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Radical Feminism as Social Arrest: a Kinetic Analysis

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RADICAL FEMINISM AS SOCIAL ARREST: A KINETIC ANALYSIS

by

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Introduction

On September 7, 1968, roughly 400 women activists arrived in Atlantic City to protest the annual Miss America pageant. Organized by New York Radical Women, the protest brought together feminists of various origins and groupings to chant and shout feminist slogans and display a "Women's Liberation" banner during the procession of the pageant. On the boardwalk, women threw "instruments of female torture," including cosmetic items and cleaning supplies, into a "freedom trashcan," issuing a symbolic rejection of the oppressive social prescription that women function as beautiful objects and domestic servants. The protest was heavily publicized, leading Carol Hanisch, then a member of New York Radical Women, to claim that it was *the* event that put Women's Liberation on the map.[1] The growth of Women's Liberation groups, which had been underway prior to the Miss America protest, accelerated greatly in the wake of the protest, and in the following years, New York City, Boston, D.C., and the West Coast became hubs of radical feminist activism.[2] This incendiary protest, incidentally the source of the still-pervasive bra-burning myth (women did not actually burn anything placed in the freedom trashcan) and the stereotype of the angry feminist, played a crucial role in fueling the spread of feminist organizing and thinking across the United States.

Historians typically recount that the radical feminism of the late 60's and early 70's was born from the organizational and ideational flourishing of the New Left in the United States. Many of the women who took action under the banner of radical feminism had earlier participated in the Civil Rights Movement, particularly Freedom Summer in 1964, leaving the comfort of their predominantly white northeastern universities to register black voters in the

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[1] Carol Hanisch, "Background and Introductory Thoughts," *Carolhanisch.org* (July, 2003).
[2] Ellen Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," in *No More Nice Girls: Countercultural Essays* by Ellen Willis (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 118.

south. Others participated in the Student Movement, working within student organizations, particularly the various chapters of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), to protest the draft, imperialism, and the authoritarian operations of University bureaucracy.

The significance of women's participation in both the Civil Rights and Student Movements was twofold. First, it radicalized women, challenged them to become more critical of the legitimacy and efficacy of the United States' prevailing social and political systems and acquainted them with methods of grassroots organizing, and second, it made them acutely aware of their subjugation as women. Particularly in SDS and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), "the movement for change taught women activists about their own oppression. Politically, women were excluded from decision making. They typed, made leaflets, did the shitwork."[3] Anne Koedt remarked in "Women and the Radical Movement" that, in New Left organizations, women's "roles ended up concentrating on food-making, typing, mimeographing, general assistance work, and as sexual supply for their male comrades after hours."[4] Women were silenced and ignored during important discussions, and some resorted to using their bodies as social currency, establishing sexual relationships with prominent movement men in order to earn concessions like the right to speak and be heard. In the words of Jones and Brown, the radical female "never really [got] in" to the movement.[5] Coming to realize that the New Left was an inadequate venue for pursuing gender equality, many women withdrew from New Left organizations to participate in a political movement by and for women.

Though liberal feminism had effectively fashioned women's issues into public concerns, the women that relinquished the New Left did not tend to flock to liberal feminist organizations

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[3] Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 58.

[4] Anne Koedt, "Women and the Radical Movement," in *Radical Feminism*: *A Documentary Reader*, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 26.

[5] Beverly Jones and Judith Brown, "Toward a Female Liberation Movement," in *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 17-56.

to address their grievances. The women who were to become radical feminists did not believe that liberal feminists' reformist objectives, their quest to win legal protections and equal access to participation in the workforce, would amount to the realization of complete equality. Many members of the National Organization for Women (NOW), formed in 1967, left the organization for radical feminist groups only a year after its creation because they felt that the professional, thirty-something, family[6] women that comprised the organization were too invested in superficial changes. Indeed, Ti-Grace Atkinson, founder of the radical group The Feminists, left NOW because she believed it was insufficiently radical. For radical feminists, NOW's struggle "to end sex discrimination in hiring, promotions and salaries; repeal abortion laws; establish comprehensive child care; and place women in policy-making posts"[7] offered no promise for obliterating the institutional and ideational entrapments that bound women so tightly in their everyday lives.

Radical feminists "were adamant about their overarching anti-establishment ethos, [viewing] themselves as part of a grassroots movement,"[8] and they believed that the liberal quest for concessions from the United States' hierarchically, bureaucratically organized political system merely confirmed the legitimacy and dominance of a political order comprised by men and sustained by male values. Radical feminists did struggle to win or amend legislation pertaining to abortion, rape, and other issues of female concern, yet by and large they rejected the legal system as an inadequate medium for procuring change that would be meaningfully impactful on women's lives. Instead, radical feminists formed small, informally structured groups that embraced participatory democracy, consciousness-raising, media-directed actions,

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[6] Voichita Nachescu, "Radical Feminism and the Nation: History and Space in the Political Imagination of Second-Wave Feminism," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism,* Vol. 3 No.1 (2009), 31.
[7] Sarah Davidson, "An Oppressed Majority Demands Its Rights," *Life Magazine* (1969).
[8] Nachescu, "Radical Feminism and the Nation," 31.

and support groups.[9] Though radical feminist groups were divided along ideological lines in several ways, primarily concerning protective laws, abortion, and lesbianism, their rejection of what they deemed a hierarchical, patriarchal system and their emphasis on the importance of altering women's consciousness were consistent across their various constituencies.

Historians have heretofore analyzed radical feminism as a social movement, approaching radical feminism as a subcategory of the broader Women's Movement. It is my objective in the chapters that follow to examine radical feminism through a kinetic lens--that is, to analyze the kinetic nature of the social field within which the radical feminist struggle took place. A kinetic analysis of radical feminism reveals that it operated within a moving social field, a society in constant circulation, teleologically progressing through time. Because radical feminists wished not to improve or advance the existing social order but rather to subvert it entirely, radical feminists leveraged tactics of *arrest*, methods of halting the constant circulation and progression characteristic of the modern state, as opposed to tactics of *movement,* which are only promising means of subversion in the context of a stagnant social field. I therefore arrive at an understanding of radical feminism not as a "movement," or as an agent of historical progress, but as an "arrest," an attempt to halt the progress of an existing sociopolitical order characterized by patriarchal values and systems.

In Chapter One, I examine how the modern conception of revolution causes radical feminism to register as a deviation from the sociopolitical status quo. I further argue that the application of the term "social movement" to this struggle disguises its subversive nature, warranting a more appropriate, kinetic analysis, and that it also convicts radical feminists of participating in a process of reform over time that, in reality, they sought to interrupt. In Chapter Two I explain that ideological change was crucial to this attempt at interruption because radical

[9] Ibid., 31.

feminists believed patriarchal oppression to operate through a network of institutions, ideas, relationships, and women's own self-objectification. Because this network, what I call a *patriarchal carcereal continuum*, requires the self-objectification of women in order to function, radical feminists saw ideological change, the transition from self-objectification to active self-definition, as a means of subverting the patriarchal status quo. In Chapter Three I view this attempt at subversion through a kinetic lens, arguing that radical feminists utilized both tactical and ideological forms of social arrest as a means of interrupting the progress of patriarchal order, thus socially arresting the passage of modern time itself.

Outlining a kinetic understanding of radical feminist activism in the 60's and 70's allows us to dig the true nature of radical feminism out from under the historical narrative that places it within a historical continuum of progress. My ultimate objective, however, is to demonstrate that the rejection of self-objectification and adoption of an actively defined self was the crux upon which radical feminism operated in seeking to abolish the patriarchal order. The insights that my understanding of radical feminist activism provides, I will conclude, illuminate the fallibility of many 21st century attempts to combat patriarchal oppression and demonstrate the necessity of combating women's tendency toward self-objectification in the present.

Chapter One: The Effect of Revolution on Historical Narrative and the Implications for Radical Feminism

"To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was' (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it." -Walter Benjamin[10]

On December 3rd, 2015, US Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that women would be permitted to serve in combat posts in the United States military, roughly 20 years after women were initially barred from serving in small ground combat units. President Obama endorsed the decision as "another historic step forward,"[11] and *Time Magazine* deemed "the advance of women toward the front lines...a long time coming."[12] While some denounced the decision as a fatal threat to the strength of the US military, many celebrated the change as a historical landmark in the struggle for female equality, a broadening of the forms of civic participation available to women and a deepening of democratic egalitarianism along gendered lines. The National Women's Law Center's Nancy Duff Campbell boasted that "thousands of women will now have the opportunity to be all that they can be and our nation's military will be the stronger

[10] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, 1999).
[11] Bill Chappell, "Pentagon Says Women Can Now Serve in Front-Line Ground Combat Positions," *NPR*, December 3, 2015.
[12] Mark Thompson, "Pentagon Opens All Frontline Combat Roles to Women," *Time Magazine*, December 3, 2015.

for it." Popularly, women's achievement of the right to serve in combat was perceived as a victory for feminists, the culmination of many years of struggle, of "decades of allowing women to move ever closer to [the] front-line,"[13] in a formal, democratic success.

Yet the perception of this alleged "victory" as a completed stage in the fight for female equality threatens to stifle and discard a more radical element of this present feminist struggle: the struggle against the masculine phenomenon of war itself. As Tickner contends, there prevails a socially constructed, hegemonic notion of masculinity that maintains and legitimizes Western societies' valorization of the power, violence, and rationality of war. Tickner argues that a feministic approach to international relations would provide an alternative to the masculine pursuit of war and dominance, would create a space for combatting war and promoting peace in the form of economic and physical security.[14] Multiple feminist groups spanning the length of US history (particularly those active in the late 60's) have denounced the institution of the military as an agent of war and colonization, of the maintenance of the United States' patriarchal stature in the international arena. If, today, society at large understands women's achievement of the right to serve in combat as a feminist victory, it effectively condones and bolsters the dominance of the US military. Thus, this achievement of formal equality promulgates a popular illusion of progress that merely preserves the patriarchal phenomenon of war, stifling efforts to conceive of an alternative, feminist system of international relations.

The Suffrage Movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries provides a historical parallel to women's entry into the front lines. The Suffrage Movement threatened to suffocate the efforts of the more radical Women's Rights Movement to generate change in the ways that women conceived of and conducted themselves in everyday life, i.e. in familial, economic, and

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[13] Ibid.

