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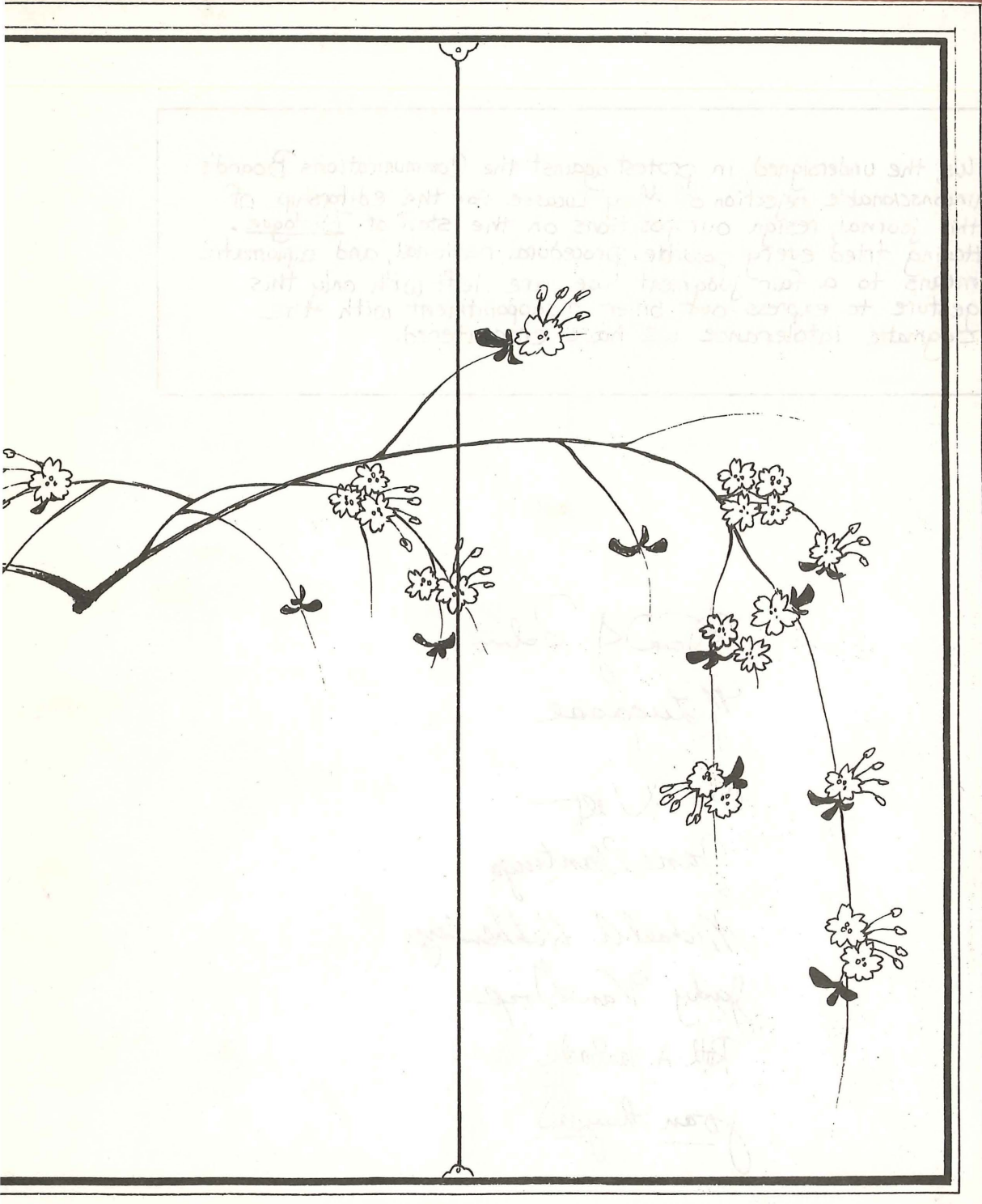
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dialogue

MAY 1980

We, the undersigned, in protest against the Communications Board's unconscionable rejection of Mary Lucasse for the editorship of this journal, resign our positions on the staff of Dialogue. Having tried every possible procedural, rational, and diplomatic means to a fair judgment, we are left with only this gesture to express our bitter disappointment with the dogmatic intolerance we have encountered.

David J. Bohm

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Lu Nief

Jane Plantinga

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Ruth A. vanBaak

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dialogue

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Editorial

M. Lucasse

This *Dialogue* is about Women. "OK," you might rejoin, "I can understand having *Dialogue* devoted to Theatre, Music, Ethnicity—perhaps even Politics, but *Women*? Today's "liberated" woman always is bitching about her "hard lot," always talking about *her* experiences. A woman's situation isn't really that different from a man's; *why all the talk!* And besides, there's no real discrimination at Calvin; a woman can take the courses she wants, a woman can be a student-body president; a woman can be a *Chimes* editor; a woman can argue in class (and they do). Women aren't denied any rights; no big deal. Some things are "separate but equal;" but who really wants co-ed showers, huh? And if that's not enough, once a woman gets out of college, she can do whatever she wants. Graduate schools accept women. In fact, with the quota system a woman has a *better* chance of getting in. A woman can get into any profession for which she has the talent and qualifications. A woman today can do what she wants! Yes, people do say such things; they did when I told them that I was editing a Woman's issue of *Dialogue*. Whether or not you would ask these specific questions, I am sure you must have some of your own. And this editorial is my answer.

I have drawn on the theory of Simone de Beauvoir found in the book, *The Second Sex*. Simplified and shortened, her theory is that only woman, of all socially defined persons, thinks of herself as "the Other." To clarify: every person has her "group identity." For example, I am a member of the Christian Reformed Church. I adhere to certain doctrines; I attend a Christian Reformed Church; I worship in the prescribed manner. Because I *am* Christian Reformed, I *am not* a Catholic. I can be said to view myself as "the given" or "the self." The rest of the world, all other groups into which the

world is divided, are "the Other" (that which I am not). Now, women, according to de Beauvoir, have never defined themselves by this process of exclusion. And, consequently, they have never formed a group complete with a group identity. As Jessica Benjamin asserts, identity "does not evolve from what [women] are but from what men want them to be: the Other. Women are inferior to men and defined by them as: all that I am not, all that I fear, all that I wish to be." Women identify themselves only as man's "Other," man's satellite. But not necessarily any particular man's satellite. Women value in themselves the qualities which men and our male-dominated culture value. In the past, such qualities have mainly been those which supported man and his social position: passivity, mothering, silence, physical weakness. Today's values are, if not different, certainly more diverse; there is more room in our culture for strong women or aggressive women. This issue of *Dialogue* is intended to promote such women.

Women have to learn to think differently of themselves. No longer must we consider ourselves man's "Other." We are *ourselves*. Each woman must be responsible to *herself*, not to man's concept of herself. Each person, female or male, has this responsibility, not only to him/herself, but to God, the God who made each of us in Her image. We must count it our responsibility to develop the many facets of each of our individual characters. This has been difficult for woman to do; she has been inundated and submerged by the economically and physically stronger male.

Does this sound too strong to you? React in anger or fear, but understand that this is an earnest call to all those at Calvin, whether male or female, to start, just start this task.

Let's look again at de Beauvoir. She grounds her theory in an

examination of the support theories for the traditional view of women as the "Other." She examines first "The Data of Biology." (*The Second Sex*, p. 40.) So simple a theory I hardly need explain it: as we all know, women and men are created with biological differences. Women have the capacity to bear children and feed them; men have the ability to fecundate females. Some people have extrapolated from this biological data (not just that given above, but all biological differences) to say men are more capable than women; men are "superior" to women and must therefore take a dominant role in society. De Beauvoir asks, within a society, which is more necessary for the species, male or female? She argues further; "but in truth a society is not a species, for it is in a society that the species attains the status of existence—transcending itself toward the world and toward the future. Its ways and customs cannot be deduced from biology, for the individuals that compose the society are never abandoned to the dictates of their nature; they are subject rather to that second nature which is custom. . . the facts of biology take on the values that the existence bestows upon them." (*The Second Sex*, p. 41) So, if one wishes to support the theory of male superiority, biological data are not convincing. Behavior and values are dictated by the rules of society, not biology.

Now, the psychoanalytic point of view is that "nature [biology] does not define women; she defines herself by dealing with nature on her own account in her emotional life." (*The Second Sex*, p. 42.) Women, "naturally," are affected by the needs of their bodies, just as men are. And therefore, the way each female and male thinks of him/herself is necessarily different. Thus, some tendencies all women have in common: *feminine* tendencies; some, men have in common: *masculine* tendencies. And this, folks, is the basic, unchangeable difference between men and women (though you won't find de Beauvoir saying so). A girl, as she understands her, is not as "the psychoanalyst describes her, . . . torn between 'viriloid' and 'feminine' tendencies" as she is "incited to identification with the mother and father." Instead, de Beauvoir "conceives [of] her as hesitating between the role of *object*, *Other* which is offered her, and the assertion of her liberty." (*The Second Sex*, p. 58.) This is not to deny that children develop "feminine" and "masculine" characteristics, but to say that these characteristics do *not* increase or decrease the value of the person. Each person finds her/his value not in maleness or femaleness, but in *self-identification*.

Another defense of male superiority is often found in the doctrine of historical materialism, a theory propounded by Engels in "The Origin of the family, Private Property, and the State." De Beauvoir paraphrases his thinking thus: "Humanity is not an animal species; it is a historical reality. . . women's awareness of herself. . . reflects a situation that depends upon the economic organization of society, which in turn indicates what stage of technical evolution mankind has attained." (*The Second Sex*, pp. 58-59.) By this view, women's value is determined by her economic value for society. In primitive society, women played a large part in maintaining the community; but, with the beginning of private property, the person with superior physical strength—usually male—dominates the weak. Thus, weak men became slaves; the land was subdued; *man became the proprietor of woman*. This, says de Beauvoir, was "the great historical defeat of the femal sex." (*The Second Sex*, p. 60.)

The Marxist view of women is plausible only if one agrees that a person's value is determined by his/her economic worth. For us and for de Beauvoir this cannot be enough. As she says, "In our attempt to discover women we shall not reject certain contributions of biology or psychoanalysis, and of historical materialism; but we shall hold that the body, the

sexual life, the resources of technology exist concretely for [people] only in so far as [they] grasp them in the total perspective of [their] existence. The value of muscular strength, of the phallus, of the tool can be defined only in a world of values; it is determined by the basic project through which the existent seeks transcendence." (*The Second Sex*, p. 67.) To define a woman on the basis of her biological make-up, her "feminine" psyche or her economic value is clearly inappropriate. Even some combination of those qualities would be unfair. Yet it is on these that she is judged.

De Beauvoir traces woman's role through history, starting with primitive societies and continuing on through to today's culture. She concludes that women today are still in subjection to men; they still dance to a masculine tune. "We open the factories, the offices, the facilities to women, but we continue to hold that marriage is for her a most honorable career, freeing her from the need of any other participation in the collective life. As in primitive civilizations, the act of love is on her part service for which she has the right to be more or less directly paid. . . . And the married woman is empowered to see to it that her husband supports her; in addition she is clothed in a social dignity far superior to that of a spinster. . . . Everything still encourages the young girl to expect fortune and happiness from some prince charming rather than to attempt by herself their difficult and uncertain conquest." (*The Second Sex*, p. 153.) Though de Beauvoir wrote that almost 30 years ago, I think this social tendency to reduce woman to man's Other is still strong. Each of us could probably come up with many examples. Let me remind you. Consider your grandmother's (or your roommates when you mention a member of the opposite sex. Don't their eyes light up? And, although nothing may be said, you *know* that they are already pairing you off with that unknown person. And when two year reappointments were being considered at Calvin, one woman professor's departmental chairman felt obliged to say of her that, although she was an excellent teacher, her duties in the home as mother to her two children might distract her from her academic duties. Clearly, this man felt that "marriage was for her a most honorable career, freeing her from the need of any other participation in the collective life"—to reiterate de Beauvoir. Another example: when *Time* or *Newsweek* identifies a woman, it describes her either in a social or sexual way—regardless of whether she is a scientist or housewife. They do not do the same with men. *Newsweek*, when reporting on the shooting death of Dr. Tarnower in the March 24 issue, described him as a "prominent cardiologist" and his alleged assailant, Jean Spruven-Harris, as a well-bred "socialite." In fact, she was headmistress of a girls' school. And I'm sure you can think of many more examples to substantiate de Beauvoir's theory. Our society may be more liberated than in the past, but these examples demonstrate that women today still allow themselves to be defined not by what they are, but what men want them to be.

Too often women are given the choice: either conform to society's image of you or become an outsider. A woman can become either a Snow White, a lovable appendage to the prince and seven dwarves, or the wicked stepmother, a self-possessed woman, and far from the madonna most men prefer. There seems to be no middle ground, no space where a woman may be her own very personal self without being rejected by society.

Simone de Beauvoir, ending her book, suggests the solution: woman must not emulate man; neither should she try to overpower him. There is, there must be enough room in society for woman to develop according to her own biological and psychological needs.

It is my hope that women and men at Calvin can help make that room.

The Coming of Age of a Woman Artist

I graduated from Calvin with an Art major, but at that point the Calvin Art major was not a BFA. After that I taught art and took graduate courses at the University of Michigan. I then decided that I wanted to go on to graduate school [at the Art Institute of Chicago]. When I got there, I began painting. I came to the Art Institute because I really liked the open-endedness of their program and professional discipline.

The Women's Movement had not reached the Midwest when I was in school at Calvin College; it was happening in New York, but nobody ever breathed a word of it in Grand Rapids. There were not many female teachers at Calvin. I had a few, but they were not role models or people who would raise the consciousness of women on campus on these issues. I felt, after leaving the Calvin community, something lots of women artists have talked about: you realize that you've been trying to please male instructors. You finally grow up and get out of school, and you have been responding to other people's dictates. But you do come into your own; it has to do with growing up. In the tradition I came out of, (which isn't necessarily Calvin College, but just a larger, personal family background) women are not necessarily held in high regard. They are very useful for a number of purposes, but they are not taken very seriously.

Part of the pain or travail of being a woman artist is being an *artist*. In Chicago, in my experience, there is a lot of support for women artists. Coming to Chicago, I encountered very strong women. For three years I was part of a group of female graduate students. We met and talked about women's issues, talked about what were the problems for women in graduate school and what the problems were for women looking for jobs. There are women's galleries in Chicago that are supportive of women artists, doing a variety of art work. I was giving thought to growing up as a woman and separating myself from the cultural tradition in which I was raised. (And I was raised in a very, very traditional, conservative home, where girls grow up to be mothers. I was the first one in my family to complete an education and I am the only woman in my family who works professionally.) I thought very seriously about not having done what I was supposed to have done as a woman, which was to have gotten married and have babies. I had come into a world where I saw all kinds of women

Jeanne Buitter: An Interview

*interview by M. Lucasse and David Baker
photographs by David Bouwsma*



who had a commitment to their art work, and to their profession. That was really exciting.

Teaching

I teach high school printmaking, and I'm teaching third, fourth, and fifth grades. A lot of methods of teaching art have to do with pulling a trick out of a hat every time you come into the classroom: a gimmick a week. That is *not* the way I teach. You can teach children to manipulate visual phenomena. I teach art concepts, but I do it in such a way that they usually don't know that it's going on. But I am very fortunate in that I'm teaching a very selective group of kids at the

University of Chicago, a private school, and they definitely have a lot of motivation. They are very bright, articulate children who, at the age of eight years old, can talk about art concepts and values and can work with them.

I find teaching art to be a double-edged sword. It is very easy at the end of the day to have dispersed all your artistic interest and energies on other people. There are some times when I think it would be real nice to sell shoes or do something that was very mechanical, so I could have enough time and aesthetic energy. You can be worn out in your body, but still have your mind.



The Art Scene

When I came to Chicago, I joined a women's gallery. I've left a women's co-operative gallery and I am not formally associated with any gallery because I don't have time. An ideal situation for an artist is to have a gallery that represents him consistently. You've got a dealer whose motivation is to sell your work because he's making money off of you. In the co-operative gallery system, there is no dealer making money off of you. Neither is there a dealer who is moti-

vated to hustle your work. So you run the store; you scrub the floor; you gallery sit, and, all of a sudden, you realize that you are spending all your time in maintaining an institution. And I don't have time for that; I work. One of the problems in the women's art world today is that some women *with* men are competing with women *without* men; some of those women with men are married to rich lawyers and doctors who are supporting them. Those women not only get to make art all day, but they get to make art under wonderful conditions. They can afford materials, studios; they can move to New York; they can go to galleries. They

also are moving in social circles where they have a lot of connections. I think this is going to become a bigger issue within five years. When I joined the cooperative, I was one of two members that supported themselves. There are, of course, male artists who are being supported by women. Some of the women supported by men are damned good. I don't hold it against somebody who is an artist that they're being supported. I also know a lot of women who are being supported who make crummy art. This doesn't have to do with people's integrity or their talent. Actually, one of the women artists in Chicago whose work I respect a good deal is doing her work off of alimony payments. Well, what can you say?

The only ideal conditions under which to make art, in my opinion, is to have somebody support you: a patron, whatever. You need to have a lot of time. That is precious to people in this day and age. But there is a price to be paid.

