DEDICATION

When a woman may walk on the open streets of our cities alone, without insult or obstacle, at any pace she chooses, there will be no further need for this book. When a woman may book a table for one at any restaurant without strange looks from the waiters and prurient speculations from the other diners, this book may be deleted. When she does not have to pretend to read a book as she eats, but may gaze freely about her without seeming insolent (if her eyes are focused) or distracted (if they are not) this book will seem hysterical and old-fashioned. When a woman may call a man and ask him to go with her to a dance without lying about free tickets or invitations for a partner, when she may call him to come and have coffee without coyness or leering, when hostesses no longer care about evenly distributed sexes at dinner, when pin-up magazines can find no models, when women are shameless, healthy, active and happy, there will be no point in reading this book, no point at all. For what this book offers are alternative possibilities to the painful confusion women labour under at present — no statistics, no facts of any respectability, probably, but a visionary strategy, a series of other games to play, in which a woman’s role is more exciting, more varied and interesting than the alternatives she chooses between now. I can have no credit for inventing the tactics: they were forced on us.
as a freak - too tall, too clever, too noisy - at a very early age. At first they merely functioned, latterly I developed a rationale for them. Since my mother, I have suffered a great deal at the hands of women, maids, nurses, girl-friends, sexual rivals, and I had as a result no interest in their problems at all. I would no more have written a book for my people than the first black senator would be likely to join the Black Panthers. I had made it in a man's world, and I reaped the fruits of the rarity of the phenomenon. I enjoyed other people's husbands without risk to my freedom and was repaid by their infatuation. As hysteria I mocked the women who had sacrificed liberty for security. They had all been duped, consed into fulfilling menial positions in a world where menial work was dying out and they had no-one to blame but themselves. I suppose I ignored them. Certainly I often snubbed them. I certainly wouldn't have spent 70,000 words on them.

I don't know when it was that I discovered that I was after all a woman. I watched my mother turning and turning in an agony of frustration which destroyed her mind, felt no flicker of pity, nursed the bruises and insults that she rained on me without once considering her anguish and helplessness. I did not even learn compassion when I knelt on the bathroom floor fainting into the mess of liverish gore that might have been my child. When faculty wives became obscene in their displays of envious bitchery I cursed them within their hearing, and devoted my attention to their husbands with redoubled ferocity, although heaven knows they
seemed equally pitiable. My love and compassion could never have been excited by the vanquished. It was the women I have met in London and New York, bloody but unbowed, riding the waves of achievement and failure with a valiant attempt at equanimity, still warm, still tough, still sensuous and lovely, sometimes marvellously neurotic. These are my sisters and through them I have learnt to recognize the female principle. The woman who decides to trust to herself, her uncertain beauty and half-disciplined mind and make her own rules for existence in this white man’s world, walks into the wilderness like the Duchess of Malfi, and dares the unknown.

This book is for Kasandra, the gilded witch-child who loves Leonard Cohen better than he could ever contain; it is for Lillian and her golden abundance, her wit, her generosity and her terrible asthma; it is for Claudette and her magnificent surliness; it is for Miriam who had love and never asked it; it is for dark Joy whose husband tried to blunt the point of her mind and undermine her judgement for years without avail; it is for the other fair Joy whose serenity in chaos is most subversive; it is for Janis Joplin, and Caroline Coon.

It was strange to discover that there are women who can talk without gossiping or boasting or lying, whose sensibility is directed to the world about them and not only to themselves, their adornment, and their uneasy truce with men. There is no reason why they should not be legion. When they are, the ramparts will fall and our dying world live again. Not one of these women is a
feminist, if feminist means someone who wants to punish men for their oppressions by withdrawing the commodity of sex, a posture which is all too often adopted by women who are too patently seen to be making a virtue of necessity, or if it means someone who wants to carry a gun, the highest development of penis envy, or if it means lesbian, which has something in it of the negroes' desire to coon their hair and make white chicks, nor do they despise men on grounds that they have learnt from men, nor do they despise or hate men. The victory that they have won is the victory over hate and fear. They have made themselves a space wherein they breathe and work, inquire and rejoice. They do not think of themselves as victims, and so they are victims no longer. The position is not maintained without difficulty. Conditioning dies hard and their struggle against anxiety is not helped by doctors who tell them they should be married and having children. Most of them have had to come to terms with marriage or to refuse to come to terms with it. I think I only realised that it was a struggle for life itself when, in a moment of inattention to what I knew was the intrinsic character of the institution, I married. Suddenly I was no longer free, busy and rich and I learnt in a very short time how easy it is for women to be enslaved, idle and poor. From the moment when the woman in the registry office told me to sign my maiden(1) name in the register for the last time, I realised that something awful had happened. Sure I had security and legal protection - so has any inmate of her Majesty's prisons. What I had before offered my
husband in joy was now his to demand, and his exclusively. I would be allowed to earn my own living, although I would be taxed as an appendage of his, and even to sleep with other people, if he chose. If I had been in love with him, I should have sacrificed my interest in the university, in politics, in other people, gladly, but I wasn’t, and had never said I was, and the sacrifice struck me in all its savagery. If I continued to be successful at my chosen career, it would have undermined his ego, which seems to be shorthand for his sense of male sufficiency, and the marriage guidance counsellors would tell me that if I valued my marriage I ought to devote myself to it. Nevertheless I was prepared to learn the role of wife as well as I could, given time and adaptability. Fairly soon I discovered that neither was to be accorded me. I was told that I did not understand what being a wife was. It was made part of a gibef against my moral stature and my sexual identity, although as far as I could tell, and I had no excuses for ignorance on this score, sexually my marriage was exemplary. The threat held over me was that of abandonment, a singularly meaningless one in this case and eventually, after being told to go, like a Muslim wife, three times, I went on the fourth with a great sense of liberation. I realise that I did my husband a great wrong, by marrying him without being in love, because only being in love can induce a woman to prepare herself for a life of poverty, chastity and obedience, for that is how I construe relinquishing one’s earning power and control over income, resigning oneself to the ebb and
flow of a husband's sexual inclination, and running the kind of household that he wants to live in, by definition a household where his wife does not indulge interests which conflict with his claims.

What seemed to me most unfair was that he had asked me to marry him because I was unlike other women, but once married this unlikeness became a reproach. I felt that the whole object of the exercise was to destroy whatever he found disturbing and attractive, and replace it with the domestic and predictable, so that he betray it with impurity. What was obvious in my married situation seemed to me to be inherent in the marital situation itself, although usually not so evidently.

Supervising an examination with a faculty wife, I was struck by her envy, expressed without malice, of my sphere of activity. She explained with a kind of quiet despair how she had given up her interests, her friends, to make a happy home for her husband whom she loved dearly. 'But,' she moaned, 'I've become so dull. I can't blame him for being bored with me. I talk platitudes to people three feet high all day. I read women's magazines and recipes. I can't concentrate on a decent book, even if I do get time to read it.' The fault was not to be found in the physical toil of housework, but in the voluntary limitation on her interests that she had made six years before, which left her now that her every thought was not of and for her husband painfully empty and helpless. Her husband might have complained, as I have heard men do, that he had tried to get her to do something she even arranged
for a nanny or a nursery school, bought household gadgets, been prepared to stay at home with the children while she gaddled, but she did not seem to want to do anything. If she goes out, where shall it be, and with whom? How stimulating is a trip to the theatre with the girls? All these activities are contained, limited, their dynamics are enfeebled by the impossibility of development.

Living in a woman’s college in Cambridge, I saw girls bringing this dissociation upon themselves by all sorts of means, including enforced marriage. ‘I don’t want to be a wife and mother any more’ said a girl who got her bloke by getting pregnant, four years later, ‘I want to be a person.’ But the pressures, even in this academic society, were overwhelmingly to have and keep your bloke. The boys were expressing a simple sexual urge, warily though, while the girls were establishing dependencies. They worked at being indispensable. They washed their menfolk’s shirts, flattered them, laughed at their jokes, trembled at the possibility that they might ask some deb up from London to the May balls. Most of the nervous disorders which the university doctors prescribed ritalin for were connected with the anxiety aroused by the girls’ struggles for emotional security, words which to most of the boys had almost no meaning.

At the college feast the Principal always speeched about how much better we had done than the men’s colleges on an average, and looking at the sour faces and shapeless bodies ranged beside
her on high table one wondered whether the fight hadn't cost too much. For oneself, one hoped, there was no fight. It was humiliating to reflect that the men's colleges would not have dreamed of totting up their results in contradistinction to the girls. Of course we should have done better; the best girls were dropped off into three colleges, while the larger men's colleges had to select a wider spectrum. Those girls who knew they had no chance in the sexual stakes, threw themselves into their work with a fury which was only incidentally related to intellectual curiosity, and one reason why they did well was that their servility of mind was admirably suited to Oxford examinations. The conversation at table in that august institution was as vivid and girlish as you might expect to hear at luncheon in Selfridge's canteen. Study and frivolity made Jenny and Valerie and Linda and Sue very dull girls indeed.

There were exceptions, and if it were not for these women, I doubt whether I should have written this book at all. The exceptions were the girls who dared insecurity to do its worst; they experimented, questioned, loved without asking, and suffered. They were punished for their audacity by the college authorities, when they stayed out at night, and by the men, who retreated when they came on too strong. I used to notice at faculty parties that a large number of English dons seemed to be married to decorative and tranquil women who could hardly speak English. If even intelligent men did not like intelligent women, who the hell did? One of the most
aware and responsive girls I have ever taught cannot succeed in losing her virginity, because she makes it plain that she wants to. What could be more perverse? The word that is used for this abnormality is aggression. Women who are willful, inquisitive and enthusiastic are aggressive, and that is not an OK thing to be. One could advise Louisa for example to disguise her intelligence, to be coy and indirect, to feign a vice if she has it not, but damn if I want to. Intelligent girls who are also very pretty, generally do not meet this trouble in so crude a form. The passes are made and followed through before their intelligence has made its presence felt; the difficulty comes later when she and her boyfriend actually discuss an issue and she refutes him. Maybe she can do it some of the time, but she bloody well better not do it all of the time or even most of it.

Nevertheless, the crux of the matter seems to me to be, not in the inability of the male to cope with intellectual competition, although I do think his culture is to blame for the notion of competition itself, but in the overriding feeling that women have of incompleteness, of risk involved in any relationship which is not secured in some way. They are conscious of their sexual need, indeed they feel morally obliged in our culture to acknowledge it, but at the same time they feel that a relationship which is not of the in love kind, which is not theoretically monogamous and permanent, is an invasion or a degradation. They lack a sense of personal integrity which prevents them being exploited and ultimately wounded. Either men opt out of relationships because
of the constant pressure to utter the magic words I love you, or else they say I love you, wondering what it means.

Why do these girls, the most qualified to take advantage of their new freedom, feel that their existence is without meaning unless there is a man in it? Why do even they feel that their destiny is bound up in their effect upon men, the effect of desire, respect and protectiveness? (The disabilities that they labour under are if anything worse for the girls who do not attain to their educational distinctions.) What happens to the woman who does not give a fig for her matrimonial chances? Who dares to go out at night by herself? Even supposing she is able to work in some non-menial capacity so that she can make herself a living of some dignity? At the risk of appearing to exaggerate, I can say from personal experience that her life is replete with petty embarrassments and indignities.

One example may suffice to illustrate how far women are from being accepted as citizens with equal rights. At Kennedy Airport International Departure Lounge, I found myself with a quarter of an hour to spare, a dollar or two and a momentary thirst. The bar was so arranged that if you sat on a stool you could see the airfield, so I slid on to one and asked the barman in a chatty way for a beer, and looked away at the airfield, until I heard him apologising in no very courteous fashion that HE COULD NOT SERVE ME. There I was hopping back and forth across the Atlantic, big deal professional lady with a Ph.D. and some bun of a barhop is telling me that he cannot give me a drink. He pointed
to some tables at the back where I would be allowed to sit alone,
but the bar was out. My first impulse was to hit him with one of
his own bottles. His excuse would be that he hadn’t made the
regulation, but nothing would disguise his glee at being allowed
to carry it out. I asked him in a bull roar whether he supposed
that I had time for hooking in his miserable bar with my boarding
pass in my pocket, or whether the aim of the regulation was to
force me into picking some man up. He took that as a witticism and
said it probably was. So I contemplated offering one of the negro
porters a free beer just to discomfort the bartender, but eventually
I figured that that would be unfair to the porter. The rage I felt
at that moment is an every-day feeling for the negro, and it is
the same rage that I feel when drivers slow down and wind down
their windows when I am walking home at night, when emotional
cripples assume that I ought to accept their haggled advances, when
they assume that I have gone to a concert or a movie to pick them up!
The assumption is that a woman is only alone, even in the departure
lounge of an airport, because she could not find anyone to accompany
her. In Latin countries the situation is ridiculous, but in Anglo-
Saxon countries there are absurd awkwardnesses about being a woman
and alone. While a woman must settle for going out with a man who
bores and annoys her, or staying at home, rather than run the
gaultlet of the theatre foyer or discotheque, or restaurant alone,
she is not free. And she has just as much to fear from other women
as men.

I got used to going out alone when I was a drama critic; very
often I just couldn't get anyone I liked to come with me. I discovered that if I gazed about me with an air of insolent condescension the stares changed subtly to furtive glances and wonderment. I began to enjoy wearing outlandish clothes and swooping into my seat with the empty one beside it and looking as if I had bought that seat on purpose to keep it empty, and not as if I was waiting for someone. I discovered that arranging to go out in a group or a couple made a great fizzle of the evening and interfered with my thoughts about what was going down, so now I always buy one ticket to any show I want to see, but I am still the only one of me in the foyer. I have probably over-compensated, but that is the whole point of redesigning a role. It may be as fictitious as any other, but it's better fun. Once upon a time I used to sit in cars waiting for shapes to open the door for me, now I am prompted to mockery if a man takes my arm crossing the road. (I have a suspicion that this idiotic practice conceals a desperate desire to fling me under the wheels of some passing truck.)

Woman (and men for that matter) have always played roles. What I propose is not honesty, because until we know what the truth is honesty is a little difficult to arrive at, but a different kind of role, which a woman chooses for herself in response to a particular situation and different data about herself. The first difficulty in changing roles for a woman is that she has been persuaded to accept certain notions about her intrinsic nature, physical, psychological and moral which are certainly arbitrary, probably entirely false.
propose to begin my work of subverting the docile womanhood of
the world by questioning the commonest presumptions about women,
first her body, then her soul. Then I propose to examine the roles
open to her in this Wasp dominated world, reject them and propose
some new ones.
SEX
THE WICKED WOMAN

CHAPTER ONE

BODY
"Vive la difference" is a phrase which is usually uttered as a fatuous gallantry, and usually interpreted as a sort of expression of enthusiasm for the pulenda of the Fair Sex, this being the most significant corporeal difference. If we are to believe the evidence of the diagrams in anatomy books, all bodies are male except those that have the female reproductive system, for no female bodies appear in diagrams until we come to the section of the work that deals with reproduction. And yet when men say "Vive la difference" they really mean it; they are offering support to a whole system of discrimination. Although anatomists do not bother to indicate it as they go along, they refer almost contemptuously in their discussion of women as reproductive animals to differences affecting the whole organism, which nowadays would be discussed in terms of endocrinology, and originally were discussed in terms of the humours.

"Man differs from woman in that he is of taller stature, his bones are bigger, less smooth, the traces of the muscles are more deeply marked, the protuberances are more noticeable; in woman they are less clearly marked. All the parts of man are firmer; skin, cellular tissue, muscles, even the calcification of the bones is harder ... that is why man is stronger and has greater appetites. Hippocrates pointed out that the flesh of women is flabbier; their members are more flexible and susceptible of greater expansion ... For this very reason, women are
more easily exhausted, are more irritable
and are more frequently upset by convulsions;
the pulse, because of the smallness of their
stature, is more rapid and fainter; they have
more fat under the skin, on the face, the bosom
and the buttocks..."

Von Haller finished by remarking
"One must therefore consider the opinion of
those who say that women do not differ from men,
as ridiculous."

Perhaps the reasons why women's bodies can only illustrate
the reproductive function in anatomy books is not because early
experiments were done mostly on the bodies of felons, and that
there was an extraordinary prudery attached to the visual
contemplation of even dead female organs, but really because the
human anatomy is not very well represented in women, being half-
developed, sloppy, slushy, fatty and susceptible to boiling, as
another anatomist pointed out:

"The sex has considerable influence upon the
quality of the flesh of animals... The muscles
of the male, larger and more energetic, have a
superior flavor, resist boiling much longer, are
firmer &c. Boiling water, on the contrary, affects
the female much sooner, it is softer and gives to
the liquor a weaker flavor."

One would dismiss such comments with light laughter, if one
could not remember Mr. Semit apologising one morning for the lack
of cock-pheasants, for hen pheasants are not half so good to eat
and are all dark meat. If less good to eat means inferior, then
perhaps women are inferior, but that only holds if you think people
are for eating. The differences in female tissue formation and
ossification are due to differences in conditioning, which the early anatomists make no provision for, and endocrine balance, which they did make some reference to, in their notion of the humours. The whole formation of women was seen as due to a deficiency in the vital principle, which meant that they had less heat.

"Man ... is hot and dry, whilst woman is cold and moist; he is the agent and she the passive or weaker vessel, that she may be subject to the office of the man."

So presupposition affected empiricism, as it always does, and no-one thought to actually measure the body temperature of women, or they would have discovered that at certain times it is actually higher than a man's. It was the vital heat in a man which expelled his genitalia into the cooling air, for they were identical with women's, except that women's seed was like the rest of her, feeblier.

"The Seed of Women is different in temper and qualities from that of Man, by reason it hath its propagation from Blood and Nervous Liquor which are more cold and moist in the Female than Male, whereupon the first principles of the Semen being of a swarmer nature in Women, the Seed itself will follow their constitution, which is more Crude and watry, as less Composed by a more faint heat, working upon lower principles of Vital and Nervous Juice."

So a polarity is assumed: man is hot, dry, strong, active, desirous; woman is cold, moist, feeble, passive and without will. While we would not accept Collins or Von Haller's account of the
basic difference which causes this polarity we still assume a
polarity, apparently because Nature delights in contrasts, but
actually because the paternal principle evinced in our society
delights in a contrast which justifies continued male domination.
Of the genuine differences between men and women that we notice,
we tend to exaggerate the degree and incidence, and we even add
differences which are entirely fanciful. In fact Nature does not
delight in uniformity or distinctions. The animal and vegetable
worlds are not universally divided into two sexes, or even into
two sexes with the possibility of intermediate types, androgynes
and hermaphrodites. Some lucky creatures are male and female by
turns. Some fungi and protozoa have more than two sexes and
different ways of coupling them. The degree of distinguishability
between the sexes varies between something almost imperceptible
to a degree of difference so great that for a long time it was
not known that creatures found in the same environment were male
and female of the same species. It is not even true that the
di verschrunken between the sexes become more marked as we progress
up the evolutionary scale, an argument which German anthropologists
liked to demonstrate by pointing out that Asiatic and negroid
people have less clearly defined secondary sexual characteristics
than Aryans, for spiders and some birds are more strikingly
differentiated than we are. Ultramasculine and ultrafeminine are
not the norms of a natural male-female polarity, but cultural
concepts, arbitrarily interpreted to justify the distribution of
power and privilege between the sexes. The first step towards
liberating women is the removal of the artificial concept of
womanhood which they have come to regard as the norm, so that they strive to live up to it, and avoid modes of behaviour which may seem to them to place their sexual integrity in doubt. In a thoroughly successful patriarchal society, women might find happiness in enacting the role of diminished responsibility, but when the authoritarian state structure is no longer viable in itself, even on its own terms, women cannot remain contented to exploit and be exploited. In the jungle the lioness is as savage as the lion, and no-one calls her butch or dyke.

We tend to think of sex as something essentially physical, even animal. In fact, in the higher animals the phenomenon of sex becomes more and more intricate, and increasingly dependent upon factors not immediately connected with reproduction, as I discovered when I introduced a handsome young male cat to my two mousing females. He needed his period of induction at the hands of the other older toms in the neighbourhood and my cats needed to get to know him. The nervous tension in my house was terrific. I can remember too that when I had a skinny black half-Siamese, the sumptuous pink chinchilla who lived next door refused a noble sire for her priceless litter, and sat for days crying pitifully by my locked door. Human beings, further up the scale still, escape from the tyranny of a period of heat, and are more sexual than the other animals, (except for the white mouse which can also mate in any season) partly because they have the faculties of the rational soul, memory and will. It has been proved that the strength of the sex drive in human beings is directly related to their creative energy, and the activity of the anterior
pituitary gland. We would progress much further if we could
realise that more masculine men are not more sexually energetic,
that sexuality and gender are not co-extensive. Perhaps one could
extend the proposition to mean that while sexuality is a good, as
an index of creativity, energy, and generosity, masculinity and
femininity are mere statistics, places on a graph of an indifferent
kind. Our culture has confused potency with sexual typicality, and
attached a moral value to the artificial concept thus resulting,
manliness and womanliness being morally loaded words which transfer
their loading to the related words in each category. The point is
easier to understand if we imagine an androgynous who is exceedingly
affectionate and sexually active, and a supemsale who is cold and
withdrawn; both are possibilities.

What is the chromosome structure of human beings? The range
allows for a greater variety than simple dimorphism. Male and
female have twenty-two pairs of autosomes in common. In the female
the remaining pair is designated as XX and in the male, XY, XX + Y
is a possibility (Kunstefelter's syndrome) and so is XO (i.e., lacking
one chromosome of the deciding pair). The Y is the male-determining
chromosome, and the X chromosome female determining, but one X cannot
do the work of two; where the XO structure is found we have sterile
females with ovarian degeneration (Turner's syndrome). The autosomes
are on balance male-determining, which explains Valerie Solana's
curious argument that the female chromosome structure is the complete
specimen of which the male is an imperfect example. There is another
fact, a more respectable one about the male chromosome structure.
The differentiation of the sex chromosomes would be followed by important genetic effects. Since mutations within a chromosome can only be tested in different combinations when they can be freely distributed by crossing over, suppression of crossing over prevents mutations occurring within the Y form being so tested. Since crossing over does not occur, the X cannot undergo any structural change by means of interchange of parts. The Y-chromosome therefore, during its evolution, would come to lose its effectiveness in the matter of sex-determination, and its place would be taken by the autosomes interacting with the X.

Poor old isolated Y-chromosome, doomed to atrophy out of the evolutionary race. Of course it is largely a mythological point; chromosome structure does not hold the answer to the plight of twentieth century woman, but women can consider the point as a new addition to the ideology of femininity. We may become the adaptable, surviving, nay, Eternal Sex. If the chromosomes mutate enough, it seems likely that the universal female link with childbearing, which governs our daily lunar movements, could weaken, and that other hidden value of maternalness connected with female sexuality might also wither away. As is clear enough, the alternative is not a blighted 'masculinity' or sexlessness. There are more possibilities, admitted even in the narrow male-dominated world of science, than our mothers and teachers dreamed.

So much for the primary, genetic, chromosomal difference between the sexes. The next step on the way to deciding how different you are from your brother comes when we consider the effects that this
basic difference has upon our physiology, which brings us to
that no man's land of shamy pharmaceutical cookery, hormonesville.
Androgen and testosterone are the male hormones. Testosterone is
a steroid secreted in the testis, and it induces the growth of the
secondary sexual characteristics. Androgen is a potent general
anabolic agent which stimulates the growth of muscle, skeleton,
viscera and thus accounts in part for the greater musculature and
stature of men as compared with women. But the secretion of androgen
is under the control of the pituitary interstitial cell stimulating
hormone, and oestrogen is very like it, although it acts
antagonistically in controlling dimorphism, which is a man's way
of saying that if men take oestrogen their secondary sexual
characteristics become less evident, and if women take androgen the
same happens. In fact both sexes produce both hormones, and the
difference is one of degree, a question of balance in a complicated
hormonal recipe. For some functions oestrogen needs the synergistic
action of another hormone, progesterone. What complicates the picture
is that women live their lives in a state of hormonal ebb and flow,
which is the menstrual rhythm, which is intimately connected with
the whole glandular system, for many of our secretions have
complementary and catalytic interactions.

Actually all these relationships, between genes and chromosomes
and hormones are very much subtler than I have been able to indicate.
The sex of a child is established at the moment of fertilization
because each spermatozoon contains one Y or an X chromosome, and
the mature ovum contains one X. The sex difference grows out of the
specialised chromosome, but the development of sexual features
grows out of specialised chemical substances in the chromosome.
Up to the seventh week the foetus shows no sexually differentiated
characteristics, and even when development begins, a lay observer
must be struck by the similarity. At first there is only the genital
tuberole, a mound under the umbilicus, with the beginnings of a
cleft which will be anus and genitals. The cleft lengthens, slightly
earlier in the male, and either side appear the genital swellings.
The glans penis and glans clitoralis look very alike at this stage,
and both show the urethral groove opening beneath. The next stage
is also parallel, for the glans penis and glans clitoralis remain
about the same size in relation to the whole embryo, and the
urogenital groove in the male is slow to close; the genital swellings
look like labia majora in both cases. Even a chicken sexer would have
trouble distinguishing them at this stage. Gradually the urethral
cleft closes and the scrotum forms out of the genital swelling in
the case of boys, and in girls it grows into the labia, and the glans
clitoris gradually becomes smaller in relation to the whole. One
type of intersexuality which can be observed in adults is a form
where one labium majorum has developed with the characteristics of
one side of the scrotum, and the clitoris is enlarged and protuberant.
As we shall see later the actual homology of the adult genitals in
male and female does not follow the lines of foetal development, for
the kinds of tissue which develop in these sites are quite distinct.