[14] J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

religious contexts. Insofar as the Suffrage Movement announced the success of the feminist struggle for equality more broadly, it substantiated the popular perception of feminism as a victorious, as opposed to an ongoing, struggle; that is, in rendering equality achieved in the popular imaginary, the acquisition of the right to vote ultimately stifled the more gradual, intangible, and diffuse efforts of the Women's Rights Movement to cultivate alternative modes of being woman in the home, the church, and the economic realm.

In both of the aforementioned examples, the popular perception of legal and policy changes as revolutionary successes threatens to hamper social struggles that, though fighting for the same oppressed group, pursue more radical changes in the conditions of that group by threatening the very institutions that enable their oppression. In this Chapter, I explain how it is that society's conception of revolution as legal and policy change affects possibilities for more radical change. Specifically, I explore how the popular conception of revolution influences the historical memory of radical feminism, arguing that the nature of revolutionary time effects the closure of the pre-revolutionary period of radical ideological change. I begin by juxtaposing two historical conceptions of radical feminism in the 60's and 70's: one as the derivative of the 19th century Women's Rights Movement and the other as an unprecedented, unassimilable roadblock to the locomotive of historical progress. I then utilize Dosemeci's analysis of today's popular, policed conception of revolution to explain the ways in which a revolutionary change in law or government effects the burial of radical feminism in history, stunting its pursuit of intangible change in the very conception of woman by rendering it unnecessary in the popular imaginary. Historian's and radical feminists' depiction of radical feminism as an extension of earlier feminist projects is ultimately an attempt to artificially situate radical feminism within a linear conception of history in which, based on its ideas and objectives, it does not belong. I argue that

the location of radical feminism in such a historical narrative disguises the acute lack of substantive change that has occurred since the time of radical feminism's alleged historical "precedents," constructing an illusion of progress that complicated the prospect of radical change in the years following the liberal feminist successes of the early 20th century.

Competing Radical Narratives

Historians of 60's and 70's radical feminism and women liberationists themselves lack consensus concerning radical feminism's place and function in history. Some radical feminists and the historians who study them locate radical feminism within a teleological understanding of the struggle for women's rights, whereas others understand radical feminism as an autonomous struggle to sow the seeds of a new social era. In this section I explore the dichotomy that exists in both historians' and radical feminists' understanding of radical feminism's place in history. In the sections following, I establish how our contemporary conception of revolution generates this dichotomy and explore the implications that it has for our understanding of reformism.

Some contemporary historians locate feminism along an historical continuum of progress in the female condition. Imelda Whelehan, in her *Modern Feminist Thought: From the Second Wave to Post Feminism,* articulates the implication of the "wave" analogy, arguing that the term 'second wave' implies "a continuation of a movement, that earlier phase of feminism which clamoured for civic equality for women via the vote, achieved in the United States and the United Kingdom during the first two decades of this century."[15] According to Dahlerup, second wave feminism was "the second peak of a feminist movement that has existed for more than 100

[15] Imelda Whelehan, *Modern Feminist Thought: From the second wave to "post-feminism* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 4.

years"[16] that in achieving female enfranchisement promised "the possible future reform of the most inequitable aspects of social life."[17] Whelehan conceives of second-wave feminism as a strand extending from an even earlier time period, locating the origins of contemporary feminism in the liberal writings of John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, and in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* written in 1792.[18]

However, other historians contest this understanding of radical feminism as the derivative of some historical precedent, arguing instead that radical feminism was of its own creation and sought to replace the dominant order with one predicated upon its own values. Cobble, for example, in *The Other Women's Movement,* claims that second-wave feminism was a "new feminism" that only "resembled its predecessor at the most fundamental level: it too sought to end women's secondary status and to inaugurate a new day of equality and freedom."[19] Evans and Avis contend that the women who came of age in America in the 60s and 70s, in defying "the sanctions against interracial and interfaith marriage, abortion, single motherhood, divorce, and unmarried cohabitation,"[20] functioned as a "transitional generation" into a new era. Contending that, "as a result of their efforts, women today are truly free to become fully self-actualized persons, without the constraints of gender,"[21] Evans and Avis evince an understanding of the generation of women coming of age in the 60's and 70's as the catalysts for a new era of liberation.

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[16] Drude Dahlerup, *The New Women's Movement: Feminism and Political Power in Europe and the USA* (London: Sage, 1986), 2.
[17] Whelehan, *Modern Feminist Thought,* 4.
[18] Ibid., 29.
[19] Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 181.
[20] Joan Avis, Ph.D. and Susan Evans, Ed.D., *The Women Who Broke All the Rules: How the Choices of a Generation Changed Our Lives* (Naperville: Sourcebooks, Inc., 1999), 4.
[21] Ibid., 5.

By the 1970's, many radical feminists understood both themselves and the women's liberation movement as a whole as the historical derivatives of the Women's Rights Movement of the 19th century. Martha Lear's 1968 piece 'The Second Feminist Wave' in *New York Times Magazine* "christened the movement with a name that connected it to 'first wave' feminism in the suffrage movement,"[22] and young radical feminists, embracing Lear's terminology, began "openly identifying with their predecessors and openly advocating the research and study of first wave feminism."[23] The pervasiveness of the term 'Second Wave' in the 60s implies that the linear connection between 19th and 20th century feminism was not a historical narrative constructed in retrospective analysis; rather, it demonstrated that radical feminists self-identified as the products of a linear historical struggle.

Voichita Nachescu, professor of Women's Studies at Grand Valley State University, explains in her work on history and space in the political imagination of second wave feminism, "radical feminists placed themselves in the historical continuum of a feminist struggle that counted among its successes the extension of franchise to women...noting the limits of first wave women's movement radicalism allowed women liberationists to create a unique political standpoint for themselves, as continuators."[24] Nachescu marshals the writings of Shulamith Firestone, founding member of New York Radical Women, the Redstockings, and the New York Radical Feminists to support her claim, explaining that, though Firestone conceded that the early Women's Right Movement was characterized by a non-radical "'cop-out' or 'reformist,'" agenda that focused on "women's suffrage to the detriment of a much needed revolution in gender roles,"[25] Firestone ultimately "reads the past history of feminist struggle as a struggle within the

[22] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 85.
[23] Nachescu, "Radical Feminism and the Nation," 33.
[24] Ibid., 32-40.
[25] Ibid., 35-36.

women's movement between a conservative, reformist wing focused on gaining the vote and a radical one, intent on questioning gender roles."[26] Firestone, according to Nachescu's interpretation, identifies second-wave feminist reformism as the historical derivative of the Suffrage Movement and New Left-era radical feminism as the historical derivative of the Women's Rights Movement.[27]

However, further analysis of Shulamith Firestone's work reveals that Firestone, in some instances, evinced a different understanding of the radical feminist project of the 60's and 70's. In "Women's Rights Movement in the US: A New View," Firestone contends that from its inception onward, the 19th century Women's Rights Movement was a radical movement purporting a radical agenda. Though Firestone conceded that the radical orientation of feminism in her time mirrored that of the Women's Rights Movement, she did not understand radical feminism as the product of the evolution of the Women's Rights Movement. On the contrary, Firestone stated that "By the time the Suffrage Movement disbanded the Women's Rights Movement was dead. The opposition had had its way."[28] For Firestone, radical feminism could not build upon the successes or function as a later stage of the Women's Rights Movement because "contrary to what most historians would have us believe, women's rights were never won," and the Women's Rights Movement was effectively mischannelled.[29]

Firestone was not the only feminist writing in the 60's and 70's who conceptualized radical feminism not as the continuation of a prior struggle, but as an autonomous and original one. Robin Morgan understood second-wave feminism as a transition from an 'Old' order to a 'New' order instead of progress within an existing order, and Alice Echols wrote in *Daring to Be*

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[26] Ibid., 38.
[27] Ibid., 35-36.
[28] Shulamith Firestone, "The Women's Rights Movement in the US.: A New View," *Notes From the First Year,* June, 1989, 4.
[29] Ibid., 6.

Bad that "The very title of New York Radical Women's 1968 publication, *Notes from the First Year*...reflected a certain awareness of their place in history."[30] Anne Koedt, member of the New York Radical Feminists, recounted in "Women and the Radical Movement" that women identified more with the black struggle than with the Suffrage or Women's Rights Movements.[31] The critiques that radical feminist organizations issued against dominant institutions and value systems indicate that radical feminists conceived of themselves not as continuators or improvers of an existing social order, but as agents of its obliteration. The Feminists, for example, sought to obliterate the male-female role system by challenging the institutions of marriage and family, and radical lesbian groups attempted to establish a new society that was not predicated upon the dominant heterosexual values of the prevailing social order. Yet in spite of radical feminists' goals and ideas, both their contemporaries and the historians who studied them have in many cases situated radical feminism along a historical continuum of progress in the quest for women's liberation.

Thus, both radical feminists themselves and the historians that studied them were deeply divided in their conception of radical feminism's place in history. Amanda Third, in *Gendering the Political: Deconstructing the Female Terrorist*, argues that the understanding of radical feminism as part of a history extending from the 19th century forward into the present is contingent upon contemporary society's conception of time. According to Third, contemporary society embraces a "notion of time as structured, ordered, and imbued with historical purpose…the passing of time comes to be conflated with progress and evolution, with processes of amelioration, and the gradual perfection of society."[32] Third explains that our conception of

[30] Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 20-21.
[31] Koedt, "Women and the Radical Movement."
[32] Amanda Third, *Gender and the Political: Deconstructing the Female Terrorist* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 72.

history as "the linear and ontological expression of national destiny" is a product of our conceptualization of modern time: society equates the passage of time with the "gradual unveiling of the blueprint of the utopian society; the passage of time marks the path to amelioration and the emancipation of the modern citizen,"[33] the culmination of history in the realization of a utopian democratic society. Reformist (liberal) feminism is easily situated within this logic of modern time; as time progresses, liberalism posits, the continual process of reform gradually increases the freedoms, rights, and opportunities of women, ultimately approaching the utopian end of a completely gender-inclusive democracy. Each reform registers as a continuation of past reformism that furthers the struggle toward that utopian end. Both the historians that studied them and radical feminists themselves have, in many cases, situated radical feminism, too, within this linear conception of time, contending that radical feminism is a product of the evolution of the 19th century Women's Rights Movement.

