Radical Feminism

edited by Anne Koedt • Ellen Levine • Anita Rapone

An anthology of radical feminist writings from the current women's movement. Forty-five articles ranging from the personal to the theoretical and drawn largely from the feminist annual NOTES.
The Fourth World Manifesto
by Barbara Burris

In agreement with Kathy Barry, Terry Moore, Joann DeLor, Joann Parent, Cate Stadelman.

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Background

The “Fourth World Manifesto” was originally written partly as a reply to the way in which a “women’s liberation” conference was planned. We were upset at the dishonesty of the call for a “women’s liberation” conference with Indochinese women in the spring of 1971.

The women who planned and worked on the conference defined themselves as anti-imperialist women. Some of them have also been active in the women’s movement. While stating in one of their planning leaflets that it was necessary to be “upfront about our politics,” they discussed, sometimes subtly and sometimes very blatantly, the use of the women’s liberation movement to further their own political ends.

As we stated in the original “Manifesto,” we do not concede to the women who planned the conference the title of “anti-imperialists.” We feel they used a very narrow definition of imperialism taken without question from the male-dominated Left. We find it self-evident that women are a colonized group who have never—anywhere—been allowed self-determination. Therefore, all women

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who fight against their own oppression (colonized status) as females under male domination are anti-imperialist by definition. In the second part of this “Manifesto” is a detailed discussion of women as a colonized group.

It should go without saying that those of us connected with the “Fourth World Manifesto” are deeply opposed to the war in Indochina. As individuals all of us have strong commitments against this war. There are plenty of anti-war groups (however male-dominated) that women, as individuals, can relate to if they wish. But it would be disastrous to turn the independent feminist movement into simply another adjunct to the anti-war and anti-imperialist movements—with the same male-dominated perspective which those movements have.

The anti-imperialist women, like the rest of the anti-war and anti-imperialist Left movement, never question war and national imperialism as male-supremacist institutions. They ignore the roots of domination, aggression, imperialism, and war in male-supremacist society. Because they do not see imperialism and war in their deepest aspects as male-supremacist institutions in all societies, the anti-imperialist women are anxiously concerned that an “anti-imperialist consciousness” be injected into the women’s movement. They make a strong effort to change the direction of the women’s movement from independent feminist issues to anti-imperialist activities as these have been narrowly defined by the male Left.

The anti-imperialist women were less than honest in calling their conference a women’s liberation conference with the Indochinese women. We would have had no objections to their conference if they had stated honestly that they were calling an anti-imperialist conference for women interested in anti-war work. It was the dishonesty of the anti-imperialist women’s attempt to use and convert the women’s liberation movement to their brand of anti-imperialist politics that roused our anger. We have experienced too much of this kind of manipulation of the women’s movement by Left groups.

Most of our criticism of the conference was developed in the original “Manifesto.” We do not want to go over the details of it here. However, we do feel that it is crucial to open up a discussion of the emotional and ideological reasons underlying attempts to co-opt the women’s movement into other “more important” struggles.

In an expanded edition of the “Manifesto” we have worked out a
deeper analysis of the emotional, psychological, and social assumptions underlying the attitude that women’s liberation is less important than black liberation, anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, etc. In the expanded “Manifesto” we criticize the male definition of oppression which does not recognize the unique position of females as a subjugated group.

But we feel it is necessary in this limited space to focus strongly on the male-dominated Left. The anti-imperialist women are criticized here only as they are one of the most recent examples in a series of attempts to re-direct the women’s movement into male Left-dominated priorities.

Now that the women’s movement (thanks to independent women) has become a force to be reckoned with in society, there are many Left groups trying to get a finger in the women’s movement pie. Over the last year and a half the SWP-YSA (Socialist Workers Party-Young Socialist Alliance) has made a nationally coordinated attempt to infiltrate and take over women’s centers and organize women’s liberation groups (which they hope to mold to their “single issue” approach and subordinate to their organizational aims). This “Manifesto” is not simply directed at the “anti-imperialist” women. What is said of the anti-imperialist women’s manipulation of the women’s movement applies equally well to every other Left group—the Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialist Alliance, International Socialists, Students for a Democratic Society, Progressive Labor, Youth Against War and Fascism, etc. The criticisms we make of the anti-imperialist women apply equally to all of the male Left and the women in the male-dominated Left.

The Invisible Audience

In an honest article in the February issue of Radical America, Marlene Dixon described the pressures on women radicals to conform to a male-dominated movement.

In discussing the First National Conference of Women’s Liberation near Chicago in 1968, she says:

The Invisible Audience at the Chicago Conference were the very “male heavies” who had done so much to bring about the existence of a radical Women’s Female Liberation Movement. [p. 27]

The radical women were decimated by the invisible male audience. Thus the real split among the women hinged upon the sig-
significant audience that women addressed: other women, or Movement men. [p. 28]

But why were these women so super-conscious of a "male presence" at an all-women conference of women’s liberationists at a camp near Chicago—with no Left males for miles around?

Because women had learned from 1964 to 1968 that to fight for or even sympathize with Women’s Liberation was to pay a terrible price: what little credit a woman might have earned in one of the Left organizations was wiped out in a storm of contempt and abuse. [p. 27]

But perhaps becoming a "success" in the male Left is not the highest of all possible goals for a woman—or for anyone.

Women must face facts. Men will never, until forced by circumstances, place first, or even urgent, priority upon a struggle against the oppression of women. Witness the fact that there is not one male dominated organization, from the Left-liberal New University Conference to the radical Youth Movement, that has been willing to place top priority upon the women’s struggle. Indeed the idea is so repugnant to many men that they cannot tolerate a woman who refuses male leadership in order to address her energies primarily to the liberation of her sisters. [p. 33]

Women who still are acting for the Left male invisible audience but who now form women’s collectives to organize women in relation to the priorities set up by a male Left are little more independent than they were working with the males. They are somewhere between fear and open rebellion. They fear to work on their own definition of women and women’s issues and so still relate primarily to the invisible audience of "male heavies."

What a difference it would make—in terms of male approval—if the women working in "anti-imperialist" collectives or on "anti-imperialist" issues were working on their own women’s issues.—If they themselves developed a perspective on how women are a colonized group in relation to men all over the world, in all classes and races, including the Third World. With that perspective they would no longer be a part of the male Left. But it doesn’t even seem to occur to the "anti-imperialist" women that the male definition of imperialism may be extended and perhaps truly was originally applicable to women.

The "anti-imperialist" women are trying to get women to work
on “anti-imperialist” issues in a certain way in which they are defined by the male Left. We quote an article describing the last planning meeting that was held in Baltimore (October 24–25). “In order to spread the word about the Conferences [planning] more widely and to get women involved in anti-war activities, a series of actions are being planned as part of a whole anti-imperialist offensive of women.” (From “Battle Acts,” published by Women of Youth Against War and Fascism.)

It is one thing to be against the Vietnam War and all wars and quite another for a group of women to try to draw women working in their own Movement away from it into the male-dominated, very narrowly defined anti-war and anti-imperialist movements. The same mistake happened at one point (there’s always something more “important” than female liberation) when a large segment of the earlier Feminist Movement went into the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and fizzled out as a threatening force in the society.

The demand for an end to sex roles and male imperialist domination is a real attack on the masculine citadel of war. After all, women don’t declare or fight in offensive wars. War is a male institution—as are all other institutions in the society—and war is simply an extension of the colonial policy of the subjection of the female culture and “weaker” male cultures, i.e., “weaker” national cultures. Women, who have nothing to say about running the country or fighting in the war, will never end war except by attacking and ending male domination and the sex roles where men learn their war mentality. The women who went into WILPF took the safest and therefore totally ineffective and reactionary (for women) way out. They opted to reinforce the split between male and female and to use their “feminine myths” to act as adjuncts to the male peace movement and claim that women’s voice was needed (in the same old role, of course) to save men from themselves—their own self-imposed slaughter. The oppressed are going to “save” with their oppressed “virtues” (defined by males and unsifted and unquestioned) their own oppressors.