Many of the differences which we take for granted between adult
male and female are in fact exaggerations, and some are in fact
conventions which both sexes have trouble living up to. Starting at
the top, we may take as a case in point presuppositions about
male and female hair. It was supposed for a long time that women’s
hair grew longer than men’s; indeed if you had asked me as a little
girl what the difference was between men and women I should have
replied that women have long hair, and men don’t, illustrating from
my lovely mamma, who wore trousers much of the time, and had a
glossy auburn pompadour style which swung around her shoulders. The
supposition that women’s hair was somehow naturally longer than
men’s has however been held by adults. When the question ‘Why have
women longer hair than men?’ was asked, the reply was not ‘Because
they don’t cut it’ but

Because women are moister and more phlegmatic
than men . . . Because women want beards; so the
matter of the beard doth go into that of the
hair.

It was supposed that strong wiry hair was connected with
strength, and so implied that women’s hair was softer than men’s.
Those young hippies who have been growing their hair long enough
occasionally to sport it below waist level, and it shows as many
varieties of softness and fineness or harshness and brittleness as
does the hair of the sex of whom it is usually consider the crowning
glory. The tyranny of this presupposition about male and female hair
may be gathered from the use by women of false hair in every age,
to give the length and fullness which was declared to be characteristic,
and conversely the expense and discomfort for men of having their
hair clipped and greased into a masculine shape for the last three
generations. The potential for baldness is one of the products of
testosterone, and regarded as a secondary sexual characteristic of the
male, which probably explains why that percentage of women who go bald are so ashamed that only the discreetest wig-makers have any idea of the real statistic. The association of baldness with virility, inferred I suppose from the knowledge that testosterone causes it, is of course unwarranted but consoling — for men, that is. Hair is one of the most adaptable and symbolically significant human attributes, as we shall see when we come to consider clothing and adornment.

Unfortunately for those champions of female equality, who care about such statistics, the skull is one of those parts of the body in which a genuine difference may be found. The typical female skull is lighter and smaller than the male, with nine-tenths of its capacity.

... The glabellas, superciliary arches and mastoid processes are less prominent and the corresponding air-sinusae are small or rudimentary. The tympanic part of the temporal bones is smaller and the margins less roughened ... the upper margin of the orbit is sharp, the forehead vertical, frontal and parietal tubera prominent, vault somewhat flattened. The contour of the face is rounder, facial bones smoother, the mandible, maxilla and contained teeth smaller.

Speaking generally more of the infantile characteristics are retained in the skull of the adult female. A well-marked male or female skull can easily be recognised as such, but in some skulls the characteristics are so indistinct that the determination of sex may be impossible.
The anatomist is careful not to suggest a polarity, and we must follow his example. We must be careful in regarding that dismaying fact about the capacity of the typical female brain not to perpetrate the mistake that size and value are somehow related, which is the kind of mistake that people make when they discriminate between noble and ignoble savages. The biggest races are not the strongest or the most intelligent, although they have often beaten smaller opposition into concurring with their mistaken opinion of themselves. In case we are tempted to accept this vague statistic as evidence that we had better let men take care of us and tell us what to do, it may be as well to remember that male dominated cultures have so far succeeded in making use of one-tenth of the brain's capacity, so that what bulges in their larger vault is largely porridge. There is also the interesting fact that this difference in the skull does not make its appearance until after puberty, and perhaps it would not be too far-fetched to argue, for the moment, that cranial development is hindered as a result of the conditioning of female children. In any case the relative dimensions of the skull are changing as a result of our more sedentary and cerebral mode of existence, which seems to suggest that conditioning does play some part. Some such arbitrary supposition can be used to combat the other suggestion that women's smaller skulls are a positive indication of lower cerebral powers. We might with as much justice claim that larger skulls attest hydrocephalus more readily than anything else.

Travelling on down the body (rather like a louse) we pause at the jaw to remark that men grow facial hair and women don't. In the language of ought, men ought to have luxuriant facial hair (although
they ought also to shave it all off) and women ought to have none. Actually a great many men have fairly sparse beards, and still more cannot manage a decent moustache while those many girls who have visible hair on the upper lip incessantly pluck and bleach and shave it away. Dark girls with a thick down growing down from the ears under the jawline plaster their doctors for hormone treatment or electrolysis to get rid of it, regardless of the risk and inconvenience, all because this hairiness (though no more unsightly than the fur on a peach) is regarded with derision as a kind of monstrosity. This hair is not even of the same kind as beard hair, but such distinctions are no comfort for the girl who is frightened of being a freak. Perhaps our rigid notions of what is normal would be salutarily affected by the story of Clemantine Delait who was proud of her full glossy chestnut beard, dearly loved by her husband, the local policeman and a man who tattooed her portrait on his chest.

The point is not that there is nothing male about facial hair, and nothing more female about the lack of it, but that we do not understand the extent of the variation which can naturally arise, without hint of abnormality or perversion. Men have facial hair, but not as often or as much as they are assumed to, and women have it more often and more than is commonly allowed. In neither case should the situation be considered abnormal or shameful, despite the claims of the vendors of peroxide, electrolysis, and pain.

Immediately beneath the face, hairy or otherwise, we notice the larynx, if it is man we are looking at, or fail to notice it if it is a woman. The Adam's apple which betrays gulping in the adolescent
male is merely the projecting part of the larynx, which in women is only two-thirds the size and usually more adequately swaddled in subcutaneous fat and is set further back under the jaw. The difference in size of this organ means a variation in the resonances it produces, so women's voices are higher pitched than men's, and men's are usually more resonant. Again however we notice that this phenomenon is exaggerated. Girls' voices change at puberty too, but less markedly than boys'. A soprano voice is itself a continuing use of the falsetto in the adult female, and a coloratura voice is the ultimate in birdlike affectation. Female singers are conscious of a break between the notes that they can sing forward in the mouth and the higher range of notes that they can sound through the nasal cavity by fluting or hooting. The supposition that women sing alto and soprano and men tenor and base is relatively modern, and led to the rude comments made about Alfred Deller before he was identified as a blackbearded giant with six children. I grew up a squealing soprano convinced that my ultrasonic peeping was a great voice until I heard a female voice which was not effete and piercing. The voice belonged to Shoshana Damari (and still does), but something like it can be heard in the amazing voices of the Amaya gypsies and the black sisters. At the same time as female singers slid down from the piping heights of their register, men took the courage to use their falsetto: one has only to think of its electric effect in Stravinsky's Le Sacre, or John Lennon's screaming in Hey Jude. Most pop groups slide in and out of falsetto with no great difficulty. In fact the great operatic voices were combinations of born freak and cultivated instrument: the music of our generation is produced much
more simply and seems closer to the kind of sound one can hear when men and women simply sing at work or play. Then we hear that the difference in their voices is not as constant or as vast as the difference between the bass and treble clef.

The polarity developed between the singing voices of men and women has a parallel in the affectations of many women's speaking voices. Idiots and impediments are cultivated as fascinating and cute and very often the pitch of the voice is arbitrarily heightened into a screech meant to unnerve all the hearers or a bray to bash niggers with. Women are so used to being ignored that many of them use their voices as guerrilla weapons. When they may speak simply to be understood and not have this struggle to be heard, we may actually hear the true vocal organ of women. The matriarchs of southern Italy do not need affectations. Recent researches have proved that women's voices tend to get harsher and louder as they get older, which seems to indicate that the virginal murmur will not stay the distance. Those women who agree with Lear's opinion that a sweet low voice is an excellent thing in women, might as well remember that the commonest way of accounting for the quality of women's voices was to put it down to general debility and coldness of humour, as in babies and old men. At all events there are more possibilities open to us than the maiden's pipe so shrill and the virago's scream.

Ah well, at least we may be sure that a real male has broad shoulders — but may we assume even that after all? If this is so why do all men's jackets in our era have padded shoulders? Men
think that they ought to have broad shoulders, and they are
couraged as lads to engage in exercise which will aid the
development of a square shoulderline. In fact the assumption
that the ideal male shape is a sort of inverted triangle on
short stumpy legs is relatively new and intrinsically associated
with the wasp ethic. If we regard the silhouettes encouraged by
earlier cultures we will notice an extraordinary variety in the
shapes assumed to be rigueur for the shoulders. The Egyptians
seem to have favoured straight square shoulders for both sexes,
although not particularly over-developed. In the Renaissance
both sexes built them out with padded sleeves and extended
shoulderlines, and later the style was modified in favour of
an extended sloping shoulderline for both sexes. What passes for
a beautiful male torso in the body-building magazines is in fact
an abnormal development of the biceps, triceps, deltoid, trapezius,
lattissimus dorsi and pectoral muscles, which appeals in some
fairly obvious way to the all-male readers of such literature.
Ideally it would appear that both sexes have well-set shoulders,
but women too often stoop in an effort to disguise their height,
and were even in some cases encouraged to adopt postures which
increased the natural slope of the shoulder. A Spanish dancing
master laid down the following rules for elegant deportment in
1734:

She may not move her head when she walks,
otherwise she would look nonchalant. The
shoulders must be drawn downward and the
elbows carried well back so that they shall
not rest upon the hips ...
Anyone who has ever worn period costume must be aware how the dress dictates the posture necessary to wear it. My mother retained the free stride of the short skirts and padded shoulders of the forties, while I grew into the sloping shoulders and nipped waists of the new look, when we walked with the pelvis thrown forward, the shoulders drawn down and the bosom elevated to some dizzy point within reach of the chin. I can only be thankful that our diet was too good to permit such a deformity from actually developing, and we spent too much time in the sea to actually succeed in developing Dior's notion of a skin figure. The extremes to which the female athletic figure may develop can be shown by any photograph of girl swimmers, and after working in an Olympic village as interpreter, I think I can say that there was no evidence of any sexual abnormality accompanying this development.

To associate broad shoulders with maleness is the result of associating physical prowess with maleness, and not an indication of a genuine point of sexual differentiation. The proliferation of body building studios is evidence in itself that the seven stone weakling outnumbers the hunk, and that the difference is a question of cosmetics.

Breasts are agreed to be a secondary sexual characteristic of the female, and so we can assume that women have them and men don't, unless there is some hanky-panky going on. Perhaps it would be more proper to say that women have mammary glands and men don't. The actual gland is a convex structure extending from the second rib to the sixth beneath the fat which forms the vast bladders which the sex-bombs thrust towards cameras is not itself a sexual characteristic.
Even now, when the breast fixation seems to have localised itself in a certain kind of fetishistic demand from orally deprived males, 'flat-chested' women can feel so ashamed and inadequate that they are allowed surgery on the national health to remedy the deficiency. Everybody seems to understand this anxiety, which is much less warranted than the suffering borne by the over-developed female who knows that her tits attract more attention than her face. Very few cultures before our own have relished this disproportion, and its incidence is comparatively rare. Even today many girls in the model and movie business use falsies and invest in insertions of silicone or paraffin, in order to appear properly desirable. The problem is that the fat is only desirable in this one area: the rest must remain sleek and trim. It is actually the disproportion which usually results from endocrine derangement which is found arousing. Any woman who actually has to cart about this kind of adipose ballast, like the great bulges dwarfing Anita Ekberg's lovely face, knows what a bore it is. Her shoulders are cut by the tight straps necessary to hoist the blubber into the right anti-gravitational plane, and make it even more obtrusive than its mere bulk makes it by nature. Undressing can be an ordeal if watched, and a blessed relief in private. One of my best friends used to carry her breasts about on her left arm, because they hurt if left to hang, and in bed she wore a brassiere for comfort. The apparatus needed to control this flesh is hot and cumbersome, and many a bosomy girl feels embarrassed in revealing clothing, because of the licentious attention she attracts, so she
wears shapeless sagging tops, and stoops to hide a feature which she considers an irrelevance to the impact she wants to make on people. Some girls even wear brassieres designed to let half the breast escape beneath the cup so that the point seems less gross and unmanageable.

The full breast is part of the concept femininity; it is a millstone around the neck of the woman, which endears her to the man who wants to paddle in her plenty, to make his namest of her, the man who reads Playboy, the magazine with the largest circulation in the world. The breast beautiful as photographed on Playmates is a swollen, phantasm, beloved of both sexes, a source of suffering and dissatisfaction because it is available to neither. When they are beautiful, breasts are admired and pressed at the right point in petting games like magic buttons producing instant eroticism. When they show signs of their purpose, of the mutations they go through with childbearing and lactation, stretched, darkened or withered they are ignored. They are not regarded as parts of a person but hares slung around her neck, to be kneaded and twisted like magic putty, or mumbled and mouthed like lolly ices. If this were not so, then Men could find an interest in what the breasts express about the person they are part of, instead of cherishing some infantile fantasy of huge bobbing boobies. One way in which women can protect themselves from the breast fetish, is to refuse to wear undergarments which create the uniform shapes of men's fantasies and force them to come to terms with the varieties of the real thing. Recent emphasis on the nipple, which was absent from the breast of popular pornography,
in women's favour, for the nipple is expressive and responsive. The growing tendency to let breasts assume natural proportions and their natural place on the ribcage free of foam and wire is an index of the vegetable creep of women's liberation. The danger is that in the swing of reaction we might revert to artificially raised and proffered bosoms.

Once we think of breasts as parts of people, we come again to the fact that women do not have them exclusively. Men derive pleasure from attention to the erogenous zone of the nipple, especially if they are not embarrassed by the supposition that there is something abnormal about it. Their nipples are erectile too and express their appreciation in the same way as women's do.

The helps of them in a man are for coziness, and for the defence of the members of the breast; and they reverberate heat to the Heart, and sometime there is milk made in a man by reason of the abundance of nutriment, especially in one that hath great and strong Teats ...

As a matter of fact I can find no evidence that men ever lactate; gynaecomastia is what happens when either one or both of a man's breasts develop beyond the normal into the appearance of a non-functioning female breast. It usually occurs in cases of incomplete genital development or in cases of hormone treatment used in cases of enlarged prostate, or simply to induce this symptom in drag queens.

Nevertheless the fact remains that King Farouk had bigger tits than I do, and his sexual adequacy was never challenged.

That seems to have confused the breast question nicely, and we may move on, remarking en passant that men and women have the
same number of ribs, contrary to something I seem to have heard at school in reference to the Mosaic theory of female creation.

The question of the hairy chest of the real male is a bit like the hair on the face situation. Edmund Wilson could reduce Hemingway to an adulterous panic by sneering that he had crepe hair on his chest. Really, hairiness seems to be fairly irrelevant to maleness in this case as well. One could hardly argue that the hairless races were unvirile. The position of the negro as the hairless supernormal would seem very odd indeed. Some of the flabbiest, basest men one sees on the beach are covered with a black pelt, even to the shoulder blades. The degree of hirsuteness is actually related as much to endocrine activity as to the direct influence of the sex hormones, and also to racial type. If men may be hairy or not, more or less indifferently, it seems clear that women never have hair on their chests. Well lady gorillas do, and so do some hairy ladies of my acquaintance. I can remember undressing with a girlfriend at the baths one day and noticing that she had whorls of wiry hair about each nipple. I was so shocked and disgusted that I got giddy for a few moments and had great ado explaining to her what was the matter. I must confess to four or five hairs on my own chest, which is no less than many of my boyfriends have had. Both sexes have pubic hair under their arms, and considerable hair on their legs, but it is only considered displeasing on women. The demands of the bathing suit aesthetic are so rigorous that women wax, pluck, shave and chafe themselves hairless, even if it means that they have stubby thighs and prickly legs, so that we are not very sure just how hairy women might be. Some women
have never let all their hair grow. Even the eyebrows are
plucked if they are too abundant, and sometimes when they are
not. My argument against all these aesthetic requirements of
female grooming is that they hurt, and they take up too much
time. It is all very well for Princess Pignatelli to pluck each
hair on her 'flawless' legs individually, provided she is such
a moron that she can sit gaping at her shins for hours at a time.
The conspiracy to present the normal woman to the real woman
as satin skinned and hairless has been carried by painters until
Bonnard, Modigliani and Matthew Smith. Oddly enough the taboo
on hair on the superfemale image has persisted in photography.
No Playmate has a single blade of hair to mar the sheen of her
ballooning plastic body. The oddness of the situation strikes one
very forcibly when one realises that the word that Greek gallants
murmur after girls in the street actually means hairy. A rationale
for the depilation of females would probably run something like
this. Animals have fur; animals are sexy; men ought to be sexy
therefore men ought to have hair; women should not be sexy therefore
women should be glabrous. As the basic assumption is wrong, for
humans engage in very much more sexual activity than any animals,
except perhaps the white mouse, what follows is wrong too. Hairiness
is still in some way connected in our minds with strength, and
strength with virility; both connections are arbitrary, and the
ultimate source is that body of folklore collected under the spurious
authorship of Aristotle, called the Secret of Secrets; the smoothness
of women's bodies was explained as further evidence of their lack of
vital heat, and it was noticed that women with strong, black hair,
were energetic, sexually demanding and barren, that is to say,
vivace, women like men. This is the physical type of Katharina
the shrew, whom Petruchio married for love and got his money's worth.
Many of the ballads of Joan, the useful girl who is better to marry
than my lady, refer to her brownness and strength and the blackness
of her hair. The ultrafeminine ideal is after all a middle class
speciality.

Which brings us to the waist. When a waist is gone women
lament it; when a waist is not there men miss it. What is it? It
is hardly a natural phenomenon at all. In all ages when the
prevailing aesthetic demanded it women have worn apparatus of
various kinds to enforce it. In much the same way that lots of
brass rings really do elongate Bantu ladies' necks the waist came
to exist. Nineteenth century belles even went to the lengths of
having the last rib removed so that they could lace their corsets
tighter. Certain natives of New Guinea wear tight girdles, and wonder
of wonders! the men have waists and hips too, for not only does the
girdle constrict, the flesh tends to swell above and below the
ligature. The regime of exercise followed by the certain boy and
girl bull dancers, developed their musculature in a certain way,
and the effect of the heavy girdle both sexes wore made their
silhouettes so similar that the only differentiation in the
paintings of them is that the boys are painted in a different colour.
The narrow waist is chiefly valued, if one may take the imposition
of a tight corset on '0' as any evidence, as a point of frangibility
for the female frame, gratifying basically sado-masochistic desires.
Men could have waists although they would probably not consent,
unless they were Danny Larue whose waist is tiny, to the constriction
of a corset. They have simulated waists in the cut of their clothes often enough, but they have only put themselves through the ordeal of wearing a corset when obesity had destroyed any image of physical competence. It is not so much that the waist dips in as that the hips go out, that imparts a feminine line to the body. An eighteen-inch waist is not beautiful because it is a palpable disproportion. Greek ideals of womanhood show no such violent indentations, just as they would not have dreamed of superimposing gourd-shaped breasts. Dior brought the nipped waist back in after it had taken a half a century to assume natural proportions but the regression was short lived.

We have arrived at the other point where sex really influences the physical structure, the pelvis. It is not a question of having different bones, but having the same bones slightly differently shaped and in slightly different relation to each other. However the difference is often overstated:

In a man the breast is broad, not carinated as in the greater part of Beasts, yet is broader in a man than in a woman; but for the bearing of the young, the lower Belly is greater in a woman than in a man; and for this reason the Region of the Rains, of the bone Sacrum and the Ancharum in a woman is very large.

If the thorax was commonly constricted from childhood it stands to reason that it was narrow, and that the hips gather fat beneath it because of the obstruction. Differences in the pelvic structure of women of different classes and environments seem to suggest that well-fed sedentary women develop a broader pelvis than is strictly normal, and poorly nourished labouring women often have undeveloped
hips. A diagram from a medieval anatomy shows this wasted form very clearly. The difference ought to be one of shape rather than size. The ossification of the hip bone in puberty takes a slightly different form in the female, so that the balance of the bone is altered. The sacrum to which it is attached is shorter and wider in women than in men, and the pelvic surface faces downwards more, so that the pelvic cavity is more capacious, and the angle where the sacrum joins the vertebrae is sharper. Again the anatomist is careful not to over-estimate the sex-determined difference in the bone structure.

No difficulty will be experienced in distinguishing a typical male or a typical female sacrum, but, as the sexual characters are not always pronounced, there are many cases in which it is by no means easy to determine the sex.

The difference in the shape of the male and female pelvis has been summarized as the difference between a long section of a short cone, and a short section of a long cone. The degree of difference is best appreciated by a look at the diagram. The reason for it is of course the accommodation and eventual passage of the foetus. The bones are in addition more mobile, especially the coccyx. During pregnancy the joints and ligaments relax, allowing the hipbones to rotate, releasing the locking mechanism of the sacrum. It is partly the angle of connection with the sacrum which explains the projection of the hips and the difference in the female walk.

At last we have arrived at the point where the anatomy books begin to use female diagrams, just before they turn to discussing
freaks, the areas where there can be no mistake. There is still a great deal of mystery surrounding women's organs, even as far as women are concerned. When menstruation seems likely or possible, our mothers show us livid pink diagrams in the flattest possible two dimensions; clitoris, labia minora, labia majora, sphincter, vagina, cervix, womb, fallopian tubes, ovaries, are all designated somehow or other, but we are not told what kind of tissue it is, how sensitive it is, what changes may take place in it normally, and what symptoms are abnormal. To mention a case in point, I did not know that the strange wart-like tissue just inside the vaginal sphincter was normal; when I first palpated myself there I was sure that I had some kind of tumour. In fact it was a meticulously engraved dissected vagina which I saw in an eighteenth century book which finally convinced me that this tissue was not abnormal in any way.

The most fundamental difference between the female sex organs and the male is that the female are hidden, and their movements are secret. The degree of excitement is only evidenced by lubrication, which may disappear if the foreplay goes on too long, and an engorgement of the tissue which is hardly perceptible. Likewise the female organs is a mysterious thing, so much so, that it is still not altogether clear where it happens and what sort of a physiological manifestation it is. Thus women are specially fitted to be great sexual pretenders, and so they have been. This difference was thought by some anatomists to be the only basic difference between the sexes.
If Nature having formed a male should convert him into a female, she has nothing else to do but turn his genitals inward, and again to turn a woman into a man by a contrary operation ... there is not that vast difference between the sexes as Pliny asserts; for a woman has in a way the same rudiment as a man, though they do not appear outwardly, but are inverted for the purposes of generation; one being solid and the other porous ...

In fact the operation that he describes is what is done in cases of sex change; the penis is turned inside out and pushed up into the abdomen. The result is probably that the sexchanges are the only women to have vaginal orgasms for the sensitive area of the glans now forms an area at the highest point of this dry, artificial vagina. (Perhaps there is something in the fact that no women that I have heard of have asked for sex changes the other way about.) Following this analogy with the male genitalia, early anatomists made some pretty peculiar deductions. Women were assumed to have sperm 'not gross as in a man but watery, thin and cold'. Polybius, for example, thought that women ejaculated when they lubricated, sending forth their seed before the man, a change from the modern stress on the labours necessary to bring a woman to climax. He thought that the effect of the male orgasm was to cool the womb suddenly and bring the woman down from her pleasure level. Lots of pornographic literature is written in the supposition that there is a female ejaculation of some kind, which bathed the man at the point of orgasm. Actually women have no ejaculatory duct. Although Harvey
believed Ex ovo omnia.
That both the Hen and Housewife are so matcht
That her Son born, is only her Son hatcht;
That when her Teasing hopes have prosperous bin
Yet to conceive is but to lay, within,
in 1651, it was two hundred years before the role of the ovum
was understood. Sprengel found sperm in the ovaries of a virgin
bitch, reopening the possibility of virgin birth. For a while it
was believed that the preformed adult was enshrined in the egg
(by the ovists), or that he was to be found in the sperm (by the
animaclists). In 1805, Good, speaking of the past fifty years
wrote 'Every naturalist, and indeed every man who pretended to
the smallest portion of medical science, was convinced his children
were no more related, in point of actual generation, to his own
wife, than they were to his neighbours.' Only in 1827 was the
mammalian egg discovered, and not until 1879 was it understood that
a single mammalian sperm entered the egg. However, it seemed clear
to the old gynaecologists that women had an interest in copulation,
which they explained as a necessity to expel their seed.

Besides ignorance even in women of just what their genitals
are like, there is also a positive distaste for the vagina and its
environ. The worst word anyone can call anyone else in our culture
is cunt. The kind of open joking about the size and characteristics
which one often hears about the penis is simply not indulged in where
the vagina is concerned. It is sloppy, smelly, unresponsive and
performs a culminating monthly operation which is so disgusting that
whole industries have flourished on women's desire to eradicate the
symptoms entirely. The excessive modesty which the most emancipated
women feel about menstruation is connected with shame. One would like to think that women could glory in their sexual organs and speak of them with pride and familiarity, but in fact they don’t. They have done in past cultures. A lusty wench admonished a bashful young tailor in a seventeenth century ballad in round terms:

because he could not measure the depth of her fringed bag

You’ll find the Purse so deep,
you’ll hardly come to the treasure.

Another sang the praises of her partie honteuse like this:

I have a gallant Pin-box,
  the like you ne’er did see,
It is where never was the Fox
  something above my knee:
O ’tis a gallant Pin-box
  you never saw the peer;
Then I’ll not leave my Pin-box
  for fifty pound a year.

Since men usually write about sex and gynaecology, we will have to rely on their descriptions of the organs in question. Few are the men who really feel affection and interest in it; one of them was Samuel Collins, whose description is so loving that it would raise the morale of any woman to read it. Sad to say, I may be the first woman ever to read these words. He speaks of the vagina as the temple of Venus, and the mons veneris as Venus’s cushion, but he abandons euphemism to describe the female erection:

The use of the Nyaphs is to cover the urinary channel ... and being extended, do compress the Penis, and sneak a delight in the act of Coition.
The use of the blood vessels is to impart vital liquor into the substance of the clitoris, and of the nerves to impregnate it with a choysce Juyce inspired with animal spirits (full of elastick particles making it vigorous and tense).

