**THE POSITIVE WOMAN**

**by**

**Phyllis Schlafley**

The first requirement for the acquisition of power by the Positive Woman is to understand the differences between men and women. Your outlook on life, your faith, your behavior, your potential for fulfillment, all are determined by the parameters of your original premise. The Positive Woman starts with the assumption that the world is her oyster. She rejoices in the creative capability within her body and the power potential of her mind and spirit. She understand that men and women are different, and that those very differences provide the key to her success as a person and fulfillment as a women.

The women’s liberationist, on the other hand, is imprisoned by her own negative view of herself and of her place in the world around her. This view of women was most succinctly expressed in an advertisement designed by the principal women’s liberationist organization, the National Organization for Women (NOW), and run in many magazines and newspapers and as spot announcements on many television stations. The advertisement showed a darling curly headed girl with the caption: “This healthy, normal baby has a handicap. She was born female.”

This is the self-articulated dog-in-the-manger, chip-on-the-shoulder, fundamental dogma of the women’s liberation movement. Someone--it is not clear who, perhaps God, perhaps the “Establishment,” perhaps a conspiracy of male chauvinist pigs--dealt women a foul blow by making them female. It becomes necessary, therefore, for women to agitate and demonstrate and hurl demands on society in order to wrest from an oppressive male-dominated social structure the status that has been wrongfully denied to women through the centuries.

By its very nature, therefore, the women’s liberation movement precipitates a series of conflict situations--in the legislatures, in the courts, in the schools, in industry--with man targeted as the enemy. Confrontation replaces cooperation as the watchword of all relationships. Women and men become adversaries instead of partners.

The second dogma of the women’s liberationists is that, of all the injustices perpetrated upon women through the centuries, the most oppressive is the cruel fact that women have babies and men do not. Within the confines of the women’s liberationist ideology, therefore, the abolition of this overriding inequality of women becomes the primary goal. This goal must be achieved at any and all costs--to the women herself, to the baby, to the family, and to society. Women must be made equal to men in their ability not to become pregnant and not to be expected to care for babies they may bring into the world.

This is why women’s liberationists are compulsively involved in the drive to make abortion and child-care centers for all women, regardless of religion or income, both socially acceptable and government-financed. Former Congresswoman Bella Abzug has defined the goal: “to enforce the constitutional right of females to terminate pregnancies that they do not wish to continue.”

If man is targeted as the enemy, and the ultimate goal of women’s liberation is independence from men and the avoidance of pregnancy and its consequences, then lesbianism is logically the highest form in the ritual of women’s liberation. Many, such as Kate Millett, come to this conclusion, although many others do not.

The Positive Woman will never travel that dead-end road. It is self-evident to the Positive Woman that the female body with its baby-producing organs was not designed by a conspiracy of men but by the Divine Architect of the human race. Those who think it is unfair that women have babies, whereas men cannot, will have to take up their complaint with God because no other power is capable of changing that fundamental fact. On some college campuses, I have been assured that other methods of reproduction will be developed. But most of us must deal with the real world rather than with the imagination of dreamers.

Another feature of the woman’s natural role is the obvious fact that women can breast-feed babies and men cannot. This functional role was not imposed by conspiratorial males seeking to burden women with confining chores, but must be recognized as part of the plan of the Divine Architect for the survival of the human race through the centuries and in the countries that know no pasteurization of milk or sterilization of bottles.

The Positive Woman looks upon her femaleness and her fertility as part of her purpose, her potential, and her power. She rejoices that she has a capability for creativity that men can never have.

The third basic dogma of the women’s liberation movement is that there is no difference between male and female except the sex organs, and that all those physical, cognitive, and emotional differences you think are there, are merely the result of centuries of restraints imposed by a male-dominated society and sex-stereotyped schooling. The role imposed on women is, by definition, inferior, according to the women’s liberationists.

The Positive Woman knows that, while there are some physical competitions in which women are better (and can command more money) than men, including those that put a premium on grace and beauty, such as figure skating, the superior physical strength of males over females in competitions of strength, speed, and short-term endurance is beyond rational dispute.

The Positive Woman remembers the essential validity of the old prayer: “Lord, give me the strength to change what I can change, the serenity to accept what I cannot change, and the wisdom to discern the difference.” The women’s liberationists are expending their time and energies erecting a make-believe world in which they hypothesize that if schooling were gender-free, and if the same money were spend on male and female sports programs, and if women were permitted to compete on equal terms, then they would prove themselves to be physically equal. Meanwhile, the Positive Woman has put the ineradicable physical differences into her mental computer, programmed her plan of action, and is already on the way to personal achievement . . . .

