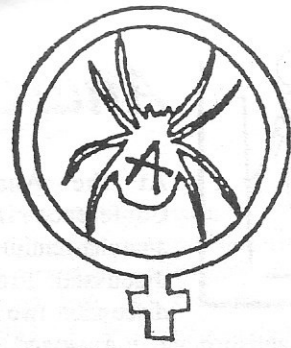




SEKHMET

ISSUE 7



MAGAZINE OF ANARCHA-FEMINIST FEDERATION OF AOTEAROA



HAGS! WELLINGTON PEACE'N ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
OPEN DAY



INSIDE:
SELF-CONFIDENCE THE INTERNET
FEMINIST WITCHCRAFT VIOLENCE
SELF-ESTEEM LESBIAN DYNAMIC



Anarcha-Feminist Federation of Aotearoa

At the Anarchist Conference in 1991 anarcha-feminism was discussed. From the discussion two groups

were established one in Auckland and one in Wellington.

Sekhmet is the magazine of the Anarcha-feminist Federation. The name of our zine 'Sekhmet', is taken from Egyptian theology. Sekhmet being an Egyptian war goddess, we see Sekhmet as a good name for a magazine making 'war' with hierarchies. Articles in Sekhmet do not necessarily reflect the views of the collective.

An anarcha-feminist is an anarchist that concentrates on feminism/feminist that uses anarchist theory to achieve womens' self determination. So anarcha-feminists have formed women only groups as we feel it is more productive to work on womens' issues in women only groups.

An excellent example of anarcha-feminists at work in the past is Mujeres Libres (Free Women), the Spanish Anarchist Women in the 1930's. They formed a women only organisation which was affiliated to the CNT (A huge anarchist union which was the main force against the fascists etc.). In the heyday of Mujeres Libres they had 160 groups throughout Spain with 20,000 women actively involved. They taught illiterate women how to read, provided creches, formed collectivised restaurants, and provided health services etc.

Anarchists want to bring about a free, stateless and equalitarian society, that is a society which is free of divisions, rank and one which is just and fair.

Anarchism is a political set of ideas and beliefs that argues that society should be arranged without set up power and control structures, so that it is without government or rulers.

Anarchism does not mean chaos, disorder, bombs, murder and robbery. That's what government is all about. Nor does it mean a return to the stone age. Anarchists seek a form of social life in which nobody is in a position to oppress or exploit, victimize or abuse anyone else. A way of life in which everyone has equal access to the resources to get their basic human needs meet. Order in such a society is achieved by various

coming to free agreements. These agreements on order are freely made up to allow the attainment of the wide variety of human needs and desires, as well as organising aspects of production and consumption.

Feminism is a term widely used today that refers to many different movements and groups. The central aim of feminism is usually to achieve more equity and equality between the sexes. The different ways in which women have done this has been categorised by the different ideological approaches and focuses women have taken, so that feminism ranges from Marxist feminism to lesbian-separatist feminism and everything in between. Anarcha-feminists challenge the patriarchal order,



which includes government and any other hierarchical organisation. Women have often worked in non-hieratically organised ways to secure rights for women.

Feminism also means breaking from subservient conditioning. Peggy Kronegger: "In actual practice within the women's movement, feminists have both success and failure in abolishing hierarchy and domination. I believe that women frequently speak and act as 'intuitive' anarchists, that is we approach or verge on, a complete denial of all patriarchal thought and organisation. That approach, however, is blocked by the powerful and insidious forms which patriarchy takes - in our minds and in our relationships with one another. Living within and being conditioned by an authoritarian society often prevents us from making that all important connection between feminism and anarchism. When we say we are fighting the patriarchy, it isn't always clear to all of us that, that means fighting all leadership, all hierarchy, all government, and the very idea of authority

and small leaderless groups have been anarchistic, but in most cases we haven't called them that by name. And that is important, because understanding anarchism as anarchism could spring women out of reformism and stopgap measures into a revolutionary confrontation with the basic nature of authoritarian politics. If we want to 'bring down the patriarchy', we need to talk about anarchism, to know exactly what that means, and to use that framework to transform ourselves and the structure of our daily lives. Feminism doesn't mean female corporate power or a woman president: it means no corporate power and no presidents. The equal rights amendment will not transform society; it only gives women the 'right' to plug into a hierarchical economy. Challenging sexism means challenging all hierarchy - economic, political and personal. And that means an anarchist feminist revolution.

Anyway the anarcha-feminist scene in Aotearoa is alive and ticking. And as me old mate Emma G used to say if there's nothing rude in this mag I'm not reading it. Read on....



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L e t t e r s

Dear Sekhmet,

I read last issues' article comparing Marxist Feminism and Anarcha-Feminism. I found it interesting and I would like the opportunity to make a few comments on some of the points raised.

First there is the statement "Instead of monogamous, marriage sexual varietism is preferred. Non exclusive sexual relationships or free love. The explanation for this is that exclusivity implies a form of property right." I disagree with this point as some anarcha-feminists are in monogamous relationships and feel that if it is a free agreement between two individuals there is nothing hypocritical about this. Anarcha-feminists tend to disagree with the institution of marriage though as they don't like the principal of the state or church sanctifying a relationship, they also don't like it that the state only recognises heterosexuals as being qualified to marry. Though some anarchists do marry, it is usually for reasons like so that one person can legally stay in another country or so that they can get a student allowance etc. What really angers anarcha-feminists also is the portrayal of monogamous, marriage, heterosexual, couples (not more than two in a relationship and that if you are in a couple you should live on your own in suburbia not in collective households) etc. are seen as the norm and everything else is seen as deviant with people having no chance of being able to choose or experiment with their sexuality on level ground with everything else.

Secondly I would like to comment on the authors' comment "Feminism could possibly go beyond anarchism because feminism exposes hierarchy and authority for what they really represent male power structures." I disagree with this as the crux of anarchist theory is that it opposes all unequal relationships on every scale and you can't go against this without contradicting anarchist theory. Though feminists often oppose power relationships in practice it is not contradictory to feminism if a woman is in power wielding position e.g. like a woman member of parliament or a woman boss, or has a prejudice against another oppressed group.

Lastly in the article, anarcha-feminism is described as a vision, criticised for being a utopian dream, unattainable and impossible. In fact though anarchism has been shown to work and to be achievable many times during history. For example in Spain in the 1930's. In Spain over 3 million people were organised in collectives turning out better products at less cost and this is while reducing their working week and getting attacked by Franco and the fascists.