The fountain of this serous juice is seated in the Glands of the Vagina, which being heated in Coition, do throw off the rarified fermentative serous Liquor, through many minute Neustas into the Cavity of the Vagina, and thereby rendreth its Passage very moist and slippery, which is pleasant in Coition.

... the Hypogastrick Arteries do sport themselves in numerous Ramistle about the sides and other parts of the Vagina, which are so many inlets of blood to make it warm and turgid in the Act of Coition.

No mere hole for the accommodation of the penis this. We are the inheritors of a notion of the female sex as essentially passive, and many of our presuppositions about the female organs are the result of this stereotype. Collins on the other hand assumed that women delighted in sex if anything more than men, and he describes the vagina as an active thing. The similes he and his contemporaries used to describe the female organs are informative; the vagina is said to be lined with 'tunicles like the petals of a full-blown rose,' and

all its hollowness is removed to the center in the receiving of the sperm, and embraseth and toucheth it with its sides.

And the substance of its Neck is Lacertous flesh, as it were, Cartilaginous, having wrinkle upon wrinkle, who do give delight by Friction
in copulations; this part is sensible enough.

'Sensible enough' is exact. Orgasm does not originate in the vagina, but the vagina contributes to the orgasm by its sensations of fullness and constriction of the man's moving organ. Early anatomists were aware of the role of the clitoris as well, declaring it the seat of venereal pleasure, and therefore called it the 'sweetness of love' and the 'fury of venery'.

The introduction of the notion that genuinely potent women would have orgasms originating in the vagina was a metaphysical interpolation in the empirically observed data of these pioneers, and as such a retrograde step. Collins took the sexual pleasure for granted, and did not stop to question its moral or psychological significance. The lustiness of English maidens who sickened for intercourse is the more wonderful when we reflect what the almost certain results were. Perhaps the risk enhanced the excitement; at any rate when pleasure was considered inherent so that girls were wildly excited by their own speculations long before intercourse took place, it seems to have been easier to achieve it. The orgasm has never been so difficult since it became a duty. Certainly the effects of intercourse upon the psyche of women were so marked that the medical chapbooks never fail to refer to them. If women were now to consider their sexual organs as active, and to develop the degree of muscular control that they have in order to actually take some initiative in their sexual experience, our dependence upon the penis and men's artifice could perhaps be lessened or at least made less obvious. The Wife of Bath exhausted
her husbands, indeed killed them it would appear, by her constant sexual demands. How many English wives in this century would know how to make their husbands swank? Girls in Tahiti can tighten the vaginal sphincter around the male organ so that it must remain engorged, and so excite their menfolk that they keep on making love all night long. This extreme virtuosity is only exercised on special occasions. Unfortunately our whole linguistic emphasis is placed upon the poking element in intercourse; the word fuck which is generally used sadistically is something that a man does to someone else, and the variants rot, screw and shag, or do and have and the vulgar words cock, prick, dick, tool, and synonyms like weapon, all stress the deed done upon the body of a woman; perhaps only the word ball and the obsolete squire are genuinely intersexual words. Woman may insist on using the word fuck in defiance of its etymology, but the associations die hard. Perhaps we had better find a word of our own. The extreme view of the power of the vagina to induce intercourse is celebrated by Theodore Faithfull in a piece of mythology which women could decide to make use of, even if they never actually prove it. To a man suffering from inability to get an erection, he wrote

If you ignore any idea of erection and concentrate your attention on your girl friend, ignore the clitoris and use your fingers to caress her internally and if you follow such activity by a close association of your sex organs you may soon find that she can draw your sex organ into her vagina without any need on your part for erection.

This is possibly a deliberate piece of therapeutic mythology, nevertheless serious attempts have been made to influence woman's
concept of how far they are active in copulation. A.H. Kegel, teaching women to exercise the pubococcygeus muscles that surround and are attached to the walls of the vagina to correct urinary incontinence found inadvertently that this improved their enjoyment of the sex act. This was pointed out earlier by Le Mon Clark, and developed later by J.F. Cliven and Maxine Davis. Of course in school we are taught exercise for most muscles, but not for those which might enable us to derive pleasure. Sex education can hardly expect to go so far! I am sure that one of the anxieties militating against successful coition in many women is the sensation of dependency, of waiting for something which they can do little to bring on. If we understood the function of our own muscles better we could bring more tension to bear on the clitoris in a less pompous and deliberate way than digital massage. One of the reasons why enlightened women prefer the female superior position is that in that position they can feel their own muscular movements more clearly, but in fact this is not a prerequisite. Women may take active part in intercourse in any position if only they think of the vagina embracing and stimulating the penis instead of taking it. The reason why penis substitutes of various kinds are used in heterosexual intercourse seems fundamentally to be that they allow women to take a measure of control which is denied them otherwise. It is after all a question of communication; it is time we understood fucking as talking to each other, not he talk, me listen.

To love one’s sex necessitates knowing it, and knowing it not in terms of blatant euphemism, like honey-pot and scented garden, nor
in the sadistic terms which seem to abound, of cracks and slits and gashes. The kind of description which seems to me the language of love is like Collins or the terms Jackson used in translating the famous Microcosmography of Berengarius in 1664.

Os Metrical ... having the form of a mullets head, otherwise of Cephalus or the tooth fish, or of a new bred puppy ...

To make these comparisons he has seen a cervix in all these little hokey things: the analogy is just, unlike the analogy of the honeypot or the scented garden. Berengarius also limits the notion of penetration men might sadistically imagine.

The cervix is very long, round, hollow; it is as much violated as is the Yard of him that doth copulate therewith.

So much for O's masters who were forever entering her womb, and even grasping her womb in their fingers.

How should I describe my genitals without recourse to scientific jargon or euphemism? It is probably a linguistic exercise each woman should perform for herself. How far we are from doing it can be felt if we imagine an essay topic for the middle school, 'Describe your genitals in five hundred words of your own.'

There is another fact which the early anatomists celebrated about the vagina, which has very interesting implications, especially for those who consider that the female sex is by divine design essentially and intrinsically monogamous:

The Vagina is made so artificial (affabre is his word) that it can accommodate itself to any penis, so that it will give way to a long one, meet a short one, widen to a thick one,
constringe to a small one; so that any Man

might well enough lie with any Woman, and every

Woman with any Man.

It is clear that the vagina is not a penis turned inside

out, nevertheless there are genuine parallels between male and

female genitalia, which we never discuss. The ovaries are, as

the old anatomists thought, homologous with the testicles,

although the production of the sperm is much more speedy and

happens continuously. In the foetus ovaries and testicles start
developing in the same place, in the lumbar region above the

kidneys. The labia minora are made of the same tissue as the
dartos muscle of the scrotum. The clitoris is an erectile structure
homologous with glans penis. The bulb of the vestibule, the

roughened swelling one can feel just inside the opening of the

vagina, is the same as the bulb of the penis and the adjoining

part of the erectile tissue which is known as the corpus spongiosum.
The great vestibular glands are the same as the bulbo-urethral

glands in the male.

Nothing emerges so clearly from this learned comparison, as

that we are still no nearer to understanding the sexual pleasure of

the other sex. We can never know what it is like to ejaculate. We

will never know if the sensation that comes if the clitoris is
directly stimulated is like or unlike a male orgasm; even so recent
sexual researches are succeeding in distinguishing the sexes on the
basis which seems to us at least not altogether valid. It seems to
be assumed that men always find sexual release in intercourse because
their orgasm follows inevitably from mechanical excitation, while
women are altogether more spiritual, more dependent upon affection and highly inventive and sensitive caresses. If it were true that one hole was much the same as another to a man there would be little point in fidelity or adultery; given the constant manufacture of sperm and the resultant pressure to have intercourse, men would copulate without transport or disappointment, with anyone. This is clearly not what happens. The pressure at the moment tends to an ideal picture of man and woman both intent on achieving the female orgasm, fiddling and diddling about in search of a spasm which will award their love the seal of approval. The process sounds so laborious when some sexologists describe it, that one can imagine it having a severely inhibiting effect on general sexual activity.

What seems to me to be wrong with the whole sexual experimentation business is that there is no way of measuring the phantasy element, even for that matter the curious element of being watched and charted. I have only once made love in a semi-public situation myself, and was surprised to discover how powerful the effect of the perceptible proximity of other people was. One of the effects that this scientific approach has is to cool off a potential sexual situation: when a man dutifully does the rounds of the erogenous zones, spends an equal amount of time on each nipple, turns his attention to the clitoris, usually far too directly, leads through the stages of digital or lingual stimulation and then politely lets himself into the vagina, perhaps even waiting until the disappearance of the clitoris tells him he is welcome, the effect is a kind of computerisation. The implication is that there is a statistically ideal fuck, and there is no reason why an adequately programmed couple cannot
achieve it all the time. The fact is, and I state this categorically, that there is no substitute for excitement, and not all the clitoral stimulation in the world will ensure orgasmic potency, which is not just a matter of a muscular spasm, but a psychosexual release. We have probably gotachel to blame for the notion of vaginal orgasm, and it is a red herring, but it is clear that real sexual gratification is not enshrined in a tiny cluster of nerves but in the sexual involvement of the whole person. The secondary orgasm, the continuing pleasure which women have, does not reside in the clitoris, which does not respond particularly well to continued stimulation. This continued high enjoyment of intercourse which men observe with wonder is much more a sensual affair than a genital one; it is part of the whole female responsiveness to endearment and caress, which if we continue to tickle around the clitoris with one eye on the clock we are going to succeed in diminishing. Men's sexuality has been diminished and localised by the kind of conditioning they undergo from their earliest years. The male sexual ideal is one of virility without languour or amorousness. I can remember my mother when I was nibbling my dear little brother's ear, smacking my hand away and telling me not to do it because it would make him 'susceptible'. I would not change the great and ambiguous kind of pleasure that I find in sex for ejaculation, or any female analogue of it. Certainly when a man and a woman find intense pleasure in being together, there is nothing to be gained by feats of synchronisation, and indeed something to be lost. There is nothing more desolating in sex than the feeling that one's partner is masturbating inside one. By that I don't mean
that manual stimulation is not permissible in sex, but the relationship in which each partner is experiencing alone, eyes shut, light off, labouring away for release: the excessive concentration on the localised sensation in lovemaking spreads this tendency which is common in men to women also, and bids fair to estrange the sexes even further.

I am aware that the many women who greeted the Masters and Johnson conclusions with cries of 'I told you so' and 'There you see I am normal!', cracking a new whip over their husbands, will feel that I have betrayed them. If they argue that they have only ever had real pleasure in intercourse (charming word!) when direct stimulation was applied (another charming word!) to the clitoris, I think I can argue in return that this itself is an index of a desexualisation of the whole body and of the mind, in non-Reichian terms, a substitution of genitality for sexuality. Get down, the rock singers wall, get back into your body, and their words are addressed to the mind. Women, like the potheads and the younger generation, have some chance of getting back into their bodies, of reunifying sensibility so that ideas are sensations and sensations are ideas. If we accept T.S. Eliot's notion of when sensibility became divided, we will find that the poetry before that time is desirous and pleasure-directed in a way that we never see in our poetry thereafter, until perhaps now. Wit, which is both humour and intelligence, and fantasy are essential elements of the sexuality of the metaphysical poets, and what results is a highly potent form of involvement. The ideal American marriage as measured on the machines of Masters and Johnson is enfeebled. Dull sex for dull
people; Reich saw that the sexual personality was anti-authoritarian. It remains for the all-embracing system to design standard, low-agitation, cool-out monogamy with guaranteed orgasm and defeat that true proposition too. If Mrs Masters and Dr Johnson were to watch Robert Plant of the Led Zeppelin enacting his great mind-fucks in music, they would recall from the evidence of polymorphus perversity and savage energy that he puts out. The sex that thrills around the hip audience is off their registers, and I defy them to get it on.

I have argued then that the regime that men have followed has actually succeeded in limiting the scope of their sexuality, sometimes to the point of dependence upon fetishes like rubber and bondage, often to postures which are isolated and unexpressive, but generally to a narrow concept of genital gratification, which is now being grasped after by women as a new sexual right. Claim the orgasm, clitoral or otherwise, by all means, but claim more: claim the right to interesting sex, the right to excitement, the right to ecstasy, for which there is no button on the apparatus in the Reproductive Biology Research Foundation laboratories.

The removal of the fantasia of the vaginal orgasm, which had hovered beyond woman's reach, mocking them as neurotic and infantile, was probably a service, but the substitution of the clitoral spasm will be ultimately seen as a disaster for sexuality and the sexual personality. The books which have begun to appear on railway bookstands telling husbands what to do (and one suspects that moneymaking is not their only purpose) are full of references to 'touching the spot' and the joy and relaxation that will follow if they do. Some of the more aggressive books on the topic, like Mette Ejlersen's Masters & Johnson's research have inspired sensible clitoromania. Books appear on railway bookstands every day extolling the clitoris as woman's sex, like Mette Ejlersen's
I assume success in establishing the utter irrelevance of the penis to women's gratification, while speaking of the orgasm of women as resulting from the 'right touches on the button'. She condemns books which recommend ... the stimulation of the clitoris as part of the prelude to intercourse, to that which most men consider to be the "real thing".

What is in fact the "real thing" for them is completely devoid of sensation for the woman. This is the heart of the matter! Concealed for hundreds of years by humble, shy and subservient women.

Not all the women in history have been shy and subservient, however; the maidens whose lamentations fill the broadsides of the seventeenth-century lament that a moment's pleasure led them into such woe, but not one of them that I know of laments that the much vaunted pleasure was no pleasure at all. It is absolute nonsense to say that a woman is devoid of sensation when a man is moving his penis in her vagina, especially if she is cooperating and involving herself in the situation imaginatively as well as physically. The clitoral takeover is ultimately a greater victory for female passivity than anything which has gone before. With the discovery of electricity and the increase in the sale of massagers of every other sort of tissue, it is only a matter of time before the electric clitoral stimulator is given out free with wedding rings, and monogamy triumphs again. The whole body is no potentially so much more exogenous than it has become, the human mind is potentially so much more sexual than it has become. Sexuality in women has dwindled away into one tiny area, and sexuality to a
more ten minutes stimulation in the happy housewife's day.

The organisation of sexuality reflects the basic features of the performance principle and its organisation of society. Freud emphasises the aspect of centralisation. It is especially operative in the 'unification' of the various objects of the partial instincts into one libidinal object of the opposite sex, and in the establishment of genital supremacy. In both cases, the unifying process is repressive — that is to say, the partial instincts do not develop freely into a 'higher' stage of gratification which preserves their objectives, but are cut off and reduced to subservient functions. This process achieves the socially necessary desexualisation of the body, leaving most of the rest free for use as the instrument of labour. The temporal reduction of the libido is thus supplemented by its spatial reduction.

The clitoris is in no sense a twentieth century discovery. Its function was well known to earlier generations, not as a magic switch which accomplished the gratification of women, but a kind of sexual overdrive, a dear part of a dear organ, known simply because the whole thing was familiar and fascinating, among the potent, creative and sexually oriented at least. Clitoral stimulation was not seen as perverse or artificial, because it was not seen as the sine qua non, the necessary and sufficient action for female gratification. The discovery of the magic button is after all no antidote to the marital situation as described by Pantelejmon Ramanof.

In the beginning their souls are flowering and
their efforts are harnessed to achieve the greatest possible heights. But if their life together continues after this flowering period has faded, they act against nature because the only thing left in this extinguished state is the purely sexual side – that is to say, the satisfaction of the animal instincts.

The language is full of the usual limiting and unexplained ideas, nevertheless the problem must always remain in the condition where sex has become a conjugal duty and a conjugal right, does he (or she) want me, or does he want sex? Even if he does consider that a ten minute triddle is fair exchange for his orgasm, he may still just want sex. In cases like these both partners are isolated in a masturbatory situation, whose sole object is release of an immediate and localised tension.

Part of the new mythology is the notion that the male orgasm is absolutely satisfactory and inevitable whenever he is conceded the use of the vagina. Sex has become for many men a sordid business, which stresses human isolation more than almost any other because of the attitudes of many emancipated women, the go-ahead-I'm-on-the-pill-what-do-I-care? attitude. Sexual activity among the unmarried has probably if anything slightly decreased as a result of freer contraception; certainly no surge in sexual activity has been noticed. The orgies feared by the puritans have not materialised on every street corner. Homosexuality in various forms, indeed any kind of sex which has a chance of escaping the dead hand of the institution, group sex, criminal sex, child-fucking, bondage, discipline are probably on the increase, and not because our attitudes are more
parasitic, or because enlightenment is harmful, but because sexual enlightenment has happened under government subsidy, so that its discoveries have been released in bad prose and clinical jargon upon the world. First sex is no longer a voyage of discovery, but a kind of examination which one may take. Women of course have contributed to the situation; they write of wonderful lovers, even refer them to each other, as if making of love to them were a single example of a universal potential, and not a unique situation arising between her and him. I suppose Jackie Collins thinks she is a hip chick, well astride the new morality, but this is the ideal fuck in her canon ...

He took her to the bedroom and undressed her slowly, he made love to her beautifully. Nothing frantic, nothing rushed. He caressed her body as though there were nothing more important in the world. He took her to the edge of ecstasy and back again, keeping her hovering, sure of every move he made. Her breasts grew under his touch, swelling, becoming even larger and firmer. She floated on a suspended plane, a complete captive to his hands and body. He had amazing control, stopping at just the right moment. When it did happen it was only because he wanted it to, and they came in complete unison. She had never experienced that before, and she clung to him, words tumbling out of her mouth about how much she loved him. Afterwards they lay and smoked and talked. 'You're wonderful,' he said, 'you're a clever woman making me wait until after we were married!'

This is the kind of nonsense that leaves women without any way
of influencing their own sexual lives. Supposing this virtuoso tires of displaying his technique, she can float around on her airbed for all eternity wondering where it all went. Apart from the unlikelihood of this one occasion, there is the question of when and how, if ever, men are allowed to yield, to lose control. In this kind of writing sexual organs are not mentioned, but the meaning is nevertheless narrowly genital, the woman as cello. I daresay the clitoris was one of the routes that this husband took to the edge of ecstasy, although Miss Collins values suggestion too much to mention it. His genitals of course have become irrelevant. What he does, and all men do in the culture of the magic button, is no more than the eunuchs in the harem have done. The sad thing is that in this manner of thinking the harem still prevails. Sex has finally been harnessed in the service of counterrevolution.

As I have hinted, the polarity between the sexes is still a part of this morality. Male sexuality has been differentiated from female response by its rapidity, its inevitability, its simplicity. Male needs are seen as mechanical, animal, physical. This is a simplification accomplished long ago when the double standard was established. The notion was that men were impelled to indiscriminate sex by a strong physical urge, even involving pain and discomfort, which would lead them to lie, cheat and even assault to get the use of the female body. Women had to manipulate this animal urge as well as they could to get the highest reward for eventually offering to capitulate to it, while cherishing the tenderest, most sentimental sexual desires of their own, which were not based upon any mere urge
for gratification, but on esteem, trust, true love, which by displaying their superior moral qualities they were expected to make the man feel for them, eventually. So the more complicated psychic aspect of men's love was undervalued, while the sexual aspect of female passion was denied. What has happened is not that male sexuality has been realigned with its psychological aspect, but that female sexuality has been aligned with the limited notion of male sexuality. The new polarity is penis–clitoris, organs irrelevant to each other's gratification in the new scale. The sexbooks must teach a technique; until we realise that we make love to people and not organs, that they are never more idiosyncratic, never more totally there than they are in the act of love, we are impotent and alone.

Not all of this discussion has been anatomical, and I have no intention of apologising for it. In the case of the external genitalia, there is no substitute for looking and feeling and tasting, in the case of the internal reproductive organs, we might as well remember that men have none, and we have womb, fallopian tubes and ovaries, the presence of which we will discern very clearly when they give trouble. One difference which even I can do nothing to minimise between men and women, is that men do not menstruate, and women do.

Menstruation, we are told, is unique among the natural bodily functions in that it involves a loss of blood. The supposition behind this statement is that nature is a triumph of design, and none of her (?) processes is wasteful. This assumption makes it seem even more unlikely that there is 'real' pain associated with
menstruation. This assumption about nature does not stand, however. It is normal for nature to eject a malformed foetus, but it is also normal to do this by washing it out with blood, just as the unused endometrium is flushed out of the womb when women menstruate. The trouble with the haemorrhage of miscarriage is that it doesn't know when to stop, until curettage has removed all the bleeding tissue and left a clean wound-surface, which can then heal. The deep sorety that whatever is is right is something that women have never had, because no little girl who is called aside by her mother to be told that soon her vagina will bleed regularly, and who then discovers not only that it bleeds, but that it smells offensive and is not to be talked of, when she knows that she has done nothing wrong, feels in her heart of hearts that this is how it should be. The Greeks had a word for that other menstrual manifestation, dysemorrrhea, and doctors admit that most women suffer 'discomfort' during menstruation, but differ very much about how many women suffer 'real' pain. Whether the actual contractions of the womb during menstruation are painful in some absolute sense, or whether the pain could all be magically dissolved if women learnt to relax, as they are constantly exhorted to do in childbirth, is hardly worth establishing. The fact is that no woman would menstruate if she did not have to. My mother, who was amazingly healthy, although she seemed to bleed very copiously, said to me more than once that she would rather be pregnant than face nine periods. Possibly the pain and depression of menstruation are all due to the fact that women have never actually accepted menstruation. Perhaps women do resent it, not only on the grounds of actual abdominal pain, but for
the tension, pre-, during and post, for the unpleasantness, the odour, the staining, the napkins and tampons, and the taboo on mentioning an inconvenience which takes up, say, a sixth of her adult life until the menopause, when she may confidently expect several years of endocrine derangement, and then the glorious prospect of gradual atrophy of the sexual organs.

Whatever menstruation may mean in terms of the fitness of the female sex for sustained effort, I think it should be noticed that the problems of menstruation are treated by doctors male and female in a peculiar way. These problems are less noticeable now that the pill has suppressed menstruation and alleviated menorrhagia and dysmenorrhea to a large extent, for which one is properly grateful, although aware that these properties alone would hardly have led to the development of pill-therapy on a wide scale. As long as menstruation was assumed to be a natural process, like dying, little was done to alleviate the more painful and inconvenient symptoms. As a little girl I dreamt of a pill to make menstruation happen all at once, and I suppose I still cannot see why that could not happen. The development of internal tampons was a great boon, and probably did as much to liberate women as the pill. 'No pads, no pins, no odour' would have seemed to me as a little girl a blessed relief, because my mother's inexhaustible taste for self-flagellation made her use harsh towels, which she instructed me to use too. I had to soak them in cold water and then wash them by hand. As my menstrual flow was sluggish for reasons which doctors refused to diagnose for ten years until I paid for a private laparotomy which revealed an enormous pyosalpinx, I
stained these cloths in the most appalling fashion, and often 
crowded over my bucket of foul clouts I had much ado not to be 
sick. The prudery about menstruation which persists even now, so 
that men think they are being risque when they make reference to 
a woman’s position on the monthly roundabout, means that little 
girls have to cope with their disgust alone. Mother told one what 
to do, then one went ahead and coped, creeping about the house 
guiltily with towels and pads and pantees and pins. My mother’s 
brother once found one of her towels in the laundry, and attacked 
her hysterically, thinking that such a disgusting symptom must 
have meant that she had done something filthy. The furtiveness of 
her demeanour must have given some added reason for the dread he 
felt. Certainly women buy sanitary towels with enormous discretion, 
and never send their husbands to ask for them. They put them under 
things in their handbags, and carry the whole bag discreetly to the 
loo if they need a single tampon. The situation is loosening up, too 
late for women who came to menstruation ten years ago, but perhaps 
girls menstruating for the first time this year will not feel as I 
did, that it was too ghastly for words if people guessed. If only I 
had known that a class of fourteen year olds always stinks of 
menstrual odours I should not have felt so conspicuous. At least 
girls are allowed to take baths and wash their hair these days. 
Perhaps if we understood more about muscular control in this 
department too we could actually aid the contractions which shed 
the useless endometrium and increase the efficiency of the sloughing 
off, in the same way that we can aid childbirth.

In any case, we could change the ideology of menstruation: it
probably would be less of a curse if we did not have to obliterate every sign of it. If the common phrases used to designate it were not aqualid (having the race on is my unfavourite) or clinical (menstrual sound awful) we might get somewhere. 'I've got my period' is one of the more uninspiring euphemisms; 'J'ai mes gouttes' is not a euphemism but an actual description, and it even sounds rather nice. 'Le lune' sound quite nice as well, but 'la regela' are as mathematical and doozy as periods. At one Sydney Girls' School, sanitary napkins were affectionately called 'daisies'. Italian girls refer vulgarly to 'il Marchese' and German girls to the parallel 'roter König'.

Nowadays menstruation is not taken as an instant deterrent to sexual advances, although I am not sure how far this is an indication that men do not really believe girls who say that they are indisposed in this way. The difficulty is that it still takes a long time to say it; one rather envies the simple expedient adopted by La Dame aux Camélias. If only menstruation were a simple, obvious phenomenon, we might have a better chance of coming to terms with it. Again, we might gauge how far we are from it by imagining an entry in the Day's Engagements, to the effect that the Queen's menstruation was a day early and she had cancelled her appearance at the Trooping of the Colour. Indeed in some cultures she would not be allowed to mount a horse during her days of seclusion! Women who are concerned to banish the shame and furtiveness connected with so many female functions might compensate, in the usual terms of over-compensation, by publicising their menstruation; certainly in the confrontation they will learn a lot about woman-hatred. I have long meant to record a song called the
Menstruation
glass, and Sylvia Plath has written a menstruation poem. Meanwhile many women are able to forget what menstruation was like, and to them good luck. I should like to know how many of them there are, and whether the allevor depression that the pill is said to impose is easier to bear than the ups and downs of the menstrual cycle. At all events the situation is far from satisfactory, and until women can devalue the assumption that because menstruation is natural it is good (an argument which has ceased to hold for conception, because conception inconvenienced the male), they will not succeed in having the problem adequately dealt with, any more than they will get a perfect pill if they do not voice their dissatisfaction with the ones they've got. The take-it-or-leave-it attitude to both is simply not good enough.