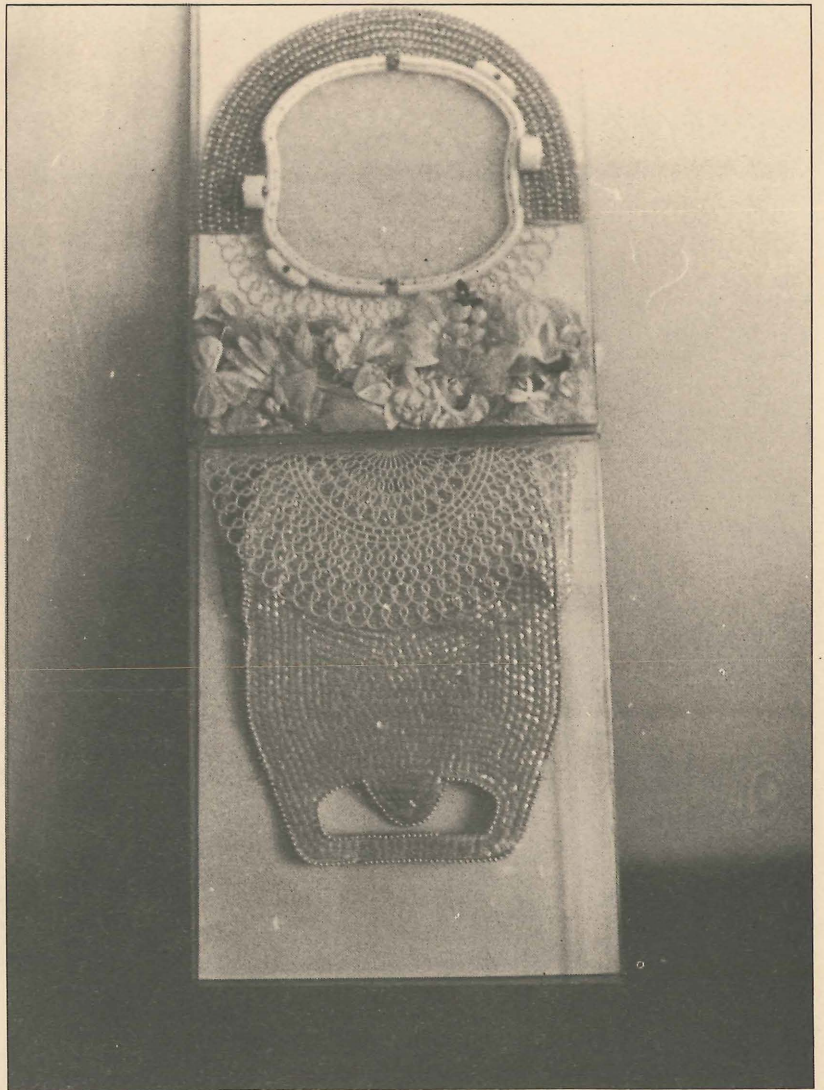
The Economics of Art

Art is basically big business in the U.S. Dealers and collectors have become taste makers and big corporations are collecting. The result is that it is very hard for artists to be very true to themselves. That's why I chose, at the time that I did, to make the kind of art that I did; coming out of a sheltered little world of Grand Rapids, coming into the big city and realizing that personal values, a kind of idea about who you are, is very important. A lot of artists begin to make art for other people's needs or requirements; there is a real tension between making art that comes from personal sources and making art that's going to be successful. I see a lot of art that is being sold because someone's hustling and they're doing a good P.R. job. My feeling is that much contemporary art has become so completely formalized that you are only dealing with the elements of art and there is very little statement left. That's where the fashion and trend of painting was when I quit painting. In the past five years, art has become more and more formal to the point where a machine could have made it; but, then, all over the United States, people are moving away from that and beginning to do art for different reasons. Some of the movements are hooking up with traditions. I find it very frustrating to start trying to enter into the market-place. I sold a lot more work when I painted. (Which is one reason to go back to painting.) I haven't started painting because I'm not really sure what it is I want to paint. Now, I want to be real sure before I start so I don't become influenced by what's trendy and fashionable.

Ritualistic Art

I started painting [at Chicago] and I felt it was terribly impersonal. I was painting very large and colorful paintings and I had painted myself into this huge space. It felt very slick and very cold and very much like what was fashionable. I decided that I wasn't finding out about things I didn't know about and I wasn't exploring anything. It finally got to be sort of boring. So I decided to make art about something I knew and cared about. The most overwhelming factor in the move [to Chicago] was discovering all the ethnic cultures in Chicago neighborhoods. I discovered all the Salvation Army Stores and second-hand junk shops in Chicago. (There are all kinds of people who live their complete lives out of junk shops.) When I started doing a lot of "junking," I kept on running into these incredible collections of objects, objects that I had never seen before, trappings of worlds that were not part of my life, all kinds of religious objects and ritualistic objects (for instance, prom dresses with designs that were just mind-boggling). In looking at the designs and stitchery in clothing that women wore (which, I assumed, were designed by men), I found sexual imagery; some of the dresses had lace that basically had ovaries and penises in the lace. These objects really have a primitive, fetishistic aspect to them. (I don't think of my pieces as fetishes.)

As a woman in art school, I had been very much in a man's world. (Art schools are still men's worlds.) And I tried to be a lot like them. I got in there with the best of them and sketched good paintings and was working in a very masculine style. When I saw all those objects, it became very clear to me what the women were doing meanwhile in the last five centuries. They were knitting and crocheting and embroidering and giving bridal showers and having babies and getting married and getting dressed up in these uncomfortable prom dresses. And this was as much cultural artifact as painting. I had an overwhelming sense of all the hours of women's lives that had gone into these pieces, not only making them, but wearing them, living with them. That was very emotional and overwhelming, especially at a time in my life when I was really beginning to think about what I wanted to do with my life as a woman. One of the first things I did, I took some of my paintings and cut them up in little pieces and I put little pieces of my cut-up paintings into little bags. All of a sudden, one day, it occurred to me that I didn't have to work with canvas and paint just because that's what was traditionally associated in my mind with art.



The first piece that began all of this new work was a big grid piece. It's thousands of those objects that I had been collecting, ripped up, wound up, and put together, all kinds of women's clothing, lace curtains, dresser scarves, things that women had painstakingly spent hours of their life embroidering, crocheting. The time and the devotion represented by those objects was very... I connected with that emotion.

Doing Art

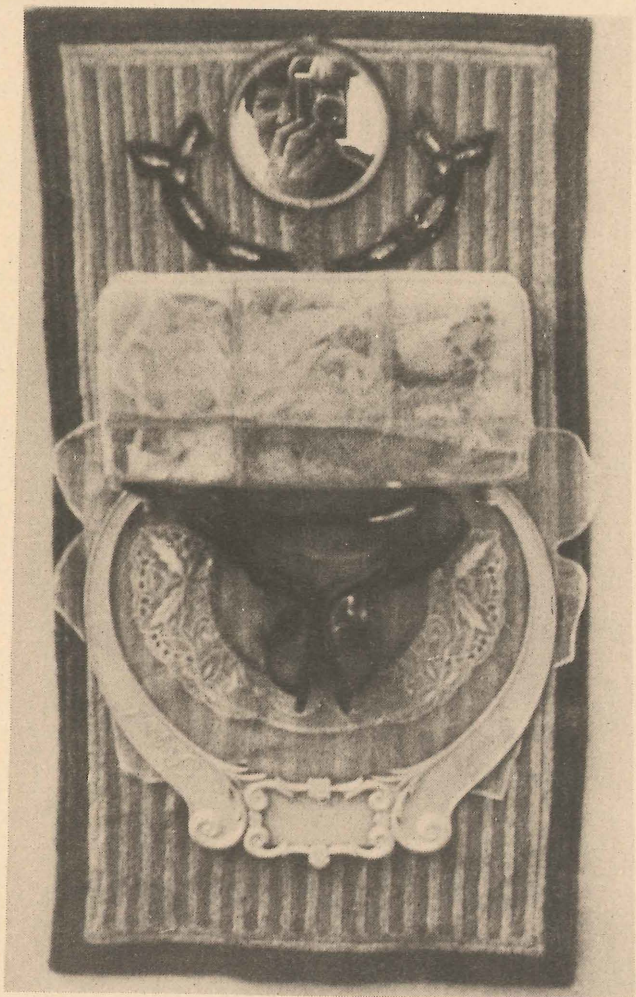
I think of my work as being first of all Art. I really do it because I enjoy making art; I just enjoy working with the visual phenomena. I find that when I start working, I have to start on a very formal level. I do a lot of physical work that needs to be done in my studio: arranging things, working with physicalities. Okay, then gradually you start getting down into other levels of consciousness. In the situation in which I am now working, I work on week-ends. So, if I work all day Saturday, by Saturday afternoon I am

just beginning to get the two together and by Sunday afternoon it is really beginning to happen, and then Monday I'm back at work. But it takes a lot of time; it's like reaching down into yourself deeper and deeper so you're responding not only with your head but also emotionally. Sometimes I start with an object I just happen to be very interested in working with. I'm trying to make it work and I'm working with it very formally and it's stiff and cold and then all of a sudden a lot of things start coming together. That happens on a very subconscious level; there are kinds of concerns that repeat themselves and keep on coming through. For a while I was trying to make a statement about pregnancy. A number of my friends were pregnant, and I thought it would be a nice thing to do, make a piece about pregnancy. No success, because it wasn't something, I guess, that I had enough personal feeling about. I have noticed that there are a lot of references to anatomy, female anatomy, in my work.

Political Art

I did art for a lot of emotional reasons; a lot of the work of my early period was very political; it came out of a lot of anger. I think of that work as my really heavy-duty political stage. At the same time I consider that work very much within a formal art tradition. One of the things that I have the hardest time with is when my work is not looked at formally, when it is only looked at for its content. That has happened to me repeatedly. It happened to me in graduate school with my male advisors. They couldn't look at my work and talk about the formal problems I was dealing with. They could only deal with subject matter, and, because the work was so heavy-duty,

BEAUTY PAGEANT



THE ACCOMODATING LADY

feminist/political, some of them were not comfortable with the subject matter. I had a fair amount of trouble in graduate school just dealing with what I considered essentially other people's problems. But finally I got a set of advisors who were terrific; who were really supportive, and who could deal with the work on a formal basis. And I ended up having a very successful time in graduate school. I got into the fellowship show, which is the student competition, at the end of the graduate program. And I felt as though I worked very hard to deserve and gain the respect of these people for my work as art work.

On Calvin

When I got the invitation to exhibit at Calvin, I first of all talked to the gallery curator on the phone and said, "I'm not sure you want to hang this stuff. I will send you slides and if you still want it, fine." I immediately realized that there was a potential for a lot of problems. But I said, "You take a real good look at the slides and you make sure you show your whole department and they are very well aware of what they are getting." They wanted the show. So I sent it. I came up for the opening, not necessarily expecting to see all the pieces hanging on the wall. I was very surprised and pleased at the number of women who really looked at the art and understood it, identified with it and responded. There were some people who were uncomfortable or threatened by the work, but generally speaking, I didn't feel in any sort of way ostracized. And, in fact, the person who wrote a review for the *Chimes* did an excellent job of looking at the work, understanding what it was all about and posing a challenge to people who might have problems with the work. She basically said, "Listen, if this stuff makes you angry or uncomfortable, don't blame the work. Maybe there's stuff which you ought to think about." And, actually, I didn't get any more flack directly or indirectly from Calvin than I got from any other place in the country.

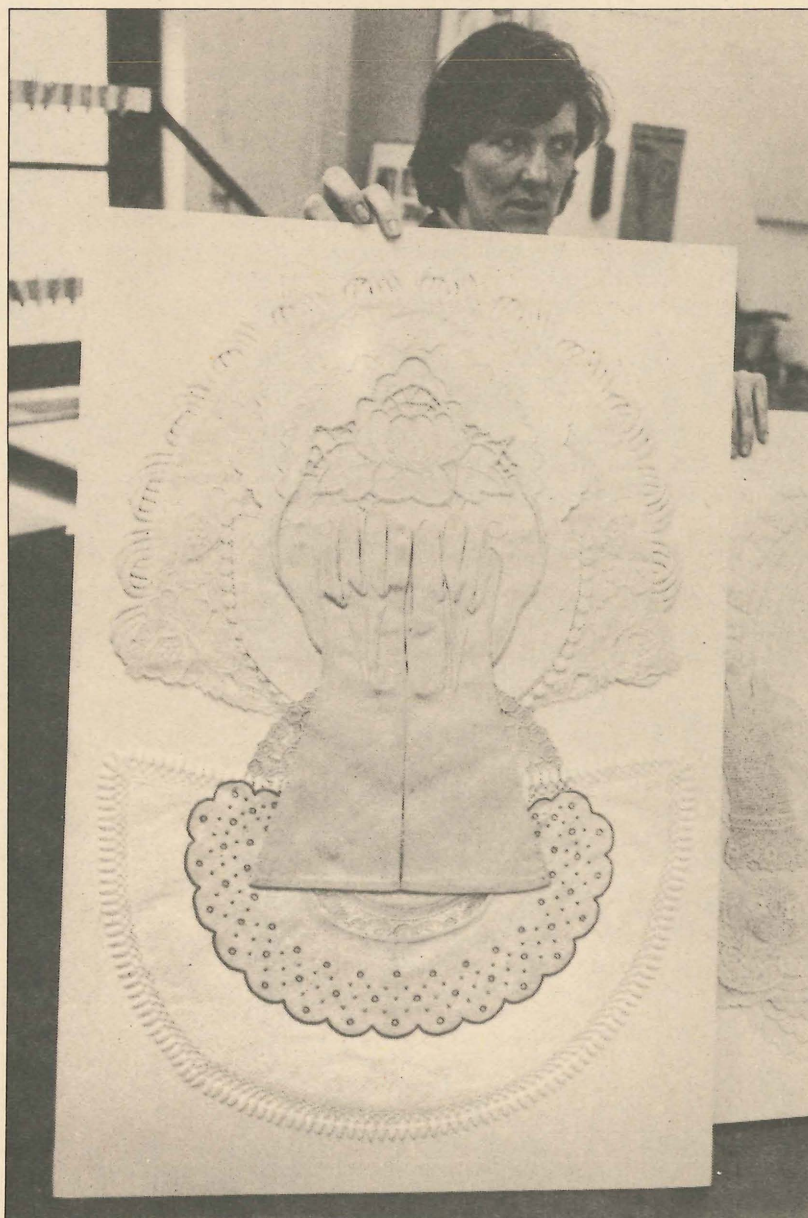
Feminist Art

There are women artists who are very political in the U.S. today; they are very involved with political art caucuses. They're lobbying and I think that a lot of the work they do is really important. But I'm not particularly political, perhaps more "personally" political (as opposed to publically). But some artists I know that are strongly *feminist* do very, very traditional art. There is a woman artist I know who does pencil renderings of interiors of rooms; she draws sofas and chairs and windows. And I consider the point of view from which she draws and the end product of her work to be very female. There are women who are doing art that looks like it was done by women. And there are women who do art that looks like it was done by men, the massiveness of it. I ran across a wonderful photograph of a woman sculptor from around the turn of the century. She was all dressed in her black dress, a long dress with the bustle and with the white lace cuffs. She was on a ladder

chiseling at a piece of stone, one of those equestrians which you see in the parks, 70 feet tall, and here's this little lady who's dressed up like she's going to a tea party that afternoon on a ladder chiseling away without an apron on.

I have shown my work far too often at women's conferences. I finally got to the point where I realized that I was going to make a whole circuit of women's conferences, and I felt more as though I wanted to be an artist than to get into their consciousness-raising issue. So I

declined showing at any more women's conferences. First of all, I didn't want to spend my time that way, because if I had that much time, I wanted to spend it making art. And also I didn't want to be bunched in with the whole bunch of women artists who were doing the circuit. I think they were being viewed more politically than seriously as artists. Since then, actually, my work has probably become less interesting for women's conferences anyway; *it's real different!* ♀



Androgynous Liturgy

Sonja Jager

A Church liturgy may seem an unlikely place to find statements such as "God the Mother," "God the Mother-Father," "God the Parent," "sisterhood," and "peoplehood." And it is. But why should it be? For it is in Church that the children of God—male and female—gather to express their love for God and for one another, to bless God and bless each other, to be reminded of God's work in history and in our lives, to remind God of the ancient covenant established between the God of our forefathers and our foremothers, and to find renewal and rejuvenation in the fellowship of believers and in the communal partaking of the Lord's Supper. If all believers, regardless of sex, are loved by God, have been used by God as agents in history, are included in the covenant of God's promises, and are invited as members of the believing body to find renewal together at the memorial table, if this is so, why does the vast bulk of Church liturgy reflect only the masculine attributes of God and God's people while ignoring fully one half of the Christian community? The question is asked and the answer is not simple. However, its complexity does not nullify the fact that a change is called for, and must take place.

Why can't we keep the liturgy, including our prayers, our hymns, and all of our dialogue the way it is? Did not Christ, Himself, address God as "Father?" Are the writers seriously suggesting that we do away with masculine imagery? These questions will inevitably arise with the first suggestion of a change in liturgical language. Perhaps a major impetus behind the movement for a change in language lies with the idea already suggested: fully one half of the community of believers are not being recognized as full participants in that community. We women who are consistently exposed to a one-sided God—"The Father"—and a body of believers referred to generally as "the brotherhood," leave our places of worship feeling as though we are less than human, that we, in some indefinable

way, are not full members in the covenant and Christian community because we are not male. The reaction to this statement might well be: "But when we say 'God the Father,' we all know that we don't really mean God is a male, and as for 'brotherhood,' of course that includes every one. Likewise with the word 'man,' everyone knows that it includes all of 'mankind.' All of *mankind*—yes, that is just the problem. In certain contexts, the scriptural writers use the word "man" in reference to the male sex only: "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and the two become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). However, in the third chapter of Romans, Paul is addressing his followers on the topic of God's justice: "...it is God's way of righting wrong, effective through faith in Christ for all who have such faith—all without distinction" (verse 21). Then, in verse 25, as Paul describes how God demonstrates this justice through Christ's death on the cross, he writes: "...showing that he is himself just and also justifies any man who puts his faith in Jesus." One assumes here that the word "man" refers to the previously mentioned "all." But in this and other passages there is a certain ambiguity huddling around these masculine nouns

in Christ, *he* is a new creature." The image most of us form is likely to be of a male "man" rather than a female "man." Because the masculine is the image we carry in relation to that word, "man," we subconsciously receive a different message much more closely tied to the male than to the female being. When a male or female is constantly bombarded with masculine terminology and masculine imagery, the result is to form the conclusion, unconsciously, that all life is lived in the masculine gender, by the male sex, thus placing the female outside the boundaries of human life, in a world of her own. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the word for the male specific, "man," and the words "human" or "human being" are interchangeable, thus woman stands apart from human."¹

Exclusion of one half of the community of believers is not the only result of liturgical language dominated by male terminology. Such language limits God; it puts *Him* in a small blue box. Because of our language and terms of address, we conjure up images of a

So, when we say "God the Father," or "the brotherhood of man," or "sons of God," are we really beyond God the male?

and pronouns. So, when we say "God the Father," or "the brotherhood of man," or "sons of God," are we really beyond God the *male*? Are we really including all of humankind—males and females—in our exclusively masculine terminology? I think not. The words we use conjure up images in our minds; images which are very likely to be male-oriented.

Because the same words are used in reference to the male specific as well as the generic... the tendency is to form a masculine image when hearing a statement such as, "If any *man* is

male deity with male attributes. Traditionally, this has meant that God was cast in the role of a domineering, authoritative, patriarchal figure. For, how could traditionally feminine qualities of tenderness, compassion, sensitivity, gentleness, and forgiveness be associated with a God cast in such a stereotyped role? The Catholic Church has tried to deal with this imbalance by raising Mary to an almost defied status, creating a quasi-aternity. This is an attempt at a solution—but not the answer needed today.