That's about all I wanted to comment on, ta.

Love and Lentils, Lyn



Dear Sekhmet,

I have just been reading back over some old Sekhmet letters on the issues on lesbianism and ...men. Thanks Vanessa, Hilary etc. for voicing your views on a subject which seems to be treated as taboo by so many anarchists.

As a newly out dyke I have come face to face with heterosexism and homophobia in the anarchist movement. I am already sick of me and my friends having to put up with it. The prejudices that some friends have expressed to me about lesbians and the lesbian community are not far off "Joe Bloggs" prejudices.

That all lesbians are man-haters and separatists and are all obligated to dislike bisexuals goes beyond simple ignorance.

Bisexual wimmin get support from anarchist ideas and theory for sameness and equality reasoning (i.e. that , ideally, men and wimmin would be equal and therefore treated the same- sexually, socially, politically and spiritually). Whereas there is a general lack of support for difference arguments that some feminists and dykes stick to as separatist lesbian-only spaces as being essential.

Does anyone else agree? Does anyone else want these attitudes and behaviours to change?

Here are a few classic one-liners I have received for your amusement. (!)

" So, you're never going to sleep with a man again? ...

What if mister right comes along?"

"I bet you still kiss the boys when no ones looking."

Ha. Ha. Ha.

On a completely different note I want to invite any readers who have seen the Trollops or the Hags performing to write in to Sekhmet with your opinions on their content.

Over the year I've been involved in this anarcha-feminist performance thing, feedback and criticism from outsiders had been slack. I want to know what wimmin think. Anarcha-feminist performance is definitely not the political hard-line so if you don't agree with certain messages or ideas or even if you find them offensive. I personally value your opinion and I'm sure others are interested too.

I personally value your opinion and I'm sure others are interested too. I briefly discussed with a friend the contradiction of the 'I am oppressed' skit being performed by a

it was never mentioned again.

Are other wimmin discussing our performances in such a fashion? If so I want to hear your ideas. Let's start confronting each other about our actions and let's start thinking about sharing ideas instead of carrying on in ignorance, as anarchists we must challenge to move forward.

Love Val

Dear Hags,

Thank you for your splendid entertainment last Friday evening.

We all enjoyed your lively wit and the very pertinent comment that your skits made about our society and its pretensions. Some of them, in particular, will live on in memory and in the retelling. All of them are well worth repeating to people who were not lucky enough to be there on the night.

My one regret is that we didn't offer a larger audience for your talents.

We wish you every success as you continue to develop your art.

Please accept the attached cheque in recognition of our appreciation and as a contribution towards your expenses.

Sincerely,

Gwenyth Wright
Co-ordinator of Angel Bank

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FEMINIST WITCHCRAFT AND THE PHALLEOCRAT'S GOD

"The Priestess shall pour into a Chalice a portion of wine, and drop in a morsel of Bread or Barley cake... and, after rinsing the chalice about, shall offer the chalice to the east and say: 'Hail holy goddess, our mother who is waiting to come to life'" (Liberations to the Mother Earth - Magic Pentacle, Winter 94, Vol. 5, no. 2)

What is Feminist Witchcraft?

There is great diversity of belief and practice, but my construction is that it is a Wimmin-centred spirituality which combines ancient folk religions with modern spiritualism. It often centres on the worship of a Goddess figure. Rather than an authoritarian figure, She is regarded as a symbol of inner female strength- "power from within". Images of the Goddess frequently include Artemis, the Greek huntress Goddess, Aphrodite, the Goddess, Gaia, the Earth Goddess, Hecate, the Goddess of night and the waning moon, Inanna, the Sumerian Queen of Heaven and Earth, and Brigid, the Irish Goddess of wisdom and knowledge, arts and fertility. The Goddess has been imagined as:

"something at the edge of one's vision, in between the salt sea and the sand, the night and the day something wild which we can make space in us to live along side us, but which we can never imprison by too clear a vision..." (Ursula King, *Women and Spirituality: Voices of Protest and Promise*, Macmillan, 1984, p. 133)

The practice of Feminist Witchcraft varies greatly. Some groups practice traditional rituals, while others create their own. Men may be included. Rituals frequently celebrate the earth, seasonal cycles, moon cycles, and equinoxes - often involving chanting, formation of sacred circles, music-making, dancing, and the planting of herbs. Naming oneself a witch both recognizes the witch as an image of female power (the crone aspect of the Goddess) and identifies with the oppression and torture of millions of wimmin as witches in the Middle Ages.

Feminist witchcraft and anarchy-feminism fit together naturally in many ways. Both are wimmin-centred, earth-centred, and reject Patriarchal Judaeo-Christian religion. The loose associations of covens of feminist witches is highly compatible with a decentralized network of anarchist communities. Both reject domination, hierarchy, and the binary oppositions of patriarchal society - male/female, rich/poor, black/white, etc. Feminist witchcraft goes one step further in denying the separation of the physical and the spiritual, the political and the spiritual. It offers an element of spirituality perhaps lacking in anarchafeminism.

Both, however, emphasize that the personal is political, and both feminist witches, and anarchafeminists have tended to have strong links with the peace and environmental movements. Both celebrate an uninhibited sexuality, and love between wimmin. Even the symbols seem similar - the "A" within the circle of Anarchy, and the sacred circle of witchcraft. In fact, feminist witchcraft has been described as "matriarchy"

Many of the beliefs of feminist witches such as Starhawk seem almost identical to anarchafeminism:

"You make your own rules. You are free and beautiful.... Whatever is repressive, solely male-oriented, greedy, puritanical, authoritarian - these are your targets. Your weapons are theatre, satire, magic, herbs, music...."

(Robin Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood is Powerful*, Vintage Books, 1970)

One criticism of feminist witchcraft is that the Goddess could be seen as a female equivalent of the authoritarian Male God. However, most feminist witches consider the Goddess rather as a symbol of the legitimacy and beauty of inner female strength.