Yet it is precisely this notion of time as progress that allowed other radical feminists and historians to argue that radical feminism presented the possibility of a new social order. Specifically, because radical feminism registered as terroristic, it presented the social body with the possibility of the existing order's apocalyptic end, the cessation of its progress over time, and its supplantation with a novel order. Third argues that radical feminism and terrorism, emerging alongside one another and sharing subversive tactics and goals, became co-inscribed in the Western popular imaginary in the 60's and 70's. Because, in the *popular imagination*, radical feminism functions as the discursive equivalent of female terrorism, it registers *popularly* not as the continuation of a prior struggle, but as an interruption of the progress of the social order within which that struggle took place. By extension, radical feminism appears to the modern

[33] Ibid., 76.

citizen not as an extension of earlier struggle, but as an uncontextualized "breach" of the progress of the gendered social order through time.

Third argues that the radical feminist functions as the discursive equivalent of the female terrorist. Third defines the female terrorist as a hyperterrorist threat to the gendered cultural order who represents "the materialization of the ever-present, generalized potential of women's subversion, their rupture of the reified category of woman around which the gender relations underpinning Western cultural order are structured."[34] Not simply departing from the traditional conception of the feminine, the female terrorist "both *marks the limits of legitimate femininity*—circulating as a site of containment and control of the meanings of femininity—*and operates to disrupt those limits."*[35] Both enabling the perpetuation of the system of gender representation and posing a threat to its stability, the female terrorist generates widespread terror and is thus radically othered.[36] Because radical feminists similarly challenge the gendered order, they are, in parallel, othered as *radical* feminists and function as the discursive equivalents of female terrorists.

Third argues that because radical feminism is understood in the popular imaginary as terrorism, it also, by extension, registers as a "breach" of linear time. In other words, radical feminism threatens to subvert the gendered cultural order and thus registers not as a continuation of that gendered order along a linear continuum of progress but as a threat to its continuation. Radical feminism interrupts the progression of modern time because, as Third explains, "our understandings of terrorism are always predicated upon a disavowal of the past, a process of burying history."[37] Indeed, Firestone remarked that "there is a suspicious blank in the history

[34] Ibid., 41.
[35] Ibid., 4.
[36] Ibid., 4.
[37] Ibid., 31.

books when it comes to the Women's Rights Movement."[38] Blossoming in the present with no apparent historical context and posing a threat to the gendered status quo, radical feminism functions as a rupture of modern time, presenting the possibility that history will culminate not in utopia, but in apocalypse. This apocalyptic potential is what allows Terrorism to

> [inhabit] the space of present and future simultaneously, erasing the past...Terrorism thus registers (albeit momentarily) as the end of modern linear time, and, consequently, the (apocalyptic) end of modern social order per se...terrorism disrupts modern linear notions of time as historical development and progress, enabling it to present as unique and special.[39]

Thus, as Derrida describes, female terrorism registers as "unassimilable"[40] and provides cause for fear in the popular imaginary.

In short, Third argues that radical feminism registers in the popular imaginary as a threat to historical progress. Several radical feminists and historians were thus similarly able to understand radical feminism as the quest to subvert and replace the existing social order. Yet how is it possible, then, that many other historians have been able to draw connections between radical feminism in the 60s and 70s and earlier examples of radical feminism--that is, have located radical feminism along this continuum of progress? In the next section, I demonstrate that our contemporary conception of revolution is what enables the "burial" of radical feminism in history, causing radical feminism to register as a terroristic breach in time, and will later discuss how the attempt to locate radical feminism within a linear historical struggle is merely an

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[38] Firestone, "The Women's Rights Movement in the US," 2.
[39] Third, *Gendering the Political*, 77.
[40] Ibid., 71.

attempt to contain the threat that radical feminism, as a form of terrorism, poses to the existing social order.

Revolution, Historical Narrative, and Radical Change

I utilize Dosemeci's analysis of revolution as a platform for contending that governmental restructuring or legal concessions, in registering as revolutionary "lightning-strike" moments in the popular imaginary, complicate the ability of individuals to re-imagine their humanity in the post-revolutionary context. When a quest for ideological change, specifically a change in human subjectivity, is lumped together with the struggle for "revolutionary" legal or governmental change in the popular imaginary, the success of the latter tends to announce the victory of the former as well, deeming that process of ideological change no longer necessary in post-revolutionary time. Thus, though legal or governmental change solidifies the popular conception of the self as the citizen-subject of a democratic society, it stifles pre-revolutionary attempts to re-imagine the humanity and social subjectivity of the individual. These "revolutionary" changes, in stunting the process of re-imagining human subjectivity and lumping it together with a social struggle that is "complete," have the effect of burying the quest for alternative subjectivity in history. The Women's Rights Movement (WRM) was invested in generating such change, but the success of the Suffrage Movement, in announcing the end of the WRM, effectively stunted that process and effected the burial of the radical WRM in history. Thus, because women liberationists were largely engaged in promoting similar forms of ideological change, their social struggle registered as new and unnecessary because they occurred alongside or after the successes of early 20th century suffragists and liberal second-wave feminists.

We may utilize Dosemeci's explanation of the taming of revolution in order to understand how radical feminism becomes buried and subsequently appears as a breach of time. Dosemeci observes that in contemporary society, we police the concept of revolution in two distinct ways: first, we evaluate 20th century revolutionary movements not in terms of the extent to which they secure ideational change, but rather in terms of whether or not the alterations they made resulted in the implementation of representative democracy--that is, in tangible change that ensures democracy specifically through the creation of a law or government. In other words, revolutions "are increasingly being judged not by what they achieved (the overthrow of the previous socio-political order) but by the new regime's convergence or divergence from a free-market liberal democratic state."[41]

Second, Dosemeci argues, our conception of revolution "makes the link between revolution and democracy, but does so through a periodization that temporally separates the two."[42] In the popular imaginary, the revolutionary period is that which immediately precedes the emergence of democracy, the moment of revolution itself is "bookended by the old and new regimes...momentary, a lighting strike that changes the affairs of human beings and not a temporality that humans themselves inhabit," and democracy is the product of the revolutionary moment.[43] Though the revolutionary period ultimately generates change that fosters the birth of democracy, the two occupy different temporal spaces, separated by the moment of revolution itself.

The location of the struggle for democracy (i.e. the revolutionary period) and the implementation of democracy on separate sides of this revolutionary moment creates a dual standard for what is acceptable in each period. Dosemeci points to the French Revolution as an

[41] Mehmet Dosemeci, "Don't move, Occupy! Social movement vs social arrest," *Roar*, November 5, 2013.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

example, explaining that the struggle against authoritarianism preceding revolution registers today as a legitimate expression of popular sovereignty, "whereas similar protests within liberal representative democracies are marginalized as the acts of a raucous minority."[44] The bifurcation of struggles against authority that precede and succeed the moment of democratic revolution is what allows modern governments to present as the legitimate, embodied will of The People "while simultaneously circumscribing all expressions of popular sovereignty outside of the new representative bodies."[45] The implication: once a people have achieved representation, any act of protest that threatens the established order is considered an act of a rebellious minority, not an expression of the will of The People.

The contemporary conception of revolution as the point of bifurcation between revolutionary struggle and democratic reality results in the enclosure of the period of revolutionary action, the declaration that the struggle for change, having achieved democracy, is over and done. These "revolutions" are moments of tangible change--i.e., legal and governmental change in a democratic direction. Because this conception of revolution is only a moment, a "lightning strike," it cannot be constituted by some sort of ideational change, which necessarily takes place over an extended period of time, but rather entails the creation of something more superficial, like a law or government. Thus, though ideational change necessarily occurs during the ongoing period prior to revolution, when revolutionary subjects begin to re-conceptualize their relationship to authority and their ability to procure change, it cannot occur in the moment of revolution itself.

In sum, the contemporary conception of revolution as a "lightning strike" change in law or government has the effects of both siphoning the era of revolutionary struggle off in the realm

[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

of historical memory and, by extension, stunting the process of ideational change that accompanied that revolutionary struggle. Thus, in the context of the democratic regime that succeeds revolutionary action, what would once be deemed "revolutionary struggle" and the ideational change that accompanied it register as deviance, as a terroristic threat, and ultimately as an unassimilable breach of time.

Revolution and Radical Feminism's Registration as a Breach of Modern Time

It is the prevailing, popular conception of revolution that causes radical feminism, as a form of terrorism, to register as a breach of modern time. Firestone, like Third, contended that the Women's Rights Movement had been "purposely ignored and buried." I argue that this burial is testimony to the occurrence of a revolutionary moment (in other words, a legal or governmental change) that fostered the democratization of society, extending liberal freedoms to women: female enfranchisement. The success of the Suffrage Movement sealed off the period of pre-revolutionary struggle, deemed it complete in the political imaginary, leading Jo Freeman to recount that "by the early 1960's the suffrage movement was a vague, historical memory; most everyone assumed that women had equality, at least as much as they wanted."[46] This assumption of equality implied that there was no need for further change, hence the occurrence of what Whelehan calls the "lean years after [the] putative equality"[47] won through emancipation. In the post-enfranchisement context, then, radical feminists' pursuit of change in female subjectivity registered not as necessary progress, but as an interruption of the functioning of the allegedly egalitarian social system--as a terroristic breach of time.

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[46] Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process* (New York: Longman, 1975), 9.
[47] Whelehan, *Modern Feminist Thought*, 4.

Female enfranchisement represents the culmination of the Women's Rights Movement in what would register as a revolution precisely because it constituted the formal inclusion of women in American democracy. As Freeman's comment confirms, social narrative dictated that female enfranchisement had eliminated the patriarchal nature of democracy, giving birth to a gender-inclusive, and thus more democratic, political system. Thus, all radical feminist action taking place thereafter, in parallel to revolutionary organizing that succeeds the formal institutionalization of democracy, would register as a deviant interruption of progress, as unassimilable and unfounded, as "bitchy, catty, dykey, frustrated, crazy, Solanasesque, nutty, frigid, ridiculous, bitter, embarrassing, man-hating,"[48] and ultimately illegitimate.

This "revolution," though necessarily the product of ideological change concerning the political competence and intellectual equality of women, itself crystallized as a formal alteration in the legal system, specifically enfranchisement. Radical feminist action, which prioritized challenging the very concept of woman and the social conditions that perpetuated it over such formal change, struggled to establish legitimacy post-enfranchisement because, in the popular imaginary, democracy had already been won for women, halting the pursuit of the less tangible changes that the WRM had sought to promote. Indeed, Firestone argued that though the fight for the vote "had been seen only as a preliminary, a weapon with which to wrest real political power," women's "pooling and concentration of all energy onto the limited goal of suffrage...had depleted the WRM. The monster of the vote had swallowed everything else...by that time they could hardly remember that there had been anything else to fight for." In other words, the end of the Suffrage Movement effected the closure of the Women's Rights Movement, rendering its quest for deeper social change unnecessary; in so doing, it caused radical feminism in the 60's

[48] Robin Morgan, "Goodbye to All That," in *Feminism in Our Time: the Essential Writings, World War II to the Present,* ed. Miriam Schneir (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 153.

and 70's to register as contradictory to the existing democratic regime, as an interruption of its operation and, by extension, as a breach of modern time.