The Positive Woman recognizes the fact that, when it comes to sex, women are simply not the equal of men. The sexual drive of men is much stronger than that of women. That is how the human race was designed in order that it might perpetuate itself. The other side of the coin is that it is easier for women to control their sexual appetites. A Positive Woman cannot defeat a man in a wrestling or boxing match, but she can motivate him, inspire him, encourage him, teach him, restrain him, reward him, and have power over him that he can never achieve over her with all his muscle. How or whether a Positive Woman uses her power is determined solely by the way she alone defines her goals and develops her skills.

The Differences between men and women are also emotional and psychological. Without woman’s innate maternal instinct, the human race would have died out centuries ago. There is nothing so helpless in all earthly life as the newborn infant. It will die within hours if not cared for. Even in the most primitive, uneducated societies, women have always cared for their newborn babies. They didn’t need any schooling to teach them how. They didn’t need any welfare workers to tell them it is their social obligation. Even in societies to whom such concepts as “ought,” “social responsibility,” and “compassion for the helpless” were unknown, mothers cared for their new babies.

Why? Because caring for a baby serves the natural maternal need of a woman. Although not nearly so total as the baby’s need, the woman’s need is nonetheless real.

The overriding psychological need of a woman is to love something alive. A baby fulfills this need in the lives of most women. If a baby is not available to fill that need, women search for a baby-substitue. This is the reason why women have traditionally gone into teaching and nursing careers. They are doing what comes naturally to the female psyche. The school-child or the patient of any age provides an outlet for a woman to express her natural maternal need.

This maternal need in women is the reason why mothers whose children have grown up and flown from the next are sometimes cut loose from their psychological moorings. The maternal need in women can show itself in love for grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or even neighbors’ children. the maternal need in some women has even manifested itself in an extraordinary affection lavished on a dog, a cat, or a parakeet.

This is not to say that every woman must have a baby in order to be fulfilled. But it is to say that fulfillment for most women involves expressing their natural maternal urge by loving and caring for someone.

The women’s liberation movement complains that traditional stereotyped roles assume that women are “passive’ and that men are “aggressive.” The anomaly is that a women’s most fundamental emotional need is not passive at all, but active. A woman naturally seeks to love affirmatively and to show that love in an active way by caring for the object of her affections.

The Positive Woman finds somebody on whom she can lavish her maternal love so that it doesn’t well up inside her and cause psychological frustrations. Surely no woman is so isolated by geography or insulated by spirit that she cannot find someone worthy of her maternal love. All persons, men and women, gain by sharing something of themselves with their fellow humans, but women profit most of all because it is part of their very nature . . . .

Here is a starting checklist of goals that can be restored to America if Positive Women will apply their dedicated efforts:

1. The right of a woman to be a full-time wife and mother and to have this right recognized by laws that obligate her husband to provide the primary financial support and a home for her and their children.

2. The responsibility of parents (not the government) for the care of preschool children.

3. The right of parents to insist that the schools:

 a. permit voluntary prayer,

 b. teach the “fourth R,” right and wrong, according to the precepts of Holy Scriptures,

 c. use textbooks that do not offend the religious and moral values of the parents,

 d. use textbooks that honor the family, monogamous marriage, woman’s role as wife and mother, and man’s role as provider and protector,

 e. teach such basic educational skills as reading and arithmetic before time and money are spent on frills,

 f. permit children to attend school in their own neighborhood, and

 g. separate the sexes for gym classes, athletic practice and competitor, and academic and vocational classes, if so desired.

4. The right of employers to give job preference (where qualifications are equal) to a wage earner supporting dependents.

5. The right of a woman engaged in physical-labor employment to be protected by laws and regulations that respect the physical differences and different family obligations of men and women.

6. The right to equal opportunity in employment and education for all persons regardless of race, creed, sex, or national origin.

7. The right to have local governments prevent the display of printed or pictorial materials that degrade women in a pornographic, perverted, or sadistic manner.

8. The right to defend the institution of the family by according certain rights to husbands and wives that are not given to those choosing immoral lifestyles.

9. The right to life of all innocent persons from conception to natural death.

10. The right of citizens to live in a community where state and local government and judges maintain law and order by a system of justice under due process and punishment that is swift and certain.

11. the right of society to protect itself by designating different roles for men and women in the armed forces and police and fire departments, where necessary.

12. The right of citizens to have the federal government adequately provide for the common defense against aggression by any other nation.