Another criticism is that the energy put into ritual-making and Goddess-worship could better be spent in "real" political activism. This sort of thinking assumes that ritual and revolution are mutually exclusive rather than complementary. Change needs to occur at many levels, both within society, and within ourselves. Rituals are a way of sharing support, bonding with other wimmin, recognizing powerful female role models, and releasing and challenging energy for political tasks. Without this, we run the risk of burnout. Rituals can also be incorporated

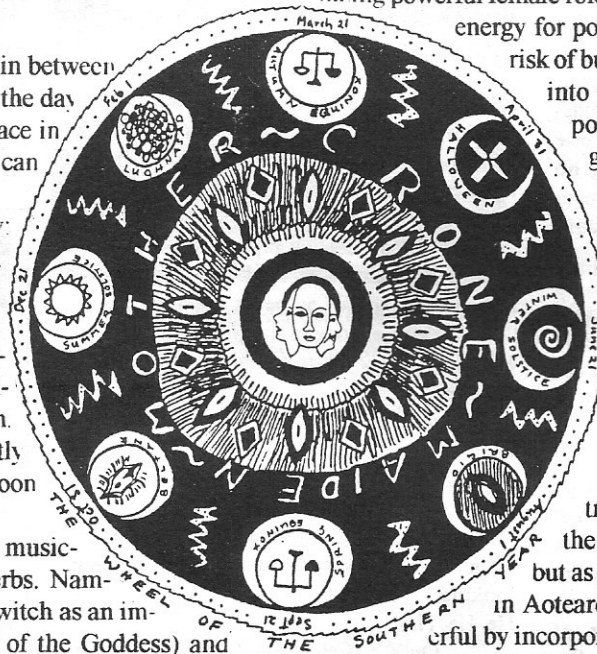
into political actions to make these more powerful - for example the American group in the 1960s WITCH - Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell - used chanting, spell making and exorcisms in their actions.

More seriously, it is true that feminist witchcraft relies heavily on an European tradition. In Aotearoa it is mainly practiced by middle-class, relatively well-educated pakeha wimmin. It ignores the rich Goddess tradition of Maori culture, which regards the sacred and the secular not as separate, but as parts of the whole. Feminist witchcraft

in Aotearoa could perhaps be made more powerful by incorporating the images of Goddesses such as Paptuanuku, the Earth Goddess, Hine-nui-te-po, the Goddess of Death and Night, and Mahika, the Goddess of fire.

While perhaps not for everyone, Feminist Witchcraft offers a meaningful, holistic, wimmin-centred spirituality, which is highly compatible with anarchafeminism. Together, they provide a powerful, and beautiful way of reconciling the oppositions of patriarchal society.

"Hail, Holy Goddess,
Our Mother is waiting to come to life...."



Womens' Health Tips

Thrush

The yeast fungus *Candida Albicans* or thrush should grow in any normal healthy vagina. It is one of the many bacteria healthy humans grow.

However sometimes this particular fungus grows more profusely than usual and causes irritation.

Most of the time the pH level of your vagina is too acidic for candida to grow very well but there are times when the pH level of your vagina rises (becomes more alkaline) and the fungus grows causing itching and a white discharge. These times are more likely to be when you have your period (blood is alkaline), when your on antibiotics, when your pregnant, when your on the pill or if you have diabetes.

There are various potions available from the chemist to deal with thrush. But the problem is these medications to kill off all bacteria in your



body, the good ones and the bad ones. This often makes it easier for the nastier ones to re-establish. There are alternatives to the concoctions your doctor will offer. The best measures against thrush are preventative. Once we understand how it grows we can change some of our habits accordingly. Here are some suggestions.

1. Diet whenever your body isn't functioning how you think it should it's a good idea to look at diet first. General well being requires a good diet. For those who get thrush it is recommended to eat less refined

foods, that means more fresh fruit and remember no soap, rinse with 1 part veges. Many women find yeast gives vinegar and 3 parts water, pat dry and them thrush. It may be worth giving wear clothing that lets the air circulate. If you can wear something long and cotton with nothing underneath, yeast up to see if that is what's causing your thrush.

2. The Pill increases the pH of the fresh air is good and it feels nice your vagina making it a nicer place too. Then try one of these suggestions: for the fungus to grow. If you're on the pill and you get thrush it may pay to use alternative methods of contraception.

3. Soap soap is alkaline so be careful how you use it. Preferably don't! Regular bathing can beat thrush but not when you use soap. I recommend lots of warm water and a vinegar solution. *Candida albicans* especially likes the soap that can build up in your clothing (especially Underwear) so go easy on the washing powder. A small cup is all that is needed to wash a full load. Be sure your washing is well rinsed. Put the machine on an extra spin cycle if necessary.

4. Sunshine and Fresh Air - get lots of it. The UV rays the sun kill thrush. So don't use a dryer hang your underwear out in the sun. Likewise your vulva likes fresh air. Wearing knickers to bed can encourage thrush to grow. Wearing nylon pantihose and clothing that doesn't let the air in can also encourage thrush, so if you like to wear pantihose it's best to wear them on alternate days with cotton, wool or nothing.

If you keep all these things in mind you are much less likely to get thrush. However if you still do or if it's too late for preventative measures (which it never is really) there are things you can do that don't involve giving precious dollars to drug companies.



A late Medieval woodcut of an abbess as pharmacist. (from *A History of Women in Medicine*, K. C. Hurd-Mead)

1. You can acidify your system by taking lots of vitamin C (500 milligrams daily)

2. You can soak a tampon or sponge in a yoghurt (the acidophilus culture is what does the trick, this culture is also used to make yoghurt so if you are wary of dairy, soy yoghurt will work also) or b) vinegar (2tbsp diluted in a pint of water) or c) a clove of garlic peeled and wrapped in gauze. Insert into your vagina, leave for two or three hours. Do this every day for a week or so.

Good luck. These suggestions came from Vanessa Robertson (my mother), *Our Bodies Ourselves*, and my own experience.

Next issue tips on how to deal with bladder infections!

Billie Clayton.

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VIOLENCE IN THIS SOCIETY

Newspapers, radio and television at the event of a murder label the possible killer as psychopaths, monsters and intrinsically evil people. These convenient labels help our communities to understand murders to be done by the inherently 'evil people' of our society. As long as society is able to point the finger at deranged individuals, there is never any collective need to analyse what part society plays in many violent crimes and murders.

As individuals we are not born innately good or evil. As human beings we all have the capacity to torture, rape and murder. History is littered with examples of sane reasonable people who become killers when social conditions change.

We live in a violent society; every moment of every day we are subjected to violent images. Violence is sanctioned by the state, in its bid to maintain the status quo. The cornerstone of any state is armed violence. The state will not hesitate to use the forces at its disposal - armed forces, police and prisons if it feels its interests are threatened. Whether we live in a parliamentary 'democracy' or a military dictatorship, the state maintains its power through violence.