Actually I can remember feeling as a little girl that menstruation was rather unnatural than natural because animals did not do it, but conceivied instead. It was put to me as one of the consequences of civilisation, like the weakening of the mandibles and assumption of an erect posture. The fact that I went to a Catholic school probably stressed this aspect in my mind. Certainly it came as a great surprise to me to discover that animals menstruate. My little cats had an engorgement of the genital tissue and a small discharge in estrus, and apparently spayed bitches have a regular discharge. Anthropoid apes lose an appreciable amount of blood at regular intervals. Nevertheless the pangs of menstruation were for a long time seen as women's punishment for failing to pay the debt of the flesh. Nothing rational however can account for the superstitions which have collected around the female cycle. Women
who adhere to the Mosaic, Muslim, and Hindu faiths must regard
themselves as unclean in the time of menstruation, and accept
seclusion for up to two weeks. Even Catholicism made the stipulation
that menstruating women were not to come into the church, or to
communicate. Most primitive and other peoples have placed the
severest taboos on sexual intercourse during menstruation, but
in some tribes the inference has been rather that the women were
sacred, and to be preserved from defilement. The answer of our
rational society, which still feels an atavistic fear and distaste
of menstruation is not to treat it as if it were an uncleanness
or a blight, but rather to ignore it altogether. It would probably
be easier for little girls if we devised some ritual of puberty
whereby the enormous thing which has happened to them could be
genuinely minimised and familiarised, like the puberal feastings
of some tribes, when the little girl was admitted to the august
company of marriageable maidens. The arrival of the first
menstruation is more significant than any birthday, but it passes
without comment in most civilised Anglo-Saxon households. Among
the freemasonry of schoolgirls the situation is different, but
what occurs in this context may be more unsettling than otherwise.
I can remember someone pointing out a ten-year-old at my school who
was already menstruating, and my heart stirred with pity. As far
as I was concerned I had bidden my infant good health goodbye
for ever. Some 'savage' rituals can be seen as attempts to get
menstruation well started with easy contractions and free flow,
as the girls' bodies are bathed and anointed, massaged and even
buried in warm sand. Altogether it seems a nicer alternative than
creaming your hat on, grabbing your briefcase and trudging off to school before the day’s cramps had fairly begun, with three spare towels in a paper bag.

There is nothing very interesting chemically about the blood that is shed in menstruation, but it has enjoyed the most lurid reputation as a poison and a cure, and the bleeding woman’s power to curse and blight by day is only equalled by her efficacy as an insecticide by night. These superstitions are not only to be found in primitive communities; Pliny listed gout, goitre, sore throat, erysipelas, boils, puerperal fever and the bites of mad dogs among the ills that it could alleviate and Saint Hildegarde said that copious baths of menstrual blood prevented leprosy. Menstruating women could also disperse storms and hail, and save ships from peril. Witches offer a loving cup of menstrual blood collected over seven years to the devil. It is probably better for the female psyche to suppose that menstrual blood is magical (black or white) rather than simply mucky. Heaven knows why it has not been used as a beauty treatment, if placenta and royal jelly have been.

It could possibly be argued that menstruation and the endocrine processes which control it is one of the reasons why women live longer than men. At any rate the cycle feels like a renewing process: the mrs told me at school that it purified the blood and freshened the complexion, although even I was dismally aware that I had never had any pimples until it began. Nevertheless it seems clear that it impairs efficiency for a couple of days in the month, for even if the pains are alleviated by some simple analgesic (no mere aspirin will do)
the combined effect of the drug and the extra process happening in a woman's abdomen is apt to make her feel sluggish and make concentration difficult. The disadvantage must not be exaggerated however. In Japan women are given menstruation holidays, which seems very generous. Most of the women I know would use them for doing the shopping. In fact the impairment of a woman's faculties through menstruation pales into insignificance beside the impairment of the faculties of the managerial classes by their daily consumption of alcohol.

We could get along perfectly well if we continued to menstruate the way we do now, but still it seems a strange thing that we must consent to the regulation of our lives by constant initiations and subsequent moderations of the pregnancy cycle, when most of us will be pregnant only once or twice in our lives, if at all. However as long as gynaecology continues to be dominated by men, so that even the women who qualify learn the male attitudes towards the female reproductive apparatus, there will be menstruation, or the disadvantages attendant upon it. By now of course millions are being made out of it, and every year brings forth a new way of exploiting it, the latest being vaginal deodorants, which were unleashed upon the women of the world in a wave of the most sickening advertising ever to be seen in our press. The despicable thing about this is that it preys upon female shame and anxiety, for if the vagina is regularly washed it does not smell offensive unless there is something wrong, in which case a doctor ought to be consulted. What all these preparations offer is confidence, although consumer surveys have shown that this is what they least warrant.
If men are cocksure then perhaps women could manage a kind of sexual pride of their own. There is no sign in our society of the naive pride of the seventeenth century wanton singing the praises of her fine deep fringed bag. In fact there is considerable dread among women of having a large vagina, although it is every man's desire to have a large penis. Women never think of the marvellous strength and elasticity of their vagina, or the amazing powers and constant activity of the womb. They have been happy to call attention to their breasts and other erogenous zones in their manner of dress, but the mons veneris and its neighbouring precincts have received very little in the way of glamourising treatment until recently, when jewelled girdles worn over tight trousers of scintillating or lustrous fabrics have become more or less commonplace, especially in the glossier magazines. Generally the tendency to obliterate the external female genitalia in pictorial representation is accompanied by a real lack of spontaneous interest in them. Any woman who has undergone any kind of abdominal surgery can bear witness to the casualness of the treatment given to her most sensitive areas. A nurse with a blunt razor and a bowl of cold water came within the breadth of a layer of skin to performing an inadvertent clitorectomy upon me a mere five years ago. I prefer to remember with pride how one of the best gynaecologists in England told me that I had a beautiful cervix!

It is a sad fact that most women are more or less unaware of their internal genitalia, the womb, the fallopian tubes and
the ovaries, until something goes wrong with them. It seems rare that a woman should live her life without some trouble from her reproductive equipment; too many women die from cancer of the vulvae, cervix and vagina. The attitudes of our society to this equipment may be partly responsible for what goes wrong with it, or at any rate for the late diagnosis of conditions which had trivial beginnings. Nevertheless it is heartening to remember that although there are literally scores of ailments which women suffer from which men can never get, and few which they have which we cannot also suffer from, women live longer than men. Only a small proportion of gynaecological ills are grave in their symptoms or their effects, although doctors still seem cavalier in their treatment of ailments which only occasion what they call discomfort or inconvenience.

Primitive peoples have very strange ideas about the womb, thinking of it as a sort of anarchic, free-moving creature with a life of its own, which demands to be propitiated or else it wrecks its unfortunate hostess with convulsions and suffocations. This belief is responsible for the strange history of the evil called after the womb, hysteric.

That the mother (as they call it) gets into the throats of married women and maids is by thousands believed to be a truth; yea, that the string of the mother is fast in the throat, and that the vein of the mother is also seated there ... Yea the mother can also (say they) in some women be translated into other parts of the body ... But it may very well come to pass, that the
womb being charged with blood and stale seed, from whence arise foul and ill-conditioned damps, these damps do swell the bowels, and occasion some rising, whereby the Patient can breathe either not at all, or with great difficulty; which maketh Women think from the swelling of the Muscles of the throat, that they are in danger of suffocation. Where you may take notice, that Maids and Widows are most troubled there with, and Married Women least; a good Husband being the best remedy for this distemper.

So the vicissitudes of the womb were seen to be responsible for almost all the psychosomatic symptoms in the calendar. It is described as Emolentia uteri, aestus muliebre, suffocationem hypochondriacum, and involves ventriculum, sensus globi in abdomen se volventis, ad ventriculum et fauces ascendentis, ibique stratumulantis; senor, convulsiones; urinae limides corda profusa; animus, nec sponte, variae et mutabiles, and even hororvomiti, maus, flatusque ex sono. In some cases it was identified with menstrual pain, nimium immediate affectus hujus causae sunt uteri convulsivii motus, a dolore & vellicationes fibrorum nervosissime excitati, cum spiritum lammore, torpor et perturbationes. Hippocrates supplied the justification for the belief that this imposing array of symptoms, which also included headache, arose from the womb ...

Est femineo generi pars una uterum omnium morborum

and it was referred to as that most atrocious scourge of the weaker sex. Many of the symptoms were clearly hysteric, many those of colic, nervous dyspepsia, migraine, and of course the rigidity, arching and breath-holding that today are still described in the word derived from
the Greek for womb, hysteria. When the same symptoms appeared in
men they were called hypochondria, and in some cases ascribed to
self-abuse, but women were seen to be at the mercy of the insatiable
womb, which demanded coition. Like the doctrine of the humours,
which resembles modern endocrinology, this doctrine has an odd
similarity to the Freudian theory of repression, based upon
purely empirical observation, but we would be more impressed with
its value if it made any reference at all to tight lacing and
the desperate desire of the unattached and therefore insignificant
female to call attention to herself.

The ellipsis in this argument is inevitable, given the
assumptions that men made about the nature of women. The emotional
damage resulting from oppression is seen as a reason for continuing
that repression. Women are the hysterical sex, not fit to govern
their own lives. Because they were always more or less prey to
anxiety symptoms, these are considered universal among women; because
the womb is also universal among women, and its movements are secret,
it is logical to ascribe this instability to its fluctuations. When
the same symptoms appeared in men they were called by another name
and their psychic origin was correctly recognised. It took Freud
to discern that hysteria in males and females was the same phenomenon.
A student of mine collapsed in an examination this year with cramps
and uncontrollable weeping, as a direct result of the pressure of
a way of life that she found completely joyless and laborious,
because she was not interested in any of the topics she was studying
and forced herself to work much more than other students out of guilt
and a misplaced feeling of responsibility. Nevertheless her case was
described as *hysteria*, and its aetiology left unexamined, because she was a girl; another useless sacrifice on the educational pyre, from which we can learn nothing about the inadequacy and inappropriateness of our methods and preoccupations.

In virgins the 'mother' was more frequently referred to as 'green-sickness', an illness which was seriously discussed by all doctors from Hippocrates down to the authors of the medical chapbooks of the nineteenth century.

The inclination of maids to marriage may be known by many symptoms; for when they arrive at puberty, which is about the fourteenth or fifteenth year of their age, then their natural purgations begin to flow; and the blood, which is no longer to augment their bodies, abounding, stirs up their minds to venery... and the use of this so much desired enjoyment being denied to virgins, many times is followed by dismal consequences; such as the green vessel, colic, short breathing, trembling of the heart etc.

This appeared in 1779; within a century the prevailing ideology had changed so much that it was assumed that women felt no strong sexual desires at all, although the usual assumptions were made about the eventual 'drying up' and general derangement of old maids. The green-sickness, as it was called, was universally acknowledged in girls from the earliest times until the nineteenth century. No analogue was adduced for men, probably because a measure of wenching was assumed to follow puberty, while girls were more efficiently controlled. It was so-called because it lent to the face a greenish pallor, and was accompanied by headache, palpitations, unusual beating and throbbing of the arteries in the
temples, at the back of the neck, a loathing of meat, swollen abdomen, thighs, legs and ankles, and general lassitude. 'The first thing necessary to vindicate the cause is matrimonial conjunction...!' for girls over sixteen leeches might be applied to the ankles or the arm, and a purge was common. The mixture of physical and somatic elements can be found here also. Often there was genuine obstruction of menstruation, caused by a variety of undiagnosed ills, which intercourse and childbirth did either aggravate or dispel. The lovesickness which maidens fall into and die of was of this same kind, but with a specific object. Pity the poor girl dying of peritonitis who has it universally construed that she died of love! She might even believe it herself, considering only that she had not yet met the man for whom her body was so painfully yearning. Despite the confident prescription of the penis as a universal specific, it was a commonplace that breeding women were always poorly, and given the rigours of pregnancy and childbirth and the prudery and brutality of midwifery it is hardly surprising. The feebleness of the female principle in these centuries of all-male society can be partly put down to the short life and miserable health of most women, for whom the hazards of venereal disease and puerperal fever were increased by the debility caused by indolence and corsetry in the upper classes, and backbreaking labour in the lower. Any work on obstetrics written before 1830 contains details of female anguish so horrible that they need hardly be quoted, caesarians performed on conscious women by barbers, fragments of the skeletons of long dead foetuses emerging through abdominal
fistulas; which makes it more wonderful that women retained any remnant of sexual desire, and yet it was not questioned...what women would have accepted of the embraces of a man, considering the turmoil and tediousness of going nine month with Child, the most painfull and often fatall bearing of it, and its education full of care and anxiety, unless the Genitals had been affected in the act with transporting pleasure?

Women no longer live in the atmosphere of the charnel house, although gynaeology is in many ways an ordeal still. Prolapses can be cured, venereal disease and tuberculosis are under control, curettage has dealt with the problem of retained foetuses or placenta and continual haemorrhage, puerperal fever is virtually unknown, and on top of it all we don't have to bear children if we don't want to. Men have liberated us to that extent, with the result that we are now capable of liberating ourselves. The self-perpetuating ideology of women's subjection has been broken down for us on the grounds of humanitarianism and medical progress, but some of the secrets of female vitality which can be discovered in any tract against women as delinquents in the male society are further from us now than they were when women's lives were as cheap as rabbits'.

However I must not fall into the error of most books about women, which is to discuss them mainly in terms of their reproductive function, and must instead resume the creep down the female body. Because of the wider angle of the female hips and sacrum, if women stand with ankles and knees touching they are more likely than men to be knock-kneed, especially if their knees are plump. Therefore
it is supposed, they cannot run. Many women do a kind of waddling
trot when they should run, but this is not so much because of an
actual inability to run as a sort of odd modesty about flopping
about. Most women carry things, and wear restricting garments
which prevent the development of a free gait. They can run, at
least as well as most men, but they don't. Out of high heels and
tight skirts, and without handbags and hats, they can run all right,
which is why they wear all that gear in the first place. Men will
not tolerate too many Atalantes.

Female extremities are supposed to be small and dainty. While
foot-binding is probably not on, women do wear ill-fitting shoes and
shopgirls do totter if they take sizes beyond the manufactured
range. Hands and feet are meant to imply uselessness, and women
have paid the price. Their limbs ought to be in proportion, but
atrophy is preferable and therefore wrongly designated as normal.

Another physical difference between the sexes of which we
hear a great deal, is the celebrated subcutaneous fat. It is
assumed that women may wear decolletage and in general wear very
much less in the way of clothes than men because they are insulated
by a layer of fat beneath the skin. It ought to be noticed, however,
that this layer of fat will thicken in response to continued
exposure, as the mini-skirt wearers discovered when their thighs
thickened. Moreover, constant wrapping in warm fabrics causes a
corresponding wastage in the tissues, as men demonstrated when they
first began to wear bathing costumes, and their withered scrawny
legs were exposed to the world. Moreover it is not true that men
do not have subcutaneous fat, simply that it tends to be more evenly
distributed in women. Again we are dealing with a cultural phenomenon; plumpness was a desirable characteristic of the feminine:

There is something alien and repellant in very angular and flat surfaces in women, such as appear among certain primitive races, owing to overwork and poor living at an age when European women are still in the prime of life. ... The adipose layer may be considered a most important secondary sexual character in women. It produces the tapering roundness of the limbs, the curves of throat, nape and shoulders, the swelling of bosom and curving roundness of buttocks; all the characteristic signs of womanhood. This adipose layer also produces the smooth cushioned shape of the knee, which differs so markedly from the masculine form. And the massive roundness (which sometimes appears disproportionate) of the upper thighs in women, tapering rapidly toward the smooth dimpled knee, is caused by the same fatty layer.

In fact most fat is deposited in plump people in this subcutaneous layer; what is reflected here is the assumption that attractive women are plump, while men are scrawny. The distribution of fat is an endocrine phenomenon, and is connected with hormone activity, but not exclusively, and not in the way suggested by this account as intrinsically feminine.

There is another aspect of the mythology of the female body which we might exploit. The body of the infant is very much more erogenous than that of the fully conditioned adult, and women are
said to retain infantile characteristics of skin sensitivity and responsiveness to contraction, or cuddling. In other words, the kind of localization of the sexual response to a single area and its conversion to a limited activity as noticed by Marcuse, is less well established in the female, whose body has not been so ruthlessly adapted to labour and the performance principle.

The sex has considerable effect upon the vitality of the cutis. In general the animal part of this vitality is more excited in females, with whom everything belonging to sensations is proportionally more striking than in man, whose superiority rests in the power of muscles destined for locomotion. The effects of tickling are much more powerful in females. All arts requiring nicety and delicacy of touch, are cultivated with success by the fair sex. The peculiar texture of the corium, a texture in general of superior delicacy ... contributes undoubtedly to this phenomenon. ... Women in general have more resemblance to children in their phenomena of sensible organic contractility.

Bichat does not mean this as praise, for he is seeing it ultimately as a justification for the continuance passiveness of the fair sex, but we can find in it evidence that we have escaped the delibidinising effects of conditioning for a work ethic. It may be that our bodies have remained more unified, more responsive to polymorphous pleasure and proximity. Certainly women are permitted in our society to oil and powder themselves, to pamper themselves in
perfumed baths and cover their bodies with fabrics which are pleasant on the skin, and not merely practical. The male hippies have demanded this increase of gratification for themselves, and have reclaimed the sensual pleasures of soft, rushing raiment, in proportion as they drop out of the performance ethic. Perhaps we have been compensated for our castration, by our elevation as sensual if not sexual animals, and we may contribute a great deal to the rescue of the human race if we can lead man back from his postures of aggression and violence, into a multi-faceted sensuality which is incompatible with destruction. For body cannot be separated from the soul; at least I am sure it is so for women. At all events matters not immediately anatomical have intruded upon this discussion of the female body: it is another index of the power of the female principle that I shall not be able to keep all mention of the physical out of the discussion of the female soul.
Capped teeth bite gingerly, and painted lips arch themselves away from food, and taint what food they touch. Swags of bought hair affect the balance of the head, and slow down the turning of the neck. The feminine idol does not see, but is seen, does not touch, but is felt, does not eat but is eaten, does not pay but costs. The same media which are changing the quality of experience for a new generation are disseminating her image more rapidly and more widely than ever happened before. She is the universal beloved and the universally unattainable. For the men who are in love with her, there can be scant pity; she appears at their side occasionally, to show that she is bought and paid for, she wets her already gleaming lips and smiles beside objects they want to sell, to men and women alike, and she sells them. Because of the efficiency of the communication of her image, it changes rapidly to sustain interest, clad in leather, silk, skin, fur, trousers, floating skirts, uniforms, nothing at all, Indian, Chinese, Mexican, Eurasian, black, languid, laughing, cruel, romantic, cute, impressive, mysterious, always perfect, lustrous, luscious, never a wart, wen, mole, freckle, pimple, frown, reddened eye, wrinkle, scar or bruise. Women are in love with her. Perhaps not one model, not one photograph quite makes it, for women will find fault with what they spend hours trying to emulate, nevertheless the feminine idol is their dearest beloved.

The attempt to define the identifying traits of the female mind is as old as psychology itself. More than half a century of testing has failed to reveal a clear-cut consistent difference in any of the intellectual activities of the sexes, so the question of whether the mind has any sex is yet to be answered. The unconditioned
mind does not exist: even the experiments on tiny babies revealing differences in skin susceptibility and motor activity were not performed upon entirely unconditioned creatures, and the results are not impressive in any case. Money and Hampson decided from their observation of children with the adrenogenital syndrome (females with male external genitalia) that children are the sex that they are brought up to be, for the children correctly identified as girls knew that they were girls, and the boys incorrectly so-called were equally secure in the conviction that they were boys. A more recent study of intersexual and transsexual cases complicates the picture but does not remove the possibility that Money and the Hampsons were right. Certainly a child's consciousness of his sex role does not depend upon his having a penis, or a clitoris or a vagina, but on the other hand he often clings to a sex which his circumstances and treatment have sought to belie which endocrinologically speaking turns out to be the right one. The part played by biology in determining sexual characteristics is simply not known. The complex relationships of the somatopsychic do not yield up their secrets so soon.

Moreover there is an inbuilt conservatism factor in the medico-psychological test situation. Adjustment and the concept of the norm are necessary assumptions for such testing. Martians will discover more about our concepts of masculinity-femininity from the tests than they will from the results. Moreover in discussing the intellectual gifts of men and women it is important to bear in mind the level of general culture attained by the tester. The notion of genius which Terman and his helpers had is certainly not mine: the following poem is proudly quoted as an indication of the exceptional
gifts of Sarah:

The Virgin

Her pride subdued by shyness, or by art,
The maiden walks; the whispers of her heart
Only betrayed by the elusive rose
Upon her cheek. Through all her being flows
A consciousness of happy innocence
And youth more sweet for its impermanence.

Eager to live, yet fearing to be caught
On life's rude turbulent flood, wise though untaught,
Aware of all she is designed to be,
She savors and delays her destiny.

All that this vapid, posturing rhetoric can testify to is

Sarah's glibness and facility in emulation. University teachers
have good reason to mistrust the evidence of school performance
in indicating intellectual ability, for, as Sarah's case indicates,
what most people learn in school is how to stop learning, discovering
and creating, and get taught. Nevertheless, bearing in mind such
disquieting factors, we can glean from the psychological
statisticians some carefully understated observations which may
be taken as indication that the general tendency of my argument is
correct. In the pre-school years there is little difference between
the abilities of boys and girls; if anything little girls are quicker
at learning to count and read. By school age however, the boys
begin to overtake the girls. Girls continue to get better grades in
school, although they do not perform so well in tests.

For both sexes there is a tendency for the
more passive-dependent children to perform
poorly on a variety of intellectual tasks,
and for independent children to excel . . .

... subjects who refuse to accept authority
do considerably better on the E.F.T...

For girls, by contrast (with boys) the crucial
factor in the development of I.Q. appears to
be relative freedom from maternal restriction -
freedom to wander and explore.

... girls are more conforming, more suggestible and more dependent upon the opinion of others, than boys.

The general picture is consistent with the idea of docile industry producing good academic results for little girls, but limiting the development of their actual intellectual ability. The evidence for cross-sex-typing as a correlate of intellectual abilities is stronger for women than for men, which we could take to mean that more of the attributes of intellectual ability are ascribed to the male side of the polarity, which might then help us to understand a phenomenon which McKinnon found puzzling, that 'a girl should have to repress her masculine tendencies more strongly than a boy does his feminine tendencies', for he sees the limitation of the girl's mental processes as stemming from repression, which has a generalised effect upon thought processes, interfering with the accessibility of the individual's own previous experiences. An individual who is using repression as a defence mechanism cannot be, to use McKinnon's term, 'fluent in scanning thoughts'. McKinnon has evidence that creativity is in fact associated with the absence of repression (as indicated through personality assessment tests) and Barron reports that originality is associated with 'responsiveness to impulse and emotion'.

As I hope to illustrate in a fashion which these learned gentlemen would not accept for an instant, the repression practised both upon and by the girl, is a repression of the energy of the mind and body itself, of 'masculine' tendencies which are tendencies which are denied the female, those powers of mind which are inseparable from libido, which the Freidians identify as masculine. The nature of the joke played upon women is becoming clearer. Catch 22 is not more diabolical.
Despite the difficulties which have prevented an army of investigators from devising a description of inherent differences between the male and female mind, an enormous gulf yawns between male and female achievement. If there had been a female Bach or Beethoven, the anti-feminists argue, she would have flourished despite all the curbs and obstacles. The whole point of conditioning is that it prevents a Bach or a Beethoven from coming into being. It is no indication of what the female mind could accomplish to say that so far it hasn't accomplished it. It is obvious by now that no amount of testing is going to produce an ontogenic cause for the absence of female achievement. But why should a woman achieve, why should she accept the male discipline of school and university, or concert hall or studio, when her reward will be to be considered freakish? On every hoarding, every can, every pressure pack, every shop window, every television screen, every cinema, the feminine fetish smilingly dissuades her. After all, for doing nothing, simply being, she is offered all the rewards of our civilisation - fame, fortune, love, security, power, and praise. She is not happy or unhappy, satisfied or dissatisfied, she has no desires and no duties, she need produce nothing, not even, at least in England, babies. The power of her image is unlimited and utterly limiting. Men strip themselves to grey flannel convict suits, and bestow all the plunder of the markets of the world and the refinements of the new technology to adorn her. In return she spends their money on toys for the childhood world to which they may return as their reward for drudging their hours away in the productive machine. Custom-built cars, deep freezers, diamond bracelets, babies, are her toys. There is real horror in the situation, for
whole nations are infatuated with this ideal which does not exist. She is more tantalising than la belle dame sans merci, for she is genuine walking, talking phantom, infinitely variable but eternally unchanged, without smell but perfumed, without flesh but ultra-plastic. She is the embodiment of sexual inauthenticity. For despairing love of her girls grow fat, acneous, thin, querulous, insipid, withdrawn: those who can manage to masquerade as the feminine idol for a few hours a day practise the duplicity of woman/feminine, but every time they dress up, paint or unpaint their eyes, every time they menstruate, every time they apply deodorant, every time they feel a passionate desire to embrace, they know they do not make it. Moreover, as their real duties grow more and more menial and irksome, they are torn by new contradictions. As they grow older, and the struggle to emulate their beloved image grows tougher, when it becomes a matter of tip-tilting breasts and stretching away bags and wattles, when hair grows thinner and bleaching more disastrous, when legs become knobby and crepey, old desires which were sacrificed for the easy rewards offered to the feminine mammet appear again more insistently than before.