As I see it, there are two possible solutions if we are agreed that the

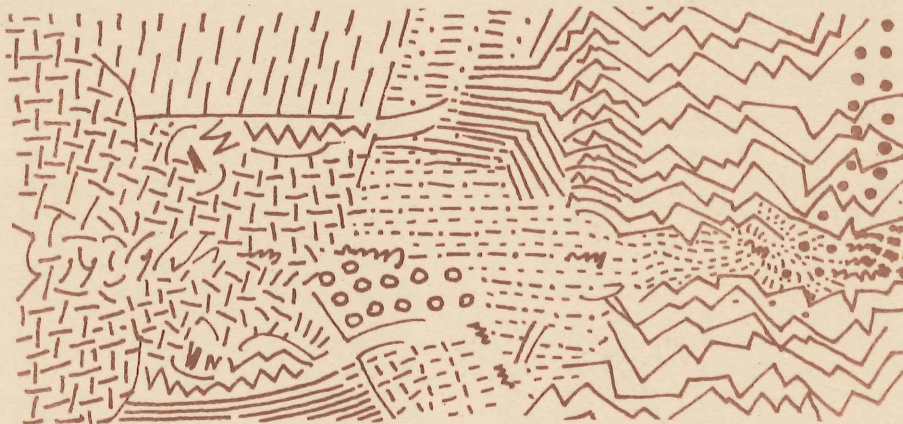
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present state of affairs is unacceptable. We can eliminate all reference to God in sexual terminology, or we can describe God using both masculine and feminine imagery and language. There are problems inherent in both, however. Neutering our liturgical language can result in a dehumanizing of God and an apparent severance of personal relationships with our Creator. But using both masculine and feminine terminology is potentially dangerous in terms of verbiage. Insistence on consistent use of both masculine and feminine terminology in discussing God and the body of believers—"God the father-mother," "the brotherhood and sisterhood of Christians," "sons and daughters of God"—would be a hindrance rather than a help. The solution lies in the middle. We must implement both means for a satisfactory result. Usage must depend largely on the needs of the congregation, and on the context of the language. At this point it is necessary to clarify and emphasize once again the fact that our terminology does consist of *words*. And we recognize that God is not bound to a language or conceptual framework. God transcends such human limitations, although God may choose to communicate with us through such modes. We are limited by our languages; we conjure up images to coincide with our word choices. And as long as we are human beings communicating with a transcendent God, we need to express ourselves in human terminology. Therefore, in order for our language to meet the needs of the community of believers, to avoid idolatry, and to express our understanding of God as completely as possible, we must amend our language to express *all* of the attributes and characteristics of God which we can comprehend.

But where do we find these images? What will be the basis for amendments to our language? On the surface, Scripture seems to be overwhelmingly patriarchal and androcentric, yet it is to this source that we must turn. Why? Because, in the books of the Old and New Testaments, we find the historical account of God as an active agent in history. Revealed in these books are the covenantal promises made to our forefathers and foremothers, and the assurance of salvation for *all* of God's people regardless of race, nationality, or sex. Indeed, the Bible is and must be the basis of all liberation theologies.

At this point, the crucial issue appears to be what we perceive to be the role of the Bible and its purpose in history. How

do we regard the Bible? Do we recognize it as an inspired historical account of God working as an active agent in history, an account of God's perfect will for mankind and of our imperfect selfhood which has distorted God's purpose in Creation? Or do we regard the Bible as the Holy, unadulterated word of God, crystalized in the first century as a fixed, normative pattern to be interpreted and applied to our lives in a literal and uncritical manner? I believe that a theology which embraces the latter method of interpretation is at the root of our attitudinal difficulties concerning God. In the Old Testament we are confronted with accounts of a seem-



ingly jealous and vengeful God. This image of God was projected onto the males of that particular culture, producing and justifying the tyrannical father-image of the patriarchal society, and resulting in imbalanced relations between the sexes. Mary Daly attributes our distorted conceptions of God to the influence of Greek philosophy. Greek ideas have infiltrated our language producing concepts of "divine omnipotence," "divine immutability," and "divine providence" in reference to God. The result has been an image of an all-just God who wills or permits oppression and injustice to exist.² The effect of this misconception of God is a static world view. Such a picture of God saps people of all inclination or desire to change existing patterns in the belief that they must be right simply because they exist. Thus, the patterns of behavior revealed to us in societies of the Old and New Testaments are accepted as normative for all societies at all times. In addition, the idea that divine revelation ceased at the close of the apostolic age only reinforces this acceptance of the *status quo*. Certain statements in the Bible are accepted as inflexible divine will which must be force-fed to our society in spite of the fact that thousands of years

separate our cultures. We are left with an immutable, static pattern of male and female nature with no room for growth and evolution as conditions in history and cultural settings shift and change. Retention of this static world view results in a negation of Scripture's ability to speak to all people at all times. Instead, we must recognize Scripture as a historical account of God's work in history, corrupted as it was a result of humankind's Fall from grace, and a message of God's salvation for our corrupted selves through Jesus Christ who completed God's original creative purpose. That completion is described for all in the words of Paul's letter to the

Galatians: "There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus" (3:28). Can our liturgical language live up to this ultimate declaration of freedom and liberation from human sexual limitations? It must.

It is expedient at this point to demonstrate that Scripture supports the thesis that God encompasses those traits traditionally considered feminine, as well as those generally considered masculine. Let's begin where God did, with the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the first man and woman. "So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). Explicitly stated here is God's original design: man and woman created in the image of God. In the second chapter of Genesis we find an expansion of this Creation narrative. In verses 21-23 we discover that woman was created as help and succor to man's loneliness. According to Samuel Terrien, the Hebrew word used to describe the first woman's status is 'ezer,' a term generally applied to God as the ultimate succor of those in need.³ It in no way implies an inferior or subordi-

nate position. With woman created in God's image and for God's purposes, it is in no way surprising that God reveals Himself through feminine imagery in numerous passages in the Old Testament. For instance, verse 21 of the third chapter of Genesis describes God in the act of dressing Adam and Eve in tunics of skin—a traditionally maternal role. Also, God provides and cares for the children of Israel as they wander long years in the desert: "Forty years long didn't sustain them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet were not swollen" (Nehemiah 9:21). This mothering role is emphasized by Moses as he shouts at God, reminding God of the responsibilities involved in caring for the Israelites:

How have I displeased the Lord that I am burdened with the care of this whole people? Am I their mother? Have I brought them into the world, and am I called upon to carry them in my bosom, like a nurse with her babies, to the land promised by thee on oath to their fathers?" (Numbers 11:11-13).

Furthermore, in the eleventh chapter of Hosea, God mourns the waywardness of Her son, Israel:

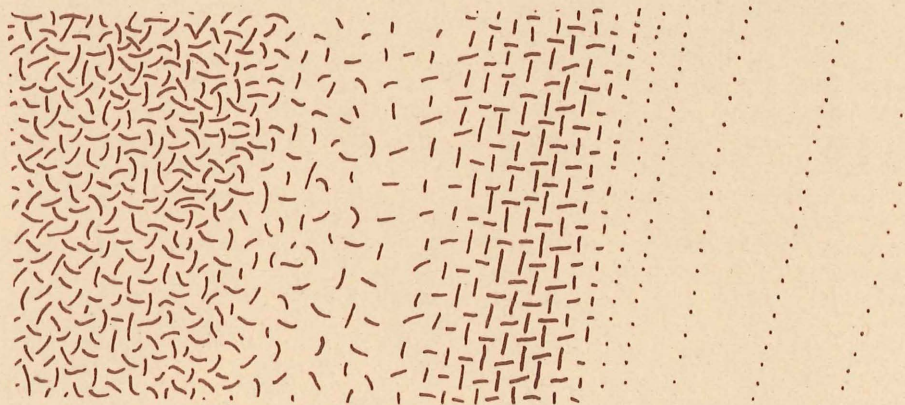
When Israel was a boy, I loved him; I called my son out of Egypt" (verse 1). "It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I who had taken them in my arms; but they did not know that. . . I had lifted them like a little child to my cheek, that I had bent down to feed them" (verse 3, 4).

In addition to these, the image of God as midwife is found in numerous places in the Scriptures. For example, Psalm 22:9 reads: "But thou art he who drew me from the womb, who laid me at my mother's breast." And also Isaiah 66:9 "Shall I bring to the point of birth and not deliver? The Lord says; Shall I who deliver close the womb? your God has spoken." Nor does God hesitate to describe Himself in a role that is exclusively feminine—that of a woman in labor: "Long have I lain still, I kept silence and held myself in check; now I will cry like a woman in labor, whimpering, panting and gasping" (Isaiah 42:14). God also shows Himself to be more faithful than the most loving mother? "Can a woman forget the infant at her breast, or a loving mother the child of her womb? Even these forget, yet I will not forget you"

(Isaiah 49:14). And further, "As a mother comforts her son, so will I myself comfort you" (Isaiah 66:13). To conclude this brief sketch, let's look at Isaiah 46:3-4 in which we find a poignant description of God's relationship with Israel:

Listen to me, house of Jacob and all the remnant of the house of Israel, a load on me from your birth, carried by me from the womb: till you grow old I am He, and when white hairs come, I will carry you still; I have made you and I will bear the burden, I will carry you and bring you to safety."

From these texts, it is evident that God is in no way limited to masculine imagery in the Old Testament Scriptures. In a multiplicity of ways she refers to Himself in feminine terms. On the other hand, it is true that Scripture contains numerous passages in which women are not equally ranked with men. We must regard these as witness of the tragic state of humankind. All of humanity—male and female—is in need of renewal and rejuvenation. The continuation of this account of creation and redemption is related in the New Testament Gospels and Epistles.



The New Testament, as the continuation of the historical account of God's action in history, also contains the continuing theme of God described through androgynous imagery. It is in the New Testament that we, for the first time, find descriptions of all three persons of the Trinity. Upon studying the references made to these three personages throughout the gospels and epistles, it is clear that each one of them possesses both male and female characteristics. As we have already seen, the first person, God, is revealed to us in the writings of the Old Testament through both masculine and feminine imagery. To reinforce this picture, Christ, himself, does not hesitate to attribute feminine

characteristics to God, as is recorded in the parable of the woman and the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10). For Christ to speak of God in feminine terms in a culture suffused with rabbinic Judaism, is an action worthy of note. Nor does Christ hesitate to refer to himself with a feminine allusion. In Matthew 23 he cries out: "O Jerusalem, the city that murders the prophets and stones the messengers sent to her. How often have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings; but you would not let me." If there was anything in the least intrinsically derogatory or inferior in the nature of females, we can be sure that Christ would not have referred to Himself in such explicitly female terms. Secondly, a traditionally female characteristic has been that of submission. Christ's life is a vivid witness of submission—submission to God's will. But we do not consider this an implication of inferiority on Christ's part. These traditionally feminine characteristics, coupled with the fact that God did, indeed, choose to send humanity's salvation in the human form of a male, suggest to us that Christ is the embodiment of all humanity, and that in Christ we are given the perfect redemption for

both men and women.

An additional image of Christ which cannot be overlooked is that of the Wisdom of God. We find this allusion in I Corinthians 1:24: ". . . to those who have heard his call, Jews and Greeks alike, he is the power of God and the wisdom of God." In addition to this, the general theme of Christ as the *Logos*, or Word of God runs consistently throughout the New Testament writings. This is an obvious link with the feminine concept of Wisdom found in the Old Testament scriptures. In the eighth chapter of Proverbs, we discover the origin of Wisdom. She was created by the Lord, "the beginning of his works, before all else that he made, long ago." She

describes herself as,

...at his side each day, his darling
and his delight, playing in his
presence continually, playing on
the earth when he had finished it,
while my delight was in mankind...
for he who finds me finds life and
wins favour with the Lord, while he
who finds me not, hurts himself,
and all who hate me are in love
with death."

In Proverbs 1:20-24, 8:1, and 9:1-5, we discover the Wisdom who invites humankind to leave their simplicity. Proverbs 4:7-9 reveals a Wisdom who fulfills the desire of all those who embrace her. Proverbs 8:17 is an invitation issued expressly by her to all those who search for her. Wisdom is the reward. "Those who love me I love, those who search for me find me." Thus our picture of the second person of the Trinity is a weave of androgynous images, embracing the humanity of female and male.

Finally, what about the third person of the Trinity? In what way does the Holy Spirit contain both masculine and feminine characteristics? Beginning with the etymology, we discover that the Hebrew word for "spirit" is *ruach* and is feminine in gender, whereas the Greek is the neuter word *pneuma*. This is significant in itself. However, when reinforced with contextual data, the androgynous significance of the Holy Spirit is unmistakable. In John 14:16 and 26, we find the Holy Spirit cast in the traditionally feminine role of comforter. In Acts 2:3-4, however, the Holy Spirit is associated with a flame which is a masculine symbol. In addition to these two instances, we find the Holy Spirit represented in the symbol of the dove (Matthew 3:16, Mark 10, Luke 3:22, and John 1:32). Although birds are generally masculine symbols, the gentle nature of the dove and its soft cooings and flutterings lend to it definite feminine characteristics.⁴ This femininity is reinforced in John 3:5-8 in which John speaks of the Holy Spirit giving birth: "...no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born from water and spirit."

From the passages cited, it is evident that each member of the Trinity possesses definite masculine and feminine characteristics, and that these attributes are expressed in Scripture, yielding an androgynous image of the Trinity.

We cannot close this argument, however, without at least mentioning Paul, a human being whose writing has been so often mistreated, misquoted, and misunderstood. Those who, even after reading this argument for amend-

ing our liturgical language, would still stubbornly refuse to yield, would undoubtedly turn to Paul for ammunition and fire a few rounds of Corinthians at our advancing ranks. Those troublesome passages in which Paul is seemingly pointing his finger at woman and barking, "Back to the barracks," are troublesome only because they are yanked out of context, and used as a knife in the ribs. A careful and prayerful study of Paul's writings reveals that he is not trying to keep women on K.P. duty or at the rear of the ranks. On the contrary. Paul is very much aware of the radical theology Christ is preaching, and he also realizes that when misused it has the potential for becoming a lethal weapon. He recognizes, too, that radical change must be doled out carefully, or one risks an overdose which can nullify the change already brought about. Secondly, we recognize that Paul is a human being not immune to the mores and structures of the culture in which he lives. His education in rabbinical and Greek doctrine and philosophy sometimes acts as a vaccine against this new, radical theology. Paul is a man torn between conflicting theologies—his writings are witness to this.

If there is a question in our minds, the authority to turn to is Christ, Himself. The witness of this one man should erase all doubt from our minds. During His time on earth, we have no record of Christ ever speaking in a derogatory manner of women, acting in a superior manner toward them, or in any way implying their inferiority. He is the living example of Paul's words: "There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman,

male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus." This is our liberation theology. In the face of this statement, the ethnocentrism and self-aggrandizement of Israel, the Church and all of Christendom, stands wretchedly naked for all to witness.

On the basis of Christ and Scripture, a reassessment of the theological underpinnings of our liturgy is imperative. If our liturgy does not reflect our theology, a change is called for. A change in liturgical language is only the first step, however. Gradually we must begin to revise our hymns and songs when possible. In many cases, new pieces will be necessary. As for creeds and statements of faith, perhaps the formation of new ones would be better than tampering with the historicity of those already existing. Change will be gradual, but it is inevitable. The formation of androgynous liturgical language is a matter of responsibility—to meet the needs of the community of believers, to avoid idolatry of a single aspect of the Trinity, and to aid us in expressing the fullest possible comprehension of our God. ♀

Footnotes

¹Sharon N. Emswiler and Thomas N. Emswiler, *Women and Worship: A Guide to Non-Sexist Hymns, Prayers, and Liturgies* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974), pp. 7, 8.

²Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 140.

³Samuel Terrien, "Toward a Biblical Theology of Womanhood," *Religion in Life*, (Autumn 1973), pp. 324, 325.

⁴Virginia R. Mollenkott, *Women, Men, and the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), p. 66.

even the daisies
on the bedspread
are too many
this morning

and the countless fish
in the bathroom
swimming
in place
across the wallpaper.

today's no day
to shop at the Farmer's Market.
today is no good
for picking out melons
or sweet corn.

faith van alten

And the Bride Wore Blue:

In Defense of the Meaningful Wedding

Sheryl DeWeerd

These three pages are for women only. After all, the wedding is a female affair, a matriarchal totalitarian event in which men have no more relevance than the elevator operator on a self-service elevator.

The focus of all eyes and sighs is the bride; it is she who floats down the aisle in a puff of white to receive her elevation in status. Mama plays director, checking whether the florist tints the carnations the right shade of pink; the bridesmaids are ladies-in-waiting, oohing and aahing appropriately as the Virgin Princess dons her white lace. From the engagement announcement to the Poconos honeymoon, the bride and other females orchestrate and revel in THE BIG EVENT.

Where, for instance, is *Modern Groom Magazine*? What store has a "groom registry?" How many males coveted their classmates' Barbie Doll wedding dresses? Not only do women run the show, but they are trained for their starring role from childhood. According to Barbara Donovan, former editor of *Bride's Magazine*, "the American girl is married long before she is even in high school. Her images of her wedding day begin when she's *practically* an infant."¹ Ms. Donovan has a point: I know eight year olds who have their ceremonies planned. I've also heard a twenty-eight year old with an orange crate and bare walls existence describe herself as "in hold—you know, until my REAL life begins."

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Real life for such a woman begins when the diamond securely on the fourth finger of her left hand sparkles GO. It is ceremoniously bequeathed her when she says "I do." Hence her wedding is perhaps the most important day in her life. She'll want to do it just right, which at minimum includes the engagement notice, photographs, party; the ring; the wedding invitations; the wedding preparations; the trousseau; the bridal showers; the registering for gifts; the furnishing of a new dwelling; the wedding itself; and, of course, the honeymoon.

The bride-to-be needn't fret, however. The American Bridal Machinery shifts gears just for her as the big event draws nigh. There is, in fact, an interesting chicken and egg question here: does the American woman yearn for that magic day because Madison Avenue tells her she's supposed to, or do the industry's heralds—*Bride's* and *Modern Bride*—merely reflect the prevailing lack of liberation in American bridedom? Whichever the case, *Brides* and *Modern Bride* can give one a pretty good idea of what goes into the Great White Wedding. Ladies, pay attention: this may save you hours of poring through etiquette books.

If *Bride's* used trumpets it couldn't convey its basic message more loudly: SPEND, YOU FOOL, SPEND! A typical 250-page issue contains only fifteen pages without an advertisement, eight of which are devoted to describing the bliss awaiting newlyweds in the Virgin Islands, Barbados, Mexico, and the Poconos. The other 235 pages inform the corporate victim-to-be that America's oldest silversmiths make America's most romantic sterling, the

best way to begin is to begin with the best, and, "in years to come, you'll probably pick all his ties. Why not start early?"²

Crass materialism is, of course, nothing new on the American scene. But somehow the orgy of spending to which the upper crust is invited in the *New Yorker* is more palatable than the clamorous claims of white dress manufacturers, microwave oven makers, and decorator stereo people that no first-time bride may even contemplate starting her new life without ensuring its future bliss to the tune of thousands and thousands of dollars. Where else but in America could the bridal registry have evolved? Sheer necessity dictates that you spell out exactly what you want so that dear old Aunt Agnes can set you up for eternal marital bliss with just the right stoneware pattern.