Violence is a common facet of our

society. Constant exposure to violence through television, radio, and newspapers help create a climate of violence. Reality loses its grasp and physical violence has become an everyday occurrence. Each and everyone of us has the capacity to become desensitised and brutalised. Isolated acts of violence may be explained away as individual aberrations but recurrent acts of violence in any community opens a window on how that society functions.

Most conservative thinkers believe that the state can legislate against violent behaviour by the reintroduction of capital punishment and longer prison sentences. An ever increasing brutal state response will only add to the circle of violence we are experiencing today. The state has no solution to the increasing levels of desensitisation and violence we are faced with everyday. It is also not in the States' interest to look too deeply into causes, as this would mean a dramatic change (on all levels) to the way things are run.

It is not surprising there are such recurrent acts of violence in a society where the emphasis is on competition, power related relationships, with the survival of the fittest attitude etc., instead of consensus decision making (where peoples' opinions are valued),

conflict solving, self expression, and mutual aid which should be a main part of early learning.

From early childhood we learn not to question authority (showing that our opinions are not valued), and to do what we are told. In the school yard it is often those who are the strongest or who have the most dominant personality who get everything their way or make life hell for others. These ways of interacting continue through life and most people accept this as "life" not realising that there are other ways of doing things.

Changing these power imbalances, which show that by being higher up in the pecking order you can get what you want and stuff everyone else (Whether you get higher up by using your fist, by getting a promotion or being boss in the work place), we need to relate to people equally in every section of the community. This is something we can be doing now like working in collectives, looking at the way we raise our children encouraging them to express their opinions etc.

Changing the emphasis in our communities to a more social and equal way would reduce violence as people improve their communication skills.

By Lyn

With parts pirated from 'Anarchist Age'

Crime and Anarchism

Who would protect us against crime and criminals in an Anarchist society? First we should ask ourselves whether government really protects us against them?

Government itself creates and upholds conditions which make for crime. Crime often increases with the growth of poverty and injustice fostered by government.

Crime is the result of economic conditions, of social inequality, of wrongs and evils which government and monopoly are the parents. Government and law can only punish the

criminal. They neither cure nor prevent crime. The only real cure for crime is to abolish its causes, and this the government can never do because it is there to preserve those very causes. Anarchism means to do away with those conditions that create crime. Crimes resulting from government, from its' oppression and injustice, from inequality and poverty, will disappear under anarchy. These constitute by far the greatest percentage of crime.

Anarchists reject the legal system and the agencies of law enforcements. The law is not autonomous from society, nor is it neutral or value free. Not only does the law serve to reinforce social order but it is active in constructing, defining and shaping that 'order'. We are also full of criticism of the methods of the police, the fallibility of the courts, lawyers and judges and the barbarity of the penal system. Anarchists want a society where the only intervention with material force is when people offend against others violently and prevent them from living in peace. Physical restraint would only be used against attacks of violence and for no other reason than that of self defence. We do not believe in punishing acts of anti social behaviour but in seeking their causes and making every effort to eliminate them. By accustoming ourselves to consider offenders as friends who have strayed, sick people needing loving treatment it will be possible to reconcile the complete freedom of all with defence against those who obviously and dangerously threaten it.

Lyn with help from 'ABC of Anarchism' and 'Anarchy in Action'

The Anarchist Black Cross

The Anarchist Black Cross is an international network of groups working on issues regarding anarchist prisoners and their rights. This covers those convicted for their political beliefs or activities, and those politicised by their experiences in prison.



Support is provided in a variety of ways; for example it may simply involve writing to a prisoner so that they can keep contact with the outside world (they may or may not be able to reply to all mail due to prison restrictions, volume of mail etc.) through to demonstrations in support of prisoners wrongfully convicted or suffering bad treatment. For more information see issue 23 of 'The State Adversary' or write to the ABC c/o the Committee for the Establishment of Civil Liberties, PO



LESBIANISM AS AN ANARCHIST DYNAMIC

There are similar struggles experienced in both the queer and the anarchist movements, their lifestyles and their cultures.

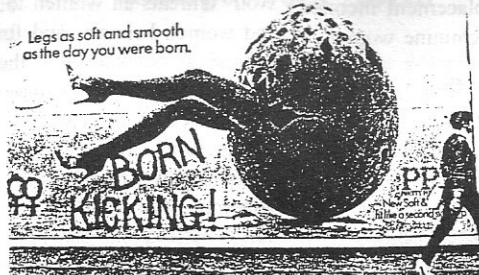
Anarchism is about standing outside authoritarian structures, about having no government and no prescribed ethics or morality for everyone. The queer movement has also fought against these structures to make same sex love - legal, visible and normal. So that lesbians, bisexuals and gay men can live their lives free of persecution, discrimination or shame.

Members of both these groups have defied socially prescribed beliefs and while fighting to gain some measure of personal freedom. The common belief that pervades is the right to live one's life as one sees fit, not as set out by government, law or societal pressure, in a way that does not encroach upon anybody else's rights or liberty.

Individual liberty is the right to freedom, which means a person's right to an adequate standard of living, choice of religion, access to their culture, their language and customs. I believe that sexuality is also an important and basic human right, this is often culturally defined. In western or pakeha society 'normal' sexuality is usually defined as 'heterosexual', while any other sexual orientation is considered 'abnormal, immoral, perverse, dangerous' by many people in society. As a result lesbian, bisexuals and gay men have been subjected to persecution, discrimination and violence.

Rigidly socialised gender roles, 'enforced' heterosexuality and gay bashing conspire to make queer people invisible, their lifestyles unnatural and their expression unsafe. Homophobia has the double effect of stopping women from escaping their patriarchal oppressors, stopping women finding other solutions to being coupled with men. Lesbianism is also threatening for some men as it would effectively render men obsolete, redundant, unnecessary and more importantly makes women beyond men's control.

As I see it, the way queer women and men refuse to take on socialised gender roles threatens two of the major ideologies that uphold authoritarian society today - capitalism and patriarchy. Capitalism and patriarchy reinforce each other, with both parties having a vested interest in maintaining each others continuation. Patriarchy works because there is such strict definitions of what men and womens roles are and their corresponding values. By maintaining this strict order or hierarchy a power imbalance is created in which only some benefit (men as patriarchs) and some who contribute great but see little of the praise(women).



