

For Ms. Con't

Barbie dolls as an image to strive for, be mommies, with easy-bake ovens, etc., while boys are encouraged to do with carpentry sets, trucks, etc.; all aid him in his feat.

We should be questioning our educational system; i.e. sexist literature, with women depicted in the subordinate to the hero, or the sexual object to be conquered.

Most of all we should be questioning ourselves, as to whether we would be freer, more independent, more spontaneous if we weren't women.

If the answer is yes, then it's time we did something, because if it's yes, then we're oppressed.

If there is to be a cure (liberation) it lies not in occupying ourselves with trivialities: who lights whose cigarettes, who uses make-up, etc., but in being the multi-dimensional people we are.

Cathy McNeill

Dear Ms.;

Having read a number of your articles on Women's Liberation I felt I had to write and voice my own opinions on the subject.

First of all -- what is all this trivia about make-up, hair rollers, door opening, cigarette lighting, etc., etc.? If a girl wants to wear make-up and curl her hair -- that's her business and to tell you the truth I really don't think she's doing it all for the opposite sex. After all, what girl with any self respect wants to go around in dowdy old clothes looking like she just crawled out of bed? If she can "improve" her appearance by wearing make-up, etc. -- why not? Furthermore, when a male opens a door or lights a cigarette for a girl it does not mean that he has an "ulterior motive". I've had guys open doors for me who didn't know me from a hole in the wall -- I really don't think they had any "ulterior motives".

But as I've said before, the above are nothing but trivia! If you want to talk about how women are oppressed, why not talk about something of relevance and importance?

In doing some research on the subject for a sociology paper I have come up with some very sad facts about how women in this country are really oppressed.

The present family system - the nuclear family - is one of the great oppressors of women and of people in general. Marriage is an instrument of coercion. It is a means by which society regulates personal life, decides which behaviour norms shall be imposed, etc. It

places the man-woman relationship in a special category from other human bonds and makes impossible the true friendship which can only come about between equals. Sexual need, so long as it is morally acceptable within marriage only, remains the principle reason for marriage for males. The woman therefore is not an equal, but an object of the man's needs.

The protection which the present system provides to dependent persons (namely women), merely continues their dependency and limits & narrows the lives of all concerned. It keeps the man with his nose to the grindstone and the woman labouring with no pay at all.... her work in the home appears to have no material value & can never get as much respect as that of the male.

The work force is another oppressor of women. In this day and age a college degree of some sort is usually required for a high paying job. However, in many families in Canada in provinces where student loans are difficult to get -- boys are given preference when it comes to educational funds. Only about one in three recipients of a BA or MA is a female. Of all working women only about 13% are professionals and most of these are teachers and nurses. Finally, something like 1% of the total labour force actually are the career women found

in occupations normally considered masculine. Looking at both men and women who do not have college degrees, it is the woman who suffers more from lack of employment choices. There are still some high paying jobs available to men without college in the skilled trades -- which are always called men's jobs. With only a high school diploma, a woman will almost certainly wind up behind a typewriter or a switchboard.

To conclude -- I would like to point out that the government is also an oppressor of women. In its 1972 report on the status of women the Royal Commission stated that "it was not its goal to force women to work", but it is the working women of whom it speaks when it sums up its objective: "that she share in the responsibility to society as well as its privileges and prerogatives". There is the distinct suggestion that women in traditional roles have not shared responsibilities in the past. They have treated the childless married woman at home as a 'social parasite'!

Therefore, Dear Ms., I think you would find it more worthwhile to concentrate on items of the sort I have just mentioned. I would think that it would be much more rewarding than worrying about being oppressed because you wore a little make-up today or because a guy lit your cigarette yesterday!!

Leslie Lambie

