

The Black Woman's Dilemma

A black woman living in this era of civil rights and women's rights has to decide if the two movements clash or integrate. She has to realize that she is first black, then a woman. This may not be the order in which she thinks of herself, but this is the order in which the world regards her. Because of this, black women are impelled to place gaining equal rights as a race over female rights.

This is not to say that the two movements necessarily clash. They can integrate with each other if both black and white sisters see that although they have a common problem of job discrimination, the discrimination at home is not the predominant problem in black families that it is in white families. While the problem of equal rights in the working world is common ground on which black and white women can meet, a compromise is necessary on the issue of family.

In black families, the woman has often been the breadwinner and the most influential parent. Until civil rights began to be implemented, many black men held inferior jobs to their white counterparts and oftentimes to their spouses. Black families have a tradition of being more concerned with educating their daughters than their sons. Thus, black women have had for centuries what white women are striving for.

Furthermore, it was because black women worked primarily as the domestics of white women that white women had the opportunity to indulge into the pampered flower image. The memories of scrubbing Miss Ann's floors while she sits on her fat behind or works where a black woman cannot work has undoubtedly left a legacy of bitterness for the black woman. After watching her man's ego demolished by the racial inequities of the past, the black woman tends to aid and shelter his growing sense of identity. Today's black men are more involved in their families and community relationships than those of the past. Thus the black woman, unlike her white counterpart, has to lose some of her power in the family. She is similar to the white male in this instance.

Only in specific instances do the two movements conflict, resulting in the black woman placing the black movement first. When one sees the importance of the black male renaissance and the still present employment discrimination against blacks, one can understand why many black women feel the women's liberation movement is not for them.

Sheila Burkes



ERA: The 27th?

Forty-nine years after it was first introduced, the Equal Rights Amendment was approved by Congress on March 22, 1972. The ERA, if ratified by 38 states will become the 27th Amendment to the Constitution. (As of February, 1974, 33 states have ratified the ERA.) It reads:

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. Congress and the several States shall have the power, within their respective jurisdictions, to enforce this article by appropriate legislation. (HJ Res 208)

Opponents of the ERA cite federal and state legislation which they believe prohibits sex discrimination and therefore renders the ERA unnecessary. The Supreme Court, however, which decides the constitutionality of laws, has consistently treated sex discrimination as a joke or--worse, ignored it. The ERA is the only quick and effective way to wipe all existing legal inequities based on sex off the books.

When the Constitution was written, the Colonies were ruled under the Old English Common Law system. Under this system, women were not persons; they were the chattel of men. "Persons" in the Constitution refers to white, free males. As it stands now, there is only one Constitutional Amendment (the 19th) which explicitly deals with women. This amendment extended the franchise to women; obviously, it cannot deal with any discrimination other than at the ballot box.

The ERA will affect all areas of life in our society. It will equalize domestic relations in the eyes of the law. The age of consent for marriage will be the same for both sexes; women will have the right to retain their surname; alimony in divorce cases will be decided on an individual basis; custody of children will not be automatically granted to the mother.

In criminal law the ERA will affect the following areas: the prostitution statutes will be changed to include the customer as also subject to penalty; statutory-rape laws (if the act is voluntary) will be taken off the books; rape will continue to be punishable because of the physical differences between the sexes; and the imposition of higher penalties on one sex than on the other for some crimes will be prohibited.

The ERA will perhaps affect labor legislation the most. Protective laws, which have penalized rather than protected women, will be invalidated. Maternity leaves will be available to women without loss of tenure or job. Leaves for child rearing will be available for both fathers and mothers.

The ERA will prohibit local, state, and federal legal distinctions made on the basis of sex. It will give women a legal status on an equal footing with men. The ERA, if ratified and enforced, will be a major step toward the emancipation of women.

For information on the ERA's progress, send a self-addressed stamped business-size envelope to:

NOW Legislative Office
Suite 1107
National Press Building
529 14th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Roxanne Garrison

Legislation of Interest to People!

On June 15, 1972, the Kentucky General Assembly ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. During this session of the legislature, Senator Don Johnson (R.-Ft. Thomas) has submitted a resolution (HR 78) to the Election of Constitutional Amendments Committee to rescind ratification of the ERA. In spite of the resolution drawn up by the Kentucky Commission on Women stating that "Attorneys-Generals of several states, including Kentucky, and the legal counsel of the Constitutional Amendments subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee have issued opinions that there is no legal way for states to rescind ratification action of the ERA," the House Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee "gave its blessing" to HR 78 and reported it favorably to the house on March 13.

