

SPECIAL SEX ISSUE!

# PROCESSED WORLD 7





# PROCESSED WORLD

SPRING 83 -- ISSUE 7

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All of the articles and stories in **Processed World** reflect the views and fantasies of the author and not necessarily those of other contributors or editors.

**Credits:** Helen Highwater, Chris Winks, Freddie, Maxine Holz, Louis Michaelson, Zoe Noe, Lucius Cabins, Stephen Marks, Bradley Rose, Sally A. Frye, Linda Thomas, The Motleys, Richard Laubach, Michelle La Place, Ricke "K", Clayton Sheridan, Linda Wiens, Friends of the Toad, Out-of-Control Data Institute, Pauline Slug, Melinda Gebbie, Ian Hughes, and many others...

*Processed World, 55 Sutter Street #829, SF CA 94104 USA*

# TALKING HEADS

*This, the seventh issue of Processed World, is the first to be created in our new home — a basement in a Victorian in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district. Previously PW's production facilities were housed in one of the staff's apartment, but roommate hassles and the need for a more accessible location has put us out on our own, with an additional \$275 monthly overhead to worry about. A number of PWers, with the invaluable aid of skilled friends, renovated a run-down basement, and a January 16 Open House christened our delightful new HQ. Thanks to all who helped, made donations toward the \$1500 cost of the move, and came and had a good time at the Open House. We will probably be having another one soon.*

*As indicated on the cover, this is our Special Sex Issue, with the themes of sexuality, sex roles, and the sex/work connection appearing in a number of articles. The opening article by Stephen Marks, "Sex Roles/Social Control" details the changing relationship between sex role mythology and work roles, how sexual insecurity is used to control us, and shows how the advent of the gay male clerical worker and the female manager has actually validated the traditional patriarchal hierarchy in the office. Michelle La Place's article, "The Dead-End Game of Corporate Feminism," discusses how capitalist values have absorbed and distorted a once radical opposition movement, and punctures the myth of women's liberation through career advancement.*

*Going right to the heart of the*

*sex/work connection, one of our regulars, Linda Thomas, "bares" her past in "Toiling Tails: "It's A Business Doing Pleasure With You." In a poignant, often humorous style, Linda makes the link between her eight and half years as a nude model, hooker, and stripper, and her more recent past in the S.F. office world, concluding that in most respects she was robbed of the same things by the ostensibly different experiences.*

*Maxine Holz, in her article "Porn: Turn On or Put Down?.. Some Ideas on Sexuality," recounts her inquiry into the controversy surrounding pornography and rejects the politics of both the "left" Women Against Violence and Pornography in Media and the "right" Moral Majority-types. Critically examining the claims of WAVPM activists in literature and the film "Not A Love Story," Maxine counters the emotionally-charged arguments in favor of repression but continues beyond the constricted borders of that debate to analyze the sexual poverty and sexual commodification that permeates modern society. She condemns a sexuality bound in by the "pole-in-hole" banality of pornography, and calls for one which is not categorized and separated from the myriad of daily human experiences, and a life in which we are free to experiment, to fantasize, and to play with sexual and emotional desires.*

*The short story "Through The Tinted Glass," loosely inspired by Linda Wiens' cover graphic, and Sally A. Frye's "Tales of Toil: Stuck in Stocks" round out this issue, an*

issue we hope will satisfy both our regular readers who appreciate our unique emphasis on the office/work-a-day world, and those critics who insist we break out of that "narrow" focus. As always, we have a large Letters section following this introduction, in which several discussions are continued and some new ones broached.

Now that we have finished the arduous task of moving and renovation, our attention is once again

turning toward strategic questions of how we can raise the stakes. We hope to convene an open assembly to air different ideas, tactics, and goals in the relatively near future — if you're interested please write to us. As always we are anxious for your comments, criticisms, and contributions to Processed World. Our mailing address remains "Processed World, 55 Sutter Street #829, San Francisco CA 94104, USA. Let us hear from you!



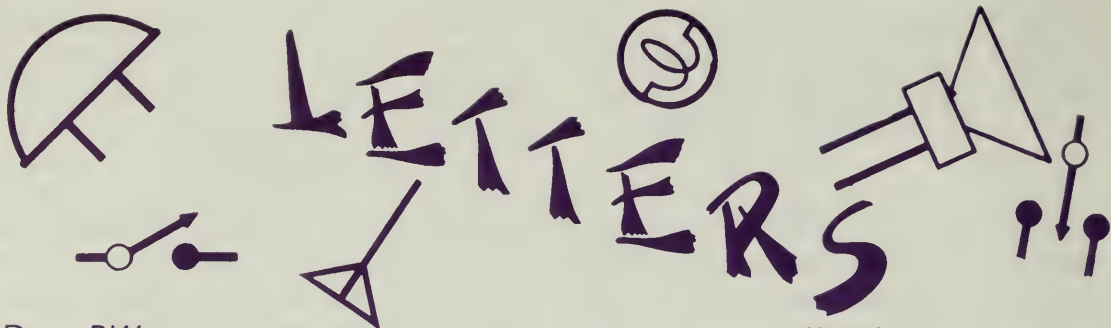
## IS AN END TO WORK IN SIGHT?

NOT TOTALLY. WHILE SOME ARE LOOKING FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT, WE'RE LOOKING FOR FULL ENJOYMENT.

just a hint: life will not be as we know it....

Anti-Torpor League, 181 Union Street Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

# LETTERS



Dear PW,

You sure fill a slot for me. I'm 52 now, been working since I was 10, about 90% of the time in offices and this is the first time I've seen somebody tackle head-on the real nitty-gritty of life in these paper factories from viewpoints I can empathize with, though I should qualify that a bit since for the past few years I've been working freelance, a peculiar shadow-land betwixt and between the normal categories. It has its own, often

horrendous disadvantages and problems but I've decided I much prefer it to the 9-to-5 office wage slavery.

I gathered that I missed a lot of discussion on one of my favorite — uh — topics, Sabotage but wot the hell. At the risk of possible repetition: Generally speaking, everybody who works for wages is being fucked over. From a purely pragmatic standpoint, leaving out all questions of "ethics" (we know who promulgated them, don't we?), it



makes simple common-sense to get back from the employer whatever you can. He's still going to come up winner, but you can even things at least partially if you have a creative mind. The main advice I can offer is the old saw: "Don't get mad, get even." The key here is keep your cool; allowing your natural rage to take control means mistakes and mistakes mean you get caught. Once you get on the inside of any office work situation, you will begin to see the holes in the system and how you can profit by them. And when you've exhausted all those possibilities, it's time to turn to creative monkey-wrenching. I will leave it for the theoreticians to argue about the dialectical nuances of sabotage. Basically, there is one overwhelming reason to do it: it makes you FEEL GOOD. "Igor *like* Sabotage — make Igor *sweat*." And I'd love to see a good detailed hard-line how-to booklet on the subject. Matter of sharing information — no?

On the question of unions, I've found that often you can counter the (very natural) distrust most people have — particularly those in offices — of unions by simply going back to basics. Instead of insisting on affiliation with some Big Union, start your own. Admittedly you won't have the power of big organization behind you but you won't have to put up with all the shit either. If there's crap, you will have created it yourselves. This is particularly true in small shops where you can sometimes operate in total solidarity without ever forming any kind of formal organization. This also frustrates the boss when he tries to ring in NLRB and other bureaucratic, delaying, organization-busting appendages on you. Again, small shops have advantages. One boss confronted with six people in an office who have secretly agreed to back each other

up and down the line is in a rough position since he has nothing concrete to counterattack. It's also a hell of a lot easier to engage in some of the more necessary forms of warfare with The Man such as blackmail, working purposely in a stupid manner (the original meaning of Sabotage, incidentally, though the meaning has been changed by common usage), etc. Not that you can't get chewed up even so. That, to me, was the real "message" of the very interesting film *Blue Collar*.

Let's face it, that's where it all starts — with YOU trusting one other person where you work, then the two of you agreeing, after careful consideration, to trust a third... and so on until, with any luck and a little patience, the yous are at least a majority, by which time solidarity should have extended to helping each other in ripoffs, covering for each other whenever necessary and cooperating to nullify the activities of company finks and supervisors. Mainly, *you have to start somewhere*.

Got to go (freelancing means, among other things, that you always have either not enough work or too much work — I've yet to figure out which is worse).

D.E. — Oakland



Dear PW:

The article by Cabins, et al, failed to emphasize a couple of important points. The first is based on a presumption that all growth is beneficial. What else did the baby boom generation have going for it except its numbers and its correspondingly inflated expectations? Even the self-definition "boom" reveals a fallacious belief in the

ideology of unlimited growth. The boom generation contributed bodies, 58,000 of which were killed in Vietnam, millions of which are now just another market.

The second is that the frustrations of the many have not been shared by all. How about Wozniak and his expectations? I am a white secretary who has worked longer than most of the boomers have lived. I have suffered as much at the hands of those half my age who are still working on their expectations. At the end of three decades of going downtown I have — guess what? — three decades of going downtown. We all live with our disappointments. Besides these disappointments we have something in common. We are all consumers in the process of being consumed. And hard cash moves everything.

About the editorial comment that offering services and information may encourage dependency: do you really believe this is true? History offers so many examples to the contrary, underdeveloped countries and welfare recipients being but two. And just how is this supposed to happen? What legitimacy does *PW* claim? Are hordes of brain-damaged (“I guess I’ll have a lobotomy and be a secretary,” said the frustrated boomer mentioned above) office workers going to become “dependent” on *PW*? How? The only way I could become dependent on *PW* is if you send me a check twice a month, enough for rent, food and the occasional movie. I think you’re falling for the myth of individualism, which doesn’t work. Individual gains are too much like the promise of the charismatic leader. When one goes, the other goes. In fact, trying to do it alone is fighting impossible odds. And that’s what the odds mean — you can’t win. In the old, tired days we called it solidarity. Nowadays it’s community, or maybe not.

When I finish reading *PW* I pass it along to someone else. Does this encourage dependency? The thought never crossed my mind. But other thoughts do, and at this point I am conscious of the differences between *PW* and me. Most of you are at the beginning of your working lives. I’m nearly at the end. It’s been a long prison sentence, years of solitary confinement, decades of longing for the city across the bay and the friends thousands of miles away and the stranger at the next desk.

I’m unemployed now and should be typing my resume. Typing a resume becomes more and more like typing a suicide note, and yet choosing not to work is a kamikaze mission. When I wake up knowing I won’t have to work for one more day I am filled with joy. Habits of three decades die hard. Without food I will be brain-damaged. And joy’s easy to get rid of. It goes all by itself while I wait for the 14 Mission. From the freeway I can see the hideous megaliths of the financial district. And no Rasta feels more hatred at the sight of the towers of Mammon. We both must call down destruction, flames, purification by fire. He in his tin shack, I on the stinking bus, we share this vision. But quietly, quietly I go to my desk.

B.C. — SF



Dear Ms. Highwater,

Well, dear, you have really hit low-tide now! You have revealed yourself to be the lazy good-for-nothing I always knew you were when you worked with that fine firm, Sodom Associates.

I am none other than she you so maligned in your rag, *Processed Worms*. However, when the fine firm referred to above folded, I





was forced to leave my home, S.F., and come east.

My name, as you dubbed me, so ineloquently, is Chatty Kathy.

Too bad, our fine president was unable to impress upon the American people the need to tax unemployment benefits. Lazy people like you would be forced back to work, off the role, and off the backs of hard-working Americans like me!

Someone has to do the dirty deeds! Why do you resent whistle-blowers?

Your time will come! Keep looking over your shoulder at the next place of work, there are many more like me (tee-hee... she who laughs last, laughs best!).

Chatty Kathy — NYC



Dear *Processed World*,

Re the generally excellent response by Louis Michaelson to a moronic letter by a Mr. Wallis in #5. Louis erred somewhat when he stated that Western European youth prefer "to fight directly for money, free time, and the space to enjoy both." They are fighting *for* free time and free space, but are frequently fighting *against* money.

Their actions include tactics such as squatting, self-reduction (which means organizing in large groups for the purpose of obtaining goods and services at prices lower than demanded by stores, buses, utility companies), rate strikes, and occasionally, expropriation and redistribution of goods (what the media calls looting). These are all attempts at freeing human needs from the grip of the money system.

The system's abolition will be necessary for workers to completely challenge "the state and the wages

system” and begin “taking over social power and running production and distribution for their own purposes — without a bureaucracy.” Office work is dominated by the task of keeping track of money. I would like to see more on the role office workers could play in a social re-ordering whose aim is a new, freely cooperative and communal society.

J.S. — Berkeley



To *Processed World*,

Within the context of leftist analysis modern society is riddled with annoying paradoxes. At times it seems that the *PW* editorial group is aware of this as when you take a stand against unionism for, among other reasons, reducing rebellion to structural goals. But yet you wish, somehow, to organize workers.

Or to take another example, you state your desire to create a society beyond the logic of Capital but yet you appear to hanker for the good old days of social activism that a depressed economy will supposedly usher in (“Roots of Disillusionment”, *PW* #6), as if succumbing to the illusion of immiseration — misery as the motor of revolt.

When you had an opportunity to take on these paradoxes by at least outlining a clear criticism of leftist practice, and defining your relationship to this “tradition” as Louis Michaelson refers to it in his reply to Gidget’s imputation of bad faith (in *PW* #5), you let it pass. And when W.R. of LA writes of the “revolt against work” Maxine’s reply concentrates on a few obvious confusions instead of dealing with, head-on, W.R.’s substantive paradox: That as the fragmentation and regimentation of society increases people lose interest in improving

their dead-end jobs.

I would say that the vision of a truly free society cannot be maintained by *PW*’s graphics and fiction alone. Is it not time to give your vision some more substance?

C.S. — SF



Dear *PW*:

If I may stand in the line of fire between Gidget Digit and Louis Michaelson for just a minute, I would like to offer *my* criticisms of *Processed World*.

GD’s remarks about *PW*’s “honesty,” despite their guilt-ridden, abstract, and undialectical nature, obviously touched a sensitive nerve, hence LM’s disingenuous, ad hominem response. LM’s protestations of “honesty” won’t arrest *PW*’s decomposition — the editorial “we” is in an advanced state of schizophrenia (“some of this think *this* while others think *that*”).

I would venture to say that the problem of defining who you are and what you want is not resolved by the submission of resumes of past political affiliations — it’s not so much a matter of *origins* as of present relations and projects. Your present is more obscure than your pasts, and its clarification (along with an analysis of your resistance to this clarification) would be more interesting.

Differences within *PW* can only sharpen as *PW*ers are compelled — not by me but by real developments — to confront their own activity. If *PW*ers seem confused about their project and their expectations for it, this confusion seems less and less “innocent” and more like a flight from consciousness. Otherwise, how to explain the stagnation of *PW*’s critique and *PW*’s complete lack of criticality about itself?

In fact, *PW*’s critique of work and

authority doesn't go beyond the ambitious worker who's against "bosses" and "shit work" (and for self-management or self-employment in an "interesting" occupation). I think this may be the key to *PW's* relative popularity — it's a "satisfying" representation of its readers' interests rather than a dialectical critique of them — workerism with a human face. (And this is in line with *PWers'* self-conception as being just a bunch of regular folks who happened to start a magazine that happened to have an anti-authoritarian attitude.)

Implicit in much of what is and isn't said in *PW* is the notion that theory can somehow be left for later or that its readers aren't sophisticated enough to appreciate it — that is, they can't think for themselves. Well, practice minus theory equals pragmatism: the magazine gets published. The question remains: *why* publish *Processed World*?

Yours,

J.B. — Berkeley

Dear J.B.,

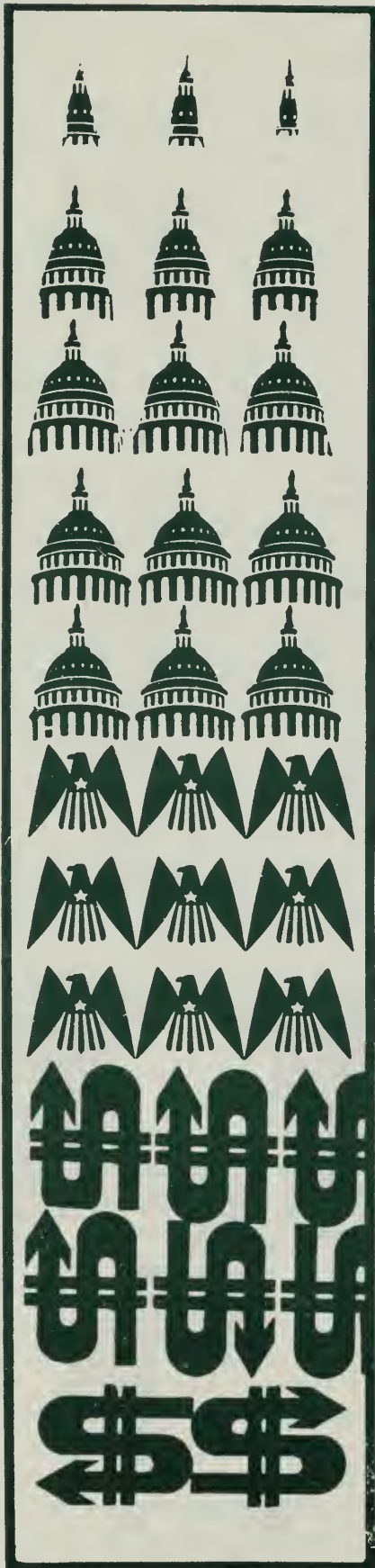
To respond to your concluding question first, we publish *Processed World* because it is an intrinsically satisfying creative experience. Beyond that, the magazine attempts to address and illuminate the situation of the majority of the work force, i.e. information handlers. This focus is not derived from the view that information handlers, office workers, are more likely than other types of workers (or non-workers for that matter) to move toward revolutionary activity. Rather, we wanted to end the silence surrounding an aspect of daily life on which we, among millions of others, spend all too much time. And it is true that office workers as a sub-group of the working class do have enormous potential power to disrupt the flow of information which is vital to the maintenance of the present order.

