" movements, socialist parties and groups, and socialistically male defined "revolutionary" politics. As feminists, we believe that women are inherently collectively oriented. True socialism is an integral part of our vision of feminism; "socialist feminism," therefore, is redundant.

Throughout centuries of patriarchal rule, women have been conditioned to react in an acquiescent and supportive way to the multitude of anti-female institutions. Our lives have been wasted by subtle diverting of our energy into male alternatives, such as "revolutionary" groups designed to alter the hierarchy of male power, but keeping the oppression down on women. Some Lesbians even fall into the trap of the other extreme by joining the female end of the U.S. military core. While seeing a survival alternative to the "straight" world, they wind up an integral part of this system which is constantly denying us all our rights and privileges. The feminist movement around the world was sold out by the vague and empty "power" of the vote. Continued hope in male politicians and male power struggles is equally destructive to our lesbian/feminist movement. Even if these groups include intensely oppressed women.

Another real difference that exists is "class". If a lesbian is not heavily struggling with her class in a way that doesn't hurt lower and working class lesbians, then I don't want to get too close to her. If judgements are being made on my mannerisms, then I'm gonna start scrutinizing too. Since men in society have set the standards on what's passable and what isn't, I say "throw it all away and be natural." It's valid to say that middle and upper class attitudes are an outgrowth of a destructive system that enslaves women of all races and would eliminate lesbianism if it could. Class privilege is a protection in the competitive male world. The lesbian community has no use for it.

Separatism is not an end in itself. It is the means by which we attain a stronger sense of ourselves so that we can eventually work with all lesbians. And then, we would be a forceful unit in attacking the oppressive elements in this society.

I am a rathal of many faces of the



GODDESS

Singing chants of the Witchworld hitherto we be
Come blend some harmonies with me
Together once again we will be free

I am the whirlwind in the willows
I am the firefly in the night
I am the tremour of the earth
against our foes

I am the foam crested wave of
sea might

I am the combined frenzy of all women's woes
I am the yeast that rises in your mothers' doughs
I am the first dawn that greets the light
I am the pent up anger that every woman knows

I am all manner and all shapes of creatures
For look upon my many faces that
melt and flow and grow
I am your daughter, mother, lover of
female features

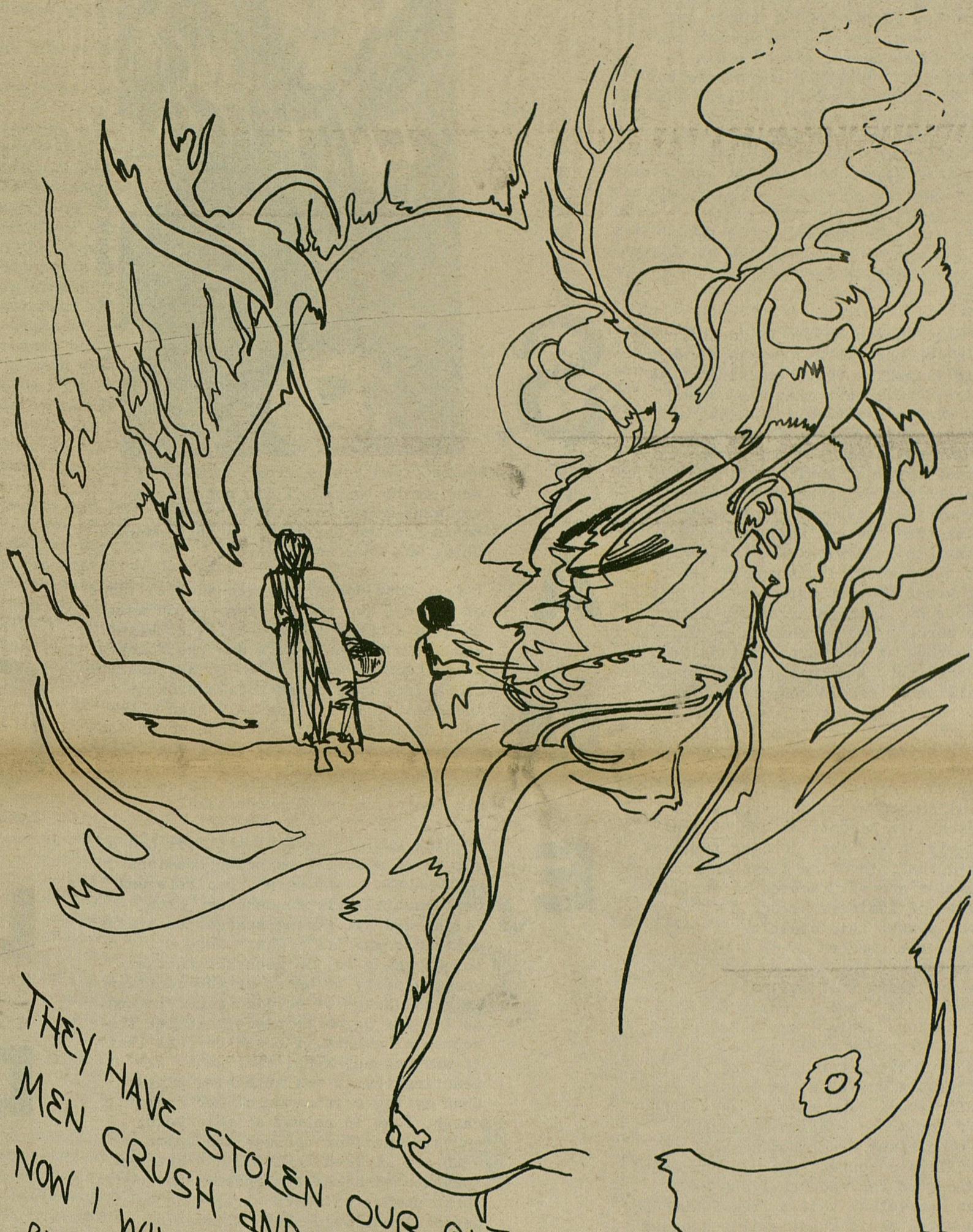
For I am Demeter, Hecate, Kali
a triumverate of the three
United Living Spirits of the
Gorgonous, Sirens, Furyish