Perhaps it is the Bridal Machinery—the diamond pushers, the dressmakers, the housewares designers, the honeymoon packagers—which also manufactures the obsession with "doing it right" that so pervades the American way of wedding. Doing it right, of course, means that no one blows his lines and you get lots of gifts. So you hire a bridal consultant (she'll arrange the production for you and station someone at the back door to watch the gift table) or wade through countless etiquette manuals; either way the happiness brokers will be sure to keep you wanting something and spending your money.

But doing it right also means fairy tale perfection. THE MOMENT IS HERE says the copy for Alfred Angelo's Wedding Night Bridal Lingerie. From the ash-heap to Prince Charming's arms...

this is it. . .the big day. . .and they lived happily ever after. It appears that a perfect wedding ensures a heavenly marriage.

The ad men for the bridal industry are paid to tell you that their client's product is indispensable during this once-in-a-lifetime bid for never-ending bliss. "Lenox China and Crystal. A beautiful beginning." "It was a storybook wedding. The bride wore white and the groom wore After Six." Peruse the back pages of a *Bride's* and you'll discover a dozen nauseating honeymoon resort ads which offer the *perfect* weather, *perfect* surroundings, *perfect* jacuzzi for that *perfect* honeymoon—all at a place called something like Paradise Valley. Romantic schlock and the marketplace make compatible bedpartners.

But the myth of perfect romantic love and eternal happiness runs deeper than Madison Avenue. The copy in *Bride's* and *Modern Bride* gushes "A time for you. Now you are what you've always wanted to be—a bride. And you are beautiful. . ." "It's so beautiful being a bride. . .in lustrous fabric, ruffled chiffon, a tint of color" (as opposed, perhaps, to a shade of value). . . "A Special Bride, A Special Dress," . . . "All for Love." The magazines are here reflecting the deep unspoken understanding of American brides-to-be that, despite the social upheaval of two world wars and a dramatic change in women's roles during the last two decades, things are pretty much as they were when Wagner and Mendelssohn were around.

Women still believe, in their heart of hearts, that they are finally validated as

people when everyone in the church stands up to watch them walk down the aisle. They become complete and full human beings at the public celebration of their attachment to a man.

Is it surprising then that the bride is the focus of the wedding? Is it any wonder that weddings are the province of women? And naturally there is neither a magazine churning out romantic gush for grooms nor an industry built around a groom's "new life." American product pushers are simply making money off of (and perpetuating) womankind's absorption with WEDDING AS BEGINNING OF REAL LIFE by seeing to it that this rite of passage is conducted in economic terms.

The inevitable result is the cheapening and mass production of a ritual which ought to reflect the couple's deepest understanding of what marriage intends. The wedding is, after all, an ancient celebration of humankind's renewal, of the continually interweaving patterns of our existence. It does indeed mark the passage of a man and woman from parental care or single independence to a new level of commitment and responsibility.

Such a momentous transition arouses in us humans the hunger for a formal, sanctified public ceremonial. We dress up an event and treasure it until death, because ritual and ceremony arising out of the changes through which humans go—puberty, marriage, childbearing and rearing, death—provide our lives with a point of stability, an equilibrium and consistency, a bridge with the past. Therefore they are rich with meaning;

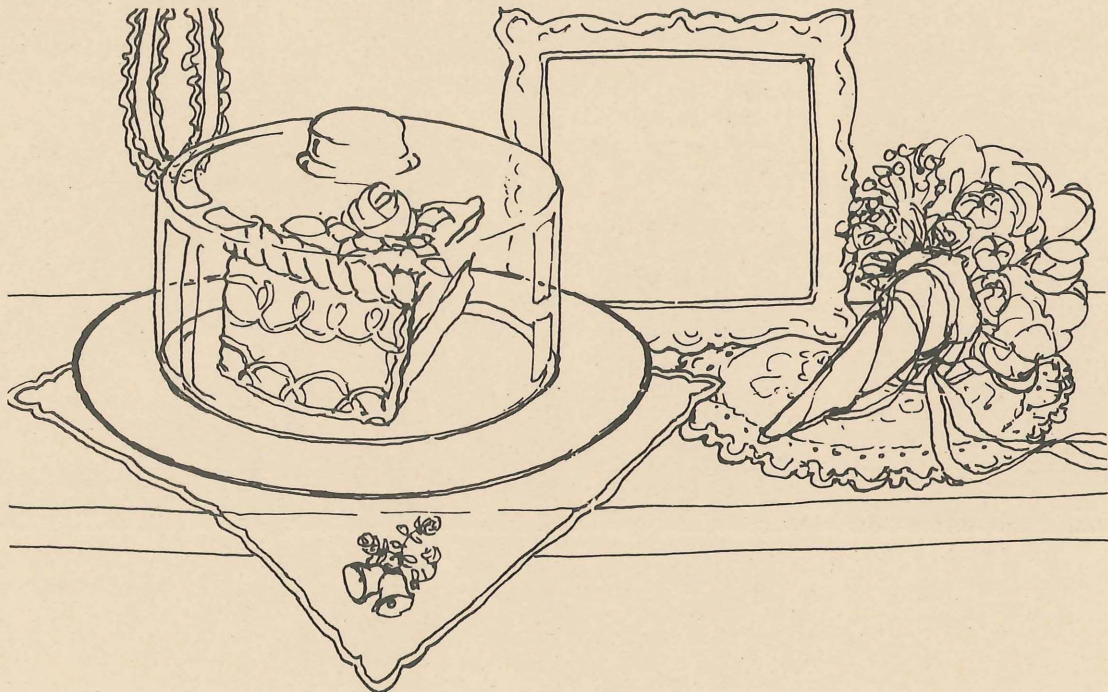
every word, every gesture, every tradition carries the weight of significance.

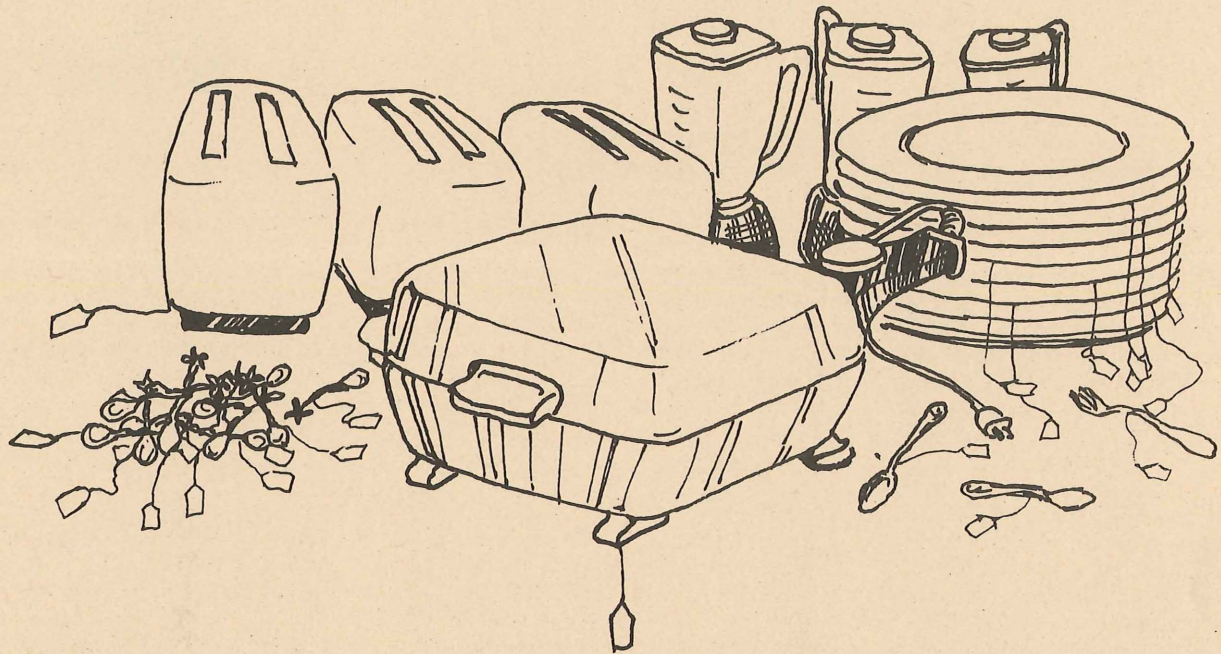
Not, so, however, with the debauched and barren American white wedding. Not only has the U.S. Bridal Machinery turned the craving of women for fulfillment by incorporation into commercial success, but it has also managed to rob every last shred of meaning from today's wedding customs. Who knows why we throw rice? Why are attendants *de rigueur*? Why the white dress? Why the veil? Why orange blossoms?

Interestingly, many of today's wedding customs predate the church's involvement in the ceremony³ and are moored, rather, in magic, superstition, and paganism. Eons ago, when humankind was less estranged from its nature and purpose, each of these customs bore a very specific and vitally significant meaning. Each rite symbolized something—fertility, female submission, separation from one family and union with another, protection from evil.

Rice and confetti, for example, echo the ancient Greek custom of throwing nuts and fruit, symbols of fertility. The "something blue" in the traditional "something old, something new" rhyme stems from the Israelites, for whom a blue ribbon was a symbol of purity, love, and fertility.

Giving the bride away is a custom rooted in antiquity, perhaps as a survival of the days when she was literally handed over by her father upon payment of the bride price.⁴ Carrying the bride over the threshold evolved from the purposeful desire of the Roman groom to introduce his new wife to the





family's spirits on friendly terms. The veil originated as his bride's protection from any malignant spirits lurking nearby. The ring, the wedding cake, flowers—everything carried a meaning which imbued the wedding ceremony with all of the significance inherent in the establishment of a new marriage.

The Great White Wedding as we know it, however, didn't emerge until halfway through the last century. The church crowded with friends and relatives, the bridegroom waiting at the altar, the blushing bride inevitably clothed in white and crowned with a veil and orange blossoms, matching bridesmaids, a honeymoon for two—these conventions materialized during the Victorian era, as did womankind's obsession with the magic day and industry's mass production of its elements.

Very likely the compulsion to adhere strictly to meaningless convention which we see in contemporary ceremonies began at that time as well. Deviation from the ceremonial norm was probably as abhorrent to our Victorian predecessors as was exposing a piano leg. Today we hang on to nineteenth century innovations and older customs because. . .well, just because.

Part of the emptiness of modern wedding ceremonies exists because we are prisoners of the overly rational and scientific twentieth century aren't at all capable of understanding and participating in the symbolic wealth of the objects and rites which make up the event.

A flower is just a flower; a cake is just a cake; rice is simply rice. When ritual is robbed of meaning, its repetition becomes rote and the obsession with "doing it right" takes over.

Not surprisingly, the Bride Machine is waiting to hum and purr for women so obsessed, creating the illusion of meaning for the uncertain first-time bride. The market is flooded with how-to manuals and etiquette books. Mass-produced doggerel and ditties created especially for weddings crop up everywhere. (Ever wonder how often "We've Only Just Begun" has been sung publicly by a friend of a bride?) There are even wedding equipment rental agencies: if you want an elegant candelabra with matching kneeling bench, call George. He'll throw in the white paper carpet for free. Rice gets wrapped up with after-dinner mints in pink netting, companies manufacture blue and white lace garters, picturesque chapels pack 'em in over the weekend. The only things missing are recorded vows and automatic ringbearers.

To these commercial grotesqueries all women are enticed—nay, dragged—because the wedding is their big event. It takes great intestinal fortitude to arrange a meaningful and dignified ceremony in the twentieth century.

There is, for example, no reason why one must adopt the nineteenth century's predilection for white dresses and veils: two hundred years ago women wed perfectly well without them. At-

tendants don't have to sport matching dresses. A maid of honor is not required. One needn't even order a cake.

After all, a custom is worth retaining to the extent that it is symbolic of what marriage intends. Thus Christians may want to avoid some customs rooted in paganism, drawing instead on the rich symbols and traditions of the church. The thoughtful bride may want to forgo portions of the orgy of spending to which she is urged. Or she may want to investigate and use some of the centuries-old traditions of her ethnic heritage.

She may even want to share responsibility for planning the marriage celebration with her husband-to-be and his family, perhaps allowing her groom equal time and attention throughout. Who knows? At the next wedding you attend, perhaps the bride will wear blue, the attendant's dresses won't match, and the groom will float down the aisle—a vision of handsomness—to the familiar strains of "Here Comes the Bride." ♀

Footnotes

¹Marcia Seligson, *The Eternal Bliss Machine: The American Way of Wedding*, (New York: Morrow, 1973), p. 1.

²All advertising slogans are genuine.

³Seligson, p. 22. According to historians of the wedding ceremony, no Christian religious sentiment was expressed in the wedding until the late Middle Ages.

⁴The word "wedding" comes from a root meaning "bride-price."

Styles of

Mary Vander Goot

If the 1970's were the women's liberation era, there can be little doubt that the 1980's are post-liberation years. The rhetoric of liberation has gone out of style, and what passed as progress a decade ago now seems old-fashioned. Even though the liberation era is past, however, some valuable insights can be gotten from a retrospective glance.

During the liberation era great numbers of women said they no longer wished to form their lives along traditional patterns. Now, just a decade later, many of these same women have concluded that they also do not want to be liberated in the style of the 1970's. The phrase "liberated woman" is pretentious. The styles of liberation that caught public attention a decade ago have not ushered in a perfect life for women. On the contrary, some of the life patterns of "liberation" have proven to be defeating and unhealthy. Three in particular merit our critical evaluation.

Liberated in Style

Sometimes being liberated was a way of being in style. A conformist became "liberated" in order to feel accepted by and approved of in a group of women with a liberationist tone. Being "liberated" around traditional women was hard, but being traditional in a "liberated" group was just as uncomfortable. Conformists do not like the tension of not fitting in. When the going style was "liberated," that is what the conformist wanted to be.

A conformist has a short memory. For example, once upon a time she was meticulous about her make-up and had her hair done every week. She was known to say that these luxuries made her feel like a "real woman." After she became liberated she refused to wear a speck of make-up and would not think of letting a hairdresser touch her hair. After all, what would her friends think? She used to read *McCall's* so that she could impress everyone with her feminine skills. Once liberated, she read *Ms.* and flashed it like a union card.

When the novelty of being liberated wore off, and when the pats on the back for "being in style" became fewer, the liberation fad was forgotten by conformist women. They replaced it with something new. The replacements took many forms, but one thing they all had in common was that they were *in style*. Some of the new causes were worthy ones—anti-nuclear energy or jogging and health foods. The pattern will carry on. The once "liberated" conformist will stick with new causes just as long as they are popular.

Liberated and Angry

Some "liberated" women were angry, and their pattern of change was reactionary. Germaine Greer's popular book, *The Female Eunuch*, exemplified "reactionary" thinking. "The first exercise of the free woman," said Greer, "is to devise her own

mode of revolt, a mode which will reflect her own independence and originality." When Greer tells how a woman should plan her revolt it becomes clear how central the villain was in this style of liberation. "The more clearly the forms of oppression emerge in her understanding, the more clearly she can see the shape of future action."¹

Name-calling was important in "reactionary" thinking. In the big move to liberation everything became its opposite and got a new label. The good boss became the chauvinist pig; the trusted leader became the oppressor; previously good men became the hated Establishment; and previously good women became despicable queen-bees. The reactionary liberationist turned all previous vices into virtues in one big turn-about. For example, in the late 1960's an angry and ardent group of feminists formulated the Bitch Manifesto. "Bitches," they claimed, "are aggressive, assertive, domineering, overbearing, strong-minded, spiteful, hostile. . . tough, brassy, masculine, boisterous, and turbulent." The style of thinking which generated the manifesto is best exemplified by this claim: "A woman should be proud to declare she is a Bitch, because Bitch is Beautiful."²

The "reactionary" woman seldom improved her lot. Instead she published her misery and looked for someone on whom she could stick the blame. She was her own worst enemy. In thinking that she could blame others for her misery, she got stuck with it. It was easy to pick out the stuck, "reactionary" liberationist. When you dealt with her honestly *you* ended up feeling angry.

Liberated from "Just Housewifery"

Once upon a time women whose vocation was keeping a home and caring for children talked as if they did nothing. The scenario was something like this:

Stranger: What do you do?

She: Nothing, I'm just a housewife.

Stranger: What does your husband do?

She: Oh he's a (what he does) for (where he works).

In 1963, Betty Friedan wrote a book called *The Feminine Mystique*. By arguing against the tradition of just housewifery, she set the pace for a dramatic change in women's vocational roles. The traditional woman, she suggested, would find new social roles and meaningful vocations outside of the home. Friedan did not suggest, however, that women should discard their familial roles. Each woman, she encouraged, must make "a commitment of her own to society, with which her commitments as a wife and mother can be integrated."³ In 1963 the liberation of women had a lot to do with giving the traditional housewife permission to be more than that. Today Betty Friedan's advice is considered status quo by almost everyone everywhere (with the possible exception of some people at Calvin College).

The old styles of liberation are not as progressive as they once may have seemed. Conformist and angry liberation are more entangling than emancipating, and getting out of the house does not guarantee the ex-housewife a free and happy future. Nevertheless, liberation happened; there is no turning back. We need to rethink our attitudes toward liberation.

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Liberation

Liberation of a Different Sort

The clear place that women used to have in society is now blurred and confused. Even the woman who decides to be ultra-traditional is now under pressure to defend her decision. Although we would seldom volunteer to be confused about ourselves, the confusion we have inherited is good for us. In the uncertainty of the post-liberation era every woman is pushed to take responsibility for herself and decide what kind of woman she wants to be.

Deciding what kind of woman to be is not a simple decision. Rather it is made many times over and in many different contexts. As the insightful feminist theologian, Penelope Washbourne suggests:

There is no fixed female identity. One element of a false solution to life is to stagnate in an identity, one stage, one self-image of womanhood. . . . Becoming a woman is a spiritual search. It involves finding a sense of one's personal worth in relation to the whole of life.⁴

Crucial to this spiritual search is the determination to make actual in our lives the belief that the only absolute loyalty, the only ultimate commitment, the only sure authority is God. The power of this ideal is that it gives us security and at the same time allows us to be open to many other persons and a broad range of experience. It allows us to be trusting, productive, courageous, and adventuresome without becoming grasping, self-serving, and calculating.

Absolute reliance on God is concretely displayed by the qualified attachments that we have to everything and everyone else. These qualified attachments do not mean that we live at half-energy, that we avoid commitments, that we only half-heartedly dabble in relationships and projects. Qualified attachment means, however, that no single relationship, no one project, no particular achievement, no optimal stage of development can ever be allowed to dominate our lives.