I agree with you that an assessment of our current relations and projects is crucial to our project. I think we have tried to do this in the "Talking Heads" introduction columns in *PW's* #5 and #6, where subjects like "organization," "sabotage," "direct action," etc. were described as a source of contention in the group, and different viewpoints were outlined. You seem to think our inability to agree upon a single point of view is a sign of "decomposition" or "schizophrenia." I think it is wrong to imagine that we as a group should necessarily reconcile our differences in order to continue. If a basically cooperative spirit is preserved the magazine can become (and hopefully has been) a sounding board, where different ideas can be expressed and responded to.

You criticize the magazine and its creators for "fleeing from consciousness" because we are confused about our project and where it's going. Is there something wrong with admitting to not having answers, or even comprehensive explanations? As has often been said, different people in the group have



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*different reasons for participating in PW at different times. We have neither "Principles of Unity" nor a basic operating credo. We are all anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian, but what that translates into in terms of practical activity is quite divergent, and so it should be. I think diversity and disagreement is a great thing, provided that it takes place in a respectful atmosphere (which unfortunately isn't always the case).*

*Let's face it, no one knows what it's going to take to overturn the current mode of living. We can and should have extensive inquiry into how such change could happen and what we can do as small groups (if anything) to help bring it about. We know that earlier theories of revolution have proven bankrupt or inadequate, even if we can learn from them, and that everyone everywhere (or even in most places) is not going to change all of a sudden, as if by religious transformation. We need to learn how radical transformations do happen. We can try to facilitate discussion and activity among ourselves and others, with an eye toward developing a practical sense of what it takes to bring about the kind of changes we desire.*

*For you, our "critique" has stagnated at a point where it doesn't go beyond "the ambitious worker who's against "bosses" and "shit-work" (and for self-management or self-employment in an "interesting" occupation)". Considering that a pretty straight-forward critique of wage-labor, the money system, the state, and unions has appeared in at least one article in every issue, I really think you are not reading what's there. We have repeatedly called for a complete transformation of the whole of daily life, most especially the reality of "work." Although as yet no article in PW has been*

devoted to a critique of self-management, we have never advocated self-management, especially for office workers.

If we have stagnated, it is as much at the level of action as it might be at the level of theory. In fact, an adequate synthesis of radical critique and practical activity is a highly elusive goal, as you yourself well know. I hope more deliberate consideration and action is dedicated to achieving such a synthesis, not just within the PW group, but among radicals and "regular folks" everywhere. Clearly, we all have a lot to learn.

Thanks for your comments,  
Lucius Cabins



Dear PW:

I thought that #6 was the best issue since #1 or 2. I particularly liked "Roots of Disillusionment." It was clear, well developed, comprehensive and still had an element of optimism about what happened in the sixties in spite of all of the recuperation and sellout that happened.

I like PW because it does attempt to deal with work from an "existential" perspective, that is, PWers realize that above all work must be lived in all its frustrations, boredom, anxieties and contradictions. There are very few jobs that can actually be "liked," yet if one hates their job then they can only end up hating themselves. Yet if one likes their job on some level or other one still sees all that one is giving up so just below that level of liking there is an element of self-hatred.

Yet as you so clearly expressed, what can we post marginals do? The socio-political, but above all econo-



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mic basis for marginal survival is gone. In Canada, in terms of constant dollars, there is 40% less money being put into unemployment expressed as the amount spent on the average claim. We as conscious marginals survived on that 40%.

But we can't go back and we don't want to go ahead. With no ambition to even strive to rise in the ranks, not to mention that there is not much room at the top any more, what does one do when one finds oneself marking time on the job? One develops a lot of cynicism, apathy, and anger to which there is

no outlet. The dreams of escape, standard proletariat thought that I won't be here in thirty years like these others around me, are often the only escape. How long can one use "political activism" as a psychological escape, as a means of validating our existence, of differentiating ourselves from the "mass worker" to whom we have so many contradictory feelings?

Keep up the good work. There is so little material that speaks to our concerns as workers as opposed to simply trying to develop a theory about the working class.

J.C. — Toronto



Dear PW:

I liked Marcy's article about the "Them" festival a whole lot. It's nice to read about the spectacle without that word being used. In general, **PW** gets better and better and worse and better. It's great that y'all have decided to give letters all the space they need and you have been getting some good ones. And the increasing PERSONALNESS is not just great, in the sense of "politically/ultralefty-correct" but INTERESTING, and consistently so. In other (less) words, I loved *Talking Heads* and Louis' letter.

Now, most of what I want to respond to is the child care piece by Penney O'Reilly. Although it SEEMS LIKE I'd like to find myself working in a center with her, especially compared to my generally horrible experience of your run of the mill "child care worker", I have serious problems with both her analysis and "Alternatives".

*The Ideal: Happy children and sympathetic teachers*

Shit, Penney, are you able to "express your thoughts and feelings simply and clearly"? I think maybe I've met one or two people in my life who I felt could claim that. I can't. Now of course, there are differences in how unclear most adults are. The clearer the better. You say "Once a relationship of trust is established between child and teacher, the child can develop the self-confidence to enjoy his/her surroundings." My experience of most kids, inside and outside of institutional settings, is that they *have* self-confidence and that it is adults, almost all of whom hate themselves to some degree, that quickly (in infancy) destroy the little person's ability to enjoy his/her surroundings.

I guess that's my major point. That you refuse, or fail, to talk

about what I call "adulthood" (shitty word, but...) You don't talk about how, even in the most utopian centers, there are huge amounts of coercion. Part of it is relatively unavoidable in the real and nightmarish world: i.e. you gotta keep them from getting run over crossing the street. But there's lots that obtains from the fact that they are forced to go to the center, live in usually nuclear families, etc. I think in a human world there wouldn't be such a thing as a day care center. If big people didn't have to do huge amounts of alienated worthless work helping capital reproduce itself, they could choose to spend lots of time with their kids, IF THEIR KIDS WANTED THEM TO--or they could choose not to have kids at all. I think children, from a very early age, can take care of themselves to an incredibly greater degree than is "allowed" in our society or your article. There's lots of "anthropological evidence" for this. What necessitates the crazy domination of children is among other things the fact that there is no community, people live in tiny isolated units and it's not like the kid (at the age of two or so) can wander out of the house, apartment, yurt, teepee and *be safe, make friends, be in a human world where they are respected and protected and appreciated.*

Of course, adults who want to be with children could and would choose to do so and that is not only desirable but necessary. BUT IT WOULDN'T AND SHOULDN'T BE A FUCKING JOB, and a poorly paid, basically oppressive one that fosters the repression of the kids so you can save your own sanity. I've clobbered a kid who hurt me physically because I didn't have the time to work it out with him (like why he had fastened his teeth on my leg when I asked him his name) because there was another kid

freaking out and a few more trying to run away. (I always am vaguely gratified when children try to escape.)

I agree that parent co-ops are a bit better, more than a bit if they make "workers' " lives better (so was Carter, sort of, maybe not who cares that much).

Actually I've worked a whole lot of what little I've worked in co-ops and yes they were much smaller (very important and good) and better staffed numerically (ditto) and often semimore creative in terms of equipment, more and better field trips (what a joyous concept, that you have to make an event out of leaving your institution, neighborhood, area) BUT BUT BUT I hate the nuclear family I think we're doomed as long as that remains the basic unit of our society along with its glorious variation, the even more lonely and impoverished single parent family. I hate the way most parents treat their kids and *most* of them shouldn't have had any or at least not as many given how much time and energy they are able to put out given other responsibilities. I think most "adults" haven't the vaguest idea of what *they want to do with children* (especially groups thereof) or *what children like to do. They're uptight.* They don't play in their own lives and *don't really want to play with the kids.* They want to usually talk to the other adults and/or "instruct" children.

Of course I'm one of these adults.

I hope I'm dealing with sex roles better than 99% of all parents I've met including co-ops and small groups. Of course I'm righteous. Of course I want it all. The article brought up a lot of pain for me. I "love kids" and have been fired several times from day care jobs, for my politics, atheism, long hair, militance, etc. etc. I want to be with them and the only friend I have who

parents — well, I don't get along with his kid. took me years to realize that I don't like all children or they me etc. etc. I want to be around children but don't "want a job" tho' I need one and am looking. I'd like to hear from anyone who wants to talk about this if anyone of you has kids, I babysit for free.

J. — SF

Dear J.,

*Your letter made me think about the conflicts and doubts I had and still have when I began taking early childhood education classes and working with kids. Rarely before in my life had I been in a position of authority. I had always been either a student or an employee, and my response to teachers, bosses, lawyers, landlords, doctors,.. was to convulse in rebellion. Suddenly I found myself responsible for "enforcing limits," "supervising activities" and (the most horrible of all) socializing children.*

*I most emphatically did not want to police kids, but was ambivalent about how to express the authority implicit in my role. What about my anti-authoritarian beliefs? Should I let the kids do whatever they want? I quickly began to suspect that children are not miniature adults. They are unsocialized; born without the realization that they can't always have their own way (a realization which many adults never assimilate). I decided that what I most wanted to do as a teacher was to help kids find ways to co-operate with one another. It was obvious to me that they were eager to learn this skill because the more practiced they became at it, the better time they had playing with other kids. Of course, I could encourage children to be responsible and co-operative only in so far as I was responsible and co-operative with them. Once I thought that we had established a respectful relationship, I did not*



*feel so bad about thwarting some of their activity.*

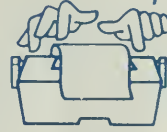
*My own teachers in the early childhood education program helped me to clarify my attitudes toward authority. These teachers were, as we say in the trade, very good "models." Although possessing much more experience and knowledge than I, they did not make me feel inferior in intelligence or ability. I could learn easily from them because they were able to learn from my opinions and observations.*

*I think socialization a sad but inevitable process. When I was working with toddlers, I often pondered the tragedy of toilet training in which one must give up the freedom to shit and piss where and whenever one wants and accept the restrictions surrounding elimination in our society. But not even parents will want to change their children's diapers forever. And most children want to learn to take care of themselves. Children are not born nor can they live in a vacuum. For better or worse, children learn from adults how to survive in the world they inhabit. Hopefully the dynamic between child and adult is characterized by mutual respect. All too often it is not. I agree with you. Many of the parents and childcare workers with whom I have worked have treated children with little appreciation for their individuality and dignity. Probably these adults were treated in such a way when they were young.*

*Now that I have worked with babies, I am convinced that human beings have powerful social drives. It seems the paradox of our existence that society, which in many ways has ensured our survival as a species, is proving to be our prison and, perhaps, our gallows. I, too, dream of an institutionless community where both children and adults can freely live with, play*

*with, love and learn from whomever they wish. But everyday I confront the monolithic reality of the society in which the children I know must grow. Those moments of honest, supportive and co-operative exchange between the people with whom I'm directly involved are the most authentic manifestations of my dream. It is on those moments I depend for my sanity.*

*Thanks for your letter,  
Penney O'Reilly*



Dear PW,

I've just finished reading PW #6, the first one I've ever seen, and I just wanted to send you my congratulations and support. I had hoped some intelligent workers' journal existed, especially for those of us in the outlands of radical America (although you'd be surprised how many socialists scoot around Louisiana).

I also wanted to lend my two cents to K.L.'s call for an end of managerial free rides. Over the past few years I've corrected hundreds of supposedly copy-ready articles for both newspapers and journals, but I've yet to get any real recognition, either vocally or monetarily, from my bosses. So lately I've been letting these boobs stew in their own juices. God only knows how many times I've seen "thank you for your patients" on a "corrected" manuscript. If people want me to type up their papers and articles in as perfect a form as possible, they damn well better pay me for my editorial skills also. Sadly, more managers are illiterate these days, and mistakes go unnoticed. Perhaps we can create enough havoc in the meantime, though, to force some positive change. Right on, K.L.! — no more free rides!

Sincerely,  
T.A. — Baton Rouge, LA

Dear *Processed World*,

In *PW* #6, there are calls for a "new social movement" and also general questions regarding *PW*'s potential role in organizing activi-

ties, while hints of such activity are suggested throughout #6.

The "Roots of Disillusionment" provides a vivid history which explains the decline in youthful



"A chosen few will ascend to heaven."  
— *The Bible*, by Milton Jones  
Chap. 23, Subsection 6.3  
paragraph IVa., verse 2Q.

idealism. The article suggests by its references to military build-up and the proposed new child labor laws that the ascendancy of the New Right is a direct impetus to the current disillusionment.

It seems to me that neo-conservative policies have severely exacerbated a troubled capitalist economy, while these same policies intensify hardship on low-income people and the unemployed, *thereby compelling them to tolerate deteriorating wages and working conditions*. The current crisis is not merely the result of the inexorable advancement of capitalism, but rather is additionally the direct effect of neo-conservative federal government policies.

As the Cabins article aptly points out, it is time for "idealistic" radicals and disgruntled workers to join forces in an all-out offensive against neo-conservative politics and ideology. A "new social movement" *could* be forged which would simultaneously exert electoral pressures to revolutionize American politics.

This movement would penetrate unemployment lines, welfare offices, and workers' hangouts through immersion in voter registration drives. Citizens would be urged to register or risk losing unemployment benefits, jobs, or risk continually lowered real wages. The movement would be legal yet semi-disruptive.

If successful the movement would register low-income people, office workers, and the unemployed who generally disfavor conservative policies, but ordinarily fail to vote. As voter registrations rise, politicians will be alerted and take more popular stands or new politicians will rise up. Either way, the conservative position would be severely threatened. Newer, more populist policies would eventually be generated. Once the "fire" of the

new movement is fanned, there is no telling how fast it will spread or what other progressive flames it might spark.

Yet the immediate task is to publicize the viability and powerful potential of this movement and to get to work organizing and registering. The beauty of this movement to me is its offer of *tangible* action that addresses the *immediate* wants and needs of workers.

TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT!  
Hopeful and eager,  
T.M. — Santa Cruz

Dear T.M.,

*We sympathize with your desire to get into action, but can't agree that the way to go is registering the poor and unemployed to vote (a strategy, by the way, recently adopted by a group around left-wing sociologists Frances Piven and Richard Cloward, so we'll see what happens).*

*You write: "The current crisis is not merely the result of the inexorable advancement of capitalism, but rather is additionally the direct result of neo-conservative policies." True enough. But the current crisis is worldwide in scope, and includes not only "socialist" mixed economies like West Germany and France, but the "Communist" nations as well. Reaganomics (which is also Thatchernomics) only aggravates the crisis locally by damaging exports, starving potentially-competitive businesses of capital and increasing the tendency to speculate rather than invest productively.*

*A "rational" capitalist response would be: re-channel major investments on a nationwide scale via a government-run holding company; clamp down on speculation; upgrade technical and scientific education and retraining; establish a basic minimum survival income for those that can't be employed in the new high-tech industries. The wor-*

kers and poor would still have to be squeezed for fresh investment capital, though, and the "reindustrialization" would only generate large numbers of new jobs if wages sank significantly below the cost of labor-saving machinery. In other words, if you want "full employment," prepare for low pay. The ideological banner under which all this is done — liberal, socialist, fascist — matters little. So long as the present world economic order persists, whoever drives the sleigh will have to throw many of us to the wolves.

This doesn't mean we shouldn't fight. A movement capable of dealing with the problem at its root can only emerge from mass social self-defense against the demands of capital. But voting is generally of little use. The real masters of the economy and of society are not elected — they merely allow us to help them choose a governing team from among their internal factions. If we ever came close to electing a team that refused to play it their way, they would change the rules, as in Chile in 1973.

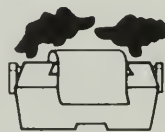
The problem runs deeper still. The market and the wage system exist because people don't attend directly and collectively to satisfying their needs. The state and every other separate power over social life exists because people don't take direct and collective control of social life themselves. A movement, initially "defensive," which practices direct action and direct democracy (all essential decisions made by popular assembly, coordination carried out by mandated, recallable delegates and not by "representatives") in itself begins to challenge this state of affairs. When the movement additionally starts seizing and redistributing goods, housing, etc., it goes a long step further. It remains for the movements' assemblies to impose their own "plan" of collective tasks in the

areas of their control, shutting down operations that are now useless, establishing completely different relationships between the remaining useful ones, sharing and rotatory necessary drudgery among everyone capable of doing it.

