

ALL WAYS A WOMAN



Yetta '89

# EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Thanks for waiting patiently for the new edition of our magazine.

As you probably know, ALL WAYS A WOMAN focuses on the contemporary woman and her world.

This fifth edition gives unique insight from writers old and new.

I hope you will enjoy reading their work as much as I did.

To those who have contributed both time and money, my deepest appreciation.

Gloria Medina,  
*Editor*

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**ALL WAYS A WOMAN**  
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## **I Ate Bread on Passover**

Not just one piece, Lord. Four bread sticks  
with butter. And two rolls.  
(The service was slow)

Sir, I did worse. Worse than that.  
Went to a church wedding.  
Read from the New Testament.  
Corinthians 13 (It's about love, Sir)

But that's not all. You know the part  
where it says... "but when I became  
a man, I put away  
childish things..."

Sir, I don't know what  
got into me.  
I changed the words.  
Yes. I did.  
I said "woman" Sir.  
I said woman instead of man.

The minister  
stopped the service.  
He had to, Lord.  
I know and I don't  
blame him.

The thing is  
my sister-in-law  
ended up  
in the hospital.

As she was rising  
to throw her bouquet  
in my face  
her heel  
caught in her gown.  
She broke her ankle.

Jews always manage  
to make a mess of things.  
Don't they, Lord?

Lynda Blum

## Excuses

In my day  
we didn't have  
PMS  
We were called  
Bitch  
As in:  
Leave the bitch alone.  
What a bitch!  
You're acting bitchy.  
Bitch in heat.  
Look at that bitch  
wiggle her ass.  
That girl is some bitch.  
Now we're fancy  
Men take us  
more seriously  
As in:  
"I'll cook supper, honey."  
Meaning:  
I'd better stay away  
from her cause that bitch  
could kill me  
and  
get away with it!

Lynda Blum

## CROSSING

Wooden boat  
So open, so wide,  
Cross me.

Gather me  
Fuel me  
Shelter me.

Sure, safe passages of long ago come  
Anchored by love

I'll go willingly to that  
Other shore  
Take the now feeble fears  
And pristine pride

Cross me to the other side.

Connie Donlin Capitano

## Dowry

"Fatal burning of brides as a result of their dowry problems have reached an epidemic proportion in India, with Delhi now averaging one bride-burning case every 12 hours." — N.Y. Times Nov. 13, 1983

There are no buildings tall enough to throw oneself off in the villages of India, so the women use what's handy. The oil that they cook with to feed their husbands, will feed the flames that devour themselves.

On the stretched canopy, Khrisna lounges. Five of his 16,000 wives surround him, feeding him, massaging his back and feet. Khrisna's wrists and ankles are jewelled and his flute lies beside him. On the green and white cotton, he weaves his magic around his women. They are stunned into serving this master. They are stitched here and cannot leave. Each one would thankfully immolate herself for her lord of love. Khrisna will not have to wife-hunt like the village men for a richer woman; he will just take the next in line.

No guns in Indian villages, no traffic to step into, poisons — too sophisticated, no garages to fill with carbon monoxide, ovens are not supplied with gas; so the Duhita — the daughters, new brides called milkers — ashamed of milking their husbands' families will sometimes tie a rope around their necks, tie the end to a tall tree and will jump off a high branch. The cooking oil is more convenient

She delicately spreads it on her arms, legs and face, rubbing it into her skin, pouring it in a ring around her, while he avoids her eyes, strikes the match and lights his wife. As the flames grasp the air and her cries subside, she is already being replaced at a higher price. The result of a cooking accident.

Kali, wife of Shiva, the Destroyer beckons. Her ten graceful arms welcome these spirits.

Kali, form of Durga, women's nature, add an extra human head on your necklace garland, your mundamala, for each burned wife.

Kali, the goddess of positive destruction, will see to it that on the next turn of the wheel these spirits will return richer or as men.

Donna Decker

## Picasso's Painting of Apollinaire

*For Herb Leibowitz*

"Keep your head aerated like Apollinaire."

—Herb Leibowitz

"The gypsy knew it all along—"\*  
She sang it in her nightly songs—and rituals.

His head was painted with strands of hair that went up and down with spaces in between.

The limitless—  
the immortal second chance.  
He would always answer you directly with the precise invitation that he could change his mind at any minute because his head reached high.  
The sky.

Perhaps if you looked up from the inside of his feet you'd see the moon—  
the sun frying eggs—  
remembrance of perhaps something funny—  
but a whole flock of birds might fly by or a tall oak tree's leaves bend or hurricane rains—  
but anything happening outside  
you'd be able to reach  
from inside his head  
because there were no limits—  
no doors locked on the scientific theory that the world born of gas  
would someday (new theory)—die of sin—  
or psychological warheads were hidden 50 miles away & red danger alerts could protest present relationships  
no questions were answered because he found the right book or person—

No.

Apollinaire lived up through the sky  
and kept his head as wide as mountain ranges  
and the sky kept pockets for its alibis of seasons.

"Limitless," the gypsy cried,  
her crystal ball  
was one part sky.

Helen Decker

\*LaTzigane  
Translated by Meredith

## ABOARD the "Liberated Lady"

I am not here for pleasure.  
Ignoring S.O.S.'d distress  
I stand upon the dock of all desire  
Impregnable behind my heaving hull  
Stock still inside a scarlet slicker  
Athwart the steady rain, the scowling sky  
Fling proud pleading into every face  
Passing aboard my ship of schemes  
Answered by askance, averted eyes.

An Admiral assumes command:

"The Order of The Day  
- is Truth\$"

She speaks in thunder...

then comes the whispered WORD:

"She's only mad.

Signed, Sealed, Delivered" - up.

"Certified Insane" - by common cry.

Sigh relief.

Shrug shoulder.

Echo feral laughter. Fade.

My sinking ship sails south.  
This bloodied scow lists to beneath gray heaven.  
The burial takes place at sea  
And here at home.

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(July the Fourth still happens every year  
But August Twenty Sixth is cancelled.)

H.PATTERSON

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## THE SUBVERSIONIST (A BALL-BREAKER)

Men have  
awfully loud voices —  
Their balls are always  
banging in my ears.  
As if that weren't bad enough —  
they bombed my Mona Lisa  
smile.

"We don't tolerate  
insolence in women"  
they shouted  
at me.

"But it was a man  
who painted that smile  
on my face"  
— pleading.

THE JUDGEMENT: — handed down —  
"That man's been dead  
a thousand years — You  
have nothing left to smile for".

ET VERBUM VERO FACTUM EST  
— So I don't.  
but my ears  
are very sharp. inside.

H. PATTERSON

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## THE ARTIST AND THE POET (On Viewing The Work of Joseph A. Smith)

The Artist  
took his pencil in his hand and  
looked down deep inside himself then  
drew a sheep a teatless ewe  
standing on the tainted plains of Utah  
one head raised and screaming  
screaming at the empty sky one  
head low to grieve its lamb where  
it lay slain while the  
congregation fawning on the  
artist glowing artist were  
amused because the poet asked him why  
he drew me as he drew me  
screaming teatless underneath  
his inner eye but  
The Poet she knows why  
The Artist  
took his pencil in his hand and  
drew a hag a Baba Yaga  
in her cauldron her gray cauldron  
flying out across a starry sky  
with your wailing weeping infant  
with your sobbing bleating baby  
but that lamb was even mine and  
that hag was even I did the  
artist know he drew me  
drew me cackling in my cauldron  
whirling wild across the midnite sky  
as he drew me as he drew me  
drew the witchy woman poet and  
The Poet she knows why  
The Artist  
took his ink pen in his hand and  
he drew me as he saw me  
gray and old and fat and ugly  
flaps of flesh that hung down from me  
baggy breasts and bloated belly  
crumpled visage named me Suzy gave  
me nothing no expression  
drew me naked as he saw me sitting  
bare a baleful gadfly on the surface  
of the landscape in his eye  
drew me there for all to see me with  
out mercy as I rankled in his eye  
as he drew me as he drew me  
as I goad him with my why...