For I am strong in my many

faces of DYKES
an Amazon nation WE all will be

...Aida...

line
drawing
of
Signature
of
STONE
3rd
B.C.
or
A.D.



THEY HAVE STOLEN OUR RIGHT TO WALK FREE —
MEN CRUSH AND DESTROY OUR WAY, OUR LIFE
NOW, I WILL NOT COVER UP MY FACE WEEPING
BUT CRYING OUT IN THE SILENCE
THAT THESE ACCURSED DEAF SOULS CAN NOT HEAR ...
IN THE SEASON OF HARPIES AND DOGS
O KALI-HECATE, LIKE A COBRA WILL I STRIKE!

This article is specifically written for the women who attended the West Coast Lesbian Conference, held in Los Angeles the weekend of April 13th through the 15th, and witnessed a confrontation between Robin Morgan and myself, Rena, and also witnessed the use of taped criticisms of Robin to support the conference organizers particular disagreements with her. This article is being sent to various women's publications across the country. I am writing this article to clarify my criticisms of both Robin Morgan and the conference organizers, and to explain how I feel I was caught in their crossfire. I think that the entire situation has detracted from the points I was originally trying to make.

As a half-Puerto Rican, (I identify with my mother who was Puerto Rican, but my father is white) working class lesbian, I was very concerned about Robin Morgan's analysis of class and race oppression within the lesbian/feminist movement. In her speech on Saturday morning, April 14th, she was vague and confusing about the importance of these issues. At a later meeting the same day where women got together to talk with her, presumably about her speech, I was one of the first women who attempted to criticize the speech. I am in agreement with Robin about a lot of things, especially her outrage at the participation of "Beth" Elliot, a supposed male "transsexual" in a lesbian conference, and about the divisive tactics of male-dominated socialist groups within the Women's Movement. My intentions were to constructively criticize Robin within the context of feminism. My initial question was concerning her statements in support of the Amazon Quarterly, a Bay Area lesbian/feminist arts journal, in which class and race oppression are not treated as serious elements of feminist struggle. Robin did not answer this question directly; instead, she reacted as if I had attacked her. She assumed that I was white and began to invalidate my criticisms as if I had no basis for what I was saying. When I was asked to go onto the stage in order to be heard, I was on Robin's territory and was in a vulnerable position; by monopolizing the microphone, she made it very difficult for me to explain my ideas. Even though she described herself as non-college educated, she did not want to relate to the fact that she has gotten her verbal skills from SOMEWHERE. Robin acted as if these skills dropped from the sky onto the "deserving." Through slippery semantics and double talk, and by treating the situation as a debate, she managed to cover a number of extraneous subjects, some of which I agreed with her about. However, Robin DID NOT listen and respond to what I was actually saying.