Sara M. Evans and William H. Chafe

“American Women in the Twentieth Century,”

**The Second Wave**

By mid-century the conditions for another surge of activism were under way. During the Second World War women joined the labor force in unprecedented numbers. Most signiﬁcant, perhaps, married women and women over age 35 became normative among working women by 1950. Yet cold war culture,

in the aftermath of World War II, reasserted traditional gender roles. The effort to contain women within the conﬁnes of the ”feminine mystique", as Betty Friedan labeled this ideology, however, obscured but did not prevent rising activism among different constituencies of women. Under the cover of popular images of domesticity, women were rapidly changing their patterns of labor force and civic participation, initiating social movements for civil rights and world peace, and ﬂooding into institutions of higher education.

The President's Commission on the Status of Women, established in 1961, put women's issues back on the national political agenda by recruiting a network of powerful women to develop a set of shared goals. They issued a report in 1963, the same year that Friedan published The Feminine Mystique. That report documented in meticulous detail the on-going realities of discrimination in employment and in wages, numerous legal disabilities such as married women's lack of access to credit, and the growing problems of working mothers without adequate child care. In 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act gave women their most powerful legal weapon against employment discrimination. An opponent of civil rights introduced Title VII, and many members of Congress treated it as a joke. But Title VII passed because the small number of women then in Congress ﬁercely and effectively defended the need to prohibit discrimination on the basis of "sex" as well as race, religion, and national origin.

The second wave emerged simultaneously among professional women and a younger cohort of social activists. Professionals, with the leadership of women in labor unions, government leaders, and intellectuals like Friedan, created the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966 to demand enforcement of laws like Title VII. A second branch of feminist activism emerged from younger women in the civil rights movement and he student new left. Civil rights offered a model of activism, an egalitarian and visionary language, an opportunity to develop political skills, and role models of courageous female leaders. Young women broke away in 1967 to form consciousness-raising groups and build on the legacy of the movements that had trained them.

The slogan, "the personal is political," became the ideological pivot of the second wave of American feminism. It drove a variety of challenges to gendered relations of power, whether embodied in public policy or in the most intimate personal relationships. The force of this direct assault on the public/private dichotomy has left deep marks on American politics, American society, and the feminist movement itself. Issues like domestic violence, child care, abortion, and sexual harassment have become central to the American political agenda, exposing deep divisions in American society that are not easily subject to the give-and-take compromises of political horse-trading.

From 1968 to 1975, the "Women's Liberation Movement," using the techniques of consciousness-raising in small groups, grew explosively. The synergy between different branches of feminist activism made the 1970s a very dynamic era. Feminist policymakers dubbed the years 1968 to 1975

”the golden years" because of their success in courtrooms and legislatures. These included the Equal Rights Amendment, which passed Congress in 1972 and went to the states; the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion (Roe v. Wade); Title lX of the Higher Education Act, which opened

athletics to women; the Women's Equity Education Act; and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act.

With their new strength, women challenged barriers to the professions (law, medicine), to ordination within mainstream Protestant and Jewish denominations, and to the full range of traditionally male blue-collar occupations, from carpenters to ﬁre-ﬁghters and police. They ﬁled thousands of complaints of discrimination, mounted hundreds of lawsuits, and also built thousands of new institutions-day-care centers, shelters for battered women, bookstores, coffeehouses, and many others. The new feminism

drew on women's stories to rethink the most intimate personal aspects of womanhood including abortion rights, sexual autonomy, rape, domestic violence, and lesbian rights.

The second wave of feminism also changed the American language both through its own publications of which there were hundreds, the largest of them being Ms., ﬁrst published in 1972. New words entered the

American lexicon—”Ms.," "ﬁreﬁghter," ”sexism"—while uses of the generic Masculine--mankind, brotherhood, policeman--suddenly seemed exclusive. In Women's Studies programs, which grew rapidly in the early 1970s, young scholars rethought the paradigms of their disciplines and initiated new

branches of knowledge.

The second wave provoked a strong reaction, of course, revealing not only male hostility but also deep ﬁssures among women themselves. Antifeminism became a strong political force by the late 1970s with the mobilization of Phyllis Schlaﬂey's Stop-ERA and antiabortion forces. In the

face of widespread cultural anxiety about equality for women and changing gender roles, the Equal Rights Amendment stalled after 1975 and went down to defeat in 1982 despite an extension of the deadline for ratiﬁcation. Antifeminism drew on the insecurities of a declining economy in the wake of

the Vietnam War and on the growing political power of the New Right which made cultural issues like abortion, the ERA, ”family values,” and homophobia central. The 1980s, framed by the hostile political climate of the Reagan ad- ministration, nourished a growing backlash against feminism in the media, the popular culture, and public policy. As public spending shifted away from social programs and toward the military, female poverty increased sharply. The Reagan boom after 1983 did not touch the poorest, disproportionately female and racial minority, segments of the population.