The anti-imperialist women, in a new refrain to an old song, are in essence asking that women in the independent Women’s Movement focus their energies on “anti-imperialism” as the male Left defines it. This is like asking the Women’s Movement to move from
a position of independence to a position of subservience to the male-dominated Left.

But the Women’s Liberation Movement started out from the Civil Rights Freedom Movement, Student Movement, and Anti-War Movement. Women got the notion working in these movements that the idea of freedom should apply to women too. But the males in these movements never intended the freedom struggle to extend to women. It is still too subversive an idea for any of these movements to tolerate on any real level. So many women who got the freedom bug too bad left to relate to women in a Female Movement.

And just as the freedom and anti-war struggle never applied to women, so neither does the present Left anti-imperialist movement. Is there any analysis about imperialism against women? Is there any recognition in writing or action that women are a colonized group, brutally exploited by their colonizers—men—and that this is a primary fact of women’s existence? No. And this kind of analysis will never happen in the male-dominated Left or its periphery because males are the colonizers. And the colonizer has never yet defined his privileges out of existence—only the colonized will.

The male Left has absolutely no interest in a female revolution. Rather, the male Left has a direct interest in perpetuating the status quo, i.e., male privileges, and preventing any real threats to male supremacy from both within the Left and without it.

A SPECTER IS HAUNTING THE LEFT—
The Specter of Feminism

The only real threat to male supremacy is the independent Women’s Movement. Therefore the male Left has done a great deal to impede the development of independent Women’s Liberation and tried in numerous ways to co-opt the energies of women away from working independently with other women on women’s issues. There have been numerous devices used by the Left to this end depending on the situation and the consciousness of the women involved.

The first tactic in reaction to Women’s Liberation was laughter. But that didn’t stop some women—in fact it made some of them so furious they left and began “organizing” other women. The next tactic was anger. “You castrating bitches.” “What do you women
want anyway?" And that didn't work either—even more women left to join the newly emerging independent Women's Movement.

Then the men began to get really nervous—after all women were leaving the Left in increasing numbers—and the men began to play guilt games. "So what makes you think you're oppressed, you white middle-class chick?" (Notice the order of the defining words the male Left uses—"chick" is last.) That tactic made some women even madder but it began to cut deep into many women. And this tactic began to work on some of the less strong women—those who were still full of white male-imposed guilt and self-hatred. The Left males realized that they had struck a tender nerve. And they began to manipulate women's guilt and started becoming very liberal toward the Women's Liberation Movement—that is, when they weren't chuckling about those "frustrated bitches" in male-only company. And they had to be liberal anyway because that God-damned Women's Liberation Movement composed only of females was putting the heat on them and they might lose "their" women to it if they didn't play it cool. So they put up with the discomfort of women's caucuses rather than lose all "their" women to the independent Women's Movement. At first it was pretty rough and more than one male Left organization folded under the pressures of the women's caucuses.

But then the Left males began to see that the women's caucuses could have some real value for their organizations. They could be used as important organizing tools for recruiting new members and for working with women associated with the males whose problems the Left organization was concerned with. Such as having the women work with GI wives while the men worked at "organizing" the GI's in the army. Women in the caucuses express best the male attitudes of the organization toward "women's issues" and women's struggle for liberation. We give only two examples out of many. One is a leaflet passed out by PAR (People Against Racism) women at a women's liberation conference in Detroit in 1968. They list as one of their concerns something which reveals the manipulative way in which the Women's Movement is viewed: They wish to use Women's Liberation "as an organizing tactic for broader political movement."

Bernadine Dohrn's equally blatant statement in the \textit{New Left Notes} special issue on women is every bit as revealing. She says, "Everywhere around us there are concentrations of women: dorms,
women's schools, education and home economics departments, high schools, jobs—women can be mobilized to fight against imperialism and racism.” Maybe women's caucuses were really a boon to the male Left and not the threat they had expected them to be and which they were at first.

So a pattern was generally established throughout the male Left that women could stay in the caucuses and organize other women into the Left male-dominated Movement as long as they concentrated on:

1. Raising women's issues mainly as they related to the structure of the male-dominated organization which the women remained working for;
2. Raising women's issues on the periphery of the male-defined "important" issues of the organization;
3. Relating to the Women's Liberation Movement as caucus members only of the primary male organization to "raise" the issues of the male organization in the Women's Movement, and, if possible, get its focus off independent women's struggle and onto how women can relate to male-defined Left issues.

Women's collectives, unless they are truly autonomous women's collectives working from their own analysis on women's issues, can be and are used in much the same manner as the Left women's caucuses. Because they too relate primarily to the male Left Movement and only secondarily as females to female liberation issues. They are one step ahead of the women's caucuses if only because they know they can no longer work with the males in the organization—but they still remain working for them even though now working in women's collectives. Also, "women's collectives" is now being used by a number of women as synonymous with caucus group—but a more "hip" term than caucus.

**The Myth of the White Middle-Class Woman**

The male Left tries to intimidate Left women into not taking a strong and independent stand on the female liberation struggle with the "abusive" statement, "They're only a bunch of white, middle-class women." It would take another long article to refute this statement, but we will do it in a very cursory manner here.

White is the first defining word of "white middle-class women."
This implies that the primary position of women in the society is due to white privileges. If this is so, then all whites must have the same privileges, i.e., all whites must control the institutions, make the laws, control the army and police, control the government, the religion, education, and business, and have the very best positions in jobs, etc. But it is white males only who are in positions of power and control in all of the institutions of the society. Women are excluded from control and decision-making, are discriminated against in jobs more than any other group, get the lowest pay, are defined as inferiors and as a sexual caste, etc. Also, women were the first group to be subjected as a caste all over the world, thousands of years ago—long before blacks were subjected to whites in America or anywhere else. Obviously whiteness does not overcome the caste position of being a woman in this society. There are some incidental advantages to being white for a woman who is white, but there are also advantages for black males in being males in this society. But the incidental advantages—which are meaningless in terms of woman’s true caste position as a sex—come to her mainly in her affiliation with a dominant white male.

The Left very shallowly sees women associating and living with white males and therefore assumes that women share white male privileges. This is false. Being integrated as subordinates does not mean that women share the privileges of the ruling caste—white males. Women get the crumbs. In fact, as the black liberation struggle found out, there are distinct disadvantages to being “integrated” with your oppressor, especially when he still has all the power. The control over the oppressed is just that much more complete.

The second defining word in the series, “white middle-class women,” is middle-class. If class defines women before her sex does, then she should be able to compete with any male for any job on an equal level. But this is not the case. Women are almost in a different labor market than men because of the extremely rigid female caste labor role. The discrimination against females in the economy is the most intense of any group. Female labor is the lowest paid. Doesn’t everyone know the statistics by now? In 1966, the median income for a white man was $7,164; for a nonwhite man, $4,528; a white woman, $4,152; a nonwhite woman, $2,949 (full-time year-round labor). In 1955, the median wage of women working full time was 64 percent of that of men; in 1967, it was down
to 60 percent. Things are getting worse and we could go on and on quoting statistics you have probably already heard. But it is clear that the white male and the black male get paid more and the white female and the black female get paid less. The black female is doubly disadvantaged as a female and black, and has the lowest pay level of all. That “female” work is the lowest and the caste lines of labor are most rigid in terms of sex can be proved by the fact that black males—while demanding integration in jobs in male fields, i.e., better paying jobs—have never demanded to integrate (sexually, that is) as secretaries, waitresses, salesgirls, etc. When black males integrate into a female job (which is rare) such as nursing, they are paid more than the females doing the same job.

