

Examples of exploitation and discrimination are easy to enumerate. When involving institutional and cross class manifestations, or their usual context: a class in a superior hierarchy utilizes the institutionalised rules of behaviour to take advantage of people belonging to the psychologically less prestigious classes of the status quo. The most obvious discriminations are reflected in the legal system which negates female sexuality except to oppress freedom of abortion, and oppresses both gay males and children for sexual activity.

Within the course of social interaction, women are exploited by men in that their class definition still projects them as slaves to the sexual and economic needs of the male, including assuming the care of children (who, in turn, are the property of both, first as pets, then as slaves). Gays are exploited by a system which accepts our labour and cultural contributions, but denies our identity, threatening discrimination if we step out of line by living our homosexuality with openness and pride. Gay women are exploited by straight males who view them as a double challenge to their macho roles. Gay males are often exploited by straight males who enjoy sexual interaction with gay males, but who hold them in contempt and may reward them with an act of physical violence - just to put them in their place so that there can be no mistake about class differentiation.

The psychological reaction which is at the origin of sexist behaviour is the process of objectification.

Objectification is the internal psychological event necessary for encouraging and rationalising sexist behaviour. The process involves a conceptualization whereby a group or individual is viewed in such a way as to negate her full and equal humanity. This usually involves a socially conditioned tendency to construct an image on the basis of certain distorted and exaggerated characteristics. Effectively "labelled" within a cliché definition, society sanctions the next steps of oppression - exploitation and discrimination.

An example of a common process rationalizing the oppression of women and homosexuality is the old "nature" explanation. "Women are naturally inferior (passive, less intelligent)". "Homosexuality is unnatural". Such cliché responses reveal two important insights into social consciousness. First, they reveal just how removed from a realistic awareness of nature people are. Of course everything IN nature is natural, not to mention the fact that there is a good deal of variation in the behaviour of females and males of different species - including plenty of female "dominance" and homosexuality. Secondly, these same people who invoke "nature" in the defence of oppression negate the fact that our species has the ability to evolve as a society which values equality over primitive evolutionary precedents, variation over conformity, and which correctly views destruction aggression as the predominant enemy of humanity.

For gay people this is the most contentious area of discussion. The revolutionary content of gay liberation is largely related to our effort to deal with both the political and personal aspects of oppression and liberation. While being our theoretical strongpoint, it means that we walk a tightrope of trying to deal with both the enemy without and within. Despite the beauty and creative energy of gay liberation, we must acknowledge our past as conditioned by the repressive system - and strive not to reproduce the oppression aspects in our efforts.

Jearld Moldenhauer

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GAY ACTIVIST WOMEN (North London)
WANT TO ANALYSE HOW THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF THE GAY MOVEMENT AND THE
WOMENS MOVEMENT RELATE TO THE OVERTHROW OF CAPITALISM - WE FEEL THAT
IN AN IDEAL SOCIETY PSYCHOLOGICAL OPPRESSION WOULD NOT EXIST, AND
WITHOUT THAT THE URGE TO CHAUVINISTIC AND EXPLOITATIVE POWER OVER
EACH OTHER, WHICH IS AT PRESENT EXPRESSED THROUGH MALE CHAUVINISM AND
THE CLASS SYSTEM. WE WISH TO BE SEEN TO FUNCTION AS A LESBIAN GROUP
THAT IS INVOLVED IN STRUGGLES OTHER THAN GAY POLITICS ALONE.

AT PRESENT WE PROJECT TEACHING OURSELVES SIMPLE FRMS OF SELF-DEFENCE,
SO THAT EACH WOMAN LEARNING CAN PASS THESE ON TO ANOTHER WOMAN. WE
DO NOT WISH TO LEARN AGGRESSIVE MALE SYSTEMS LIKE JUDO OR KARATE.
WE FEEL THAT IF WOMEN FEEL CONFIDENT THAT THEY CAN DEFEND THEMSELVES
IT WILL ALTER OUR SELF-CONFIDENCE, SELF-IMAGE AND BEARING IN SOCIETY.

WE ALSO PLAN TO WRITE A BROADSHEET ON SEX EDUCATION TO COUNTERACT
THE USUAL SEXIST PROPAGANDA. IN THE FUTURE WE HOPE TO READ AND
DISCUSS POLITICAL LITERATURE.

LOVE - PEACE - REVOLUTION

GILLIAN & JULIA c/o Women's Liberation Workshop,
3/4 Shaver's Place, London S.W.1.