At the same time, the 1980s witnessed the continued growth of women's presence in positions of public authority: Supreme Court justice, astronaut, arctic explorer, military ofﬁcer, truck driver, carpenter, Olympic star, bishop, rabbi. Mainstream religious denominations began to rewrite liturgies and hymn books to make them more "inclusive." Despite regular announcements of the "death" of feminism, it would be more accurate to say that in the 1980s feminism entered the mainstream with new levels of

community activism, sophisticated political fundraisers like EMILY's List, and broad political alliances on issues like comparable worth. Experimental "counterinstitutions” started in the 1970s survived by adopting more institutionalized procedures, professionalized staff, and state funding. Women's Studies took on the trappings of an academic discipline.

Feminism was broad, diffuse, and of many minds in the 1980s. Legal and cultural issues grew more complex. Feminist theorists wrestled with the realities of differences such as race, class, age, and sexual preference, asking themselves whether the category "woman" could withstand such an analysis. The multifaceted activities that embraced the label "feminist"—policy activism, research think tanks, literary theory, music, art, spirituality—signaled the fact that the women's movement had lost some cohesiveness.

The testimony of Anita Hill during the 1991 hearings on the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, however, catalyzed a new ound of national conversation, complicated by the deep ﬁssures of race and sex. The sight of a genteel black woman being grilled by a committee of white men who made light of this “sexual harassment crap" mobilized thousands of women to run for ofﬁce and contribute to campaigns. In 1992 an unprecedented number of women were elected to public ofﬁce.

If we look at women's situation at the end of the twentieth century, the contrast with 1900 could hardly be more dramatic. The average woman now can expect to live 79.7 years, which is 65% longer than her great-grandmother in 1900. On averge she will marry at age 24.5, and bear only about two children. There are now decades in women's lives—both before and after the years of childbearing and child care which earlier generations never experienced. As a result of the second wave of women's rights activism in the ﬁnal decades of the twentieth century, in politics and law, labor force participation, education, and sexuality women live in a truly different world.

In the last twenty-ﬁve years we have also seen a dramatic growth in the numbers of female elected officials. In 1997 there were 60 women in Congress (1l.2%)—14 of them women of color; 81 statewide executive ofﬁcials (25%); 1,597 state legislators (21.5%); and 203 mayors of cities with population over 30,000 (20.6%). There are two women on the Supreme Court, 30 female circuit court judges (18.6%), and 107 female district court judges (17.2%).

Similar results occurred in education. In the arena of higher education, for example, women are closing in on equity. Today, 54 percent of all bachelor of arts degrees go to women; 25 percent of women aged 25 to 34 are college graduates. Most striking, the proportion of women in professional schools is now between 36 and 43 percent. The revolution of the late twenteeth century is evident in these ﬁgures, as most of the change occurred in the last three decades. Compare current numbers with those of 1960, when the proportion of women in law school was 2 percent (today 43%); medicine 6 percent (today 38%); MBA programs 4 percent (today 36%); Ph.D. programs 11 percent (today 39%), and dentistry 1 percent (today 38%).

In stark contrast to a century ago, more than 61 percent of all women are in the labor force, including two-thirds of women with preschoolers and three-fourths of women with school-age children. Though African-Arnerican women continue to work at a higher rate than average (76% overall), the

gap is clearly shrinking as the pattems that they pioneered are becoming the norm. With overt discrimination now outlawed, women practice virtually every occupation on the spectrum from blue collar to professional.

Yet alongside change, older patterns persist. Women remain concentrated in female-dominated, low-paid service occupations despite their presence in many professions and in traditionally male blue-collar occupations such as construction or truck driving. Although the exceptions are highly visible, 70 percent of women work either in the services industry (health and education) or in wholesale or retail trade. Women's median weekly earnings are still only 75 percent those of men-though there has been a dramatic gain since 1970 when they were 62.2 percent.

**Sexuality, Fertility, and Marriage**

If female sexuality was suppressed in 1900 at the end of the century sexual references and images saturate American culture. It was not until the 1930s that birth control became legal in most states. In 1961 the birth control pill introduced the possibility of radically separating sexual experience from the likelihood of procreation. Then in 1973, the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision legalized abortion. Today, premarital sex is common, even normative. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, in the early 1990s 56 percent of women and 73 percent of men had sex by age 18.

As dramatic, homosexuality has become an open subject of public discourse, and lesbians—once completely hidden, even to one another-are creating new public spaces and organizations, ﬁelds of intellectual inquiry and theory, and families that rely on voluntary ties in the absence of any legal sanction. Lesbians have been a major constituency and source of leadership in the second feminist wave. Twenty years of visibility, however, is just a beginning. American society remains deeply, and emotionally, divided on the issue of homosexuality. Opposition to gay rights marks a key issue for the religious right, and open violence against lesbians and gay men continues.