Disillusionment may set in at any time, for some women realise early that they cannot make it, others, much fewer, that they do not want to. They take up old enquiries, cultivate new interests, but their attitude is barbaric. They try to plunder knowledge, to coquette with mental disciplines. The habit of narcissism is too strong to be overcome by merely willing to: they are sterile, querulous, bored.

It would appear that lots of women see through this fantasm, that I have exaggerated the problem. I don't think so. Even intelligent women, who ought to have explained our condition as John Stuart Mill besought them to, have explained womanhood in
terms of the feminine idol. Those who rejected her, embraced masculine ideals in a masculine fashion, because they thought that femininity exhausted femaleness. What they did not understand is that the principal instrument in the incultation of the idolatry of the feminine is direct castration of the female. Female desire, female power and female energy are not outlawed, but denied to exist. Insofar as she feels rebellious the little girl is a freak. Her energy puts up protests of varying intensity until puberty, then suddenly it is extinct. The feminine fantastic is in full power. It is not that the girl's energy is punished, although it may be. It is simply that it is ignored, given fewer and fewer outlets, while passivity, coyness, sweetness, softness, shyness, gentleness are all rewarded. The stereotype is built into our understanding of language. We can hardly form a concept of woman without reference to it. As a tiny girl I was so impressed by the dichotomy that I believed for a long time that all cats were female and all dogs male, because cats were soft, withdrawn and elegant and dogs were messy, extroverted, noisy and active. Insofar as I knew that I was female, I knew I had to be more like the cat than the dog. In fact a female child early learns that approximation to the feminine idol is her real goal, and no matter how fat, pasty, pimply and plain she is, there are moments when she finds herself adorable, when she stands in front of the bathroom mirror with her towel wound up around her head and her eyebrows raised, looking at her reflection with unfocussed eyes, loving what she sees and what Mr Right will one day see as well. Beauty is her highest achievement; what power can schoolmistresses with their straining faces and dusty clothes bring to bear against the effortless feminine? They are losers in the female battle, and school is a conspiracy to put their young
vanquishers out of the race. Some of the teachers may be young, sunny and beautiful but the headmistress is certain not to be. Schoolgirls speak cruelly of their teachers, regarding them as innocents or perverts or frustrated old hags. The cruelty and injustice of their observation can be best explained in terms of their fealty to another image. While they seek love and approbation from their teachers, and retain their own energy to express, which cannot be indulged by the daydreams of the feminine fetish, they make (often furtive) efforts to work and achieve distinction in the schoolroom ethic as well as the feminine battleground, but even this aim succumbs when our little person arrives at the status of sexual object. The feminine idol is the only sexual object, because she herself is without libido, so the little girl's masturbation fantasies are principally focussed on her, and thereby her ideal bathroom-mirror self. The essential narcissistic-masochistic limitation on female sexuality is fully established, except that the will to love sometimes persists until it is finally stamped out in heterosexual and other adventures. In a year or two she will know that her only power henceforth is to refuse; she will build up a whole economic system on a principle of staged, controlled refusal. When she was born, the little girl was a person; by the time she is eighteen she has become a thing, in her own and others' estimation. The part that estimates and manipulates her own thing-ness is the stump of her individual energy. At various stages in her life she may try to redevelop this, when thing-ness has ceased to be rewarding, or has simply failed. It may be possible to de-castrate a physical eunuch, but the mental eunuch is in a worse position. No-one can find the organ she has lost; she was neutralised almost before she knew desire. In her attempt to reintegrate her personality
she will be looking for a lost part of herself, not for external reality. When she examines her own quest, she may see that she is seeking a lost organ of her own, rather than external reality which she has no faculty to comprehend until she finds what she has lost, and then she imagines with horror that it is a penis that she seeks, for in the realm of the feminine idol there is only one sexual organ, the phallus, which services the sexless object. Not a single authority to whom she can turn can reassure her that she has a self and satisfactions of her own to seek. Even among the psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists, male or female, the feminine idol holds court.

I have strained credulity long enough with this theme. It is time to describe how this maiming is affected, in an attempt to indicate where the female, considered as antithetic to feminine, principle might lie impotent. What follows is addressed to the delinquent in every woman, and to the suppressed desire for the delinquent woman which disturbs the dreams of men.

The notion of energy that I use throughout this chapter and the rest of this book is deliberately unspecified. It is the faculty of the psyche which impels activity, both physical and mental, and it cannot be denied in any of its operations without damage or distortion of the whole psychic balance. Whether I call it elan vital, like McDougall, or libido, like Jung and Reich, or tension, like Janet, or vigilance, as Head does, or general orctic energy, as Flügel does, makes very little difference in the long run. However it is clear that I make certain other presuppositions: just as the power of the body is adversely affected by unequal exercise of its parts, which D.H. Lawrence saw as the great deformity of industrial civilisation, so the mind ultimately suffers if curbs are put upon
the free exercise of energy. Just as confinement and enforced inactivity weaken the body, deprivation of varied contacts with reality debilitates the spirit. It is the worst extreme of the Cartesian solcism to suppose that energy deflected from expressing itself in one area of cognition, will serve to strengthen mental activity of another kind.

Freud believed that the personality was a closed system with a limited amount of energy to dispose of, and that the principle of the conservation of energy applied. Energy not invested in one activity is said to be withdrawn from that field and reinvested somewhere else, so that the new activity is enriched by the energy transferred to it. The economy governing performance then is a capitalist one. The notion that energy can be husbanded and properly invested is as fantastic as the Victorian fantasy correctly identified by Stephen Marcus, that vigour not wasted in shedding semen went to build a strong bodily frame. No-one is born with an initial capital of energy which he must invest wisely, any more than he has a fixed amount of semen which he must be sure not to squander. It is absurd to suppose that a man would make a better painter if you cut his legs off, and it is equally absurd to suppose that the limitations which the growing girl daily encounters in all fields of activity and enquiry strengthen her for some mysterious avocation as wife and mother. The limitation upon a girl-child's energy begins, as soon as she is born, just as it does for a boy, but the boy is eventually encouraged to be independent and exercise his specially contoured energy, while her restriction is intensified until she can be relied on to continue it herself after puberty and all her life.

It is not even a question of cutting off one limb so that
another may flourish, however misguided it may be to treat human beings like fruit-trees. The aim of female conditioning is total impotence. As a teacher, I am convinced that 'l'appetit vient en mangeant', indeed I might reformulate the old saying as 'l'appetit ne vient qu'en mangeant'. If you starve a girl-child's hunger for the world long enough, it will cease to exist. By the time girls are eighteen, unless they are extraordinary survivals, they have lost appetite, desire, energy and joy. This is the reason why female emancipation never happened. Women are not interested. The cage has been opened, but the canary will not fly out, and so it is shut again, and his master says 'He doesn't want to get out' and imagines his continued captivity to be thereby justified.

In the palmy days of unified sensibility, the word used for sexual activity was knowledge, and without broaching the never satisfactorily accounted for Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden, we might profitably consider love as a mode of cognition. Many attempts have been made to reunify understanding and love, which must also be attempts to break down the characteristic Freudian explanation of love as dependent upon over-stimulation of the love object and fixation on it, a situation which does not involve increase of understanding or the acquisition of new information. When the hippie says 'You dig?' he is not merely using a jargon which will signify his adherence to a group, for the word means 'understand-and-therefore-like-and-like-and-therefore-understand'. Another terms with the same resolved duality is to be into something or somebody, which is to say, to be deeply interested in and exploring something or somebody. It does not connote the usual idea of mastering the subject, of being an expert, in the sense that the subject now has to consult
the knower to make sure that it is still the subject. Notions like these are at the basis of the current dissatisfaction with traditional education. The students' demand to follow a line of enquiry which they have discovered for themselves might be justified in the same way that Montessori defended the autonomy of her bambini; the distinction between work and play becomes meaningless, because the occupation itself is regenerative and recreative. Energy is not expended in such a self-chosen task, but stimulated. The child reveals powers and resources that had never before appeared, performs feats which are said to be beyond him. His natural tendency is towards complete efficiency which is the incarnation of all his potentialities. What he discovers exists in his mind of itself and for himself, and not some ulterior purpose of gaining prestige or mastery over men or materials. It is the relationship which Martin Buber called I-thou, the awareness which hippies try to rescue from the anaesthesia imposed by our civilisation, so abnormally efficient in all its operations, by the use of drugs, most of which simply provide the excuse for the return of the mind to its natural mode of knowing. The situation is difficult to describe in our language, but the current interest in eastern philosophies stems from a desire to develop a concept of human mental activity which cannot be excelled by a computer. The emotions are being revalued, and some form of reunified sensibility is sought. The male's attitude to the universe is essentially one of exploring, mastering, controlling, while the female seems to have no attitude to it at all. The state of both is the result of the operation of our civilisation upon the infant, who, as even Freud admitted, knows and loves everything about him.

There is much to suggest that when human beings acquired the powers of conscious attention and rational thought they became so fascinated with these new tools that they forgot all else, like
chickens hypnotised with their beaks to a chalk line. Our total sensitivity became identified
with these partial functions, so that we lost the
ability to feel nature from the inside, and more,
to feel the seamless unity of ourselves and the
world. Our philosophy of action falls into the
alternatives of voluntarism and determinism, freedom
and fate, because we have no sense of the wholeness
of the endless knot and of the identity of its
actions and ours. As Freud said:

'Originally the ego includes everything, later it
detaches itself from the external world. The ego-
feeling we are aware of is thus only a shrunken
vestige of a far more extensive feeling – a feeling
which embraced the universe and expressed an
inseparable connection of the ego with the external
world.'

Moreover, Freud also believed that 'Love with an inhibited
aim was originally full sensual love and in men's subconscious mind
is so still,' which seems a further proof that the integrated
personality, unlimited in any of its functions, has a capacity for
response and absorption which it later loses. Wordsworth's description
of the journey away from empathy which the growing boy makes does not
seem so far wrong. Certainly the infant's powers of learning are
enormous. Girls have a slight edge over boys in the rapidity with
which they accomplish the first and most Herculean task of the
human intellect, learning to talk, although it is sad to notice
that in cases which are not as rare as they should be, even this
self-initiated enterprise is perverted and foiled. The baby's first
instinct is to love and emulate, the best way of gaining information,
but he is equally disposed to love and emulate of his own accord.
What actually happens is that he is treated as mother's new penis.
Most of the time he is made to sleep, so that all the receptive powers
of his little supersensitive body, to which all contact, all stimulus
which is not painful is pleasurable and interesting, are spent on
the familiar feelings of his bedcovers and his developing sight on
the walls of his bassinet. When he is not asleep he is supervised unnecessarily and given special objects which provide him with false information, most of which, like the rattling beads strung across his pram, are meant to act as hypnotics. Nowadays the treatment of the baby as a phallic extension of the mother does not go so far as swaddling him into a rigid cigar-shape, but other forms of swaddling are still prevalent. The most significant and delightful form of information, the bodily contact of the people he loves, is that which is most specifically denied him, especially if he is bottle-fed. Despite the fact that we see him learning with his fingers and his mouth, hooting with joy in his bath as his whole body feels varying sensations of hotness, wetness, coolness, dryness, powder, nakedness, other's hands all over it, holding, patting, stroking, probing, we do not learn what his wisdom shows us. What we offer him is not love, like the spontaneous interest and tenderness he offers to us and any other people he knows, but an exclusive relationship, loaded with conditions and exclusions. The degree of success in limiting the scope of the child's confident enquiry can be measured by a momentary consideration of the large number of coy, petulant infants who refuse information by hiding their faces in mother, and at the same time exploit mother's desire for unique and undisputed dominion in their own desire for power, which has replaced the spontaneous desire for knowledge which is love. Baby would not have to spend so much time in his cot if he were allowed to investigate more promiscuously and if he had access to a wider range of people than mother. The principle that becomes operative is the same one that saps the industrial vitality of the welfare state: baby is kept free from exertion, pain and deprivation, but he is allowed no liberty, left
with no incentive to do anything but keep still. Nevertheless, the desire to live is stronger than the pressures of repression: sooner or later he forces his parents to stop treating him as a cross between a toy and an invalid or a work of art, and his decorative garments are laid aside for rompers, in which he miraculously preserves some desire to romp. But now he has become naughty and active: mother withdraws a large measure of her sympathy, and prohibition becomes the familiar situation especially connected with raids on the unknown. No-one is really interested in him, although any suggestion that this necessarily meant that none loved him would be hysterically denied. Days of unrelieved boredom alternate with crises like visits to the shopping centre, when his arm is dragged from its socket and unfamiliar legs and bags and buggies thunder past him. Mother is both his first love and his first hate. The Oedipal situation is a direct result of the nuclear family and this intensification, limitation and confusion of the child's interests. The little boy is more or less emancipated from the eye-to-eye confrontation with his mother when he begins to go to school and his independence is fostered, but the little girl, for whom the problems have been the same, remains close to her. She may be dependent upon her, and need her sanction and approval and even guidance for all she does, but this was not a feature of that first infantile love, and it is not really related to that kind of love-understanding. Where discipline of the boy is probably handed over to his father, the little girl is still exposed to the diurnal carpings of her mother, which themselves follow the pattern of mother's own frustrations and disappointments rather than any principle of equity or reason. Boys eventually learn to handle their mothers, partly because they can manage to keep out of their way.
Usually the worst that father can do to his daughter is to be indifferent to her, a crime which children forgive more readily than destructive interference. The Oedipal situation exists most significantly for adults probably. My brother learnt at an early age how to cope with my mother, and actually managed to curb the more striking manifestations of her hysteria, because she was more submissive and more inclined to treat him as a person than either of her daughters, whom she liked no more than she did herself, and of whom she was perceptibly jealous. The very fact that girls 'take more bringing up' than boys is a cause for resentment and persecution, for all oppressions are carried out by the oppressed.

The justification for the degree of parental interference with daughters is the same one that applied for the baby-protection. In the name of protection, the growing girl will be encouraged to spend most of the time when she is not at school at home, despite the known fact that the great majority of accidents occur in the home, and she will be taught to fear the world at large, on grounds which are darkly hinted but never specified. The prohibition is irrational on many grounds. First of all it does not work, because sexual deviates are not so resourceful that they cannot waylay little girls even when they are limited to the scope of activities that protectiveness will sanction. Secondly, the sexual assaults suffered by little boys are much more damaging because they so frequently involve outrage and physical mutilation. Bit by bit little girls learn to regard themselves as objects for assault, and the subjects of some kind of lecherous regard by all strangers, and so the situation is perpetuated in which victims of the same system must prey upon them. In the Trobriands violation of children is unknown. The other result is that when the assault is offered the little girl can think
of no defence, because first of all she has no clear idea of what the threat is, and secondly she has been trained in a habit of submission. If she does talk to a stranger and he does turn nasty, she has asked for it, and is so afraid of reprisal that she keeps her shock a secret. In fact most children suffering any degree of sexual assault from the most mild to the most serious feel that they cannot tell their parents, either out of guilt or a feeling that the parents couldn't take it, so the whole purpose of the prohibitions and the limitations fails. Another factor in the haphazardness of the whole business is the too frequent occurrence of 'fates worse than death' within the family circle.

In this way, the limitation on the little girl's acquisition of information about the world is directly linked with the repression of her libido and her concept of herself as a passive victim of the sexuality of 'strange men'. That limitation may be more simply termed a limitation on her power to love and understand.

If infantile desires for reality are to be construed as sexual, then it is clear that I am not speaking of the urge as understood by Freud; detumescence is not the aim of these impulses to intimacy. But then it seems unlikely to me that the urge to detumescence is as important even in the adult as the urge to make pleasure and express love. In the highly sexed character, who might be understood not as the sexual-aggressive type but as a person whose impulses to tenderness are not crippled as efficiently as usual, detumescence itself is a pleasurable state, erection is provoked and maintained, and detumescence is postponed because of the pleasurable quality of the tension. On the other hand fetishes, masturbatory behaviour, and most socially sanctioned Saturday night marital sex are all governed by the urge to detumescence. The little children who flung their arms
around me in a school that I visited in Manchester to do a
television film did not kiss me so fully and forwardly on the mouth
because of an urge to detumesce, but because they wanted to know
me, my skin, my smell, the touch of my fur coat. When the desexua-
lisation of this urge is complete, we have the appalling phenomenon
of maddened spasm, when public figures have their clothes torn
off and their hair torn out. Between the wild and loving kisses of
the children and the brutal insults and familiarities of a football
crowd lies the tragedy of our civilisation. It is more clearly
described in The Bacchae. When Pentheus attempts to suppress the
Dionysiac orgies because of his prurient suspicion and anxiety of
what human beings will do if left to leap and dance and be
exhilarated unchecked, he first of all falls prey to his own
repressed tenderness and becomes a ludicrously impotent transvestite.
Then his behaviour turns the exultation of his womenfolk to murderous
frenzy in which he himself is torn to pieces and mania reigns in
a devastated land. What Dionysus offered was turning on, a trip
back into the potentialities of the body, and Pentheus reacted like
a well-trained boy, with an indistinct anxiety arising out of his
feeling that the body was evil. The baby is at one with its body:
he is not body and soul but somatopsyche, and any notion that his
body is evil or inimical is nonsensical. Among my earliest memories
is the fascination of watching a little girlfriend shitting, and
then letting her watch me. It was like peeping into a cupboard
that had never been opened before. By cooperating with each other,
we saw what otherwise we could never have hoped to see. I cannot
remember when I discovered that boys had a 'tiddley', but we must
still have been in that infantile condition of unified sensibility,
because we all bathed together naked at the seaside from the age
of a few months. Genital trauma seems most unlikely in such
circumstances. When I stood in a cupboard with a little boy and his bicycle lamp I was only impressed by the sweetness and softness of our baby genitalia. Anything seemed possible and all things exciting.

Most of my childhood pleasures were anticipatory. A mere holiday in the country caused physical thrills for months before it happened, expectation of a bosom and high heels was glorious. I felt heartily sorry for the boys who already had it all, and could look forward to no extra bonuses. Like most little girls, I exhibited my crutch to anyone who looked as if they would be interested, whipping down my little knitted skirts with elastic waistbands, with a great sensation of being daring and entertaining. Moreover, I used to befriend old tramps in the sea-front park that ran along in front of our apartment, and sit gravely with them, holding their flaccid old organs in my little hand, with as much affection as I could muster, and one eye on the kitchen window because instinct told me that my mother would have gone ratshit if she had seen me. I was famous for making friends easily, and once went for several hours walk with a young couple I liked. After my mother had beaten me savagely several times to instil mistrust of the world at large, for the usual twisted motives that mothers punish children who have caused them to harbour murderous fantasies by being independent, I stopped undoing old men's flies, but I wasn't frightened by exhibitionists who were numerous in our park than seagulls, until a man approached me once with a terrible smile and tried to stop me from running past with his arm. This was not a genital experience, but a child's intuition of evil, for the man was holding sweets like a bait and smiling horribly. I used to see him about, and would desperately try to tell people what he was up to, but because he didn't undo his flies, everybody thought he was
a pleasant chap.

I cannot have even seem my parents fucking, which is pretty unlikely on the face of it, but my father did not come home from the war until I was six and then he seems to have desired my mother pretty rarely. At all events when I was eight, someone blabbed to her mother about the love games four of us used to play in the sunroom on the roof of the apartment block, and we were all in the severest trouble. They were love games, for we used to inspect each other for a bit, and then lie very close and warm in the hot silent room, smelling each other’s hair, and rubbing our hot cheeks together, but our parents seemed to think we had been doing awful things, for they were obviously shocked and upset, and we were forbidden to see each other. We accepted their judgment, the summer holidays ended, the boys went back to their boarding schools and the myriad perversions thereto appertaining, and the girls went on with learning housework and taking flowers to school. The interesting thing is that a Jewish girl called Miriam who lived in the flat beneath us, asked me if I had let John or Michael put his little thing inside mine. I remember thinking that it was a very cute idea, and wondering why she had sniggered and whispered when she said it. It seemed a mere trick, an irrelevancy. Not an outrage, not a delicious immolation, just a neat thing to do, maybe. Thank heaven so many things were prohibited for my greater health, like chips, white bread, sweets, movies, that the sexual prohibition did not make it seem shameful, just another part of my mother’s prejudice against my pleasure, which was always obeyed and never accepted.

All of which makes it seem that I was a very cool, odd little girl, with a superhuman knack of turning my parents’ blunders into
advantages. Maybe. I believe that children are naturally strong and cool until the pressures get so heavy that their enormous powers of self-preservation are perverted into autism or anxiety or destruction. Children live flexibly. What they know experientially is so much more potent than what they are told to believe that they are accustomed to the constant duality and manipulate it more or less successfully most of the time.

If I had seen erect penises I might have had the right reaction, but I have never seen, in thirty years, an exhibitionist with an erection, and the boys, although tumescent, were hardly frightening. I remember the first time I saw a full-grown erect penis. A man was standing half way up the cliffs on our beach, drying himself in the bushes, with an enormous erection. My girlfriend and I clutched each other and moved closer to inspect it. I think we felt vaguely sorry for him, because it seemed so rigid and unmanageable, swaying from side to side as he rubbed himself dry. We were not shocked, not disgusted, but pleased that we had this extra piece of experience to knit in to what we already knew in the ludicrous clinical way. What we told each other about sex, crude and mistaken though it was, was much more real than our parents' long circumlocutions. The word fuck was true. Sexual intercourse had no referent. Now we had a true bit of knowledge to unite the real mystery of our word with the meaningless of the euphemism of authority. We began to feel how it was done, and we were grateful, if not satisfied. This is not the whole story: I was disgusted when I was told how babies were generated, but mainly I think because I couldn't imagine how my parents, who treated each other without respect or love, could do it together, except in some appalling way, lustfully with smiles like the man in the park. With them it was like the crude drawings on the corrugated iron walls of the public lavatory, but when I
thought of the sex I would have it was in terms of searing passion
and Gina Lollobrigida miming Nedda's aria in the film of Pagliacci.

The opportunities for such unsupervised exploration of the
world were few and far between. My official environment, like other
little girls', was home. At home the little girl receives her
training in domesticity. It is not like building a treehouse or
mending a bicycle. It is supervised work, for Mother is always
there, so it has not the same learning value as the process devised
by herself to achieve an end which she spontaneously desires. Her
leisure time is spent perforce in a sedentary fashion, reading,
dreaming, or playing with dolls. If she is lucky enough to have
older brothers she may be allowed to hang around with them, but
they will either baby her or resent her parasitic presence and
make her feel it... At school she sits unnaturally still and
unnaturally quiet, absorbed in the struggle to avoid boredom and
suppress restlessness, for a shadow of the love she carried with
her when she was born. Because there is no alternative independent
learning process which combines intellectual inquiry and discipline
with immediate experience, which boys find in their playing, girls
must fall for one or the other. If the sensual retains its hold,
they prefer to work with their hands, cooking, sewing, knitting,
but the creative element of their work is missing, so the master
cooks and tailors will be men; if they fall for the dessicated
academic routine, their sensual perceptions are suppressed and
channelled.

The following description of girls' behaviour in the learning
situation was made in 1903, but it is still the reason why any
university teacher who finds that his option is to be studied by
twelve girls feels his heart sink, and why one particular Cambridge
don who is quite interested in heterosex never invites women to
his weekly soirees.

At lectures women students are models of attention and industry; perhaps they even apply themselves too much to carrying home in black and white what they have heard. They generally occupy the front seats because they enter their names very early and then because they arrive early, well before the beginning of the lectures. Only this fact is noticeable, that often they merely give a superficial glance at the preparations which the professor passes around; sometimes they even pass them on to their neighbours without even looking at them; a longer examination would hinder their taking notes.

The preparations are the real subject of the lecture, but the girls do not want to learn — they want to be taught and so the subject escapes them. A famous professor of Anatomy at Melbourne University used to devise hideous pranks to jolt the girls in his classes out of their servility, but the only result was open hostility. They do not want to experience the fact for themselves, but only to satisfy the teacher's requirements. All creativity is gone, not because women have no need of it because they will bear children, but because it has stifled for want of space and encouragement to move and grow. It is too late now for a university teacher to goad it back to life. Women are prepared for drudgery, and the most inspiring work in their hands will become drudgery. The objects that they handle are not real and existential with a life and history of their own, but toys. They are not to be built up or broken down but played with. The routine of cleaning and straightening up and cooking and shopping is not work, but a kind of dreary self-perpetuating play. When it was exhausting its real character was obscured by its apparent effect. Now that it does not even exhaust the female, its real uselessness is too evident to be ignored. In our economy men suffer the same pain, but they more often invent ways of counteracting it in the
time that they may dispose of for themselves. Most housewives feel that none of their time is theirs to dispose of, or if it is, that they cannot manage to be creative in their disposition of it. D.H. Lawrence was occasionally right.

There is no point in work unless it absorbs you, like an absorbing game.
If it doesn't absorb you, if it isn't any fun, don't do it.
When the Hindus weave long lengths of stuff, with their thin dark hands
And their wide dark eyes and their still souls absorbed,
They are like trees putting forth leaf,
They are living, not merely working.