A woman’s class is almost always determined by the man she is living with. From her father’s house to her husband’s house, his income determines her class. Her income and job are only “extra.” In fact, if all women were to be put out of all their men’s houses and had to depend on their own earning power, almost all of them would be lower or working class—no matter what their class positions were when living with the man. They would be lower or working class because of women’s sexual caste position in the economy. Class is therefore basically a distinction between males, while the female is defined by her sexual caste status.

So we have only the last word left in the “taunt” of “white middle-class women.” And woman—a sexual caste subordinated to the dominant ruling sex, man—is defined primarily by that relationship.

But it is true that women—through self-hatred and manipulation by male culture (as evidenced by the male Left example above)—do not necessarily identify with their true caste position as women. She often identifies with her oppressor’s privileges as white or middle or upper class or even as male. But the Left, which is so upset about her identification with whiteness and class, does not have a comparable critique of black and Third World male identification with male supremacy and privileges (humorously referred to as “foreskin privileges”). This is because the identification with male privileges by black and Third World males—even in their movements—fits in with white male movement domination.

But as women, we are upset about any inequality—any identification with privileges—between women or within the Women’s Movement. We have tremendous barriers to overcome. As the Fe-
male Liberation Movement must cut across all (male-imposed) class, race, and national lines, any false identification of women with privileges that are really male (such as whiteness or class, etc.) will be fatal to our Movement. Any identification with privileges will destroy the basis of communication which we females share as a suppressed caste and will divide us up as enemies where we should be friends and equals. And the male Right and the male Left movements will manipulate these differences among women to prevent women from overcoming the barriers that keep us apart and therefore unable to effectively change our sexual caste position as females.

Many women do identify with white and class privileges. Our task as women is not, as the male Left does, to write them off as white bourgeois but to patiently discuss and communicate with women, as sisters, what our true caste position in society is. Once we really understand our suppressed caste status and begin to move to free ourselves from it, we women can then understand other groups’ oppression—but not before. But it is not an automatic result. People can see their own oppression clearly and be blind to others’ oppression. So the understanding of the oppression of other groups needs to be a very conscious and important part of the Women’s Liberation Movement, but only from the basis of an understanding and struggle for our own freedom as females—not as an imposed lecture by some “movement organizers” who will “raise our consciousness” about oppression, and try to impose their white male guilt on us.

The male Left tries, through guilt, to play one oppressed group off against another oppressed group in much the same way the Establishment plays one against the other. They are always going in circles with the “who’s most oppressed” musical chairs. How does one decide who is “most oppressed”? Surely the male white Left—as oppressors—cannot decide this. But they do and try to impose their decision on everyone, especially women. And women are—of course—defined as “least oppressed” by the male-dominated Left.

Let us suppose, for a moment, that we are in a male Left meeting and they are trying to decide who is “most oppressed,” therefore who most deserves their solicitous attentions and rhetoric. First of all they decide that blacks are most oppressed. But then someone says that black females are more oppressed than black males. Some-
one else counters that black females in Third World countries are even more oppressed than are black females in the U.S. Then another person realizes that a black female in the Third World who is in the working class is more oppressed. But someone else says that a black female in the Third World country who is in the working class and under eighteen years of age is even more oppressed. But the most oppressed, and therefore logically and morally the only people they should try to “organize” and work with, are black females in Third World countries, in the working class, under eighteen years of age, pregnant, and culturally defined as ugly.

Such is the “logic” of the “most oppressed.” But we can take one last look at it from another angle.

A Dramatic Meeting of Two Oppressed/Oppressors, or “Who is More Guilty?”

A black man meets a white woman on the street. He is oppressed because he’s black and so need feel no guilt toward her. She feels guilty because she’s white. But then the balance shifts as she realizes she’s a woman and therefore oppressed and needn’t feel guilt. But then he feels guilty because he’s a male. Then she begins to feel guilty because she’s middle class. Then he feels free of guilt because he’s working class. But he begins to feel guilty because he’s older and she’s very young and oppressed. She feels oppressed as a youth and therefore doesn’t feel guilty . . . ad infinitum.

The fact that has to be faced by the male Left at some point is that everyone in the society—including the white male—is both oppressor and oppressed. Psychologically this could be a revolutionary concept for the Left. If we can only identify with our oppression and not see how we also oppress others we are fooling ourselves. If we feel only guilty about being oppressors we are also fooling ourselves.

The male Left is in a vicious circle of guilt and righteousness, because people in the male Left refuse to go deep enough into their own personal processes of guilt and anger at their own oppression, which becomes a confused mixture of violence and revenge. The male Left has become so hung-up on guilt and “who’s most oppressed” that they have lost an elemental sense of justice for all human beings.
We, as women, do not want males to feel guilty. We don't care about guilt; what we want is change. All we demand is justice for our sisters, and that cannot come from a guilt-ridden movement which has defined half of humanity's freedom as a "side effect" of the "real" revolution which will be made by other "vanguard," "more oppressed" groups.

The males in the Left continue, through control of leadership, control of the Left organizations, control of writing and publishing, to define the issues which Left workers will concentrate on. This often goes in fads. The latest one is anti-imperialism. (Which is not to negate the importance of imperialism but to say it has been taken up in a shallow and faddish manner and as an escape from the realities of American society.) The definition of imperialism is carefully male-controlled and does not include women's colonial status.

The women who are organizing this "women's" Conference have accepted the male Left priorities and their definition of "anti-imperialism," which excludes women's movements for self-determination.

The women who call themselves anti-imperialists made this statement in their planning leaflet:

Discussions followed concerning the level of anti-imperialist consciousness within the Women's Liberation Movement in the various cities represented. It was evident that although there was both a high degree of women's consciousness and of anti-imperialist consciousness in various parts of the Movement, the relation between the two has not been made clear to most women in the Movement. [p. 3]

Let us explain to the "anti-imperialist" women what imperialism and anti-imperialism really are to women.

There are two definitions of imperialism. The Webster dictionary states that imperialism is:

... the policy and practices of forming and maintaining an empire; in modern times, it is characterized by a struggle for the control of raw materials and world markets, the subjugation and control of territories, the establishment of colonies, etc.

The imperialist is defined by Webster's as a person favoring imperialism.

Fanon and the whole black liberation struggle have recently extended the dictionary definition of imperialism or colonialism to mean a group which is prevented from self-determination by another
group—whether it has a national territory or not. The psychological and cultural mutilation is particularly intense and the colonialism more brutal when the group that colonizes and the group colonized have different defining physical characteristics that set them clearly apart.

All of the above definitions apply to the subjection of women, as a sex.

The dictionary definition of imperialism included “the subjection and control of territories . . . .” Women, set apart by physical differences between them and men, were the first colonized group. And the territory colonized was and remains our women’s bodies.

Our bodies were first turned into property of the males. Men considered female bodies as territory over which they fought for absolute ownership and control. Consider the imperialist implications of the language: He related his sexual “conquests,” she “surrendered” to him, he “took her,” etc. Marriage (exclusive of property rights) and the patriarchal family system are colonial institutions created and controlled by males for the subjugation of females.

Our bodies are free territory to other male colonizers when not “protected” by an individual male colonist. What is rape but an imperialist act upon the territory of our bodies?