He went home. (You can't expect people to be at your
beck and call.) He went home. (He's nothing to you,
nor you to him--did you think he ought to wait around?)
But I was so (Have you forgotten what it's like, to
be alone and happy?) sure that tonight (Don't you re-
member, when you had pride?) I wouldn't have to sit
here (Don't you have an identity apart from him?) alone.
God, (Study, write poetry, write letters) how I hate
(do anything, but remember your happiness in being
yourself) to be alone. (Don't you remember what it was
like, to be a woman and to be proud?)

Laurie Thomas



Wondering

The freshness of some summer breeze
Echos through a southern sea
Fills the ruthless heart with lust
And turns idyllic dreams to dust.

We sit absorbing at a length
A reservoir of private strength.
Asylum waits beyond the door
Of silent hopes and metaphor.

But can we touch what we can't see?
Or live our lives so silently
That chaos reigns to make us feel
So far from truth to be unreal?

Beth Greene

What We Need is Muscle!

Have you seen the new set of competitive-style barbells, the new squat rack, or the new station-by-station weight layout in the men's gym? And have you been working out regularly on the Marcy weight machine? If you haven't, then you're probably either not interested in athletics or you're a woman.

Down in the sweatshops under the men's basketball court there is a room with a weight machine and barbells, all set up for the development of rippling, manly muscles, right? Wrong. Weight-lifting, or more generally, resistance exercise is a physical fitness activity in the same category as running. Resistance exercise allows you to strengthen specific muscle groups or increase the general strength and tone of your body.

It is a type of exercise that is definitely not restricted to men. Many doctors and physical therapists prescribe weight programs for women to develop a little more strength than is required to withstand the force of gravity. And anyone on an athletic team could benefit from added strength. So why should women at Centre be prevented from access to the weight machine? Why should we discriminate against the women's athletic teams by depriving them of the benefits of resistance exercise?

The obvious answer is that women can not be allowed to work out in the same room where men are dressing. There is a simple solution for this problem. If the locker area as it presently stands were partitioned off from the area with the weights, the privacy of the locker room would be maintained and the weight facilities could be open to all. This would be a relatively inexpensive operation, the benefits of which would far outweigh the cost.

Diane Millsaps
Walt Tapp



The Senate Health and Welfare Committee broke a deadlock over two conflicting abortion bills March 15 by recommending instead a committee substitute for one of them, Senate Bill 259. SB 259 would permit abortion during the first three months of pregnancy, but only on the advice of a physician. After the first three months of pregnancy, an abortion would be permitted only until the fetus reaches viability, defined in the bill as that stage when the unborn child can survive outside the womb unaided or through medical life-support systems. In addition, abortions would be permitted at any time "to protect the life or health of the pregnant woman. The bill would require written consent of the woman herself, and after three months of pregnancy, consent would also be required from the woman's husband, or her parent if she is a minor and unmarried. The bill includes stiff penalties for violators.

We urge everyone to keep informed on these issues which are vital to all persons; write your congressman NOW, let your opinions be heard before it is too late.

March 5 - March 12 was Women's Week at Centre College, coinciding with International Women's Day on March 8th. The Human Liberation Group sponsored several activities, including: a discussion of legislation currently under consideration in the Kentucky General Assembly by Dr. Kafogalis, a state representative; the presentation of a paper by the Red Star Sisters, a socialist feminist organization; a panel discussion on rape; a program on Women in the Arts; and a talk on "The Menstrual Experience" by Dr. Audrey Landers. Two convocations coincided with Women's Week - Elizabeth Koontz spoke on "Women's Liberation and

The only unfortunate aspect of the week was that, due to lack of time and woman-power, the publicity was less than might have been hoped for. Although only a minority of the campus attended these events, the fact that they existed for the first time at Centre allows us to hope that such activities can continue even here. It's time that the Centre community realizes that women's liberation will liberate us all from the oppressive game of role-playing.

Diane Millsaps
Beth Langan Pendleton



Don't Talk to ME about Women's Liberation

In trying to write this article, I have been beating my head against a wall. Aside from a few comments from a few helpful people, I have been met with utter frustration. I began, optimistically, to explain the Women's Movement to men as something more than a horde of castrating lesbians screaming "Down with men!" It is easy enough to talk about it with other women because we have had, more or less, the same cultural upbringing that has conditioned us to act the stereotypical "woman's role".