After I had had some space to talk, Robin apologized basically, for being defensive. At that point, it became clear that many women were uptight about the confrontation continuing. One woman yelled out that we should kiss and make up because she didn't dig the bad vibes and said we should all go out and have an orgy. Shortly after that, before I felt that there was any real resolution, Robin gave me a long hug, seemingly to prove to the audience that she sympathized with

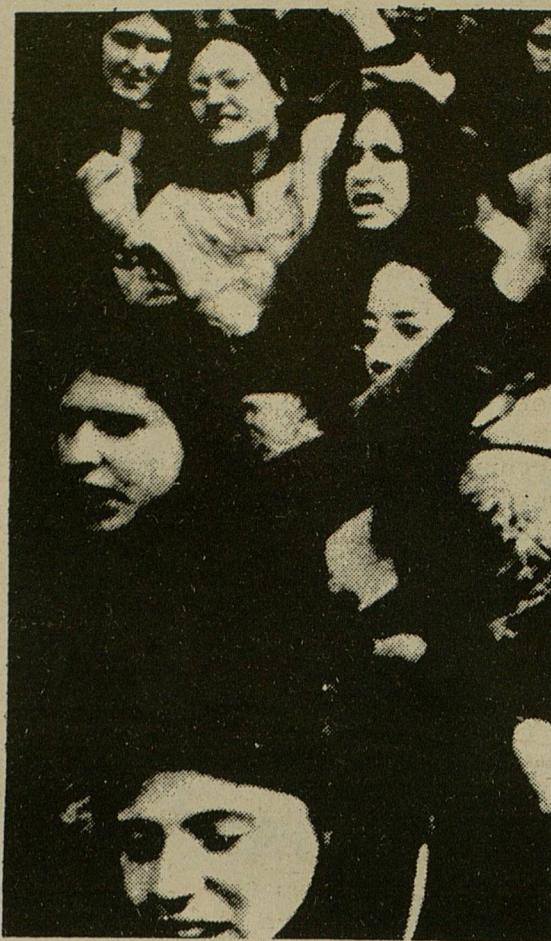
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A GRAPHIC NOTEBOOK ON FEMINISM

where I was coming from. I did not want to be hugged; I did not get to say what I went on stage to say. Robin created the illusion that everything was cool and resolved.

I feel that Robin had preconceived ideas of where I was coming from, which seem to have a basis in her political background in the male left and the Women's Liberation Movement. Two of her assumptions were that class equals Marxism and that socialism can only mean male-left organizations. But a person's consciousness includes all the things that she has been through. Robin was using a political shorthand that she assumed all feminists would understand.

I think Robin's general attitude had a lot to do with the existing tensions between the conference organizers and her, particularly concerning "Beth" Elliot and her strong statements against socialist parties. There were a lot of things going on, in general, that a vast majority of women at the conference were not aware of or didn't understand. As I later began to piece together the course of events, I began to feel that it was not me, Rena, that Robin was reacting to; it was something bigger than my few criticisms of her could cause, I am in no way at this point excusing her for the way she dealt with me. I feel that Robin's actions contributed to an atmosphere that a large number of women already considered alienating. This alienation had a lot to do with the way the conference was structured and the organizers concept and purpose of a lesbian conference.

First of all, the conference workshops emphasized gay and women's rights, law reform, sexuality, music, and art, which created a void for discussion of issues more directly related to an analysis of lesbian/feminism. I am not saying that these workshops were not important to a large number of women, but the meager number of other workshops created a situation where women did not have the space to bring up possibly "alienating" issues without being seen as "disruptive." Discussions on what lesbian/feminism means were forced into large meetings where personal contact and a real exchange of ideas was impossible. Large meetings like this could

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only have caused the chaos which they did. The lack of workshops on racism and classism in the Women's Movement is indicative of the conference organizers lack of understanding that these issues might be important to a lot of lesbians attending the conference.

The atmosphere of "disruptiveness" was not only true around the set-up of the workshops, but also in the organization of childcare facilities and the supported presence of "Beth" Elliot by the conference organizers. In both situations, "disruption" occurred from elements in the audience when the situation could have been avoided had the organizers been less arrogant and more sensitive to the women who the conference had supposedly been organized for. The lack of adequate childcare seems to have been an act of negligence; and because it was so poorly thought out, mothers and women involved in raising children were forced into the role of being "disruptive crazies." A lot of misguided resentment was thrown at righteously angry lesbians when the blame should have been placed on the conference organizers.