It is important to note that the era of 60's and 70's radical feminism itself was enclosed in our historical memory as a result of liberal feminist successes and subsequently buried in history, demonstrating that the enclosure of a pre-revolutionary period of struggle is not a phenomenon unique to the Women's Rights Movement. In retrospective analysis, historians largely concurred that the formal successes of liberal feminists in the 1960's sealed the era of "second wave" feminism itself, including its radical elements. Rosen contends that by 1980, "pundits had already packaged the decade" as feminist activists had procured formal changes in employment and legal rights, producing radical feminism in the popular imaginary, as a stage of struggle completed.[49] Willis conceded, commenting in her foreword to *Daring to Be Bad* that "since [the end of the movement], its achievements have been by turns denied and credited to the liberal mainstream of the women's movement, [and] its original political meaning has been obscured."[50]

The Problem of Reformism

Though legal and governmental change in a democratic direction registers as "revolutionary" in the popular imaginary, radical feminists themselves rejected such formal changes as ineffectual reformism. Despite the divergence in theory and practice between their various organizations, radical feminists almost uniformly conceded that legal and governmental alterations were an insufficient means of subverting patriarchal power because they merely

[49] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, xiii.
[50] Ellen Willis, foreword to *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, by Alice Echols (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), vii.

amounted to the incorporation of women into an existing patriarchal political structure. Radical feminists sharply criticized both the suffragists and the reformist programs of their liberal contemporaries for failing to generate meaningful change--for failing to subvert male dominance and male values beyond the institutional level, in the everyday lives of women.

Firestone's argument that the Women's Rights Movement failed, procured freedom in name only, serves to highlight how "revolutionary" governmental and legal change proved ineffectual in generating substantive change in women's everyday lives. As Firestone explains,

> every husband knows he's not losing a vote, but gaining one...Though as often quoted to show progress, one third of all women work, they work in the worst sense of the word; that is, they have merely added a new exploiter to the old one. For they are concentrated in the service occupations, at the bottom rung of the employment ladder, in jobs that no one else will take. As for earnings, latest figures show that even black male workers make more...The Women's Rights Movement did not fold because it accomplished its objectives, but because it was essentially defeated and mischannelled. SEEMING freedoms appear to have been won."[51]

Rosen, too, articulates the failure of early 20th century reformism to generate meaningful change in the female condition. Rosen explains that

> Long before the women's movement began, American women's participation in both the labor force and the sexual revolution had dramatically altered their lives. But it took a women's movement to address the many ways women felt exploited, to lend legitimacy to their growing sense of injustice, and to name and reinterpret customs and practices that

[51] Firestone, "The Women's Rights Movement in the US," 4-6.

had long been accepted, but for which there was no language."[52]

The deficiency of language and a framework of understanding for the injustices that women still faced in the 60's and 70's is testimony to the ineffectuality of the "revolutions" of enfranchisement and female participation in the labor force--what radical feminists would deem reformist, minor legal alterations that otherwise preserve the status quo. What radical feminists pointed out, and what Rosen recounts in her work, is that in spite of their formal liberal freedoms, the institutional discrimination that women faced was rooted in ideological prejudice against women; women's voices were considered too shrill and unappealing for radio broadcasts, women were often denied loans on the basis of their financial incompetency, no woman sat on the supreme court, hurricanes were given exclusively female names, there were few female professors, and the opinion that women were "too tortured by hormonal disturbances to assume the presidency of the nation"[53] was granted credence as a medical analysis. Women were not yet equipped with the consciousness and language to articulate these ideational forms of discrimination as they manifested in established institutions, let alone address them. Indeed, most people conceded that "rape victims had probably 'asked for it,' most women felt too ashamed to report it, and no language existed to make sense of marital rape, date rape, domestic violence, or sexual harassment."[54]

Thus, as the radical feminists of the 60's and 70's maintained, legal and governmental alterations had failed to generate real social or ideational change that would touch women in their everyday lives. For example, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was created in 1965 and charged with addressing sexual discrimination in the workplace, yet it tended to treat

[52] Rosen, *The World Split Open,* xii.
[53] Ibid., xii.
[54] Ibid., xii.

sexual discrimination as a joke. Furthermore, the commission was not particularly effective at addressing it since it "could only investigate individual complaints, issue findings, and seek voluntary settlements...shocked by the volume of (sex discrimination) grievances, the EEOC nevertheless remained committed to monitoring only racial discrimination."[55] The National Organization of Women (NOW), founded in 1967, issued a Bill of Rights that sought a ban on sex discrimination in employment, maternity leave rights, child day care centers, equal and unsegregated education, and a host of other institutional alterations,[56] all in the hopes that formal changes in employment, education, and childcare would be enough to truly liberate women. Yet banning sex discrimination in employment would not prevent male bosses from preying upon their female inferiors; equal education would not necessarily lead men to perceive themselves as the intellectual equals of women; and access to birth control would only ensure that women would be held solely responsible for their reproduction, absolving men from the responsibility to use condoms and reinforcing the notion that pregnancy and childcare are the woman's responsibility alone, so radical feminists argued.

The women of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), too, emphasized the necessity of programmatic change that would "free women from their traditional roles in order that [they] may participate with all of [their] resources and energies in meaningful and creative activity."[57] SDS women advocated the equitable sharing of housework, the institution of communal childcare centers, and promoting the availability of birth control and abortion, institutional alterations that they believed would free women to lead meaningful, fulfilling lives.[58] Yet the

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[55] Ibid., 73.
[56] "NOW Bill of Rights," in *Takin it to the Streets: A Sixties Reader,* ed. Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines (New York Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
[57] "An SDS Statement on the Liberation of Women," in *Feminism in Our Time: the Essential Writings, World War II to the Present,* ed. Miriam Schneir (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 104.
[58] Ibid., 104.

nature of the SDS Statement on the Liberation of Women demonstrates that women's pursuit of institutional change actually tended to disguise the perpetuation of gender inequality in its less tangible manifestations. SDS women placed the onus on SDS men to check and curb their own privilege, an unrealistic expectation in the eyes of radical feminists, and stated that they as women would love and support men throughout that process, reinforcing the idea that it is the female's responsibility to support, care for, and sustain the ego of the male. Jones and Brown, critiquing the statement, contended that the achievement of SDS's and NOW's programmatic goals, if realized, would only serve to cloak the preservation of the traditional conceptualization of the female subject as the passive, inferior object of man.[59]

Radical feminists' criticisms of the pursuit of legal and governmental change reveal the problematic nature of formal (and what they would deem reformist) changes that register as revolutionary in the popular imaginary. Radical feminists conceptualized "true" revolution as radical change in *social conditions,* i.e. in conditions at home and in the workplace and in the system of gender roles. Their critique of what they deem reformism is evidence that a revolution may occur in governmental or legal terms without generating substantive change in social and ideological conditions. The very idea that legal or governmental change can constitute a revolution thus not only effects the burial of radical feminism in time and renders post-"revolutionary" change unnecessary and deviant, but it also, in failing to generate substantive change itself and complicating the possibility of future change, actually functions to preserve the patriarchal status quo. Indeed, Charlotte Bunch, a member of the radical lesbian separatist group The Furies, comments that "U.S. Society encourages...reformism to keep us from political revolt and out of power...Reformists offer solutions that make no basic changes in the system that

[59] Jones and Brown, "Toward a Female Liberation Movement," 17-56.

oppresses us, solutions that keep power in the hands of the oppressor."[60] Legal or governmental change that registers as revolutionary creates an illusion of progress that reinforces the concept of modern linear time, disguising the absence of a "true" revolution and the continued existence of the conditions that incited or characterized earlier struggle.

Situation in Time

In the previous sections I have leveraged Dosemeci's conception of modern revolution to demonstrate how, in Third's words, radical feminism registers as a terroristic breach of modern time. Because radical feminists functioned as a breach of modern time in the popular imaginary, threatened to halt the progression of the existing patriarchal system and bring it to an apocalyptic end, radical feminists and the historians who studied them were similarly able to understand radical feminism as a threat to the patriarchal status quo, as a potential catalyst for the birth of a new social order. However, I have not yet presented an explanation for the dichotomous understanding of radical feminism's situation in time. I have, until this point, only demonstrated why and how radical feminism registers popularly as a breach of modern time. The question remains: why is it that historians and radical feminists themselves have in many instances situated radical feminism in the 60's and 70's along a historical continuum of the gradual liberation of women? I argue that the popular ascription of the term "social movement" to the radical feminist struggle permits the latter conclusion about radical feminism's place in history and that this understanding ultimately amounts to an attempt to tame the threat of radical feminism.

[60] Charlotte Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt," in *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 332-333.

Nachescu contends that in Firestone's account, "a straight line unites the radicalism of Stanton and Anthony and the National Woman's Party (NWP) attempts to amend the federal Constitution through the Equal Rights Amendment,"[61] yet I have demonstrated that radical feminism does not advance the linear progression of time as legal or governmental change does, but presents society with the possibility of its cessation. This artificial construction of radical feminism as part of a movement that has sustained forward momentum since its 19th century inception is due largely to the ascription of the term "social movement" to radical feminism. Dosemeci explains that as the social movement scholars that emerged during the 60's and 70's "made inroads into historical analysis, the language of social movement theory and its core concepts have diffused into historical scholarship; incorporated, often uncritically, by historians of social struggle into their own work."[62] According to Dosemeci, the use of the term "social movement" constitutes a "misappropriation" that demonstrates "a teleological strain that seeks either to make sense of past social struggle through a contemporary category or, more dangerously, marshal past struggles under the umbrella of a contemporary movement now positioned as [its] natural historical outcome."[63]

The misunderstanding that historians perpetuate in utilizing the term "social movement" to refer to radical feminism is two-fold: first, they are in danger of fundamentally misinterpreting the nature of the radical elements of the Women's Rights Movement by placing it in the same social category as the radical feminism of the 1960s and 1970s. In the present context, however, the teleological strain misrepresents the nature of the *later* movement, i.e. 1960s and 1970s radical feminism, framing it as a cog in the machine of modern time instead of a potential agent of its rupture. In Benjaminian terms, the conceptualization of radical feminism as a later stage of

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[61] Nachescu, "Radical Feminism and the Nation," 39.
[62] Mehmet Dosemeci, "The Kinetics of Our Discontent," Working Paper (Fall 2015), 1.
[63] Ibid., 6.

the Women's Rights Movement "affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes,"[64] of becoming chapters in the narrative of democratic progress that preserves the reigning gendered order. By conceptualizing radical feminism as an extension of the Women's Rights Movement, society is, in Third's terms, "[producing] the terrorist act in ways that will contain the threat it poses"[65] i.e. locating it within a historical narrative of gradual reformism instead of acknowledging its apocalyptic intentions. The retroactive attempt to incorporate these social struggles into a linear history of progress is merely a means of blunting the fear that radical feminism incites in registering as a threat to modern time, for it disguises the truly subversive elements of struggle in a veil of progress, masking the possibilities for change that it provides.