H.PATTERSON

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## Essay on "The Artist and the Poet"

by H. Patterson

A few years ago, while browsing through the Doubleday Book Store in Manhattan, my eye fell upon Erica Jong's latest book, *WITCHES*. However, it was the illustrations which really attracted me into spending the enormous sum of \$25 to carry the book home. As luck would have it, just a couple of weeks later, the artist-illustrator, Joseph A. Smith, appeared personally at an exhibit of his work right here on S.I., at Sailor's Snug Harbor. Naturally, I attended. In fact, I went back several times after that initial visit, so fascinated was I by the man and his work, as well as the subject of the book. Being a Feminist and having recently read the minutes of the Salem witch trials, I found myself understanding more than Mr. Smith ever intended to reveal of himself and his subconscious view of women. Then, something began to happen to me, in relation to the drawings and paintings I was seeing. I began to be subjectively drawn into them, as if they were drawings of me, so that I was seeing myself as, I felt, the artist must see me, perhaps as all men must see me, as they see all aging women, not as we are, but as witches: the ugly, aging external internalized so that what we, I, really am, the person I had always been, did not exist for them.... It was a horrifying realization, but it caused me to write the attached poem in an effort to describe and so understand what I had experienced.

The three stanzas of the poem are three word pictures describing the works that made the strongest impressions on me. The first stanza also incorporates an incident that passed between myself and Mr. Smith as he led his small audience on a tour of the gallery. It took place before a large black and white internal-external pencil drawing of a two-headed sheep, which he was telling us he had conceived years before on reading of the deaths of large numbers of livestock in Utah after the U.S. government had been testing nerve gas in the area. As he talked, I suddenly realized that the sheep, which he described as an ewe mourning its dead lamb, had no teats, and I realized that this sensitive, politically aware, artist, had overlooked a biological fact of life as of no importance. When I commented on his oversight that was exactly what he said. "I didn't think it was important." And the other viewers present were amused, but I felt just as I had many times when reading or listening to a lecture or sermon and hearing people, men and women, referred to as "HE".... Only this time it was so graphic, and still no one thought it important.... I thought that if the sheep he was bemoaning in his work were here and able to articulate, **she** would think it important.... And so in this stanza, I speak for her and for myself (who once fed my own infants from my breasts) and for all women and mothers....

The second stanza describes one of the more beautiful colored illustrations in *WITCHES*, the Baba Yaga or Russian baby-stealing witch, and, again, looking at it became a very subjective experience for me, for I had recently had a beloved foster-child taken from me by parents I knew would not and could not care properly for him. But I had been deemed too old to raise a little boy and made to feel like a witch and a thief for trying to keep him, even though it was conceded that his survival had been in considerable doubt at the time I took him and he was a plump, gurgling boy-child when I lost him. I have several friends and acquaintances who have had similar experiences and conclude it is a fate shared by many older women, through the ages, and no doubt it is this very real phenomenon which gave rise to the myth of the Baba Yaga in Russia and other versions of her in other countries, which are used to

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frighten little children to this day. Grimm's *HANSEL and GRETEL* is another that comes to mind.... Because of our age and waning physical charms, we are alone and unable to use the love and experience we have gained in our younger years of childraising, and for many of us, that is the only real skill we ever learned.... So we are wasted...

The third and last stanza is my word-picture of a small black and white pen and ink drawing of a fat, naked, middle-aged woman sitting on a wooden chair. There was no discussion of this drawing; the artist just passed by it as though he could not bear to look at it once having exorcised it from his sight by drawing it. In fact, I found it painfully self-revelatory and could scarcely bear to look at it myself. Its deadly accuracy and the evident distaste with which it was done and viewed by its visitors are all etched in my brain forever and internalized as both a lesson in humility and a warning never again to presume the admiration or sympathy of men as I once so blithely could... This is reality. This is here and now.

The three stanzas are linked together as the three drawings are linked in my mind. The poem must be understood as surreal, just as the original drawings are, as the whole subject of witches and their place in mythology, in the "universal unconscious" are surreal. That is, having roots in reality but being made more by having been depicted in art and poetry, which, by articulation, makes reality comprehensible, and so, perhaps, bearable.

## SOLILOQUY ON LEAVING STATEN ISLAND IN ORDER TO LIVE NEAR MY GRANDCHILDREN IN THE MIDWEST

Barrel-rolling in the brown bay surf  
of New Dorp Beach at high-tide -  
first taste of ecstasy -  
when I was tearing open  
the gift-wrapped box of my life  
gulping greedy breaths  
of salt air on the edge  
of this island in the city  
where I was bred and born and lived  
and learned to know as home for fifty years.

I have walked in the living woods  
on both sides of Rockland Avenue  
in all seasons of my years -  
pedalled from the pebbled sand  
on the shore of Rosebank  
all the way to Tottenville  
where opalescent oysters litter The Point  
at the other end of Hylan Boulevard.

I grew from girlhood  
watching gulls wheel over  
Silver Lake and Clove  
and with voyeur's delight  
the mating of the hordes  
of Horseshoe Crabs  
on the crescent backside of Gateway Park -  
survived the scrumptious terror of toes  
nearly lost to Blueclaws in the cove  
off the shoal at Great Kills...

Soon I will be  
like a beached whale caught  
gasping in the throes  
of some primeval migration fleeing  
before transplanted violence and decay  
seeping inexorably across the brilliant bridge  
out of the far-flung boroughs  
of this most fabled of all the fabled cities of the east.

*(Continued on next page)*

*(Continued from preceding page)*

There are small mirrors of my face  
reflected in sunset—  
soft voices breathing with my breath  
on the wind that blows from the west -  
children of the child of my heart.

How could I not answer  
that imperative of progeny?

So am I culled  
from cradle of ocean and bay  
to those wide fertile fields  
where lies cradled all I dreamed  
when I lay dreaming long ago  
on the swollen sunlit bosom  
of an exile-spawning island.

H.PATTERSON

## Wanton Lovers

you inspire me to love you  
as wanton dogs yearn in primal innocence  
to copulate at intersections  
amidst the blaring of horns  
and the snide jeers of those  
who simply do not understand  
their illicit passions because lovers  
cannot comprehend the warnings of STOP signs.

V. A. Pisarik

## JANE EYRE

SHE WAS NOT AT ALL BEAUTIFUL  
SHE WAS PLAIN AND HUMBLE  
GREW UP IN MISERY, TORMENT, AND  
POVERTY  
HATED, HATED, HATED

HE CAME  
MOODY, IRRITABLE, AND QUITE UGLY  
BUT HARDLY A FOOL  
TROUBLES, TROUBLES, TROUBLES

HE HAD NEVER KNOWN SUCH JOY  
BEFORE SHE CAME  
SHE CARED FOR HIM WHILE HE WAS  
SICK AND HURT  
ALL BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN HIS PAST -  
NEVER TREATED HIM WITH SUCH  
KINDNESS  
SHE, PLAIN AND HUMBLE  
HE MOODY AND UGLY

HE GENTLY TOUCHED HER SKIN  
FELT HER HAIR  
AND THEY MET IN AN IMPULSIVE,  
LOVING EMBRACE  
A RELATIONSHIP TO LAST FOREVER

Beth C. Solomon

## INNER CONFLICTS

by *Christine Cea*

Elizabeth sat near the window with her mending. The room was bright with the October sun. She put her head back and closed her eyes for a moment allowing herself to be bathed in its warmth. She was a pretty woman, with long dark hair and large green eyes which lacked their usual sparkle these days. Her faded cotton dress pulled across her swelling stomach. How weary I am, she thought, how tired. Too many things to be done, too many chores, and now another child on the way. I don't know how I'll manage, the twins are a handful and three-year-old Amanda still a baby herself.