During this process the forces of the old order have to be subverted, disorganized, paralyzed. Iran in 1978 provides a fairly good example. The best-equipped army in the Middle East collapsed in a few weeks when faced with a worker-jammed industry, snipers and bombings, and wave after wave of unarmed demonstrators filling the streets daily, refusing to go about their normal routines. For a time, the workers and poor of Iran had social power at their fingertips. That they did not grasp it testifies to how deeply imprinted are the circuits of authoritarian control. Only a movement that creates a "culture" of autonomy, self-responsibility, solidarity and free imagination can circumvent this trap.

Placing any serious reliance on electoral activity — let alone making it the axis of our strategy — ultimately reinforces reliance on leaders. The radical, communal, empowering push of direct action is diffused in the solitary passivity of pulling levers in a curtained booth. Our real tasks are elsewhere.

— Louis Michaelson



Dear Processed World:

Work has been work lately and I've resorted to the use of expensive drugs to liberate my mind and soul. Thus, no money to subscribe to the World.

I would also like to share a word processing observation. "Technol-

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# Dear workers at LLL:

Here's how you can help stop the  
**ARMS RACE!**

**MISFILE** those reports . . . SPILL COFFEE ON  
THE XEROX MACHINE ... forget to give telephone  
messages to your boss... **white-out** key

**documents** . . . LOSE INTER-OFFICE MEMOS...  
mistype numbers... **turn bomb blueprints**

**upside-down** . . . miscollate scientific papers...

**UNPLUG THOSE COMPUTERS!!! . . .**

## SLOW DOWN . . . . .

**THE POWER IS YOURS ...**



**together**  
**we can**  
**stop**  
**nuclear**  
**war**

Distributed to workers at Lawrence Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab

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ogy" is cursed by "enlightened" protesters; computers are denigrated by oppressed workers. In all honesty, I generally prefer my NBI machine to the political, self-righteous, egotistical people around this busyness world. It's the one thing in this joint that I control and that

behaves in an understandable way.

Pre-word processor, supervisors hunted through my garbage can at the end of the day to find out how many errors I had made. My annoyance with the little blinking cursor doesn't compare to my fear of carbons!

I work for money whether I push, produce, process or collect garbage/paper. The insanity I deal with isn't caused by technology but by the black-hearted little people trying to disguise, manipulate and maneuver neuroses.

T.C — SF



Dear PW:

Yes, as you keep saying, the way people deal with each other on a daily basis is important; and so is "enunciating new visions." If, however, a prankster wants to destroy some of my work in the office, I hope he or she will be polite and ask me first. About half of it I wouldn't mind a bit.

I take it from your last issue, that PW has become a fully fledged anarchist publication, and is put out



## Stealing Time on the Job

quoted from *U.S.A. Today*

Here are the most common forms of employee time theft:

- Arriving late at work.
- Leaving early.
- Taking inordinately long lunch hours.
- Socializing excessively with co-workers.
- Slowing down the pace of activity to create higher-paying overtime opportunities.
- Feigning illness and taking unjustified "sick" days.
- Eating lunch on the premises — and then going out for a full lunch hour.
- Using the employer's time to tend to personal business.
- Taking numerous and long coffee breaks.
- Operating another business on the side.
- Making excessive personal phone calls.



## HAIKU

*To the museum curator  
The visitors  
Are the exhibits.*

— O'Tannenbaum

by the most highly inspired of hydrogen and nitrogen inflated idealists. Half the world's best people sleep under the stars, and the other half are anarchists. If only the communist fantasies of the last 100 years or the American fantasies had satisfied expectations, the last ten decades wouldn't have been so depressing. The anarchists tried to get people to forget about government as salvation altogether, and it's sad they never succeeded.

Don't soldiers ever get bored or tired of their jobs like the rest of us? A third world publication said recently that during the last thirty years, there have been more than 75 military coups — not one of which has ever "returned power to the people's representatives." I find this increasingly depressing. I hope PW will continue to provide sustained laughter and a bit more sophistication so that wage slaves can believe *somebody* knows better. If we deserve an improved world, it will be because we are less sure of ourselves, have deeper respect for each other, and are more thankful than the slide-rule military jerkoffs who are running things now.

Tenderly,

C.R. — Silicon Valley

P.S. For the whole week after I read one of your issues, I find I have to puke a lot less...



# SEX ROLE SOCIAL CONTROL

Male and female sex roles — “masculine” and “feminine” — are not determined by biology, but are socially created. They vary a great deal among different societies and historical periods. The “mythology” of sex roles is used to direct people’s behavior and determine their social status, and society provides us with forms of recognition for validating our status in achieving those roles. In modern industrialized society, jobs and products alike are categorized in terms of masculine and feminine and psychologically linked to our self-images.

This is the sex role/social control equation: how our self-image and emotional needs are manipulated by social institutions — from schools to television to employment — and how the process of validating sex role status in America has been commercialized and marketed back to us as products and jobs.

## JOBS AND SEX AFTER WWII

The dramatic changes in the American economy after World War II were reflected in equally major changes in sex roles.

The Depression made traditional means of livelihood untenable for millions of Americans involved in occupations like farming and small businesses and trades. The outbreak of WWII re-industrialized the country. Families moved from rural to urban areas and, in the face of a labor shortage, women were brought into traditionally male jobs on the factory-line, as “Rosie the Riveter.” After the war, the munitions plants made ap-

pliances and America had a consumer economy: mass production supported by mass consumption promoted by advertising and the new device of television.

The rise of the suburban, nuclear family lifestyle meant that sex roles had to change. Media hype helped convince women to leave the work force and return to the home. Men had to be convinced to give up traditional American dreams of self-reliance and economic independence to accept jobs as wage-slaves on the assembly line and in the growing bureaucracy of the corporations. In the 1950s, assuming the suburban husband and wife roles became a patriotic duty.

Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* is still the best account of how women’s roles went topsy-turvy in the 40s and 50s. Friedan thoroughly documents how corporations together with psychiatrists and other “professionals” helped make the housewife into the purchasing agent of the nuclear family. But what about the “masculine mystique”?

The role of men was to earn the money to support this buying. But after WWII, jobs increasingly challenged traditional ideals of masculinity. Suburban life offered security for both the unionized workforce and white collar workers. But it offered little of the traditional masculine mystique of independence, self-reliance, mobility, and self-motivation.

Adapting to the new sex roles created anxiety for women and men alike in the 1950s. Advertising, mass media, and various cultural institu-

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## billboards of the future.

tions played on this anxiety. The way to feel secure in one's sex role, they said, was to fulfill the appropriate economic role. Thanks to the influence of psychiatry in this period, the ideological basis of sex role mythology shifted from biology to an emphasis on emotional and psychological differences. It wasn't that women couldn't handle men's work physically — Rosie the Riveter challenged that myth — it was that women just weren't *psychologically* suited for those jobs. They were much better suited to be wives and mothers. And men's jobs — including the growing number of white collar corporate jobs — were described in terms of their masculine qualities. Managers were "objective," "competitive," "decisive" — supposedly "unfeminine" traits. The jobs that women continued to fill in this period, typically clerical and secretarial jobs, were modelled after the premier female role: the housewife. And so the stereotype of the secretary as an office-wife to the male manager emerged.

For men, a new collective authority was needed to establish the symbols of masculine status, in lieu of tradi-

tional means of sex role validation. The male peer group became a new source of sex role authorization. Men became increasingly dependent on *other men* for recognition of their masculinity — whether on the street or on the job.

The model of the male peer group is the military hierarchy. The higher the level one achieves in the hierarchy the more masculinity one accumulates, masculinity being associated with the power to control and direct others. The corporate world, like the factory, adopted this structure virtually unchanged. While the male hierarchy took on many forms (from the hierarchy of the corporations to status levels of machismo), in all cases the hierarchy implied that there were *degrees* of masculinity. Men gauged their masculinity in comparison to those lower on the rungs of masculine status.

In fact, this ongoing need to judge masculine status created a demand for a special group of men to be permanently identified with the lowest levels of male status — scapegoats for male insecurity who could be singled out and punished for their failure to achieve masculine status.



This group's presence would serve as an impetus for male conformity.

In the 1950s, this need was met through a national campaign of homophobia that indelibly stamped the role of the *faggot* on the American consciousness.

### A POLICY OF HOMOPHOBIA

During the 1950s, homosexuals in America began to see themselves for the first time as a minority social group. Until then, the rigidity of the family, the grip of religious values, the isolation from other homosexuals, and the culture's denial of homosexuality prevented potentially gay-identified individuals from seeing themselves as anything but sickos and perverts. But the mass mobilization of WWII and the post-war social mobility broke down these constraints. Gay GI Joe and Gay WACS didn't go back to the farm in Iowa when the war was won: they began to settle in cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York, drawn by social, and job opportunities. (And many who received dishonorable discharges from the military for being gay could not return home.) The cities offered the possibility of anonymity, of separating one's private life from one's public life. So the gay double-life of the 50s became the first step out of the no-life of the closet.

The treatment of gay people as a class — thanks to psychiatric propaganda and police harassment of gay bars — sparked gay people's awareness of themselves as an unfairly persecuted minority. In fact, gay people were the target of a deliberate program of homophobia in the 1950s, administered by both local and national government.

Historian Alan Berube has obtained military documents showing that during the war, authorities were aware of homosexuality in the armed forces but chose to ignore it. A lecture to WAC officers in 1943 warned that "...Any

officer bringing an unjust or unprovable charge against a woman in this regard will be severely reprimanded."

..As soon as the war was over, however, this hands-off policy was reversed. It began in 1946, with homosexual witchhunts in the military. Between 1946 and 1953, thousands of gay people were purged from the armed forces — they were sent home by the shiploads.

Beginning in 1950 the focus shifted to civilian life. Jonathan Katz, in *Gay American History*, shows how charges of homosexuality and communism were linked from the beginning of McCarthy's witchhunt. Homosexuals were accused of being security risks because they were vulnerable to blackmail. Of course, firing them for that reason was a self-fulfilling prophecy. But in the process, a link was made between disloyalty to one's sex role and disloyalty to one's country. During this period, over 6000 alleged homosexuals were dismissed from civilian jobs. These purges particularly affected those in "sensitive" professional jobs: the civil service, medicine, teaching, etc.

The impact of these homophobic witchhunts on the American psyche should not be underestimated. As Jack Kerouac wrote in the 50s, "It's getting so you can't look a man in the eye without it being queer." Everywhere, paranoid parents were observing their children for signs of incongruous sex role behavior, secretly fearing their own sex role failure might "cause" their children to turn queer. Taunts of "faggot" became standard fare in male groups.

Homophobia became the negative electro-shock stimulus in a Skinnerian system of sex role/social control. It was the ultimate way that men could be manipulated while manipulating others. And in a world that was increasingly sexually ambivalent, *faggot* was a way of labelling anything that wasn't clearly male or female. It

could always be labelled half-female  
— that is, not-male — faggot.

*SEX ROLES IN THE 70's  
THE NEW CONSUMER AND  
THE URBAN PIONEERS*

In the 1960s and 70s, sex role stereotypes changed again as the service sector became the foundation of the post-industrial American economy. Women re-entered the work force en masse to fill the new demands for clerical and secretarial workers. Because they were more specialized, these new clerical roles could no longer be subsumed under the secretary-housewife stereotype. Managers' roles changed, too. The importance of skills in selling, persuading, competing, and directing was replaced with a new emphasis on cooperation, team work, maneuvering, and communicating — skills suited to bureaucratic paperwork. To make their way through the endless layers of authority in the corporate world, managers had to have "people skills." The "team player" must be able to compromise, to lower his defenses enough to take "feedback," to listen to others and see things from their perspective. This amounts to a de-machification of the manager's role, a process I call the "Humanization of the Manager."

The challenge to sex role stereotypes extended to society in general. Feminism challenged many myths and helped women to find alternatives to total emotional and economic dependence on men. As a result, certain ways in which men had validated their sense of masculinity at the expense of women were questioned. Other scapegoats were played down as well: overt racism, for example, became socially unacceptable in many settings.

In fact, feminism and human growth psychology together put forward a new view of men. Men need not dominate women to be masculine; masculinity could be derived from more abstract associations. Men were seen as also having emotional needs, which were translated by the mass media into emotional insecurities that could be manipulated by the economy just as women's insecurities were.

So the male mystique was stuck in old myths about self-reliance, bravery, physical prowess and conquest — cowboys-and-Indians stuff. Yet, in the 1960s and 70s, there were few opportunities for men to validate this mystique, except for a rugged weekend escape in a Winnebago. The result was a new challenge to the sex role mythology and a particular crisis in masculine identity.

The media manipulation of both women and men's sexual insecurities was central to the creation of a new non-family, urban-based market for consumer goods and services. This market — the New Consumer — was forged out of the remnants of the counter-culture of the 60s, the women, gay people, straight singles and childless couples who filled the inner cities throughout the 60s and 70s. They became the cutting edge of an urban revitalization in the 70s as they began returning to the job market, in the new downtown office jobs, but this was not the 60s dream of urban renewal. It was the profitlined



*This is my receiving unit — Its soft, feminine contours are specially designed to take all the dictating he can give me...*

*This is my transmitter unit — notice its sleek masculine appearance — I like the way it feels in my hand when I'm dictating...*



**DictatorPhone®**  
**The Ultimate in Sex Toys**  
**For the Office!**

dreams of the real estate speculators who tapped the market represented by "alternative lifestyle" people and began the process of gentrification. The refurbished inner city neighbor-

hoods then became the physical counterpart of the New Consumer marketplace.

Through the New Consumer, the changes in male and female sex roles

in the 60s and 70s were reincorporated into worker-consumer patterns. The buzzword of the New Consumer is “disposable” income. Because these urban dwellers have fewer or no children, they can take an income that would barely support a family and “dispose” of it freely on commodities. But since they don’t spend money on a family, they had to be convinced to consume for other reasons.

In the media, products were increasingly presented in sexual terms. The sexual freedom of the 60s was exploited through an unprecedented sexual objectification of women in the media. In the 70s, the sexual anxieties of *men* were appealed to for the first time. Sexual attractiveness had not been such a major concern for heterosexual men when they could take their domination of women for granted. But now they were encouraged to be concerned with their hair styles, their clothes, their colognes, and how they looked on the dance floor.

A precursor to the sexual objectification of men in the media can be found in the gay men’s community — where new styles of male appearance were explored in the early 70’s. In fact, gay men had a special role in the formulation of the New Consumer market.

The urban gay migration accelerated through the 70’s. Middle class gay people entered the gay movement, bringing with them characteristic concerns of security and social acceptance. Typically the professional and middle class gay people were anxious to present themselves as being just like everyone else except for what they do in bed. The gay community in the 70’s developed a fetish for the symbols of the mainstream culture. Gay marching bands waved American flags and gay men lavishly squandered their disposable incomes on material symbols of mainstream status and security.

The desire for social acceptance was easily manipulated. Consumption became the answer to social and personal insecurity. While the family stayed home and watched TV at night, gay men went out and consumed — entertainment, products, drugs, alcohol... and sex. Sex became the perfect consolation for an unfulfilled life, a quick fix for a damaged self-image, immediately rewarding and reinforcing. As the influence of gay lifestyles spread, heteros also discovered that sex was an answer to insecurity. Finally, the media presented its version of our anxiety and how products could help us by making us more successful in obtaining sex.

The fulfillment-through-consumption sell was one way in which many of the lifestyle experiments of the 60’s were assimilated into economic, consumer-worker roles. By the end of the 70’s the signs of assimilation were everywhere: gay men sought acceptance by using their “economic clout,” women associated equality with a corporate career, products were sold on the basis of their sexiness, and the grass-roots politics of the 60’s were substituted with traditional influence-peddling and bankrolling in the form of “political action committees.” But the clincher was the linking of the desire for self-realization to sex, and sex to the consumption of products.

To address the crisis in masculine identity in particular, a new means of sex role validation was introduced through the consumption of media itself. Jerry Mander, in *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*, describes the influence of media on our lives as the “colonization of experience.” Media and advertising have invaded our consciousness to such a degree that we live out our emotions, and deal with frustrations, through vicarious media experiences. Advertising promises, television programs, films, spectator sports and video games all provide

the opportunity to experience the “thrill of victory and the agony of defeat” so important to the masculine mystique. Similarly, women can live out their emotional fantasies by means of soap operas and romance novels.

But to deal with sex role changes on the job, an even more interesting technique is resorted to.

### TO THE SEX ROLE RESCUE: THE WOMAN MANAGER AND THE GAY SECRETARY

The Woman Manager and the Gay Secretary are pivotal figures in the challenge to sex roles on the job. The corporate employers have managed to use the aspiration of both to make the transition from the patriarchal office of the 50's to the “post-feminist” office of the coming decade.