Under patriarchy women's roles as wives and mothers serve capitalism well, imagine the cost to industry to feed, clothe and care for its workers, instead women are expected to perform these services for free. In this way some types of 'work' are valued - monetarily like men's work, while housework is considered women's work and unpaid. It is ironic that traditional womens roles are not valued highly in their status or wages, yet these are jobs which are fundamental to society, while manufacturing and commerce often male preserves, involve environmental damage and exploitation.

From an early age we are socialised into patriarchal gender roles of male superiority, objectification of women and distinct roles for each sex. This has created a culture which practices women hatred, a culture that condones and encourages crimes against women. A culture in which women are kept in their socially defined place by the threat of male violence.

Lesbian women defy some of this by not forming intimate relationships with men. Dykes are are not emotionally, sexually or economically dependent on men so avoid many of the power and control issues het. women are subjected to. Living under patriarchy still has it limitations on lesbian women but they do manage to be less effected by two of the major institutions that have subordinated women - heterosexuality and male privilege.

There are as many, many different reasons why women love women, or identify as lesbian as there are different kinds of lesbians. These reasons may be political, sexual or spiritual. Lesbianism could be seen as the ultimate extension of feminism, although not all lesbians would or could be called feminists. Lesbian sexuality is also very diverse, from your leather dykes to celibacy and everything in between. Spiritually queer people have usually had important roles in society as shamans and priestesses, especially in periods of transition and social change. It is their ability to cross over gender specific roles, this includes cross dressing and performing rites performed by the opposite sex that helps guide a society through social change.

Lesbians have always brought about social change, by questioning the very institutions and beliefs society is based on. Lesbian women especially have lead the way to emancipating women, by defying tradition and fierce opposition lesbians have broken into safeguarded patriarchal preserves. Lesbians have entered professions, roles and sports formerly reserved for men that are granted greater prestige and pay better. Breaking down gender defined roles in areas such as paid work has provided women with more choices and therefore more freedom.

I see Lesbianism as a form of Anarchism because it has the effect of defying oppressive hierarchical structures like the government, patriarchy and capitalism. I see many similarities between the queer and anarchist movements. Anarcha-feminist lesbianism is a form of separatist politics which will help achieve a society in which people can live free from oppression, restrictions or discrimination. A society in which dykes will be able to express themselves freely and live to their full potential.

Johanna

Self Esteem of Women in Aotearoa / New Zealand

by Mary

One thing that hasn't changed since the so called 'liberation of women' more than twenty years ago, is the fact that we continue to be conditioned to question our self-worth. However despite, or in spite of, the conditioning that constantly puts women down, we still manage to affirm ourselves and teach each other.

I know many women who have had their self-esteem seriously undermined. Women in my family, women who are my friends and acquaintances, women everywhere seem not to be fulfilling their potential. Women have had their worth undermined through attacks on their person, **in the home** through i) obsessive and/or violent destructive relationships, ii) sexual, mental and physical abuse, iii) unequal relationships which allow little economic autonomy, personal space or free time, - and through the **structure of society** - a) in the mass media, b) in the legal system, c) in the workplace, d) through legislation, e) education, f) race inequality and g) class inequality. Girls and young women are targeted too, girls are generally given dolls not lego! Low self-esteem is a symptom of the disease of inequality, the doctor in charge is patriarchy.

Anarcha-feminists are generally regarded as strong women, however I know that *my* actions are often tempered by self-doubt. Women from all backgrounds have times of self-doubt. The patriarchal mainstream feeds our self-doubt, although some women don't get completely sucked in, some question it and fight back. This article will explore how women in the past have been conditioned to doubt their self-worth and how we are presently conditioned to doubt our abilities, both as individuals and as a collective sister-hood.

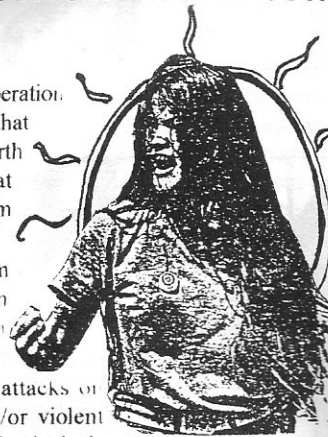
Mental well-being

Outdated scientific beliefs assumed that women were biologically weaker physically and mentally (there are contemporary replacement theories see 'The Beauty Myth' below). The stereotypical feminine woman is taught to express certain characteristics and to inhibit others. In a sense she is allowed to assert half of who she is as a complete human being. The stereotypical feminine woman gives rise to learned helplessness a condition which is created through women having every day lack of control that comes from depending on someone else either financially or emotionally. If you're a strong woman or consider yourself aware enough to question stereotypes, attaining your true potential, your whole is still difficult but never impossible to attain.

The stereotype of a feminine woman has also been adopted by psychologists. In 1970 the UK Journal of Consultative and Clinical Psychology defined that healthy males were active, independent, competitive and rational while healthy females were dependent, passive and irrational.

Therefore to be classified as mentally healthy you had to be a male!!! These unfounded assumptions are based on the same ideas which erode away the self-esteem of women.

In the late nineteenth century attempts were made to 'cure' feminists who held strong independent views. The cure, dubbed 'rest cure', involved confining women in darkened rooms, serving them bland foods and thus denying them their right to self-expression. This was imposed upon writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1887 who followed the orders of her doctor but then came dangerously close to losing her mind. In "The Backlash - an undeclared war against women" by Susan Faludi, one chapter is devoted to the psychological backlash. (Ch 12: entitled "It's All in Your Mind, Popular Psychology Joins the Backlash"). Faludi



approaches of the 1880's to the misogynist backlash of the 1980's. Not much has changed. Inappropriate treatment is still used in an attempt to cure women, and still the symptoms and not the *causes* of mental ill health are targeted by the medical profession. This means that a disproportionate amount of women suffer, in many instances unnecessarily, from depression and other forms of mental ill-health.

The System

What really causes low self-esteem in women? It's such a complex question!...Everything that establishes weak stereotypes of women, ill-founded assumptions and bias to attack the systems which put women down is to attack the root of our patriarchal society because as power is drained from women it is transferred to men. If you doubt this concept talk to men about feminism, or better still patriarchy!

