

LESBIANISM:

A CLASS THING

by Rachel Resnikoff

When a bunch of hip-groovy women's liberation types get together and run down a lot of bullshit about "loving eachother" and "taking pleasure in women's bodies", everyone, particularly classy men, think it's kind of cute and titillating. These women now like to call themselves "lesbians"; it's like doing the latest daring thing, and it certainly doesn't do them any harm. Classy young women can get away with breaking a few rules, so long as they remain classy, young and cute. They can even improve their ranking in the "movement" by giving themselves the lesbian label; after all, that makes them even more oppressed than they were as ordinary heterosexual women. They really get a lot out of this tactic. They're classy, sexy, pretty, and oh so super oppressed. Like hell.

The women who are really oppressed by the label "lesbian" in this society are not these cute young items. They are the out of role, un-"feminine", scorned and laughed at "dykes", who may or may not sleep with women. Who they sleep with is in fact irrelevant. What matters is that they don't act like classy ladies, they don't cover their behavior with the proper sprinkling of charm, they don't pass.

The oppression of lesbians in this society is not a sexual oppression, it's a class oppression. It's the degradation, humiliation, exploitation of women who don't act classy enough, who are out of role. Women who sleep with women but don't step out of role do not get treated in the same shabby manner as women who are out of role, regardless of whom they bed down with. If a woman isn't smooth and graceful, if a woman is tough and aggressive and serious, she's dismissed as lower class, and often as a lesbian or dyke-y.

Rich women can afford to be charming and graceful and beautifully in role. They have others to do real work for them. Women who have to do all of their own work, who have to earn a living, clean house, raise children, can't afford the time or money required to develop and maintain ruling class behavior.

The issue of "lesbianism" is a false issue, now being used to cover up serious class difference between women. But a class war is brewing in this country, lurking behind many false issues raised by many "movements". The time is coming, and soon, that classy women and men in classy movements won't be able to cover their tracks with neat little false issues. The time is coming and soon, that everyone's going to know which side of the class war you're on.

THIS TIME WE'RE GOING ALL THE WAY

From THE SECOND PAGE (formerly The Women's Page)

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