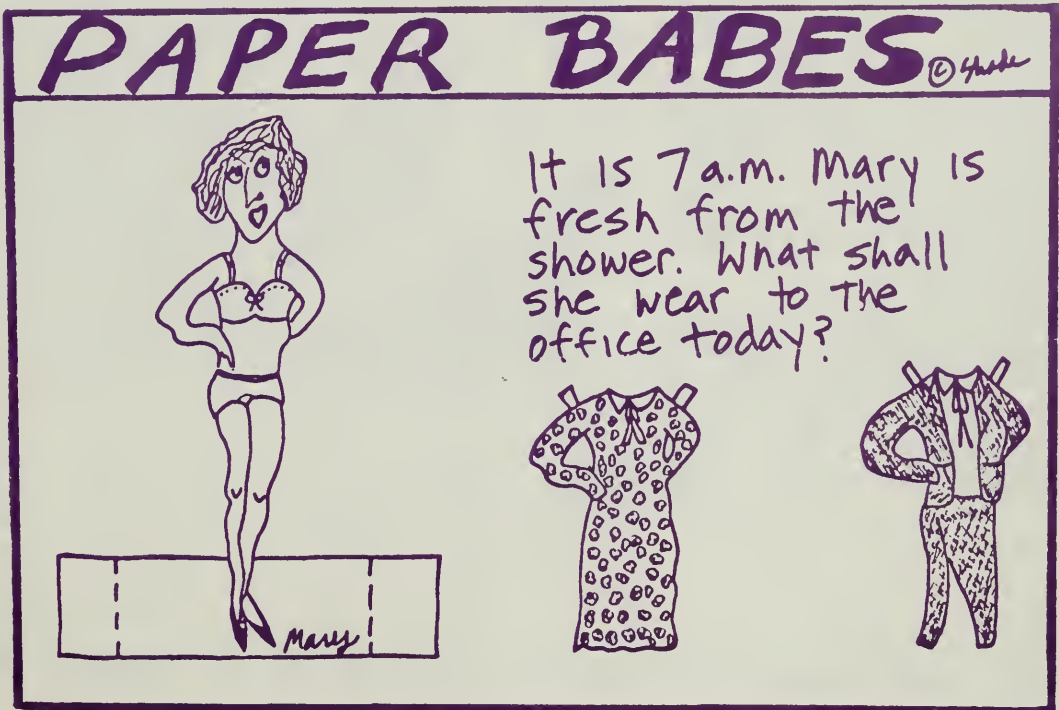
The Woman Manager helps link the 60's' ideal of self-realization with the corporate career. More than any other group entering the corporate job market in the 70's, the Woman Manager interprets having a career as the answer to her desire for personal growth. To some, the Woman Manager is the corporate watchdog femi-

nist, breaking down sexual barriers. In fact, she is manipulated into a facade of equal opportunity by her token presence — and she ends up reinforcing sexual assumptions that support the distinction between management and clerical.

The most interesting way that this can be seen is in the different ways women managers dress and behave as compared to women secretaries. The secretaries still dress in styles considered feminine. But the Woman Manager is “dressed for success” — that is, dressed like a man in non-sex mid-length skirts with jackets and something like a tie, all made of the same material as men's three-piece suits.

Women who want to “make the grade” in management must overcome a good deal of social conditioning. They must become assertive, objective, detached and competitive — like men. In this way, a symbolic association of manager roles with masculinity is maintained. And the Woman Manager ends up championing the right of women to act like men.

Interestingly, however, women still bring to their jobs certain values and



attitudes more common to them than to men. Women find it easier to be compromisers, negotiators, communicators, and to attend to individual feelings. They actually bring the qualities the corporation needs for the "Humanization of the Manager."

At the non-management level, the Gay Secretary plays a key role. The young gay men who began taking secretarial jobs in the 1970's are not really motivated in the same way as the gay middle-classes. The Gay Secretary is in a limbo between the values of the counter-culture and the fulfillment-through-consumption values of the New Consumer. Because they are not as concerned with establishment proprieties, they have few hang-ups about taking jobs considered lower-paying and traditionally female. So gay men not only entered the corporate workforce in numbers, they did so visibly, the result of a decade of gay pride. Actually, the lower-paying women's jobs were the least threatening place the corporations could have allowed openly gay men to accumulate.

Once in these jobs, gay men often help with another corporate strategy. Because they are often "over-qualified" for clerical work they help upgrade those positions, setting new productivity standards and lending a "professional" image to secretarial work. But like the Woman Manager, the Gay Secretary helps disguise the continued, now covert, sex role stereotyping of office jobs.

Since these roles can no longer be sex-typed simply by limiting them to men (as managers) or women (as secretaries), they are associated instead with secondary sexual characteristics. Women who assume male jobs assimilate to masculine behaviors and values. And men who take women's jobs are feminine — not-man — *faggots*. The sexual hierarchy is maintained: feminine/clerical has the least status and mascu-



Out-of-Control Data Institute

line/manager has the most. Male managers who might wonder just how masculine it is to be a paper-shuffler can console themselves with a rationalization something like this: "My job is still masculine — only *gay* men are secretaries." (Of course, psychological rationalizations like these are not usually conscious although they can be made conscious, as the first step in dealing with attitudes of sexism and racism, as well as homophobia.)

The assimilation of women managers and the association of gay men with women's work belie their would-be role as challengers to the sexual barriers. The homophobia of the 1950's has assumed a seemingly benign, subtle, and institutionalized role in the office of the 1980's. With gay men visibly concentrated in the lower rungs of the corporate hierarchy, the faggot-scapegoat gets a job title and a place in the daily working lives of millions of Americans: the ever-present reminder of the dif-

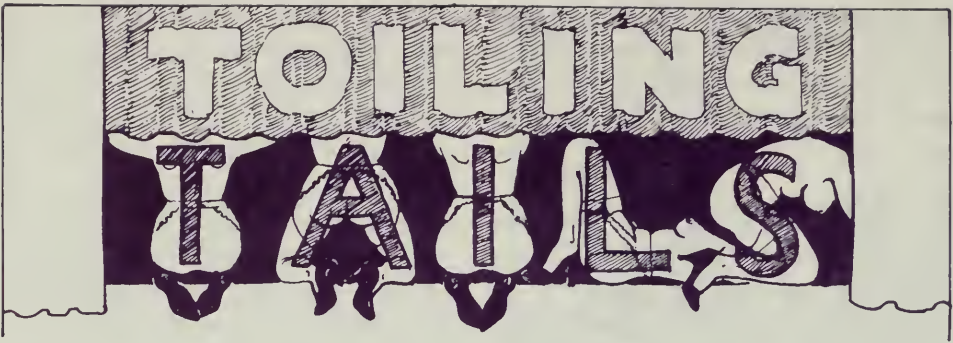
ference between masculine-manager and feminine-clerical. And the sex role/social control equation remains in force despite the advances of women, gay people, and other groups.

Considering this history of the changes in sex roles in the past three decades, one thing seems clear: in the future we should not underestimate the cleverness of the mainstream culture in assimilating our aspirations perverting our ideals, and seducing

us into consumer and worker roles at the expense of our desire for self-determination and autonomy. To break up the sex role/social control equation not only should sex role stereotyping be challenged, but the entire system that benefits from this social manipulation should be questioned and our own relationships to that system reconsidered.

—by *Stephen Marks*





## “It’s A Business Doing Pleasure With You”

Eight and a half of my twelve years working experience were in the sex-for-money market. The last three and a half I have worked in the so-called “straight” sector. I’ve never really been able to separate the two working experiences. Though they are vastly different, they are both firmly rooted in the same money market.

My first job was after school in a drugstore in Walsenburg, a small town in Colorado. My mother was a known prostitute. I lived openly with my boyfriend, which earned me a “bad reputation.” Girls from school asked me to get birth control pills for them, but I refused because I hated their hypocrisy. The job was not too bad—I took advantage of whatever fringe benefits I could create. The handyman took advantage of every opportunity he could create to trap me against the wall and cop a feel. He intimidated me, but I always managed to get away, and I quit soon after graduation anyway.

I “developed” early, and had a regulation “nudie” magazine type body. Since I had a “bad rep,” men were always after me. Even my brother couldn’t resist. When he came back home from his stint in the army and found me all grown-up and open-hearted, he raped me at my other brother’s house. I had gone there because he wanted to talk about my future and the possibility of going to college.

Some friends of mine lived in the mountains near Redwing, Colorado. I

visited them and decided to accompany them to NYC. After arriving there, my friends and I managed to acquire funds, so I didn’t think about working. One day while out walking on the lower east side, I saw a place called the Pink Orchid. I love orchids, so I went inside and met the owner, Danny. He was the cutest red-headed boy I’ve ever seen. With him were several young, pretty women. They explained to me that it was a nude modeling studio, and that I could be paid for being photographed in the nude. The women further explained to me that I could make tips by having sex with the customers. Excluding the relationship I’d had with my boyfriend, my sexual experiences thus far indicated that my sexuality was going to be taken advantage of anyway, so getting paid for sex was a form of vindication. I immediately doubled the house prices at the Pink Orchid. The other women followed suit, and we were all happy about that. I still remember one of the men who frequented the place. He had a twisted penis and ejaculated from the side. Most of my friends were involved in various forms of the underground economy. I didn’t ask them what they did for money, and they didn’t ask me. When I returned to Colorado, however, friends in Denver were horrified when I told them what I was doing. They persuaded me to get a straight job and I was hired by a chiropractor. I didn’t have the skills for office work, but he gave me lots of

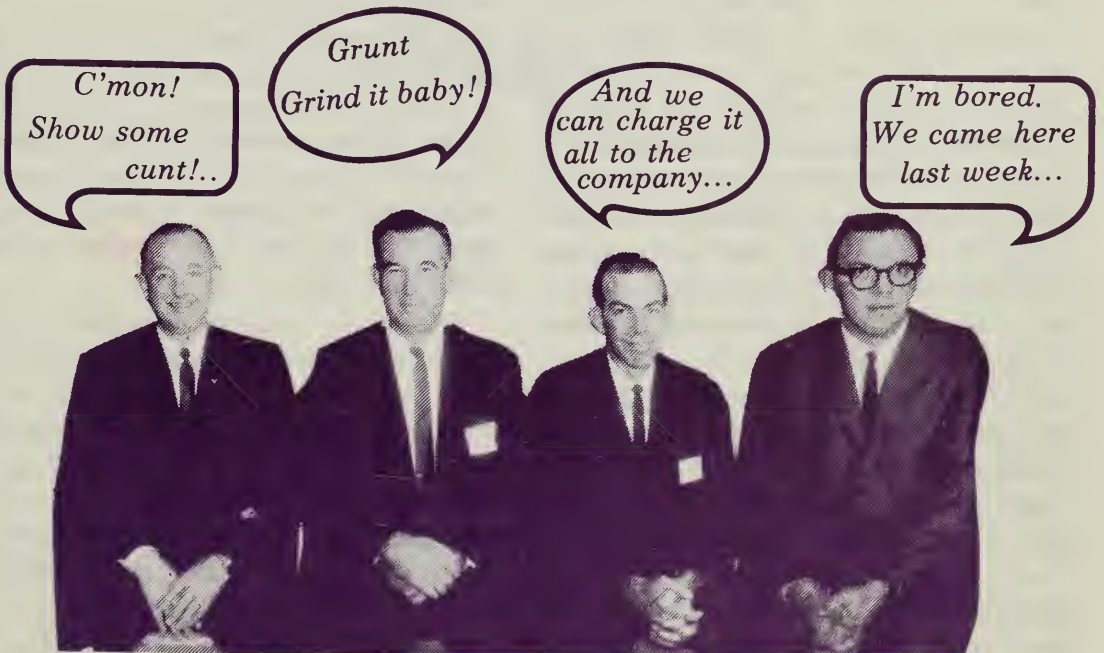


time to do the paperwork. He had big plans for me to become a chiropractor and gave me free treatments for a back injury. The rest of his time he spent chasing me around the table. Soon it seemed ridiculous to receive minimum wage for what he had in mind, so I gave up my future as a chiropractor and went back to "The Life" as it's called by those who live it.

The Adult Literary Guild All-Girl-Shoe-Shine-Parlour, Pornographic Book Store and Nude Modeling Studio was my next employer. We shined shoes for 50 cents plus tips. We wore short skirts, and a mirror behind us allowed the customers to see what we had to offer. Often, the shoe shine would entice them into a "modeling" session with one of us. Between the modeling and the shoe shines, I made big bucks. I had a few tricks of my own as well, like Maurice, who refused to take out his false teeth when he gave me head. I nearly died laughing at those teeth clicking between my legs. Once someone arranged a "date" for me who turned out to be one of my sister's high school boyfriends. As far as the transaction was concerned, it didn't

matter that we had practically grown up together—he paid his money, and he got his goods. Back in New York, I tried selling hot dogs on Wall St. People would come to stare at the novelty of a *woman* selling hot dogs but took their business to the man up the street who resented the "competition." (He actually chased me down the street once. It's hard to run fast while pushing a hot dog cart.)

Undaunted, I got another job in the Wall St. district, at a place called Maiden Lane Massage. While working there, I acquired my first and only pimp. At first, I didn't think of it that way. Certainly, he never assumed the role of procurer, but did encourage me to make more money. So I went to work for Caesar's Retreat, a posh midtown massage parlour where I made up to \$700.00 per day. I shared the money freely with Lee because I am a generous person. In my line of work, I felt a "real relationship" was impossible since it couldn't fit the "you and only you" category, which to me defined a "real relationship." Besides, I didn't have the time. Lee understood that. He held me at night sometimes, when I needed that.



*The Insurance Management Team at the Palace Theater*

When I became ill and was hospitalized, he took all the money I had and disappeared. I heal quickly though, and in two weeks I was back at Caesar's Retreat and began my own private practice.

Private practice is risky; you have only yourself to rely on. There is a network of tricks who use call girls, and soon my name and number got around. One of my regulars was a rabbi who liked to be whipped. I started getting calls from a man who threatened he "knew all about me," and gave me the option of spending the weekend with him or in jail. Around the same time, my landlord alerted me that a couple of detectives had been looking for me.

I conferred with my friend Kathy and we decided to head for Las Vegas and the big time. Neither of us had experience at picking up people because we were used to having them come to us. The massage parlour scene was dismal, and there were places nearby where it was legal and cheap. We packed everything in Kathy's old cadillac and drove to L.A. where we hired on with an "outcall Escort Service." We decided to work in pairs for safety, so when I got a call to join Kathy at the Hyatt Hotel, I figured the guy wanted two girls or something. When I arrived there, I was immediately arrested. My friend Kathy was on probation, and had talked the cops into letting me take the bust instead. I got bailed out and went to stay with friends. Kathy disappeared.

By this time, I was exhausted and my body felt like it was falling apart. I decided that I had to get out of the business. To make it easy on myself, I got a job as a receptionist in a massage parlour. I knew that no one would give me a hard time, no typing was involved, and I could share my life with like-minded people. A man who

often came in recommended that I be a masseuse. I told him the truth, that I was happily involved with someone, and four months pregnant. He didn't care — he wanted me, and one night on the late shift, he came in with a long knife and got what he wanted. He was very brutal, and complications set in with my pregnancy. I lost the baby shortly afterward.

My next attempt to make a living was as a stripper. I worked at the Coronet on La Cienega Boulevard. I transferred to San Francisco for two weeks, and worked at what used to be the Follies Theatre on 16th St. It was winter, and there was no heat. The basement dressing room walls were cold and damp. I contracted a mild case of pleurisy and told the manager that I wanted to go back to L.A. He warned me that if I broke my contract, I would never work for them again. I left anyway and got a job at the Ivar Theater which I eventually ended up managing. Actually, we all managed the place, interchanging jobs and otherwise supporting one another.

The manager didn't object because our self-management freed him from responsibility. When he argued with our decisions (like hiring a black woman as comedienne-MC, or hiring a 50-yr. old stripper) we voted him down. When someone in the audience started jerking off, the dancer would signal the projection booth and whoever was running the spotlight would focus it on him.

I became acquainted with a tour guide who brought groups in. Plying me with the familiar argument: "What's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this?", he introduced me to a gift shop owner who gave me a job in his office. It was a Japanese-run shop, and as such, the working environment was characterized by teamwork and co-operation. None of the men ever hit on me, and we all



La Maison Tellier, illustration by Rene Lelong, 1903

worked hard together. I began to feel that perhaps I could make it in the straight world after all. I learned to be a bookkeeper by trial and error. Then my boss got married and his wife took my place.

Armed with my new skills, I went to work for an insurance brokerage. My grasp of the work to be done was very rudimentary. I struggled along, trying to cope with this new environment; typewriters clicking, computers beeping and humming. I cried nearly every day for the first month. I finally got the hang of it though, and I did my work and tried to look happy about it.

(A man who had graciously undertaken to train me as *whore extraordinaire* had informed me that it was *most* important to appear to enjoy what I was doing.) I tried to be an exemplary worker, but could not reconcile this to the rage that was growing inside me. I constantly suffered from migraines and I felt very self-destructive, feeling that no matter how hard I tried, I wasn't good enough. I gave notice and began feeling better.

