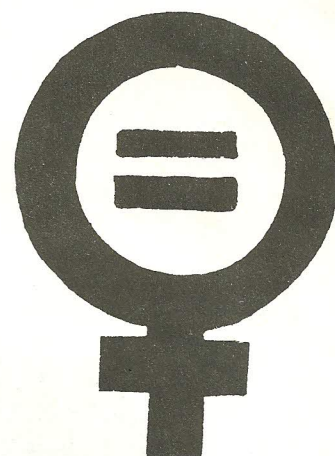
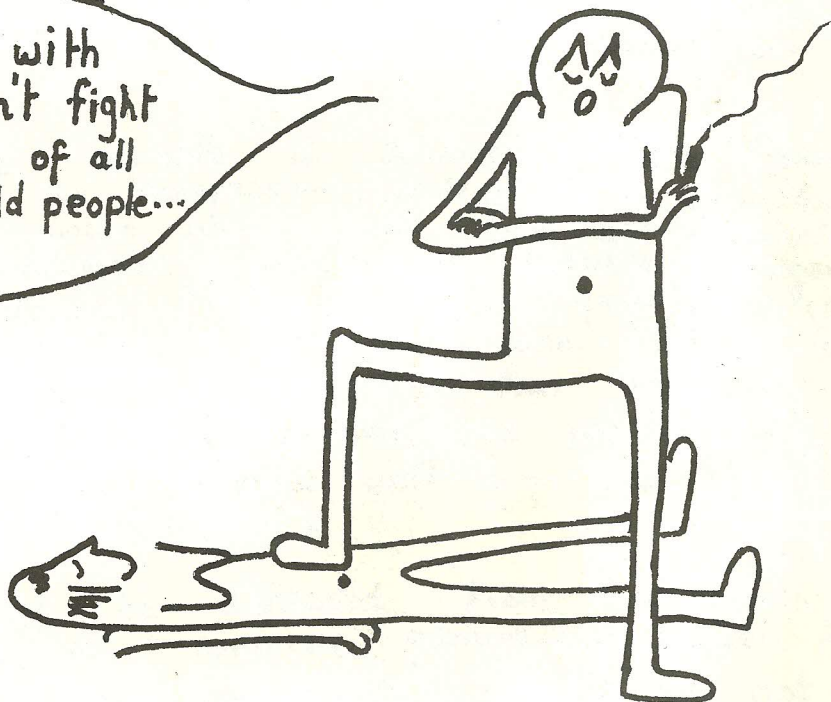


FOWNES STREET JOURNAL



i couldn't live with
myself if i didn't fight
the oppression of all
those 3rd world people...



WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Vol. 2, No.1.
September 1973 .

5p

Box No.662

Women Unite

Sisters

One of the major forces which sustains a system which discriminates against women is a tragic lack of unity amongst women themselves. This lack of unity is maintained in many ways; sadly, all too often by women. Women are encouraged to get a husband in the marital staple-chase where the interlocking odds are her sex-object appeal and his earning capacity. Her position, initially secure is often maintained without regard to any human consideration. As long as he provides fairly adequately, does not make too many demands and does not seek affection from "rice" women all is well.

Women are capable of solidarity, both personal and political. Without the compassion, understanding and help of women many the house-wife would find a desperate situation completely intolerable. Women are capable of organizing themselves and of achieving their goals. The quietly effective and often unfairly ridiculed ICA has done more to improve the life of women in Ireland than any other force. But we are told that women are capable only of gossiping and having hen parties until we are in danger of almost believing it ourselves.

Let us not be distracted from that which is the basic aim of all women's groups—to secure full human rights and responsibilities for women. Let us not be further conditioned into being the isolated "ME" who has made it career-wise, looks-wise, or spouse's status-wise. In most cases the successful woman is having risen above the bitchy herd and her tenuous position on her keeping the competition (other women) in a state of permanent isolation. Most of all, let us not employ the tactics which have been used to divide us against each other. Together we are formidable, divided we fail.