The Beauty Myth

In the past women were made to feel inadequate. This was largely due to the scientifically-held belief that we were physically and mentally inferior to men. Science no longer holds that view but still women are made to feel inadequate. **The Beauty Myth** by Naomi Wolf exposes the mass coercion of women. Wolf states:

"The inadequacy of female flesh stands in for the older inadequacy of the female mind" p271.

The Beauty Myth is a truly inspirational book, it suggests that the powerful images which lower women's self-esteem (eg fashion or pornography) can be drained of power by women consciously turning away from them and replacing them by looking directly at each other; finding alternative images of beauty in the female culture, by women seeking out the plays, the music, and the films that illuminate us in three dimensions. Wolf entreats all women to actively seek out biographies about women and women herstory, and female heroines that have always been around but mostly not known to the majority of women. (after page 277).

In the Beauty Myth, Naomi Wolf also mentions the reclaiming of female ritual and rites of passage - away from baby showers and bridal showers, to marking things like menstruation, menopause, recovery from heartbreak and renewal ceremonies for childbirth. There is a role for the new (or rather old worldly) and positive, rather than negative celebrations. These celebrations can do a lot to heal, mature and develop women and raise their level of self-esteem.

Feminist Consciousness

Susan Faludi in her book "**Backlash**" supports the idea that women generally are not happy because sexual equality hasn't been reached, and that there is a rising pressure to halt and even reverse women's quest for equality. Faludi's outstanding book stresses the need for women to be constantly aware and vigilant of where power is held, and by whom. "Backlash" shouts the message that complacency is a **REAL** danger for the progression of all types of feminisms in a time of international right wing conservative ideology.

Naomi Wolf in the chapter 'Beyond the Beauty Myth', writes about a feminist third wave. She prophetically states

"The Beauty Myth can be defeated for good only through an electric resurgence of the women centred political activism of the 1970's...In this decade [1990's], for young women in particular, some of the enemies are quieter and cleverer and harder to grasp...we'll need to define our self-esteem as political: to rank it, along with money, jobs, child care, safety, as a vital resource for women that is deliberately kept in inadequate supply" p281

Women must isolate what makes them feel low self-esteem. Once you know you can fight it. Although some memories and knowledge can be really really painful (eg suppressed memory of child abuse), if the things that are being held back aren't dealt with they will forever hold us back. The things that lower women's self-esteem must be questioned, fought and exposed by strong women. We must do this for our fellow women, for girls and for future generations. We must also fight all patriarchal constraints for the women who have gone before - the Suffragettes, Emma Goldman, Te Puia etc. our heroines, our myth makers.

The Stereotypic Feminine ♀



A Trolloping Good Show

The Random Trollops have been around for a year now, an offshoot that grew out of an anarchy-feminist group in Auckland. The first performance was 'Random Glamour' an anti-fashion show hijacked by short skits from the local anarchists presiding around 'College Hill' home of Books from the Black Lagoon (Anarchist Bookshop). Since then the trollops have done over a dozen performances, the latest of which included their 'World Tour' - 'Smashing the Phallogentric Hierarchy in a Town Near You'.

The tour started in Christchurch and worked on up to Nelson, Wellington, Hamilton and finishing in Auckland with a one-off gig at the Midnight Club - a Lesbian and Gay club.

There were 8 shows performed over a two week period. Reactions to the show were quite varied, depending on the audiences which ranged from Absolutely Fabulous Full Moon Extravaganza Wild Wimmin to NORML gig type and Women's Refuge Benefit types.

The performances focused on wimmins issues - always critical of patriarchy, sometimes titillating and usually in your face. Giant vulvas being licked by huge tongues, chainsaws cutting men in half, artistically deprived cow, naked women covered in mud. You name it ...but don't ask me to make sense of it.

Spiders On The Moon - Katipo Collective Out and About

24 May TANGIMOANA DEMO

A van load of Anarchy-fems ventured to Tangimoana to meet the enemy (the marine surveillance spy station), educate ourselves about the activities that happen there (eavesdropping on national and international offshore communications and short wave radio) and to continue the tradition of women protesting for peace and against military alliances.

22 June WINTER SOLSTICE

The Katipo Collective and friends gathered in Civic Square, Wellington at around 7pm to celebrate the shortest day of the year. Wearing wedding dresses, carrying instruments, we cut a strange and solemn procession. The moon was there in full strength encouraging our ritual making. We were there publicly enjoying our show of strength, privately congratulating ourselves as women. The

of patriarchal oppression, then burnt them in defiance and anger. Later we joined hands to celebrate ourselves and each other, passing a kiss around the group. The evening ended with roaring, laughter and fire, then finally quietly waltzing and the planting of winter solstice garlic.

5 & 20 July DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Women were dropping like flies from domestic violence, literally as part of four pieces of street theatre performed by the Hags (Wellington Anarchy-feminist performance troupe) on Cuba St. and Manners Mall leading up to the women's refuge appeal week. We took the issues of domestic violence to the streets, to get it out from behind closed doors, so that it is not ignored, condoned or encouraged through ignorance. How could anybody not notice us, all dressed in black, with bruises and cuts, carrying kitchen instruments? Or ignore our message with a megaphone and the eerie sound of clattering teapots, spatulas and the like? Or women lying on the ground, representing the 11 women and 2 girls killed through domestic violence in 1993 (Suffrage Year)? Or the words and bodies marked in chalk that we left behind?

Katipo Goes North

On Tuesday 6th of September a delegation from the Katipo Collective went north to Palmerston North to mark Massey University's Festival of Women. The Katipo Collective had been invited to hold a workshop on Anarchy-feminism but we collectively decided to scale it down and hold a stall* (we're really just shy types!). The initial hassle of getting transport up was easily over-shadowed by the fun outing, stopping on the way up at picturesque Titahi Bay and the skilled driving of Billie-Jo and Val. It turned out to be a slow day, sales wise (only three), partially because it was a wet and windy day and the market day was moved indoors. The warm interior close to the women's room with free coffee, tea and biscuits, a stall giving away tampons and pads, plus the soothing musical talents of 'Leraine' half of Spinning Wheel catered for all our needs. After a few hours and an attempt to move the stall outside - the wind conspired against it, we cruised on into town to check out the Women's book store. We then drove back to Wellington stopping to check the oil and water - I learnt lesson #1 about motors, that you shouldn't check the water with a hot radiator! Thanks goes out to Catherine who very kindly lent her car at the last moment - it's reliable although it does have a wicked pull to the left!!