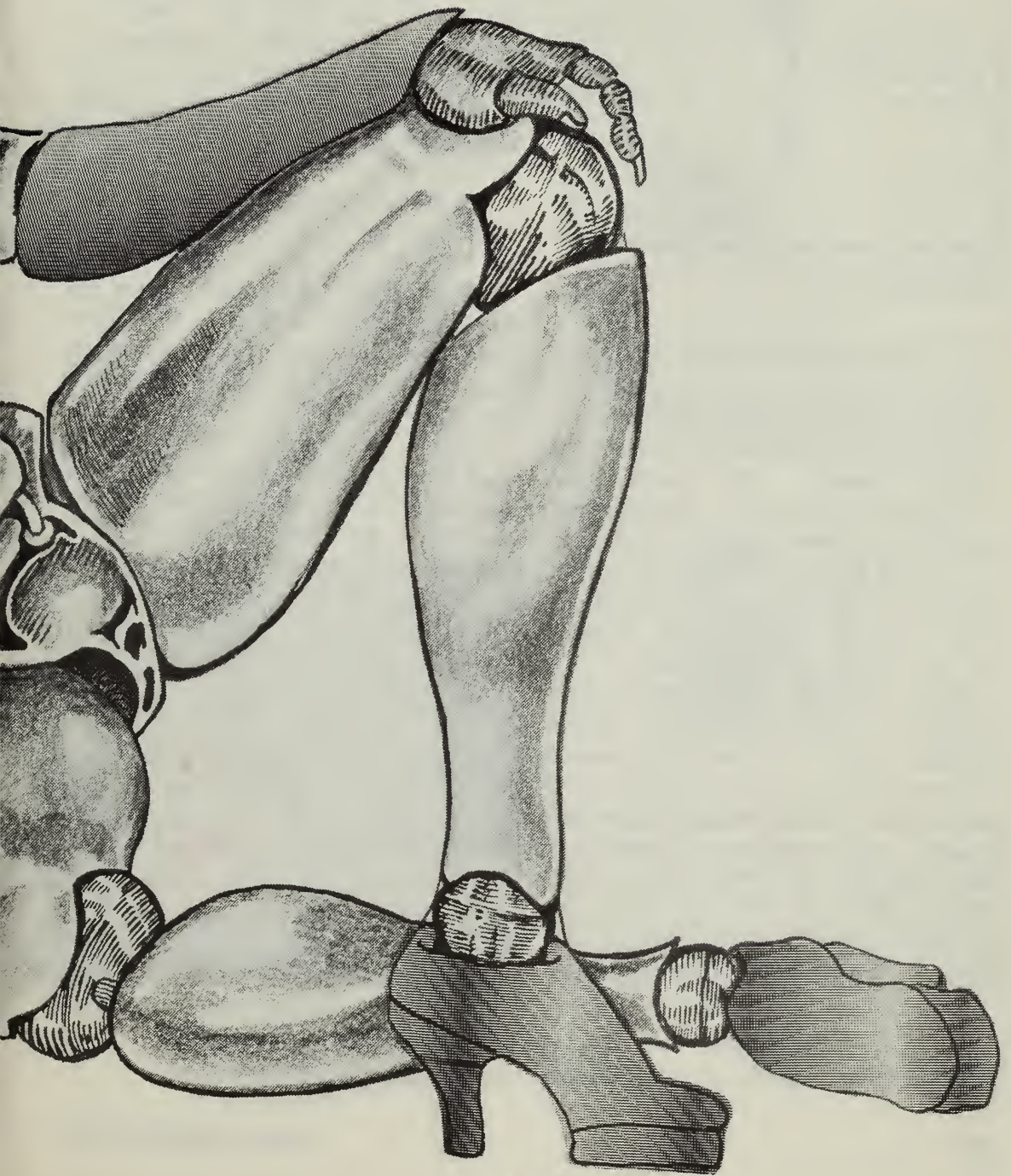
After a vacation from the work world, I joined the temporary workforce. During this time, I went to

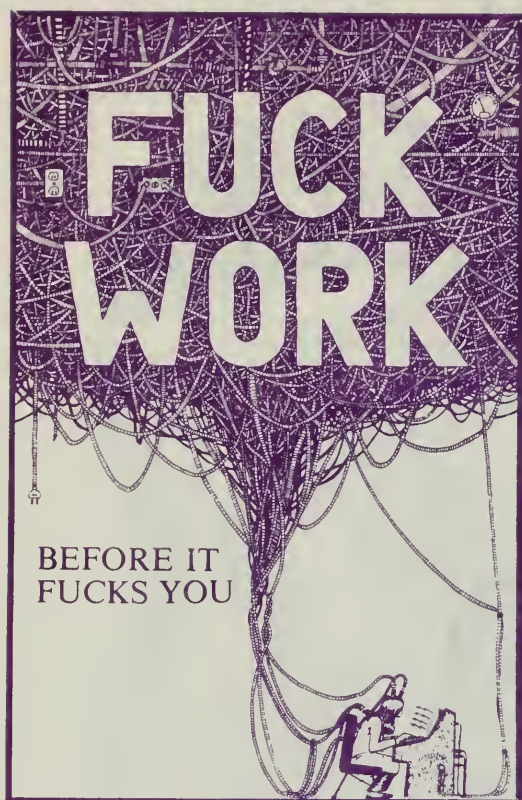
*cont'd. on p. 36*



Leinda J. J. J. J.

# WOMAN of the 19-YEAR-82





cont'd. from p. 33

Ascot Personnel Services and met Leslie, who was eager to find the "right position" for me. When asked what I really wanted to do, I answered "Write poetry." She reacted by giving me a typing test. Looking me up and down, she asked me if I would be willing to spend \$300.00 on an "interviewing costume." I envisioned a sequined G-string and fringed bra and went home and cried.

Without Leslie's help, I got hired at another insurance brokerage. While working there, I noticed that one of the men who used to sit in the front row of the Palace hung out on the corner. He clearly recognized me, and though we never spoke, the encounter was an intense one. His presence reminded me that I had never fit in anywhere — neither in the

crowd rushing down Kearny St., nor on stage.

The working world is an alien one, whether exchanging sex for money or time for money. Life itself becomes a commodity. I've tried to acquire the work ethic. I've devoted myself to my work, done overtime without pay, furiously entered data, cooperated until I was drained.

Despite my efforts, I grew alienated and withdrawn, in the same way that I "withdrew" sensation from my body when I was in *The Life*. The toll extracted from my body, my heart and my mind has been the same — alienation, rage, shame. When I hawk *Processed World* on the streets, people often angrily ask what alternative I have to Wage Slavery. I always tell the truth (honest politics) that I don't know of any. This is America, where we can all grow up to be what we want to be. We've all heard the story about so-and-so, who started out shining shoes and is now a millionaire...well-meaning, charitable types suggest doing "something you really like" for money.

*Step right up folks, she's spinning gossamer webs of poetry right out of her very being, be the first on the block, get 'em while they're hot.....*

### Will the Real Rapist please Stand Up?

*It's not you, blue-eyed brother.  
It's not you, long-knived one,  
Nor You, tender, sweetly parting  
my thighs.*

*I am spread eagled, bound:  
Slave to the almighty dollar —  
Capital Punishment.*

*(The condition in which the whip becomes an extension of the arm swinging innocently by your side as you walk to work.)*

— by Linda Thomas, with thanks to the Processed World staff, for their Truly Human Contact (With me).

☆☆☆☆☆☆  
☆☆☆☆☆☆  
☆☆☆☆☆☆

# Hot Flashes!

San Francisco Chronicle

Tues., December 7, 1982

## Brothel Gives A Big Party — Just for Ladies

Battle Mountain, Nev.

**Madam Julie Hickman** said yesterday the women of the community always ask her about life in a brothel, so she threw a big party to let them see for themselves.

Hickman, operator of the Calico Club, invited about 300 women from Battle Mountain and neighboring towns to the party on Sunday. Men were not invited.

The women sipped champagne, watched a fashion show and talked with the six prostitutes employed at the place.

One of the prostitutes handed out tickets for door prizes. Asked how she liked the work, she said, "It's better than being a secretary like I was before working here."

*United Press*

## Clerk Charged

### Boss Killed Over Christmas Bonus

New York

A 38-year-old law clerk who complained about the size of her Christmas bonus shot and killed one of the firm's partners yesterday, police and a company spokesman said.

Barbara Austin was charged with murder after she allegedly fired three shots into Jay Jacobs, a 50-year-old resident of Greenwich, Conn., at the offices of Burke & Burke on Fifth Avenue, police said.

"Afterward, she was heard to complain that the amount of her year-end bonus was unsatisfactory," said Michael A. McElroy, a firm spokesman.

Austin fired five shots at the lawyer, hitting him three times, police said. A gun was recovered at the scene.

McElroy said that after shooting Jacobs in his office, Austin returned to her desk outside and sat down.

McElroy said Austin operated a word processor and did not work directly for Jacobs. He would not disclose the size of her bonus, but said it was determined by a committee and said, "I understand it was substantial."

At the a police precinct house, a man who said he was Austin's boyfriend waited for her to return from the hospital.

The man, who identified himself only as Giovanni, said she had complained of harassment on the job but would not say what kind.

*Associated Press*



\* \* \*

**ATTEMPTED SUICIDE** on the job can be grounds for dismissal, an arbitrator rules. A union had fought the firing of a dairy driver who cut his wrists. The union argued that the driver suffered from mental illness. But employers needn't "take the risk" of giving such workers another chance, the arbitrator says.

\* \* \*

# PORN

TURN ON



or

PUT DOWN



## Some Thoughts on Sexuality

Until recently, controversy about the commercial sex industry in the U.S. has been dominated by the anti-pornography campaigns of such diverse political groups as Women Against Violence and Pornography in the Media (WAVPM), and the Moral Majority. Although opposed on almost any other issue, they agree that the public availability of explicitly sexual images for the purpose of sexual arousal is evil and should be suppressed. Pornography, they argue, is not only morally offensive to normal citizens, but is directly responsible for sexual deviance and violent sexual assaults against women.

To convince people that pornography is inherently degrading and violent to women, WAVPM relies heavily on the indignation and disgust that graphic sexual images tend to evoke, especially in people who are unfamiliar with them. In the movie *Not A Love Story*, (whose arguments are typical of the WAVPM campaign) such images are presented against a backdrop of eerie music to increase the horror effect and are interspersed with interviews with "experts," who interpret the images for the audience.

Professional psychologists are called upon to provide behavioral models that support their claims but emotional fervor, rather than concrete evidence, prevails in WAVPM's analyses.

\*\*\*\*

Is it true that pornography is typically violent and degrading? Does the consumption of pornography lead

LOOK AT THIS, MARK - A  
NEW IDEOLOGY! IT'S GREAT,  
IT MAKES YOU FEEL  
REALLY GUILTY!







Helen Highwater

to violence against women? At least one major study on the subject, conducted by the U.S. Commission on Obscenity and Violence (1970), concluded that it does not. Other studies with similar conclusions are cited by Beatrice Faust in her book *Women, Sex and Pornography*, "A Controversial Study." Faust admits that research methods and the results differ so much that it is possible to draw almost any conclusion from a survey of the literature. (I came across this very interesting and controversial book quite by chance. It was listed in a bibliography that accompanied an article against pornography, and was described disdain-

fully as "pop sociology.") Beatrice Faust's own exhaustive research leads her to conclude that "Pornography does arouse aggressiveness as well as sexual feelings but that is not translated into anti-social — particularly anti-women behavior except possibly in a tiny minority of cases," a minority made up of people who are vulnerable to influence because of their prior attitudes or experiences.

An interview with a reformed rapist, reprinted in the book *Men on Rape*, by Timothy Benneke, supports this opinion. He was brutally abused by his stepmother throughout his childhood, had become a serious drug abuser in his early teens, and had



recently broken up with his wife after a disastrous marriage (during which his wife refused to have sex with him but went to bed with his cousins behind his back). He was full of rage and despair and hatred toward women. Shortly after viewing a \$.25 movie featuring a rape in a porn bookstore, he raped a woman while fantasizing that he was killing his wife. He remembered being so disoriented that he addressed the victim by his wife's name as he left her. When asked whether the rape was instigated by the movie he said that in fact, the movie *had* given him the idea and that he felt such movies should not be publically available. He added, however, that in the state he was in, he was bound to commit some kind of violent act against a woman, and might equally well have gone out and killed someone.

As a *Spectator* reader put it in a letter to Mistress Kat, author of the tabloid's De Sade column,

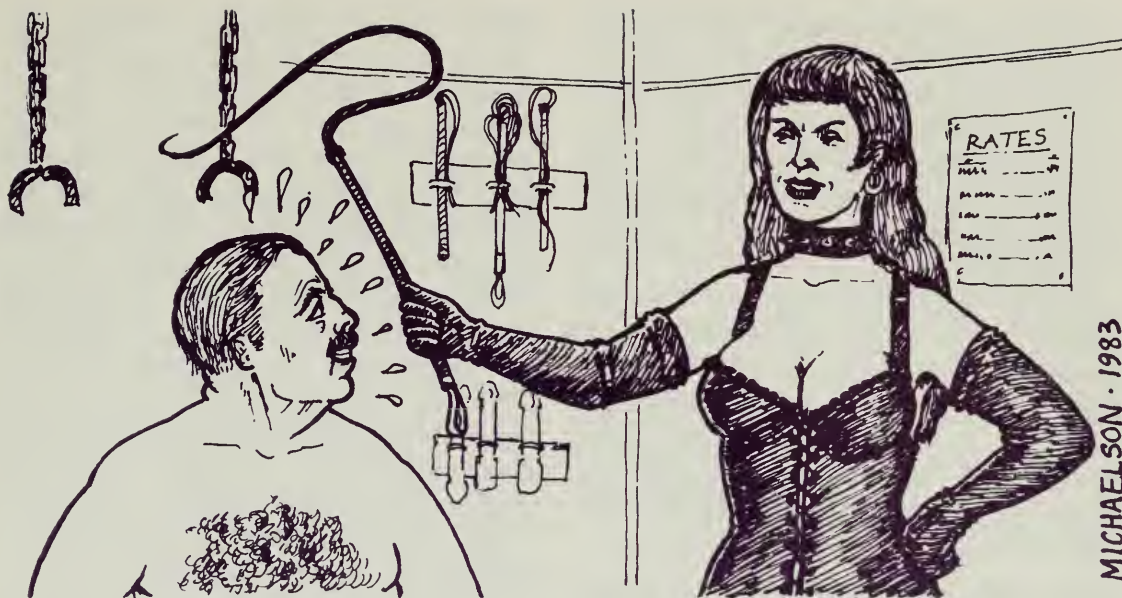
*[The filmmakers of Not A Love Story] give no credit to the viewer's ability to decipher fantasy from reality. How many leave a porno theater and go out and rape and pillage? Most, I assume, get turned on, go home, jack off or go home and fuck their wives. If you walk into a porn theater a nut job, you'll walk*

*out as a nut job. If you walk in as a normal person, that's how you'll walk out."*

The other side of the argument is summarized by the testimony of "experts" interviewed by director Bonnie Klein in *Not A Love Story*. Feminists in the movie repeatedly refer to a simple behavioral model: violent, sexist images get translated into violent sexist behavior, i.e., pornography breeds rape and violence. At one point a professional (male) psychologist explains authoritatively that men turn to porn for excitement and titillation, but after a while the images may no longer do it for them. So, the story goes, they turn to more violent images and when these images no longer satiate them they turn to acts. The interviewers shake their heads and appear quite convinced.

This "slippery slope" thesis reminds me of the school shrink telling my father that my use of marijuana was dangerous because it led to heroin addiction. The "proof" was that most heroin addicts initially got into drugs by smoking marijuana.

The anti-porn analogy apparently needs even less "proof." Nowhere in the movie are we enlightened by any factual evidence linking rape to pornography: moral fervor seems to be



argument enough. Are rapists typically frequent consumers of porn? According to research cited by Beatrice Faust, most sex offenders are indifferent to pornography. Even if they weren't, the converse notion — that porn consumers are potential sex offenders — is highly speculative, and the question itself misleading because it implies that all pornography is the same.

#### DOES PORNO = VIOLENCE?

Which brings us to another questionable plank in the WAVPM/anti-porn campaign. Does porn typically represent violence towards women? People who rely on WAVPM for their information on pornography probably think so, since many of their examples are taken from the bondage, s/m category.

My advice to people who are not traumatized by pictures of genitals and naked bodies copulating is to take a look through the porn rack the next time they are in a magazine store that carries porn. My own perusal of 15-20 typical pornzines convinced me that WAVPM grossly exaggerates the violence and s/m in pornography. Out of several dozen sequences depicting naked or scantily-clad women in provocative poses, only one sequence of 3 or 4 pictures could be termed "violent" in the usual sense of the word.

Even these shots (of a woman bound by her wrists and ankles) looked artificial and certainly could not be mistaken for a real torture session. Clearly Susan Griffin's claim that "pornography is filled with images of silencing women" — corroborated in *Not A Love Story* [NALS] with a picture of a gagged woman — is false.