There are two forms of the colonization of our bodies (territories) by males. Most males have an individual colonial relationship to an individual female and most males identify with and act on the group colonization of women. For instance, rape is an individual male imperialist act against an individual woman while the abortion laws are male group control over their collective female territories. (We realize that we are generalizing here about males and that some of them do not perceive women simply as open territory for conquest. But unfortunately, there are too few males who perceive females as equal human beings to change the generalization much at this point.)

Another example of group colonization of women is the way our bodies are defined as open territory for exploitation (compare the exploitation for sexual satisfaction of the male colonizer to exploitation for raw materials—female bodies are the raw materials). In all forms of the dominant male culture—advertising, pornography, the underground press, literature, art, etc.—female bodies are exploited as territory to demean, subject, control, and mock.
The fact that each male petty colonialist has an individual interest in perpetuating the subjection of his individual territory, i.e., woman, makes the colonization of women more complete than that of any other group. The colonial rule is more intense for females as we have no escape into a ghetto and at all times are under the watchful eye of the male colonizers, from father to lover to husband. Therefore our suppression as a group (culture) and as individuals has been more complete as has been our identification with our masters’ interests (much like the proverbial house nigger).

Fanon shows that it is not enough for the colonizer to control the territory and subject the inhabitants of it to his rule. The colonizer must destroy the culture and self-respect of the colonized. And colonialism’s condemnation of the colonized’s culture transcends any national boundaries, for it is the essence of the colonized physical and cultural differences that threaten the colonizer.

Fanon says in *The Wretched of the Earth* that “Colonialism . . . turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.” [p. 210] He says that the colonized (in his book, speaking of blacks) “must demonstrate that a Negro culture exists.”

The great mass of women have been totally ignored in history except where they appear as adjuncts to men. And the history of Female Liberation Movements has been distorted and almost completely censored. Through the almost complete censorship of the realities of women’s condition throughout history, women have been robbed of the means to knowledge about the origins and extent of their subjugation. History (of art, politics, literature, etc.) as related by males has engraved upon women’s minds a male image of the world.

*Women Are Now in the Process of Having to Prove that a Female Culture Exists.*

Culture is defined by Webster’s as the “concepts, habits, skills, art, instruments, institutions, etc. of a given people in a given period.” We will show that the concepts, habits, skills, art, and instruments of women in any period have been different from men’s and have been ridiculed and/or suppressed by them. We will show that in all the major institutions of society women receive unequal treatment and the appearance that these institutions are the same for men and women is false.

A female culture exists.
We also hold that female and male culture began with the definition of females as embodying all those human attributes which males as dominators could not reconcile with their own self-image and therefore projected onto females, thus causing a schizophrenic split of personality into masculine and feminine. —That women, defined by these attributes (such as emotional, intuitive, etc.) by males and further limited by their physical position in society as to work and tools, developed a female or “feminine” culture, and a culture of resistance to male domination. Although the concept of the “feminine” was imposed upon women, we have, through the centuries, developed and created within the confines of the feminine, a female culture.

**Female and Male Culture**

What do most people imagine when they think of differences in culture? They most often think of strange customs and a different language. The traveler to a foreign culture will notice women carrying pails of water on their heads or men riding donkeys, different and strange costumes and white-washed houses. In another culture she will notice people riding bicycles, small towns, sidewalk cafés, small shops, more chic dress, different foods, etc. Especially will the traveler notice the difference in language if there is one.

Although these are just a few of the differences of national culture that distinguish the lives that both women and men lead, and we respect these differences, they are the superficialities that cover up the fundamental similarity of all national cultures the world over. This fundamental similarity is the split between male culture and female culture.

Let us go back to some of those superficial differences that the traveler noticed. In the first culture, the women were carrying pails of water on their heads and the men riding donkeys to market. What was seen as one whole is now divided up by sexual work role. The different costumes which were seen as a whole unit are now divided up into male costumes and female costumes. The small shops noticed are owned by men and sometimes staffed by women. A split is now seen between male ownership and female workers. The cafes are served by women, if cheap, and staffed by male waiters if more expensive. A difference in value of work and pay between male and
female is perceived. The food production in agriculture is done primarily by males but prepared in each home by females. What was seen as culinary differences now reminds the traveler of the role of women in the home and woman’s caste work roles all over the world. The traveler in this second look at the culture begins to notice the basic sameness of the male-female cultural split under the superficial differences that were so striking to her at first.

The problem is that the split is so obvious and taken for granted that practically nobody can see it. Things which are conceived of as “natural” cannot ordinarily be perceived. But the emperor had no clothes in spite of what everybody “saw,” and a female culture exists whether or not most people will acknowledge the facts of its existence.

Let us again take up those things (habits, skills, art, concepts, and institutions) which distinguish one culture from another according to Webster’s definition. Part of the customs of a culture are its habits. Habits here means what people do in their daily lives. It can also include how they go about doing these things. It is clear that women and men have very different daily habits. Women in practically all parts of the world, whether they are working outside the home or not, have responsibility for the cooking, cleaning, and child “raising” chores of the society. This means that most women spend their time with children. This in itself is a cultural split, as men go out and mix mainly with other males in the male world outside the home. Generally males do not do any of the work designated as “female work.” Women, mainly in the company of other women and children, organize their time and routines and socializing on an entirely different basis than males. Female work, being so completely caste labor, is organized and done by women in ways peculiar to the female view of things (which is very much determined by woman’s secluded work place, i.e., the home and its environs). The whole daily routine of a man and a woman is totally different.

The woman develops skills associated with her work role. Her skills are usually entirely different than the male’s. She usually knows a lot about cooking, child care, washing, sewing, colors, decorating, and cleaning, while he knows mechanical or carpentry skills and anything he may learn as a skill at his job. The instruments or tools a woman uses are defined by the work and skills she is allowed.

If the woman goes out to “work” she will have all the home
chores in addition to her outside "job." But women's skills outside the home are limited by what the male-run economy will train her for or let her do. She usually fills "service" roles which utilize the "skills" she has learned in her role as wife and mother. She is allowed limited acquisition of physical skills in such things as typing and small tedious work. She fills completely different job roles than males in the male-dominated economy and is segregated into "female jobs" almost completely. Males do almost all the specialized skillful work—for higher pay.

At one time in the process of the cultures, women did almost everything and men did nothing but hunt and make weapons and war. As men had free time due to women's performing all the drudge work for them (as slave labor, really), they began to develop skills in certain things. As a skill developed, women were no longer allowed to perform the task and it was passed on from father to son. As specialization increased women had more of the skills and trades taken away from them and were left only with the drudge chores of cleaning, washing, cooking, "raising" children, etc. This culminated in Europe in the all-male guilds of feudal times.

When the feudal guild system broke down with the onset of industrialism, cheap unskilled labor was needed and women were used again—sewing, weaving, mining, working metal in factories, etc. It was on the backs of cheap "unskilled" female labor (and child labor) that the grotesque edifice of Western industrialism was built. Female slave labor in the cotton mills and black slave labor in the cotton fields produced industrialism for the white male Western world.

And when industrialism was achieved, hordes of women were sent back home and men replaced them in the factories. So that now we have a small body of lowest-paid female labor in the factories but almost totally female personnel in sales and service roles (typing, nursing) which were once male "skills" but are now just very low-paying drudge work.

The final three parts of Webster's definition of culture are the art, concepts, and institutions of a people.

Women have been excluded from contributing to the art, philosophy, and science of all national cultures. These things are in tight male control. The male culture, which is the dominant culture in every nation, i.e., is synonymous with the national culture, cannot
accept a female view of things as expressed by female writers, artists, and philosophers. When some women break through male prejudice to create truly great art—which is often very sensitive to the female culture and values—they are not given the recognition they deserve, because males, looking through their own culturally distorted view of the world, cannot give any credence to an art that expresses the female view. In fact, most males cannot understand what is going on in female culture and art. The worth of female art is thoroughly suppressed in a male-dominated society.