FOWNES STREET JOURNAL - READERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

In selecting material for the magazine, it would be a great help if we knew a little more about our readers - what sort of person are you, and what do you like to read about most? So, we made out the following questionnaire for you to answer. Fill out as much of it as you like and post it to us at: P.O. Box 662, Dublin 9.

As soon as we hear from you, we will analyse the results and you can read all about yourselves in the next issue of the Fownes Street Journal.

1. YOURSELF

1.1. ☐ Sex: Female

☐ Male

1.2 Which age group do you belong to:

☐ under 20

☐ 20-30

☐ 30-40

☐ 40-50

☐ 50-60

☐ 60+

1.3 Do you live:

☐ In the

☐ Country

☐ In Dublin

☐ (postal No.)

☐ Another town

1.4 Are You:

☐ Single

☐ Married

☐ Widowed

☐ Separated

☐ Divorced

1.5 Where do you work:

☐ In the home

☐ Office

☐ Factory

☐ Sales

☐ Media

☐ Teaching

☐ Other professional

☐ (Specify)

☐ Student

☐ Retired

1.6 Are you trained to do any other work besides what you are doing at the moment?
What is it _____

1.7 Do you belong to any of the active groups in your area:

☐ ICA

☐ Irish Housewives Assoc.

☐ A.I.M.

☐ Widows Assoc.

☐ Women's Lib.

☐ Political parties

☐ (specify)

☐ Parent/Teacher Assoc.

☐ Parish Committee

☐ Residents' Assoc.

☐ Other (name)

1.8 Where do you stand on the big issues affecting women:
(a) Completely against.
(b) Moderately against.
(c) Neutral.
(d) Moderately in favour.
(e) In favour completely.

☐ Contraception

☐ Abortion

☐ Divorce

☐ Equal Pay for Equal Work

☐ Equal Taxation

☐ Equal Educational Opportunity

☐ Day Care Centres

☐ Mixed Schools (Co-Ed)

Contd. next page.....

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1.9. Any comments you would like to make:

2.1 Do you read it:

- ☐ Regularly
☐ Occasionally

2.2. Would you prefer to:

- ☐ Buy it in the newsagents
☐ Subscribe (£1 per year and have it arrive by post)

2.3 What changes would you like to see in the magazine:

- ☐ Bigger
☐ Glossier
☐ More Pics.
☐ Longer articles

2.4 Would you pay more for a bigger, better Fownes St. Journal:

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2.5 Do you object to the ads. in the magazine:

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ No, but don't advertise useless products

2.6 Of all the articles that you read in the magazine, which one did you:

- ☐ Like most
☐ Dislike most

2.66 Do you think the name of the writer should appear with each article:

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2.7 How many of these areas would you like to read about in the magazine:

☐ (a) Stories about a woman's life in various parts of Ireland, the world

☐ (b) Women and women's issues in the news

☐ (c) Reports from women's organisations on their current activities

☐ (d) Reports of Women's Liberation Movement's activities

☐ (e) Comment on current films, TV shows in relation to their treatment of women, books, etc.

☐ (f) Readers' letters about articles in the magazine, etc.

☐ (g) Advice for readers with problems, whether personal, financial, legal or whatever

☐ (h) Romance, poetry, jokes, cartoons

☐ (i) Other(describe)

Please indicate in order of your preference the three you favour most.

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2.8 Would you be prepared to jot down your own ideas for an article in the magazine (we can help you with the writing if you're shy?) Just write down the numbers of the subjects listed above that you think you know something about

2.9 Any comments on magazine:

B O O K S

Not in God's Image, by Julia O'Faolain & Lauro Martines. (Temple Smith, London).

The Descent of Woman, by Elaine Morgan. (Northumberland Press Ltd., Gateshead).

The Church and the Second Sex, by Mary Daly. (Willmer Bros. Ltd., Birkenhead).