From where she sat, Elizabeth caught a glimpse of little Amanda running toward the swing that James had made when the twins were small. Her dark curls were bouncing as she ran, her chubby cheeks rosy from the crisp fall air. How happy she is, thought Elizabeth, and vowed to keep her that way. She shall marry a man of means someday. I will see to it. She will not become a farmer's wife as did her mother and grandmother.

Elizabeth thought about her parents. She had always wanted more than they had had. They worked from dawn to dusk, just as she and James do now, to scarcely get by. Although they didn't have much, James and Elizabeth were at least as comfortable as the other farmers in Highbridge. There was food enough to eat and the children had shoes to wear. Tired, she thought, I'm as tired as mother used to be. How I wish I lived in one of the mansions on the hill instead of the modest farmhouse James built for us on the land my father gave to him when we were married, and I came along with the deal. Perhaps I could have lived as well as gentry, she thought, if only my father had allowed me to choose on my own. I knew mother had plans of a better life for me. She taught me to read, just as her mother had taught her. I can still hear her voice saying, "Books will take you to places outside of the farm and into other people's lives." Father had other plans, however, and he made all the arrangements. I was to marry the Egan's boy; it was all settled. I could see the sadness in Mamma's eyes the day I became Mrs. James Egan. Even now, twelve years later, I still feel anger toward father.

Elizabeth put down her mending, looked outside and caught sight of James. She felt a twinge of guilt at her disloyalty to him, if only in her thoughts. I do care for him, she thought to herself, but ... oh I don't know, I don't know why I'm so troubled lately. She watched James as he chopped wood for the stove and for the warmth of herself and the children. Kind, hardworking James, he really did his best for us, she thought. A good man he was. Why isn't that enough for me? "I'll take care of her, Sir," he said to father the day we were married. I being only seventeen at the time and he being twenty. He knew I was unhappy with Papa's match. "You will not be sorry you married me I will see to it," he told me when we were alone in our new farmhouse. Elizabeth watched him now as he brought the axe down upon the wood again and again. James was such a strong man, she thought, but so gentle with me and the children. Just then Amanda called to him, her swing being tangled. He put down his axe and went to her. He was smiling.

Elizabeth looked past them now to the road and the trees in their autumn colors. Highbridge was such a lovely country town and Elizabeth longed to have the leisure to enjoy its beauty. She wished she could take her morning exercise as the wealthy women do, by walking under the trees with no particular destination in mind. She and James passed the ladies of Green Manor yesterday while on their way to market with the produce. They looked so lovely in their silk and lace, their skin so soft, their hands so smooth. Elizabeth sat next to James in the wagon in her rough cotton dress as he tipped his hat and the Brody women nodded and smiled faintly. She looked down at her hands, rough and red from tending the garden and washing the clothes. How I wish I had the means and leisure to just merely stroll under the trees, Elizabeth thought to herself, for she would not share her thoughts with James.

The smell of simmering stew brought her back to the present. Dinner should be ready soon she said to herself. I wonder where the boys are?

If we lived on the hill, she thought, I would not have to prepare dinner. I would not have to chop, serve or clean up either. We would all sit around the dinner table, dressed properly, of course, and the food would be brought to us. We would have fine china and glasses instead of wooden bowls and mugs. Everything would be proper and elegant.

Just then Elizabeth saw the boys round the bend in the road. Timothy and Charles carried a bushel of apples between them, the results of their afternoon labor she supposed. They began to run when they neared the house, followed by Amanda and James. Elizabeth rose to greet them all. The boys were laughing as they came in, their cheeks as red as the apples they spilled all over the kitchen floor in their haste. Giggling at themselves, they began picking them up. Elizabeth couldn't help smiling herself. Amanda was next. "Mommy, mommy" she called, "here," and held out a small bunch of field flowers. Elizabeth smiled again as she placed them in a cup on the table. James came through the door rubbing his hands together. "Something sure smells good," he said with enthusiasm as he hung his hat.

Elizabeth served the stew and sliced the warm corn bread. When she was seated, the family joined hands while James said grace. Elizabeth sat for a while and watched her family as they ate. They were a noisy lot, the boys were teasing each other and Amanda was trying to chime in. James was laughing. Not a dignified and proper group at all, she thought, but wonderful just the same. Is this what life is all about, she asked herself. At that moment, the baby kicked. Elizabeth placed her hand on her stomach, a faint smile brightening her face. Perhaps, she thought, and vowed to put her thoughts aside for a while.

"For dessert," she announced in a loud voice, "we have fresh picked apples."

## German Sunset

by Pat Kochanski

From the porch I could see a storm of dust chasing his truck along the road. Momma was sitting behind me stroking old Willie on her lap.

"Momma," I said turning to her, "remember when I was little you used to tell me that the red sky around the settin sun was Germany. And that Poppa went there before the war?"

"Yes, I remember. That was a long time ago, Julie. Why are you thinkin about that now?"

"Well," I said looking up at the sky, "cause it looks just like a German sunset tonight."

The truck pulled up the dirt drive and stopped in front of the porch. Frank sat there in his truck looking at Momma. And Momma sat there on the porch looking at Frank. Neither one of them moving a muscle or twitching an eye. Willie jumped off Momma's lap and started rubbing his fat back against my leg.

"Well—isn't anybody gonna say anythin or are we just gonna sit around gapin at each other all night?"

"Now you mind your manners tonight, Julie," Momma warned, "Frank drove all the way in from town just to see us."

"He sure as hell didn't come to see me," I said folding my arms across my chest.

"Julie, I'm askin va nice. Now you just watch your tongue and behave yasef."

Frank stepped down from the truck and walked back to the tail gate. Momma never took her eyes off him. He picked up a big box wrapped in fancy paper with a red bow and laid it at Momma's feet.

"This here is for the two prettiest girls in Prescott," he said looking deep into Momma's eyes. Momma just stood there staring at him. Grinning like a damn fool.

"Aren't ya gonna open it?" he asked stroking Momma's milky white arms.

"Oh, Frank. You're so... wonderful. You're so thoughtful. Look Julie, Frank's brought us a surprise."

"Yeah, I see it."

"Well go on woman and open it," Frank pleaded.

Momma sat on her knees and began ripping the paper from the box. Frank picked the bow up from the dirt, dusted it off and put it in Momma's hair. She opened the top of the box and pulled out a fan. An electric fan.

"A fan! An electric fan! Look at this Julie, we got us a real electric fan. Momma and Frank started hugging and kissing and rubbing like they were the only two people in the whole world. I slammed the screen door behind me.

A few minutes later Momma came into the kitchen. "Would ya like an Orange Crush, honey?" she asked opening the refrigerator door.

"I suppose he's stayin the night," I said.

"I suppose," she answered.

"You make me sick, Momma! Do you know that?"

"You keep ya voice down, Julie. Frank's right outside the door."

"I don't care. He drives in here every Friday night and stays until Sunday. Momma, can't you see he's buyin you with them Friday night presents?"

Momma set the three bottles of Orange Crush on the counter.

"For two days out of the week that man out there reminds me that I'm alive. Think about it, Julie.—Stop feelin so sorry for yasef. Your Poppa ain't ever comin back. We both know that. Now I'm willin to forget how rude you've been. Frank wants to take us to the carnival. Why don't ya go upstairs and put on ya cotton dress? We'll be leavin in a few minutes."