The female soul, suppressed and most often stereotyped in male art, is defined by negative comparisons to the male. The eternal feminine is seen as a passive, earthy, malleable, mysterious, unthinking, emotional, subjective, intuitive, practical, unimaginative, unspiritual, worldly, evil, lustful, super-sexual, virginal, forever waiting, pain-enduring, self-sacrificing, calculating, narcissistic, contradictory, helpless, quivering mass of flesh.

The fact that women live under the power of belief in these characterizations causes a certain outlook which molds the female culture. Woman’s position in society, her economic and psychological dependence, reinforce the female stereotypes. Because of the belief in these attributes and woman’s position in society—not because of our inherent “female nature”—women’s concepts of the world are much different than men’s.

Almost everything that has been defined as a male view of the world has its opposite in a female view. Because of the child raising role and the emphasis on personal relationships, women have a more personal, subjective view of things. Because of our subjection, women have a more fatalistic, passive view of the world. We are more in touch with our emotions and often find it necessary to use emotions in manipulating men. Through the imposition of a servant status on women, the female culture has elaborated a whole servile ethic of “self-sacrifice.” As the major ethic of the female culture, self-sacrifice has been one of the most effective psychological blocks to women’s open rebellion and demand for self-determination. It has also been a major tool of male manipulation of females.

The institutions of a people are an essential part of their culture. The major institutions of every culture are the same: the family, religion, government, army, and economy. Men and women have a completely different relationship to the institutions of “their” cul-
ture. In fact there are two cultures hidden by the appearance of one culture under one set of institutions.

Women are excluded, except sometimes in token numbers and in the lowest working ranks, from participation in government, the army, and religion. There are basically two economic institutions of a society: the substructure or family and the superstructure or outside world of work. Women are limited to an economic dependence in “their” caste work in the family. In work outside the family, women are caste laborers in the lowest-paid drudge work. Women are kept from management or decision-making in work outside the home.

Though it appears that both men and women live together within the institutions of a society, men really define and control the institutions while women live under their rule. The government, army, religion, economy, and family are institutions of the male culture’s colonial rule over the female.


National cultures vary greatly according to the degree of the suppression of the female culture. The veil and seclusion of women and their almost total segregation in Arab culture make for differences between them and, for example, Swedish women. A Swedish woman may not be able to tolerate the suppressed life of Arab women but she also, if she is sensitive, may not be able to tolerate her suppression as a female in Sweden. Crossing national boundaries often awakens a woman’s understanding of her position in society. We cannot, like James Baldwin, even temporarily escape from our caste role to Paris or another country. It is everywhere; there is no place to escape.

The repression of female culture is only a question of degree all over the world; the underlying reality is basically the same: the denial of self-determination for women. Women traveling to a foreign country can readily communicate and understand other women in that country because female work and roles (culture) are basi-
cally the same all over the world. But it too often happens that women falsely identify with "their" country's dominant male culture and so cannot communicate with their sisters in subjection in other lands or in other races. This female identification with male cultural supremacy must be overcome if the Women's Movement is to be a truly liberating force.

Most males all over the world perceive and compare females as a caste group. A male of any culture perceives a woman as a woman first and only secondly as "representing" a national or ethnic culture. And he treats every woman as females as a caste are treated. The "Miss World" and "Miss Universe" etc. female flesh auctions, comparing various nationalities of female flesh, are only one example of many. The best way for any woman to find out the truth of this statement is to do some traveling to different countries.

"National" Culture is the Dominant Male Culture

Whoever defines and controls the institutions of a society controls that society. Males define and control all the institutions of all "national" cultures—including every purportedly socialist nation that has ever existed.

Because the male culture is dominant and in control in every nation, the "national" culture becomes synonymous with, and in fact is, the male culture. The female culture exists "invisibly," in subjection to the male-defined "national" culture.

What appears as one national culture, due to male propaganda, is in reality the male culture setting itself up as the national culture through subordination of the female. The male army, the male government, the male religion, the male-run economy, the male-defined institution of the family, along with the male culture in the "narrower" sense—i.e., the male arts, sciences, philosophy, and technology—are defined as the national culture when in fact they represent nothing but the male view and male interests.

One national culture vs. another national culture is simply one male-dominated society vs. another male-dominated society, with women carried along or used outside their subservient role temporarily if this is necessary for victory of the male national culture. Women are obviously hurt doubly by the imposition on them of two male-dominated cultures—one "their" own males', the other the
foreign males. But the confusion comes when “our” own males, who dominate and define the female culture, refuse to recognize that for women it is simply two dominant male cultures that have to be resisted. “Our” own male dominators always want us only to resist the other males’ domination in the guise of fending off the destruction of “our common culture”—which they have always excluded us from and subordinated us to.

Because of this identification of the male culture with the national, ethnic, racial, or revolutionary culture, some very oppressive male-supremacist attitudes are widespread in national and racial liberation movements. For this reason it is extremely important to make a clear distinction between national or racial liberation and female liberation, although the basis is the same: self-determination. Fanon, for example, in the chapter called “Algeria Unveiled” in *A Dying Colonialism*, makes the mistake of confusing the two and exposes his own identification with male cultural supremacy. Fanon takes the veil as the symbol of Arab and Algerian culture:

The veil worn by the women appears with such constancy that it generally suffices to characterize Arab society. . . . The way people clothe themselves, together with the tradition of dress and finery that custom implies, constitutes the most distinctive form of a society’s uniqueness. . . . [p. 35]

Now the veil can be seen as a distinctly Arabian cultural trait or a national cultural trait. We have shown that the national culture is synonymous with the male culture. In this case the male Arab culture has a unified way of defining and limiting the female through the veil. The female cultural suppression is symbolically represented by the veil, which must be worn by females from the age of puberty on.

Fanon is correct in saying that the French tried to destroy Algerian (male) culture and that this is a typical colonial tactic of one male culture vs. another colonized male culture. But Fanon shows a typical male inability to see the brutal colonization of females by males. In his use of the veil as a symbol of Algerian culture that the French were trying to destroy, he oversimplifies in order to avoid a recognition of his own male guilt and the Algerian males’ culpability toward the Algerian females’ repressed and demeaned culture.

If Fanon were more honest he would recognize that the French, as a male culture, had no more interest in the Algerian woman’s
freedom than the Algerian male had. But Fanon, who has such passionate anger against the French colonizers, does not extend his vision to demand justice for the Algerian female. In fact he pooh-poohs the idea that Algerian women are oppressed at all. Nowhere, except in what he reveals unknowingly, does he admit the fact of female oppression by the male in Algeria. (We will later quote an Algerian woman who, for obvious reasons, does not share his bigoted blindness on the colonized status of women in Algeria.) Fanon says:

To begin with there is the much-discussed status of the Algerian woman—her alleged confinement, her lack of importance, her humility, her silent existence bordering on quasi-absence. And “Moslem society” had made no place for her, amputating her personality, allowing her neither development nor maturity, maintaining her in a perpetual infantilism.... Such affirmations, illuminated by “scientific works,” are today receiving the only valid challenge: the experience of revolution. [pp. 65, 66]

For one who is so concerned with the psychological mutilation of the colonized group, this statement shows a callousness equaled only by colonial French statements about the “non-oppression” of French rule. Compare this to a statement Fanon made about the mutilation of the Algerian personality by the French:

French colonialism has settled itself in the very center of the Algerian individual and has undertaken a sustained work of cleanup, of expulsion of self, of rationally pursued mutilation. [p. 65]

But not only does Fanon deny the existence of female oppression in Algeria, like any other colonizer he must justify it as chosen by the colonized:

The Algerian woman’s ardent love of the home is not a limitation imposed by the universe [no, it was imposed by males]. It is not flight from the world. The Algerian woman, in imposing such a restriction on herself [in not taking off the veil, and staying home], in choosing a form of existence limited in scope, was deepening her consciousness of struggle and preparing for combat. [p. 66]

In this a typical male-supremacist attitude emerges. Women who give up their own struggle for freedom are the most “conscious” women if they are then prepared to fight alongside their male oppressors. Fanon says: “What was most essential was that the occu-
pier should come up against a united front.” [p. 66] And a united front means women must give up their “silly, trivial” ideas of a female anti-colonial movement and fight in the male-dominated “anti-”colonial revolution.