However, in the case of "Beth" Elliot, I do not think it was negligence, but a deliberate arrogance that brought him to the conference. Women were viewed as divisive when we objected to having a man shoved down our throats at a lesbian conference. For a lot of women who did not know the history behind this man, it was absurd and thoughtless for him to have been invited to perform at the conference; and it was a direct slap in the face to those lesbians who had supported his ouster from the Daughters of Bilitis.

After a "show of hands" on whether "Beth" Elliot should perform, dissenting women refused to be quieted. The conference organizers' line was "the show must go on," which reeked of a straight media attitude towards "entertainment." In fact, the emphasis on performance ran through the whole weekend. The conference leaflets announced that Robin Morgan and Kate Millet would be speaking, a deliberate use of "superstarism," as if this is really what draws women to a conference. My feeling of not being a participant in the conference was accentuated by the presence of TV cameras.

The structure of the conference around superstarism plus existing tensions between Robin and the conference organizers created a situation where Robin could not hear me for what I was saying, but what she thought I was saying. This is not to imply that after all is said and done, we agree about the best way class and race should be struggled with in the lesbian/feminist movement, but because of various dynamics operating at once, she was more defensive than she might have been.

On Sunday, I was approached by a woman named Pat who said she "supported" me and would like to tape an interview with me concerning my feelings about what had happened between Robin and myself on Saturday. I thought it would be a good idea to make the tape because she said she would try to have it played at a general meeting and assured me that she would not use it for reasons other than to give me the space to be heard. I asked her who she was connected with and never did she associate

herself with the conference organizers. Unfortunately, I had to leave the conference on Sunday afternoon; as a result, I was not present when she played the tape. But I knew some of my friends were staying and could tell me about it. I did not expect that anything I said would be misinterpreted.

After a telephone conversation with Pat and talking to some friends who had stayed longer, it became apparent that my statements about Robin were being used to criticize her about unrelated issues and that Pat was involved with the conference organizers. I found out that on Sunday afternoon Pat had played the tape, but that at a general meeting that evening Pat had spoken and had paraphrased what I had said in the tape, adding that Robin had been the most divisive element in the conference. The insinuation was that I had made that statement or at least agreed with it, which is totally untrue. Pat had also told me over the phone that she was working on an article to be printed in The Lesbian Tide about Robin's participation in the conference and that she wanted to quote me in her article. It was clear to me that her interest in quoting me did not have to do with being concerned about Robin's attitudes about class and race. She seemed more concerned with using my statements as "evidence" to back up her particular hostilities toward Robin. I also became aware that Pat's criticisms of Robin are shared by a larger number of women, particularly the conference organizers and certain members of The Lesbian Tide staff.

Robin's statements against socialist groups and "Beth" Elliot, her support of "The Family of Woman" in getting a room to perform in after their performance had been cut short by the conference organizers, and her support of those women who "did justice" to a Jesus freak who disrupted Robin's speech on Saturday morning, make her an open target for criticisms by various elements in the Los Angeles community.

These dynamics detracted from any real discussion about the importance of classism and racism in a feminist struggle because both Robin and Pat were exploiting me and the things I said for their own ends. I am left to speculate how Robin and Pat would have dismissed me had I identified myself as a white-middle class woman. Both were patronizing; both were so enveloped in the existing tensions at the conference that neither would listen to what I was actually saying.

My point was that unless we learn to deal constructively with the issues of class and race oppression and other factors that effect where lesbians are at, we are going to live under an illusion of what a feminist struggle is and all that we talk about will merely be rhetoric. It means that each of us must confront our oppressive behavior and attitudes in our daily lives. This is not limited to class and race, but also includes sexism, age oppression, children and their care, mothers, heterosexual oppression, etc. These are not empty political issues and concepts. Dealing with these issues is necessary to eliminate male supremacist attitudes. And being defensive, patronizing and insensitive, acting out of guilt and backstabbing do exist among us all, whatever we choose to call them.

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Except for me and the tree I was quite alone. I'd been dreaming about the tree since the last full moon. I knew that I would find it or that it would find me. Sometimes I need a little help finding things. But this tree I knew right off and I knew. I had this crazy idea that if I could wrap myself around her good enough (what was good enough I didn't know) I would find some ease. Real ease. Some comfort "sister" if you know what I mean. Well I wrapped myself around that dear old tree and I waited. And I waited some more. The more I waited the crazier I felt. After a while my body started to change. I could feel the juices changing inside. My eyes sunk into my skull and my flesh tightened itself around the bones. I didn't know what was happening but I didn't want it to stop. I couldn't see anything. I wasn't sure of what I was hearing. None of it mattered. It felt so good.