The Second Sex, by Simone de Beauvoir.

The Feminine Mystique, by Betty Friedan.

OVERHEARD:

A remark, by a male teacher, when the question of allowing boys into the Domestic Science Class was discussed, "An excellent idea - knowing how to cook would make them independent."

Dr. Mary Daly, Assistant Prof. of Theology at Boston College, Mass. in her book - "The Church and the Second Sex" writes:

"Especially disastrous for marriage is an element of the Eternal Woman myth which has been dear to popes and theologians as well as to non-Christians: the virtual identification of women's being with the relational roles of wife and mother (with the stress upon mother). Psychoanalyst André Lussier states that therapy often reveals a woman who has an impression of non-existence, resulting from the annihilation of her personality identity by her duties as wife and mother. Therapy also reveals that there are men - and they are legions - for whom the person in the wife is non-existent. These men know the wife as a possession and the mother of their children".

Advertisement

WANTED....Tenant for large room in flat. Dublin 2 area. Gas, electricity, 'phone, etc. Couples no hassel. Reasonable rent.

Apply: Ad for Flat, Women's Liberation Movement, Post Office Box. No. 662. Dublin 9.



MARY MURPHY:

CASE

HISTORY

The law is for the protection of the people. It is your law, to protect you. It is my law to protect me. Or is it? Are women regarded as people?

Mary Murphy got married. Every year she had a child. She did not always want the child, but the law says that she may not use contraceptives. The law, made by men, did not protect Mary Murphy, a woman.

Mary Murphy's husband deserted her. She went to the law for protection, in her new situation as deserted wife. Out of her husband's wages of £30 a week, Mary Murphy was awarded £15 a week. The law recognised, and rightly so, that the man could not live on thin air, and he needed his car to take him to his work, which was far away, and

six pounds a week for his digs, and then the money for clothes and things afterwards. Mary and her eight children were also given £15 to live on. The law did not exactly kick her in the teeth, but this pittance you would not describe as "protection".

But then, what could the law do? Award all the man's money to the wife, in which case he wouldn't work, and send the man to prison, in which case she'd get even less on welfare? So the law divided the person's money, and the woman got what was left over. Mary then got into debt. She fell behind in rent and electricity bills. She got an eviction notice - the law was used against her; and her electricity was cut off - legally. She borrowed

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advance money from her husband, who asked for a receipt, and she paid off the electricity, and the following week, she received a reduced allowance from her husband. So she was not able to put down even a little against the rent arrears.

She went to the St. Vincent de Paul Society to ask them for a hand-out. But they had struck her off their list of charitable recipients, because she had been going out with a man to whom she was not married and they said she would get them a bad name. Deserted wives should stay deserted wives, they felt.

Mary's neighbour objected to her having a boyfriend, and told her so in vulgar terms. Mary lost her temper, and broke the neighbour's window. She was summoned by the court for malicious damage, and was fined £10. The law came looking for the fine when the time for payment was up. She hadn't got it, and the law legally peppered her in the form of a guard, who had his legal duty to perform - the collection of fines.

Mary is exhausted and bewildered and facing eviction. Is there no law, she wants to know, which can help her? Well, now, the law will certainly uphold some of Mary's rights. She is entitled, like anyone else, to eat in the Shelbourne - if she can afford it. She is entitled to set up a finance company or start a business - if she can afford it. She is entitled to keep her children at school beyond school-leaving age, and even send them to

University - if she can afford it. She is entitled to free passage along the public highway, if she so chooses, and she doesn't even have to pay for that. She can even go out to work, if she likes, the law allows that - if she can get a job which will enable her to pay a house-keeper to raise her children. Excuse her, please, while she dies laughing.

"He established that, while a sturdymale washer-up could cope with dishes for 300 customers during a shift, two women working together could manage 1,200 - since they have less energy, women work more methodically. They are also more sparing with detergent."