Fanon shows that the Algerian national liberation struggle was a male struggle and that when, out of necessity, women were included, they were under male leadership and control.

Until 1955, the combat was waged exclusively by the men. The revolutionary characteristics of this combat, the necessity for absolute secrecy, obliged the militant to keep his woman in absolute ignorance. [p. 48]

Fanon never questions what made possible the male’s position of fighting and the female’s of being kept in ignorance. He never questions male control of the revolution. He states: “As the enemy gradually adapted himself to the forms of combat, new difficulties appeared which required original solutions.” [p. 48] Among the “original solutions” was the possibility of including women in the fighting—but not really in the revolution, because women were not to be freed by it. The excuse given before was male chivalry: after all, women might get tortured and killed. But when it was necessary to use women the chivalry arguments were conveniently forgotten.

The decision to involve women was made wholly by males. “The decision to involve women as active elements of the Algerian Revolution was not reached lightly.” [p. 48] But before it was decided to include women in the revolution, the male revolutionists came up against the effects of their own colonization of women. They pondered how the Algerian woman’s colonized status in relation to Algerian males might interfere with her “use” in the revolution. Fanon never says it occurred to the Algerian males that Algerian women needed to engage in an anti-colonial resistance to Algerian male domination. Women’s colonized status was seen simply as an obstacle to her “use.”

Having been accustomed to confinement, her body did not have the normal mobility before a limitless horizon of avenues, of unfolded sidewalks, of houses, of people dodged or bumped into. This relatively cloistered [i.e. slave] life, with its known, categorized, regulated [by males] comings and goings, made an immediate revolution seem a dubious proposition. The political leaders were perfectly familiar with these problems [i.e., with the
suppressed status of Algerian females], and their hesitations expressed their consciousness of their responsibilities. They were entitled to doubt the success of this measure. Would not such a decision [to involve Algerian women] have catastrophic consequences for the progress of the Revolution? [p. 49]

Here the revolution is defined as male and women are to be used; but female liberation is never considered. In fact, the idea is how to use women without too much upsetting their colonial status.

In the final decision to “admit” them to the revolution, women, naturally, were not consulted:

After a final series of meetings among leaders, and especially in view of the urgency of the daily problems that the Revolution faced, the decision to concretely involve women in the national struggle was reached. [p. 51; emphasis added]

Fanon waxes euphoric in discussing Algerian womanhood’s role in the revolution. Even though woman’s position in Algerian society did not change during or after the revolution, he continues to state that women fought as sisters alongside the Algerian brothers and this proves that the Algerian women are not slaves of the Algerian men. In fact it only shows that the Algerian men needed them and were able to tolerate them outside of their traditional role in order to win the revolutionary battle. There are many quotes from Fanon to show that women within the revolution had a subservient role. He makes some incredibly paternalistic remarks about “accepting” women’s “support” in the revolution. This seems to show a subconscious understanding on his part that it was a revolution made by and for the Algerian males. He says:

The married women whose husbands were militants were the first to be chosen. Later, widows or divorced women were designated. In any case, there were never any unmarried girls—first of all, because a girl of even twenty or twenty-three hardly ever has occasion to leave the family domicile unaccompanied. But the woman’s duties as mother and spouse, the desire to limit to the minimum the possible consequences of her arrest and her death, and also the more and more numerous volunteering of unmarried girls, led the political leaders [male] to make another leap, to remove all restrictions, to accept indiscriminately the support of all Algerian women. [p. 51]

Notice that he said “support” instead of “equal participation.”

The Algerian woman’s role was limited and defined by the males
in spite of Fanon’s glowing rhetoric about her equality in the revolution and how this gave the lie to accusations of Algerian male unfairness to her.

...the Algerian woman assumes all the tasks entrusted to her. Among the tasks entrusted to the Algerian woman is the bearing of messages or complicated verbal orders learned by heart, sometimes despite complete absence of schooling. But she is also called upon to stand watch for an hour and often more, before a house where district leaders are conferring. [p. 53]

That the district and revolutionary leaders are all male and do not include women in the decision-making is evident from a number of statements (emphasis is added):

During those interminable minutes when she must avoid standing still, so as not to attract attention, and avoid venturing too far since she is responsible for the safety of the brothers within, incidents that are at once funny and pathetic are not infrequent. [p. 53]

Meanwhile the woman who might be acting as a liaison agent, as a bearer of tracts, as she walked some hundred or two hundred meters ahead of the man under whose orders she was working, still wore a veil... [p. 51]

Fanon reveals the hypocrisy of the male Third World when he mocks the “allegations” that the Algerian female is oppressed. His defense of Algerian male culture is every bit as smooth as the French justification of colonial rule. And he denies female oppression under the guise of defending the Algerian national culture from vulture-like attacks by the French. No one will doubt that the French were brutal colonizers of the Algerians, but that does not either deny or excuse the equally brutal colonization of Algerian females by Algerian males. Fanon says:

...the dominant administration solemnly undertook to defend this woman, pictured as humiliated, sequestered, cloistered.... It described the immense possibilities of woman, unfortunately transformed by the Algerian man into an inert, demonetized, indeed dehumanized object. The behavior of the Algerian was very firmly denounced and described as medieval and barbaric.

Lamentations were organized. “We want to make the Algerian ashamed of the fate that he metes out to women.” Algerian women were invited to play a “functional, capital role” in the transforma-
tion of their lot. They were pressed to say no to a centuries-old subjection.

After it had been posited that the woman constituted the pivot of Algerian society, all efforts were made to obtain control over her. [p. 38]

Never once does Fanon see the Algerian woman simply as a pawn of both the French male-supremacist culture and the Algerian males, neither of whom were interested in her humanity. What he does instead is to deny her oppression and then to sympathize with Algerian male colonists who used her oppression as a symbol of their manhood and Algerian culture. In fact he is terribly moved by the plight of the Algerian male in his fight to retain control over “his woman.” The Algerian male has his manhood (synonymous with male culture and control) destroyed by any attempts to “free” the Algerian woman. So he clings more tenaciously to his dominance, which he equates with his culture.

Converting the woman...wrenching her free from her status, was at the same time achieving a real power over the man and attaining a practical effective means of destructuring Algerian culture.

The Algerian men, for their part, are a target of criticism for their European comrades, or more officially for their bosses. “Does your wife wear the veil? Why don’t you take your wife to the movies, to the fights, or to the cafe...? The boss will invite the Algerian employee and his wife. Before this formal summons, the Algerian sometimes experiences moments of difficulty. If he comes with his wife, it means admitting defeat, it means prostituting his wife, exhibiting her, abandoning a mode of resistance... [There are] traps set by the European in order to bring the Algerian to expose himself, to declare: “My wife wears a veil, she shall not go out,” or else to betray: “Since you want to see her, here she is,” would bring out the sadistic and perverse character of these contacts and relationships and would show in microcosm the tragedy of the colonial situation on the psychological level, the way the two systems directly confront each other, the epic of the colonized society, with its specific ways of existing, in the face of the colonialist hydra. [pp. 39, 40]

It seems never to occur to Fanon that the “sadistic and perverse character of these contacts and relationships” between the male and female in Algerian culture shows also the “tragedy of the colonial situation” of females “on the psychological level.” Fanon, for all his
justified bitterness and hatred of the French and European colonizer, does not have a corresponding sense of justice for the plight of the colonized Algerian female.