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Behind all the stories about a revolution in women’s status was a complicated, tortured, and often contradictory reality. Because race and class interacted with gender, some women beneﬁted enonnously from the gains that had been won by feminists, while countless others saw no change at all in their lives, and the situation for many worsened rather than improving. To a poor woman struggling to make ends meet while holding down a minimum-wage job at the local fast-food outlet, the promises of women’s liberation seemed like a slap in the face.

Economic resources and education seemed to be the most important variables. A young college-educated woman from an economically secure background had a world open to her that was strikingly different from her mother's or grandmother’s opportunities. If these earlier generations worked outside the home, they were likely to be secretaries, salesclerks, nurses, or teachers. Even then, they were likely to stop work when they married and had a child. The woman with a college degree in the year 2000, on the other hand, could go to law school or get a master's degree in business administration. She might then enter a large corporate ﬁrm and make a six-ﬁgure salary, doing the same kind of work for the same pay as the brightest young man. If she married, it was probable that her husband would be someone with a comparable background. And if they had a baby, they were likely to pay a child-care worker or a day-care center to take care of the child while continuing to pursue their careers.

A young Latina woman born in the South Bronx, on the other hand, faced a very different situation. If she was like half the young people in New York City’s public schools, she would drop out before graduating from high school. There was a good chance she would have a child while still in her teenage years, but would not get married. With no job skills, she could ﬁnd work only at low-paying service establishments. By the time she was twenty she would be locked into a cycle of work and family responsibilities that seemed to offer little opportunity for improvement. Not only was the life of the South Bronx woman no better than her mother’s or grandmother’s, but it might even be worse.

There were other possibilities, of course. A white (or black) high school graduate who worked as a secretary for an insurance agency or as a factory operative at General Motors might well ﬁnd her life better than that of her mother — for which the feminist movement deserved some credit. Greater attention to sexual harassment in the workplace might discourage unwanted advances from male bosses or coworkers. Legal advances for women’s rights contributed to higher wages and the opening of some jobs that previously had been restricted to men. If the woman had an unwanted pregnancy, she now could consider terminating it legally.

One of the major problems with feminist advances was that they operated differentially. Their beneﬁts were largely limited to women already in a position to be able to take advantage of the new rights that had been won. Nor did the differential decrease over time. When Roe v. Wade became the law of the land, for example, poor women as well as rich women had access to an abortion. But by 1978, Congress had prohibited federal funds from being used to pay for abortions for poor women. Then additional restrictions were enacted to circumscribe women’s abortion rights, including a twenty-four-hour waiting period and the requirement that teenagers notify their parents and get their permission. Because of threats to their funding and security, abortion providers dwindled in number. Well-off women had little difﬁculty coping with these restrictions. But women from culturally conservative and economically disadvantaged backgrounds found the restrictions almost impassable. What had once seemed like a feminist victory for all women had come to have a distinctly middle-class tinge.

Similarly, government programs designed to force companies and universities to open doors to women had little impact on those clustered in sex-segregated, low-paying jobs. Afﬁrmative action occasionally worked well as a means of giving women lawyers access to jobs at law ﬁrms that previously hired only white men, or of giving women professors opportunities to be hired in departments that had never considered women scholars. But afﬁrmative action meant little to women who were data processors working side by side with other women in a giant computer pool or to operatives at a textile mill who had neither the education nor the training to qualify for a management-level opening. In short, afﬁrmative action — and other equal opportunity programs — tended to beneﬁt those with preexisting credentials that enabled them to move forward. They did less to open new possibilities for people stuck in sex-segregated and low-paying positions.

Programs that might have been of greater value to the mass of women in the workplace either were not implemented or were rejected. Working-class and minority women had no need greater than adequate child care for their young children — child care that would not only permit them to hold decent jobs, but would also give their children the medical care, nutrition, and educational stimulation that might break the cycle of poverty and improve the children's chances for a better life. Congress enacted such a program in 1972, but President Nixon vetoed the measure on the grounds that it would undermine the strength of the nuclear family. Well-off people, of course, could afford to pay for their own child care. But poor women did not have that option, and most were forced to rely on makeshift arrangements.

“Comparable worth” was another idea that, if enacted and upheld by the courts, might have signiﬁcantly improved the economic status of millions of women workers. Equal pay legislation in the past had focused on securing equal compensation for women who performed the same work as men. Yet such laws failed to address the underlying problem of job segmentation — the fact that most women worked with other women and did not hold the same jobs as men. On the other hand, if the skills required for a job could be measured and compared with skills needed for other jobs, it might be possible to arrive at a reliable standard that would lead to people with comparable skills being paid comparable wages. In San Jose, California, for example, job investigators found that the skills and training needed by a nurse were approximately comparable to those required for a ﬁre--truck mechanic. Yet the nurse, a woman, earned nine thousand dollars less than the mechanic, a man. Clearly, given the number of women in skilled positions, whether nurses, secretaries, or data processors, a wage scale adjusted to compensate for comparable worth might bring substantial improvement in wages.