"I ain't goin nowhere Momma til you take that stupid bow out of ya hair."

When I came back downstairs, Momma and Frank were sitting in the pickup waiting for me. Momma still had that bow in her hair.

"Don't your Momma smell like magic tonight, Jewelie?" Frank asked.

"My name ain't Jewelie, it's Julie. And watch out for the cat when you back out of the drive."

From the corner of my eye I could see Momma rubbing Frank's leg with her bare foot. Frank had his right arm around Momma's shoulders. Every now and then, when he thought I couldn't see, he'd give Momma's teatie a little squeeze. Now ain't that enough to make you sick? I just turned my head away and let the cool breeze hit against my face.

When we got to the carnival, Frank gave me a dollar. I was to meet them in an hour by the pickup. I bought a Coca Cola and was standing there drinking it when someone come up behind me and put their clammy hands over my eyes.

"Guess who?"

"You don't sound like her but ya sure smell like Bobbie Jean," I said.

"Oh Julie, you really are a dick," Mary Jo said turning red as a jelly apple." Is that your Momma's beau I saw her with? He's very handsome."

"Yeah, I don't think he is," I said, "let's go on the ferris wheel."

"I can't," said Mary Jo, "I don't have no money for tickets."

"I do. I'll buy you some tickets, Mary Jo. Frank gave me a dollar."

"A dollar? A whole dollar?"

"Yeah, come on."

We bought the tickets and went on the ferris wheel. Mary Jo and me were rocking the chair back and forth, scaring the hell out of each other. Then the chair stopped at the very top.

I looked up at the sky. That German sunset was so close to me I thought I could reach out and grab it. Just barely, I could hear Momma's laugh. I looked down and saw her standing with Frank, leaning against the back of the Coke stand. The wind was blowing her dress and her hair was all off her face like one of them fancy girls you see in magazines. She was just standing there, making circles with her toe in the dirt. Laughing at Frank. The red sky and that red bow gave her face some kind of different look.

"What you lookin at Julie?"

"Shhhh, Mary Jo. Just shush."

Yeah, I looked at my Momma. And I seen she was happy. Real happy.

When we got off the ferris wheel, I gave Mary Jo some tickets and I walked over to Momma and Frank.

"You guys wanna go in the spookhouse with me?" I asked.

"Sure," Momma said, "come on Frank, ya wanna go?"

"Sure," he said.

While we was walking I seen Frank wink at Momma. He had his arm around her waist and it slowly moved down over her hips. When he thought I wasn't looking, he'd give Momma's ass a little squeeze.

## A Feminist View of Anorexia Nervosa

by Camille Gatins

Anorexia nervosa is defined as "a syndrome of self-starvation predominantly in adolescent and young adult women. It is characterized by a relentless pursuit of thinness that results in life-threatening emaciation, an almost delusional preoccupation with food and, a general withdrawal from family and friends."<sup>1</sup>

Anorexia nervosa is considered a new disease because it has been occurring at a very rapid rate for the past fifteen to twenty years.<sup>2</sup> But, actually it was described over a hundred years ago in Europe and was given the name anorexia nervosa by Sir William Gull. There are also earlier references to the disease. In 1689 Richard Morton reported a "nervous consumption". In his observations, he described the patient as "a skeleton only clad with skin".<sup>3</sup> Recently, this disease has drawn much public awareness and concern because of the media's attention given to it.

The object of this paper is to look at anorexia nervosa and bulimarexia, a related illness, from a feminist point of view.

The physical symptoms of anorexia nervosa are obvious but the underlying factors go much deeper. The reasons why so many young girls are starving themselves into skinny, emaciated creatures, purposely mutilating their bodies, are much more complex than just the desire to be thin. Today our culture, the society reinforces the problems of these adolescent girls and young women and helps to distort their self-image and feeling of worth in this society.

The physical manifestations of anorexia nervosa are very dramatic and extreme. The anorectic female deprives herself of nourishment until her body is a shapeless, haggard form. Despite her emaciated appearance, the anorectic girl will never feel that she is thin enough. She will always see imaginary fat on her body. This girl lives with the fear of getting fat or being obese and unattractive. She does not eat, but not because of lack of appetite or disinterest in food. On the contrary, the anorectic is usually preoccupied with food and is constantly thinking about it, but denies herself food as self discipline.

In addition to excessive thinness, there are other physical problems characteristic of this disease. Menstruation stops in anorectic females. Their skin color and texture changes, their hair and nails become dull, lifeless and brittle and they grow soft body hair. Despite all these physical changes taking place, the girl suffering from anorexia nervosa will refuse to see her illness and will deny that there is anything wrong with her. Her distorted self-image prevents her from seeing herself as the rest of the world sees her.

These women will go to any extremes to prevent weight gain. Not only do they deprive themselves of food but will use excessive amounts of laxatives, self-induced vomiting, and enemas to insure weight loss, thereby keeping themselves in a semi-starved state. "Anorexia nervosa is not a disease that just happens or befalls a girl; she is always a very active participant in the process."<sup>4</sup>

In addition to their restricted diet, anorectic girls usually adopt an exhaustive exercise program. They push themselves to do an excessive amount of physical exercise, calisthenics, sports, jogging. They exercise beyond the point of human endurance in an effort to keep their bodies from storing an extra ounce of fat. They push themselves to jog that extra mile, do the extra sit up, to prove that they can endure.

A feminist viewpoint suggests an additional cause.

The young woman's attempt to be involved in as many activities as possible is a protection against the exclusion she anticipates on entering womanhood because, in projecting into her future, she sees that the world is made up of men who are rewarded for being out in the world and women who are either excluded from activity in the world or, even more devious, included but not rewarded. In her frantic activities it would appear that she is trying to give herself a broader definition than her social role allows.<sup>5</sup>

In a related syndrome, bulimarexia, women "alternately gorge themselves with food and then empty themselves, whether by fasting, vomiting or through self induced diarrhea".<sup>6</sup> The two diseases are very similar, but differ in one aspect. The woman suffering from bulimarexia goes on a regular cycle of eating and bingeing. She will gorge herself with food and then force herself to vomit until she can't vomit any more. Then she repeats the cycle over and over again. This all-consuming way of life leaves these people little time or energy for anything else in life. Like anorexia nervosa, it is a self-destructive disease characterized by the same symptoms and basis for behavior.

Research studies indicate that women suffering from anorexia lead restricted social lives. They have low rates of marriage and sexual satisfaction and are dependent on their parents. Studies also show that these women preferred to be alone and spent more than 50% of their time alone.<sup>7</sup> They look upon solitude as a means of control and fear interaction with others because of fear of losing that control over their lives. A feeling of self-control and discipline are of paramount importance to the anorectic person. It is a form of power over herself and therefore a way to control her family and the world around her.

Bruch has formulated the concept that excessive concern with the body and its size, and the rigid control over eating are late symptoms in the development of youngsters who have engaged in a desperate fight against feeling enslaved and exploited, not competent to lead a life of their own.<sup>8</sup>

The young girls usually affected by the disease are the daughters of affluent families, raised in luxurious, comfortable surroundings. Rarely is the disease found among the poor. Raised in a very success-oriented family, the anorectic female usually attends a private or a boarding school. Encouraged to excel, the anorectic girl drives herself relentlessly to achieve good grades in school, going without sleep and studying long into the night. Obsessed with excelling in school, she employs the same extremes that she uses to control her weight. She achieves scholastically to please and to live up to her parents' high standards.