The futility is both a symptom and a cause in the continuing syndrome of female frustration. It is futile to vacuum the floors every day, but it is already neurotic to think that you must. As a little girl, I sometimes felt so helplessly thwarted at the chores I had to do that I used to scream softly over the sound of the vacuum cleaner. It was not that I had anything else to do; mother would often haul me inside to work because the 'devil finds work for idle hands to do'. It was just that the work had no end, no possible achievement, and no scope for variation. The carpet was always clean before I started, but mother was liable to leap in and claim that I had not done one bit properly. The noise drove out any thoughts I might have liked to entertain, and if my attention strayed I bumped the furniture or ran over a pin. Likewise I was likely to discover when I had almost finished washing up that mother felt like washing the skirtings down or cleaning the stove. Weeding was never ended, neither was hosing the garden. You just did all those chores until you were allowed to stop. I was the eldest child by six years, and so I got the boys' jobs too. What a difference! Clipping the hedge was wonderful, because it looked so lovely when it was done, and it was full of nests, old balls and
lost things, with even the threat of a venomous spider. Digging holes was even better. The smell of the earth and the way the layers changed, and the bits of old crockery that appeared were delightful. I used to dig until my whole body ached, and nothing was visible from outside but the mounds of loam all about the edge. I chopped all the hard logs that father refused to endanger his back over, with such abandon that the axe once bounced off a knothole and into my foot. The dangers of unlimited roaming paled into insignificance beside mother’s need for horse manure, and I used to toil around the neighbourhood for hours bringing back great tins of manure for which I was given a threepence, but I wasn’t in it for the money. Nevertheless I was so listless and despondent at home, that my mother when she first saw me leaping around on a public stage singing and dancing the Duke of Plaza-Toro in a school production of the Gondoliers, was convinced that my strength would never hold out. Indeed, if I had not been much better loved at school than at home, I might not have invented so many reasons to stay behind and produce plays, write poems, sing songs, design posters, and read and argue and steal bread and jam from the convent kitchen. If I have survived the feminine conditioning at all, I have this circumstance to thank. During the same period I learned three languages and how to read music. I am to some extent deviated still, but the small space I had to act in gave me a chance of correcting a good deal of my conditioning, although it was a slow and laborious process, fraught with hazards, any one of which could have thrown me back into all the sterile postures of femininity.

A single fact lies at the source of all deviations, viz. that the child has been prevented from fulfilling the original pattern of his development at the
formative age, when his potential energies should evolve through a process of incarnation ... thus welding the acting personality into unity. If this unity is not achieved, through the substitution of the adult for the child or through a want of motives of activity in his environment, two things happen: psychic energy and movement must develop separately, and a 'divided man' results. Since in nature nothing creates itself and nothing destroys itself, and this is especially true in the case of energies, these energies since they have to work outside the scope assigned to them by nature, become deviated ... They are deviated above all because they have lost their object and work in emptiness, vagueness and chaos. The mind that should have built itself up through experiences of movement, flees into fantasy.

Montessori believes that fantasy itself is an indication of deviation: Deutsch and Horney believe that it is not a deviation in the appentent female because it stimulates her narcissism and protects her until the social and physiological conditions are right for her impregnation. The Freudians cannot be refuted, for we have no completely unconditioned subject to illustrate our argument from - nevertheless if we simply reject the necessity of the situation and consider women as deviated people, thwarted of their desire for reality, an integrated desire which is also sexual, although not concerned with possession and power, we have a picture which seems easier to adapt to the other facts of modern life, the pill, total warfare and the decline of the family.

There is one aspect of the mental development of the female which all observers are agreed upon. Delaunay in 1900, Freud, Deutsch, Horney, Terman, all observers of female development notice that puberty gives a sharp boost to the decline of the girl's learning powers. Dr Chapman thinks that 'women are to be congratulated on being able to traverse this stage of life retaining any semblance of emotional stability.' For the Freudians this decline of energy in the girl is biologically determined: she
is passing her phallic phase and moving into the narcissistic-
machoistic passive period when she may be courted. Without for
the moment considering Freudian monosex, it would seem that there
are ample sources of conflict which are more demonstrable than the
secret ministry of biology.

I have a worry which is too embarrassing for
me to seek the advice of my mother. I sometimes
feel very lonely and simply long for a boyfriend.
I yearn for an experience which I have never
known. I know I am very young to be talking about
this sort of thing as I am only thirteen but I
can't help it and it reduces me to despair when I
think I have so long to wait. Please don't advise
me to forget about this desire because I can't
however much I try. My mind runs on it most of
the time. Please help me.

Obviously a case where the conditioning has not quite worked.
Although this woman-child knows that her desire is too embarrassing
to be revealed to her mother, nevertheless she is clearly aware of
its nature and origin. Somebody has not convinced her that she is
narcissistic and passive and that her feeling of unspecified desire
is masculine. On the other hand this child has been too successfully
conditioned.

I am the plain Jane in our family and just long
for beauty. When I go to the pictures and see
the beautiful girls it makes me nearly cry to
think I'm so unattractive. Can you help me? Is
there any way I could make myself attractive,
could you give me any beauty hints?

Any women's magazine can provide such instances of adolescent
girls battling with the difficulties of assuming their adult sex
role. The strain is expressed overtly in irritability, nightmares,
bed-wetting, lying, giggling, shyness and weeping, nailbiting,
compulsive counting, picking at sores and cuticles, or simply
increased introspection. New conflicts arise and conflicts which
have prevailed since infancy are exacerbated. Now the female child
confronts the requirements of femininity which she must learn to
conform to, and is in turn required to forget her pre-adolescent urges to develop her ego and make her own mark upon the world, which were the expression of her psychic energy. There is no parallel in girls' schools for the extensive polymorphous genital activity which goes on at boys' schools, activity which increases the divorce of such feelings from tenderness and involvement and stresses the mechanical quality of sexual specificity. The growing girl is encouraged to use her feminine charm, to be coy and alluring, but also to be blind to the real theatre in which these blandishments operate. Her strong desires to love become dissipated in passive fantasies, and their connection with sexuality is effectively obscured. Kinsey's statistics, that 90% of males masturbated and 62% of women at least once give a very imperfect idea of the actual difference in this kind of activity for boys and girls. Most affective neuroses in women make their first appearance at this stage, and can, I think, be directly related to the deeply contradictory nature of the roles that girls are expected to play. During this period a girl is expected to begin her dealings with men, dealings which are based upon her attractiveness as a sexual object, without consideration of her own sexual urge. If she fails in her manipulation of the situations in which she finds herself, either because of her unfitness to attract the marital prey, or her own susceptibility and desire, she turns to guidance. James Hemming studied the correspondence sent to a weekly periodical magazine, noticing that twice as many letters came from girls as from boys and that the great majority of them dealt with personal problems of adjustment. All the reasons he gives also apply.

What accounts for the sex difference is not clear. It may be that boys find it easier to adjust to a society which is still predominantly controlled by men in spite of the growing emancipation of women.
It may be that problems exist for the girl which the boy escapes because parents are more anxious about their adolescent daughters than about their adolescent sons. It may be that the girl's sensitivity in matters of personal relationships lays her open to more anxieties. It may be that she is more disturbed by the existing confusion of values than are boys. It may be that the girl's greater facility in expressing herself in words makes her more willing to write about personal problems. Or it may be what Dr Ian Suttie called 'our tabu on tenderness' makes boys shy about sharing their problems in case this should make them appear 'soft'. Whatever the reason, all research into problems of adolescence produces more problems of adjustment from girls than boys.

Karen Horney noticed the same phenomenon. The connection of the disturbance with castration, although Horney would never use the term in my way, is clear.

In analysing women with neurotic troubles or character disturbances, one frequently finds two conditions: (1) although in all cases the determining conflicts have arisen in early childhood, the first personality changes have taken place in adolescence ... (2) the onset of these changes coincides with menstruation.

She goes on to describe the common symptoms manifested by all four of the main types of disintegration represented by these neurotic characters, deep sexual guilt and anxiety, and the fear that they do not measure up to the feminine ideal, deep defensiveness and hence suspicion and antagonism. Her conclusion runs counter to some of the earlier observations she made as a young Freudian and underscores my argument in this chapter. She closes her paper with a general admonition that it is better 'to educate children in courage and endurance instead of filling them with fears'.

But what use is courage and endurance when the point of my existence is waiting to be exploited by Mr Right? All the liberalising tendencies of a girl's education, which were always in conflict with the behaviour she was learning outside school, are now actively
she finds that she is only appreciated for qualities which her schooling sought to devalue. One may see examples of the anomalies on many streets in England on a Saturday afternoon, when bands of thirteen-year old girls saunter along behind groups of boys who affect unconscious superiority, occasionally flinging taunts or direct insults. The boys feel contemptuous, even brutal, and it is easy to see why. During this phase, girls often say that they hate boys. Only a psychologist would believe them. Pretty soon the girls abandon this kind of frustrating boldness and struggle to acquire the sort of feminine appeal that dated girls have. Instead of sneaking out with lipstick and eyebrow pencil in their purses, they begin to stay at home and wait for the phone to ring. The agonising self-examination begins. What she cannot go out and get, which could simply be described as genuine communication with boys, she tries irrationally enough to deserve. She becomes the white kid in the clearing and waits for the lion. On very rare occasions, for example at pop concerts, twelve to sixteen year old girls are able to respond in a sexual and even genital way to an overt stimulus. The ferocity of the phenomenon is an index of its rareness and its inadequacy as a release mechanism. Most of the time the pubescent girl denies her sexuality, and gives in to crushes and day-dreams which sap her energy and waste her time. The phenomenon is the same as the antics of girls in other circumstances, who spent hours casting spells and performing rituals to reveal their sexual future. This example is too good not to quote.

Young wenches have a wanton sport which they call moulding of cockle-bread; viz. they gett upon a Tableboard, and then gather up their knees & their coates with their hands as high as they can, and then they wabble to and fro with their buttocks, as if they were kneading dough with their arses, and say the words, viz: —
My dame is sick and gone to bed,
And I'll go mould my cocklebread
Up with my heels, and down with my head,
And this is the way to mould cockle bread.

I did imagine (Aubrey comments) nothing to have been in this but meer Wantonnesse of Youth - rigidas prurigine vulvae. Juven. Sat. 6 (129) but I find in Buchardus in his Methodus Confitendi on the VII commandement one of ye articles interrogating a young woman is, if she did ever subigere panem alunibus, and then bake it and give it to one that she loved to eate; ut in majorem modum exardesceret amor?

It is the helplessness of woman to encompass the expression of her own sexual urge which leads to these inefficient phantasy gratifications. At least the content of the seventeenth-century ritual is overt. The effect of a modern girl's elaborate fantasies upon her efficiency as a student must be great. If she fights her sexuality by intense application to her work, however, she tends to replace creativity with industry. Creativity, including the creativity of self-willed intellectual inquiry, is to be feared, because it must reveal deeper desires and preoccupations, so the girl student takes safer and safer lines, and nothing in her high-school education reveals the fruitless track her mind has taken until she begins to apply it to the freer university situation. Moreover, the education which she has been allowed to deserve, is male education extended to females, obviously, for no woman have ever been in a position to invent any other kind. Those qualified to do so have been qualified in male-initiated institutions and tend to perpetuate what they know. The only alternative that they can supply to femininity is a grotesque mime of masculinity. Almost no adolescent girl passes through the puberal stage without a deep love of some kind, the efficacy of the repressive measures adopted in her family, an efficacy not related in any direct ratio to severity for the cruder the method the less
effective, is reflected in her choice of love-object. If her mind has already been undermined by the mass media, she fixes her passion upon Andy Fairweather Low or Steve Ellis, or George Best or Tony Blackburn. If not, she is more likely to offer this great love to some member of her immediate environment. The commonest situation is a blend of both, for the adolescent passion is not jealous or exclusive. Frequently, as in fan clubs, girls cooperate to express their love in expensive presents, in handmade favours, in songs and shows offered more generously than they are ever found to do their other work, and in the same way, they offer love of different kinds in different ways simultaneously.

For example:

When I was fourteen years old, after several friendships with the daughters of neighbours or other girls who just happened to be around, relationships which ended because they moved away or because of incompatibilities of a pretty obvious kind, I came to love a girl in my class at school. It happened quite gradually; she waited for me after classes, and I waited for her. At lunchtime she kept a seat for me, or if I was early I kept a seat for her. We were rivals, as far as the rest of the world was concerned: she sang the best in the school, I about second best, I was the cleverest in the class and she about the next cleverest. What was more, we both loved and admired the same girl, Judith, an elegant, off-beat, rather plain girl who was a very good comedienne. Some time before I fell in love, I saw my first movie, because my grandmother insisted that I could not catch lice, get hysterical or be morally corrupted at a screening of Scaramouche, and took me regardless. When Stewart Granger kissed whoever it was in a huge screen close-up, something strange happened in my vitals which I discovered could be
made to recur by looking at a photograph of him. This happened
with other film actors as well, and so Jennifer (for that was
my love’s name) and I were united in love and fealty in the
RoTaStGrAllaMeFeCoWiMaBrDeRoHe club, named after Robert Taylor,
Stewart Granger, Allan Ladd (who rocked us in Shane), Mel Ferrer
(an odd choice from Scaramouche and Lili), Cornel Wilde (whom
Jennifer had seen in A Song to Remember?) and whom I also desired
because she acted out all the best scenes with me, swapping roles
as the spirit moved), Marlon Brando (God knows why — I had no
seen him in anything), Dale Robertson (whom I didn’t like at all
from his photos), and Robert Helpmann (we were all allowed to see
Red Shoes). All our spare time came to be spent together, usually
in an annexe in an unfrequented part of the school, where we saw
the nuns’ feet flash by as they came down a wooden staircase that
ran past the windows from some commonroom above. This was the room
where we practised for the school special choir, a crack musical
squad that won prizes up and down the country, singing Pachelbel,
Palestrina and Monteverdi, music so beautiful that it was no wonder
we were in love with each other. The piano there was always in
excellent tune, and Jennifer, who was a fine pianist at fourteen,
used to play me the Sonata Pathétique with incredible strength and
fire. She identified with all the dashing interpreters we had ever
heard of; she was ever Eileen Joyce, she was Liszt, she was
Paderewski, dammit she was Beethoven; nothing was too much for her,
and she sightread the great works with an impudence and empathy
which made up for wrong notes. I would sit on the piano stool hearing
and her neck.
the chords vibrate in her chest, kissing her hair; I kissed her more
and more and she played better and better; then she would stop and
kiss me back. I do not know why our noisy forty-minute spare periods
were not discovered. Certainly is the nuns had found us clinging together in that dingy annexe we would have been treated as disgusting obscenities and causes of great grief to the Almighty, but perhaps they respected our errant genius and refrained from inquiry. I would stay with Jennifer at school as late as I could, and then go home, full of light and glory, because Jenny'd kissed me. We both wanted to become great divas and have many lovers. We enacted love scenes from our favourite books and rolled about on the wooden floor in ecstasy to a battered recording of Anita's Dance. One day, after choir practice, Jennifer laid her hand on my bud of a breast. My first reaction was a tremor of fear, then a gush of joy because I had wanted her to do that for so long, then a further joy because I could lay my hand on hers, already full and heavy. We wrote poetry, made presents, read and sang together; when apart we thought of being together again, and when we were together all things were possible. In a vague way we knew that we were outlawed, but we felt rather that we would have scorned to reveal to the vapid girls who sat obliterated in the classroom, or the withered prurient nuns, the beauty and power of what we were together. I began to visit Jennifer's house when her parents weren't there, and there I saw her quite naked. Her body did not absolutely delight me, for her breasts were heavy and slack, and I sometimes wished, although I loved her, that she would not insist upon nakedness and upon particular caresses, which I always rejected. A new source of tension set in when I began to fear a kind of sexual exploitation from her. Then summer intervened, and when we came back to school, Jennifer proudly recounted that she had a boyfriend, a lame Czech, whom she drove wild by her teasing so that he would weep. I renounced her one bitter day in the playground, on the grounds that she was worse than a whore, for our dreams of being great lovers
had not included this squalor. Suddenly she left school, and eventually music. I did not fall in love again for nearly four years.

For all its lack of genitality, this was a sexual and spiritual relationship of great intensity, as full of the sublime as the ridiculous. Because of these two years we were both able to keep our intellectual energy through the rigours and anxieties of puberty, although Jennifer was such an early victim to the absurdities of the heterosexual situation. The sordid bargaining that she conducted with her distracted Czech was totally unlike her sweetness and generosity with me, except for a habit she had which drove me to distraction, of testing my love, which she once did in the middle of a geography exam, when she sent me a note saying that I was conceited and empty, and that she was looking elsewhere for the perfect love. Nevertheless if her narcissism took this form, mine took another, ultimately more hurtful possibly, in not allowing her to caress me as she wanted to. Considering the pressures operating to inhibit such a relationship, we were extraordinarily lucky to achieve it at all. When it was already over, my mother discovered one of Jennifer’s letters and screamed and ranted of sins against nature. I remember telling her with suicidal calm that all adolescents went through a homosexual phase. That night I cried more bitterly than usual. The world approved of the toying between my love and her demented admirer, but our love was a 'phase' and an ignoble substitute for that! Of course we longed for men’s embraces, we longed for love in all its forms, but somewhere between girlhood and womanhood the unlimited possibilities that we spoke of while the Erotica pounded and roared through the cheap gramophone died out and left no trace. I began to read the
women's magazines and wonder about the proper conduct of sexual haggling.

My only reason for recounting that story, is that it is the only illustration that I can use with confidence of the love urge of the young girl. Dr Deutsch and Dr Horney both go to great lengths to deny any sexual motivation to the adolescent girl. Indeed Deutsch is principally concerned with her delinquent charges because their innocence of a sexual drive leads them to underestimate the dangers inherent in the company they keep.

This indifference she regards as absolutely normal. Instead it seems to me that that indifference itself is an index of abnormality, and ought to have been regarded much more closely. Impotence in men is always assumed to be a sign of ill-health, mental or physical, but in women it is assumed to be a kind of natural situation resulting simply from the combination of the tricky female genital organisation and male ineptitude. Nymphomania is understood crudely to be sexual desire so excessive in the female that it becomes a mania. In fact nymphomania is of the same genesis as religious mania: it is a compulsion neurosis which appears in an attitude to sexual behaviour. The compulsiveness is the problem, not the degree of sexuality. The sexually potent character, regardless of the degree of its activity, that is to say, the orgasstically potent character, is healthy. The prejudice against promiscuous sexual activity in women, tends to obscure the central problem, which is whether or not that activity is satisfactory to the woman, and concentrate on promiscuity itself as a clinical symptom. The sad thing is that the promiscuous woman has so many guilts and social pressures acting to inhibit her activity, that she too tends to assume that her desire for more than one man is guilty
and abnormal and may even seek therapy saying that she is ashamed and unhappy and wants to be made less promiscuous. Thus the genesis of her anxiety is obscured: the psychiatrist promises to render her less promiscuous when what she really wants is to be less anxious. In extreme cases the anxiety may take the form of inventing excuses for promiscuity which seem to be indications of a compulsion, for example a pain in the stomach which is only relieved by intercourse, which is seen as an indication of the abnormality of the desire for intercourse itself. When we two girls sat clasped together speaking of the wonderful men we would meet and love in the world of wonderful things to do which we were to set out and earn our fortunes in, we knew that we were not monogamous. When I asked my mother how a woman ever renounced all potentiality for actuality on a green form under someone else's name she told me that I would find out when I fell in love. Nothing was clearer to me than that she was not in love with my father, and I wondered why she uttered such perfunctory nonsense in answer to a straight question. When I asked if it was not possible to love more than one man in my life, she answered that women were monogamous and men polygamous. The choice was clear, be a woman and monogamous, or a monster and polygamous. 'When you are young, you are in love with love,' the saying goes: it's really a tacit recognition of the fact that a young girl has to learn monogamy, usually the hard way.

Within a year of leaving school, I met and worked in an acting troupe with a man whom I admired enormously. He was a gifted actor, and a sane and quiet person with a dry wit and gentle manner which inspired the deepest affection in me. However I discovered of course that there was nothing I could do to persuade him to share my feeling or even cultivate an intimacy with him. Dull,
demanding boys were ringing me up on all sides and dragging me into corners at parties, ruining good films by pawing me, so that I had to spend time on them and get to know whether or not I liked them, but I could not even get Stan to notice me. Through embarrassment at the scorn which pushy lovesick women obviously deserved in our society, I was even less forward with him than I might have been with impunity. A kind of dreadful diffidence began to turn my brains when I was near him, so that I said stupid things and became more and more nervous. One night after a party that his regular girl, the most despised and untalented dolly-bird in the troupe, did not attend, he offered to take me home. I tried to conquer my misery, and I thought I'd succeeded. At least I was funny and gay, and sure enough he turned off the road like all the others, and kissed me. He became very aroused, and I was filled with awe and generosity. I remembered, through the worst three months of my life, that in all virginity I said I wished I could take him home to my room. He suddenly apologised, and instantly drove me home. The next time I saw him, he came towards me with an anaesthetic smile and begged my pardon for the liberties he had taken with me, and assured me that it would never happen again. Three months later a doctor assured me that I was in a state of nervous exhaustion, and asked, as he doled out the tropinal, if I was in trouble. Trouble? Sure I was in trouble, but I knew there was no point in telling him. I didn't take the tropinal because I wanted to get firsts in my university exams. I got used to the idea that my desires could not bring anything to pass, and that at least as far as men like Stan were concerned I was a thing which ought to be left unsullied for an eventual owner. He married his dolly, who became a model for hair products, while he rose to great heights as a psychiatrist, what else? My illness was not the
result of unrequited love, for I was not really in love, but shock and revolt at the discovery of the squalid role I was henceforth to play in human relationships. For the good of my soul, I decided to lose my virginity, as a first step on the road to personhood.

The case history of Germaine Greer would fit the typical picture of penis envy, as Freudians will not hesitate to point out. I use the present tense advisedly because even the most recent books on the subject of women, like the gynaecologist J. Dudley Chapman's *Feminine Mind and Body* (1967) apply the Freudian schema. I cannot now undertake to refute Freud, because unverifiable statements like his and those of his disciples can only be rejected, not refuted. I have denied the Freudian account of the development of personality, because there is good evidence that genitality does not develop in boys or girls as he assumed it did, and that the latency period is entirely contingent upon factors in conditioning. I have hinted that children are not the restored phallus of the mother, that there is no such thing as the vaginal orgasm which ought to indicate mature femininity and the end of the clitoral or phallic stage (with the comforting presence of Masters and Johnson at my back) because the female genitalia do not consist of an illusory penis and a passive hole. I believe that passivity is not the normal attribute of female sexuality, but the feminine negation of it. If I am allowed to run on unchecked I might question the basis of the patriarchal family and of the state; the logical outcome of such a position is chaos or the orgone chamber. Quite so. I am unable to accept my biologically determined role as wife and mother, I have had extensive abdominal surgery for a pyosalpinx, I do have menstrual pains. But I am damned if I am going to feel guilty as well.
Reconciliation and adjustment to reality, i.e. the status quo, are all very well, provided one can accept that we live in the best of all possible worlds. The society which we live in is insane: if sanity is acceptance of madness then it seems proper to be mad. Vietnam and Biafra are not eggs broken to make an omelette; the ultimate deterrent is itself evidence that adjustment is out of the question. Women cannot obey biological urges and produce children for a destiny which they have refused to consider on the grounds that they have not got a penis. Moreover, social pressures are such that women cannot obey their biologic urges however much they would like to. In other words, I refuse to abandon my independent inquiry into the world I live in, even if such an abandonment would mean that I had no more abdominal upheavals and a brood of phallus-children instead. I have not got the right. And neither has any woman. When Jack Bruce sings

Please, open your eyes
Try to realise
I found out today
We’re going wrong

his words are also addressed to women. In order to see where we are going wrong, or where men have gone wrong, women must re-enter mankind. So, I reject Freud on the grounds that normalcy is meaningless in a lunatic world. We have assumed that maternity is a fulltime job, and perhaps when it was a skirmish with maternal and infantile death and disease, when families were large and kingdoms viable forms of state structure, it was, but it is not any more. The energy which women now have must be directed to the job of reclaiming the earth from pollution, overcrowding, famine, waste, demoralisation. We may ride on a phallus to the moon, but we need female creativity to improve the lifestyle on earth. Nevertheless I do not reject Freud on the grounds of his paternalism alone, but also because the Freudian
account depends upon and enforces the extremities of dimorphism, and so estranges the sexes while compelling them to cohabit.

According to the Freudians, the development of the little girl parallels that of the little boy, with the clitoris taking the part of the penis, but it is complicated by the little girl's discovery that she has lost her penis. This feeling of deficiency is only allayed by the bearing of children, and the psychic pressure to achieve the child/penis reinforces the biologic urge. Women live in a state of appettency and frustration until they are impregnated, when they become whole, and suddenly fully responsible people. The arrival of the menarche sees the attainment of woman's genitality; sexual tension becomes localized and she feels the need to masturbate; the spurt of interest in her environment and general activity which heralded the development of her ego is replaced by an increase in passivity and a withdrawal into domesticity. Menstruation is more than bleeding; it is the result of having been on heat and not conceived. Women's failure to adapt to menstruation is in fact resentment or disappointment at having failed to conceive. A conflict is set up between that ego that was developing fine until the menarche the desire of the girl to be a real person and have work of her own devising to do in the world, and the biological duties of the 'servant of the species'. And from this inherent conflict arise all the difficulties in explaining the female's attitudes and character. If she battles against the pull into passivity and dependence, she must be attempting to revenge herself for the loss of the penis - the only alternative. As she cannot immediately fulfil her role as mother and wife, she falls into fantasies which characterise the waiting period. As these are patently unsatisfactory and the pressures of education militate against them, she must suppress them and get on with some sort of work, but this
alternative contains a further hazard.