What I had wanted to do was make clear our objectives so that we could not be dismissed in the tone of voice that someone I know uses when he says, "Please let's not talk about Women's Lib. Anything but that". I found that our objectives are not so clear as we thought they were. Excluding the obvious economic arguments (equal pay for equal work etc.) they become muddy and inexplicable. We bitch about everything: we don't want to be supported by a man, we don't want to spend our lives raising children, we don't want to be passive, submissive or docile. Most of all, we don't want to shave our legs.

(continued on next page)

If you tell a man all this, he will probably become confused and say, "Well, what do you want? You don't have to get married, you don't have to have children. You don't have to do anything you don't want to do." He's right.

After trying the "we don't want" argument in unsuccessful attempts to convert male friends of mine to feminism, I decided to reevaluate the situation. The point of attitudes came up. We can control our actions, but do we control our attitudes as easily or as well? For example: I have as much access to the pool tables in Sutcliffe as the men on campus, but when I go there and someone says, "Women don't belong in a pool hall", it's like a slap in the face. Who wants to go where he's not wanted? I begin to feel as if I should have stayed home knitting, where I belong. The remark was meant to be facetious, but I did not take it that way.

The reason that it was not funny was that women traditionally have not belonged in pool halls, and it reminded me of our unsatisfactory status in a "man's world". We have not yet reached the level of self-confidence at which we can laugh off such comments. If one were to call a black man "boy", no matter that it is intended to be funny; to him, it would not be, because he is trying to free himself from his imposed social role as a less-than-intelligent human being.

Women are trying to gain credit for having intelligence other than the crafty, underhanded female sort by which they catches a man without him knowing it. Women are not supposed to be able to cut it: when attempting to get an idea across to a man and he says, "Now you're using woman's logic on me" it means "You're not making any sense." You feel an irrepressible rage because he dismisses you as a child that is incapable of thinking clearly.

It is an accusation to "think like a woman." Somehow, it is not as good as thinking like a man. It is a weakness to be emotional, "just like a woman"; and it is a horror among men to be thought of as just a little too "feminine." When you try to explain what women want to achieve and you're hit with, "How would you like to be taken to bed and treated like a man?", you realize that there are a whole lot of people missing the point.

We don't want to be men and we don't want to blast them from the face of the earth. We need them. But we also need a little respect, and we can't get it unless we've accomplished something worthwhile. We will never accomplish anything unless men see that they are just as limited by societal roles as women are.

It has been said before, but I repeat it here: Women's liberation is men's liberation. If women could be allowed to break out of their role as soft, confused creatures, men could stop having to be responsible for them. If women could get out and support themselves, the pressure would be alleviated from men who are traditionally supposed to feed, clothe and shelter a family. Men aren't allowed to cry, show affection, or go into interior decoration. Do you want to remain in the rut of having to be strong and "masculine" even when you don't feel like it?

We can all benefit from the throwing off of roles; all they result in is game-playing, misunderstanding, and hurt feelings. If we continue to act according to our sexual stereotypes, no one will be free to express himself honestly without having to stop and think, "is this the masculine/feminine thing to do?" Men and women must cooperate in helping each other out of the cultural trap that limits our friendships and causes us to distrust one another. If we can be strong enough to do this, and not fall back into our old ways because they're easier, perhaps someday we will be able to relax and treat each other as more than just reflections of our own self-images.

Jennifer Gunn



The Boyle County Health Department offers free birth control pills as well as other methods of contraception, pap smears, pelvic examinations, and information about the above. The Department is located on South 3rd Street across from the School for the Deaf; call 236-2053 for an appointment.

NASHing Teeth:Male and Female Nervous Systems??

(Note: This article is intended to point out the sexist bias present in a textbook, and is not meant to be taken as a criticism of the non-sexist professor who taught the course, during which the subject of this article was first brought up.)

John Nash, in his Developmental Psychology, a Psychobiological Approach (1970, Prentice-Hall), is guilty of out-of-hand scientific speculation which reveals a pervasive sexist bias throughout his book. This book, which was used during the winter term in Psych 37, Developmental Psychology, includes as one of its main tenets the belief that "the differences between males and females are so pervasive that they affect total functioning in subtle but nonetheless important ways". (p.3)

Nash believes that these differences have physiological bases, and states that these differences affect higher cognitive functions. Nash extends himself further in assigning values to these differences, stating "the female-type nervous system may be said to be more basic, and it is in this sense that Ford and Beach (1951) have described the male as more highly evolved". (p.191) This statement is based upon the somewhat specious evidence that "The growth of a female-type CNS is apparently dependent only on the absence of the male hormone and not on the presence of female hormones, because the female-type CNS develops if testosterone is absent whether estrogens are present or not". (p. 191)