- An Observer Business News report about a chain of hamburger restaurants 10/6/73.

(I wonder if he paid the women accordingly?)

Would you like to advertise in our journal?

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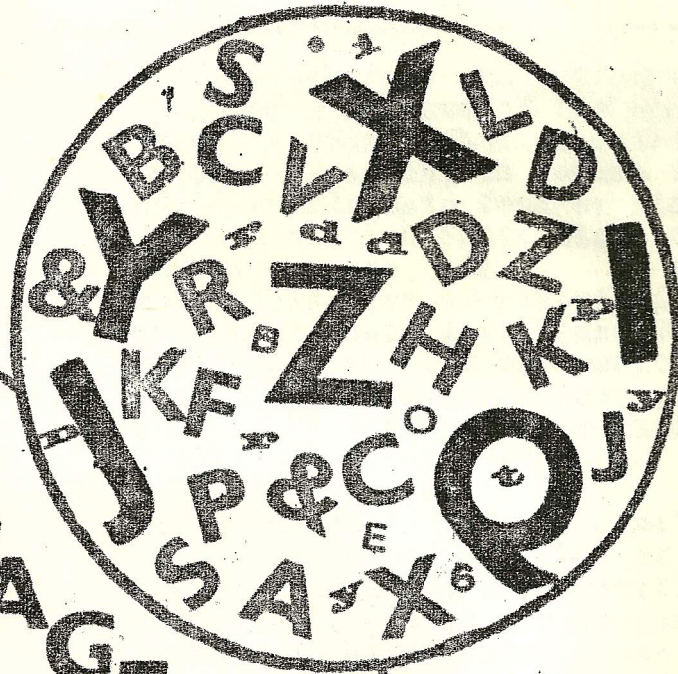
Qtr. page: £3

1th. page: £2

For further details, please write to: P.O. Box No. 662, Dublin 9.

LETTER

PAGE



Dear Editors,

C. O'Donovan's letter, published in the May/June issue of the Journal, strikes me as remarkably confused. However, I think her ideas deserve to be taken seriously because so many people cherish the same hotch-potch of attitudes, and that's why I would like to comment on them and say why I disagree.

First: She says that she agrees with the Church's view of marriage. Then why does she have sex with her boyfriend? She seems to think that abstaining from contraception is enough to keep her in line with religious orthodoxy. I wonder how many unwanted illegitimate children are born in Ireland as a result of this attitude? Fornication is o.k. provided you take care that it's "spontaneous" every time; then you can go cosily to confession with the old

excuse, "Father, my passions ran away with me" (whereas if you took a conscious moral decision to use contraceptives, that would make the sin premeditated and unforgivable). It isn't that I'm against premarital sex - on the contrary, I think people should have as much fun as they can cope with - but this attitude is illogical. The responsible thing to do is to sort out your religious and ethical position; the "sin", surely, is in refusing to face reality, acting as if there was no contradiction, and no decision to be made. Ms. O'Donovan obviously does not want a baby just now, as she says she is "lucky" not to have conceived. Conception is not an accident. She knows what causes it and she has the means to avoid it, either by contraception or by sexual abstinence.

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She says that "a product of love should not be damned without a chance". Just what is she talking about? This does have some application to abortion, but it is crazy to talk about the prevention of conception in that way. In all forms of contraception (except IUD's, where the working is uncertain), the sperm and the ovum never even get together, so how can there be any "product of love" to be "damned"?

She does not think the money factor has anything to do with having babies. This is simply nonsense. The argument that God will provide doesn't survive a quick look around this unhappy island (much less the planet we live on). Does God provide for the children begging on the streets of Dublin? It's burying your head in the sand to say that "where babies arrive they have to be catered for and where there's a will there's a way." This fatalism is irresponsible in the modern world; when we didn't have the means to limit birth, it was a useful attitude, but now it is nothing short of immoral to ignore our ability to control our reproductive faculty. Babies do not just "arrive"; we produce them and it's not use pretending that they are an act of God.