*Later on in the evening Julie Cuttance held a workshop on Women in the Peace Movement. Discussion on Women in Black activism led to a Palmerston North group being

Sunday Frolics

To avoid an onset of Wellington's winter blues women's soccer got kick started into action by anarchy-fems. Katipo thought it would be fun to have women-only games and invite other groups to play with us (no pun intended.)

The grassy field, without goals but with mighty views, at the top of Marjoribanks St., Mt. Vic provided the venue of these free-for-all games (those without twangers anyway.)

Mid-June saw the first soccer game, a particularly memorable post-women's dance 'match'. It was almost two full sides thanks to the hordes of dykes arriving in carloads. The field was a bit of a quagmire on arrival and continued to be watered from above but us daring damsels were not going to get distressed or scared away. On the contrary, the challenge was in trying to stay upright but the real fun was in slipping sliding and finally landing in the mud. I don't think I've ever seen soccer look so much like ice-skating - all those swift manoeuvres and sexy legs! Sporting attire ranged from apricot lingerie to serious soccer get-ups including the long socks.

Since then soccer games have seen sunnier weather but unfortunately lost a bit of bounce. We've compensated for the lagging energy and numbers by sometimes playing on half a field and walking instead of running. Frith the wonder canine has been a bit of a team mascot, unpredictable in her ball-handling and flexible on which side she's playing for. I must say it's been pretty damn choice to play supportive and friendly boy-free soccer without having to get up every Saturday morning at ungoddesly hours to play with an authority figure e.g. a coach shouting orders from the sideline.

Now that spring is leaping and bounding towards us, we're thinking of changing sports or expanding to a variety of outdoor pursuits. A vamp tramp is on the cards and bat-don, a mixture of cricket and softball has been suggested. Any ideas of activities which are disability-friendly?



WHY WOMEN SHOULD USE COMPUTER NETWORKS



The advancement of Internet and other global Computer Networks is a reality. The Internet (Net) is a powerful networking tool and will be taken over completely by white boys if we are not pro-active now. Women must overcome the barriers to using Computers and Computer Networks such as the Internet globally and local networks like PlaNet in New Zealand.

According to Australian writer Dale Spender, women could be left out of new forms of digital information technology, leaving male technocrats in control of the means to make wealth and form culture and politics.

Once again knowledge and culture will be male dominated, for men, by men and about men. (Boring!) Right now, women are being excluded from these networks. Women who get a chance to get on them, have a look around and don't really like or relate to what they see. We can change this by getting in there and putting our information, ideas and energy into this information medium.

"Dale Spender said young male computer fanatics used the same sort of language as they did about cars, praising the latest model, while women cared more about whether the machine did the job." Computers, the Net, the whole schaboozle are being made by the military, the biggest bastion of sexist, homophobic white boys around. But it's only just beginning. WE can change it NOW. Use it and Abuse it. Flood the net with Women.

Computers have been traditionally "boys toys", surrounded in jargon and mystique to create a veil of power and secrecy. "Dr. Spender said many women were reserved, even phobic about computers." The reality of computers is that they are basic electronic circuitry, just a machine with an OFF

switch. "But it was critical they got over their fear, otherwise "We're going to turn around in the year 2000 and have an information-rich society that's male, and an information-poor society that's female".

"Dr. Spender said society faced changes to writing, thinking and living as significant as those forced five centuries ago by the introduction of the printing press."

That earlier revolution saw women left out of ownership, decision-making and the technology of print production, left out of education and published only with men's approval. It was not until small independent presses started and women's publishing exploded 30 years ago that they started to get their influence back.

But in the meantime, men left print for electronic publishing, shifting the goal-posts yet again.

Women are indirectly denied access by several means. The cost of computers is prohibitive, the education system has declared Computers to be a "science", a male dominated academic arena, therefore excluding young women throughout the education system. The boys spend all the time on the computers!!

Women owed it to their daughters to become computer literate and proficient.

Women need to look to their communities, local bodies, women's centres, libraries, universities to get access to computer networks. We can use the net to do our stuff. Connect with other women, gossip, share feminist strategies, find out what the enemies up to, make international contact with women's groups, start the revolution....

And if women had been involved more in design, computers would look totally different. "No woman would ever have designed something so square and ugly and revolting with a switch on the back." Dr. Spender said

A bit of a Glossary

Internet: Is the backbone. It is a network of networks. It carries information and offers the following services and means to access the information:

E-Mail: electronic mail, sent from one computer to another.

Gopher: for tunnelling quickly from one place to another on the net to get information from another part of the network.

Telnet: operates a remote computer anywhere on the network
Talk: like the telephone except you type everything you want to say.

File Transfer protocol (FTP): for fetching documents and big programs from remote computers.

World Wide Webb: an advanced navigation system that organises its contents by subject matter

Mosaic: an on screen control panel that enables you to drive through the Webb using a mouse.

Usenet: a collection of electronic bulletin boards called news groups (conferences) carried on the Internet. Approximately 5500 at the moment. They allow for interactive discussion based on topic.

In New Zealand there are several options available to access the Internet. All universities have connections and students can get access. There are private internet service operators like Citynet in Wellington, Actrix, Internet Services in Auckland, etc. A non commercial operation called PlaNet is steadily growing in New Zealand. PlaNet offers both online and offline access to the Internet depending on how much you want to pay. (Online is where you are actually physically connected to a host machine for the duration required to find and receive the information. Offline is where you connect to your local host machine and the information that you subscribe to is transmitted to your machine in one session. You then read it on your own computer independently).

There are some women's networks starting up in New Zealand. Massey University has established a new electronic list called Feminist Studies in Aoteroa/New Zealand (FMST).

The first electronic journal for feminist studies in the world, it operates through a computer network, posting small articles and reviews every few days. It can be accessed by any computer.

Otago University offers a Womens Studies conference called WSST. To find out more about both this and FMST you can EMAIL Otago University.

Majordomo@Stonebow.Otago.AC.NZ
info <FMST> info <WSST>

This will get you the general introduction information for these Lists.

PlaNet

On PlaNet there is currently a Women's Conference. There are also Human Rights & Women conferences with information from the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) Global Network. The type of information currently coming through is from all over the world about many issues affecting women.

PlaNet is a very good forum for New Zealand Women to get access to the Internet and get our ideas out there.