Perhaps it would be too difficult, psychologically, to admit that the Algerian males have been doing to the Algerian females for many centuries what has been done to Algeria for 130 years by the French. Perhaps it would not be so easy to appear the “innocent” oppressed if the Algerian males had also to admit their own colonial rule of Algerian females. Because the Algerian male then might have to identify consciously with his own French oppressor to see his own role in relation to “his” women. This is why Fanon reacts so vehemently against the idea—the actual facts—of female domination by the Algerian male. And this is probably why the French male colonizers knew they could cut so deep on this issue.

But there is such a thing as justice, whether our own personal guilt is touched or not. And if, as Fanon so passionately argued, anything necessary to win freedom for the oppressed colonial culture is to be done, then he should honestly accept that principle for the colonial oppression of women. Otherwise he should reconsider whether he himself as a male does not have a strong interest in and identification with being a colonial oppressor. Perhaps he should then consider what this means in terms of his philosophy of violence and terrorism for the “unredeemable” oppressor. Perhaps women too can achieve catharsis through terrorism against the colonial male culture. But does Fanon want that? Does any male “revolutionary” want that?

The Betrayal of Female Culture in the Anti-Imperialist Revolution

All of Fanon’s emotional sympathy is wrapped up with the male Algerian wherever it is a question of two male cultures—European and Algerian—clashing over who will control the colonized status of the female Algerian. But a female has a different view of things—that is, a female who can see through both the European and Algerian colonial male cultures.

A few years after Algeria won its independence, Fadela M’Rabet, an Algerian woman, wrote a book entitled *La Femme Algérienne* (published by Maspero). In it she charged that the women who
fought in the Resistance were used in the Algerian nationalist revo-
lution only to be returned to their former subservience after "inde-
pendence" was gained. She said that not very many women partici-
pated in the struggle and their lives were never affected in any way.
She compared the position of women in Algeria before and after
the "revolution" to the position of black Africans in South Africa,
and cites case after case of the oppression of women in "liberated"
Algeria. She says:

In order to understand the situation of the woman (and her reac-
tions) it is necessary to start with the man; if she submits or re-
volts, if she accepts her condition or does not, the Algerian woman
has evolved in a world which is made by men, for men, and at his
advantage only. The Constitution, without doubt, and the resolu-
tions of the Congress proclaim the equality of all citizens; but the
gap is such between the texts and the facts that all is as if the
texts did not exist.
Socially the most honorable, the state of the married woman is, in
fact, as degrading as that of the concubine. ... The mother, the
wife; there is for the Algerian man a third category of women—
the sister. And if it is not very comfortable to be the mistress or
the wife of an Algerian man, it is nearly a calamity to be his
sister ... it is allowed to him to completely dominate her.

Let us listen to another Algerian woman concerning the "cultural
symbol" of the Arab culture, the veil. Claudine, in an interview in a
New York Times Magazine article (October, 1967) after Algerian
independence was won, said that she was lucky that her father al-
lowed her to go to school and not wear the veil. Most Algerian girls
get no schooling—even after the revolution—because, as Fadela
M'Rabet has said, too much schooling for a girl is considered very
dangerous by the male society. But the local Mufti intervened when
Claudine was sixteen. By that time there were only two other girls
in her class at the lycée, and twenty-five boys. The other girls went
veiled. The Mufti insisted that Claudine do the same or quit school;
her father would be banned from the Mosque if she refused. She
says:

... so I had to agree. The Mufti still complained though. When I
rode to school, he always stood watching for me, and I had to get
down off my bicycle and kiss his hand on my way to and from
school. It wasn't easy because in Constantine they don't use the
nose veil. There is just a great big square you wrap all around
you, covering everything except one eye. You have to hold it closed with your teeth and your hands. . . .

It is also interesting to note that Ben Bella in 1964—two years after independence—did not share Fanon’s opinion that women’s oppression was a fabrication of the French colonialists. Ben Bella said at this time:

There are in our country five million women who submit to a servitude unworthy of Socialist and Moslem Algeria. The liberation of the woman is not a secondary aspect which is to be put under our other objectives: it is a problem, the solution of which is a preliminary to the whole nature of socialism. [quoted in *La Femme Algérieenne*]

But Fadela M’Rabet lays the blame for women’s oppression on the Moslem tradition of male privilege in the home, separation of the sexes in school, and perpetuation of a racist notion that women are objects worthy only of disdain. She says, “If we really want to end our underdeveloped status, then let’s not wait. Let’s ban apartheid.” She argues eloquently for a female revolution now.

Must we wait several generations under the pretext that our society is not “ready”? We [Algeria] are the product of 130 years of colonialism. **But how many centuries of exploitation have women lived under: Their colonizers have been the men. [Emphasis added]**

We use the example of Algeria only to show that a nationalist, anti-imperialist revolution does not free women because the dominant male culture is identified as the national culture and male supremacy is never attacked.

Women have always been used and abused in male revolutions because the male revolutionists are colonialist imperialists in relation to females. It is as if the Algerians fighting with the French in World War II expected the French to liberate Algeria. The French didn’t want to be dominated by another country but they wanted to continue their own domination of Algeria. Males don’t want to be dominated by other males or another male culture, but they have no intention of discontinuing their domination of the female culture.

No anti-capitalist, working-class, Third World, anti-imperialist etc. movement will ever free women. There is too much at stake for the male colonialists to ever give up their privileges without a strug-
gle. And they control all of those movements as they control all the national cultures.

The female culture will continue to be betrayed by the ruling male culture and by male revolutionaries whose primary identification is with male culture.

The anti-imperialist movement as it is defined by males is a dead end for women. Males, as members of the dominant male culture in the Third World as well as in the imperialist countries, are equally concerned with maintaining male dominance though they may be in a death struggle between themselves.

**Oppressed Groups and the Feminine**

There have been a great deal of comparisons of woman’s position with the position of minority groups in feminist literature. Particularly, there have been comparisons between stereotypes of black people and women. Women are described as fitting the typical Negro stereotype and comparisons are made between black oppression and female oppression to prove that females are in fact an oppressed group.

But really the analogy should go the other way around. One should compare the stereotypes of blacks and other minority groups and suppressed cultures to the female stereotypes.

Woman was the first group to be oppressed and subordinated as a caste to another group—men. Without going into all the reasons for this subordination, we can still discuss the psychological and cultural results. A schizophrenic split developed when the dominating males projected onto women all of their emotions which they could not reconcile with their self-image and role as dominators, and which they were afraid of and would not allow themselves to be “weakened” by.

This schizophrenic split made female and male definitions into opposites. Generally, since males are defined as the human norm, females are defined as their subhuman negatives. Yin and Yang define the male and female stereotypes as opposites, with females getting the negative characteristics. Men are seen as “day,” positive, forceful, aggressive, dominant, objective, strong, intellective, etc. Women have been defined for thousands of years as weak, “night,” passive, emotional, intuitive, mysterious, irresponsible, quarrelsome, childish, dependent, evil, submissive, etc.
(A study was done at Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts using a sex-role questionnaire with over a hundred polar items, one pole being stereotypically male and the other stereotypically female. The subjects, a group of clinical professionals, assigned a mentally healthy adult and a mentally healthy male the same characteristics. But a mentally healthy female was seen as passive, emotional, dependent, less competitive, non-objective, submissive, and more easily influenced. —*Psychology Today*, September, 1970, p. 53.)