Nash states, "At several points in this volume it has been suggested that individuals function most efficiently when they operate according to their basic potentialities. In this view the male functions best in masculine ways and the female in feminine ways." Nash does not define exactly what he means by "masculine ways" and "feminine ways"; nor does he offer convincing documentation for the previous statement or for the following: "...when man and women do the same job they [should] bring to it a different approach and produce from it distinct contributions to society. In some occupations this may be difficult. If a woman cannot bring some unique contribution to engi-

neering, then she is misplaced in this profession. This may be, indeed, why so few women enter it, because in this profession she cannot really fulfill herself as a person, for being a person involves being a woman or a man, and an occupation that does not allow scope for both sexes to develop within it should not be popular with the disadvantaged sex." (p. 440) What Nash seems to forget is that life does not revolve around an unmutable male-female axis, but is concerned with the individual's struggle to be a complete individual.

John Pendleton



"Call Me Anything but Mrs...."

One of the first things Dr. Audrey Landers, last Tuesday's convo speaker, told me was, "I'm not a political kind of person." Dr. Landers, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Alabama, sees "supplying information" as her main contribution to the women's movement. She said she supports the ERA because laws are needed to force changes in behavior, adding, "If old Festinger is right, the change in behavior will result in a change in attitude" (referring to Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory).

As a graduate student in clinical psychology, Audrey's study of the clinical concomitants of menstruation was the first "women-related" dissertation at Michigan State. Thinking back on her dissertation work, and undergraduate and graduate years, Audrey said that the greatest disadvantage she recalled was the lack of adequate role-models. She said, "There was no woman I could look at and say, 'I'd like to be like her.'" Cathy Adams, a graduate student who accompanied Ms. Landers told me that she had never realized that women could do things like psychological research until she met Audrey.

According to Ms. Landers, women appearing in professional roles was "a lot of what this visit [was] about." Her visit was made possible by funds from the Southeastern Psychological Association's (SEPA) Visiting Woman Program. SEPA believes that visits by women psychologists to various institutions will encourage women in psychology to pursue further study in the field. Hopefully next year's convocation schedule will take advantage of the visiting woman program.

Audrey Landers is a dynamic, straightforward scientist whose work is adding facts to the overabundance of opinion about women. She said it for us all when she said, "We want to have our cake and bake it, too."

Diane Millsaps



KINDLING

We affirm and support the intentions of the Centre College Human Liberation Society and view it as part of the historic Feminist movement attempting to free humankind from the burden of ignorance and prejudice dividing the two sexes.

That the intentions and pronouncements of the Feminist movement, and the presence of the Human Liberation Society on this campus engender fear and suspicion in both males and females is quite evident. We submit that these stem from a lack of knowledge and understanding of the movement. The lurid spectre of a masculine-looking female running down the street screaming obscenities while swinging a bra is just not "where it's at." Nor are the movement's intentions to destroy the family and castrate all males. It is not a movement of suppression or domination.

At times individual voices may appear shrill and overly extreme. But this in no way detracts from the significant totality of the movement. The issues at stake are those of freedom, of becoming, of choices, of equality in all dimensions. These are for both men and women, of all ages and backgrounds. The battlegrounds are not on land, sea, and air with weapons of physical destruction and subjugation, as is the apparent lot of male-dominated wars. Instead, the arenas are the educational, political, and social forums, and the weapon is that which the academic community and all rational persons know best--knowledge.

There is resistance as old ideas based on misinformation and superstition give way to better approximations to truth. This resistance is evident both from females who, being secure in positions of derived status, feel threatened by the eventuation of personal decision making and responsibility, and from males who are especially fearful of losing unwarranted sexual-dominance roles. Another prime area of concern and resistance is, and will continue to be for some time, in the area of job competition among men and women. But within this competition which freedom and equality bring, we would hope that all persons constantly seek opportunities which can create greater cooperation out of competition. Competition does not need to be just a win or lose proposition; an outcome in which all can win is indeed a workable and desirable alternative. With this approach, competition can be used as the springboard to efficiency and cooperation within society and among individuals rather than for hostility between the sexes.

We acknowledge the biologic differences between the sexes and recommend caution to those who would interpret these differences as indicating superiority of either sex.

We commend the founding members of the college's Human Liberation Society, both male and female, in the choice of this name for their organization, for it embodies the intention of its educational and consciousness-raising endeavor in the ever present process of evolution for mankind.