When I woke up I was still wrapped around the tree. I knew where I was. It wasn't where I wanted to be. I held closer to the tree for reassurance and felt her pulse. That was enough. I didn't remember falling asleep but I couldn't think more on it. I was quite wrapped around the tree. My body ached. With much difficulty I unwound myself and got seated on the ground. I felt ten feet long, all thin and hard. My muscles were knots. I half imagined me to have leaves growing out of my head. But when I put my hand to it I found only hair. I started thinking about what had happened and what I wanted to happen but nothing came to me. I wasn't out of my head. I wasn't dead. Just what it was I didn't know.

I sat with the tree until my belly started to whine. Food. I had to have some food. I went in search of wild edibles and came back shortly with wild berries and onion flowers ready for a feast. I hadn't been sitting long when a woman appeared before me. She stood in front of me doing something with her hands. I couldn't make it out at all. Then she lifted each foot high, walked towards me and sat down on my left. Now since I knew I wasn't out of my head or dead I figured that this was really happening. I broke the silence. "Would you like some food?" She eyed the food and casually picked up a berry.

"Wild berries are my favorite. You were perhaps expecting me?" she questioned.

"Well, not exactly, you see. I've been dreaming about this tree and I must admit I felt some urgency to find it. Why I only found it yesterday and haven't been able to leave her yet." While I was talking she was putting her finger into the centers of the berries and sucking them off. It dawned on me that there could be more to the tree dream than the tree.

"Perhaps I was expecting you," I said out loud, "but in my dream I only saw the place and didn't clearly understand what it meant."

"It is of minor consequence," she said as she smiled. "I am here now and we are together." I felt edgy.

"Is this a set-up? I mean, is there some purpose to our meeting that you

MORRIGAN
ONE

are aware of and I'm not?" I demanded. She looked hurt. I felt like an ass-hole for being so paranoid but I did have doubts.

In a long, slow voice she said, "There is no purpose. We each know what is known." She reached for an onion flower, took a bite and held it out to me. I finished it.

"Where do you come from?" I asked.

"I don't fully understand the question. My base is the Mother Galaxy but I have just come from the planet ucla."

"Uckla? What is it like there?"

"It is a most oppressive place. Huge structures of cement and plastic surround bits of trees and greens. The sunlight is filtered through gray particles in the air."

"It sounds horrible! Why did you go there?"

"I want to establish affinity with my kind on different planets. There was there what you call a conference. I thought it would be a good place to gain understanding."

"Was it?"

"No, but I did gain understanding. I understood many things, some of which pleased me and some did not."

"What kind of things happened that you came to understand?"

"My kind is woman. Woman who loves woman. I thought that to be the basis of the conference. What you call "men" do not exist on the Mother Galaxy. They have never existed there. Since the mutation occurred elsewhere in the universe there has been much sorrow and destruction. Now even our very existence is threatened by their stupidity and greed. I've been hopeful with the emergence of dykes lesbian feminists and other women identified women that we could work together and put an end to the destructive male force. I have come to see that the time is not now, but tomorrow may be too late." She sounded so gloomy I wanted to comfort her but I didn't know how. I moved closer so our thighs were touching and asked what she meant. She repositioned herself in front of me and put her hands on my knees.

"I mean simply that the mutations are again creeping into the forces of womankind. With their technology, they can appear to be womanlike and from there claim women's ways as their own."

"I know something similar happened with the overthrow of the matriarchs, but how could that ever happen again? We are wise to their lies with much experience behind us."

"Aha! Such naivete I wish to believe. It is not the case. One of the mutations was not only at the conference but it was invited to do what you call entertaining. I tell you the wisdom has not come." There was a long silence.

"Was his presence ever dealt with?" I asked.

"Of course not. Nothing was dealt with. There was no time to do such. The show had to go on as they said."

"Well the conference just didn't stop there did it?"

"No. It was under the direction of those who gain their political knowledge from books written by the patriarchs! And then there were stars."