In *NALS*, all of the porn footage featured sexual violence which would probably horrify the average moviegoer. In my own random sampling of porn theaters in San Francisco's Tenderloin I encountered none of these supposedly prototypical images. The five movies I watched consisted mostly of "pole-in-hole" sequences and blow jobs, with a smattering of lesbian sex scenes and an occasional plastic penis. This admittedly limited survey (I didn't go to the theaters which cater specifically to the s/m crowd) was corroborated by a *Village Voice* review of *Not A Love Story* whose author, Andrew Sarris, was a juror for the Sixth Annual Erotic Film Awards sponsored by the Adult Film Association. Sarris said that "None of the films submitted to him by the Adult Film Association of America were even remotely in the s&m category."

One can only conclude that the makers of *NALS* went out of their

way to find images they knew would most disturb their audience. Maybe they feared that run-of-the-mill porn images wouldn't evoke sufficient horror and revulsion to support their position. This dishonest approach is unfortunately characteristic of the WAVPM strategy.

Many feminists counter by declaring that, since pornography appeals to aggressive sexuality (male lust) and to men's desire to dominate women, it always victimizes, degrades and objectifies women and is therefore explicitly or implicitly violence against women.



It is true that the representation of women in pornography is sexist in many ways. It is also true that pornography embodies an alienated form of sexual activity (sex for money). But most men turn to porn because they are lonely and frustrated, not because they want to dominate women. Domination and objectification of women is by no means the only, or even the predominant turn-on in pornography. Women in pornography are not just depicted as sex *objects*, they are also often

active sexual *subjects*. Women in porn movies and shows tend to be sexually insatiable, and often initiate sexual activity.

Some men in the audience do get off on humiliating women performers. But their aggressive, disrespectful behavior stems partly from a traditional sexist double standard that holds that *women* who are sexually aggressive and uninhibited are "bad girls" — morally and physically corrupt. Men (and women) are taught to despise what they desire — a conflict that is perpetuated by a blanket condemnation of pornographic experiences.

The women's movement has often called pornographic advertisers' use of provocative images of women to draw attention to their product. The manipulation and exploitation of sexual imagery for commercial ends has profoundly shaped our sexuality. In particular, constant exposure to anonymous sexy women, available to all through the commodity form, probably contributes to men's general tendency to be more easily turned on by visual images or personal fantasies of anonymous female bodies.

Many women find it hard to accept or understand this depersonalized mode of sexual arousal because we have suffered the consequences of being constantly viewed and evaluated in sexual terms. Men's conditioned fantasies and responses force us into unpleasant self-consciousness — from the times we are hooted at or mentally undressed by arrogant strangers in the street, to subtler forms of pressure exerted in the bedroom. Industry has exploited this situation by playing on women's fears of sexual undesirability. But many contemporary feminists, in their eagerness to fight "objectification," have ended up condemning *any* representation of women meant primarily to elicit male sexual response as inherently degrading to the female sex. By extension, they condemn as "male"

the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake.

But the sexual fantasies pornography appeals to are not *always* degrading to *all* women. If some women claim that they enjoy being overpowered by or overpowering their sexual partner, that they get off on aggressive sex play or dominance fantasies, and have fun turning on their lover with sexy underwear (in other words, Horror of horrors! they *enjoy* being treated like sex objects) or even that they themselves are driven by lust, they are told that their feelings are the unhappy consequence of their social conditioning. (The most extreme proponents of this kind of sexual standard claim that because penetration itself is a form of sexist domination, truly liberated sex can only take place between women, or with men with flaccid penises!) In other words, they are told that what gives them sexual pleasure is wrong and morally reprehensible — they really shouldn't enjoy it because it degrades them.

On what higher judgement are these standards based? Can I really be accused of degrading myself when I participate willingly in a sexual act that gives me pleasure?

In *NALS* Robin Morgan refers disgustedly to people who use "toys or tricks" in sex, claiming that such perversions "benumb the senses."

Since many people (including women) use and enjoy sexual accessories of all imaginable sorts, clearly their senses work differently than Robin Morgan's. Why shouldn't people use "toys" if it turns them on? As long as partners are not coerced or manipulated into doing things they don't want to do, does anyone have a right to dictate how other people derive sexual pleasure?

.....  
*What works for you don't always work for me...*  
—Deborah Iyall of Romeo Void  
.....

Sexual tastes vary greatly, and what repels one person can very well be a source of great excitement to another. An extreme example: the two most shocking clips in *NALS* were one of a woman tied to a table, her breasts bound up, while a man savagely stroked her body. The other showed a woman sucking the barrel of a gun. Both the images horrified me, and at the time I felt anyone who could get off on *that* has got to be really sick and maybe even a menace to society. Then I read the following exchange, once again, in the *Spectator's* "De Sade" column:

*"I was not at all offended by the plight of the woman who has her breasts severely bound and was having clothes pins applied to her nip-*



The Wonder® Years: Helps Destroy Vision in 12 Ways!

ples. Although I did hear several gasps coming from the audience, my own reaction was having my pussy involuntarily twitch. I was mad they didn't show more...

...I don't like the idea of anybody being forced into sex if it isn't what they want to do. There is a difference between a mutually agreed dominant/submissive relationship and a relationship in which the submissive is an unwilling participant and doesn't see the fun in it.

Response by Mistress Kat:

“...I have a straight, submissive woman friend, a very well-balanced individual overall, who has just bought a gun for erotic play; she plans to file off the firing pin for safety. She has been somewhat uncomfortable with her own desires for such a lethal toy. But having learned that she can play safely with some of her other erotic imaginings, she longs to play with this ultimate symbol (to her) of male power.

Are these the ravings of deranged lunatics? To me, it sounds as if these two women have clearly established the boundaries between fantasy and reality, between sexual coercion and (admittedly bizarre) sexual play by consenting partners. I personally find these fantasies distasteful and I wonder how people come to find them arousing. Is it just a matter of enjoying extreme intensity of sensation? Or are these fantasies a way for these women to overcome the fear

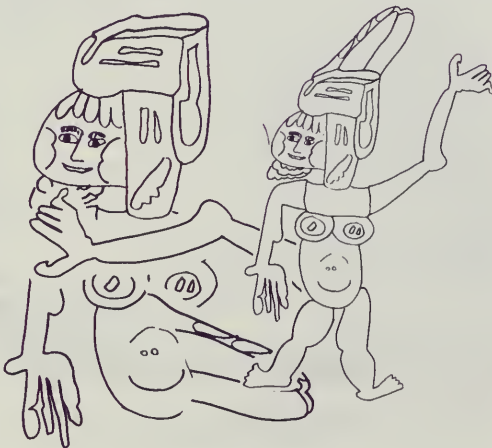
and oppression that women are subjected to in reality, a kind of ironic revenge? Are they a result of internalizing the violence that is so prevalent in our society? Or does the excitement come merely from breaking the strictest of society's taboos?

Research on the subject of women's sexual fantasies has revealed that significant numbers of women draw on images of sexual dominance and coercion to enhance their sexual pleasure. More often than not these women do not care to turn their fantasies into reality. Yet in Nancy Friday's fascinating book *My Secret Garden*, several women confess that without their fantasies they are incapable of enjoying sex. Indeed, many women interviewed express heartfelt gratitude toward Nancy Friday for giving them the opportunity to speak openly about their fantasies, thereby helping to dispel the shame associated with the affirmation of their sexual needs.

The need to experience sensations of complete power or powerlessness is undoubtedly a product of the fears and inequalities that abound in this society. The recent rise of interest in s/m porn is probably related to a general increase in levels of tension and anxiety throughout the population. If in some cases s/m reinforces anxiety or inequalities in social relationships, in others it is a way to neutralize or subvert them. For some individuals, fantasies of being a bottom are a way to purge haunting fears of abuse or domination in the real world. Acting out these fears on a sexual level helps to relieve them.

At its best, sex involves a complete surrender to pleasure, a feeling of being out of control and therefore emotionally vulnerable. This state of total release is easily blocked in this sink-or-swim society with all its moral strictures against sensual pleasure, especially for women. Rape fantasies can be a way of overcoming guilt about sexual release, a sort of psy-

Helen Highwater



The collage consists of several elements: a large, stylized portrait of a woman's face in the upper right; a television set in the upper left showing a woman's face; a computer monitor in the lower left; and a banner with the text "Everybody's Favorite City" across the middle. The background is filled with a dense grid of small text, likely a radio frequency or station list.

**Zoe Noe**

chological trick played on oneself: If I have no choice but to submit, it's not my fault so I might as well enjoy it.

Most people's horror at these fantasies is certainly justifiable — especially for those whose actual experience with violence against women makes it hard to conceive of anyone deriving pleasure from s/m images and power games. It is also likely that for some men, violent images reflect misogynist attitudes. But the point I want to make is that some people derive harmless pleasure from images that shock and disgust others, and this does not mean they are potential criminals or psychiatric cases. In fact, some people who indulge in s/m or other "deviant" sexual fantasies and practices are probably saner than others whose denial and repression of

their fears and desires makes sexual pleasure impossible.

*IN THE LIFE*

NALS has the merit of documenting workers' views and experiences in the porn industry — a perspective that is sadly ignored in most discussions on the subject. Unfortunately the sympathy toward porn workers initially demonstrated by the director and feminists in the movie turns out to be heavily laced with a condescending, accusatory self-righteousness.

At one point writer Kathleen Barry, introduced to the audience as an "expert witness," describes the typical sex industry worker as "totally enslaved," a victim of "all the perversion that exists in society." Terri

Richards, member of the U.S. Prostitutes Collective, was outraged by this "expert" who tried to "show us to be pathetic, rather seedy victims, who, in our work, allow ourselves to be manipulated and abused by men because we're too stupid to know any better." (quoted from a letter to the editor in the Nov., 1982 issue of *Coming Up!*)

The women workers interviewed in *NALS* defy Barry's analysis. For example, the movie features several discussions with Linda Tracey Lee, a feminist *cum* tourguide for director Bonnie Klein. Lee speaks candidly about her work early on in the movie. Very much a *subject* in her performance, which is simultaneously a strip show and a conscious parody of a strip show, Lee clearly appreciates her success with the audience. She is not offended or disgusted by their display of "animal" sexual behavior. Rather, she appreciates the sex club scene because it is "honest," and she enjoys turning men on and observing their behavior — feelings echoed in subsequent interviews with other women who work in the business.

*NALS*'s director and her entourage of feminist "experts" should have taken seriously the statements of these women workers. Instead, we find the director attacking a disturbed Linda Tracey Lee at a particularly vulnerable moment, following the screening of a sadistic, violent porn flick. "You're part of it" Klein insists, implying that by working as a stripper Lee is somehow responsible for the misogyny that some kinds of porn appeal to. Despite the onslaught, Lee continues to defend her work (though I have read that she eventually did give up stripping to become an actress).

Linda Tracey Lee's self-confidence and thoughtfulness about her trade may be rare but definitely not unique. In an interesting discussion of the difference between male and female turn-ons in the *Spectator*, Mistress

Kat refers to the pleasure some women derive from acting out "age-old fantasies" of dancing naked in front of strangers. She describes the lively performance of her friend Morgan, an experienced dancer, who, on stage "is in control and clearly enjoys it." (Incidentally, among sexual fantasies described in Nancy Friday's book, exhibitionism was one of the most frequent turn-ons.)

Morgan and Linda Tracey Lee hold relatively privileged positions in the commercial sex market. Most women who work as hookers, strippers or models for pornzines have less autonomy and are more vulnerable to physical and moral abuse by bosses, clients and the law. The WAVPM approach encourages harassment and marginalization of the sex industry.

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Five women wearing black masks picketed the British consulate in San Francisco on 11/19/82 to protest what they called "police illegality and racism" against prostitutes in London and San Francisco.

The pickets, members of a group known as U.S. Prostitutes Collective, said the action was in sympathy with a score of masked women who sought refuge in a London church the previous week after claiming that police harassed prostitutes without cause.

One San Francisco demonstrator carried a sign that read, "Justice for the working girl!"

Rachel West, a spokeswoman for the group, said "police brutality and harassment is a daily fact of life" for prostitutes in SF and in London. "We're arrested while walking our dogs or shopping," she said. "We take a lot of verbal abuse and even beatings and rape by police. And we're fed up with officials trying to take away our children."

The women picketed the Montgomery St. building chanting: "No bad women, just bad laws..."



But this kind of social pressure undermines workers' attempts to fight their exploitation because it leaves them no recourse to legal protection, and no way to appeal to public support for efforts to organize against bad working conditions.

Moreover, the feminist anti-porn movements's complicity with the repressive apparatus (according to Terri Richards of the US Prostitutes Collective the movie was made with the assistance of the Toronto Vice Squad) is disturbing. Police harassment and violent abuse of streetwalkers and strippers is notorious. As Richards says: "It's time they (feminists) came clean about who they are helping and whose side they are on — the side of the police and the laws against us, or on our side?"

Several of the women interviewed in *NALS* (and other friends of mine who have worked as strippers and hookers) do complain bitterly about the crass, misogynist behavior of some male customers. Also working conditions are often appalling — no heat, poor sanitation and long hours. One woman in *NALS* noted that on some days she and her husband perform their live sex show — a copulation act — twelve times in a single day! However, this same woman claimed frankly "It's nothing to me to be naked in front of strangers." She prefers this work to a "respectable" 9-5 job because it pays more and she can work with the man she loves rather than suffer the humiliation of having a boss on her back all day long.

As Terri Richards points out: "the filmmakers chose not to pick up on this and nothing was said about the degradation women suffer in 'respectable jobs,' the fact that, e.g. according to a recent survey published in *Ladies Home Journal* 'anywhere from 36-70% of working women have been subject to sexual harassment, ranging from a dirty joke to an outright 'get-laid-or-get-fired' proposition.' "

The singular obsession with the degradation of women in *porn* is a clear indication of the conservative bias of the WAVPM movement.

In many ways, working as a porno star or a hooker is no different from working as a secretary (see "Toil of Tail..." in this issue). In both cases, women must render services to their boss or customer, not primarily as a result of their needs or desires, but out of economic necessity — i.e., they both are engaged in a social relation (wage labor) that alienates their life activity. The stigma associated with commercialized sexual pleasure stems from the fact that sexual acts are, after all, the most vital and intimate of human relations. In our culture, sexual intimacy is considered to be the ultimate expression of love and pleasure — whose transgression is understandably looked upon as a betrayal of one's humanity.

But we live in a world that continuously forces us, against our better judgement, to sacrifice our humanity and compromise our principles. For some women, performing sex acts is less dehumanizing than secretarial work. And what of the typist who finds herself typing eviction notices for slumlords? Or the artist or writer who is obliged to produce trash in order to make a living? Or the desperate father of four who takes a job producing weapons that will be used to murder rebelling peasants in El Salvador? Or the legal aide who helps defend a corporation against asbestosis claims despite her better judgement? Are these any less of a betrayal of one's humanity? Certainly we should resist the dehumanizing forces of society wherever possible — but workers in the porn industry should not be scapegoated.

Feminists have exposed other, subtler forms of economically motivated sexual alienation. It is well known that many wives submit unwillingly to their husbands' demands for sex, in exchange for financial





Helen Highwater

For instance, women in Porn are instantly aroused without need of foreplay or tenderness.

Most people will agree that there are differences between male and female sexuality. Though some women enjoy currently available porn, surely a pornography that was geared toward female sexual arousal would have some differences in emphasis

and content. Current pornography's near exclusive concern with male arousal perpetuates an unequal situation: the affirmation and exploration of sexual pleasure by women has only recently gained some social legitimacy. Consequently, women tend to find it harder to discover what they enjoy and to make their pleasure known to lovers. Mutual understand-

ing of sexual needs and differences of the opposite sex is important because it helps dispel fears and insecurities that get in the way of sexual pleasure.

In *Women, Sex and Pornography*, Beatrice Faust uses the term "porno-topia," first coined by Stephen Marcus in *The Other Victorians*, to refer to the unreality of the pornographic experience. In modern pornography, men never have trouble getting an erection, and women are instantly aroused. Nobody ever sweats, there is always a comfortable rug or couch

available, and privacy is never a problem. Nobody worries about contraception, herpes, or whether they're too fat. Potential sexual partners who conform to stereotype *Playboy/Playgirl* standards of beauty and sexiness appear everywhere, they are uninhibited, desirable and instantly sexually compatible. This idealized presentation of sexual opportunities and behavior is obviously at odds with most people's experience. Trying to live up to these standards can only contribute to a crushing sense of failure and

# THE JORDACHE

IN THE SOCIAL DOMINATION  
BY COMMODITY-TIME, TIME  
IS EVERYTHING, WO/MAN IS  
NOTHING; S/HE IS AT MOST  
THE CARCASS OF TIME.

**JORDACHE™**  
Designer Jeans by R. Jordache

showroom 488 7th Ave NYC 10018 212 219 7343

o a . p Museum of Modern Prehistory 1979

frustration.