Experience itself reveals the relatively of things. Children put extraordinary faith in their parents, but when they grow up they see that parents are not gods but ordinary mortals. Some single men and women think that marriage makes life complete, but married people inevitably discover that their partners cannot make all their wishes come true. Some people seek fulfillment in children only to discover that their children's lives are just as uncertain as their own. So it is too with work, brothers and sisters, friends, teachers, leaders, and heroes.

The fact that human relationships are not absolute does not imply that they are evil, deficient, worthless or artificial. Human relationships are good gifts and they make our lives rich. This can happen, however, only if we do not allow them to possess us, to dominate our lives, or to make us limited and small. Loving God above all gives our love for others some limits, some proportion, and some protection.

When we keep relationships in proportion and avoid idolizing any particular one, we are free to have many relationships and enjoy many identities. For example, a woman may be (become) a daughter, wife, mother, friend, citizen,

worker, and may more things. Furthermore, she does not have to be the same in all of these roles because each one brings out different possibilities in her. To find harmony in our many identities, we must neither let them compete with each other, nor let one take priority over all others. This principle applies even to such important roles as that of wife and mother. Harmony is found only if a woman keeps her various identities in proportion and leaves her life open to many possibilities.

At Calvin?

There is good reason to worry about the women at Calvin College. One need not look far to find a woman who cannot take her future seriously until she has found a man. Once she finds that man she cannot take her future seriously until he has made clear to her what his future will be. And, once he has made his decision, she cannot make any decisions because by doing so she might interfere with his life-plans. In frightened passivity this woman gives away the possibility for many identities, and she lets her life be dominated by one attachment.

Why can't these women take risks in good faith? Why don't they dare to dream some dreams and pursue them? Why are they so hesitant to ask for cooperation from persons with whom they plan their lives? Can it be that the freedom of absolute reliance on God has been replaced by a confining reliance on their men? The Calvin College community does not encourage its women to find a sense of proportion in their commitments.

Women at Calvin College need to find new freedom. They can find the freedom to mature only by cashing in their idols and scrutinizing their commitments. The wise, Christian thinker Dietrich Bonhoeffer had this sort of liberation in mind when he wrote in one of his letters from prison:

God wants us to love him eternally with our whole hearts—not in such a way as to injure or weaken our earthly love, but to provide a *cantus firmus* to which the other melodies of life provide the counterpoint. . . . Where the *cantus firmus* is clear and plain, the counterpoint can be developed to its limits. . . . Only a polyphony of this kind can give life wholeness and at the same time assure us that nothing calamitous can happen as long as the *cantus firmus* is kept going.⁵ ♀

Footnotes

¹Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), p. 10.

²Joreen, "The Bitch Manifesto and the Tyranny of Structurelessness," *Radical Feminism*, eds. A. Koedt, E. Levine and A. Rapone (New York: Quadrangle, 1971) pp. 50-59.

³Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell, 1963), p. 322.

⁴P. Washbourne, *Becoming Women* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 154-155.

⁵Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers From Prison* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953), p. 150.

Frogs and Snails,

interview by Joan Huyser
photographs by David Bouwsma

To find out what today's kids are thinking about gender differences, I visited the sixth grade class at Millbrook Christian School. They were eager to talk. Their experience necessarily limits their thinking, and some of their comments obviously parrot parental opinion. Generally, however, independent thinking characterizes their perceptive observations and offbeat comments.

SHOULD WOMEN BE DRAFTED? WOULD ANY OF YOU REFUSE TO GO IF YOU WERE DRAFTED AND WHY?

girl: If women want to be liberated, then they should be drafted, too.

girl: We're not supposed to be equal.

girl: Women are more sentimental about being killed.

boy: Guys don't want to be killed either.

boy: I wouldn't go because I'm a scared chicken.

boy: Women would get grossed out more. If a guy and girl were in a jeep fleeing from the front and they saw a bloody soldier in the ditch, the guy would be quicker to help.

girl: That's not true. Girls are just as brave. And women are more protective than men, so they'd be quicker to help a wounded person.

girl: We're so young. We only have one chance to live. And if you go fight you have a chance to get shot. And then your life's already done.



DO YOU THINK A WOMAN COULD BE PRESIDENT? SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT WOMEN WOULD CRY TOO EASILY OR WOULDN'T BE TOUGH ENOUGH TO HANDLE THE PRESSURE.

girls and boys: If a woman is smart enough, she can be a good president.

boy: Well, some women don't seem very smart. Like the mayor of Chicago can never make up her mind. She doesn't seem so smart.

girl: A woman might have to take more training to do the same job.



SO IS JIMMY CARTER ACTING LIKE A WOMAN ABOUT AFGHANISTAN SINCE HE'S JUST WAITING? IF JIMMY DECIDED TO LET ROSALYN RUN INSTEAD, WOULD YOU VOTE FOR HER?

boy: Yes, he would if she was president, he'd have to.

girl: Most of us wouldn't vote for Rosalyn because we're Republicans.

girl: About the army—a guy wouldn't listen to a woman.

boy: Yes he would if she was president, he'd have to.

boy: A woman boss could charm a man into doing what she wants. She just has to say "Pretty please."

(general boos and laughter)

girl: I don't think a woman could run for president because she'd have to spend too much time on her looks for the TV campaign.

boy: Men don't care about their looks. But girls spend all their free time in the house. That's all they do—work on their beauty.

IF RUSSIA INVADED IRAN, WOULD A WOMAN PRESIDENT KNOW WHAT TO DO OR HOW TO HANDLE THE ARMY?

boy: If Russia invaded Iran, a man President would be quick to go out and fight tough. But a woman president would sit back and wait and think things over.

boy: Women can't decide as fast. Like when they go shopping and find what they like, they have to go to another store and compare.

(girls agree)

Sugar and Spice



WHY DO WOMEN CARE SO MUCH ABOUT THEIR LOOKS?

girl: To get all the cuties out for a date.

girl: You have to look good because other people see you.

girl: Most people care some about their looks. But how much depends on their personality.

boy: Some boys in this class are always combing their hair.

boy: Women have to look good because if they don't spend time, they stick out as oddballs. But a guy is normally a slob. So if he does spend a little extra time on his looks, then he's really going to stand out as something special.

boy: I think a lot of women have low self-esteem about their looks. Like Joan of Arc thought she had to dress up like a guy to get people to follow her. Men put women down, so women don't think they're any good.

IN MANY JOBS, A WOMAN DOES THE SAME WORK AS A MAN, BUT SHE GETS LESS PAY. WHY IS THAT?

girl: If a woman does the same work she should get as much money. But not if she can't get as much dirt on her shovel as a man.

boy: Lots of women policemen get fired because they don't dare to go to murders.

girl: Lots of bosses are male chauvinists. But if a lady was a boss, she would remember what it was like to be a worker, and she'd treat the ladies and men equally.

girl: Sometimes a woman can do the job, but a man just thinks she can't.

boy: Men have all the power and they want to keep it that way, so they give bad pay.

boy: Most women drink way more coffee than men—so it should come out of their paycheck.

MOST OF YOU SAY THAT A WOMAN CAN BE AS GOOD A PRESIDENT OR SOLDIER OR BOSS AS A MAN CAN. BUT HOW ARE BOYS AND GIRLS DIFFERENT—OTHER THAN LOOKS?

girl: It's just that men are stronger.

boy: Women are more sensitive. They feel sorry for other people.

boy: I agree. Men's feelings are tougher. Men work out to be strong. Women work out for beauty.

girl: That's only true for some people. If a lady spent so much time working out she could be stronger.

boy: You act like guys don't have feelings, like a guy can just break up and walk away and get himself a new date. But a guy hurts, too.

boy: When a girl has a fight with her friend, she says, "I'm not going to talk till she apologizes." And it takes forever for them to get back together. But when I was in fourth grade, I had a fight with my friend and we punched each other out. But at the end of noon hour we shook hands.

girl: I'd like to punch someone sometimes.

boy: Guys stay friends longer.

girl: That's not true. I've had the same best friend for six years.

boy: Boys are quicker to hit. They say, "I want to be Mr. Cool." So they punch him out.



WHY DO BOYS TRY SO HARD TO BE TOUGH?

boy: Boys lose their temper more. It's that way with boy dogs, too. That's why people like girl dogs better—they don't lose their temper so much.

girl: Boys are so worried about being tough. The Dad tells boys about all his fights when he was little, how tough he was. So the boy has to live up to his Dad's standard.

girl: Boys don't even think about acting grown-up—they just punch. Girls try to talk things over because they want to be like grown-up adults.

Con:



James O'Brien

Women

Pro:



Nicholas Wolterstorff

It is my purpose in this essay to set forth the biblical justification for not ordaining women to the eldership of the Church. Although some have characterized this position as chauvinistic let me say at the outset that I deplore chauvinism in all its forms. The issue is a biblical one and if this prohibition is not taught in the Bible then we must gladly and heartily support the movement for women's ordination.

I Timothy 2:11-15 is of fundamental importance because Paul addresses himself specifically to the question with which we are concerned. He states very clearly that "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent." What is it that Paul commands here? A woman is not to teach or to have authority over a man. These two things explain one another. If a woman were to teach she would be exercising authority over men. Or to put it another way, the authority which the woman may not have is to teach men, for there is in the NT an authority given to ministers of the Word. Women may not have this authority and thus they may not teach. Notice, however, that the context is concerned with the public worship of the Church. It is in this context that women may not teach and it is the authority which the minister of the Word has when exercising his office as minister that is forbidden to women.

This must not be construed to mean that women may be elders but not ministers. Not only is such a distinction foreign to the NT, but one of the qualifications of an elder according to I Tim. 3:2 is that he be "able to teach." Obviously the ability to

teach is required because the elder will or could be called upon to teach, but this is forbidden to women.

The reason why women may not teach in the public worship of the Church is stated by Paul in I Tim. 2:13, 14. "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner." The first reason is a "creation ordinance." God has established an order in the creation which Paul applies to the role of women in the Church. Now this point must be seen clearly. Paul gives a reason for his commandment. The reason is creational and it is obviously not cultural. If Paul had wished to use a cultural argument he had a perfect opportunity to do so and it is most likely that such arguments would have carried great weight at that time.

If Paul had not given a reason for this prohibition then we would be left to ponder whether or not this is a matter of culture and thus might no longer be appropriate in our context. But Paul gives a reason and it is rooted in God's created order. This is an abiding order and is, since Paul uses it here, obviously applicable to the present redemptive order.

The second reason, the priority of Eve's fall, is added as further confirmation of the first argument. I freely confess not to understand this argument. In fact I am in sympathy with Prof. Wolterstorff when he writes of Paul's first reason, "Neither do I know why he seems to affirm that from Adam's being created first it follows that men always have authority over women." But whether or not we think we understand the "logic" of Paul's reasons, it is abundantly clear that Paul sees them as

in Office

Response to Jim Brian

Let me describe, as starkly as I can, the reality with which we are here dealing, so that we will see clearly its human dimension. To something more than half the members of the church of Jesus Christ we say that there are certain functions in the church which we all assign absolutely central importance. We say this, while at the same time freely admitting that there are those among this group who have all the gifts of talent and life requisite for carrying out those functions well. Perhaps, indeed, there are as many of such people in this half as in the other. We recognize that in this half there are many wise in Christian insight, many exemplary in life, many gifted in speech, etc. Nonetheless we disqualify them. We do so because they lack the quality of maleness. They were born thus. They were destined by God to lack the quality of maleness, instead of being female. It was through none of their choosing.

Now on the face of it this is an arbitrary and unjust practice. Accordingly one would naturally expect that the church would have as its ground for this practice a large number of lucid biblical passages which tie this practice into God's cause of redemption. And one would expect that those who have been illuminated by the light of the gospel would see the 'sense' of this practice—would see, that is, how it fits in with the coming of the Kingdom. When Peter in his first letter talks about the qualifications of elders, he says, among other things, that the elders are to exercise their authority by being examples to the flock rather than by domineering over them. One can easily see the sense of this. So too one would expect to be able to

see the sense of withholding the offices from women. Indeed, one might even expect Christian experience to confirm the wisdom of this practice. One would expect that something quite obviously bad and unedifying would happen when women preach, as it surely does when elders act in domineering fashion.

The striking thing is that all these expectations are dashed. There are only some two or three passages which so much as suggest that women should not hold office in the church or speak; of these, surely the Timothy passage is the strongest. But this one, everyone agrees, is filled with deep obscurities. And I have never yet heard anyone so much as attempt to show how debarring women from office follows naturally from the redemptive task of the church. I have never heard anyone show the connection of this practice to the church's redeemed status and redemptive calling. No one has ever shown its 'sense.' And—the crowning blow—we maintain this practice in the face of the obvious fact that in the church at Corinth women *spoke* in the assemblies, spoke *prophetically*, and thus, with *authority*; and in the face of such facts as that Paul, in commending Phoebe to the church of Rome, describes her as a deacon in the church at Cenchreae.

I do freely admit that I do not fully understand what Paul is driving at in the I Timothy passage. But I strongly feel that in our traditional handling of this passage we are acting the part of Pharisees, getting hung up on jots and titles. Just as with the Pharisees, we fall into the practice of no longer reading the individual passages of the Bible in the light of its redemptive

firm proofs that women may not teach and thus may not be elders. There are many things in scripture, the "logic" of which we cannot penetrate, but nonetheless we believe them because they are clearly taught. Though we cannot explain the Incarnation or the Trinity, we do not hesitate to affirm that they are both biblical and cardinal doctrines of the faith.

Prof. Wolterstorff is not unaware of the creation ordinance in I Timothy. He writes, "The creation ordinance Paul seems to have in mind is a very general one: no female should ever have authority over any male; or, possibly, no *adult* female (woman) should ever have authority over any *adult* male (man)." But we must ask where he finds this taught in Timothy. As I have shown, the context clearly refers to the teaching role in public worship. This is the application which Paul makes of the creation order. Nowhere does he apply it to all human relationships. Since he does not extend it beyond the Church, what warrant do we have for doing so? It seems that the burden of proof rests with Prof. Wolterstorff to show why he deduces a principle of such broad application from what the Apostle says. One could suggest that the creation order antedates the Church and thus is of broader significance, yet one must ask if corporate worship was not intended to be an essential part of life in the garden. Thus, even then there was a "Church." But this aside, let us be clear that Paul tells us how the creation order relates to us. It relates to life in the Church, and more particularly in the public teaching of the Word of God.

However, I should also say that if Prof. Wolterstorff can make a cogent case for the necessity of extending this creation ordinance to all of life then as obedient children of God we would be duty bound to apply it across the board. To be sure we wouldn't "like" it, but if he can do this it would mean that such was God's will and what Christian would argue that we can set aside God's commandment because it is extremely

unpopular? Thus, it is not the case, as Prof. Wolterstorff thinks, that those opposing women's ordination use a "selectively-applied-principle strategy." We simply see no Biblical warrant for deducing a principle as general as he does from Paul's statements.

Prof. Wolterstorff also says that people, like myself, use a "pick-and-choose" method whereby we take what we like and ignore what we don't like. As examples of this he points to I Timothy 2:8-10 where Paul says, "I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God." How are we to respond to these injunctions? We must first say that there are many things in the Bible which are culturally conditioned. The Church has always recognized this. By this we mean that certain practices were appropriate in NT times to give expression to certain abiding principles. As times change, the appropriate ways of expressing those principles may change. Are the things mentioned in I Timothy 2:8-10 cultural expressions of abiding principles or abiding injunctions in themselves? Well, it is not always clear which is the case. This demands careful thought and is quite frankly a matter of reverent interpretation. Sometimes we have more confidence than at other times that something is cultural. I think that in this passage the abiding principle is that women should dress modestly. In those days, that meant that women should not braid their hair. But is braided hair considered immodest today? I do not think so. On the contrary; we tend to think of braids as an expression of innocence, often associated with little girls. I think this is pretty certain, but perhaps someone will disagree. Let us hold as a firm principle that if we really feel in doubt about the matter, we should follow the in-

message as a whole. And that, in my judgment, is to abuse the Scriptures, under the guise, indeed, of respecting them. The Bible as a whole makes it perfectly clear that we are to respect the gifts of the Spirit and to struggle for the abolition of injustice.

It will be said: But when the dust raised by this blustering about Phariseeism has settled, it will be seen that you are nonetheless advocating that we disobey Paul in I Timothy. My answer is: But why do you refuse to let women be deacons, when Paul did not disapprove of their being that at Cenchreae? And why do you refuse to let them address the assemblies, when Paul did not disapprove of their doing that in Corinth?

You say: Surely women don't have to be ministers and elders and deacons to exercise their gifts in the church! My answer is: But what if their gifts of talent and life are exactly those of the New Testament and Christian experience look for in ministers and elders and deacons? How are they going to exercise *those* gifts?

I like the tone of Jim O'Brien's article. It is a serious, non-alarmist, address to the issues. I also like it that he brushes aside all the clutter, and goes directly to the strongest point for his case, namely, that I Timothy passage. Notice, though, that even he, with the best of will, does not show how this passage fits into the apostolic witness as a whole. He does not show how that witness illumines this passage, giving it sense. Instead he focuses narrowly on this passage, and then suggests that if his exegesis is correct, the rest of Scripture will confirm it. Yes, indeed. But that is a large "if." The proper procedure in biblical interpretation is just the reverse of this; namely, to use Scripture as a whole to show that one's exegesis of the particular is correct. One ought to bring in the

rest of Scripture in the course of arriving at one's exegesis, rather than arriving at one's exegesis and then presuming that the rest of Scripture will confirm it. Scripture must be allowed to interpret Scripture.

In his closing remarks, O'Brien, like so many others, fails to face up to the full reality of the situation. It's true, of course that "anyone who desires truly to serve Christ can find numerous ways to do so in the Church without being an elder." That's true of men too. It's true of Jim O'Brien. He too can find other ways to serve than by being a minister. But what if he has the gifts of talent and life which fit him to the role of minister? And what if a woman does? *That's* the issue. I have known such women, women who strongly felt, in addition, that God was calling them to the ministry. I could not look them in the eye and say: The apostolic witness clearly tells us that you would be frustrating God's redemptive purposes if you preached sermons.

Perhaps it's worth saying a word about the exegesis of that Timothy passage. Women, says Paul, are not to teach or have authority over men. O'Brien and I agree that in defense of this, Paul cites a creation ordinance (though that is not the only thing he cites.) But Paul does not say exactly what the ordinance is. So we have to make a reasonable inference. O'Brien thinks that it is a creation ordinance to this effect: When you assemble for corporate worship, don't let women have authority over men. (Actually O'Brien mentions only the first of these; both are of course necessary for his case.) Now this seems to me most implausible. Paul seems to say that the male has a preferred status in the order of things. This status, he says, has two roots: The male was created first. And the male sinned last. Now why would this status, in the order of creation and in the order of the fall, have significance only for

junction strictly, after all, our desire is to be obedient and if a good case can be made for raised hands in prayer or no braids, then I will gladly do it.