The mothers of anorectic girls are usually well educated, intelligent women who gave up careers in order to take care of their families and who now play very passive, submissive roles in the household. These women, usually very diet, beauty conscious, feel that women should always look attractive for their husbands. They try to live out the "T.V." myth of a perfect wife and mother and try to perpetuate the myth through their daughters. They emphasize that attractiveness and femininity are attributes rewarded in our culture. Often very dominating and over protective, these mothers exert the only power they have—power over their children. They encourage dependency and discourage independence and personal growth.

The fathers of anorectic girls are usually distant and removed. They are often out of the house making a living for the family. These fathers are often as diet and physical-fitness oriented as their wives. They keep themselves in good condition and expect no less from their families.

Anorectic daughters look upon their fathers with hero worship but hold a "painfully conscious hatred of their mothers, whom they describe as weak and unhappy."<sup>9</sup> Despite their hatred of their mothers, they fall into the same trap and believe the "myth" of femininity.

In her research, Marlene Boskind-Lodahl observes that:

...anorectics/bulimarectics accept and embrace the stereotype of femininity. They never question that the role of women is to be accommodating, passive and dependent. . . their obsessive pursuit of thinness constitutes not only an acceptance of this ideal but an exaggerated striving to achieve it. Their attempts to control their physical appearance demonstrate a disproportionate concern with pleasing others, particularly men — a reliance on others to validate their self worth. They have devoted their lives to fulfilling the feminine role rather than the individual person. None has developed a basic sense of personal power.<sup>10</sup>

By keeping herself slim and fragile, the anorectic sees herself as fulfilling her assigned feminine role. Such attention makes them feel special and important. However, in striving to achieve the feminine ideal, the anorectic actually accomplishes the opposite. Her gaunt, sticklike body is anything but feminine. Gone are the round soft curves of a woman's body. Present is the body of a young boy. For some anorectic girls, this may be their way of rebelling, of expressing anger at their parents and the world in general for expecting too much of them.

Every adolescent goes through a period of feeling odd, out of place, not knowing where she fits in. Social and sexual pressures mount and are very difficult to deal with. At this time, anorexia nervosa develops in a young girl. Feeling the biological changes in her body, she fears what is to come. To her, menstruation is the beginning of a new life with new responsibilities and pressures. The girl that develops anorexia wants to hold on to her childlike body. Dreading the fullness that comes with womanhood, she starves herself, trusting that this starvation will postpone what she most fears - the loss of childhood. Thus she does everything she can to keep her body as a child's: With the onset of anorexia, menstruation stops. This reassures the anorectic girl that she has control over her body.

"In other girls, reaching puberty may be the end of a secret dream of growing up to be a boy."<sup>11</sup> These girls play with boys as children and know that boys are more independent doing things that they are prohibited from doing. Dissatisfied and disgusted with their female bodies, they become very thin to achieve the body of a man. Some anorectic girls speak of feeling divided. When they define this divided self, the preferred self is always male.

Though few express it openly, they had felt throughout their lives that being female was an unjust disadvantage, and they dreamed of doing well in areas considered more respected and worthwhile because they are masculine. Their overslim appearance, their remarkable athletic performance, with perseverance to the point of exhaustion give them the proud conviction of being as good as a man.<sup>12</sup>

Adolescence is also a time when a youngster wants to feel special. In the anorectic girl, starvation makes her feel superior, even superhuman. To gain weight is to make them normal, therefore depriving them of their specialness. No longer would they be different, be worthy of attention, for they would have no reason to feel superior or special. Such girls are completely self-absorbed, often having no real friendships with other adolescents.

Puberty is the time in a girl's life when it is no longer okay to be a tomboy. She can no longer play with the boys as she used to. Her family and peers tease her into acting the way a girl is "expected" to act. When these changes make the girl increasingly aware of her sexuality, she rebels against it; she fears it. To avoid sexual experience and any physical contact with boys, she keeps her body boylike and childlike, hanging on to her childhood, a time of personal freedom, a time when she can be herself, free from the new social restrictions of adulthood. By defying the physical processes that will transform her into a woman, she also exerts control over her society and her world. This control empowers her, for she knows that to be a woman in this world is to be powerless.

At this time, too, there is much friction in the mother/daughter relationship. The daughter feels that her mother never wanted her, that she preferred a son. To please her mother, the anorectic girl starves herself in an attempt to please her mother by disappearing.

... The rage the daughter feels at not having been wanted for who she is, for not having had a mother with whom to identify — how can one identify with a mother who is self rejecting without also adopting a rejecting self image? — is expressed by refusal to take in the one thing the mother consistently gives — food. . . She is rejecting what her mother gives and hurting her in the most powerful way she knows how while simultaneously carrying out what she imagines to be her mother's wish, which is for her to disappear.<sup>13</sup>

Having a son is a prized accomplishment for most mothers who know that men are the effective ones in the world, that men are in control. So to present the world with another man is of utmost importance to a woman. Sons are the most valued and cherished in the family. Because of this, many women are unhappy when they give birth to daughters. No wonder so many women prefer boys to girls. Who wants to reproduce another like oneself, a person who will be considered second best in this culture? It is very depressing to prepare your daughter to live a life like your own submissive, unhappy existence.

A girl inevitably absorbs this rejection from her mother, and the anorectic girl tries to make up for her mother's disappointment by disappearing from this earth.

Some adolescent girls suffering from anorexia react differently by accepting the physical changes that puberty brings. Accepting their femininity as any normal, healthy teenager would, they become acutely aware of their bodies and their effect on the opposite sex. Fashion-conscious, striving to be as attractive as possible, every teenage girl thinks that she is overweight or fat. None are ever satisfied with their appearance. The normal adolescent will go on a strict diet for a short period of time, lose a few pounds, and then give up when they see the difference in their appearance. In contrast, the anorectic girl has a distorted image of her body. Continually starving herself, never being thin enough, she finds fat on her body that really isn't there. Such anorectic young women destroy their bodies in an attempt to make themselves more appealing and attractive to men. Having embraced the myth of the perfect female, they want men to reward them for their femininity. When the anorectic woman does not receive this expected attention from men, she feels rejected. If her dieting and thinness do not bring her the love and happiness she is expecting from some particular man in her life, or from men in general, the anorectic girl sees her weight as the cause of the rejection and diets even more. Angered by this perceived rejection, she expresses it by excessive dieting and self-deprivation. Here is a description of such an anorectic girl:

Celia had begun her non-eating regimen during her second year in college, when her boyfriend commented that she weighed nearly as much as he. He was of slight build weighing only 130 pounds and was sensitive

about this, feeling that his manliness was at stake. He expressed the desire that she lose a few pounds and she went on a diet in an effort to please him. However she resented that he had fixed their relationship at a certain weight. When she first talked about this she said, "I completely lost my appetite": later she added that she had been continuously preoccupied with food but denied it to herself. . . As she began to lose weight she experienced a great sense of strength and independence.<sup>14</sup>

These anorectic women feel worthless, unworthy of love, failures as women. Dependent creatures who need the reassurance of others. These women let men be their judges, let men place a value on their self-worth. One anorectic patient is quoted as stating, "If a woman doesn't like me, we're incompatible. If a man doesn't, I'm worthless."<sup>15</sup> One word of disapproval from a man can completely destroy the self-confidence and self-respect of these women. As a result, the anorectic girl's resentment mounts toward men because of the power and control that men have over their own lives and the lives of women. In one case study, a young woman reports two antagonistic interactions with men:

On the first occasion she was talking to her boyfriend on the phone and feeling very patronized. She felt controlled by him and she wanted to tell him to "go to hell". On the second occasion, an innocent comment by her father aroused a tirade of negative feelings against him, her boyfriend, and men in general.<sup>16</sup>

The society we live in worships the thin and beautiful. And the message we receive every day of our lives is to fit into the "ideal image" created for us by our culture. We have become a nation obsessed with diets and physical fitness. The media bombards us from every direction with propaganda. Every magazine that appeals to the American woman is chocked full of "new wonder diets," low-cal recipes and exercise programs. Television shouts out to us during every commercial to buy diet soda, low-cal ice cream, and appetite control products. Advertising agencies use every weapon they can to entice you to join that new fitness club or buy that new piece of exercise equipment. Movie and television personalities are coming out in great numbers to push their new weight control programs, new work out books, or diet cookbooks. There is always a revolutionary new diet book on the best seller list and millions of American women run out to buy it. The message comes across loud and clear — "thin is beautiful and desirable," "to be thin is to be happy, successful and sophisticated" — you can't make in this world if you are fat.