Carol Hanisch, in a 2003 interview concerning the Miss America Protests of 1968, reveals that the linear historical narrative not only misunderstands the nature and aims of radical feminism, but that in establishing an illusion of progress it also guises the preservation of certain elements of women's oppression over a period of time. Concerning the division between second and third wave feminism, Hanisch states,

> "I think it's a very false division because women are always struggling for their liberation. We get oppressed, we rise up, the backlash pushes us backwards, we built it up again. So there are all these waves constantly...I think "Third Wavers" only tend to think in terms of time, and of generations, and they think their take on this appearance issue, and on many others, is new, when it's not."[66]

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[64] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, 1999).
[65] Third, *Gendering the Political*, 72.
[66] Carol Hanisch, "A Critique of the Miss America Protest," *Carolhanisch.org* (1968).

Hanisch contends that the teleological conception of feminist "waves" approaching complete female liberation disguises the perpetuation of certain oppressions over time--in this instance, the standards governing women's appearance. In a similar vein, Firestone states that "[the Women's Rights Movement's] existence and long duration were proof of massive large-scale inequality in a system that pretended to democracy."[67] The existence of radical feminist consciousness-raising groups and demonstrations in the 60s and 70s were, according to Firestone, evidence that women still lived in a society of patriarchal ideals that rendered them viscerally, emotionally oppressed. Though improvements in home technologies, sexual permissiveness, employment opportunities, and familial freedoms had produced, according to Mubayi, the pervasive image of American women as "the most liberated women in the world,"[68] women in the US remained decidedly unfree.

Conclusion

Utilizing Dosemeci's understanding of contemporary revolution and Third's conception of radical feminism's situation in history, I have demonstrated how the prevailing conception of revolution effected the burial of 19th and early 20th century feminism in history, by extension rendering the radical feminism of the 1960's and 1970's an unassimilable, terroristic breach of modern time. Specifically, I have argued that society conceives of revolution as a lightning strike moment of governmental or legal change that ends, closes, and buries the preceding period of historical struggle, thus halting the process of pre-revolutionary change in human subjectivity and everyday social life. Insofar as revolution registers as the democratization of an existing

[67] Firestone, "The Women's Rights Movement in the U.S.," 2.
[68] Joan Mubayi, "Women's Lib and Commercialism in the US," Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 6 No 10 (March 6, 1971), 569.

order, it complicates the resumption or re-creation of that struggle for such forms of ideological change, rendering it unnecessary, deviant, and ultimately terroristic in the allegedly democratic post-revolutionary context.

It is this understanding of revolution and subsequent process of enclosure and delegitimation that permits radical feminists and the historians that studied them to understand radical feminism as an apocalyptic breach of time, or the prospect of the abolition and supplantation of the existing social order. Any attempt by radical feminists or historians to locate radical feminism within a historical continuum of progress--which the understanding of radical feminism as a "social movement" constitutes--is merely an attempt to tame feminism's apocalyptic threat, to locate it within a more palatable understanding of feminism as a project of gradual reform. Radical feminists recognized that "revolutionary" changes in government and law, which they deemed reformist and believed were part of the process of gradual reform over time, had failed to generate meaningful change in the condition of women. Thus, radical feminists did not seek to participate in this process, but rather to interrupt in, to replace the struggle for gradual reform with the struggle to create an alternative social order.

In order to do so, radical feminists purported to change ideas, to generate grassroots ideological change capable of withstanding the superficial shifts that our society hails as "revolutions"--even if said revolutions have the effect of disrupting that process of change. Specifically, radical feminists in the 1960's and 1970's sought to fundamentally alter women's self-conceptions, to effect an alteration in their subjecthood that would enable thought and action capable of disrupting the functioning of male dominance in everyday life and ultimately subvert the entirety of the patriarchal order. It is to this influence that radical feminism yielded upon female subjecthood that I now turn.

Chapter Two: The Radical Contribution to Female Subjecthood

"Realizations are, at first, halting, and then begin to hit you like a relentless sledge hammer, driving the anger deeper and deeper into your consciousness with every blow." -Susie Kaplow[69]

"...the reality is that we must finally come face to face with ourselves, with taking control of that portion of our lives we have control over." -Frances[70]

In Chapter One, I described the influence that the prevailing conception of revolution yields upon our historical narrative of radical feminism and how that historical narrative, due to its adoption of an historical teleology, disguises the preservation of oppressive patriarchal conditions over time. I attribute this lack of progress to the fact that legal or governmental change that registers as revolutionary stunts the process of transforming social conditions and challenging notions of the self, sacrificing meaningful sociocultural improvements for more superficial alterations. Radical feminists, recognizing that the project of reformism and progress had failed to fundamentally improve their everyday lived reality, sought instead to interrupt this progress by promoting ideological change that would provide alternative subjectivities to those produced by the patriarchal status quo.

The value of ideological change lies in its intangibility, for though its continuation is often complicated by changes in law or government, its achievements cannot be completely negated by their mere occurrence. In Chapter Two, I explore the radical feminist struggle to

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[69] Susie Kaplow, "Getting Angry," in *Radical Feminism*, ed. Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine, and Anita Rapone (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973), 38.
[70] Frances, "The Soul Selects: A New Separate Way," in *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 329.

generate ideological change within the community of women, namely through effecting an alteration in female subjecthood. I first examine how radical feminists conceived of the source of patriarchal oppression in order to demonstrate how, either through the explicit statement of their beliefs or the implications of their goals, radical feminists conceptualized patriarchal dominance as a carcereal continuum that both compels and relies upon the self-objectification of women. I then move on to demonstrate that radical feminists conceived of and used consciousness-raising as a tool for fostering radical women's transition from self-objectification to active subjecthood.

Debate Over the Source of Oppression

In her retrospective analysis of the value of consciousness raising as a political tool, Kathie Sarachild explains that "The dictionary says radical means root, coming from the Latin word for root. And that is what we meant by calling ourselves radical. We were interested in getting to the roots of problems in society."[71] Sarachild implies that the project of radical feminism was invested in achieving deeper, ideological change, as opposed to the superficial changes in legal structures and employment policies for which liberal feminists so ardently fought. Radical feminists left reformist feminists to pursue measurable change in the context of an existing political structure via legislation, the courts, and lobbying,[72] while they themselves sought to deconstruct the more ingrained everyday concepts and practices that generated the conditions of female oppression.

However, radical feminists hotly debated the primary source of female oppression, some blaming men's material self-interest, others capitalism, and still others the male ego. I first

[71] Kathie Sarachild, "Consciousness Raising: A Radical Weapon," in *Feminist Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1978), 144-150.
[72] Nachescu, "Radical Feminism and the Nation," 31.

compare the ways in which different radical feminist writers and organizations conceptualized the source(s) and mechanism(s) of patriarchal oppression and continue on to delineate my own understanding of the operation of patriarchal power as a carcereal continuum. Some women liberationists, as we will see, explicitly understood patriarchal power to function through such a continuum; others, though they espoused an understanding of patriarchal power as deriving from a single source, propagated programs whose very aims affirmed that patriarchal power functioned through a carcereal continuum that relied upon the self-objectification of women. Thus, whether explicitly or implicitly, radical feminists sought to subvert patriarchal dominance by disabling one or more of its nodes of diffusion. I demonstrate that understanding patriarchal society as a carcereal continuum, as opposed to a derivation of a single entity, resolves the various contentions concerning the source of oppression that existed in the 60's and 70s and validates their varied perspectives.

The Redstockings, a radical feminist group founded by Shulamith Firestone and Ellen Willis in 1969 that was primarily active in New York, expressed an understanding of patriarchal oppression rooted in the "Pro-Woman Line," or the idea that women actively assumed positions of passivity and submission in order to survive individual men's exertion of dominance. The Redstockings rejected the idea that women were brainwashed, instead arguing that the woman's social role was the product of conscious female adaptation to male supremacy. In the Redstocking Manifesto, the group stated that female oppression was the result of "continual, daily pressure from men," arguing that "To blame institutions implies that men and women are equally victimized, obscures the fact that men benefit from the subordination of women, and gives men the excuse that they are forced to be oppressors"[73]; they believed that "the direct

[73] "Redstockings Manifesto," in *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 223-225.

exercise of power by men, acting in their economic, social, and sexual self-interest, over women" generated a sexual class struggle between men and women, and that institutions were merely tools that the male class utilized to oppress the female class.[74] Based on this understanding of male dominance as operating through the behaviors of individual men, the Redstockings argued that women should seek to change not themselves, but men.

The Feminists, originally the October 17th Movement, were founded in 1968 by a group of former-members of the National Organization of Women who felt that NOW was insufficiently radical. The Feminists, also known as "Feminists--A Political Organization to Annihilate Sex Roles," also framed patriarchal oppression as a class struggle between men and women, though not on the basis of the Pro-Woman Line. Ti-Grace Atkinson, prominent member of The Feminists, critiqued both liberal and radical feminists for their individual misunderstandings of this sexual class struggle, stating,

> Traditional feminism is caught in the dilemma of demanding equal treatment for unequal functions, because it is unwilling to challenge political (functional) classification by sex. Radical women, on the other hand, grasp that women as a group somehow fit into a political analysis of society, but err in refusing to explore the significance of the fact that women form a class, the uniqueness of this class, and the implications of this description to the system of political classes...women are a political class characterized by a sexual function.[75]

On the basis of their conceptualization of a gendered class struggle, The Feminists believed that the feminine role was the defining feature of women's oppression, arguing that "All male-female

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[74] Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," 124.