]ustiﬁably or unjustiﬁably, “feminism” became associated in the public eye with well-groomed, highly articulate women in business suits who sat around boardroom tables or frequented centers of power. It was not publicly linked to programs that an Irish-Catholic mother of four who worked in a shoe factory, or a black single mother who was a high school dropout, could identify with. Some groups tried to bridge that chasm, and black and Hispanic women occupied prominent positions in feminist organizations. Nevertheless, it was hard to escape the conclusion that impoverished minority women’s experiences after 1960 had little in common with those of well-educated middle- and upperclass women; ethnicity and class remained powerful obstacles to women's solidarity.

**“THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE”**

**By**

 **Betty Friedan**

In a story in Redbook ("A Man Who Acted Like a Husband," November, 1957) the child-bride heroine, ..a little freckle-faced brunette' whose nickname is "Junior," is visited by her old college roommate. The roommate Kay is "a man's girl. really. with a good head for business . . . she wore her polished mahogany hair in a high chignon, speared with two chopstick affairs!' Kay is not only divorced, but she has also left her child with his grandmother while she works in television. This career-woman-devil tempts junior with the lure of a job to keep her from breast-feeding her baby. She even restrains the young mother from going to her baby when he cries at 2 A.M. But she gets her comeuppance when George, the husband, discovers the crying baby uncovered, in a freezing wind from an open window. with blood running down its cheek. Kay, reformed and repentant. plays hookey from her job to go get her own child and start life anew. And junior, gloating at the 2 AM. feeling-"I'm glad. glad. glad I'm just a housewife" starts to dream about the baby, growing up to be a housewife, too.

With the career woman out of the way, the housewife with interests in the community becomes the devil to be exorcised. Even PTA takes on a suspect connotation, not to mention interest in some international cause (see "Almost a Love Affair," McCall's. , November, 1955). The housewife who simply has a mind of her own is the next to go. The heroine of "I Didn't Want to Tell You" (McCall's, January, 1958) is shown balancing the checkbook by herself and arguing with her husband about a small domestic detail. It develops that she is losing her husband to a "helpless little widow" whose main appeal is that she can't "think straight" about an insurance policy or mortgage. The betrayed wife says: "She must have sex appeal and what weapon has a wife against that?" But her best friend tells her: "You're making this too simple. You're forgetting how helpless Tania can be, and how grateful to the man who helps her . . ."

“I couldn't be a clinging vine if I tried," the wife says. "I had a better than average job after I left college and I was always a pretty independent person. I'm not a helpless little woman and I can't pretend to be." But she learns, that night. She bears a noise that might be a burglar; even though she knows it's only a mouse, she calls helplessly to her husband, and wins him back. As he comforts her pretended panic, she murmurs that, of course, lie was right in their argument that morning. “She lay still in the soft bed. smiling sweet, secret satisfaction, scarcely touched with guilt!'

The end of the road, in an almost literal sense, is the disappearance of the heroine altogether, as a separate self and the subject of her own story. The end of the road is togetherness, where the woman has no independent self to hide even in guilt; she exists only for and through her husband and children.

Coined by the publishers of McCall's in 1954, the concept "togetherness" was seized upon avidly as a movement of spiritual significance by advertisers, ministers, newspaper editors. For a time, it was elevated into virtually a national purpose. But very quickly there was sharp social criticism, and bitter jokes about "togetherness" as a substitute for larger human goals-for men. Women were taken to task for making their husbands do housework. instead of letting them pioneer in the nation and the world. Why, it was asked, should men with the capacities of statesmen, anthropologists, physicists, poets, have to wash dishes and diaper babies on weekday evenings or Saturday mornings when they might use those extra hours to fulfill larger commitments to their society?

Significantly, critics resented only that men were being asked to share "woman's world!' Few questioned the boundaries of this world for women. No one seemed to remember that women were once thought to have the capacity and vision of statesmen. poets, and physicists. Few saw the big lie of togetherness for women.

Consider the Easter 1954 issue of McCall's which announced the new era of togetherness, sounding the requiem for the days when women fought for and won political equality, and the women's magazines "helped you to carve out large areas of living formerly forbidden to your sex." The new way of life in which "men and women in ever increasing numbers are marrying at an earlier age, having children at an earlier age, rearing larger families and gaining their deepest satisfaction from their own homes, is one which "men. women and children are achieving together . . . not as women alone, or men alone, isolated from one another, but as a family, sharing a common experience."