In reality, all sorts of economic and social constraints inhibit the total abandon which is the basis of sexual pleasure. The loneliness, anonymity and distrust that characterize the modern urban environment, the lack of opportunities to meet people, scarcity of time, energy and space, the countless anxieties of daily life all contribute to the poverty of sexual relations in our society. How can people abandon themselves to their sensuality when they have been numbed by 8 hours of tedium and stress on the job? How can they relax enough to get carried away by carresses and rhythm when they are fraught with anxieties about how to pay their bills or care for their children?

In porn movies, there is no mystery, no romance or jealousy, not even tenderness or affection, let alone love or friendship. The scenes that come in between the fuck scenes are just that — one wonders why they even bother to put them in at all. For the most part, the quality of filming and acting is abysmal, and the plot non-existent. The psychological and emotional void that surrounds sex in porn movies, itself a reflection of the ghettoization of sexual relations in our society, is in turn manifested in the atmosphere of alienation and solitude that pervades porn theaters.

★ ★ ★

In its current state, pornography does perpetuate sexist attitudes and contributes to the ghettoization and commercialization of leisure, but it is *not* their primary cause. Better pornography would help — a pornography (or erotica) that could for example, convey the beauty of odd sizes, shapes, and wrinkles, the pleasure of discovering partners' idiosyncracies, the infinite variety of ways (not strictly physical) that desire takes shape. But the basic contradictions of sexuality and pleasure in general go beyond porn, they are inscribed in

capitalist relations of money and power: sexual misery often results from a situation where people are bound together out of economic necessity or fear of loneliness, rather than mutual attraction or a freely chosen common project. Oppressive sex roles are exploited by the media to encourage patterns of consumption, and manipulated by authorities to control people's behavior (see Stephen Marks' article in this issue). Limited opportunities for creative fulfillment, the lack of love, and a general sense of powerlessness lead people to derive self-esteem from distorted notions of sexual desirability and prowess: men see women as potential "scores" or "conquests," while women often strive to incite sexual desire, not because they feel it themselves or have any intention of satisfying it, but as a way of exercising power over men.

The enormous increase in the profits and sales of the sex industry in the last decade should be addressed in light of these conditions. At this point, we can only speculate on the reasons for this surge of interest in porn: a reaction of men who feel threatened by the women's movement attack on male behavior? Easier access to porn since the early 70's? A result of the relaxation of sex mores? Or of the increasing difficulty of carrying on satisfying relationships in a period of heightened economic pressures and generally deteriorating social conditions? Whatever the reasons, the fact is that for every person who publically denounces porn, there are hundreds, maybe thousands, who consume it in private. Censorship, legal repression and blame campaigns won't put an end to pornography and "deviant" sexual behavior any more than prohibition put an end to alcohol or drugs or homosexuality — they will only force it further underground where it becomes a part of organized crime — the police/racketeer economy.

The approach of the anti-porn campaign to the questions raised by pornography is laden with bias and a spirit of moral condemnation that obscures the basic issues. The problem with both "left" and "right" anti-porn campaigns is that they seek easy targets and unambiguous solutions, and exploit the high emotional voltage with which social taboos have charged the issue of sexuality.

The strategy of guilt tripping people to correct their "sexist" behavior presents a great obstacle to understanding and exploring sexuality. Men and women are discouraged from acknowledging their sexual practices, needs and fantasies for fear of being labelled deviant, sexist, or at the very least victims of sexist conditioning. This is obviously not a good environment in which to protect sexual freedom and women's rights — a fight which is crucial to any struggle for a better world. The goal of this struggle should not be *reduced* to demands for "better conditions" or even "freedom from exploitation." A movement capable of transforming social relations to create greater opportunities for happiness must *also* be inspired by a politics of pleasure — a

desire to restore the joy of the senses to their rightful place in human life.

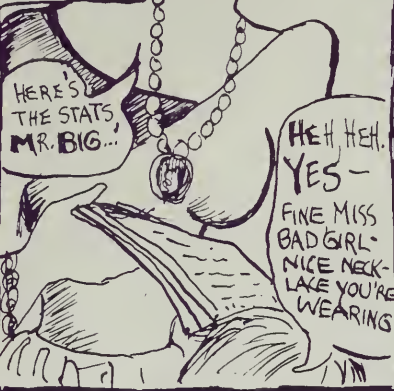
— by Maxine Holz

*Special thanks to friends in PW and beyond whose invaluable opinions, experiences and support helped shape this article.*

For several years now, a vocal minority of feminists have recognized the importance of defending the pleasure principle and have voiced their criticism of the anti-porn approach in various articles and publications. (See for example the 1981 "Special Sex Issue" of *Heresies*, "Talking Sex, A Conversation on Feminism and Sexuality" in the July-Aug., 1981 issue of *Socialist Review*, recent exchanges of points of view in the *Village Voice*, and in particular, the fascinating *Diary of a Conference on Sexuality*, published in the summer of 1982 by participants in a conference held at *Barnard University* in N.Y.) The flourishing debate on sexuality is a hopeful sign of a new open-mindedness, a willingness to reconsider old assumptions and ask difficult questions.



MONDAY



HERE'S THE STATS MR. BIG...

HEH HEH. YES - FINE MISS BAD GIRL - NICE NECK- LACE YOU'RE WEARING

TUESDAY



I'LL JUST PUT YOUR REPORTS IN HERE, MR. BIG

IS THAT BLOUSE ORANGE OR RED, MISS BAD GIRL? HARD TO TELL WITH THAT JACKET ON....

WEDNESDAY



HEAVY DATE TONITE BAD GIRL?

THURSDAY



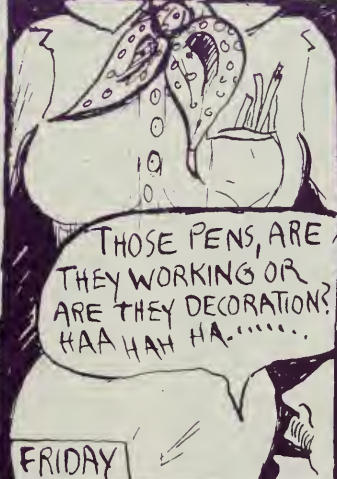
LOVE YOUR PIN SWEETIE



# BAD GIRL

She Was So Tired of Being Good

WAL MEL GARZOTTO



THOSE PENS, ARE THEY WORKING OR ARE THEY DECORATIONS? HAA HAH HA.....

FRIDAY

MONDAY



FUNNY HOW ALL YOU WOMEN TRY TO DRESS LIKE MEN NOWADAYS.....



# The Dead-End Game of Corporate Feminism

Fresh out of college, I was hired as the assistant to a woman who led women's self-help seminars. Her ostensible purpose was aiding women in finding alternative careers through support networks. The seminar was aptly named "Women Can Win!" and was facilitated by a couple of psychologists who drove expensive cars and wore the finest in business attire.

It slowly dawned on me that there was something dreadfully wrong with the feminism they peddled. To the outside observer and the unsuspecting client, the organization had all the makings of an effective feminist support group. Once-exclusive "old boy" information could be obtained, contacts provided, and personal sup-

port guaranteed, as women took the frightening step away from isolation and toward a new, more fulfilling life.

My incompetent, autocratic, highly driven employer personified the utter hypocrisy of the "Women Can Win!" ethic. A psychologist with a degree from Columbia, Judi had directed her energies away from altruistic principles toward building her company into a huge, money-making venture. What Judi and the others wanted to "win!" was good, old-fashioned American success, and they would step on anyone, especially their secretaries, to convince themselves they had it. After a huge altercation — where she accused me of not "selling our services" vigorously enough, and I accused her of under-



paying and using me — I quit.

Corporate-style feminism has become a national preoccupation, with proponents in every profit and not-for-profit organization, in periodicals dedicated to its proliferation, in advertisements and in entertainment. It is hailed by even ardent, political feminists as a sign of the wide acceptance of women's equality. Yet it haunts every woman unsure of her next step and frightened by the dead-end path on which she finds herself. This article examines the new feminism of the eighties, and points out the contradictions which inhibit it from continuing as an important social movement.

Corporate feminists tell us that female culture breeds powerlessness, which dooms women to second-class citizenship. They then advise us to learn and practice the rules of male behavior so that we can move to the top of the pyramid. Nowhere is this feminist doctrine more brilliantly expounded than in Betty Lehan Harragan's *Games Mother Never Taught You: Corporate Gamesmanship for Women*.

Harragan claims that women who enter *any* hierarchical organization suffer from "sex culture shock"; a result of the perceived "craziness," "unfairness," "stupidity," and "meanness" in their work environment. How to fight this horrible delusion?, asks Harragan. Forget the female notion of fair play. Quit playing house. Learn the rules of the military/sports game and its power symbolism, and then play to win.

The author describes in detail the workings of the military and football paradigms. Military maxims include "if it moves, salute it" and "it's the uniform that matters, not the person in it." In organizational terms, that means that "absolute deference to the authority invested in your im-

mediate boss is the undeviating Number One Rule of the game."

Since most girls have never had the privilege of playing football, they have consequently missed out on the fun of being a "team player." As a team player, an individual, with the cooperation of his/her associates, makes small, predetermined moves toward the end product: winning. Lawful deception of opponents is admired; the greatest attribute is mastery of the rules and subordination of self to the whole. In the corporation, Harragan stresses, the team player is a disciplined follower who seeks excellence not as a goal unto itself, as women's culture promotes, but as a humble step on the road to success (i.e., the top of the pyramid). The team player may falter, but gets up and keeps going,



never bothering with self-criticism or reevaluation of the destination.

According to Harragan, today's feminist doesn't bother looking for a "meaningful job," that antiquated relic from the dissolute sixties. Rather, one's work is reduced simply to planning one's career. Harragan admonishes:

*Let's face it, there's only one reason to work — to make money. If you approach work realistically — that is, as a gambling game that everybody plays — you might find what you're looking for...And if you play skillfully, it should take about 40 or 50 hours a week, leaving you plenty of time to develop an active, meaningful private life.*

The above makes sense only in light of the fact that Harragan, a self-employed writer and consultant, doesn't herself choose to experience the deadening world of 9 to 5.

Harragan's doctrine implies that feminists must accept boring and artificial work as a fact of life, and agree to continue the schizophrenic separation of the public world from the private, the realm of wage labor form that of the creative spirit. In her schema, rejecting careerism and the corporation is tantamount to accepting the "sustained quietude and meek subservience" associated with female culture. A woman's failure to "succeed" signifies her inability to be a liberated woman.

In the early 70s, mainstream America saw feminists as lunatic radicals bent on destroying the family, and to some extent, that perception was correct. Early feminism was an oppositional movement. Leading theoreticians such as Sheila Rowbotham and Juliet Mitchell considered sexism and sexual inequality to be a product of an oppressive economic system founded on patriarchy. Wo-

men could achieve lasting liberation only by profoundly altering fundamentally unequal social and economic relationships.

As the seventies progressed, the social movements of the sixties, including the women's movement, lost their radical features. Suddenly 100% Natural Whole Wheat was outselling Wonder. The counter-culture was growing into an economic force to be reckoned with.

Baby boom women, brought up on an ideology of sexual equality and unlimited resources, entered the job market in time for the explosion in information processing. Their amorphous, insubstantial attack on sexism (e.g., demands for equal pay and non-discriminatory treatment) was translated over time into a desire for "team membership." Management attitudes shifted in order to accommodate their demands for occupational integrity. But women were not really asked to join management circles despite Harragan's guidelines. They were simply made to feel that promotion depended on their ability to intercept the ball.

As I learned working as a temp in the Financial District, management has devised certain palliatives to obscure the continuing sexual division of labor. In one word processing department, my friend (a regular employee) was clearly disgruntled with the company for a number of reasons. But she was such a conscientious worker that she organized the entire system herself. As the only employee who knew how the documents were filed on the computer, she was awarded supervisory status by management — same duties, similar pay. She was consulted in the purchase of new equipment and sent to conventions to keep abreast of new technologies. By selectively promoting women to "supervisory" or "technical" positions, management

# “Success Dressing”

## The WORKING WOMAN



can ensure that their female employees will identify with the company and its goals.

The recent development of the position of “administrative assistant” is a brilliant reorganizational measure. Fast-disappearing is the so-called “social office” — the one-man, one-secretary system, which replicates the personal exchange between husband and wife. In its place is a more formal, atomized, highly-monitored system in which word processors are handed copy from various departments, and administrative assistants, under more centralized supervision, shuffle the reams of anonymous paper spewed out by the computer. Paper-shuffling assignments, requiring organizing and expediting, are often aggrandized into life-and-death importance.

As a temporary word processor, I encountered administrative assistants everywhere. The Number One Worst Example worked in the Corporate Real Estate division of the Bank of America. Roxanne was known as the “office feminist.” She had posters on her partition board displaying witty aphorisms about God creating woman and so forth; she had even gone so far as to clip particularly telling episodes of “Cathy” from the comics. She was assertive, dressed carefully for success (no pants), and visited the big boss several times a day with pertinent questions.

Roxanne decided to make life hard for me, the newest and lowliest member of the staff. She jibed me as I poured water into the percolator (“do you also do windows?”) and about answering phones, which she

333  
JOB OPPORTUNITIES

**ADMIN ASSIST**  
Opportunity Seeking  
\$10,000  
I am seeking a position in a large, progressive organization. I have a B.S. in Business Administration and 5 years of experience in administrative support. I am a self-starter, organized, and a team player. I am open to relocation. Please send resume to: [Address]

333  
JOB OPPORTUNITIES

**ADMINISTRATIVE AUST**  
Telecom. [Address]  
I am seeking a position in a large, progressive organization. I have a B.S. in Business Administration and 5 years of experience in administrative support. I am a self-starter, organized, and a team player. I am open to relocation. Please send resume to: [Address]

333  
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333  
JOB OPPORTUNITIES

**ADMINISTRATION JACKSON**  
PERSONNEL AGENCY  
I am seeking a position in a large, progressive organization. I have a B.S. in Business Administration and 5 years of experience in administrative support. I am a self-starter, organized, and a team player. I am open to relocation. Please send resume to: [Address]



stated very clearly she wouldn't do, even if it meant delaying my lunch break.

No doubt Roxanne had read Betty Harragan's book of rules. The author states that "a woman with ambitions must blast out of the job classification before she can become a team candidate." This requires a self-promotion campaign to convince your boss to

reclassify your position as low-level management. Roxanne and her cronies were hard at work doing just that when I joyfully departed B of A.

The thousands of women using the corporation as a vehicle for sexual equality have jumped on a rather dubious running board. The corporate feminist has geared her psychic



energy towards obtaining the power to tell people (without saying "please") what to do and how to do it.

Many women, looking to their own mothers' frustrated, deferential lives, have understandably vowed to look out for themselves. Unfortunately, this desire gets translated into acquiring boss-status in the marketplace. It's the old either/or syndrome: if I'm not like Mama, I'm like Papa; either I'm stepped on or I do the stepping. The quest for equality gets lost on the escalators of the corporate hierarchy.

This identification with the power of the corporate Big Daddy does nothing to change women's dependent status in a patriarchal society. In fact, it may reinforce it. As Betty Harragan tells us, successful feminist employees defer to their superiors. They are motivated not by a desire to master their craft, but by a desire to please the boss. In the corporate world, after all, what counts is not innovative and independent thinking,

but an ability to play by the rules. People's worth is not measured by their uniqueness, but by how well they conform to a corporate-defined image. Anything short of absolute power is never good enough. Paradoxically, their goal is to win "Daddy's" approval through total acquiescence.

Fundamental to this acquiescence is the fact that, under patriarchy, women's success and self-fulfillment have always been obtained vis-a-vis men, whether economically through the status of a father or spouse, or sexually by the approving glance of a man. The advertising industry has long understood and carefully exploited this dependency in order to keep women slaves to consumerism. Their manipulation of the meaning of feminism is a case in point. Years ago, products were said to bestow "femininity"; today, the same products, from perfume to panty hose to pocketbooks, confer "power." Nothing has changed in the notion that buying is the key to social (male) approval. Feminism, as decreed by Madison Avenue, is now a very sexy thing, available at your local department store. Purchasing a briefcase has become elevated to a political act. Feminism, inherently powerful and revolutionary, has become the darling of pop culture and big business. Harragan and her followers must be told that identification with the world of capitalism and the false sense of privilege and power it conveys actually perpetuates relationships of domination under which men and women can never be free. Those of us who work must make every effort to stand up for ourselves and what we believe, endeavoring not to please the boss but to please ourselves and ally with our coworkers. Perhaps that might take us one step closer to a more liberated society.