For more information on the Internet and PlaNet contact either

Xanthe Xhowes@arch.vuw.ac.nz
or Gaye@nubm.planet.wgtn.co.nz
P.O.Box 11503 Wellington

According to Burkley Astronomer Clifford Stoll, the Internet is the "closest thing to true anarchy that ever existed" (Time, July 1994). There is no central authority. To withstand a nuclear blast and keep on ticking, the net was built without a central command authority. That means that nobody owns it, nobody runs it, nobody has the power to kick anybody off for good. There isn't even a master switch that can shut it down in case of emergency.

A hacker bible states amongst other things

- * Access to computers should be unlimited and total
- * All information should be free
- * Mistrust authority and promote decentralisation

RECIPES

ALISON HOLST'S ANARCHAFEMINIST APPLE CAKE

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups diced apple (some chopped dried apricots is also nice)
- Mix and let stand for 10 minutes.
- Add: 1 tsp Orgran (egg replacement available from Health food shops)
- 1/2 cup melted margarine
- 1/2 tsp allspice
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup nuts
- 1 tsp nutmeg

Combine and bake at 350 F for 55 minutes in an 8" cake tin.

VEGAN CHOCKY CAKE

- 3 cups flour
- 2 cup sugar
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2/3 cups cocoa
- 1 tsp rose essence (rum is also good)
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 2 T cidervinegar
- 2/3 cup oil
- 2 cups cold water

Mix all dry ingredients, add liquids...

RECLAIM THE NIGHT

Women in Black is the name of a widespread movement demonstrating against the violence and rapes of war. Actions include: silent gatherings of women in town squares in former Yugoslavia and provision for women from this area to meet and negotiate ways to stop fighting by Italian Women in Black. In Australia an initiative called Thursdays in Black invites all Australians to wear an article of black clothing or badge "as a gesture of solidarity and to reclaim black as a colour of protest". This action is now starting around Aotearoa.

Here in Wellington a group of 'stroppy' women want to get Women in Black started in Aotearoa. To get it underway we are organising a

RECLAIM THE NIGHT MARCH on FRIDAY 25th NOVEMBER 1994 at 8 pm

This is International Day Against Violence Against Women and the start of Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. We hope to have speeches before the march and groovy entertainment afterwards, as well as pick-up and drop-off points for women during the march, as required.

WHY HAVE A RECLAIM THE NIGHT MARCH ?

- * To give women opportunity to join together and demand our human rights
- * To empower ourselves and other women to day or night
- * To stand against limits to our freedom of movement
- * To say no to men's threats and acts of violence and the increase in this
- * To challenge the myths surrounding women and violence
- * To show solidarity to and speak out as survivors of rape and male violence
- * To have fun, sing, shout or be silent, feel passionate and strong and to remember

The Wellington Reclaim the Night Collective is seeking the input of any women interested in helping to organise the march. If you live in Wellington (or elsewhere!) feel free to contact the collective on the following numbers; Julie Cuttance 382-8129 (daytime) or Caitlin Bush or Jody Anderson on 387-7487 (evenings)



SUNFLOWER SEED PATE

- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 2 tbsp soya sauce
- 1/4 cup margarine
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/4 cup sultanas
- 1 onion
- 1 tsp rosemary

Roast sunflower seeds lightly. Blend to a powder. Sauté margarine, onion, spices, garlic. Add soya sauce. Pour into dry ingredients, mix well, add sultanas. Spoon into serving dish and

Affiliated Groups

Katipo Collective
P.O. Box 14-156
Kilbirnie, Wellington

Committee for the Establishment of Civilisation
P.O. Box 14-156
Kilbirnie, Wellington

Anarchist Alliance of Aotearoa (Auckland)
P.O. 78-104
Grey Lynn, Auckland

Books from the Black Lagoon
5 College Hill
Ponsonby, Auckland

S'Anarchy
P.O. Box 7100
Wanganui

Nelson Anarchists
C/- Alan Cave
Central Road R D 2, Upper Moutere

*Thanks to Melanie for the photos.

My dead child's soul curls in my fingertips
 and my greyringed eyes fall shut
 doors to empty streets and screwed up newspapers.
 seeing inward and outward
 brittle broken glasses
 memories waver in front of me

trying to remember
 got to remember

and my fists clench and unclench
 i watch you undress your dreams
 with slow gluey hands.

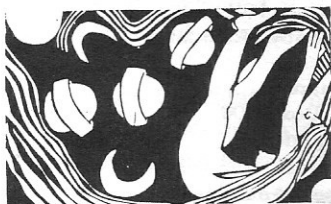
i crouch on a mountain
 it is holding me up.
 i can see whitened bones and discarded skins at the bot-
 tom.
 they are holding hands dancing.
 clickclacking melodies with disembowelled buffalo.
 as they move
 i can see the slow procession, the dead and dying.

the earth crumbles,
 my eyes are crying out to you.
 tears ripple down me through to the sand
 where on iron spears i stand
 rusted and orange, bloated and red

skeletons around skattering the dead.
 rivers flowing, water going, rocks smooth trees they
 move
 rivers flowing, water going, rocks smooth they move
 autumn is coming and summer is flying away.

i am bird too i have wings and i sing
 my fingers they tremble and i find i resemble
 more a rat.
 i think i can see moss growing on my eyebrows, it is
 sparkling in the light, all shot through with green and
 brown.
 i must go before i fall down.

By the waaa womyn



Exorcism

take thousands of years of bondage
 rinse it under a cold tap
 look at every wrinkle
 calmly, with serenity
 -take a knife out of the drawer
 and cut out all the insanity
 carefully peel away
 every mark
 run your fingers around the surface
 delicately
 don't go too deep
 -hold on
 to the unknown

dream of dolls
 dream of love
 dream of a merry-go-round
 with free rides for all
 -and no more washing up
 for one last time
 hold the shapeless potato
 in the hollow of your hand
 and in it, touch
 the monstrous superfluous cruelty,
 the sterility, the dullness of death
 Recognize
 a vanishing symbol of femininity
 -peeling the potato
 -the daily potato
 -the eternal potato
 peeled eternally
 -formless, stolid
 and prehistoric

finish off by
 pinning the potato
 onto a cloth
 fat and pregnant, pregnant with its own
 internal truth
 -put it on display
 humble and crucified
 banal and disturbing
 new in its nakedness,
 its own harsh fecundity
 dreamed of by Rimbaud

Suzanne Blaise (october 1991)
 translated from french by Catherine