Of course, I agree that children are more important than money and that large families can be very loving and happy; but remember that this is in spite of poverty. Parents harassed by money worries have to devote energies to the struggle for survival that they could be giving to bringing up their children; poverty is an obstacle to family love. Some parents have exceptional energy and endurance, and manage to

find enough love and patience to go round - but one of the worst things a poor mother or father has to bear is having to refuse their children adequate food or clothes (not to mention Santa Claus toys, school outings, etc.). If you think this sort of poverty does not exist, these days, just take a stroll down Sean McDermott St. some day. You can't just gloss over it by saying "where there's a will, there's a way."

Ms. O'Donovan's friend, Pamela, may be contented now, but at 28 she has roughly twenty fertile years left, and at her present rate of a child a year, that would mean twenty-nine children. (All of whom will "have to be catered for"). Sooner or later she will have to face this and either do something about contraception or stop having sex - which in turn would inevitably produce coldness between herself and her husband, and make her irritable with her children and perhaps jealous of them too, particularly if they achieve the carefree sex-life which she has denied herself. If you look at a few of the "martyred" mothers around, you won't take this possibility flippantly.

Concerning Mrs. O'Donovan's remarks about Barbara Cartland and Germaine Greer - does she realise the snobbery behind her preference for the "true lady, elegant, well-spoken, cared for"? These are not moral virtues; they are social decorations, and irrelevant, out-of-date ones at that. I haven't seen Germaine Green on t.v. since she used to compere a children's programme on UTV, ages ago, but I have read her book, and can't understand how her insistence on women's self-respect and self-reliance can be interpreted as "a degradation of womanhood". (The glorification of rape in Barbara Cartland's novels is

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another matter). As for Ms.
Reer's "bawdy-mindedness" - it's
about time women recognised them-
selves as sexual beings and stopped
crucifying themselves and each other
for not being born neuter.

According to Ms. O'Donovan, "the
basic difference" between the sexes
is that women want to look rich
and glamorous and men want to look
rich and successful. (A strange
emphasis on worldly wealth from
someone who is so eager to play
down "the money factor" in another
context!). Anyhow, checking up,
I asked my husband if it was his
"dream" to "walk into an office,
bank or business venture and have
everyone whisper 'the big man'".
He replied in astonishment that
it certainly was not. (All he
wants when he walks into the bank
is to have nobody comment on his
overdraft). I have been examin-
ing my own subconscious desires
and cannot find the slightest
ambition to "walk into an airport"...
in a Dior original, with chinchilla,
looking like a film star and
stopping every man, woman and
child with my beauty, poise,
sophistication and personality".
("Personality!") The pathetic
triviality of such a longing leaves
me wondering whether to laugh or
cry. What I want of my life is
quite different; shared love,
and the courage to face reality.
Consequently the prospect of being
"the woman behind the man" does
not interest me. You can't
share love in an unequal relations-
hip, and you can't accept your
full humanity by passing the buck
to the male decision-maker.

Yours sincerely,

Grainne Tobin
12 Garville Road
Rathgar
Dublin 6

Dear Friends,

I wish to draw attention through
your columns to an ad. for the
"Shop 'n Save" stores at present
being shown in Dublin cinemas.

This advertisement is a lengthy
study of women lowering zips to
reveal naked chests, women with
long legs at the top of which are
very short skirts and patterned
knickers etc. ad nauseum. (I'm
sure we all know the kind of
thing).

In other words, society's
accepted presuppositions of
women's sexuality and its selling
power are being used in their
contemporary manifestations to
market "Shop 'n Save" 'goods'.
An obvious case of crass exploit-
ation: a prostitution of women
and a degradation of our
sexuality.

Are we to submit to this?

R. Riddick
63 Lr. Leeson St.
Dublin 2

If any readers would like to write
to us, please send your letters to
Women's Liberation Movement, Post
Office Box. No. 662, Dublin 9.