— by *Michelle La Place*

morning  
electric drone of alarm clock  
pushes back my dreams/  
sweet as opium  
morning  
sipping coffee  
waiting for the caffeine rush  
as i go thru morning rituals/  
preparation for the grinding clockwork



morning  
board the bus  
finding a seat i  
pretend like everyone else that  
i'm not crying inside/  
not wanting to be here/no more  
morning  
sitting behind a typewriter  
i whore  
smile at the bosses' crude jokes  
typing their lies

i won't let it get to me  
won't let them get to me  
won't show my fear

morning break  
ladies lounge  
"the girls" gossip  
listening to their chatter  
i'm an outsider/remain invisible  
in their world



so i type  
answer phones  
smile pretty  
go out for lunch  
window shop  
mingling in the crowds  
no escaping here  
back to office madness  
filing  
stuffing envelopes  
felicita comes in for the afternoon shift  
her smile the only ray of sunshine in my day  
hola, que tal?  
pues, aqui miya — siguiendo la lucha!  
(we whisper softly  
forbidden by the office manager  
to speak in spanish...)

sisters!  
don't you know me?  
i don't want to have to  
do this shit no more!  
don't want to walk on  
concrete no more...  
but where else to go?



Just  
One



finally time to go home  
 am carried by the crowds  
 down to the street  
 onto the bus/full of  
 grumpy people:

secretaries & saleswomen  
 on their way home — dinner to cook  
 children to attend to  
 husbands to cater to  
 young salesmen, accountants  
 executives buried in their newspapers  
 concerned only with  
 today's numbers  
 wondering what's for dinner  
 what's on tv  
 will she give it up tonite?



i shut my eyes  
 thankful the day is past  
 wanting to get off my feet

i can't let it get to me/though

home  
 heat up yesterday's rice & beans  
 for me & the cats  
 who scream for attention as  
 soon as i open the door  
 we eat  
 & i drink the last of the rum  
 smoke a little grass  
 comfortable now in my apt/brick womb  
 outside the congeros play  
 their rhythms on my soul

baba tum tum ba  
 baba tum tum ba

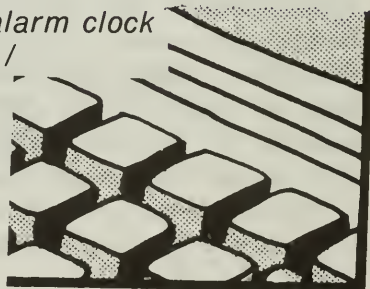
lighting a candle  
 i dance alone in my kitchen

baba tum tum ba  
 baba tum tum ba

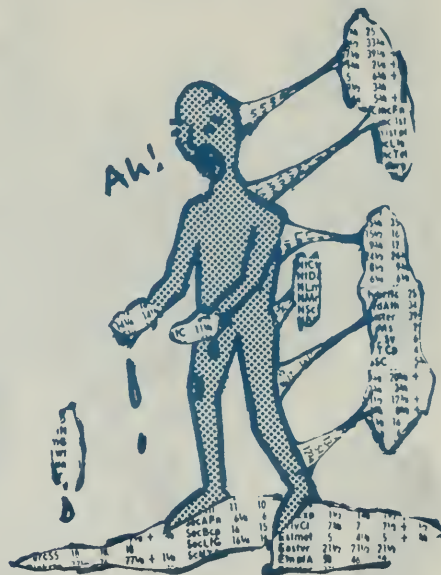
# More Day

—by Luz Guerra '77

until i can dance no more  
 climbing into a cold bed  
 i give thanks for having made it  
 thru another day  
 fall into a deep sleep  
 only to be awakened  
 too soon  
 by the electric drone of alarm clock  
 pushing back my dreams/  
 sweet as opium  
 too soon  
 it is morning  
 time for another day.



# Stuck in Stocks



## A Job With A Financial Newspaper

“Dunn and Bradstreet! Look it up there!”

I squint at the numbers. It isn't even 8 a.m. What does he want from me? “I can't find it.”

“You got Standard and Poor's, for God's sake?!”

“Ah, here it is.” I read off the stock rating to an irate Quint during his early morning stint at the Exchange.

The light is still dim, the newsroom bare and almost empty. I hang up the phone and go toward the monster machines which spew out wire copy. I cut the paper as it floats to the floor and heave discarded ink and obsolete news into large barrels. All the while, the noisy contrivances never cease printing. How to turn them off? I don't know.

People begin to file in, coffees attached to their wrists. The managing editor and director of the newspaper enter together. Using their free hands, they reach for the keys to wind us from the back. Once revved, I whirled without pause around the enormous, stale room.

All the desks are out in the open. Everyone is furiously composing stor-

ies — about stocks, bonds, housing starts, bitter ends, futures, finished and unfinished business, money rates (early and late), commercial credits...

I, the copyperson, scissors in hand, dart from the AP to the Dow Industrial wirecopy machines, slicing off relevant stories and bringing them to the desks, where they are made into thorough yet dry articles.

“How's the market right now?” the reporter asks.

I careen by — “Nervous trading!”

I slice at the air. The news is air. I chop off my fingers but mucilage saves me. Just a job. That's all it is.

From time to time, I deliver further news from the center of the newsroom: “RipOffCo has just sold to Profit, Greed and Avarice International... a new pope was just appointed... PigCo just made a deal with Saudi Arabia... hostages were just taken in Iran... (Yes, but how does all this affect the MARKET, copygirl?!)

\* \* \* \* \*

*This job brought me into contact with more paper than I had ever dealt*



with before. I monitored the wire machines, distributed and copied the news, set the knobs, occasionally answered phones, received/sent copy to and from other offices via satellite, and on the video display terminal, I typed stories which were sent to the New Jersey headquarters. There, it was assembled, and the final result was the thin, pictureless American Banker newspaper.

Down the street, the Stock Market hums, shaking our desks. The reason for our existence — 40 hours a week. Scattered paper. Mayhem. Ulcer-ridden phone calls. Stockbrokers' frantic feet pound through the building. Bankers break into a sweat. Our own foreheads grow wet.

Why are we here? (A question only asked at lunch.)

We criticize the bosses, call them bastards, yet still we watch them, write about them, monitor their movements.

“Prime rate change! Hiked two points!”

Typewriters click furiously. Faces flame in frustration. People collide with each other. “Chase Manhattan was it?!” People begin raising their

voices. “Copygirl! Any more on the prime rate?!” “Just a minute!” “Which insert has the insert in it?!” “Is this important?!” “For christakes, that’s the lead story, Murray!” The din becomes intolerable.

It is almost 4 p.m., the deadline. I run to clip the retching wire machines. Mr. B from San Francisco is sending copy via the QWIP machine. The phones are blinking. I type as fast as I can into the typesetter. No, two columns not three. Which font? No front. Headline? Frontline. I go as fast as I can. Why why why? Marilyn at the reception desk types a quick memo saying we’re cut to the quick. I send the memo on the Rapafax to New Jersey. Hal is in use — I use Alice instead. There’s a blank on the Analysis Page (of course). Mad dashes. Here there. Clip. Clip. Borders on the insane. Byline? My line. Your line. Correct line. Copy. Type. Right away. The Right take it away. Who’s Left?

Here goes. For what? And then? Coffee. More. Tony and Joe, grimacing, get the big story. Up to the eighth floor. Back down. More? Call Quint in Passaic — he has a story over the phone. But I don’t take dic! Credit lines, S & L’s, economic indicators, frantic trading. Down the street the blisters rise on the hands of those who move the gold. Back and forth. The Fed says it’s a banana. I knew it all the time. Shut up, I’m typing the lead story. But I just found it in the trash. That’s right. Papers flying. Labor wasted. People dying. Meanwhile us — turning tricks for capitalism. Scoring. Boring. Running. Working. Selling. The skull!

*Just a job. I am just a copyperson here in lower Manhattan. And it’s just a job, I keep telling myself. I stand transfixed, imagining, in the middle of the newsroom. Just a cog in the wheel. But a wheel without a cog cannot turn.*

— by Sally A. Frye



\*\*\*\*\* CORPORATANIA \*\*\*\*\*

*I retrieve from the masterdisk onto systemmemory  
columns of streaming figures. A flood-wall of stats.  
I key-in my operator ID, watch termscreen roll  
to current workpage, and freeze. The termscreen  
is an eye enclosing me, while my eyes enclose it.  
Together we serve the Hive.*

*Two hours pass without words; my red eyes sting.  
Three hours pass and only fingers feel.  
I cancel, the great columns blink out.  
I leave the rumble of my workcenter  
for the outerhive light.*

*I do not know how long I've lived inside Corporatania.  
It is impossible to know because we have no way  
to measure time. Personaltime tracking is considered  
unsocial activity — calendars not publiprinted now.*

*I suppose this hive citadel is as good as any other.  
Anyway, I know I am better off here than in the  
Outlands  
where there is no Systemlife, orderlaw or  
peacecomfort.*

*Yes, production/consumption must be maintained,  
war administered, the babies fed.  
So that we may live without concerns  
the Corporate Federation presides.*

*Returning to workcenter now. It is suffused  
with that high-intensity light. The thick, electrified  
air is pulsing with white energy. I wonder about the  
rumor  
that Pacification Management is designing  
supernew leisuretime program options...*

*Second daily workblock now begins: I sit,  
the terminal watches me key-in my ID.  
Quickly, it notes how long I've been away  
— "OVEREXTENDED RESTPERIOD... WILL  
REPORT" —.*

*I execute into file, columns of stats come back  
I go inside, deep, where sounds, sensations,  
perceptions  
cannot reach. There I wait. Soon  
it will be lunchtime.*

by Ron De La Houssaye

\*\*\*\*\*

# Through the Tinted Glass



I whistle brightly as I enter the office; outside, it's so beautiful and sunny, even the financial district looks cheerful. I'm exactly on time as usual. I give them no more of my time than I have to.

My song ends at the door of the Data Entry Department. I toss my jacket onto the coat rack and head towards the coffee pot, stopping at desks along the way for a few good mornings and the compliments of the day. From the corner of my eye, I notice Mr. Howard, "our" office manager, looking at me disapprovingly. Fuck him . . . he can't stop me from being human; he'd love to turn me into one of his machines.

Coffee in hand, I walk back to my desk, tickling hello to Susan, who works next to me and tolerates my eccentricities. Finally I settle into my chair, my ergonomical torture chamber. I sip my coffee as I contemplate the CRT, my combined savior and damnation. "Used to be I would

erase, opaque and lift-off all day," I say aloud, feeling poetic. "Now it's just one key, backspace, and all my errors vanish into history . . ."

"Along with your good eyesight," Susan cuts in, smiling.

My In basket is stacked with input forms waiting to be entered. I sigh, "Time for me to earn some cash so I can keep on living to keep on working." I take a bundle of forms off the pile and log onto the CRT.

\* \* \*

The morning goes by quickly. Susan and I are playing a game. We match each other's rhythm on the keyboard, then one of us will break stride and see how long it takes the other to realize and compensate for it. In the past, we used to joke: "Idiot work, idiot play."

The phone rings right in the middle of a furious race. According to the way we play, the first to stop entering

loses, and I can see Susan smirk, figuring on an easy win. I continue typing with one hand while answering the phone with the other. Joan down in Accounting wants to know if I have entered this particular input form because data on it is wrong.

Tucking the phone under my chin, I flip through the finished work, all the while continuing to enter. It's not there. Then, I do my Rose Mary Woods imitation: still entering with my right hand, I stretch over my CRT with my left to my In box and grab the rest of the forms. As I twist back, my elbow knocks over my coffee which spills over my keyboard. The world explodes into sparks.

The phone falls to the floor; I can hear Susan in the distance calling my name, but I stare at the CRT. I can see my reflection in its glare. The keyboard crackles and snaps. I feel as if I am disintegrating rapidly, like a sweater with a loose thread that has gotten snagged. I unravel bit by bit into nothing, smiling a Cheshire Cat smile as my reflection evaporates. With a loud pop, I vanish.

Or do I? I'm still conscious; I feel my atoms knitting together, reforming into something not quite human. My shape is human, but I feel like a one-dimensional function. I can still see and hear, though.

My surroundings are so bleak that I'm not sure I can see anything at all. I'm staggered by the dismal sensation . . . the brightest color is a washed out grey; other colors seem beyond the range of human vision, shades of frustration, depression and despair.

A faint, constant buzzing sound, impossible to shut out, surrounds me. The scene takes the shape of a long hallway stretching into infinity. There are doorways at regular intervals, and I will myself over to one. I look through it and see another endless hallway vanishing into the gray. It glows faintly without a light source, but shadows grow and flicker without reason.

I decide to go exploring and set out down the hall. After a while, I turn down another hallway, and then another. I lose track of how many doorways I pass through, how many halls I travel.

Then I bump into a shadow. Startled, I watch it resolve into a vaguely familiar face. I ponder for a moment and realize I had seen it in an old advertising brochure for the company, an informal shot of the "girls" who helped make the firm run.

"Ida?" I ask, "Ida Cummings?" Then I realize that the figure has no eyes. I feel as if I'm gazing into a void that draws me into it. Before I topple into the abyss, the sound of her voice returns me to the grey halls.

"Who is it? You reminded me of my name. All this time I'd forgotten it!"

I introduce myself and explain the circumstances that brought me here. "And you?" I ask. "How did you get here? What is this place, anyway?"

"We are inside the memory banks of the computer," she replies. "Most of us materialize here very slowly; we're the bits and pieces from the souls of the people who worked on the CRTs outside."

"Us?"

"Oh yes," she answers. "There are plenty of us here. Anyone who ever did data entry is here. We wander these halls, mourning the time we lost at work."

"Look at me," she continues. "I started working when I was nineteen; I was widowed during the war and had to work to survive. When the computer arrived, they phased out my job and gave me a choice — quit or do data processing — after all, I was a fast typist. Rather than lose my pension, I took the job, but everyday, after entering for eight hours, I'd go home drained."

"Eventually, I awoke here. My other self still exists. The later ones here tell me she retired six years ago and travels quite a bit. But I'm sure she must realize she left me behind."

I confirm the travels of the other Ida in the real world. I remember post-cards on the lunchroom bulletin board addressed to the older employees.

I hear a noise behind me. I turn around to see who it is and recognize Maria. She trained me on my job because she was pregnant again. She had three girls already, but her husband wanted a boy. Still, Maria was glad to quit. She had hated leaving her kids with a babysitter. She used to complain that she never had time to help them grow up.

"I thought that voice sounded familiar," she says. She touches my face and asks, "You must be able to see. Why?"

She is excited when I tell her my story. "We have a live one! Great! Maybe you can find us a way out of here!"

All of us start walking down another hall. On the way we encounter others, some I know, some that I had heard about. There was even a wispy version of Karen, who had worked in the Data Entry Department for two days before she walked out, leaving a cigarette burning in the ashtray and a half-eaten sweet roll on her desk.

Every soul we meet regrets having worked; it had stolen time from them that could never be replaced.

I freeze as we turn a corner. For there I see an apparition less substantial than the rest. Though I should expect this, I scream. It is myself, with empty eye sockets. I close my eyes and scream again.

And scream again. A soothing voice says, "There, there, you'll be alright. The company doctor has been called." I slowly open my eyes. I am lying on the couch in the women's room; Susan is holding my hand.

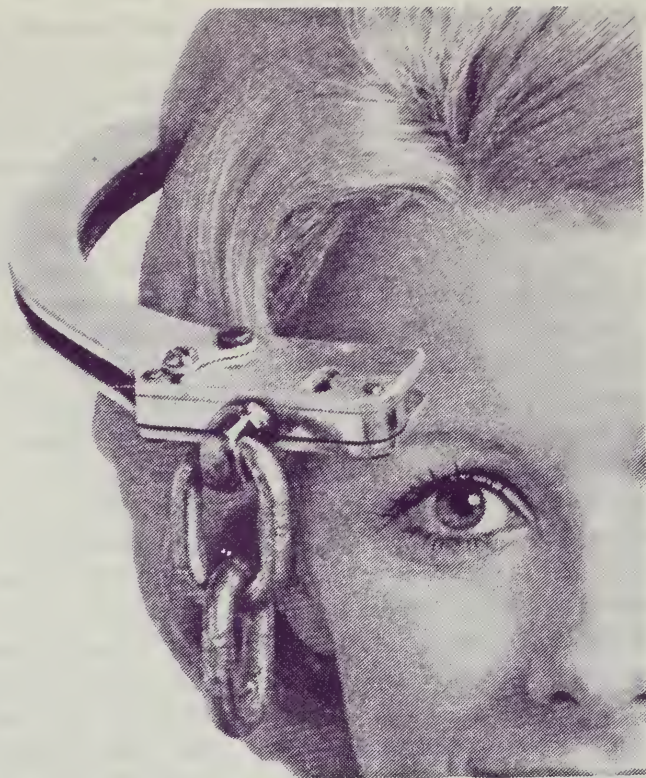
"It's alright, you got a nasty shock. You've been out almost fifteen minutes," Susan says. "You had us all scared . . . well, almost all of us. Can you believe it, Howard actually called the repair technician before he called the doctor."

Ignoring Susan's pleas, I get up and walk back into the office. Sure enough, the repair tech has arrived and has put her tools down on my desk. She's talking to Mr. Howard in his cubicle, probably about the damage.

As I approach the CRT, all those haunted faces appear on the screen, calling for me to free them. I know exactly how to repair this CRT. I reach into the toolbox and pull out a wrench. A single blow shatters the screen.

— Freddie  
with thanks to Gerry Reith





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