As females were the first colonized group and the first to be stereotyped as a caste, male culture, when it extended its boundaries and subjected other males or male cultures to its rule, defined them as inferior by assigning them female characteristics. Female characteristics were the only negative characteristics the male culture knew.

A male as a male in relation to females is defined by all the masculine stereotypes, but that same male in subjection to another male is defined as inferior through having female qualities. He is then "effeminate" or passive, or weak—all of which are female stereotypes. This idea can be extended to a culture. One male culture which dominates and controls another male culture defines the subservient males and their culture as feminine, i.e., all the female stereotypes become the minority stereotypes for the subjected males. They are defined, by being subservient, as mysterious, emotional, intuitive, personal, childlike, evil, irresponsible, quarrelsome, passive, dependent, etc. This holds for all subjected male national cultures and racial cultures.

But the female within the subjected male national or racial culture is defined twice as female. In other words, her definition as a female is her primary definition. For example a black woman is defined as a woman by all the female stereotypes—as passive, emotional, intuitive, personal, mysterious, quarrelsome, irresponsible, dependent, etc. The imposition of these stereotypes on her again in the form of racial stereotypes is unnecessary as they are basically the imposition of female stereotypes on the males of the race. And when the racial battle is won and her race is free, she will realize that the stereotypes—though they no longer oppress her man—are still her defining stereotypes as a woman. He now has his manhood back (defined as opposites of female stereotypes), but she continues to be defined by her womanhood as inferior.

The problem of male supremacy comes in again when national
(male) and racial (male) cultures repudiate the female characterizations and stereotypes assigned to them in revolting against their male dominators. What happens is that they assert their manhood, i.e., male dominance stereotypes, against the female stereotypes which they have come to loathe as depriving them of virility and their "natural" "birthright" as dominators, i.e. males. They make a super-identification with the male culture in reaction to the female. They try to become tough super-males in reaction to the imposition of female stereotypes upon them. Then we have the "don't deprive me of my manhood, i.e. balls" and "stand behind me, woman, where you belong" syndrome. Often there is such a strong open reaction against the female culture that the females of the suppressed national or racial group are threatened and defined as castrating females if they don't become invisible and get where they belong—in the subservient female culture, into silence, and "prone" as Stokely Carmichael once said.

The males of the suppressed national or racial group never question the values of the male culture which impinges upon them and which they impose upon "their" women. They accept the right of a male to dominate but feel it should be limited to females and revolt to overthrow the dominant male culture's rule over them.

The problem is that the original split between the stereotypes of male and female which started this whole mess will never be resolved by the suppressed male national or racial culture, as the suppressed males are too busy trying to prove they are super-males and that they don't have female characteristics in any way. They loathe the female principle as having defined them as inferiors—with its symbolic castration.

**Up With the Female Principle**

Only the suppressed female culture in all races, in all lands, can be proud of the female principle. For females need not prove their "manhood," as they can never be males or a part of the dominant male world culture. Therefore women will be forced, by the very fact of being female, to defend and raise the banner of the female principle.

All of the female culture traits are defined as negatives by the dominant world culture. We do not believe them to be so
all those that keep us subservient, such as passivity, self-sacrifice, etc.).

We are proud of the female culture of emotion, intuition, love, personal relationships, etc., as the most essential human characteristics. It is our male colonizers—it is the male culture—who have defined essential humanity out of their identity and who are “culturally deprived.”

We are also proud as females of our heritage of known and unknown resisters to male colonial domination and values.

We are proud of the female principle and will not deny it to gain our freedom.

It is only by asserting the long suppressed and ridiculed female principle that a truly human society will come about. For the split between the male and the female will only be bridged and a fully human identity developed—encompassing in each person all human characteristics which were previously split up into male and female—when the female principle and culture is no longer suppressed and male domination is ended forever.

We identify with all women of all races, classes, and countries all over the world. The female culture is the Fourth World.

Author’s Postscript

The female culture and the male culture are not natural; they are artificial creations of a male-dominated world. The artificial split between what has been defined as female and what has been defined as male has nothing to do with the inherent nature or potential of females or males. The definitions of the male principle and female principle and the female and male cultures are social definitions only. They are abstractions of a primal abstraction—the splitting up of the whole human personality into the caricatures known as male and female, masculine and feminine.

This “Manifesto” was never intended to be a glorification of the female principle and culture. It was never intended to imply that women have more “soul” than men or that women are inherently more human than men. It is simply a truth that there is a split between the female and male and that the female half of life has been suppressed by the male half of life. Those things which have been socially defined as female have been suppressed in males and suppressed in society through the oppression of females.
If one is born a male one is taught to repress one’s “female” self and to develop only those things which will make one a true “man” and a part of the male culture. If one is born a female one is taught to repress that part of oneself which is “male” and to develop only those parts of the self which will make one a “true woman” and able to fit into the submissive female culture.

The extreme of the male culture has become a grotesque caricature of part of the potential inherent in every human being, whether female or male. Why are so many blind to the grotesqueness of the tough, hard, super-balls, insensitive, unemotional male image in John Wayne, James Bond, the Marines, etc.? Or so blind to the grotesqueness of the super-mind, intellect, reasoning, and abstraction removed from any connection with life in the “think tanks” of the Rand Corporation, the academy, the corporations, the Army Corps of Engineers, most scientific research, war games strategies, etc.?

The extreme of the female culture has also become a grotesque caricature of the potential inherent in every human being. Why are so many blind to the grotesqueness of the super-sex goddesses, the sex-object removed from mind and emotion, the motherhood myth, the pettily personal existence which is not allowed to transcend itself into the individual autonomous existence, the enforced delicacy without full feeling and intensity, the sentiment turned into bathos because removed from direct sexual or creative expression, etc.?

The abstractions of male and female are extreme and many people are not molded wholly into either category—there is a great deal of overlap. But no one in the society is allowed to be a whole human being as long as the tyranny of the male and female culture or sex role split exists.

Recently there has been an unfortunate reaction among some women’s liberationists and feminists. Some women have begun to call anything which they do not like “male.” They seem to think that anything that has been defined as a “male quality” is inherently bad. A woman who is strong or takes initiative is told that she is “acting like a man” or “talking like a man.” The crushing of initiative and strength and self-expression in women is now being done by other women in the movement under the guise of “anti-elitism,” “anti-male-identification,” and “collective self-suppression.” It would be a tragedy if women were to make our oppressed state into a
virtue and a model of humanity and the new society. We need to sift out what is good in our imposed definition as females and to honestly examine what is stupid and self-destructive. We need also to sift out what is good in what has been defined as male and therefore denied expression in us. We need no more glorification of the oppressed and their "super-soul" and "superior" culture, for that will blind us to our weaknesses and only lead us back into the same mire from which we have been trying to free ourselves.

Neither the male culture nor the female culture is a model for a human society.

It is true that women have no recourse other than to rise up in a strong feminist movement to end male domination. We must have our own independent women's movement free from male interference and domination. But we should not lose sight of our ultimate goals. There is a danger that the women's movement will help destroy its own ends if the split between the female and male is made into a new feminist orthodoxy. The women's movement has to be free enough to explore and change the entire range of human relationships and it must be open enough to heal the split between the female and male and draw out the total human potential of every person. If we want to be free as female human beings, we must really be willing to end the split of the human personality that has cut men off from a part of themselves and which has caused untold suffering to women.