Would you like to have your
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Dublin 9.

WOMEN IN CONTEXT

by Ruth Riddick

Our male-dominated, or androcentric, society is success-orientated. Success is measured by power; power is measured by possessions. The more a man possesses - the more he can control the more he has to dominate - the more successful he becomes. He chooses these possessions with care so that at a glance they may reflect the measure of his success and, through it, his power. The notion of private property institutionalizes his dominance over these possessions - they are truly his alone and no other's. We can now recognize the link between possession, domination and success as expressions of power. The whole world of capitalist society has grown around this principle.

If we accept the Law of Private Property and all that it entails we allow a man sole possession of inanimate objects - houses, cars, etc. - with no moral qualms. We even accept his control over certain living creatures - domestic animals, horses etc. - However, when a man seeks to possess and thereby dominate another of his kind we hesitate - for example, slavery

is being abolished with our firm support. Can we morally justify the subjugation of a human being, born with free will?, we liberals ask. And to this question we firmly reply "no".

Yet when we come to discuss the role of women in this context, being androcentric, we employ a double standard to justify a man's desire to possess women, as he would an inanimate object; to dominate her, as he would a slave; and to turn her, his possession, into a living symbol of his social status, his success. In support of this we have at various times in our history argued that women are scarcely human at all, that they are incapable of independent action, that they are naturally evil requiring a male redeemer and so forth ad nauseum. Therefore, the argument runs, women are not equal to men; therefore men may possess and dominate them, to their society's ends.

Having accepted some or all of these contradictory proposals we immediately set about making

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women conform to them by becoming something other than only human. The difference is institutionalized from the cradle - a baby girl is adorned with pink paraphernalia; a baby boy with blue. We employ education to foster this difference by failing to educate a girl to the world of her brother. Instead we groom her for a quite separate experience of life - he the active, she the passive. Thus she sets her sights on life-long service; he on command. From puberty our business interests conspire to make a girl ashamed of her human nature revealed in her body and its functionings, for it is during these body-conscious years that we are most susceptible to this kind of pressure. With expensive brassiers the girl is encouraged to coerce her maturing breasts into a shape that is not naturally theirs but conforms to the standard propagated through advertising. Other "foundation garments" are also sold to the carefully fostered insecurity and shame women feel about their bodies. Deodorants and perfumes are designed to conceal a woman's human smell and all traces of her menstrual flow. We (society) demand that women cover their faces with ever increasing layers of paint, a costly mask hiding natural freshness and vitality. We dull women's consciousness with endless confusion about the latest fashion, the correct hairstyle etc. We leave our female in ignorance and fear of her sex organs and the nature of her sexual stimulation and pleasure thus robbing her of any natural initiative or desire; of the active. We have finally transformed her from a healthy, adventurous baby into a passive plaything to be moulded by big business - a doll like the dolls she was given to waste her own childhood purposelessly manipulating.

But this adult doll is not purposeless. She fulfills a triple function - that of chief consumer of the consumer society; of human yardstick of her man's success; and of mother of the male heir to his father's investment in private property.

Is this male-defined destiny and the arguments used to justify it morally sustainable? Modern women don't believe so. Hence their forceful demand for liberation, for their right to transcend the limitations of this one-dimensional stereotype.

The Women's Liberation Movement threatens capitalist society because it strikes at its foundations - private property. By examining the status of the possessed, it demands a new analysis of the nature of possession, the value of success and the morality of power through domination

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Room for thought!

by Ruth Jacob

In a semi-detatched house in the suburbs, she was born female, through no fault of her own. At first, she felt at no loss. She reclined in pink nylon, and was caressed by strangers, who managed to muster up some gentleness, perhaps because of her golden curls or cheeks tinged with delicate rose. Little Johnnie next door was admired for his brains.