The essentially sound activity and the social and intellectual energy developed by the young girl who renounces her fantasies often blight her emotional life and prevent her from achieving complete femininity and later, motherhood. That women frequently remain entangled in infantile forms of emotional life while their minds and activities are extremely well-developed is an interesting fact that still requires explanation. It appears that the development from fantasy life into fully mature femininity is a psychologic achievement that can be inhibited by intellectualisation.

The disintegrating nature of the Freudian theory can easily be grasped if we pause to consider what Deutsch would have regarded as essentially sound activity which is nevertheless proceeding from an emotionally blighted person. The dichotomy set up by the Freidians is impossible to live with: Deutsch sees that girls ought not to mope around until they are in the right circumstances to be pregnant, but also that any activity they undertake as self-regulating individuals is likely to militate against their later assumption of the passive, masochistic posture of the servant of the species. In fact what we have is in both cases a deviation, a deflection of the energy of the integrated personality into limiting forms. Neither the wife-to-be or the young schoolmistress ought to be inventing compensatory activities while they wait for a chance to be whole at another's expense. But to the Freidians the urge to motherhood appears essentially masochistic, for it is the acceptance of an entirely other-directed role. Self-sacrifice is the flag that mature, normal feminine women fly. Even Horney began to wonder about the importance of masochism as a female secondary sexual characteristic of the mind. In a later paper included in Feminine Psychology she argues that female masochism cannot be related to factors inherent in the anatomical-physiological characteristics alone, but must be construed as importantly
conditioned by the culture-complex or social organisation in which the particular masochistic woman has developed. This is a blow for my side; unfortunately she never recast her influential early papers in the light of this decision. If Deutsch could consider masochism a female sexual characteristic, we may be sure of one thing; that she saw so few women whose attitudes were free of masochism that she assumed that such freedom was abnormal. The female ego, she argued, was protected from the dangers inherent in this strong urge to sacrifice herself to male dominance and eventual impregnation, by the beneficent operation of narcissism, which could be construed as her compensation for genital deprivation, and was only operative until the birth of her children, which supplied her with her penis surrogate and overrode her concern with her self-esteem. Narcissism inhibited the desire to submit to the male in imposing conditions for the submission, causing an intensification of male desire and greater flattery for the female, a situation which, when it finally ceased to prevail, made for great satisfaction all round. The result of the harmonious balancing of all the forces that militate inside the feminine woman is this:

These women are not only ideal life companions for men; if they possess the feminine quality of intuition to a great degree, they are ideal collaborators who often inspire their men, and are themselves happiest in this role. They seem to be easily influenceable and adapt themselves to their companions and understand them. They are the loveliest and most unaggressive of helpmates and they want to remain in that role; they do not insist on their own rights - quite the contrary. They are easy to handle in every way - if one only loves them. Sexually they are easily excited and rarely frigid; but precisely in that sexual field they impose narcissistic conditions which must be fulfilled absolutely. They demand love and ardent desire, finding in these a satisfying compensation for the renunciation of their own active tendencies.

If gifted in any direction, they preserve the
capacity for being original and productive, but without entering into competitive struggles. They are always willing to renounce their own achievements without feeling that they are sacrificing anything, and they rejoice in the achievements of their companions, which they have often inspired. They have an extraordinary need of support when engaged in any activity directed outward, but are absolutely independent in such thinking and feeling as relate to their inner life, that is to say, in their activity directed inward. Their capacity for identification is not an expression of inner poverty but of inner wealth.

Well, there she is, the crown of creation, and what a bore she is. She does not exist, as Sartre said all men must exist, in her own terms at all. Her whole life is a commodity for another life, and all her companion has to supply is love and ardent desire and a noble life's work of his own that this extraordinary being can helpmate him with. Her utter dependence upon her husband or rather companion (for Dr Deutsch is no prude) is fine as long as there is a man equal to the weight of this lovely burden, with an endless fund of love and desire to keep her demand satisfied. Loved, desired, handled, excited, influenced, she renounces, collaborates, adapts, rejoices and identifies, and occasionally refuses, in return. It's a bad bargain. She does not love, desire, handle, excite or influence, for they are prerogatives of the penis, although without desire there is no movement. Despite Dr Deutsch's own lust after her archetype, she is not lovely, but dull. The inner richness which Deutsch postulates with defiant arbitrariness is not evident anywhere, even to her husband, who is more interested in his work, his friends and his doxy, although he will never leave his wife because he feels so responsible for the poor cow. How many men are there in the world who can use a woman of this sort? As long as a woman's value is all attested in relation to a man's it must be less than his. If she is more intelligent than he, or better educated, she must obliter
the signs. Sexually she has only power to refuse. He is allowed no element of helplessness or submission, no shudder of excitement, and instead is bound to her by the unremitting spectacle of her self-sacrifice. In fact, Deutsch and ultimately Freud's design is for an anchor in the middle-class status-quo, which is now the status quo ante. Women need no longer sacrifice themselves, and men are harassed both by the sacrifice and the subsequent blackmail. Having children is taking on the aspect of a social deviation, and certainly Mark Twain's desideratum of a world full of wives either barefoot or pregnant is out of the question. The logical outcome of Freudian hokum about masochism and deep biologic urges is the infanticide of nine out of ten females and the constant pregnancy of the remaining. The conditions implied by Freud for female mental hygiene are absurd. If only on those grounds, we must reject Freudian monosexuality in which there is only one sexual organ.

If this seems to be an unwarranted accusation of the father of psychology, it is only necessary to consider the argumentation in this passage to see how the Freudian dichotomy must prevail. Libido is male, whether it exist in women or not, because activity is male and passivity is female. Regardless of whether my subject is a man or a woman his sexual impulse must be male.

As we all know, it is not until puberty that the sharp distinction is established between the masculine and feminine characters. From that time on, this contrast has a more decisive influence than any other on the shaping of human life. It is true that the masculine and feminine dispositions are already easily recognisable in childhood. The development of the inhibitions of sexuality (shame, disgust, pity, etc) takes place in little girls earlier and in the face of less resistance than in boys; the tendency to sexual repression seems in general to be greater; and where the component instincts of sexuality appear, they prefer the passive form. The auto-erotic activity of the erotogenic zones is, however, the same in both
sexes, and owing to this uniformity there is no possibility of a distinction between the two sexes such as arises after puberty. So far as the autoerotic and masturbatory manifestations of sexuality are concerned, we might lay it down that the sexuality of little girls is of a wholly masculine character. Indeed, if we were able to give a more definite connotation to the concept of 'masculine' and 'feminine', it would also be possible to maintain that libido is invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in men or in women, and irrespectively of whether its object is a man or a woman.

James Strachey, the translator of this passage, adds a fevered note attempting to reduce this to a question of linguistics, but it hardly dispels the effect of Freud's own words. What happens to the little girl is, in his own terms, a more effective repression. What can be the psychological justifications for supposing a greater disposition in the subject to discipline itself, I cannot imagine, especially when it is easy to point to extra repressions brought to bear on little girls. The statement that boys and girls masturbate in exactly the same way is wrong, especially in the light of new discoveries about the connection of the clitoris and orgasm, for Freud's point is that massaging the clitoris or its immediate surrounding flesh is the same as manipulating the penis, on the grounds that the clitoris and the penis are the same, for clearly the actions are different. What the last sentence can mean practically speaking, if not that womanly women are without libido, is hard to imagine.

The dualism of masculine-feminine is merely the transposition into genital terms of the dualism of activity and passivity; and activity and passivity represent unstable fusions of Eros and Death at war with each other. Thus Freud identifies masculinity with aggressiveness and femininity with masochism.

Brown's comment makes it clear that while Freud's conception may be discussed as a matter of linguistics, it represents a profound and limiting duality in our way of thinking about people.
Men are educated to survive and move, they are allowed to work out their own reconciliations between Eros and Thanatos, but women are gradually created victims. If female libido, which though unaggressive is alive and active, is denied, then Thanatos must win the battle, because Eros is left without half of his force.

Men have brought their powers of subduing the forces of nature to such a pitch that by using them they could now very easily exterminate one another down to the last man. They know this — hence arises a great part of their current unrest, their dejection, their mood of apprehension. And now it may be expected that the other of the two 'heavenly forces', eternal Eros, will put forth his strength so as to maintain himself alongside of his equally important adversary.

Freud wrote this himself before 1930! So far Eros has not made his appearance, neither have women come forward to save the world. The reason why they have failed to do so can be found in psychoanalysis itself, in the limitations of Freud's account of the biologically determined repressions of the feminine character. Probably the best procedure in understanding Freudian conservatism and paternalism is that hinted at by Dr Sutcliffe, of psychoanalysing Freud himself.

May it not be he (Freud) himself who 'clings to' the father role in his practice and who is a victim to that 'specially inexorable repression', which I suggest is responsible alike for his personal inability either (1) to experience the 'oceanic' feeling in his life or (2) to admit to the significance of mother and love in his theory.

The genital trauma has certainly to be proved, although Freud still has the advantage that it cannot be disproved. The latency period seems quite distinctly to depend upon repression and frustration, if one takes Malinovsky's experience in the Trobriands into account. In fact in my own experience latency coincided with
lack of opportunity, surveillance and desire not to displease and worry my parents. Sexual curiosity can be demonstrated at any age. The clitoris, which Freud called a phallus, is certainly an odd thing, for according to the Freudians, the female child uses it for pleasure, but is nevertheless aware that she has not got one. Although Ernest Jones voiced the suspicion in 1933 'that men analysts have been led to adopt an unduly phallocentric view of the problems in question, the importance of the female organs being correspondingly underestimated', no-one has come forward with a psychoanalytic theory which corrects the emphasis of Freud, and indeed if we think Jones's misgiving through it would seem to threaten the very basis of psychoanalysis itself. What inroads upon the unknown might we make were we to deny that the increase of passivity which accompanies female puberty were the symptom of the just and natural takeover of the vagina, the passive hole? In describing this situation, Deutsch is forced to undervalue the intense polymorphous sexual activity of the pubescent girl, and describe it as the expression of a childish attachment to the mother in the case of strong attraction to an older woman, and the interchange of sexual discoveries with peers. When I taught in a girls' school, I was the recipient of much of this intense affection, precisely because I was unlike my more motherly colleagues. The manifestations of these feelings were so marked, that I could not even question some girls in the class, because their blushing and trembling was so disturbing. The girls pursued me everywhere even at weekends, took photographs when I was on playground duty, gave me presents, insisted on carrying my books, begged to comb my hair, stole and forced physical
contacts. At one school where I taught, the girls were from particularly deprived and crowded environments, and most of them had heterosexual contacts not available to more sheltered middle-class girls, and the incidence of crushes on teachers and each other was very much less. What impels these girls is sexual desire, not desire to renounce, adapt, submit and all that, but desire to embrace, to experience, to express.

The passion that the adolescent girl feels for her horse is, as Dr. Pearson said, sexual, but it is not a reflection of penis envy, or a hangover into adolescence of the genital phase. It is a straightforward expression of sexual energy. What the girl feels between her legs is not the longed for penis, as Dr. Pearson would have it, but something other than herself, which responds when invited, being obedient to a controlling hand, which was Eliot's way of describing potent love. She does not want to lie beneath the horse and be violated by it, nor does she want to use it as her penis. What is revealed by such a supposed dichotomy is Dr. Pearson's own sexual limitation. In the Housewives Handbook Rey Anderson describes the pleasure that she feels in female superior positions, which is surely the real parallel to the girl astride the horse. I rode bareback as a girl, and certainly there was no invitation in that situation to think of the horse as a part of me, for although he responded to my signals with knees and heels, I could feel all his musculature and his hard spine rolling about beneath me. For many girls, who will marry and lie beneath their husbands in the missionary position for the rest of their lives, horse-riding is the only time when they will use their strong thighs to embrace, to excite, to control. George Eliot knew what she was doing when she described Dorotha's delight in riding at the
beginning of Middlemarch. It is the necessary datum to make sense of her frustration in the house of Casaubon, and her later response to Willie's claim on her sexual power.

The little girls who loved me at that Church of England Girls' Grammar School had no great understanding of their own desires, which were amorphous, but nonetheless sexual. The agitation which overcame them whenever they came into proximity with any of their love-objects was simply arousal complicated by the taboos on their expression of this feeling, which resulted in a hysterical distortion of the feeling itself, like what happens to mirth when it is suppressed in similar circumstances. In their love affairs with each other these excessive symptoms did not appear, although the feelings were often deep and strong. Girls who are inseparable at school are often fascinated by each other, deeply altruistic, without any secrets from each other, and may be involved physically and even genitally to a greater or lesser extent. It will not do to identify the situation as the seduction of a feminine or submissive girl by another who is suffering from the masculine complex. Nor is it adequate to find in such love the girl's transferred longing for her mother, or the desire to talk of forbidden subjects. The behaviour of the adolescent girl suffering from a crush, especially if it involves her peer, is a manifestation of the desire to love, which may include the great infantile passion for the mother, and curiosity about the body, but is comprehended in all its forms as the desire for knowledge, for experience of another person, other people. Only if we castrate the female, and establish one partial sexual feeling for all sexuality can we come to such squalid accounts of the passions of the developing women.

Embracements are Comings from the Head even unto the Feet, And not a pompous High Priest entering by a Secret Place.
The urge to penetrate is only a part of sexual feeling, even in the stunted form in which it is allowed to exist in our society. Both sexes embrace, both sexes kiss and enter each other's mouths with their tongues, both sexes give each other pleasure with caresses. The pressure to ejaculate, to detumesce is stressed by such phallic imagery, while the other-directed desire to draw forth, to enfold, to envelop, to swallow, is denied.

Identification, introjection, incorporation is eating. The oldest and truest language is that of the mouth: the oral basis of the ego. Even in seeing there is an active process of introjection: perception is a partaking of what is perceived. (Fenichel); we become what we behold (Blake).

Communion; oral copulation. Ist nicht die Umarmung etwas dem Abendmahl ähnliches? Eucharist is marriage feast; the union of the bridegroom and the bride. He gives himself to the bride with the bread. Eat your fill, lovers; drink, sweethearts and drink deep. The two become one flesh, incorporate each other, by eating. The transubstantiation is in the unification; is in the eating.

The tyranny of the penis has outlawed communion; this is the language of Christ, of William Blake, of homosexuals and lesbians, who do but rarely, despite the fancies of pornographers, use dildoes or penis substitutes, or practise anal intercourse. Even for the sex endowed with the magic wand, phallocentricity is a limitation, for the most harmless forms of alternative sexual behaviour are seen as denials of phallic virility. The unstated embargo on male submission, the high value placed upon male superiority and control in the sexual situation has led to all kinds of crippled behaviour, like rubber fetishism and the Venus-in-furs syndrome. The relative frankness in describing sexual behaviour which has blessed our generation has had an unlooked for side-effect, for when all sexual indulgence was outlawed, it
was also free, in the sense that it was lawless, so that people 'indulging' their sexual desires did what they wanted to, in an innocent way. The degree of polymorphous perversity that resulted was unselfconscious, free from the special guilt that surround the assumption of abnormality. Now that sex is a public matter, phallic orthodoxy is enforceable: one kind of freedom has been gained, another lost. In 'freer' societies, where the tyranny of the penis has become official in this way, fetishistic behaviour has become commoner. This is a kind of fact which will be used to justify the reimposition of censorship, in the same way that the failure of female emancipation is used as an argument for not continuing it. In both cases the new information about the way we live is not understood. Its implications are so fearful that it must be repressed. The real implications of the denial of the sovereignty of the penis are political: the liberated woman desires to degrade the penis, for so far it is impossible to understand what liberated female sexuality would be like except in negative terms. Degrading the penis means destroying the basis of paternalism, property and ultimately politics. But men have asked our help in this very project: the load of responsibility has grown unbearable, now that male culture has produced the ultimate phallus, the total weapon. But in return for freedom from unwanted pregnancy and the fear of it, women have so far repaid men by increasing their sexual demand. They have assumed an unalienable right to the rigid male organ which has increased male anxiety, instead of lessening it. This cannot be what female emancipation is: until women understand that freedom must be freedom to love, not freedom to be loved, freedom to do, not be done unto, freedom to give and not to receive, they are enslaved.
'The Happy Nation sucks', or so the saying goes. Certainly if it did, male sexual anxiety and the bogies of impotence and premature ejaculation might disappear. Ours is not a happy nation however: it is almost impossible for a woman in our civilisation to make her lover understand that she wants to make love to him without him assuming that he has to summon up urgent desire and rock-hard erection, even if she on her part does understand that erections are fairly arbitrary things. It is assumed that both sexes have only the right of refusal, and that it is more damaging for a desirous woman to seek to make love to a male than it is for her to submit to caresses without desire.

The human female who has learned through a long childhood education to value a great variety of rewards, and fear a great variety of punishments, finds that her receptivity - although perhaps retaining a slight degree of periodicity - is actually subject to a great deal of modulation. Where receptivity requires so much less of her - merely a softening and relaxing of her whole body, and none of the specific readiness and sustained desire that is required of the male - she can learn to fit a simple compliancy together with a thousand other considerations of winning and keeping a lover or a husband, balancing the mood of the moment against the mood of tomorrow, and fitting her receptivity into the whole pattern of a relationship. There seems to be little doubt that the man who has learned various mechanical ways to stimulate his sexual specificity in order to copulate with a woman whom he does not this moment desire is doing far more violence to his nature than the female who needs only to receive a male to whom she gives many other assents, but possibly not active desire.

This for one lady anthropologist at least is the nitty gritty of monogamy. That same lady should have known that among the primates, whom she also consults for clues about behaviour which is not culturally conditioned, the male is not stimulated to sexual activity until he is shown the female's sexual skin, inflamed and coloured by her desire and readiness. The arbitrariness of the assumption of passiveness in connection with the vagina
may be grasped by considering a linguistic example; when a man masturbates, he is said, not to be fucking his hand, but to be pulling himself off, which is to say that the hand is the agent of the orgasm, the penis the sufferer, likewise fellatio is called sucking-off, not mouth-fucking. In fact the vagina is more or less active, depending upon the narcissism of the woman. Sarah Kavis has the typical narcissistic attitude in My Secret Life: she conceals her body because of the marks of childbirth, she concedes sex as a privilege and a one-sided occupation which interests her not at all, except when she is drunk when a kind of hollow sexual rage overtakes her. No description of her sexual response is afforded. On the other hand the author is specific about the way in which less self-conscious girls, peasants and menials, use their vaginas to clip and suck. It is evidence of the extent to which even he was a victim of the official sexual morality, that he was obsessed by the professional sexual object Madame W---t-n, and that he exploited innocent desire so casually. Most of the cunts that responded so warmly to simple caresses were those of vigorous, hardworking servants; one might fairly lay their undamaged potency to their lack of education and refinement. Mead’s savages behave more like those heroines of Krafft-Ebing.

If she is normally developed mentally, and well-bred, her sexual desire is small. If this were not so the whole world would become a brothel and marriage and family impossible. It is certain that the man that avoids women and the woman that seeks men are abnormal.

... Nevertheless the sexual sphere occupies a much larger sphere in the consciousness of women than that of man. The need of love in her is greater than in the man, and is continual rather than intermittent.

It is probably too much to expect that Krafft-Ebing should elicit the fact of repression from his own description of fantasy
inadequately compensating for reality. Of course all adolescent girls would have seemed to him, as they were represented to themselves, as maniacs, outlaws and savages, until long skirts and corsets stifled the last surges of ego and energy.

The energy and love of the woman who carries out the development that our society sees as natural and inevitable in all normal cases are changed into the narcissistic-masochistic urge to set up dependencies and exploit them. The mature, feminine woman has accepted a vicarious life: she dreams of the prince who will come and let her share his life, with no inkling that she is not fit to share anything, and the dream persists all her life, becoming even more vicarious as she extends it to her own daughters and their daughters. The other side of the coin, the duplicity and parasitism of the situation is only ever admitted when she considers the women who will want to marry her sons and her sons' sons.

The effects of having one's sex denied are much more pernicious than those of having it admitted, as the male sex urge is, and outlawed. Men know that they are sexual beings, and the limitations upon their sexual activity serve to exaggerate the fact. Indeed, one of the principal drawbacks of the permissive society from the male point of view, is that it leaves a man little excuse for lack of sexual activity but feebleness of desire, which he is forced to construe as a reflection upon his maleness. In societies where female sexuality is recognised, although conspicuously curbed, as in Southern Italy, women are in general in a less serious plight than they are in Anglo-Saxon communities. Father keeps his daughter in the house, and under surveillance at all times, because he knows, as the Elizabethan father knew, that she would do it if she came to it. As a result the sin crackles.
with sexual tension. Where the eyes of the family are always watching, a girl can look and move in very expressive ways. The effect of her subtle blackmail is to keep her husband attuned to her desire, and indeed when a wife passionately desires her husband he is apt to respond to the demand. Narcissistic wives have themselves to blame for their husbands' early loss of interest. Once it is lost, no amount of engineering can revive it again.

My case for the female soul then rests upon the assumption that the female in our society is castrated. From the beginning of her life her energy is hemmed by the exigencies of a prototype, so that her imagination and her will are stunted, and her sex obliterated. Most of the difficulties that men encounter in understanding women could be resolved if they could distinguish the functioning of this induced deformity. Women are as they stand, with notable and amazing exceptions, incapable of loving. The masochism of the female character, which Deutsch considers as essential in the childbearing sex, means that the relationships that women form follow the sado-masochistic pattern.

The passive form of the symbiotic union is that of submission, or... of masochism. The masochistic person escapes from the unbearable feeling of isolation and separateness by making himself part and parcel of another person who directs him, guides him, protects him: who is his life and his oxygen, as it were. The power of the one to whom one submits may be inflated, may be a person or a god; he is everything, I am nothing, except inasmuch as I am part of him. As a part, I am part of greatness, of power, of certainty. The masochistic person does not have to make decisions, does not have to take any risks; he is never alone - but he is not independent; he has no integrity; he is not yet fully born... the person renounces his integrity, makes himself the instrument of somebody or something outside himself; he needs not solve the problem of living by productive activity.

This is the relationship, the only relationship, of which 'normal' women are capable. When their unfortunate lovers meet
them they are usually engaged in some apparently productive activity, but this is often a sham, because they are not interested in their work, and dawdle most of their days in the typing pool away, dreaming of the man who is going to endow them with a life. Once the relationship is established, even if the man is not inclined towards sadism, towards commanding, exploiting, humiliating and hurting, he finds that his behaviour is constantly interpreted in these terms, and willy nilly finds himself in the sadistic position. Some girls are so expert at this that they can even provoke overt violence in public places from men who are, when allowed to be, extremely gentle and affectionate. Few are the women who let the situation become so extreme, but most women prefer a sado-masochistic type of sexual economy because it is so easy for them. Men are not 'such brutes', but the voluptuous feelings of many women depend upon the idea that they are. Because she only knows herself through this symbiosis, the masochistic woman is appallingly egotistical. All data she may absorb is only valuable in so far as it is information about her relationship with her beloved, therefore ultimately about herself. The bemused lover, listening to his girlfriend screaming and sobbing because he has spoken of another girl to her, is hurt and puzzled by her resolute application of the story to her present circumstances, unless he is already perverted in himself, in which case he has told the story to precipitate just such a reaction. The number of relationships which depend for their excitement, and their orgasms, on such sado-masochistic exhibitions of the strength of the ties that bind them is unfortunately very large.

Fromm says that mature love is union under the condition of preserving one's integrity, one's individuality. If women have never had integrity or individuality, but have been trained in
duplicitv and in conformity to a marketable stereotype, it follows that they are incapable of love. They produce nothing, and therefore have nothing to give. They are forever checking their disguise, their defences. It is absurd for the Freudian psychologists to claim that their lack of productivity in other fields will be allayed by their production of children, for it usually occurs too late if at all, and it is the deepest disservice to the children to have to suffer the consequences of mother’s need to confer a meaningful existence upon herself. Children are other people, and all the impotence which prevents mother from loving father will strangle and pervert her love for her children. Even if it were still possible for women to be pregnant as often as biologic urges would seem to render it advisory, Horney and Deutsch would be wrong. In fact, very few women have a sense of personal achievement at having brought forth a child. As Ellman pointed out, it is usually the doctor who is the hero of the hour. On her back with her legs in stirrups, her vagina slit back to the anus, and her lungs clogged with anaesthetic, unable to see what is going on, while a small army bustles about her, the new mother feels more done to than doing, and as resentful about that as she is about all the other things over which she has no control. There is no limit upon creative energy, except what happens to it when it is given no scope for development. It may atrophy, and it seems more likely that the women who are stunted in their psychic development will be as unproductive in their attitude to childbearing as they are in everything else. Certainly the sado-masochistic emotional orientation will affect the rearing of children, who will suffer through mother’s excessive self-abnegation or her compensatory over-assertiveness. It seems obvious that before one can live
with others, one must be able to live with oneself, and this most women cannot do.