The picture essay detailing that way of life is called "a man's place is in the home." It describes, as the new image and ideal, a New jersey couple with three children in a gray-shingle split-level house. Ed and Carol have "centered their lives almost completely around their children and their home." They are shown shopping at the supermarket, carpentering, dressing the children, making breakfast together. "Then Ed joins the members of his car pool and heads for the office."

Ed, the husband, chooses the color scheme for the house and makes the major decorating decisions. The chores Ed likes are listed: putter around the house. make things, paint, select furniture, rugs and draperies, & dishes, read to the children and put them to bed, work in the garden, feed and dress and bathe the children, attend PTA meetings. cook, buy clothes for Ibis wife, buy groceries.

Ed doesn't like these chores: dusting. vacuuming, finishing jobs he's started. hanging draperies, washing pots and pans and dishes, picking up after the children. shoveling snow or mowing the lawn, changing diapers, taking the baby-sitter home, doing the laundry, ironing. Ed, of course, does not do these chores.

For the sake of every member of the family. the family needs a head. This means Father. not Mother.... Children of both sexes need to learn, recognize and respect the abilities and functions of each sex.... He is not Just a substitute mother, even though he's ready and willing to do his share of bathing. feeding. comforting. playing. He is a link with the outside world he works in. If in that world he is interested. courageous, tolerant, constructive, he will pass oat these values to his children.

There were many agonized editorial sessions, in those days at McCall's. "Suddenly, everybody was looking for this spiritual significance in togetherness, expecting us to make some mysterious religious movement out of the lift everyone had been leading for the last five years-crawling into the home, turning their backs on the world-but we never could find a way of showing it that wasn't a monstrosity of dullness," a former McCall's editor reminisces. "It always boiled down to, goody, goody. goody, Daddy is out there in the garden barbecuing. We put men in the fashion pictures and the food pictures, and even the perfume pictures. But we were stifled by it editorially.

"We had articles by psychiatrists that we couldn't use because they would have blown it wide open: all those couples propping their whole weight on their kids but what else could you do with togetherness but child care? We were pathetically grateful to find anything else where we could show father photographed with mother. Sometimes, we used to wonder what would happen to women. with men taking over the decorating, child care, cooking, all the things that used to he hers alone. But we couldn't show women getting out of the home and having a career. The irony is, what we meant to do was to stop editing for women as women, and edit for the men and women together. We wanted to edit for people, not women."

But forbidden to join man in the world, can women be people? Forbidden independence, they finally are swallowed in an image of such passive dependence that they want men to make the decisions, even in the home. The frantic illusion that togetherness can impart a spiritual content to the dullness of domestic routine, the need for a religious movement to make up for the lack of identity, betrays the measure of women's loss and the emptiness of the image. Could making inert share the housework compensate women for their loss of the world? Could vacuuming the living-room floor together give the housewife some mysterious new purpose in life?

In 1956, at the peak of togetherness, the bored editors of McCall's. ran a little article called "The Mother Who Ran Away." To their amazement, it brought the highest readership of any article they had ever run. “It was our moment of truth," said a former editor. "We suddenly realized that all those women at home with their three and a ]tall children were miserably unhappy."

But by then the new image of American woman, "Occupation: housewife," had hardened into a mystique, unquestioned and permitting no questions, shaping the very reality is distorted. By the time I started writing for women's magazines, in the fifties, it was simply taken for granted by editors, and accepted as an immutable fact of life by writers, that women were not interested in politics, life outside the United States, national issues, art, science, ideas. adventure, education, or even their own communities, except where they could he sold through their emotions as wives and mothers.

Politics, for women, became Mamie's clothes and the Nixons' home life. Out of conscience, a sense of duty, the Ladies' Home journal might run a series like 'Political Pilgrim's Progress," showing women trying to improve their children's schools and playgrounds. But even approaching politics through mother love did not really interest women, it was thought in the trade. Everyone knew those readership percentages. An editor of Redbook ingeniously tried to bring the bomb down to the feminine level by showing the emotions of a wife whose husband sailed into a contaminated area.

"Women can't take an idea, an issue, pure," men who edited the mass women's magazines agreed. “It had to be translated in terms they can understand as women." This was so well understood by those who wrote for women's magazines that a natural childbirth expert submitted an article to a leading woman's magazine called "How to Have a Baby in a Atom Bomb Shelter." "The article was not well written," an editor told me, "or we might have bought it." According to the mystique, women, in their mysterious femininity, might be interested in the concrete biological details of having a baby in a bomb shelter. but never in the abstract idea of the bomb's power to destroy the human race.