[75] Ti-Grace Atkinson, "Radical Feminism," in *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reade*r, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 83-85.

institutions stem from the male-female role system and all are oppressive."[76] Thus, The Feminists also believed that women's active conformity to that role functioned to sustain male supremacy; it was not a necessary adaptation to oppression, as the Redstockings believed, but was a condemnable act of submission to oppression. Additionally, Willis explains that

> While Redstockings assumed that the sexist dimension of an institution could somehow be abstracted from the institution itself, The Feminists assumed that the primary institutions of women's oppression--which they identified as marriage and the family, prostitution, and heterosexuality--were entirely defined by sexism, that their sole purpose was to perpetuate the 'sex-role system.'[77]

Thus, for The Feminists, a system of interlocking, male-supremacist institutions was the source of patriarchal power, and the mechanism through which the system sustained its power was women's active conformity to their roles as prescribed by these institutions.

New York Radical Feminists was founded by former member of the Redstockings Shulamith Firestone and former member of The Feminists Anne Koedt in 1969. New York Radical Feminists, according to Ellen Willis, believed that the exercise of male dominance was not always a means to an end, but rather that, for men, "it was intrinsically satisfying to the ego to dominate others."[78] Thus, like the Redstockings, the New York Radical Feminists believed that individual men subordinated women, and like The Feminists they scrutinized maintaining relationships with men--even friendships.[79] However, they also conceded, like The Feminists,

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[76] "The Feminists: A Political Organization to Annihilate Sex Roles," in *Radical Feminism*, ed. Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine and Anita Rapone (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973), 374-375.
[77] Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," 130.
[78] Ibid., 133.
[79] Joan Cassell, *A Group Called Women*, (New York: McKay, 1977).

that women internalized the roles that men prescribed for them. Willis explains that "NYRF insisted that feminine behavior was both enforced and internalized: women were trained from birth both to conform to the feminine role and to accept it as right and natural."[80]

Individual authors, of course, also contributed to the debate concerning the source and nature of patriarchal oppression. Germaine Greer, a prominent voice in women's liberation, believed like the New York Radical Feminists that men exerted their dominance because it was satisfying to the male ego, arguing that "...men bash women because they enjoy it; they torture women as they might torture an animal or pull the wings off flies."[81] Robin Morgan, founder of one of the earliest women's liberation groups, New York Radical Women, evinced an understanding of female oppression as the product of a sexual class struggle in stating, "I feel that 'man-hating' is an honorable and viable political act, that the oppressed have a right to class-hatred against the class that is oppressing them."[82] Joan Mubayi, writer for *Economic and Political Weekly*, wrote an article titled "Women's Lib and Commercialism in the US" in 1971 in which she condemned protestors that she claimed saw men "not as victims of history which has led them to a false consciousness but as malevolent beings fully conscious of and responsible for their oppressor's role" indicating, in her terms, "a rather low consciousness on the part of the women themselves, since holding the men personally responsible for their ideology denies the very concept of a historical sense."[83] Thus, Mubayi does not necessarily contest the Redstockings' and New York Radical Women's idea that individual men oppress individual women, but she claims that this oppression is an unconscious tendency bred by a distinct social history.

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[80] Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," 134.
[81] Germaine Greer, *The Whole Woman* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), n.p.
[82] Robin Morgan, *Going Too Far: The Personal Chronicle of a Feminist* (New York: Random House, 1977), 178.
[83] Mubayi, "Women's Lib and Commercialism in the US," 571.

Authors Booth, Munaker, and Goldfield articulate an understanding of patriarchal oppression as materializing through institutional mediums, explaining how various institutions utilize "functional myths" to legitimize and sustain the oppression of women.[84] These "myths," according to the authors, were the popularly accepted, essentialist conceptions of womanness as inhering from women's biological function. As the passive recipient of the penis, held the popular myth, woman is herself passive, "desires to encircle and enclose," whereas "Man's sex, on the other hand, is activity itself, the symbol of strength, potency and dominance."[85] They accuse institutions of perpetuating essentialist myths of womanness, condemning, for instance, the family for "[institutionalizing] the myth of whore and saint with a slant," dictating that "the real woman is wife, mother, mistress--the playboy's dream.'" Willis confirms that many radical feminists began to understand the family as oppressive, noting that the creation of the words "sexism" and "sexist politics" indicated that sexual and familial relationships between men and women "were not simply matters of individual choice, or even of social custom, but involved the exercise of personal and institutional power." The liberal education system was, for Booth, Goldfield, and Munaker, another institutional source of oppression. The authors posit that "liberal arts education legitimates, for men, their right to control and manage the society. For women, it is a waiting period in which they can find a husband and make themselves educated companions of introspective victims."[86] Thus, some radical feminists, like Booth, Goldfield, and Munaker, espoused an understanding of oppression as the product of overlapping institutions and the ideas that they both relied upon for their legitimacy and themselves perpetuated. Willis

[84] Heather Booth, Evi Goldfield, and Sue Munaker, "Toward a Radical Movement," in Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 60.
[85] Ibid., 59.
[86] Ibid., 61.

perhaps best articulates this understanding of patriarchal oppression as a system of ideas and institutions:

> Sexism, the movement contended, was neither the natural expression of sexual differences nor a set of bad attitudes or outmoded habits but a social system--embedded in law, tradition, economics, education, organized religion, science, language, the mass media, sexual morality, child rearing, the domestic division of labor, and everyday social interaction--whose intent and effect was to give men power over women...It followed that there was no area of social life, public or private, that was exempt from a feminist critique.[87]

The debate over the source of oppression--whether it derived from inherently sexist institutions that upheld the gendered power structure or from the conscious or unconscious sexism of individual men--necessarily sparked debate amongst radical feminists over how best to combat this oppression. The Feminists dictated that no more than a third of their members were permitted to reside with or marry a man[88] on the grounds that women's active assumption of the female role of wife or girlfriend amounted to their willing submission to oppression. Indeed, in an interview with *Life Magazine,* Ti-Grace Atkinson claimed that The Feminists "reject marriage in both theory and practice."[89] Atkinson even went so far as to reject love itself, stating, "Love has to be destroyed. It's an illusion that people care for each other. Friendship is reciprocal, love isn't...It may be that sex is a neurotic manifestation of oppression. It's like a mass psychosis."[90]

Cell 16, a militant feminist organization founded in Boston in 1968, also advocated celibacy as a political tactic, embracing an ideology of what Alice Echols terms *heterosexual*

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[87] Willis, foreword to *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, ix-x.
[88] Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," 131.
[89] Davidson, "An Oppressed Majority Demands Its Rights."
[90] Ibid.

separatism.[91] In a retrospective account of her involvement with Cell 16, Dana Densmore explains that "Although [Cell 16] didn't condemn good sexual relationships or worthwhile family life, should these be found, it is true that, at that historical moment, we thought it best for women to stay free for making the revolution."[92] The Redstockings, in contradistinction, rejected abstention as a political tactic due to its inefficacy and permitted its members to maintain their heterosexual relationships, relying instead on its consciousness-raising efforts as the crux of its political power. It is evident, then, that the variation in the ways that radical feminists conceived of patriarchal oppression generated real programmatic differentiation between radical feminist organizations.

Radical feminists were additionally concerned with the role that capitalism played in patriarchal oppression. Most radical feminists conceded that male supremacy and capitalism were in some way related, for the very existence of a consumer economy "required useless products for its very existence" and found it profitable to target "a class of semi-educated semi-conscious unhappy people,"[93] i.e. women. Yet, while some radical feminists held that capitalism was the original source of female oppression, other groups contended that sexist oppression was a separate phenomenon--not the derivative of capitalism, but an autonomous system that merely achieved the expression of its values through the operation of a capitalist economy. As Willis explains, a politico-feminist split occurred between those who saw capitalism as generating oppressive gender roles and feminists that saw that "male supremacy was itself a systemic form of domination."[94] In "Women of the World Unite--We Have Nothing to Lose But Our Men!," published in New York Radical Women's *Notes From the First Year*, Carol Hanisch and

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[91] Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*, 164.
[92] Dana Densmore, "A Year of Living Dangerously," in *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women's Liberation*, ed. Rachel Blau Duplessis and Ann Snitow (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 87.
[93] Firestone, "The Women's Rights Movement in the US," 7.
[94] Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," 119.

Elizabeth Sutherland articulate both arguments; on one hand, they contend that "we could change the economic system and women could still be victims of male supremacy, just as black people could still be victims of racism,"[95] that male supremacy has the power to function autonomously; yet on the other, they state that women are "economically exploited, psychologically oppressed and socially kept in 'our place' by men and by a capitalist system that has institutionalized male supremacy,"[96] implying that male supremacy derives from the capitalist economy.

Ellen Willis's "Woman and the Myth of Consumerism," published in *Ramparts* in 1970, presents a conceptualization of capitalism and male dominance that aptly demonstrates the co-dependence and co-extension of the two phenomena, validating the key arguments presented by each side of the debate. Willis does concede that "the beneficiaries of [the] depreciation of women are not men but the corporate power structure,"[97] for companies utilize images of women as passive sexual objects in order to market their products. Yet, according to Willis's analysis, the fact that the corporate power structure accrues the benefits of female exploitation does not necessarily render it the sole source of female oppression, for capitalism may compound female oppression without functioning as its sole source.

In order to explain how patriarchal oppression both derives from and reinforces corporate mechanisms, Willis discusses the psychological function of advertising. Willis critiques the Freudian idea that advertising is designed to generate fear and exploit the unconscious desires of women in order to motivate consumption, for, as she contends, companies do not create psychological needs but prey upon existing ones. Willis states,

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[95] Elizabeth Sutherland and Carol Hanisch, "Women of the World Unite: We Have Nothing to Lose But Our Men!," *Notes from the First Year* (June 1968), 12.
[96] Ibid., 12.
[97] Willis, "Women and the Myth of Consumerism," *Ramparts*, Vo. 8 No. 2 (June, 1970).