In this haphazard and unscientific way, I have attempted to explain the development of the normal woman, that is the woman who is considered desirable in our society, as a conservative influence, as principal consumer of the products of industrial capitalism, as the anchor of the patriarchal family. But there are women who survive, and I do not simply mean those women who find the male roles more congenial. In his sample of self-realising personalities Maslow found some women. The struggle against feminine conditioning is unremitting and so much energy is needed to survive it, that we might expect that among the women who have had the courage to choose their own way of life, a high proportion would be self-realising, venturesome and creative, even if they are at the same time eccentric or battle-scarred in other ways. Once a woman realises that the security which will be her reward for denying her own active desires is chimeric, and in the age of total war this is obvious, she should quite quickly see that her active participation in the affairs of the world may have some point. When marriages become daily easier to dissolve, when bored divorcees and confused young widows trudge around the tourist resorts and recreation grounds of the world joylessly consuming their alimony and inheritance and other forms of invalid pension, she must see that the answer is not to denounce divorce reform bills as Casanova's charters, but to seize her enforced liberty and make it her own. Already our society is hopelessly riven between the rawness of new liberty and the inert power of family conditioning: the woman who falls for the feminine mystique cannot for long remain unaware that she has made an un rewarding choice.
Given the conditions that I have pessimistically described, how can the castrate exercise a strength she has not got? Inasmuch as any woman who buys or reads this book has a motive for doing so, she has retained some access to her personality. Perhaps it has only the negative form of discontent, but as soon as this operates as the spur to an action, the progress towards self-realisation has begun. Let us consider Maslow's description of the end result, the self-realising personalities. The key to understanding this privileged minority, for they are very few, is simply that they have a better perception of reality, an innocent eye, as Herbert Read would have put it. In other words their relationship to the world of phenomena is not governed by their personal necessity to exploit it or be exploited by it but simply to observe and to seek to understand it, the first step on the road to love. They have no disgusts, no feelings of irrational rejection, the unknown does not frighten them, the capacity is the same as that called by Coleridge negative capability. They are without defensiveness, without distaste and its concomitant affectation. 'No healthy woman feels guilty or defensive about any of the female processes.' The only things which cause them to feel guilt, or more properly regret, are laziness, outbursts of temper, hurting others, prejudice, jealousy and envy. Their behaviour is spontaneous, but it corresponds to an autonomous ethical code. Their thinking is problem centred, not ego-centred, and as a result they have a sense of commitment to a cause beyond their daily concerns. Because they are self-regulating and poised, they do not spend their time in idle regret or expectation, but in response to the present. Things seem to be 'better now than they ever were'; no phase is simply to be traversed in expectation of joy to come. It is bad psychology to suppose that a person living
in appetency, like the fantasy-ridden nubile female, will ever adapt to reality which will always be less impressive and more inconvenient than her fantasy. The religious experience in the self-regulating personality, what Freud calls the oceanic feeling, of expanding scope and continuously developing possibility, is easier for the self realisers to attain, than for those people who serve a religion out of guilt or compulsion. Their personality is unauthoritarian; they prefer to collaborate rather than command even when they find themselves in positions of authority. They are creative, with an unhostile sense of humour; they resist enculturation. The handicaps can be, and it is easy to see that they are handicaps developed in response to the prevailing pressures against self-realisation in the peculiar structure of computer society as we know it, vanity, ineftness, ruthlessness and excessive independence. Nevertheless they are more capable of actually loving than the people who cultivate dependencies. 'We can love a person only to the extent we are not threatened by him.' The self-realising personality is not threatened by anyone, because he is not vulnerable in the ordinary way, although if you prick him he will bleed. Therefore he can love in the most immediate and satisfying way; he is interested, desirous, cooperative, and altruistic. On the other hand, he is lovable, because his desire is not to dominate or exploit. For those champions of heterosex who feel that maleness and femaleness are desirable absolutes, Maslow has another interesting piece of observation of these characters:

Another characteristic I found of love in healthy people is that they made no really sharp differentiation between the roles and personalities of the two sexes. That is, they did not assume that the female was passive and the male active, whether in sex or love or anything else. These people were so certain of their maleness or femaleness that
they did not mind taking on some of the aspects of the opposite sex role. It was especially noteworthv that they could be both active and passive lovers... an instance of the way in which common dichotomies are so often resolved in self-actualisation, appearing to be valid dichotomies only because people are not healthy enough.

The dichotomy assumed between female mental traits and male mental traits is as false as the dichotomy of weak-strong and active-passive, as false and spectral as the masculine-feminine stereotypes. The uncastrated woman would have as great an appetite for experience, for the world and the flesh and the spirit as any man. The justification for the feminine stereotype, cited by most anthropologists, is the necessary attraction of man to his unlike. If it is the case that we are spontaneously attracted to our unlikes, then it is odd that so many married couples resemble each other so closely. It is odder that men react to men of different colour with such unease and suspicion. It was universally supposed by classical and neo-classical thinkers that love was engendered by similes inter prae, and that this exchange of selves, complete sympathy, so that the friends were always present to each other was the necessary quality of love.

They were aware that there were other types of love, but the love of fellows was placed highest in the canon and not only by Plato. Women could be fellows if they were more than physical objects and were capable of the altruism of true love, but this seems then as new to have been seldom the case; the homosexuality of Ginsberg and Burroughs could in some way be put down to the unsatisfactory nature of communion with women. Lovers in the Platonic sense always acted in each others' best interests, not submitting or ruling, but neither censoring any sentiment of criticism. Advice was considered the friend's distinctive duty (and it is still assumed, as in 'even your best friends won't tell you').
Because of their similar background and years, the ideal classical friends understood each other, and there was little need to explain anything. In some crude literary forms the closeness of the friends was symbolised by their appearing physically very much alike. There has never been any reason why these intimacies should not include sexual intimacy, and indeed there is every reason to believe that they did, both for Plato and others. The Renaissance theorists of love saw that such a love could exist between man and woman in theory, although they were a bit dubious about achieving it in practice because even women of equal social status, years and wealth were trained in submission, and in need of guidance. In fact the development of the dichotomy masculine-feminine which has divorced the male from feelings which exist in his make-up and which he needs to express, and divorced the female also from desires and urges which are equally essential to her, has resulted in an estrangement between the sexes, who meet now only for brief sexual skirmishes, despite the tendency of our society to institutionalise relationships founded on a minimum of common interest and call them marriage, until death do them emancipate. The gulf of unknowing between the sexes is tacitly admitted to exist, in exhortations to young women to preserve their mystery, to cultivate their prospective husband’s interests, however foolish or tedious they may find them, until the household is established and with it the wife’s suzerainty. Even when they live in the same house, the interests of husband and wife need never coincide. Even when they go out together, they often sit silently in restaurants, or gather with their own sex in separate rooms at parties, a tendency much more frequently observed in America and Australia than here. Wives have their friends and their interests, and so have husbands. In extreme cases of what is in
fact a normal estrangement, they need never meet.

A society can only be saved by its victims; the wounded surgeon must ply the steel that questions the infected part. To rescue our culture from its inhumanity, the special powers and graces of maimed womanhood must be called forth. Women have been reviled for falseness before, but no attempt has ever been made to explain women's duplicity in terms of the real woman, masquerading as the unreal or ideal, feminine. Aspects of the female have been reviled as unbefitting the feminine, and aspects of the feminine have been reviled as simply contemptible. And yet occasionally a man makes a blind plea to something that he believes, probably because of the primal situation at his mother's breast, must really be there:

The woman, at her best, is and will remain a being untouched by the machine. It may, if she becomes a machine operator, tire her physically but it cannot paralyse or make impotent her spirit. She remains, as she will remain, a being with a hidden inner life.

Having exploited the social machine inadvertently all her life, woman retained a fundamental frivolity in her attitude towards it. One has only to stand in a factory, looking at the incredible heads of curlers, of chartreuse, orange magenta, silver and purple hair, to overhear the disrespectful, bawdy, anarchic chatter of women doing a stupid job with all the inattention that it deserves, to realise that only the victims of a deathly social mechanism ever escape it. The sad thing is that women who try to make that disloyal voice heard above the clatter of heavy machinery, are swiftly educated into a conformity and a vested interest in the machine. Marriage or a career. The career is a worse fate than the marriage, if that is possible. Betty Friedan's attack on marriage conditioning in America was an attack on the sex-oriented educators who were in
fact teaching the negation of sex; the alternative was the kind of dehumanized efficiency that characterizes the beautifully
groomed female omnipotent administrator. The girls roaring with
laughter over a dirty joke on the assembly line still retain the
shadow of a capacity for real love and real work, they can still
play, if only sometimes and not without guilt.

One of the sick doctors of Western culture was a mere boy,
Otto Weininger, who embraced the ideology of nineteenth century
German society with such fervour that he performed the stoic's
only sensible achievement, suicide, a few years after writing his
remarkable book, Sex and Character. His life may be taken as the
illustration of what dimorphism, the ultimate in disintegration
and boundary building, can accomplish, and it is all on the side of
Thanatos. He identified women with the body, with unconscious
sexuality, and therefore, because of his own manicheeism, he
contemplated them.

No men who really think deeply about women
retain a high opinion of them; men either despise
women or they have never thought seriously about
them.

Like Freud, he thought of women as the castrated sex; because
the phallus meant so much to him, he supposed that it must have
done so to women:

An absolute nude female figure in the life leaves
an impression of something wanting, an incompleteness
which is incompatible with beauty...

The qualities that appeal to a woman are the signs
of a developed sexuality; those that repel her are
the qualities of the higher mind. Woman is essentially
a phallus worshipper...

While Weininger was probably a homosexual and highly neurotic,
he was also brilliant. What he did was to think the logic of sexual
dimorphism right through, and discover that man could have no
communion with women, but in the criticism that he made of the
female mind, we might find food for hope that such minds may
save us all from following in Weininger's suicidal footsteps.
Most of his objections arise from the fact that women are passive,
masochistic, and dependent, as we are told that they ought to be,
but some of them arise from his feeling that they are pretending to
be so, because of the exigencies of their sexual role, and that in
fact they are exploiting the situation, hence their organic duplicity
and mendacity. Because woman lives vicariously, she need take no
responsibility for her behaviour; because she has no responsibility,
she has no morality, and no ego. Because she has no ego, she is
logically innocent and incapable of a genuine interest in truth
or in argumentation. Because of the lack of ego, and the variety
of roles that women consciously manipulate, they have no identity —
witness their readiness to give up their names. 'Woman is never
genuine at any period of her life.' The feminists will cry out in
rage and horror, when I say that this is all true. In my remarks
about female university students I have certainly implied something
like it. But, if we were only to consider the desirableness of ego,
logic, identity, morality as Weininger understood them, we might
find that these defects are in fact freedoms which the female has
been able to preserve because she was not allowed to take a personal
interest in her society and her destiny. We might as well let
Weininger describe the advantages for us:

With woman thinking and feeling are identical,
for man they are in opposition. The woman has
many of her mental experiences as hemide
(Weininger's own coinage for undifferentiated
perceptions) whilst in man these have passed
through a process of clarification.

Can it be that women have escaped Descartes? If Spinoza was
right, if omnis determinatio est negatio, then it seems that what
Weininger really means is that women do not falsify or negate or
repress the actual experience by the process called clarification, but retain the actual experience in a non-classified or non-verbal form, so that it continues to be accessible in different contexts, and to be capable of incorporation in varying contexts. If Weininger is right, unregenerate women have retained a unified sensibility. The point is unverifiable, because once a woman has been educated in our masculine-oriented institutions her sensibility has been modified in the usual way: if she is not educated, the quality of her sensibility is likely to remain unknown. However there is a curious account of the phenomenon in a grown and articulate woman in a letter from Artaud to Anaïs Nin. I have an uncharitable feeling that Nin was bluffing, but at least the bluff points in the right direction, and role has its own existential power.

I brought many people, men and women to see the beautiful canvas, but it is the first time I ever saw artistic emotion make a human being palpitate like love. Your senses trembled and I realised that the body and the mind are formidable linked in you, because such a pure spiritual impression could unleash such a powerful storm in your organism. But in that universal marriage it is the mind that lords over the body and dominates it, and it must end up by dominating it in every way. I feel that there is a world of things within you that are begging to be born should it find its exorcist.

Most of what Artaud says is nonsense: we might expect that the inventor of the theatre of cruelty would see the phenomenon of unified sensibility and spend a paragraph trying to prove the domination of the mind, because his manicheanism prevented him from seeing that the signal was sent to the brain by the eyes in the first place. All that happened was that Anaïs Nin responded to the signal of the eyes with mind and body. The civilised disintegration did not operate. What she demonstrated was the phenomenon of sensual intelligence or intelligent senses.

In the study of ideas it is necessary to remember
that insistence on hard-headed clarity issues from sentimental feeling, as it were a mist, cloaking the complexities of fact. Insistence on clarity at all costs is based on sheer superstition as to the mode in which human intelligence functions. Our reasonings grasp at straws for premises and float on gossamers for deductions.

Men are then the victims of a superstition which woman have escaped, as any woman realises when her husband asks for the coat he insists on calling green, even though it is blue in some lights and green in others. Clarification, the function of logical thought, is more and more clearly an impoverishment in an age when most information is not disseminated in books, or even in a controlled verbal form. The electronic media have succeeded in making us feel that ideas are more than concepts, just as facts are not the same as statistics. The increase in political passion, which critics never tire of telling us is not the same as knowledge, although intimately connected with awareness, in the younger generation is the result of seeing one Vietnamese shoot another identical Vietnamese in the head in the open street at point-blank range, or even such a low definition medium as television newsreel. Thought and feeling are being forcibly reintegrated by the paradoxical achievements of a machine which was originally the triumph of thought without feeling beyond that sentimentality for the scientific. The irresponsible genesis of the electronic environment still warps its function, but if integrated responses can save it and us, we had better pay attention to the lucubrations of women which have a head start. This faculty is fragile however; education can easily deflect female minds into parodies of the scientific instrument; my own arguments have none of the virtues of unified perception but only the defects of an insufficient reverence for logic. The inclusion of images in the typography is my attempt to attain consciously to that kind of imagination which
less efficiently educated women have spontaneously. In fact such power is present in the uneducated, undisciplined mind unless its efficiency is impaired by neurosis, which it nearly always is. Women share their facility for thinking in feelings with children and savages, but now there is a possibility that an education can be devised which does not disintegrate perception. Maria Montessori has already had a good try, but her methods have been modified and limited in the state education situation. It is time more women interested themselves in genuine education, distinct from the induction into the machine which is what is compulsorily administered to our children, if only because the particular machine for which it was developed had already ceased to exist. The change in learning processes outside school is the most potent reason why children cannot be got to study science.

A woman cannot grasp that one must act from principle; as she has no continuity she does not experience the necessity for logical support of her mental processes... she may be regarded as 'logically insane'.

It is true that women refuse to argue logically, but it is also true that in most situations logic is rationalisation of an infralogical aim. The best educated woman knows that arguments with her husband or lover are disguised realpolitik: she decides whether she wants to win or lose, not whether the point at issue is true or not. This is simply hardheadedness confronting the sentimentality of men who think not that they are rationis capit, but that they are genuinely rational animals. Men understand this to be terrible depravity, because certain rules, no more related to genuine combat than the Marquis of Queensberry's are being violated. Feminine intuition, which is supposed to be a sort of occult compensation for logical incapacity, is merely the female perception, essentially non-clarifiable, non-verbal, unclassified. Which cannot justify itself in any argumentative or discursive way. It is a byword among
women how little men actually notice of what is happening around them. One of the attributes of 'passivity', which man has been encouraged to suppress in himself, is receptivity, without which he can never 'become a channel drawing all the world towards it;' so that 'being a channel for the world, he will not be severed from the eternal virtue, And then he can return again to the state of infancy.' In some ways the infantilisation of women may be considered an advantage, if it were what did in fact happen. Women however are not made infants again, but continue in the doll-like state that infants are so wrongly reduced to, all their lives. Schopenhauer thought that most women lived their lives in a state of moral infancy, and Freud was forced to admit that something went wrong with the development of the female superego:

I cannot evade the notion, (though I hesitate to give it expression) that for women the level of what is ethically normal is different from what it is in men. Their superego is never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it to be in men. Character-trait which critics of every epoch have brought up against women - that they show less sense of justice - than men, that they are less ready to submit to the great exigencies of life, that they are more often influenced in their judgments by their feelings of affection or hostility - all these would be amply accounted for in the modification in the formation of their superego... We must not allow ourselves to be deflected from such conclusions by the denial of the feminists, who are anxious to force us to regard the two sexes as completely equal in position and worth.

Position and worth are mysteries to me, a mere woman. I know I earn less, which may be worth, and that I cannot drink in a bar on my own, which might be position, and that would seem to be inequality. If it comes to morality, however, I can argue that seeing that my sex has been denied moral responsibility by male 'justice', and seeing that we have been called 'angels' by men
who found us only contemptible, it seems likely that we have formed our own conclusions about the superego and the illusory morality of men. The morality of protestant Europe is the morality of integrity, the individual conscience, which is always to accept full and unending responsibility for actions, without possibility of penance or healing. The chief mainstay of such religion is the capacity of the ego to continue repression, the self-punishing organism, acting to excite moral feeling through guilt. One of the advantages of oppression is that women are bad protestants.

The feeling of identity in all circumstances is quite wanting in the true woman, because her memory, even if exceptionally good, is devoid of continuity... women if they look back on their earlier lives, never understand themselves...

Poor Weininger is here admitting that the ego is erasable, because it consists of the memory of the self at a particular time. He notices with horror that if you ask a woman about herself, she understands it to be her body. Man has a temporal illusion of identity, woman spatial. Again we remember the child's ego which allowed him to connect freely with external reality, his greater power of empathy. It seems likely that women, even in Weininger's crabbed account have managed to preserve that too. 'The absolute female has no ego': the absolute female does not exist in any sense, but if we may believe that women have no identity, no separateness, no self-concept which regulates their actions, this, while it has clear repercussions on morality, may also prove to be an advantage, in terms of the vitality and comprehensiveness of her psyche. 'Energy is the only life and is from the Body... Energy is Eternal Delight.'

The primal act of the human ego is a negative one - not to accept reality, specifically the separation of the child's body from the mother's body... this negative posture blossoms into negation of self (repression) and negation of the environment (aggression).
This is not the whole story: the action of the ego is
dialectical, and the repressed is always reincorporated in
some form in the ego, but if women have less ego, less identity,
less sense of self, which is a dubious proposition, but one which
we might find a place for in a new female mythology, then they
ought to be more capable of the kind of understanding of the
universe which Whitehead and Needham saw as a necessary corrective
to the insanity of pure intelligence, namely 'a science based on
an erotic sense of reality, rather than an aggressive dominating
attitude to reality.' The champions of scientific investigation
and logical methods have never achieved a satisfactory account of
inventions, and originality, and it would seem that those are to
be the faculties that might preserve us from becoming the slaves
of more intelligent machines. Women reading Edward de Bono's books
on lateral thinking may be surprised to find in them a description
of the very modes of a-logical thought which they are usually accused
of conducting illegitimately. If the lack of a sense of identity
or separateness and personal responsibility means that women are
less moral creatures, it can only be true in that they feel no
necessity to justify their actions by appeal to impersonal principles,
for one of the consequences of a weakened sense of self is a greater
potentiaiity for love and compassion. The greatest virtue of the
Christian church is charity, and the greatest myth of Christianity
is that of the mystical body.

This sense of continuity with the rest of
mankind is a sexual character of the female,
and displays itself in the desire to touch,
to be in contact with the object of her pity;
the mode in which her tenderness expresses
itself is a kind of animal sense of contact.
It shows an absence of that sharp line that
separated one real personality from another...
Also sprach the suicide. The morality of consistency, of behaviour rationally and logically therefore ethically motivated, is the morality that bombed Hiroshima. Argumentatively the action was right, but viscerally it was wrong. Nothing will convince a woman, if Weininger is right, and if she has not been conditioned to ultramasculine forms of argument, that Hiroshima was right. According to Weininger, separation is the necessary attribute of personality; in a world which is becoming perceptibly overcrowded a sense of separateness is at odds with reality. In every nuclear household there is only one personality, father's, but the rest of the family must share his self-imposed isolation; the results for our society have been all bad. The sense of separateness is complemented by the pressure for conformity; the result is loneliness, the disease of the twentieth century metropolis. Women are not less lonely than others, because their opportunities to express oceanic feelings are few, and grotesquely transmogrified into organisations, where that genius of hers for contact and soothing has no play except symbolic attitudinising. We need not share Weininger's repugnance for animal contact, which still characterises most socially sanctioned contact, even the most obscenely intimate, psychoanalysis.

Thinkers like Whitehead and Merleau-Ponty did not think to address their pleas for a new mode of thought, based upon erotic knowledge of reality, or 'carnal inter subjectivity', to women, and it is probably just like a woman to snatch the highly sophisticated arguments from their contexts and misinterpret them in the service of a female mythology. Nevertheless, the sheer ignorance of women, which is the defect which gives rise to most of the other defects that Weininger finds, may be in itself a source of strength.
Dominant ideas need not always be so obvious for them to exert just as powerful an organising influence on the way a person thinks and approaches a problem. Old and adequate ideas, like old and adequate cities, come to polarise everything around them. All organisation is based on them, all things are referred to them. Minor alterations can be made on the outskirts, but it is impossible to change the whole structure radically and very difficult to shift the centre of organisation to a different place.

What lateral thinking sets out is a one-dimensional analogue of the child's mode of thinking. Inasmuch as she has not been encouraged to develop her powers of thought, a woman still thinks like a child in some respects, although her mental processes are very much limited and defused. As long as education remains induction, ignorance will have advantages over learning. Most of the other qualities of the female mind, deduced by critics in any age, have simply been the obverse of fashionable male intellectual virtues. Whatever men sought to repress in their own mental functioning, they assumed that women had in abundance. In some ways, partial repression, the form of deliberate contouring of personality, is less damaging than total repression, which seeks to destroy it. One of the reasons why women are devious, is that they have always known that their mask was a mask. They were never fooled by the myth of integrity. In some ways, living an obvious lie and knowing it, which is called hypocrisy, is healthier than living according to equally false notions in full and agonising sincerity.

If women are to understand by emancipation, the adoption of the masculine role, then we are lost indeed, for all of their animal faculties of compassion, empathy, innocence, and sensuality will fade out, and there will be nothing to hold us all back from Weininger's fate. The goal of women who have preserved enough of their energy to be interested in it, is the revivification of the
from obscurity and contempt. In order that the book be more exciting than depressing I will make much of women who behaved unconventionally or achieved odd and unexpected excellence. The faith behind the book is that it might be possible to lay the last bogey of female inferiority and kindle women’s joy and courage to invent their own forms of expression.
his sister 3,157, less than half.

Equal pay for equal work will not make as great a difference in these figures as women might hope. The pattern of female employment follows the course of the role that women play outside the industry; they are almost always ancillary, handmaids in the more important work of men. Of two and a half million women employed in British manufacturing industries in 1967, 750,000 were described by the Ministry of Labour as semi-skilled, and 700,000 were employed in administrative, technical and clerical work, mostly we may be sure in the last category. Tracing the pattern of female employment through the records of the U.S. Bureau of the Census is more difficult, because their democratic methods of classifying employees do not reveal the levels at which they are employed, and the limits of their power to rise along the promotion scale. However the largest category of male employees is that of craftsmen, which for women is an insignificant entry. In only three trades in England do skilled women outnumber others, clothing, footwear and pottery. Of the nine million women in employment in England only two or per cent are in administrative positions and only five per cent in professions other than nursing and teaching. Caroline Bird says that in America in 1968, women were

-Less than ten per cent of all the professional or "knowledge" elites, except classroom teachers, nurses, librarians, social workers, and journalists; nine per cent of all full professors,

(next page)
9 per cent of all scientists; 7 per cent of all physicians;
3 per cent of all lawyers; 1 per cent of all engineers.

The figures do not tell us at what levels we are represented; we may judge from the fact that women in the three top ranks of the American civil service have thinned out to the rate of 1.7% that women are concentrated in the lower echelons of the professions in which they are represented. Moreover, six per cent of women with five or more years of college take jobs as unskilled or semi-skilled workers, and seventeen per cent of the women with four years of college will enter the workforce at these lowest levels. In England only two million female workers are members of trade unions; in America also women are impotent in industrial bargaining.

Even when women organised themselves and engaged in militant strikes and labor agitation—from the shoemakers of Lynn, Massachusetts, to the International Ladies' Garment Workers and their great strike of 1909—male unionists continued to ignore their needs. As a result of this male supremacy in the unions, women remain essentially unorganised, despite the fact that they are becoming an even larger part of the labour force.

In England where the period spent in educating children is on the average shorter than in the U.S.A., three times as many girls as boys leave school at fifteen; only one-third of A-level students are girls, and only a quarter of university students. The corresponding pattern in the United States is that girls show a tendency to remain an extra year in high-school, the great majority and less time in college. Girls graduating from college have taken their first degree in English Literature, or Foreign Languages
and Literature, or Journalism, or Fine and Applied Art, or Home Economics (!). They are outnumbered by boys graduating in Philosophy, Medicine, Chemistry, Architecture or Engineering by more than half. Boys outnumber girls taking a second degree by two to one and there are nine males with doctorates to every female. In England where the situation is more dire because of the country's comparative poverty, three-quarters of the eighteen-year-old girls are receiving no vocational training or higher education at all. In neither country is the female apprentice represented in the census of employment.

Because of the higher prestige accorded to white collar workers, and the greater pressure exerted by American industry on the personal ambition of employees, there is little emphasis in their more accessible statistics on the class or standard of living of their employees in any breakdown of sex. The concern of the new feminist to see that her sisters are allowed keys to executive washroom must seem bitterly irrelevant to those three-quarters of America's female working population who have an income of less than four thousand dollars a year. Professional women are startlingly articulate and even powerfully represented, but the women who outnumber men in the services, and the all-female class of servants in private households who earn little more than 1000 a year are still awaiting their champion. Considered as a whole, female employment in Britain and the United States displays the same basic character, that of an inert, unvalued f
though essential force, considered as temporary labour, docile, ignorant and unreliable. Because more than half the working women are married, the assumption arises that the family is their principal concern, that work outside the home brings in a little extra off perks, that they have no ambition. Not only are women paid less than men in most of the instances where they do work identical with men, mostly the question does not arise, because women work at a lower level than men in the same industry, so that the question of parity can never arise.

In England the long struggle to elevate women's work to equal dignity with men's has slowly but surely got under way after years of fitful skirmishing: the stimulus to action has been passed on from the professional women to the workers.
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