It is because some things in the Bible are cultural that we do not follow everything in a wooden literalistic fashion. But Prof. Wolterstorff objects to making this distinction in this context. "But Paul nowhere says that his commands about prayer and 'jewelry' are culturally conditioned, whereas those about silence and authority hold for all time." Is it not quite unreasonable to expect the Apostle to preface his remarks by saying, "Now this is cultural. . ."? Such a thing occurs nowhere in scripture. Does this mean that there are no culturally conditioned injunctions in the Bible? Of course not; it simply calls us to the painstaking task of interpretation. The reason why the commands about silence and authority hold for all time is because Paul gives us the reason for them and as we have seen the reason is manifestly not cultural. Nor should it surprise us to find abiding injunctions and culturally conditioned ones side-by-side. I know of no a priori reason why the Apostle would be compelled to neatly separate these things.

Having set forth, in some detail, a major passage bearing on our question we must consider what is, in all likelihood, the major Biblical objection to this interpretation; Gal. 3:28. This passage is always cited as proving that the NT teaches the equality of the sexes before God. And that is precisely what it does teach. The Bible is unequivocal in asserting the full humanity and worth of women and men. There are no "second-class" citizens. Anyone who feels that women are somehow inferior to men is in clear conflict with God and His Word.

But doesn't my interpretation of I Timothy contradict what I've just said about Gal. 3:28? Many people think so and, because they fail to understand how these things are con-

sistent, they charge persons like myself with perpetuating inequality and injustice. Prof. Wolterstorff writes to this effect; "And there you'll hear them (women) say that the very structure of the Church, as presently constituted, humiliates them, places them in an inferior position, *treats them as less than equal no matter what we say about equality of worth.*"

The Bible makes a distinction between a person's worth as a human being and his role in life. A person who has a subservient role is not inferior in point of worth to the one to whom he is subservient. The worker is not of lesser worth than his boss, nor the wife to her husband. The citizen is not inferior to the civil authorities. All of life is lived under various authorities. If the simple fact of being under authority necessarily implies being of lesser worth, then there are all kinds of inequality in every aspect of life. We read in I Cor. 11:3, "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man and *the head of Christ is God.*" Here the principle of headship is enunciated with its implication of subordination. Is there anything in this passage which looks the least bit like inequality?

There is much more that could be said and we haven't even looked at the Corinthian passages. However, we know that Scripture does not contradict itself and thus, if I Timothy exegesis is sound we would only gain confirmation and support from other passages. I would like to make one final point. It is frequently objected against my position that the spirit has given gifts abundantly to women and that we are grieving the Spirit by not allowing women to fully exercise those gifts in the Church. I certainly do not deny that women are blessed with many excellent gifts and abilities. It is no part of my argument that women are unable to function in pastoral duties nor that there is some intrinsic inferiority connected with their gifts and abilities. The issue, however, is what is commanded in Scrip-

the assemblies and structure of the church? O'Brien wants to say that since Adam was created first and sinned last, the male may never submit to women's authority and speech *in the Church*; he may do so, though, in other domains of life. I ask: Is it reasonable to suppose that that is the principle Paul had in mind? It's true, of course, that Paul's only *application* of the principle here is to the church. (And in no other passage does he even appeal to the principle.) But that is far from showing that the principle itself is limited to this application.

But I suspect that the reader will feel, as do I, that this exegetical worrying of individual texts proves quite indecisive. In my judgment the issue of women in the church will only be settled when we begin to read the New Testament whole, and begin to ask such questions as: What is the work of God's Church in the world? Do women have the gifts of talent and life necessary for contributing as office-bearers to that work of the church? Does the Spirit, working through the apostolic witness, illumine our minds so that we see that allowing women to function as office-bearers would frustrate the work of the church in the world? If not, what do we make of that? When I pose to myself broad questions such as these, I find myself led ineluctably to the conclusion that women should be allowed to be office-bearers. And I feel confirmed in this conclusion when I see that Phoebe was a deacon, that women spoke in Corinth, and that Peter, in citing the qualities needed in elders, never mentions maleness.

Response to Professor Wolterstorff

I would like to clear up several misunderstandings of my position which occur in Prof. Wolterstorff's response. It is not my position that "women may never speak" in corporate worship. It is my position, rather, that they may not teach. Teaching is not part of the deacon's task and therefore I do not oppose women being deacons. Nor is there a conflict with prophetesses since Paul's concern in I Timothy is with the regular preaching of the Word and not with agents of special revelation. He also failed to take note of the way I understand the prohibition in I Timothy. Teaching and authority in that passage refer to the same thing, not two different things. The one expression is explanatory of the other. The authority which a woman may not exercise is the authority connected with the ministry of the Word.

Prof. Wolterstorff appeals to principles of justice and respect for gifts. But God does no one an injustice in prohibiting them to have that which He is under no obligation to give to anyone. It is a matter of His sovereign right. Nor do we disrespect the Spirit's gifts. We are simply trying to understand how the Spirit desires these gifts to be used.

I should also say a word about his principles for interpreting the Bible. Intrinsic to the idea that scripture interprets itself is the understanding that the unclear passages should be interpreted by the clear ones. The Bible is very clear in teach-

ture. We find our duty in the Word. That the Spirit gives gifts to women is no warrant for their violating scripture's express teaching. Simply having gifts does not qualify one for the eldership, though gifts are certainly a necessary requirement. When the Spirit gives gifts he does not expect us to think that He is contradicting His explicit will in Scripture. Nor should we think that it is only in the eldership that these gifts can be exercised effectively. Anyone who desires truly to serve Christ can find numerous ways to do so in the Church without being an elder. And that applies to men as well as women. ♀



it has come to this:
the clerk
in the china department
called me ma'am
and i answered.

intent on not tripping
on holding my elbows in
away from the Christmas plates
and painted teapots
i was caught off guard
another compromise.

i will walk through the backyard
see if I can find a blue jay feather
for the handlebar of my bike.

faith van alten

ing the general principles that we should respect gifts and oppose injustice. But precisely because these principles are general it is not always clear exactly how they are to be applied in specific situations. Thus, when the Bible explicitly tells us how the principle is to be interpreted in a particular case, we must not oppose the principle to the particular application.

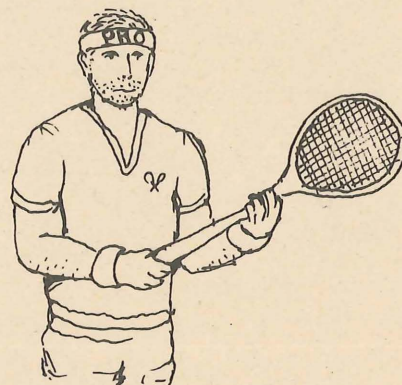
This brings us back to I Timothy. Prof. Wolterstorff objects that we do not see the sense of this practice. Are we to assume from this that we are under no moral obligation to obey a command in Scripture unless we see the sense of it? Do we only obey when we fully understand? Did Abraham require an explanation from God when he received the command to sacrifice Isaac? All that can properly be required to establish an ordinance is to show that Scripture teaches it, although it is surely very helpful to show that such an ordinance is not inconsistent with other moral obligations, as I have tried to do.

Prof. Wolterstorff's response is, in the final analysis, disappointing, because he fails to deal with I Timothy. His answer to the charge that he is advocating disobedience to Paul is to charge me with inconsistency on the matters of deaconesses and prophetesses. How does accusing me of inconsistency relieve him of the charge he is advocating disobedience to Scripture? It is no defense at all and we are still waiting for him to show us that he is not doing this.

I have tried to show the Biblical basis for this prohibition by looking closely at the most relevant passage (space, not willingness, prevented more.) We have seen that women may not each in corporate worship and thus, should not be elders.

This prohibition is rooted in the creation order and, therefore, cannot be dismissed by an appeal to cultural relativity. We have also seen that it is not inconsistent with the Bible's teaching on equality between the sexes, justice and respect for gifts. Our Lord's commandments should not be seen as a burden which we have to grudgingly bear. And since our Lord has spoken through His apostle, ought we not to lovingly and gladly obey Him?

I would like to thank Prof. Wolterstorff for his courtesy towards me in consenting to this discussion. I would also encourage anyone who would like to discuss these matters further to feel free to contact me through inter-campus mail at the Seminary. ♀



The Chivalrous Woman

"Where is the antique glory now become,
That whilome wont in women to appear?
Where be the brave achievements doen by some?
Where be the battels, where the shield and speare,
And all the conquests, which them high did reare,
That matter made for famous Poets verse,
And boastful men so oft abasht to heare?
Bene they all dead, and laid in dolefull herse?
Or doen they onely sleepe, and shall againe reverse?"

—from *The Fairie Queen*
Book III, canto IV, stanza 1

Sharon J. Anderson

Talking about chivalry in this day and age is not unlike talking about chastity. If they're not utterly baffled, most members of the modern generation respond with a sort of blank, "you've got-to-be-kidding-me" look, as though they've been rudely inconvenienced. There's little room for chivalry in this looking-out-for-number-one era.

It would seem that feminists in particular would be most offended at the suggestion of chivalry. After all, the days of the helpless damsel-in-distress anxiously awaiting the arrival of her handsome and heroic knight have long given way to the days of the competent woman-in-command anxiously awaiting the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

But to assume this indignation on the part of feminists is to misunderstand the essence of both feminism and chivalry, for the two seemingly incongruous ideals are surprisingly compatible. In fact, the ideology at the core of chivalry—that of precisely the ideology at the core of feminism—that of respecting the dignity of all persons. Though feminists have been basically successful in preaching this ideology, they have, for the most part, been less successful in actually putting it into practice. All too often the feminist road to respecting the dignity of all persons has become the avaricious road to acknowledging only the inalienable rights of women. Unfortunately, feminists too have sometimes succumbed to the lure of an ever more selfish and heartless age. Though the Knights of the Round Table also undoubtedly accommodated themselves to their own age, they, with their rigid but highly ethical code of chivalry, were more successful in practicing what they preached. The modern woman—and the modern man—can learn much from studying and emulating the chivalric character.

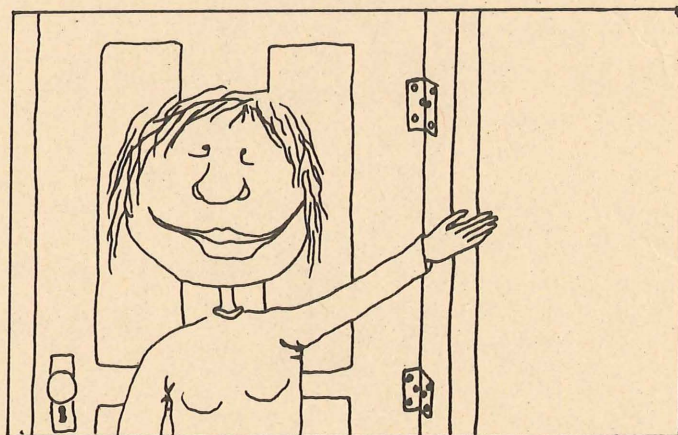
Part of the difficulty in understanding the true spirit of chivalry is due to certain unfortunate chivalric stereotypes. When most people think of chivalry, they quite naturally think of men like King Arthur or Sirs Gawain, Lancelot, and Tristram, clad in shining armor, brandishing legendary swords, ready to overthrow and conquer fiery dragons and wicked wizards. The cover of the March 24, 1980 issue of *Newseek* depicts Sir Jimmy Carter in precisely this fashion as he once again attempts to vanquish the seemingly unconquerable dragon of inflation. This is not to say that armor, swords, and tournaments were not important aspects of chivalry—they very much were. And if worse comes to worse, and women soon gain the "right" to military service, they can perhaps learn something from the

fierce patriotism that is part and parcel of chivalry. Indeed, the annals of knighthood include stories of gallant women in the front lines: Joan of Arc; Philippa, wife of Edward III to whom the victory of the English over the Scots at Neville Cross is attributed; the Countess of March, daughter of the Earl of Moray, who helped to defend the Scottish castle of Dunbar from an attack by the English; and Jane, Countess of Mounfort, who during battle:

... clad in mail, and mounted on a goodly courser rode from street to street, exhorting her people to defend their posts; and if in the din of battle her woman's voice was sometimes drowned, nothing could mar her cheering smile, which lighted the flame of chevisance in every gallant breast.¹

Yet all of this color and gallantry is only peripheral to the core of chivalry for it is no coincidence that these particular aspects were the first to wane. Color gave way to flamboyance; patriotism gave way to barbarism. What fortunately remained, at least until the twentieth century, were those aspects that make up the true chivalric character, the origins of which cannot be found on the battlefield.

Authentic chivalric character owes its origin to the Church of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when devout Christian soldiers marched to the Holy Land, wholly determined to conquer and convert infidels in the name of the Lord. The Crusades were, of course, disastrous failures, reaping more victims than converts. Yet this was also the age of monasticism, when people like St. Anselm and St. Bernard gave their entire lives over to the intense contemplation of the



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life of Christ, particularly the way in which Christ manifested love. According to St. Bernard, all should follow the example of Christ, who

... loved sweetly, wisely, and bravely: sweetly, in that He put on flesh; wisely in that He avoided fault; bravely, in that He bore death. Those, however, with whom he sojourned in the flesh, He did not love carnally, but in prudence of spirit. Learn then, Christian, from Christ how to love. . . .²

Such monastic sentiments and practices enveloped society, including the nobility, who saw this piety as a way to quell the violent and brutal passions encouraged and propagated by the crusades. William Henry Schofield in *Chivalry in English Literature* writes: "Chivalry owed its first sway to the wisdom of those medieval writers who grasped the opportunity it provided to soften the hearts of rough warriors and restrain any addiction on their part to cruelty, revenge, and boast."³

Chivalric ethics, then, had its foundations in Christian morality:

Regarding chivalry, not as an actual fact of history, but as a spiritual force, tending to take form and substance in the world at a particular period, we find that its very essence was enthusiasm of an unselfish kind. The true knight gave up all thought of himself. At the moment of investiture he swore to renounce the pursuit of material gain; to do nobly for the mere love of nobleness; to be generous of his goods; to be courteous to the vanquished; to redress wrongs; to draw his sword in no quarrel but a just one; to keep his word; to respect oaths; and above all things, to protect the helpless. . . . The investiture of a knight was no less truly a consecration to high unselfish aims for life than was the ordination of a priest.⁴

The chief aspects of the chivalric character were loyalty, courage, generosity, and courtesy—virtues that are sadly missing in the twentieth century, and virtues that once again need to be practiced daily. There are no prerequisites to practicing these virtues. One does not need a suit of armor, and one does not need to be skilled in jousting. More importantly, one does not need to be male. Just because the chivalric character was originally and exclusively practiced by men does not excuse the modern woman from practicing it.



Feminists, of all people, with their concern for the dignity of all persons, ought to be setting the example. There are several very simple and utterly practical ways to emulate the chivalric character.

In this age of rapid transit and fast-food restaurants, it is indeed difficult to find the time to maintain relationships. Divorce has reached epidemic proportions; acquaintances last as long as the bars stay open or until the sun rises. Friendships, if one has any, are considered superfluous and are nurtured only when there is nothing better to do on Friday or Saturday nights. Loyalty and devotion to working at relationships have been replaced by cold, impersonal, one-night stands.

Medieval knights used to participate in ceremonies of fraternal adoptions: they vowed to share the same heart and resolves and solemnly promised true fidelity and companionship, saying:

From this day forward, ever mo
Neither fail, either weak or wo
To help the other at need,
Brother, be now true to me.
And I shall be as true to thee.⁵

Though the poem is a bit corny, its sentiment nevertheless is sorely needed. Friendships do not develop in a vacuum. Tender affection and meaningful intimacy are seldom found at the corner bar or beneath unfamiliar bed covers. True and lasting relationships demand selfless devotion and stubborn loyalty.

They also demand courage. The paradigms of cowardice are no longer found in the horror and stench of the battlefield, but rather on the pages of the *National Enquirer* and *People* magazines. The courage to remain committed to marriage once the romance dies, the courage *not* to do as the Jones's do, as well as the courage to have a fresh or an original thought cannot be found in all of Hollywood. And this Hollywood mentality has contaminated most of society. Divorce has become tastefully chic; virginity has become socially embarrassing, and non-conformity has become highly unprofitable. Looking like Bo Derek or Richard Gere and acting just as superficially, people today have become pusillanimous lackeys, with no courage or integrity to cultivate any half-decent self-respect. Many housewives, brainwashed by the Marabel Morgan life-style, have limply allowed themselves to vegetate and waste away in days filled with soap-opera fantasies or the latest local gossip, and evenings filled with catering to an idolizing unresponsive husbands. Mustering the simple courage to be true to oneself, as well as to one's beliefs, commitments, and abilities is one way to practice chivalry.

Generosity is yet another way. Avarice was disdained by medieval knights, who never hoarded the spoils of war. Having a color television set in every room of the house, installing a 2000-gallon gas tank in the backyard, and devouring three Big Macs at one sitting are not ways to practice chivalry. Setting the thermostat at 65 degrees, riding a bus or bike to work or class, and eating meat only twice a week are.

Medieval knights also practiced benevolence in other, more tacit ways. If one knight were to stumble and fall or lose his weapon in the middle of combat, the other knight never took advantage of the situation. Instead he nobly waited until his opponent regained his footing or retrieved his weapon. Magnanimity always took precedence over easy victory. Women who are now successfully infiltrating the business world especially ought to follow this example. Climbing the corporate ladder of success often requires ruthless back-

stabbing and ignoble sycophancy, and women are just as susceptible to this unchangeable behavior as men. The way to the top need not involve greed and servile compliance, but rather skill, savvy, and a lot of hard work.