Even though these messages come across to both men and women, they have the biggest impact on women's lives. Women feel the constant pressure to fit into the ideal of perfection every day of their lives. The dictates of the fashion industry emphasize slender bodies. Fashion models are tall, skinny women, with very little meat on their bones. These women project the image that every fashion-conscious woman in America tries to live up to. Most women are constantly in pursuit of this ideal image, because it is valued as important in our culture.

The young anorectic, in an effort to achieve the ideal, responds to this social pressure by an extreme program of diet and exercise. At first her behavior is ignored by family and friends because it conforms to the norms of society. In a survey conducted by C.H. Hardin Branch, M.D. and Linda J. Eurman, a questionnaire was distributed to family and friends of girls suffering from anorexia nervosa. They found that the anorectic patient meets with more approval than disapproval from family and friends. The respondents tended to admire the patient's appearance. The patients were described as "slender," "neat," "well groomed," and "fashionable." The words "skinny," "emaciated," "haggard," and "normal" were each cited once. Some respondents envied the self-control and discipline that the patient exerted in restricting her food intake and one respondent said, "she is victorious." — ‡

In a culture that admires and emphasizes the importance of being slender, these unhappy women develop anorexia nervosa in an attempt to perpetuate the myth of femininity.

Anorexia nervosa is a disease that affects women almost exclusively. This disease is a product of their unhappy lives. Anorectic women express their unhappiness in an extreme way. But their basic feeling and motivation are felt and can be easily understood by most women. At birth, a burden is put on the lives of women. The standards they are expected to live up to are enormous and frightening. These women use their disease as a way to cope, as a way to fight back.

"...anorexia nervosa is an extremely painful response to which women may turn in their attempts to have some impact in their worlds."<sup>18</sup>

The women's movement can make very significant contributions in the effort to help anorectic women and help curtail its growth in our society. It can help by elevating the status of women, by boosting self-esteem and feelings of worth, by initiating a new awareness. Feminists must re-educate these women, and all women, and help them realize that each of us is important and worthy of love and respect.

#### FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Reed Larson, Craig Johnson, "Anorexia Nervosa in the Context of Daily Experience", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 1981, (Dec.), VOL. 10(6) p.p. 455-471
- <sup>2</sup>Hilde Bruch, M.D., *The Golden Cage*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts; Harvard University Press, 1978) preface vii
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid, preface vii
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid, p.21
- <sup>5</sup>Susie Orbach, *Fat is a Feminist Issue*, (New York, N.Y.; Paddington Press Ltd., 1978) p.171
- <sup>6</sup>Marlene Boskind-Lodahl, Joyce Sirlin, "The Gorging-Purging Syndrome", *Psychology Today*, 1977, 10(10) p.p. 50-52, 82-85
- <sup>7</sup>Larson, Johnson, op.cit.
- <sup>8</sup>Bruch, op.cit.preface x
- <sup>9</sup>Marlene Boskind-Lodahl, "Cinderella's Stepsisters: A Feminist Perspective on Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Winter 1976, VOL. 2(2) p.p. 342-356
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid
- <sup>11</sup>Bruch, op.cit.p.69
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid, p.55
- <sup>13</sup>Orbach, op.cit. p.175
- <sup>14</sup>Marlene Boskind-Lodahl, "Cinderella's Stepsisters: A Feminist Perspective on Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Winter 1976, VOL. 2(2) p.p. 342-356
- <sup>15</sup>Marlene Boskind-Lodahl, Joyce Sirlin, "The Gorging-Purging Syndrome", *Psychology Today*, 1977, 10(10) p.p. 50-52, 82-85
- <sup>16</sup>Larson, Johnson, op.cit.
- <sup>17</sup>C.H. Hardin Branch, M.D., Linda J. Eurman, "Special Attitudes Toward Patients with Anorexia Nervosa", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, May 1980, p.p. 631, 632
- <sup>18</sup>Orbach, op.cit.p.179

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## Marilyn Monroe: Madonna — Whore Image

by Gloria Medina

Marilyn. The very name immediately conjures up images of that blonde, blue-eyed, sex goddess, whom Norman Mailer says symbolizes "every man's love affair with America."<sup>1</sup> "She was our angel, the sweet angel of sex."

But Mailer also sees her as a high-priced whore who flaunts her flesh on the golden screen; a schemer and a bitch, she sleeps with any man to achieve her goal. Pleasures over and goal accomplished, she stalks another man to boost her career. Her knife is at the ready to stab him when he can no longer help her in any way. Wiping the blood off the knife, Marilyn waits to stalk another victim. Witness the relationship she had with her photographer friend, Andre Dienes. Mailer writes:

They came back to Los Angeles. They were engaged. Business took him to New York. In his studio the walls were plastered with pictures of her. His friends thought him crazy. She is not that remarkable, they would tell him.

When he went back to Los Angeles, she was changed. He spied on her and discovered she was going out with other men. Their engagement was broken.<sup>2</sup>

So Andre was out after taking "the sexiest picture he had ever made"<sup>3</sup> at Jones Beach in 1950. This photograph of Marilyn wearing a two-sizes-too-small bathing suit was one of many that skyrocketed her to stardom. Mailer confirms my interpretation of this specific aspect of his work when he writes, "Let us assume she is stroking her wand in that sweet month with Dienes and even loves him a little as the equerry whose service would refine her magic."<sup>4</sup>

Unoriginal Mailer sees Marilyn as the classic dopey blonde. In England, starring opposite Sir Laurence Olivier in "The Prince and the Showgirl," she answered an interviewer's question about her music tastes this way:

"I like, well, jazz, like Louis Armstrong, you know, and Beethoven.

What Beethoven numbers in particular, Miss Monroe?

I have a terrible time with numbers, but I know it when I hear it."<sup>5</sup>

Men all over the world must have gloated when they read or heard that cute reply — Mailer included.

Another Mailer sexist perception of Marilyn invariably views her as a little girl lost — an orphan child wanting all the love she can possibly get. After all, if Mailer's men perceive women as little girls, then men must be big and strong. This stereotypical image has been a part of our history since the beginning of time. However, Mailer, the big, strong wolf takes a bite out of little red Marilyn when he leads his readers to believe that our Marilyn was a liar who liked to call attention to herself by telling fantastically, horrible, tales of her days as a foster child. Mailer relates that Monroe recalled that she had to "wash 100 plates, 100 cups, 100 knives, forks and spoons, three times a day, seven days a week, plus scrub toilets and clean bathrooms, and for this receive ten cents a month for working in the kitchen."<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Ingraham, the superintendent of the orphanage where Marilyn supposedly did her Cinderella duties, says more than twenty years later, "I really don't know why Miss Monroe tells these terrible stories about us."<sup>7</sup> Liar? It's debatable. Let's see what someone who knew and loved Marilyn thought of her.