> Women are not manipulated by the media into being domestic servants and mindless sexual decorations, the better to sell soap and hairspray. Rather, the image reflects women as they are forced by men in a sexist society to behave…(advertisements) encourage men to expect women to sport all the latest trappings of sexual slavery--expectations women must then fulfill if they are to survive...to convince a man to buy, an ad must appeal to his desire for autonomy and freedom from conventional restrictions; to convince a woman, an ad must appeal to her need to please the male oppressor.[98]

Indeed, Willis was not the only radical feminist to argue that female insecurity is a necessary prerequisite for successful advertising. In reference to "the ingenious techniques of Madison Avenue to generate insecurity in order to offer their product or service as a means of assuaging insecurity," Densmore contended that "The most effective techniques zero in on our fears of not being socially acceptable, not being loved, not being sexually attractive,"[99] the pre-existing products of America's ideology of individualism. In the context of Willis's and Densmore's analyses, consumer capitalism exploits the pre-existing psychological desires of women--psychological desires to look beautiful, keep the home clean, and please the male. Thus, that woman conceives of herself as an instrument for male satisfaction is a requisite precondition for the exploitation of women through advertising.

Willis contends that the images and myths that advertisements and products create not only prey upon women's existing insecurities, but also serve to reinforce this self-conception of the female as well as the dominance of male values, rendering consumerism "blatantly sexist."[100] Willis explains that "The pervasive image of the empty-headed female consumer constantly

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[98] Ibid.
[99] Densmore, "Independence from the Sexual Revolution," 107.
[100] Ibid.

trying her husband's patience with her extravagant purchases contributes to the myth of male superiority" in casting women as financially irresponsible and materialistic. Shulamith Firestone comments that "the domestic pages are full of cartoons depicting irate husbands chewing out Big Mama for always going shopping whenever she's unhappy."[101] Additionally, Willis notes that "the consumerism line allows Movement men to avoid recognizing that they exploit women by attributing women's oppression solely to capitalism."[102] Thus, Willis's analysis demonstrates that the capitalist economy is not an autonomous source of female oppression but rather operates systematically, leveraging female self-conception and patriarchal values to both accrue profits and support the diffusion of patriarchal power. In other words, capitalism both requires and reinforces the degradation of women.

It is evident that the radical feminists of the 60's and 70's, though they were often active in the same geographic areas and shared many values and ideas, differed markedly in their beliefs concerning the source of patriarchal oppression. Yet Willis's analysis provides testimony against the mutual exclusivity of different conceptualizations of oppression. In demonstrating that capitalist institutions, pre-existing female insecurities, and male values operate in combination to produce patriarchal dominance, Willis provides a model for understanding patriarchal dominance as a system of interlocking institutions and ideals. Some radical feminists similarly explicitly espoused an understanding of patriarchal dominance as such, as we will soon see. Others, though they claimed that patriarchal oppression derived from a single source, pursued programs with goals that suggested that self-objectification, too, played a role in permitting other sources of oppression to function, thus adopting an understanding of patriarchal power as systematic. In the following section I will articulate a conceptualization of patriarchal

[101] Firestone, "The Women's Rights Movement in the US," 7.
[102] Willis, "Women and the Myth of Consumerism."

oppression as a carcereal continuum, a system of interlocking institutions and ideals, that relies upon the self-objectification of women elemental to a male-dominated society. I argue that the radical feminists of the 60's and 70's either explicitly or implicitly understood that patriarchal oppression operated through a carcereal network.

Self-Objectification and Its Role in the Patriarchal Carcereal Continuum

Foucault's analysis of the effect of panoptical observation on self-conception, one he developed to describe how modern forms of surveillance and discipline created or produced the modern subject, can be effectively applied to gender analysis. Specifically, Foucault's analysis allows us to understand how the male gaze possesses a panoptical effect in modern society, permitting an understanding of the process by which the female initially becomes self-objectifying. It also allows us to see how, in turn, this self-objectification functions as part of a system of ideas and institutions, a carcereal continuum, of patriarchal power that diffuses the operation of discipline throughout the social body. The notion that patriarchal society constitutes a carcereal continuum lends credence to radical feminists' varying conceptions of the nature and source of patriarchal oppression, for it permits that oppression is not located in any of the aforementioned entities alone, but diffused throughout the social body via several points of contact. Inherently sexist institutions, the insatiable appetite of the male ego, interest in material gains, and even women's militancy against their own inclinations to deviate from the patriarchal norm; all these together amount to the universal exercise of patriarchal discipline through institutional, peer, and self-monitoring.

Foucault describes how Bentham's panopticon, a carcereal structure that situated isolated cells around an observational tower, influenced the nature of the subjecthood of its prisoners.

The panoptically incarcerated individual, conscious of himself as an object of the panopticon, came to understand himself in the same terms that the potential, elusive observer would, for he was forced to police his own behavior in accordance with whatever principles of normality he presumed the observer would uphold. Observation therefore influenced his conceptualization of himself as a subject and the way that he behaved as such.

I contend that male dominance possessed a panoptical power that promoted the self-objectification of women, an understanding of the female self-derived from man's conception of woman. Feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey wrote in 1973 in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" that, "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female,"[103] woman standing "in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other" and as such "tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning."[104] Mulvey primarily focuses on the ways in which the male gaze either reinforces or compromises the male ego, but Foucault's analysis of the effect of observation on subjecthood allows us to arrive at a conclusion about the effect that the male gaze must yield upon the subjecthood of its object: the female. As panoptical observation forced its objects to understand themselves as subjects in the terms of their potential observer, the active male gaze would compel the female, passive recipient of her womanness, to understand herself as a subject in the same way that the male gaze would produce her as an object--hence her inability to construct the meaning that she bears.

Mulvey primarily treats the male gaze as an erotic, sexualizing gaze--a form of scopophilia, which Freud "associated...with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a

[103] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen,* Vo. 16 No. 3 (Fall 1975), 9.
[104] Ibid., 6.

controlling and curious gaze."[105] However, in a society characterized by inherently patriarchal ideals and institutions, the male gaze is not necessarily sexual, nor does it derive from the physical presence of a male observer. In the 1960's, both at home and in the workplace, women were subject to constant observation from men--not in the sense that male bosses or husbands necessarily perpetually inhabited the physical workspace of women, but that in their working, cooking, cleaning, decorating, fornicating, and child-rearing, women were compelled to perform to the standards established and upheld by patriarchal society. Just as the panoptically incarcerated individual came to evaluate himself as a subject by the same standards that his elusive observer would evaluate him as an object, a woman living in a patriarchal society must have come to evaluate herself as a subject in the same way that her male master, and the patriarchal society at large, would conceive of her. In other words, she would understand herself as valuable insofar as she operated effectively as an instrument for the maintenance of the home, was sufficiently physically attractive, and was able to satisfy her husband.

The radical feminists of the 60's and 70's began to recognize and articulate the phenomena of the male gaze, self-objectification, and their essentiality in compelling female subservience and legitimizing male dominance. Meredith Tax, a member of the Boston women's liberation group Bread and Roses, wrote an article called "Woman and her Mind: The Story of Daily Life" in 1970 in which she delineates the way that the male gaze relies upon and effects female self-objectification, reinforcing male dominance. To do so, Tax provides a scenario in which a woman is subjected to the gaze of male construction workers as she passes them by:

> What they will do *impinge* on her. They will demand that her thoughts be focused on them. They will use her body with their eyes. They will evaluate her market price...They will make her a

[105] Ibid., 8.

> participant in their fantasies without asking if she is willing...Above all, they will make her feel like a *thing*.[106]

The male gaze thus renders woman, in Tax's terms, "systematically deprived of an ego,"[107] unable to understand herself in her own terms and thus forced to understand herself in terms of what the men watching her are thinking. Through this process of self-objectification, women come to think to themselves: "'I am nothing when I am by myself. In myself, I am nothing. I only know that I exist because I am needed by someone who is real, my husband, and by my children.'"[108] In other words, Tax understood that the male gaze rendered woman, in Mulvey's terms, the bearer instead of the maker of her own meaning; that her understanding of herself, borrowed from the male, was the product of self-objectification.

The radical feminists of the 60's and 70's recognized that the meaning that women bore, the image that they borrowed, was that of a passive object. Tax argued that unlike men, who are brought up for conquest and accomplishment and "moreover, to see these challenges in sexual terms...and to meet each embryonic threat with the maximum aggressive response,"[109] women are brought up to be conscious and self-conscious, attuned to how others may want to see or use them as passive objects. In the terms of New York Radical Feminist member Susi Kaplow, woman becomes "a living, walking apology for her own existence,"[110] by extension disinclined to active self-assertion. "Taught to feel that our only asset is our physical presence, that that is all other people notice about us,"[111] Kaplow claimed, women come to conceptualize themselves as

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[106] Meredith Tax, "Woman and Her Mind," in *Radical Feminism,* ed. Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine, and Anita Rapone (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973), 28.
[107] Ibid., 33.
[108] Ibid., 29.
[109] Ibid., 23.
[110] Kaplow, "Getting Angry," 38.
[111] Tax, "Woman and Her Mind," 25.

commodities, their appearances as their most valuable assets, and their physical flaws as devaluing. In other words, women develop within a value system that teaches them to self-objectify, internalizing patriarchal society's definition of the woman as passive.

Radical feminists also understood that heterosexual relations forced women to become bearers of meaning, to understand themselves as the objects that men took them to be. Booth, Goldfield, and Munaker believed that the married woman "attains her identity through her husband and later through her children," arriving at an understanding of herself as "weak, gentle, submissive, emotionally sensitive, intuitive, unable to cope with the world without a man."[112] Radical feminists argued that women defined themselves not just through their prescribed marital roles but also through heterosexual intercourse. Jones and Brown, in their critique of the "SDS Statement on the Liberation of Women," stated that, for women, "Sex becomes the vehicle for momentary exchanges of human warmth and affection. It provides periods in which anxiety is temporarily allayed and girls feel wanted and appreciated, periods in which they develop some identity as an individual."[113] Yet, it was not as if radical feminists believed that heterosexual sex possessed some liberatory power that freed women to actively define themselves. On the contrary, women evaluated themselves in terms of the sexual expectations that men established for them--hence the "...private, dead-of-the-night fears that maybe we really are the sexually frustrated, neurotic freaks our detractors accused us of being"[114] and women's refusal to admit to frigidity, or failure to reach an orgasm during intercourse (even though, as women often learned in consciousness-raising sessions on the matter, frigidity, then believed to be a legitimate medical concern, was often the norm). Radical feminists thus recognized that women, in

[112] Booth, Goldfield, and Munaker, "Toward a Radical Movement," 60.
[113] Jones and Brown, "Toward a Female Liberation Movement," 27.
[114] Densmore, "Independence from the Sexual Revolution," 109.

accordance with the male definition, conceived of themselves as both a means to the end of male sexual pleasure and as sexual beings that should derive pleasure from sex.