Courtesy, the last and perhaps the most important chivalric virtue, seems to be as out of place these days as Queen Victoria in a discotheque. The simple gestures of Sir Walter Raleigh, who graciously sacrificed his cloak to the mud for the sake of a beloved's feet, or the Boy Scout, who once meritoriously guided the aged across the street, are today fashionably ridiculed. Leading this movement against manners are feminists convinced that having a door opened for them is yet another indication of merciless male oppression. And in some cases, this bitter attitude is totally justified. Nothing is more impolite than a calculated gesture of courtesy performed only to communicate one's superiority over another. Yet, nothing is more self-deprecating than an obsequious gesture of courtesy performed only to communicate one's inferiority to another. Medieval knights, with their practice of courtly love, are perhaps the worst offenders here. Among the twenty-seven guidelines in the code of manners that knights were expected to follow in their pursuit of ladies were the following: "Every lover regularly turns pale in the presence of his beloved"; "When a lover catches sight of his beloved his heart palpitates," and "A true lover considers nothing good except what he thinks will please his beloved...."⁶ Medieval knights called such fawning courtesy, but these actions were nothing more than subtle manifestations of

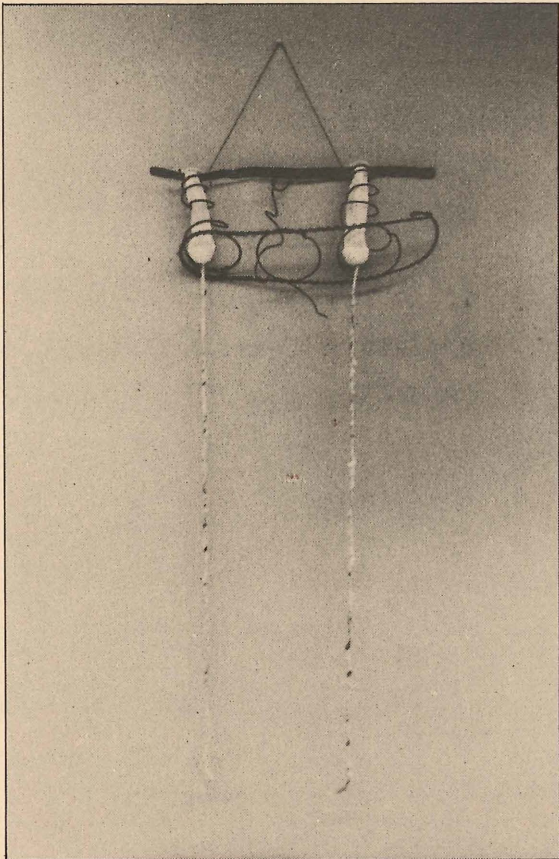
pagan idolatry—idolatry that is still practiced today in *Playboy* lounges and Total Woman clinics.

But abandoning all courtesy because it has been thoughtlessly abused at times is just as foolish as abandoning Christianity because of Anita Bryant or Oral Roberts. Why throw the baby out with the bath water? Why not try instead to set a better example? It seems a little ironic that feminists, despite their endless ERA strategy rallies, have not yet taken full advantage of perhaps the most simple if not effective way to be on an equal footing with men. There's absolutely no reason why a woman cannot begin to practice the common courtesy that only men were once privileged to practice. One does not need a male physique to open the door for someone, or to help someone with his or her coat, or to give up a seat on the bus for an elderly or handicapped person. Any person—whether male or female—is capable of performing these chivalric gestures. Furthermore, any person—whether male or female—is capable of having the kind of healthy humility that allows these chivalric gestures to be performed for him or her. One does not forsake his or her integrity by deferring to an appropriate gesture of courtesy any more than a Christian forsakes his or her integrity by deferring to the Lordship of Christ.

Some may find it irritating, not to mention inappropriate, that I should bring up the name of Christ in a study on the compatibility of chivalry and feminism. And perhaps rightly so, for the name of Christ has today become as superfluous as the Good Housekeeping Seal. Jesus now endorses everything from the building of multi-million dollar glass cathedrals to the passage of nuclear arms legislation. But I don't think I am being inappropriate in this instance particularly since, as I stated earlier, the true chivalric spirit owes its origins to the medieval Church. One simply cannot overlook that the chivalric virtues of loyalty, courage, generosity, and courtesy are strikingly similar to the Christian virtues of faith, hope, stewardship, and grace; virtues that were supremely and humbly manifested in Christ; virtues that He wants and expects all to emulate.

During the Middle Ages, chivalry was a way in which this Christian morality could be emulated. And indeed it was. Like the Bible, the annals of knighthood relate the stories of people who, in the midst of a brutal and barbaric age, still had the dignity to lay down their lives for the sake of another person.

It seems to me that feminism, with its basic ideology of respecting the rights of all persons, today offers another, if not better, way in which all people can once again emulate the chivalric character. Chivalrous women like Florence Nightingale, Victoria Booth Demarest, and Mother Teresa have already set the precedent. Their example of loyalty, courage, generosity, and courtesy offers all persons the inspiration and hope that the annals of feminism will also one day relate the stories of people who, in the midst of a selfish and heartless age, still had the dignity to love their neighbors as themselves. ♀



Breast Piece for the '80's

Footnotes

¹Charles Mills, *The History of Chivalry and Knighthood and its Times* (Philadelphia: H.C. Carey and I. Lea, 1826), p. 166.

²Charles T. Wood, *The Age of Chivalry* (New York: Universe Books, 1970), p. 104.

³William Henry Schofield, *Chivalry in English Literature* (New York, AMS Press, 1970), p. 6.

⁴*Ibid.*, quoting from *Introduction to the Study of Dante* by John Addington Symonds, p. 3.

⁵Mills, *History of Chivalry*, p. 95.

⁶Wood, *Age of Chivalry*, quoting from *The Art of Love* by Andreas Capellanus, p. 106.

Running Into the Night

Claire Patterson

"Who are you rooting for in the election, Mom?"

Lisa sat on the floor in the den, the newspaper spread between her legs. She watched her mother as she tood by the sink, washing the baking dishes in the afternoon light of the kitchen window. Her red hands dripped with dishsoap as she rinsed the angel food cake pan and set it on the dish rack.

"Oh, I don't know, honey. You just don't know who to believe these days. Your dad and I like to vote Republican. We were hoping Ford would run again, but--"

"Ford!" As Lisa stood up the paper dropped from her lap. "Ford? Don't you know anything? He'd blow the whole thing, coming in so late. You don't even know what you're talking about."

"Your dad and I like to vote Republican, but I'll admit I don't like the choices this time around." She dropped the silverware, still steaming, into the drainer. "Your dad and I both thought Ford should have run. He just has a bad name because of Nixon."

"Dad and I, Dad and I. Sure, you're a working woman, but you don't care about yourself, you can't think for yourself!"

Lisa left the room hastily. Behind her, her words saturated the room, driving her away. Crumpled and sticky in the corner of her bedroom closet, Lisa's running sweats suggested an escape. She hurried to turn them right side out. When she left, she slammed the door and winced.

The autumn afternoon was clear, but it was so late in the season that few leaves remained on the trees. The bare tree limbs cut sharp edges into the pale blue sky. Yellow glinted off steel gray. Lisa leaned into the sidewalk that sloped uphill from her house, breaking into her stiffness with short, quick steps. Loose leaves scuttled across the path as she ran, and the wind gusted, the brown flecks swirled and skidded.

"Mother, you've ignored yourself. You've been swallowed by Dad."

"Mother, don't you understand? I don't want to be obsessed with food and laundry all my life. You stock the kitchen shelves, serve the food, clean the house and work fulltime. You don't have time to think."

"You don't understand, Mom, it's different for me. I don't want to have a house and children first. I want to be autonomous. I can't use you as an example. How am I supposed to know what to do?"

Now the sun was setting; she pounded home in the dusk, watching the street lamps flicker on like white stars in the blue-gray dusk.

She didn't have much time, but Lisa decided to stop and visit her grandmother, who lived only a block away from home. She paced back and forth on the lawn in front of the dark brick house to catch her breath. Even in the twilight, the house, tall and narrow with its leadplated windows and black roof, breathed old age in a neighborhood dominated by splitlevel and one-story houses. It was the first house on the block some sixty years ago. Lisa banged hard on the front door. The living room light came on, flooding the front lawn and shrubs with light. Her grandmother opened her door and peered into the darkness.

"It's me, Grandmother," Lisa announced loudly. "I was out running and stopped by on my way back to say hello."

In the entry hall, the oak doors and trim shone with varnish in the yellow light. The old woman smiled up at her granddaughter as Lisa stepped inside and bent to kiss her powdered forehead.

"Good, good. I just finished my dinner. I ate early, you know, so I would have the dishes done for the six o'clock news on the television. There's only me to worry about at dinner time, so I can eat as early as I like." She chuckled. "Well, come into the kitchen for a minute; I'll show you the dress I've been mending."

Lisa followed behind the short, stooped woman. They traversed the old blue carpet in the living room that smelled of wool. Grandfather had died nearly ten years ago, but the house still looked the same, its worn, overstuffed couches and chairs with white lace doilies draped over the back and arms, and the upright mahogany piano that stood solidly in the corner of the room. In the dining room the white China vase, overflowing with green plastic grapes highlighted red, set as always on the polished wood cabinet. The old lady's black shoes walked heavily across the brown linoleum floor in the kitchen. Lisa watched her grandmother's crippled hands as they ran across the folded material of the wool jumper, the blue veins soft and large. She listened to the singsong of the old woman as she announced her accomplishments and pointed proudly to the tiny invisible stitches where she had mended the tear.

Together they sat down at the kitchen table in front of the

window. The two of them sat in silence for awhile, and Lisa gazed out the window. In the blackness of the night, the only view was the dimly lit images of the old woman and herself; the yellow-painted cupboards glimmered in the reflection above their heads.

"Thomas and I really like each other, Grandmother," Lisa confided. "He has a good job, so we have enough money to go out every now and then. I'm glad you got a chance to meet him."

"That's nice. Does he like you to dress up nice when you go out? Oh, I used to take such care getting dressed and fussing over my hair before I'd go out with your grandfather. On the television now they show the girls with lots of curls in their hair and such pretty skirts. So pretty. I never see you in a skirt. Don't you care for fashion?"

"Students don't have much occasion to wear skirts grandmother. I have some."

"Why don't you wear them, it would be so much nicer. You go out with that boy a lot, I think he'd take you some place nice once in a while. You're just too busy. You should have time to relax and fix yourself up nice."

"I know, Grandmother, but I can't help it. I have a lot of

studying to do. Maybe I'll have some time to sew with you this summer."

Grandmother wrapped her shawl closer around her shoulders. Lisa stared at the muddy tennis shoe that rested on her knee.

"I made such pretty dresses when I was a girl. I was such a society girl. I never had to work like your mother does. It's a shame that she has to work so hard. The dinners I used to have, the table looked so pretty."

Lisa nodded and smiled, and noticed on the oven clock that it was almost six.

"I'm sorry I have to leave in such a hurry, but it's getting late, and Mom will be worried that I was out running after dark. I have to help her with dinner."

They walked to the door and Lisa stooped again to kiss her grandmother. Even though it was cold, Lisa wandered two blocks out of her way to get home. She dropped so easily in and out of realities, as if she were making house calls. Tonight she would sneak over to Thomas', after her parents went to bed. Lisa thought of her boyfriend's bed, and how strong the sheets smelled when she climbed into it, and how she could not move, or sleep. ♀



David Cheadle

A Misogynist History

Lucie Marsden

Did you know there are grown men, philosophers, by and large, who seriously question whether there is an external world? We had a philosopher speak at Calvin a few years ago who earnestly informed us, lest any of us were worried, that he had *proofs* that indeed there was something out there. I was so relieved. The thought that I had been doing laundry that didn't exist was beginning to keep me awake nights. (Perhaps the fact that I did it but never bothered folding it could be seen, not as sloth, but as a kind of metaphysical compromise between divergent ontologies.)

As if denying the existence of the material world weren't enough, some men even deny that any other persons exist. This view is called solipsism. (Among the people who assert this, you can tell the philosophers from the non-philosophers very easily. Solipsist philosophers occupy chairs at universities. Solipsist non-philosophers occupy beds in mental institutions.)

Solipsism is a view very similar to the lament of Elijah, "I alone remain," except the solipsist thinks he was the only one to begin with as well. The rest of us are just figments of his imagination. One of the members of the philosophy department at the University of Michigan was a solipsist. When asked whether the old coot was a real live solipsist, one of his colleagues replied, "You bet he is, and believe me, we take very good care of him, because if he goes, we all go."

Now I ask you, what kinds of views are these? Can you imagine a woman ever

countenancing such nonsense? Of course not! We have too much sense to seriously entertain such balderdash, no matter how much philosophical packaging it comes in.

But if one were to believe the pantheon of philosophical greats on the nature and capacities of women, she'd wonder why God bothered making us in the first place, and how we ever learned to spell our own names, let alone *weltan schauung*.

When I first read Plato, I should have realized that philosophy was not always a pursuit which appreciated the abilities, of women. In the account of Socrates execution in the *Phaedo* we meet Xanthippe, Socrates' wife. She is understandably upset about Socrates' imminent death. She hasn't had Philosophy 153 yet, so she doesn't know that Socrates is about to free his soul from the wretched prison house of his body to spend eternity communing with the Forms. (With, for example, the Bed-itself, the Triangle-itself, the Tree-itself. Sounds like fun, eh?) Unlike Socrates, she is not entirely pleased at the prospect of his death and is weeping aloud. Socrates gives Crito the high sign to take her away so that he and his cohorts can get down to one of those dialogues for which they are so justly famous.

I can understand that you might not want an hysterical woman around while attempting to prove the immortality of the soul, but it turns out these Greeks didn't want women around for much of anything. I recall, as an unsophisticated freshman, being convinced the printer had gotten the pronouns wrong in the account of erotic love in the *Phaedrus*. They were *both* in the masculine. (And they were making dates to meet in the *gymnasium!* Look up the etymology of that one, if you get my drift.) When it finally dawned on me what was going on, I scrawled a large Good Grief! in the margin, which remains to this day as a reminder of my naiveté.

In all fairness, I should respect that

Plato displays a remarkably egalitarian side in *The Republic*. This is his account of the ideal state, ruled, naturally enough, by philosopher-kings. (It beats movie actor-Presidents.) In it, women will share equally in the tasks and privileges of the state according to ability, not gender. But before you ask for a one-way ticket to this Utopia, I should warn you that women not only share equally, but *are shared* equally, i.e. wives are held in common (as are children). Also, Plato outlaws poetry and the visual arts because of their corrupting influences. Heaven only knows what he'd do with television and *American Gigolo*.

Prior to Plato, a bit of sexism rears its head among that mathematically inclined, mystical cult, the Pythagoreans. You remember them. They thought things were numbers. When they said, "I've got your number," they meant it literally. The Pythagorean Table of Opposites has Man right up there on the side with Good, Light, Straight and Right, and woman on the side with Bad, Dark, Crooked, and Left. (While it is not too surprising that a group of ancient Greeks might come up with this ordering of the pro's and con's of the universe, it is somewhat disconcerting to see how readily Intro Philosophy students come up with exactly the same ordering.)

Pythagorus had a great many spiritual followers who sought his advice on matters which had little to do with hypotenuses or square roots. "When asked when a man ought to approach a woman, he replied, "When you want to lose what strength you have."¹ He was also the source of the following insights and maxims:²

Abstain from beans. (The soul is air according to Pythagoras.)

Never step over a cross-bar.

Do not sit on a quart measure.

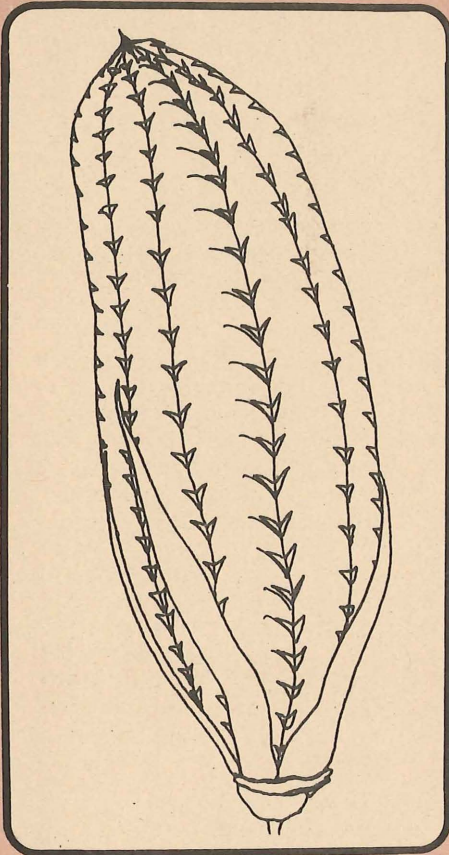
Spit on your fingernail trimmings.

Spit on your fingernail trimmings! ?!
Oh well, he was really terrific with triangles.

Lucie Marsden has taught Philosophy at Calvin College and is a graduate student at the University of Notre Dame. When asked what her mother did, her 7-year-old daughter replied, "She's a philosopher. She starts with logic and then argues about givens with daddy at the dinner table."

well, he was really terrific with triangles.

Following Plato, Aristotle brings to full expression the ancients' view of woman as *sexus sequior*. (Or would have, if he had spoken Latin instead of Greek.) This view of women as the second sex is writ in large in *De Generatione Animalium*.³ In it, Aristotle applies his hylomorphic (form/matter) theory to procreation. The gist of his view is this. Man contributes the active formative element, woman, the passive recipient matter. If all goes well, if the active element is active enough and the recipient matter appropriately passive and docile, the result perfectly resembles the form, i.e. It's a boy! If the woman resists or the forma-



tive element is made less active (as happens when there is a moist wind from the south, according to Aristotle) the result is a girl. In less serious deviations from what nature intends, the child is a male, but resembles his mother. The ideal would be for male to reproduce male. The first departure from the ideal, "...in a certain sense a monstrosity"⁴ is the female. Aristotle does allow that the production of females is a natural necessity in the classes of animals divided into sexes but does so somewhat grudgingly: "And the monstrosity, though not necessary in regard of a final cause and an end, yet is necessary accidentally."⁵

This view, that a woman is a misfit, a misbegotten male, a deviation from the ideal, is standard Scholastic fare as well. Thomas Aquinas says that in woman there is "...something deficient or accidental. For the active power of the male seed intends to produce a perfect likeness of itself with male sex. If a female is conceived, this is due to lack of strength in the active power, to a defect in the mother, or to some external influence like that of a humid wind from the south..."⁶ (There's that humid wind from the south again. I wonder how many medieval husbands invoked a "Not tonight dear, there's a humid wind from the south" after a hard day at the cathedral site.)

Thomas also held that nature had endowed men with more intelligence, and that, except for procreation, a man is better assisted in *any* field by another man than by a woman.