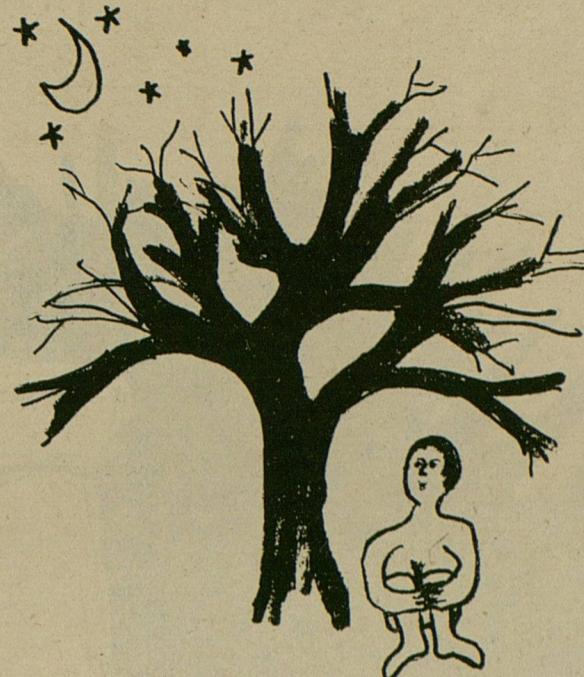
"I like stars. That must have been

nice."

"I don't mean stars that shine. Stars was a certain kind of woman. They talked to us for hours, one after another. Each stood behind a box with a machine that carried her voice throughout the confines. We listened for hours. We don't have those kind of stars where I come from. They were what you call boring. Although I learned some from what they were saying, I wanted to hear other women talk and be able to talk with them. But we were supposed to listen. Sometimes when a woman spoke out she was boohed at or yeahed at depending on what was said. It was hard to know what was even said. It was better when we were in smaller groups."

After she said that she lifted her head high and turned it around her neck two full turns. I could tell she didn't want to talk anymore and I was losing interest. It seemed that I'd heard it all before but I couldn't quite remember. I laid back against the tree to space out. I don't know how much time passed before I was aware of the woman laughing. I looked up and saw her rolling around on the grass laughing and howling. I started laughing and soon was rolling around on the grass with her when I heard from inside me a very clear thought...

Your dyke nation must learn from the many lessons of the conference. Creating positive thought forms is an important task for your divided tribes of Amazons. You must learn it if you are to reclaim women's ways. The last months have been full of internal conflict for all peoples. You are affected by the position of the planets and many difficult things



have been happening in the sky. Now that the sun is closer to the earth grow with the wonders and experience the vibrations of the seas & stars & mountains & deserts & rivers & waterfalls & caves.

I didn't know how to respond but I quit rolling around and I quit laughing. I looked at her and into her eyes. She looked away from me and lay down on her back. With one quick motion she flipped her legs up over her head, held the position and started to chant "Hecate, Ishtar, Isis, Kali, Hecate, Ishtar, Isis, Kali..." And then she disappeared. I laid back against the tree smiling. I felt comforted. I knew we would meet again.

DYKES 23

WATCH OUT! THAT WOMAN MIGHT BE A MOTHER

What is a mother to you
What is a mother to your mother
What is a mother to your father
What is a mother to the UNIVERSE

THE MOTHERHOOD

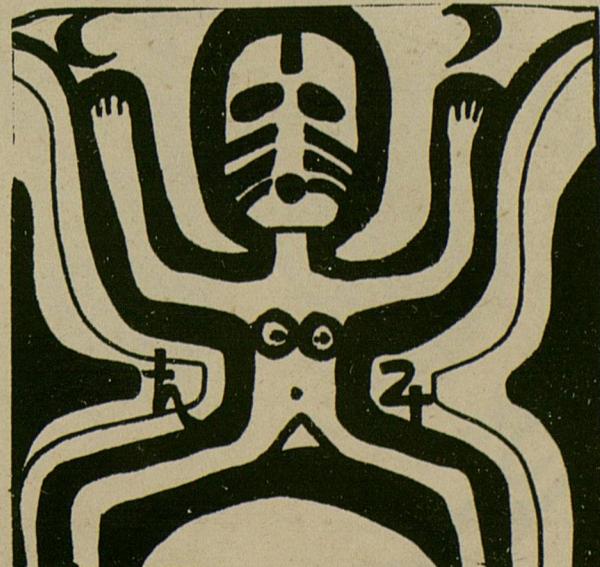
The creation and then
the growth
The birth and still
the growth
All that is living
and growing
And at death still growth
The Motherhood
Through Her nurturing
She provides all needs...