At 5, she would glance over the hedge, where invariably, some old lady from across the road would be exchanging pleasantries with Johnnie's mother, and she would hear with curiosity references to Johnnie's enquiring mind, and how he took after his father in that he let nothing stand in his way. Whilst adults were endeared to Johnnie when he climbed trees or disrupted the household ("He knows what he wants, the makings of a successful man", they would remark). She knew - or maybe she had learned painfully since those passive cradle days - that to win favour she had to be demure and "ladylike". She was encouraged to be decorative in every situation.

School was a restrictive place where docility was forced upon her by frustrated regimental women who were so grey and cold, neutral, moving silently, sneaking around corners, only discernable from the background jungle of concreta and corrugated iron by the scarlet painted mouths.

She was growing to be rather proud of her ability to provide comfort, to build a nest and decorate it with her presence. She discovered that she was exempt from the challenges of the

world, and realised that she could achieve only through passivity.

At 12 years of age, she would listen with awe and yet a certain reflex detachment to her father, when, in the evening, after having had his needs attended to by his wife and daughter, he would relate the happenings of his eventful day. Occasionally her mother would chime in about the dress she had bought, her new hairstyle, or the price of tomatoes.

The same year, her mother called her aside one Sunday morning in August when she had thought it hot enough to venture out in shorts and a flimsy top. Over a cup of tea she was told the facts of life. Apart from when she considered to be her mother's frankness concerning a subject which was not, to her knowledge, discussed openly, she was not perturbed, for with an exchange of whispers and giggles, sex had for a long time been a topic of conversation among her friends. All at once, though, she felt a sense of shame, an awareness of the meaning that her scantily clad body conveyed, and accordingly she changed her attire.

At 13, she was noticeably developing. She would dream of a strong tall man capturing her (though needless to say, he was unaware that she had lured him to her) and her thoughts graduated; while at first her dreams were similar to romantic fiction, they later evolved into fantasy situations in which he tried to persuade her to "give herself completely", but she was unrelenting. He loved her for her purity, respected her, and reassuringly gathered her soft form in his arms, protecting her, comforting in a platonic embrace, and she lost herself in the rugged

roughness that was at the same time tender, while he clasped but could never possess the warmth of her, and she was immortalised in his memory. Her dreams were no sooner formed, then broken, perhaps by her clumsy encounters with boys of her own age, who groped crudely at her in the dimness of smoky coffee bars. One morning, she awoke and found that, technically, she was a woman. At first, she felt unique, as though her fertility was a gift from God imparted to her alone. Then she realised that she had at her command a commodity which, by a sequence of giving or withholding, could achieve a limitless assortment of her desires. It was powerful, it was her body. Subsequently, she set out on a series of affairs, in return being pampered and complimented, yet never emotionally involved. She knew when to use her passport to decadence, when to flash it around but give nothing. Spiritually she was drained, empty. Mentally, she was distant, calculating, withdrawn, laughing inwardly at this man who at present was frenzied and uncontrollable above her. He would furnish her with compensations, refuel her ego. She would act out her submissive, unreachable part, in her shell, until the bitter taste invaded her mouth the next morning and, scornful, she watched him go his way, like the rest, and make way for her next victim. She cheerfully gambled, and lost her resources of happiness. She was superficial in her accomplished naivety.

She left school at seventeen and worked in her father's office, or rather supplimented the furniture as his personal stamp, the living proof of his virility. A certain junior executive was drawn to her for more than one reason, as in this case a relationship with her, the daughter of his superior, would prove fruitful business-wise. She, in turn, found his down-to-earth approach, similar to

that of her father, refreshing after the suave veneer sported by the men involved in her previous escapades. She also wished to change her status, and felt impatient to see how it felt to be a wife. They began to meet regularly, and when their engagement was made known their acquaintances approval was unanimous.