The view of woman as passive and deficient, while not flattering, is less of a base calumny than the view of woman as temptress, the beguiler of man who caused his fall. This was the view of most of the church fathers, including Tertullian, who wrote the following charming note to his wife:

"Do you know that you are Eve? . . . You are the devil's gateway. . . How easily you destroyed man, the image of God. Because of the death which you brought to us, even the Son of God had to die."⁷

Augustine, in a similar vein, complained that man, whose intellect is superior, could not have been seduced by the devil, so woman, whose intellect is small, was given to him. How this dim-witted female managed to bring to ruin the superior male is not discussed. Augustine also held that while all *souls* are made in God's image, only the body of man is made in the image of God. The body of the female, because of its passivity and inferiority, is not. A woman finds herself in a kind of perennial schizophrenia with respect to bearing God's image. Her asexual soul can reflect God's image, but her female body can't possibly. Augustine said, "In her the good Christian. . . likes what is human, loathes what is feminine."⁸

One should take into account that Augustine's view of women might be influenced by his remorse over a debauched and licentious youth during which he fathered an illegitimate son. (No moist wind from the south that night.) The road to sainthood had more than a few detours for Augustine, and along its way the somewhat ambivalent Augustine prayed, "Lord, make me chaste and continent, but not yet."⁹

Centuries of chavinism slipped by unchecked and unanswered for. It wasn't until the seventeenth century that we get a taste of revenge. Queen Christiana of Sweden singlehandedly did in the great French philosopher, Ren'e Descartes. Or so one would think if she read Bertrand Russell's account of the matter in *A History of Western Philosophy*. According to Bertrand, Descartes "...unfortunately got into a correspondence with Queen Christiana of Sweden, a passionate and learned lady who thought, as a sovereign, she had the right to waste the time of great men."¹⁰ It seems she wanted to learn philosophy but could only fit in her lessons with the somewhat deliberate Ren'e at 5 a.m. Doing philosophy at 5 a.m. in a cold castle in Sweden was more than Descartes could handle. (After all, he was used to meditating in front of the fire.) He caught pneumonia and died.

Had I been a queen a century or so later, I personally would have chosen to do in Immanuel Kant. Not only would I have spared many a student the agony of working through the *Critique of Pure Reason* (a work whose germanically constructed sentences run on four pages and are about as lucid as pea soup. As one member of my department put it, "Kant's prose resembles sawdust thickened with glue.") I would also have spared us the following comments in *Observations on the Beautiful and Sublime*.

Laborious Learning or painful pondering, even if a woman should succeed in it, destroys the merits that are proper to her sex, and because of their rarity they can make of her an object of cold admiration; but at the same time they will weaken the charms with which she exercises her great power over the other sex. A woman who has a head full of Greek, like Mme. Dacier, or carries on fundamental controversies about mechanics, like the Marquis de Chatelet, might as well even have a beard; for perhaps that would express more obviously the mien of profundity for which she strives.

A woman is embarrassed little that she does not possess certain high insights, that she is timid, and not fit for serious employments, and so forth; she is beautiful and captivates, and that is enough. On the other hand, she demands all these qualities in a man, and the sublimity of her soul shows itself

only in that she knows to treasure these noble qualities so far as they are found in him. How else indeed would it be possible that so many grotesque male faces, whatever merits they may possess, could gain such well-bred and fine wives!

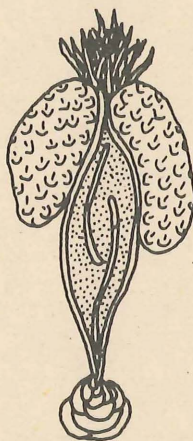
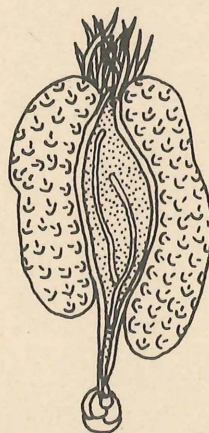
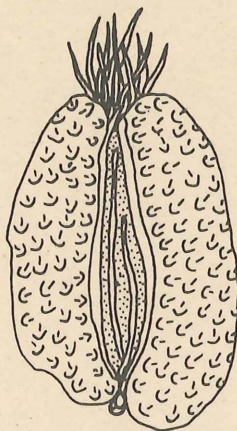
Kant happened to be one of those males with a grotesque face (I'd place it in the prune family) but he never gained a wife of any sort. According to the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Kant's outer life was almost entirely uneventful."¹² It's a good thing he wasn't a behaviorist, or it wouldn't have been much of a life.

The 18th century is known as the Age of Enlightenment and is rife with progressive thinkers ready to do away with family, church, school and any social sanctions which would limit the freedom of the individual. "Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite!" ("Sororite!" hadn't yet achieved sloganhood). But even one of the most avant garde thinkers of the day, J.J. Rousseau, said this of our kind: "Women have in general, no love for any art; they have no proper knowledge of any, and they have no genius."¹³ So there!

This, though, is an enlightened and ironic sentiment compared to the venomous, vitriolic, and vituperative maunderings of the 19th century pessimist, A. Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer was that cheery fellow who had such a high opinion of himself, and such a low opinion of everything else, that for two years he purposely scheduled his lectures at the same time as his arch-rival Hegel (then at the peak of his popularity) and drew not a single student the whole time. Talk about self-perpetuating pessimism. In his *Studies in Pessimism*, Schopenhauer has an essay entitled "Of Women." I couldn't begin to capture in a paraphrase the virtuoso misogyny displayed in this essay. And so I will quote at length:

Women are directly fitted for acting as the nurses and teachers of our early childhood by the fact that they are themselves childish, frivolous and short-sighted; in a word they are big children all their life long—a kind of intermediate stage between the child and the full-grown man, who is man in the strict sense of the word.¹⁴

Women also suffer from the defect that their reason is "only reason of a sort; very niggard in its dimensions."¹⁵ Fortunately, being found wanting in one's mental facilities has charitable side-effects:



The weakness of their reasoning faculty also explains why it is that women show more sympathy for the unfortunate than men do, and so treat them with more kindness and interest.

Unfortunately, this weakness also explains woman's inability to think beyond the immediate, concrete situation to universal principles or rules of justice. The concept of justice is totally beyond this poor creature's capacities, and as the physically and mentally weaker sex, she has only her cunning and wile to fall back on:

Hence, it will be found that the fundamental fault of the female character is that it has *no sense of justice*. This is mainly due to the fact, already mentioned, that women are defective in the powers of reasoning and deliberation; but it is also traceable to the position which Nature has assigned to them as the weaker sex. They are dependent, not upon strength, but upon craft; and hence their instinctive capacity for cunning, and their ineradicable tendency to say what is not true. . . . Nature has equipped woman, for her defense and protection, with the arts of dissimulation; and all the power which Nature has conferred upon man in the shape of physical strength and reason, has been bestowed upon women in this form. Hence, dissimulation is innate in woman, and almost as much a quality of the stupid as of the clever. . . . a woman who is perfectly truthful and not given to dissimulation is perhaps an impossibility.¹⁷

As we have seen, for centuries it has been commonplace to allege the mental and moral inferiority of women. But it took the blackbilled Schopenhauer to come right out and attack our very physiquses:

It is only the man whose intellect is clouded by his sexual impulses that could give the name of *the fair sex* to that undersized, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped, and short-legged race; for the whole beauty of the sex is bound up with this impulse. Instead of calling them beautiful, there would be more warrant for describing women as the unaesthetic sex.¹⁸

Not only are we unaesthetic because

we look so bad, but because we have no appreciation whatsoever for what is beautiful.

Neither for music, nor for poetry, nor for fine art, have they really and truly any sense of susceptibility; it is a mere mockery if they make a pretence of it in order to assist their endeavor to please. Hence, as a result of this, they are incapable of taking a *purely objective interest* in anything; and the reason of it seems to me to be as follows. A man tries to acquire *direct mastery* over things, either by understanding them, or by forcing them to do his will. But a woman is always and everywhere reduced to obtaining this mastery *indirectly*, namely, through a man; and whatever direct mastery she may have is entirely confined to him. And so it lies in woman's nature to look upon everything only as a means for conquering man; and if she takes an interest in anything else, it is simulated—a mere round-about way of gaining her ends by coquetry, and feigning what she does not feel.¹⁹

This total lack of aesthetic sensibilities explains our tendency to blithely chatter through the finest passages of the greatest masterpieces presented on stage. His solution?

In our day, besides, or in lieu of saying, *Let a woman keep silence in the church*, it would be much to the point to say *Let a woman keep silence in the theater*. This might, perhaps, be put up in big letters on the curtain.²⁰

(Big letters, I take it, because women are so shortsighted, as he mentioned earlier.) Schopenhauer goes on like this for a few more pages, calling us Philistines and blaming the French Revolution and all the subsequent disturbances that resulted on us. You have to hand it to this guy. He doesn't go halfway. Why blame us for missing socks when you can get us for whole revolutions?

When it comes to sexism, Schopenhauer is a hard act to follow. Indeed, the 20th century has few examples of such attitudes being expressed by philosophers. Rather, women are recognized as making significant contributions to the field. Philosophers right here at Calvin are doing their part to rid philosophy of sexist attitudes and language. Some of them have started using feminine pronouns instead of the

standard masculine ones for examples and hypothetical cases, e.g. "The nuclear physicist makes *her* empirical observations. . ." Of course, this doesn't always work to further the cause. One colleague now uses, without fail, the feminine pronoun for the hypothetical proponents of arguments that he totally wipes out. In his papers, niggardly nominalists, doubtful Thomists, and confused Cartesians are all *she's*. This strikes me as the kind of affirmative action we could do without, but it's better than females never appearing in philosophical discourse at all. Of course, there are occasional lapses. For example, "America's leading orthodox Protestant philosopher of God" (see *Time* April 7, 1980), falls right back on Raquel Welch's "impressive assets"²¹ to illustrate possible worlds ontology, when e.g., the assets of the more intellectually endowed English philosopher, Elizabeth Anscombe, would have done just as well.

This abbreviated sketch of sexism in philosophy touches on a few items you probably never got around to in Philosophy 153. I hope it serves to enrage and amuse in about equal proportions. For those of you who are too angered to be amused, I offer the following timeless pearl of wisdom from the mouth of one of Calvin College's very own students: "Be philosophical. Don't think about it." ♀

Footnotes

¹Robinson, J.M., *An Introduction to Early Greek Philosophy*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), p. 62.

²Kirk and Raven, editors, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), p. 227.

³Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle Vol. V*. (London: Oxford Press, 1912).

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 767.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1 q. 92, a. 1, adl.

⁷Tertullian, PL I. 1418b-192, *De cultu feminarum, libri duoi*, 1.

⁸Augustine, *De sermone Domini in monte*, 1 ch. 15, (P.L., 34, 1250).

⁹Augustine, *Confessions*, Book VIII, Ch. 7.

¹⁰Russell B., *A History of Western Philosophy*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 560.

¹¹Kant, *Observations On the Beautiful and Sublime*.

¹²*Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. "Kant, Immanuel," Vol. 4, p. 305.

¹³Rousseau, *Lettre a d'Alembert*, Note XX.

¹⁴Schopenhauer, "Of Women," *Essays of Schopenhauer*, (New York: Willey Book Co.), p. 305.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 75.

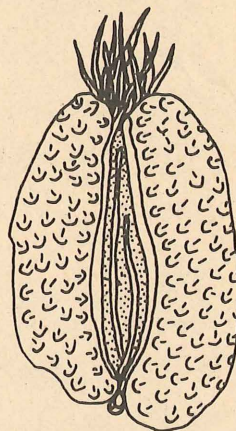
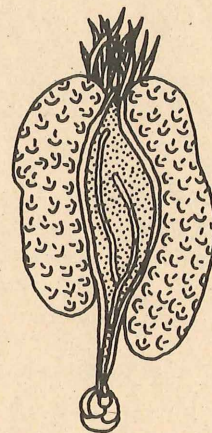
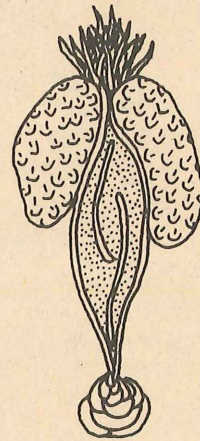
¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Plantinga, Alvin, *God Freedom and Evil*, (Harper and Row, New York, 1974), p. 99.



Visual Arts Show

Awards

Sponsored by the
Visual Arts Guild

Best of Show: R.S.c by Mark Mulder

Three-Dimensional Art

First Place: no award

Second Place: untitled by Dan Wolbert

Third Place tie: Breast Piece for the '80's by Catherine Bouwsma
untitled installation by Lori Smalligan

Two-Dimensional Art

First Place: Train #1 by Donna Groot

Second Place: Open Refrigerator by Kristen Klooster

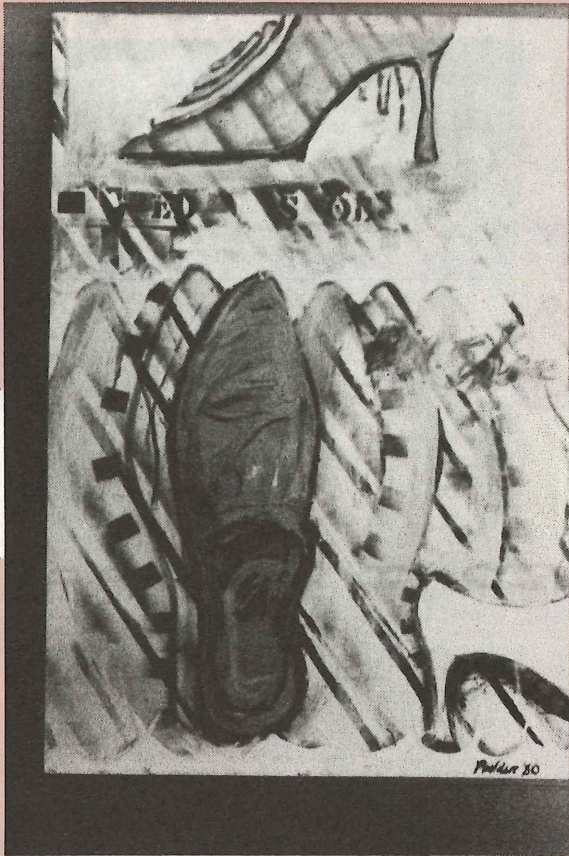
Third Place: Character with Bird by Helen Reitsma

Honorable Mention: Kenya Tribesman by Kevin Einfeld
Stencil Series vol.1 #2 by Dennis De Winter

Judges

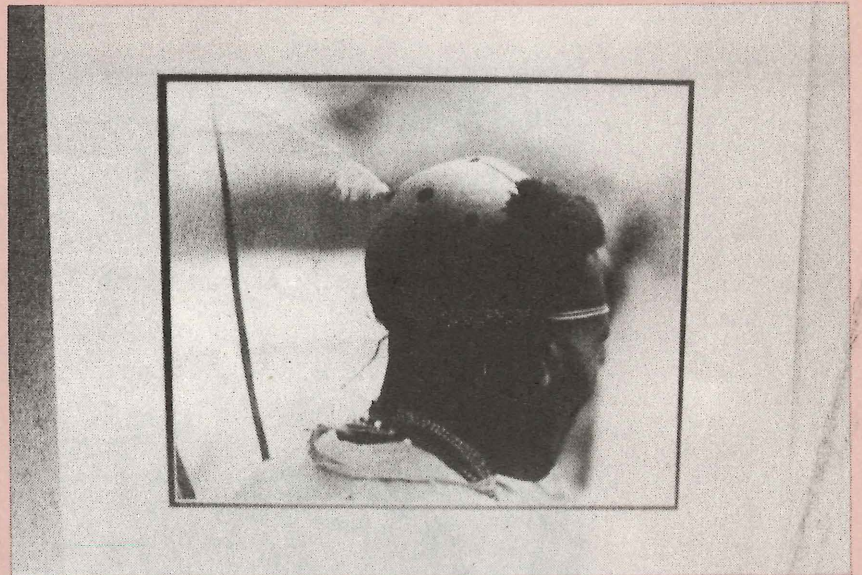
Greg Jaris: Local ceramist

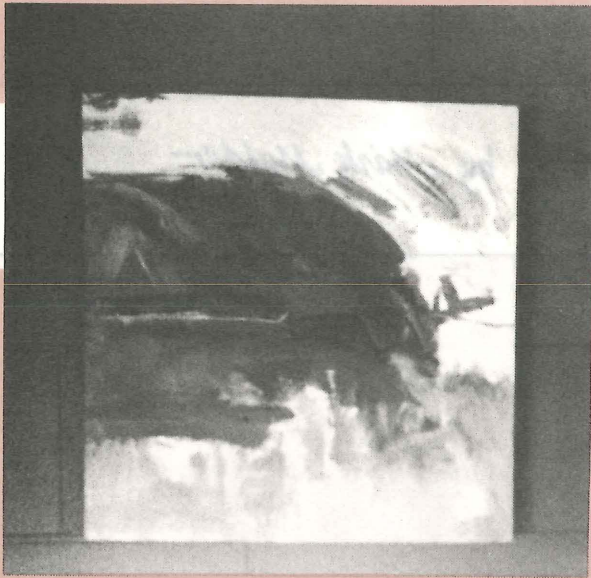
Takeshi Takahara: Professor of art at Grand Valley State College



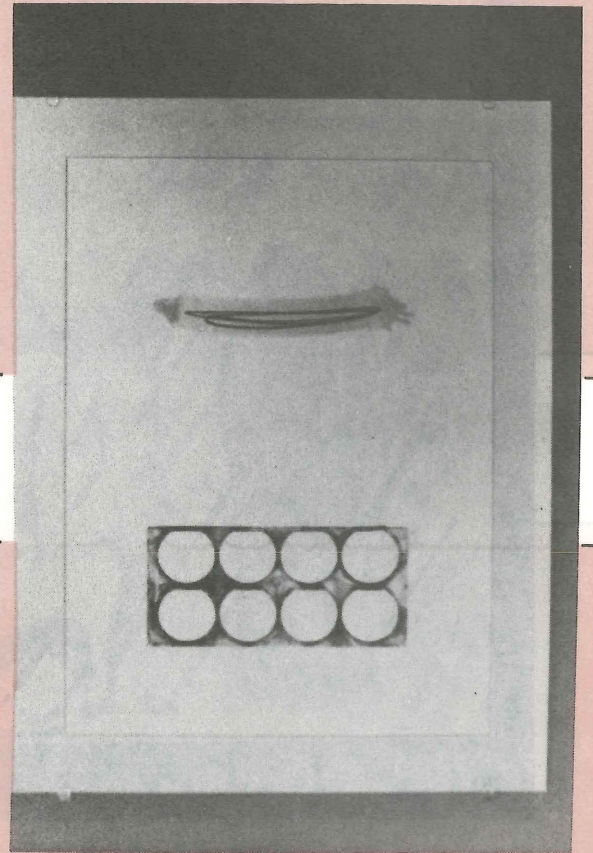
R.F.C. by Mark Mulder

*Kenya Dribesman
by Kevin Einfeld*





Train #1 by Donna Groot



*Stencil Series vol. 1 #2
by Dennis DeWinter*



untitled by Dan Wolbert

Open Refrigerator by Kristen Klooster

untitled installation by Lori Smaligan