WWO O O WWW

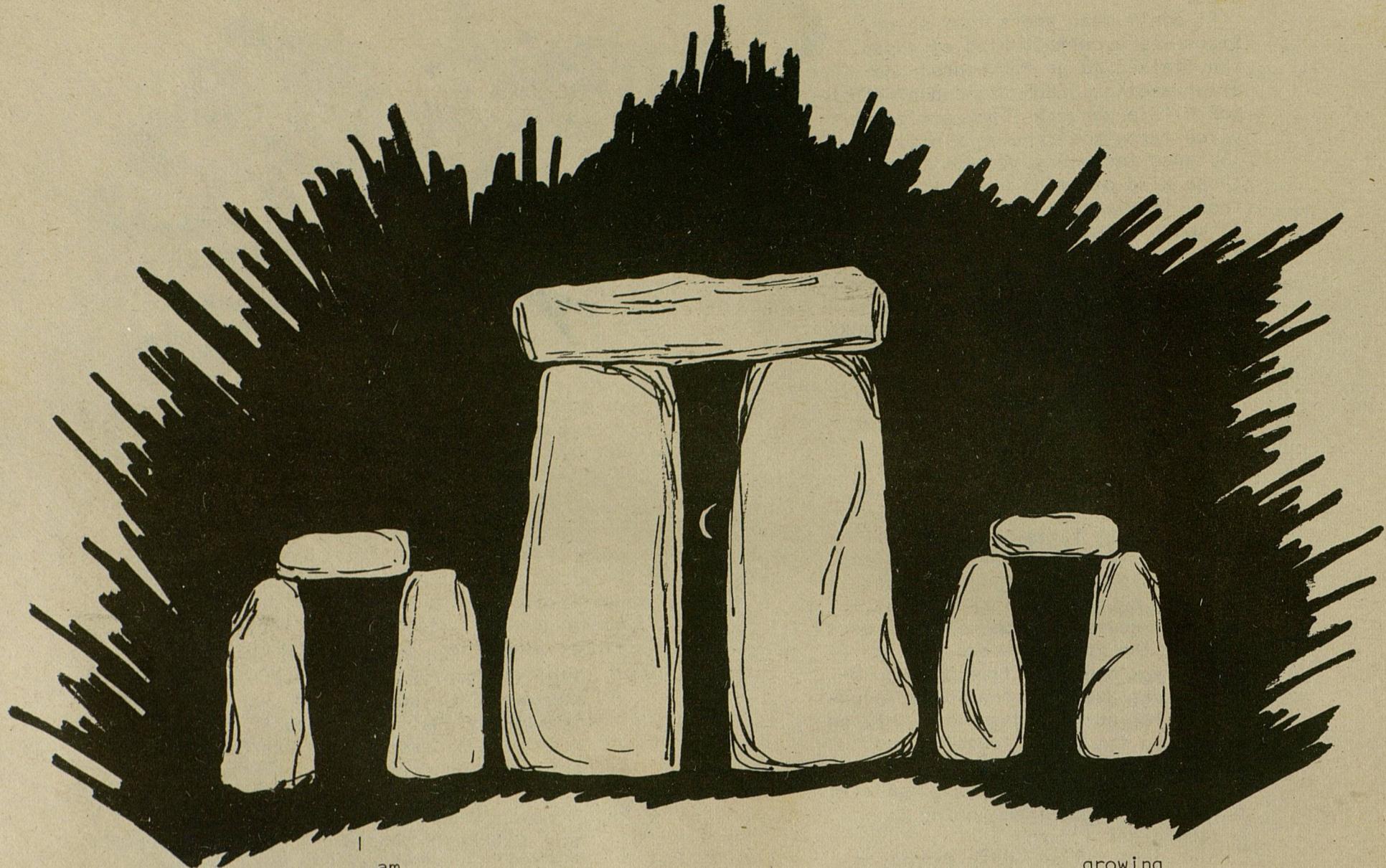
Matriarchy is the sacred Motherhood. The embodiment of the life cycle, the creation force, unifier of the cosmos. In redefining our lives, we must redefine all that is patriarchal, and especially urgent are the concepts that we as dykes--childless and mothers, have about each other and the children growing up in our community. There is so much to work out.

A poem from matriarchal China

Something there is whose veiled creation was
before the earth or sky began to be
So silent so aloof and so alone
It changes not nor fails but touches all.
Conceive it as the Mother of the world
I do not know its name
A name for it is "Way"
Pressed for designation I call it Great
Great means outgoing
Outgoing--far reaching
Far reaching--Return.



I am the soft twitchings in the underbrush
I am your eyelid, flickering to wake from sleep



I am all things dormant, never alive,
growing now and

They call me with their voices and silence:

They call me with their yearning and void.

I am this and I am other.

I am the sea, the soil, and the spinning in space.

they call me Mother

My faces are three
and my facets are endless

I see now, long ago, and what will be
I see what may never be

I am the ocean chanting in your veins,
I am the moon glowing in the sky and
the black arms of the trees.

I am all fire and blood
and you can see me in your eyes

I am the rain.