PART TWO

They married, with her parents' blessing. Everyone was glad to see her settle down; her frivolity had upset them. For the first two years he acted the role of a considerate indulgent husband, while she basked in her glorified position, busying herself with her appearance and charm. He had been promoted, and his salary now provided a cleaning woman for their home, and as they ate out with his business associates rather often, she was mostly unoccupied. She began to feel boredom, soaking into her everyday routine, but her cleaning woman, who was married with give children, repeatedly reminded her how lucky she was.

"I'm telling you, missus", she said. "If I were you I'd count my blessings. Your old man, doesn't make that many demands on you now, does he? Me? I've got to get back to the other side of town now and have his meal on the table at 7 o'clock sharp when he gets home. Big appetite he has. Before I took up this job, missus, I could barely afford to keep the kids from going hungry. Yes, believe it or not, I sometimes went without myself, for fear of him being angry at being asked for more money and coming in tight from the boozier and taking a swipe at the kids. Mind you, he's good to me in other ways, I suppose. Now take Jenny down the road. I wouldn't like to say what her old fellow puts her through. Ah well, better get on with my work. Don't forget, missus, men are all the same. Out for what they can get. Nothing to do but keep them happy."

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She wrinkled her nose in distaste and returned to the tedious task of painting her fingernails. She was a vacuum, she was numb. One day was much the same as another, culminated, due she told herself, to her feminine wiles, by a battle in the darkness of the bedroom, but she always surrendered. It seemed purposeless now, nothing to gain, no agitating fear of any loss which in the past had caused her to succeed, to utilise her relationships to her advantage while providing for the physical needs of the other party involved.

Now her marriage seemed all at once like a trap, no goal, just the triviality of her, the perpetuated myth that was her, the miracle, the goddess, the discerning and yet unscrupulous bitch in season, the poor cold hard unreachable creature, the esteemed courtesan, the heroine of old novels, the guilty shame-filled young girl who had been led astray, the anonymous anarchist, the virtuous lady who officiated at bridge parties, the martyr, the slave, the common Mrs. X, the stereotype that populated middle-class suburbia. The mother? She clutched at a straw as she sank into the mire. She wondered how it would feel to have a child, to hold it, feel its own pulsating life. An extension of herself. Raw material for her to mould, to formulate. Motherhood. Her vocation. Her .. as mysterious as Nature itself, Eve.

She discussed it with him, and probably in order to satiate her and prove his manhood. He readily agreed. "Positive", the doctor said. She cultivated a look of blissful expectancy. All through her pregnancy she received the most exclusive and costly medical attention.....

She opened her eyes. Her labour had been difficult but somehow the pain caused her to feel as though she were being purified, amending her mistakes, being distilled. How - relief. Flowers around her. She had fulfilled herself, she thought. Her past was condonable now that she done her duty as a woman.

It was a boy. She held it. She felt nothing, no protective instinct. She handed it over to a paid nursemaid upon returning home. Her husband began spending more time with his clients at clubs and hotels.

She had endured the ultimate experience of a woman, she thought what now? Joy? Despair? It was to be neither. Just a dense maze that led nowhere. She had trained her emotions to opt out. She would never divorce him. She, through him (indeed anyone in a similar position who could have fallen in the line of fire would have been her target) had acquired status, prestige. It was all she had, an asset in the shape of a prosperous husband, all she was, the wife of a successful man. Her position was sought after by all women and was apparently lucrative. But by the age of 21 she felt obsolete, redundant. At 32 she was in a private convalescent home recovering from a nervous breakdown. At 37 she was undergoing psychiatric treatment for deep depression after having attempted suicide.

Now, at 41 she swallows 4 tranquilizers per day and sleeps on artificial barbiturate induced sleep. Though she is now a gross embarrassment to him, he demonstrates his concern by providing some form of security in the knowledge that she will never be lacking in anything? Her cleaning woman of long ago is suffering in silence. The woman down the road adds to the percentage of women whose bodies have been bruised, whose minds have crumbled. There but for the grace of God go you or I.