Such a belief, of course, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. In 1960, a perceptive social psychologist showed me some sad statistics which seemed to prove unmistakably that American women under thirty-five are not interested in politics. "They may have the vote, but they don't dream about running for office," he told me. "If you write a political piece, they won't read it. You have to translate it into issues they can understand-romance, pregnancy, nursing, home furnishings, clothes. Run an article on the economy, or the race question, civil rights, and you'd think that women had never beard of them"

Maybe they hadn't heard of them. Ideas are not like instincts of the blood that spring into the mind intact. They are communicated by education, by the printed word. The new young housewives, who leave high school or college to marry, do not read books, the psychological surveys say. They only read magazines. Magazines today assume women are not interested in ideas. But going back to the bound volumes in the library, I found in the thirties and forties that the mass-circulation magazines like Ladies' Home journal carried hundreds of articles about the world outside the home. “The first inside story of American diplomatic relations preceding declared war"; "Can the U.S. Have Peace After This War?" by Walter Lippmann; “Stalin at Midnight," by Harold Stassen; "General Stilwell Reports on China"; articles about the last days of Czechoslovakia by Vincent Sheean; the persecution of Jews in Germany; the New Deal; Carl Sandburg's account of Lincoln's assassination; Faulkner's stories of Mississippi, and Margaret Sanger's battle for birth control.

In the 1950's they printed virtually no articles except those that serviced women as housewives, or described women as housewives, or permitted a purely feminine identification like the Duchess of Windsor .or Princess Margaret. "If we get an article about a woman who does anything adventurous, out of the way, something by herself, you know. we figure she must be terribly aggressive, neurotic," a Ladies' Home Journal editor told me. Margaret Sanger would never get in today.

In 1960, I saw statistics that showed that women under thirty-five could not identify with a spirited heroine of a story who worked in an ad agency and persuaded the boy to stay and fight for his principles in the big city instead of running home to the security of a family business. Nor could these new young housewives identify with a young minister, acting on his belief in defiance of convention. But they had no trouble at all identifying with a young man paralyzed at eighteen. (I regained consciousness to discover that I could not move or even speak. I could wiggle only one finger of one hand." With help from faith and a psychiatrist, "I am now finding reasons to live as fully as possible.")

Does it say something about the new housewife readers that, as any editor can testify, they can identify completely with the victims of blindness, deafness, physical maiming. cerebral palsy, paralysis, caner, or approaching death? Such articles about people who cannot see or speak or move have been an enduring staple of the women's magazines in the era of "Occupation: housewife." They are told with infinitely realistic detail over and over again, replacing the articles about the nation, the world, ideas, issues, art and science; replacing the stories about adventurous spirited women. And whether the victim is man, woman or child, whether the living death is incurable cancer or creeping paralysis. the housewife reader can identify....

A baked potato is not as big as the world, and vacuuming the living room floor-with or without makeup-is not work that takes enough thought or energy to challenge any woman's full capacity. Women are human beings, not stuffed dolls, not animals. Down through the ages man has known that he was set apart from other animals by his mind's power to have an idea, a vision, and shape the future to it. He shares a need for food and sex with other animals, but when he loves, he loves as a man, and when he discovers and creates and shapes a future different from his past, lie is a man, a human being.

This is the real mystery: why did so many American women, with the ability and education to discover and create, go back home again, to look for "something more" in housework and rearing children? For, paradoxically, in the same fifteen years in which the spirited New Woman was replaced by the Happy Housewife, the boundaries of the human world have widened, the pace of world change has quickened. and the very nature of human reality has become increasingly free from biological and material necessity. Does the mystique keep American woman from growing with the world? Does it force her to deny reality, as a woman in a mental hospital must deny reality to believe she is a queen? Does it doom women to he displaced persons, if not virtual schizophrenics, in our complex, changing world?

It is more than a strange paradox that as all professions are finally open to women in America. "career woman- has become a dirty word; that as higher education becomes available to any woman with the capacity for it. education for women has become so suspect that more and more drop out of high school and college to marry and have babies; that as so many roles in modern society become theirs for the taking, women so insistently confine themselves to one role. Why, with the removal of all the legal, political, economic, and educational barriers that once kept woman from being man's equal. a person in tier own right, an individual free to develop tier own potential, should she accept this new image which insists she is not a person but a "woman." by definition barred from the freedom of human existence and a voice in human destiny?

The feminine mystique is so powerful that women grow up no longer knowing that they have the desires and capacities the mystique forbids. But such a mystique does not fasten itself on a whole nation in a few short years, reversing the trends of a century, without cause. What gives the mystique its power? Why did women go home again?