They call me fear and they call me magick
I am the beginning, And the end,
and all infinity across the middle

They call me Goddess

I am all things female.

I am the voice of the woman
screaming in the night as she runs from her enemy.

I am the breath of the witch rising on the wind
as she burns for following My Ways.

I am the anger of the woman in hiding,
who must be secret
because her lover is a woman.

My breath molds the slashing of the wind
My teeth flash white from the blue of my lips
(I gnash them wildly like waves upon the land)

The crescent is my smile.

they call me

Isis

Hecate

Athena, Ishtar

Kali, Venus, Tiamat, Astarte,

Hera, Diana, Artemis Mari . . .

they call me

Mother

I am she who brings life and she who brings death

I am the sound crackling outside your window at night

do not fear, my child, for I shall consume all our enemies



they call me the Moon

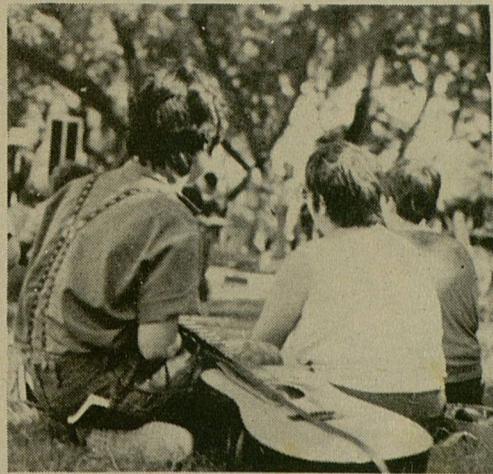
~ber xx



WOMEN'S
POWER IS RETURNING
WE GROW STRONG

CONFERENCE... CONFERENCE... CONFERENCE...

The weekend of the L.A. Conference of April 13-15th, 1973 will be remembered in many dykes minds for quite a while. It was a time when democracy reigned (the old amerikan way), thereby granting the majority the right to decide what they wanted while the few powerful elite successfully camouflaged the issues. Priorities were already determined by the conference organizers when they allowed Elliot (the man) to go on with his sing-song in spite of the protests of many lesbians. Their "entertainment hour" was more important than the political issues. (Yet, when an extremely political dyke-separatist band was making waves because they were given no time to play, they were reprimanded for being entertainment rather than being political!)



The conference clearly reflected the limited amount of awareness its organizers had. It was gotten together around very general politics: reformist coalition politics and the dream of a lesbian/feminist political party. Therefore, if you are a lesbian, regardless of your alliances, you felt a need to go because there isn't anything else. No room was left for banding together around specific politics. All the workshops were based on general topics. Entering upon any workshop you'd find yourself dealing with all the varied differences there were instead of coming together.

The naïveté of the conference organizers is evident in the fact that they feel we can work with men to attain our "rights," as well as seeking changes within this society to "reform" our situations. Having so much trust in one's oppressor is bound to get us crushed. The fact that they are ready to be sold out is shown in the last paragraph of their position paper. They state that they will work with any and all groups and individuals who are interested in attaining "civil rights" for gays, meaning men, as well as women. If they were working for lesbians they wouldn't have to make a distinction for women. However, to say that they seek anyone's aid includes even the straight prick who is trying to be non-sexist today and is raping you or another woman tomorrow. Further examples of the dangers of these reformist politics is that CBS newsmen were allowed into the conference; at the time of this writing one extremely sexist LA underground newspaper appeared with an anti-lesbian review of the conference containing semi-nude photographs of women present at the conference. And one lesbian particularly influential as a conference organizer has given an interview to "playboy" in which she speaks about the conference.

The time has come to put an end to the large political mass meetings with guest star speakers which turn us into performers and audience spectators. Instead we could begin to turn towards those Lesbians around us who are the closest to us, whom we already have an affinity with, and form collectives in which we can struggle, love, and grow together. Going to large conferences is like plopping your ass in front of the TV tube, sitting back, and absorbing "the pabulum for the masses." It's all right if you want to be able to spit back the "correct line" but it avoids real interaction between people because it perpetuates our classist society by continuing to set up the articulate leader as separate from the people. As long as we continue to see ourselves as objects, the passive women who are acted upon, rather than the subjects and perpetrators of the change within and around us, we will continue to be manipulated and shoved around in this male supremacist world. It is no wonder that whenever a lesbian in the conference stood up in the audience and took a positive stance she was immediately baited with "male left," "being purposely divisive" because she dared to be "macho," to be an activist rather than a "lady," to express her real feelings and justified anger.

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