The other extreme of Mailer's semi-pornographic work (take a look at the pictures sometime) is Norman Rosten's book, *Marilyn: An Untold Story*. Rosten depicts Marilyn as a sweet, virginal, woman-child like Rima in W. H. Hudson's novel *Green Mansions*. This perfect jungle goddess is Mother Nature and Eve rolled into one. And, as seen in this vignette by Rosten, Marilyn, like Rima, befriends all of nature's creatures. Rosten recalls one incident in particular,

On his perch Butch the parakeet is dreaming of bird seed when Marilyn reaches into the cage and carefully brings him out. "You sweet bird," she croons, "we almost forgot our dear little bird." Butch stands on her open palm, ruffles his wings, and decides to fly around the room. She calls to him, he sits on her shoulder, she coos and whistles, carries him to her lips, and ole butch leans over and kisses her.<sup>8</sup>

To Rosten, Marilyn is no mindless sex object, but a love goddess, worshipped and adored by millions. Sensitive, she appreciates all forms of art, especially the poetry of William Butler Yeats. Marilyn dabbled in poetry herself, but her friend Rosten (who is a poet) says, "The poems were, in the best sense, those of an amateur; that is, they pretended to be nothing more than an outburst of feeling, with little or no knowledge of craft. But the poet within her — and one existed — found a form for her purpose."<sup>9</sup> He felt that her poetry served as a kind of therapy to relieve her "echoes of struggle, search, and torment."<sup>10</sup> In one poem she wrote:

I stood beneath your limbs and you flowered and finally clung to me  
and when the wind struck with . . . the earth and sand, you clung to me.<sup>12</sup>

And now to the men in her life — namely, Dimaggio and Miller — Mailer, Rosten, and I don't know why these men were attracted to her, but Rosten sums it up best when he writes:

Of course we shall never know; the forces that bring people together are mysterious enough, but people who are also symbols bring into play additional forces, social and psychological, that obscure any easy analysis.

Obviously, Marilyn, one beautiful, sexy, blonde, attracted many men. The fact that one was one of America's most famed athletes and the other, a major dramatist should not astound us. Sadly, these two marriages lasted only a short time. Dimaggio wanted her to give up her career, and Miller wrote *The Misfits*, a screenplay that she didn't like. Both men wanted to play Pygmalion to her Galatea. Dimaggio wanted her to be the perfect wife and mother. And Miller fought with her continuously. About art? Neither man was her knight in shining armor. In Hollywood a sex goddess cannot be a damsel in distress.

What more can I say? Perhaps that I identify with Marilyn because we were foster children. I feel sorry for this sex-love queen who was worshipped by millions, who gaped and grabbed at her as she glided down Hollywood's golden pavements, wishing to obtain a piece of her for themselves. Perhaps a hunk of her flesh to press into a book. Ah, wishes! Film, not flesh, must suffice. But Marilyn has joined the immortals for other than fleshy reasons.

Harriet Beecher Stowe sums up my feelings for Marilyn and about her death when she writes,

"Farewell, beloved child! The Bright, eternal doors have closed after thee: we shall see thy sweet face no more. O, woe for them who watched thy entrance into heaven, when they shall wake and find only the cold gray sky of daily life, and thou gone forever."<sup>13</sup>

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## The Psychological Effect of Sex-Role Stereotyping

by Louise K. Pollock

"Anatomy is destiny" is Freud's emphatic legacy that has been handed down through history. Since the advent of the second wave of feminism, the veracity of this biological and psychological imperative has been studied by social scientists; the immutability of its meaning is now in question.

The focuses of this paper are the psychological effects of sex-role stereotyping on females, what the traditional role has been, and what possibilities exist for change in the future.

My research is confined to the areas of childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. To investigate the rigidity of the assigned sex-roles of women, it is necessary to focus on the early years of life and the effect that parents have on sex-role behaviors. In the childhood years the influence of school is examined and in adolescence the effect of peer groups is discussed. The impact of the media in books, advertising, television and news is also in consideration of sex-role stereotyping.

To understand the damage done to women by the perpetuation of the traditional sex roles and the reinforcement of these roles by society, it is necessary to know how these values are transmitted, and effect change.

Education and information are the best tools to implement change. The Women's Movement and Women's Studies courses are exemplified by this. Once women and men are aware of how they are victimized by their rigidly traditional roles, then there is hope for a constructive evolution of roles to androgynous, egalitarian ones.

In the past decade there has been a change in the way the psychological community has viewed the concepts of femininity and masculinity (Major:1981). Before 1970 it was thought females and males were at bipolar ends of one psychological and emotional continuum and being sex-typed was a sign of good mental health. Conversely, androgynous, or cross-sex-typed, behavior was considered maladaptive.

During the 1970's Bem questioned the concept of bipolarity of femininity and masculinity suggesting these definitions are dimensions of personality that could vary independently of each other in individuals, regardless of their sex (Major 1981). The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), developed in 1975, verified the hypothesis that femininity and masculinity are independent dimensions and categorized five main types of psychologically oriented individuals: the *androgynous* type endorses both feminine and masculine personality characteristics; the *undifferentiated* type endorses feminine and masculine characteristics to a low degree and is confused by the current roles demanded of women and men, and the *undifferentiated* type suggests "disintegration of social order." (Ireland 1981:663). This type has no identification with either the feminine or masculine role. *The feminine type* seeks to fulfill and preserve the traditional female role and exhibits low masculine characteristics. Whereas *the male type* possesses a high degree of masculine characteristics and exhibits few feminine ones (Major 1981).

The traditional view in research has been that men are dominant, independent, competitive, intellectual, athletic, unemotional, self-confident, ambitious, aggressive, decisive, logical and analytical. Women, on the other hand, are submissive, dependent, emotional, excitable, irrational, conforming, affectionate, kind, sensitive, warm, sympathetic, understanding, gentle and kind (Skrypnek 1982). These

stereotypical beliefs are well-defined, universally accepted and hard to dispel. Unfortunately, females who fail to exhibit suitable characteristics have frequently been labeled as mentally ill.

Research published by Maccoby and Jacklin in 1974 has not been able to prove that women and men actually differ in the ways defined by the stereotypes. One theory suggests the stereotypes are perpetuated because such behavior is more easily noticed, remembered and learned than the behavior that doesn't conform or reinforce the traditional and expected behavior (Skrypnek 1982).

In 1962 Carl Jung proposed a "synergistic model" (or cooperative model) to describe the feminine and masculine attributes of the psyche (Ireland 1981). He thought feminine and masculine characteristics were present in every personality and the degree to which they were conscious and active aspects of behavior was an indicator of the person's psychic development (Ireland 1981).

A rigidly sex-typed person will not knowingly behave in a way that is inappropriate to that behavior. Such conformity is believed to be psychologically detrimental because it over-simplifies perceptions of reality and restricts options that are available (Martin 1981). Androgynous individuals have greater flexibility and behave in a wider variety of ways. Androgyny is believed to promote a healthy, self-actualized personality (Flake-Hobson 1981).

Research shows that children are sex-role stereotyped by the age of four (Martin 1981). Once a gender identity is formed it is extremely resistant to change (Lips 1978). In children, sex-role appropriate behavior is deemed acceptable and necessary so it is rewarded while behavior that is believed to be inappropriate is either punished or ignored (Lips 1978). The determination of appropriate sex-role behavior is influenced by many factors, the most important ones are parents, schools, peers and "symbolic agents" (Weitz 1977:60).

Parents are models for their children's behavior and the first socializing influence. They help determine the child's achievements, expectancies and self-concepts (Parsons 1982). Parents convey messages to the child of their expectations through these roles.