One word of caution: Once a person glimpses the rampant and insidious inequalities dividing the sexes and becomes personally involved in the process of human liberation, he or she can neither go back to a state of former innocence or plead ignorance.

Frederick M. Brown

Don H. Brown
Brent C. White

KINDLING CONT'D

To the Centre College Human Liberation Society:

With very few exceptions, I have in the past declined to sign petitions which either support or reject some cause. I have usually been in sympathy with those who have asked my endorsement; this is perhaps why they have asked me to sign. My problem, I find, is that when I sign something it must express my views exactly and must reflect them in exactly the words I wish to use. For any group to prepare a petition which meets these conditions is next to impossible, especially if I have not participated in the formulation of the petition.

I find myself in this situation with regard to the petition by the Psychology Department which I have been asked to sign. I have no quarrel with the sense of the petition, the motivation for its development, or the cause which it advocates. I cannot, in conscience however, say that the petition reflects my exact sentiments. Rather than suggest amendments which would permit me to sign the document, I would prefer to encourage the members of the organization to present a document which reflects their collective sentiments just as I prefer to express and circulate mine.

I firmly hold to the principle of the dignity and equality of each human without regard to any accident of birth. Since I, as do some others, sometimes forget this dignity and equality and lapse into stereotypic response to my fellows, I welcome the emergence of the Human Liberation Society at Centre College. I support the organization and the cause it fosters. I encourage it to continue its activities. Even if the cause becomes abrasive, I will try to remember that in this manner are objects, and persons and ideas molded.

Gerald H. Lunney

House Bill 368, to eliminate Kentucky statutes that discriminate against women, was passed by the House 51-22 after several amendments were added to it. One amendment was attached to retain laws that limit the number of hours women can be asked to work. "You can call this equal rights or whatever it was called the other day," said Rep. Gross Lindsay, D-Henderson, who proposed this amendment, "But I believe that female workers need this protection." Two other amendments to HB 368 were to retain laws allowing accusation of incest, fornication or adultery and actions for seduction--although both laws would apply to all persons, rather than only women, under the amendment.



KINDLING

ACT LIKE A LADY

Although there has been an abundance of literature published in relation to the current womens' liberation movement, many men and women are not only ignorant of the movement's ideals, but are also ignorant of how women are oppressed in our society. Perhaps because the word "oppressed" sounds so severe, many people rationalize that if women officially have the vote and equal job and educational opportunity, why do they claim to be oppressed? I would like to focus on the subtle injustices committed on me as a female child, injustices which our culture condones.

Before I begin, there are two exceptions in my experience with injustice which make a great deal of difference. First, the fact that I am from an all girl family erases any problem of favoritism towards a son. Secondly, the fact that I was educated since second grade in an all girl school erases much subjection to sexism and male dominance in the classroom, although I was exposed to sexist educational material. Because of these exceptions, I luckily escaped some of the factors which sometimes stunt the development of a female child's intellect and self-esteem.

However, one line consistently repeated by all my school teachers was "act like a lady." This was usually said when the children exhibited some type of unruly behavior, such as running rather than walking. In junior high school this line transformed into "sit like a lady." In both these lines is the implication that girls should not display certain unruly or "boyish" behavior, but should act within their stereotype of daintiness and gentleness.

Similar to this idea was my parents' belief that though men may curse, girls should not. Men can use language of the real, adult world, while women should remain naive and passively protected from the real, adult world. Again promoting the idea of female helplessness and delicacy was the

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presence of a male curator at school whose duties included guarding the girls as they came and went. An incident which exemplifies the attitude that girls are to be protected and almost treated as property was my father's outdated comment that when I marry (not if, but when!) my fiance must talk with him about how he will support me. This implies that a daughter is a passive child, ignorant of her own welfare and ambition who must be passed from one pair of male hands to another to be cared for.

In relation to my interactions with the opposite sex, my parents suggested when I was beginning junior high school that I just tell the boy how well he danced (whether he did or not), to flatter him, and always smile. In this suggestion was the idea of submitting to the "male ego," of pleasing it both in behavior and appearance.

These subtle factors succeed in trapping a person within a stereotyped role. I use the word "person" because both females and males are subtly forced into fulfilling roles in our society. Because it is striving to lift both females and males from the oppression of stereotypes, the liberation movement represents not just women, but humanity.

Mary Carruth

The Flame needs your support. All members of the Centre community are encouraged to send us fiction, poetry, articles, letters, etc. Please send them to The Flame, Campus Mail, Boxes 892, 688, or 897, or just give them to any staff members.

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