Parents frequently sabotage their children by passing on their own beliefs about stereotypical sex-role behavior. Mothers may transmit their own difficulties with science and/or math to their daughters by not expecting them to succeed, thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure. Often a male child's scholastic abilities are praised more than a female's. A boy's achievements may be attributed to high ability, while a girl's is attributed to hard work and perseverance, as a consequence of having little ability (Parsons 1982). Independence, is praised in boys, is discouraged in girls. Governed by stereotypes, parents dress their girls and boys differently, choose different toys for them and assign them different tasks (Flake-Hobson 1981).

The second reinforcer of the stereotypes is school. Teachers, usually the recipients of traditional upbringings and educational experience, often pass the traditional sex-role distinctions on to their students. For example, note the difference of treatment when a kindergarten teacher supervises a carpentry group of girls and boys. "A girl shows her teacher her handiwork. 'These nails aren't hammered in far enough,' he says. 'I'll do it for you.' A boy shows the teacher his handiwork. 'These nails aren't hammered in far enough,' the teacher says. 'Take the hammer and pound them in all the way.' " (Weitz 1977:85). It is obvious from this exchange that the teacher views the females as helpless, weak, incapable and dependent on others to either finish the job for them, or do it for them. Males, viewed as capable and independent, are treated accordingly. Similar examples are repeated in the classroom until female children begin to adopt this passive, helpless role.

In many kindergarten classrooms activities are available to girls and boys. The

girls are relegated to the "homemaking" corner of the room, supplied with dolls, toy dishes, kitchen appliances, etc., while the boys are supplied with building blocks, trucks and other toys to encourage activity and physical action. Divisions such as this give the idea that girls should not engage in physical play and be content to play with dolls and homemaking activities to prepare them for their roles as wives and mothers.

In the elementary grades the reinforcement of appropriate sex-role behavior continues. Teachers classify high-achieving students as androgynous and masculine and low-achieving students as feminine and undifferentiated (Benz 1981). This negative association of the female personality with lower academic achievements is one of the reasons for the scholastic decline of girls as they advance through the grades (Benz 1981). These lowered expectations later adversely affect the career choices of the female students.

Another factor that influences scholastic achievement among girls may be the disproportionate emphasis placed on male characters and their achievements in textbooks, while the few female characters, are represented in a negative or passive way.

A study made of 134 elementary school readers (Stacey 1974), published by 14 major publishers in the United States conducted in three suburban New Jersey towns. These proportions were derived from the 1760 stories read:

Boy-centered to girl-centered stories	5:2
Adult male to adult female main characters	3:1
Male to female biographies	6:1
Male to female animal stories	2:1
Male to female folk or fantasy stories	4:1

The major themes of these stories deal with the "ingenuity, creativity, bravery, perseverance, achievement, adventurousness, curiosity, sportsmanship, generativity, autonomy, and self-respect" of overwhelmingly male characters (Stacey 1974:161). Stacey believes that children reading such sexist books are unconsciously assimilating their content and values and by age eight, 96% of the children surveyed knew what jobs and roles were appropriate to their sex and what limitations were placed on them.

Due to the restrictions and the low degree of achievement required of them in elementary schools, girls are often penalized later in life. A successful scholastic career begins in the primary grades and when denied, due to the sexist atmosphere of most schools, achievement in later life is elusive (Benz 1981).

In adolescence, children drop their parents as role models and choose the peer group as a guide for behavior instead (Weitz 1977). The pressure to conform is so enormous that most adolescents either conform or become social outcasts.

The pressure for girls to conform is stronger than it is for boys. Physical attractiveness, popularity, clothes and dating are valued more than scholastic achievement (Weitz 1977).

According to Piaget, in adolescence the individual's thinking becomes directed toward hypothetical, abstract or ideal notions (Curry 1982). Girls become more interested in social popularity than in setting goals and planning for the future. This behavior will penalize them later. In addition, the identity of adolescent girls is determined by their relationships with their boyfriends. They are taught to relate to men instead of relating to a career (Weitz 1977).

Although there are some sources of alternative views, such as Ms. magazine and feminist publications, relatively few females get this exposure or are influenced by them (Weitz 1977). The media is another strong perpetrator of sex-role stereotyping. Books, television, advertising and all other public representation of women and men in the public eye reinforce rigid sex-role behavior.

Toy advertisements further perpetrate sex-role myths. An examination of chemistry set advertisements shows that boys alone are on 75% of the covers while the remaining 25% show both boys and girls on the covers. There are no girls on covers by themselves. Could any girl miss the message that chemistry is for boys only?

Television is one of the worst mediums for sexist distinctions, both in programming and advertising content. Most adventure or action shows feature male characters, with women relegated to the roles of sexual objects whose existences merely enhance the male image (Weitz 1977). This aggressive, violent behavior in males is glorified and accepted. Advertising on television, insulting and offensive to women, usually portrays males as authority figures, even in areas of "women's work," such as washing clothes and cleaning the house. Frequently, women's sexuality is used to sell something totally unrelated to sex, such as cars or liquor. Considering the amount of television that most children watch, further perpetuation of sex-role stereotyping is inevitable.

Girls have few role models in public life (Weitz 1977). Among them are Betty Ford, Rosalyn Carter, wife of the President (what a great role model Nancy Reagan is), celebrities, or actresses. However, there are one or two female heads of state (Golda Meier, Geraldine Ferraro, Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher).

Young women, thanks to the Women's Movement and feminist scholars, have a greater opportunity to discover suitable role models than girls in the past.

The problem with the influence of the media and having to deal with it as a feminist is that people are given an overwhelming message to maintain the status quo (Weitz 1977). Trying to raise the consciousness of women who are not aware of the insidious messages that are transmitted through television, magazines, advertising, etc., is a job of great magnitude and one that the Women's Movement has only begun to challenge.

Of all the factors involved in the psychological sex-role brainwashing that occurs in our society, the question asked is: What can be done about it? To undo all the damage that has been done to women in the past and continues to be done is an awesome task, and one that any feminist is interested in undertaking and trying to achieve.

Since parents are the primary influence on their children, the first step would be to have parents that are not rigidly sex-typed and display behavior that is of an androgynous nature. Parents will have to be people who are educated about the harmful effects of stereotypical behavior and realize that this type of role playing is not conducive to personal growth and fulfillment.

The school environment will remain a problem as long as it remains a bastion of traditional roles and allows the reinforcement of this behavior by teachers who perpetuate the masculine-feminine dichotomy. The textbooks and readings used in schools should be examined for their sexist content and replaced by books of a more egalitarian nature. Parents must take an interest in what and how their children are taught as this early learning and conditioning is setting the course for failure in girls later in life.

Peer group pressure in adolescence is an area that is difficult to deal with. "Organized movements for sex-role change may have peer impact in given instances, but their overall effect is not yet strong enough to overcome peer mediation of stereotyped expectations in most cases" (Weitz 1977:90). The hope would be that, with an androgynous upbringing and background, adolescence would not be a time for the perpetuation of the sex-role myths, but a time for the development of greater self-understanding and knowledge.

The media is an area of concern to feminists as it is slow to change in its sexist treatment of women. Due to the collective strength of the Women's Movement and

its influence as a lobbying force and political entity, there have been some small changes seen in the portrayal of women in the media. As this area has such an important and sometimes subtle influence on the lives of women, and in which women are viewed in this society, it is important to effect change in some of the sexist policies of the past.

Susan B. Anthony said more than 100 years ago: "The fact is, women are in chains, and their servitude is all the more debasing because they do not realize it. To compel them to see and feel and to speak and act for their own freedom, though they face the scorn and contempt of all the world for doing it!" (Partnow 1978:42).

The hope for the future would be that, as more women become aware that they are the "oppressed majority", change and progress for women will be inevitable. It might not be easy to change the traditional roles and opt for more androgynous ones, but that is what women and men will have to do.

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