Because the inmates of Bentham's panopticon did not know whether or not they were being observed at any given point in time, they were compelled to constantly police their own behavior. The panopticon was therefore an extremely efficient disciplinary mechanism because it did not require active policing, but rather "induce[d] in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assure[d] the automatic functioning of power,"[115] for "he who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power…he becomes the principle of his own subjection."[116]

Subject to the panoptical effect of patriarchal society, women were compelled to police their own behavior, rendering them the subjects of their own oppression by way of self-objectification. Fed from childhood ideas about the importance of being passive, docile, sexually pleasing, and effective in maintaining the home, women not only came to evaluate themselves in terms of how well they fit the role that patriarchal ideals constructed for them, but also actively participated in the maintenance of those roles and, by extension, the system of patriarchal values itself, simply by way of conforming to them. Thus, the state of permanent visibility that Foucault describes, in the context of a panoptical, patriarchal society, influences the self-conception of woman in a way that compels her, through her active conformity to her ascribed role, to assume responsibility for the constraints of power and thereby become the principle of her own subjection. Patriarchal society compels women to develop themselves as subjects by way of self-objectification, and in continuing to self-objectify and conform to their ascribed roles, women act to sustain the patriarchal power to which they are object.

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[115] Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish (New York: Random House, 1995), 201.
[116] Ibid., 202.

According to Willis, women liberationists believed that ours was a sexist society that "enforced women's prescribed behavior with a wide range of sanctions that included social condemnation, ridicule, ostracism, sexual rejection and harassment, the withholding of birth control and abortion, economic deprivation, and male violence condoned by the state."[117] Willis understood that, like the panoptically incarcerated individual, women conformed to their prescribed role out of fear of reprisal. Radical feminist Meredith Tax also described conformity to the female role as a social compulsion, writing, "We have been *molded* into these deformed postures, *pushed* into these service jobs, *made* to apologize for existing, *taught* to be unable to do anything requiring any strength at all, like opening doors or bottles."[118] Yet many radical feminists also conceded women's active conformity to the prescribed female role was the result of the internalization of the female role, or the compulsion to self-objectify. The New York Radical Feminists believed that, though conformity to the female role was in many ways enforced, it was also the result of women's socialization and subsequent internalization of the female role. The Redstockings believed that this internalization was deliberate and tactical; they contended that conformity to the female role constituted an active, rational adaptation to their oppression at the hands of men.[119] Though the Redstockings "rejected as misogynistic psychological explanations for feminine submissiveness or passivity, since they implied that women collaborated in or were responsible for their oppression,"[120] they nonetheless believed that playing the feminine role was an active choice.

Indeed, many women liberationists defended the notion that women had been conditioned to *actively* conceive of themselves in male terms and *actively* conform to their prescribed roles.

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[117] Willis, foreword to *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, ix-x.
[118] Tax, "Woman and Her Mind," 26.
[119] Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," 124.
[120] Ibid., 124.

In the words of Emily Hancock, woman "is defined as a female instead of a person. She gives up 'doing' in favor of 'being' a good girl; instead of suiting herself, she tries to please those around her. Impressed with the importance of other's opinions, *she molds herself* to what she thinks they want her to be [my emphasis added]."[121] Indeed, Susi Kaplow contends that the radical woman would almost inevitably reach a point in the process of consciousness raising when she would realize, in anger and despair, her complicity in her own oppression:

> You were the indispensable accomplice to the crime. You internalized your own inferiority, the pressing necessity to be beautiful and seductive, the belief that men are more important than women, the conviction that marriage is the ultimate goal. Seeing this, you are violent against yourself for every time you were afraid to try something for fear of failing, for all the hours lost on make-up and shopping, for every woman you missed because there was a man in the room...This phase of anger turned inward is terrifying. You are alone with your own failed responsibilities toward yourself, however much you can still blame others. It is this phase that some women find unbearable and flee from, returning to the first phase of anger or dropping out altogether.[122]

Mubayi, in her 1971 article, also embraced the notion that the female identity is actively borrowed and performed, stating, "The American woman's psychological conception of herself was *taken* from the male. She was a limited, timid creature, who stayed in the home and liked it. She was a decorative object to be placed on a pedestal...in short, she was the 'weaker sex' [my emphasis added]."[123] It was this transposed psychological conception of the self that Mubayi believed solidified women's subservient stature. Mubayi explained how the American woman,

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[121] Evans and Avis, *The Women Who Broke All the Rules*, 18.
[122] Kaplow, "Getting Angry," 40.
[123] Mubayi, "Women's Lib and Commercialism in the US," 571.

"expected to be sweet, demure, and modest...let herself be the object of such traditional male courtesies as opening of a door to allow her to pass through, lighting of her cigarette, etc...to decorate herself for the male...to keep the male ever interested, ever attentive."[124] In other words, woman's borrowed conception of herself resulted in her self-objectification and sustained the active behaviors that bolstered her subservient status.

Radical feminists argued that women's understanding of themselves as inferior legitimized and perpetuated their oppression by enlisting women themselves in the project of female subjugation; that self-objectification, insofar as it led women to think less of themselves than of men, sustained the functioning of patriarchal power by compelling women to actively conform to their prescribed roles. As Koedt contended, "the technique used to keep a woman oppressed is to convince her that she is at all times secondary to man, and that her life is defined in terms of him." Women's status as an oppressed group implied "that to a certain extent they have accepted their inferior-colonial-secondary status. Taught self hatred, they identify instead with the oppressor."[125] Similarly, Shulamith Firestone stated at an abortion repeal rally in New York in March, 1968 that woman "has internalized [society's] values, she has accepted, and indeed in many cases she has *become*, its low estimate of her human worth,"[126] and both this self objectification and "the life-long intimidation in (woman) is so deep-rooted that even if you put her in solitary for twenty years she wouldn't dare to *think* un-kosher thoughts or to question her position in this society."[127] Radical feminists began to realize that self-objectification, the internalization of their objecthood and negative conceptions of their femininity, compelled women to conform to their prescribed roles or, in essence, to self-police.

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[124] Ibid., 571.
[125] Koedt, "Women in the Radical Movement," 65.
[126] Shulamith Firestone, "Abortion Rally Speech," *Notes from the First Year* (1968), 24.
[127] Ibid., 24.

A case in point: the Sexual Revolution. Cast in our historical memory as a time of female sexual liberation, the sexual revolution "functioned towards freedom as did the Reconstruction toward former slaves—reinstitution of oppression by another name."[128] The sexual revolution generated normative change that allowed women to take on multiple partners, yet as Tom Hayden of Students for a Democratic Society stated, the "new sexual freedom only tended to legitimize promiscuity. Women could freely take multiple boyfriends, but not as freely escape their image as passive objects."[129] Similarly, Densmore described sexual freedom as "The right that is a duty" and explained that, as a result of the revaluation of female sex, "Everywhere we are sexual objects, and our enjoyment just enhances our attractiveness."[130] Jill Johnston quotes Juliet Mitchell as stating, "Women are enjoying a new sexual freedom (changing moral attitudes and availability of reliable contraception) but this is often only for their greater exploitation as 'sexual objects' within it."[131]

Indeed radical feminists condemned the sexually liberated woman for failing to absolve herself from the passive role, rejecting "the glossy magazine's vision of the liberated girl, who wears see-through clothes, smokes Virginia Slims and gives free love. The feminists say this fake liberated girl is a sex object, a bigger and better prostitute, not a human being."[132] Densmore conceded that the sexual revolution birthed the assumption "that women are purely sexual beings, bodies and sexuality, fucking machines," and that, as a result, "freedom for

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[128] Morgan, "Goodbye to All That," 152.
[129] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 145.
[130] Densmore, "Independence from the Sexual Revolution," 111.
[131] Jill Johnston, "Selections from *Lesbian Nation*," in *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 340.
[132] Davidson, "An Oppressed Majority Demands Its Rights."

women could only mean sexual freedom."[133] Yet valuational change in female sex and women's resultant "sexual freedom" did not generate valuable freedom for Densmore, who stated,

> And we are not free when we are in the grip of the false conditioning that decrees that we need sex. We are not free if we believe the culture's ominous warnings that we will become 'horny'...and frustrated and neurotic and finally shrivel up into prunes and have to abandon hope of being good, creative, effective people. We are not free if we believe that we, like the lower animals, are driven by something which is not only instinctual but mindlessly, hopelessly ineluctable. If we believe all that, then, due to the rarity of good, healthy, constructive relationships between men and women in the world today, we will be forced to accept, even seek out, evil and destructive relationships where we are used, and accept that humiliation in return for the privilege of 'using him.'[134]

Evidently, Densmore believed that the sexual revolution promulgated a hypersexualized conception of woman that women themselves were forced, in accordance with their compulsion to self-objectify, to accept. In a similar vein, Tax explains that in "the new, improved, trendy, but equally manipulative, equally mystified, and equally destructive ideology of the 'new morality'...women are defined as sex objects *even to themselves.*"[135] As a result, women again assumed the role of submissive, compliant, male-caretaker, albeit through the medium of sexuality instead of domesticity.

According to Pat Mainardi, the value of the "Liberated Woman" for men lay in "sex without marriage, sex before marriage, cozy housekeeping arrangements...and the self content of

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[133] Densmore, "Independence from the Sexual Revolution," 111.
[134] Ibid., 116.
[135] Tax, "Woman and Her Mind," 35.

knowing that you're not the kind of man who wants a doormat instead of a woman."[136] Thus, this sexual revolution that claimed to advocate the joy of sexual pleasure was also invested in protecting the satisfaction of the male ego, and often at the expense of the female ego. Indeed, women in New Left circles often felt it necessary to sleep with movement men as a means of cultivating political status within a group in which they were otherwise ignored. Yet it was not as if female submission was part and parcel of the idea of sexual liberation. Rather, the internalization of patriarchal ideals meant that both men and women actively assumed their traditional roles even in the context of a movement characterized by non-traditional thinking and behavior. As Mubayi contended in a 1971 issue of *Economic and Political Weekly*,

> The popular belief that American women are sexually 'liberated' is true only in one sense: they are permitted to have pre-marital relations, to divorce, to remarry--i.e. this liberation relates only to the quantity of sexual relations, not to their quality. Women are generally expected to perform a 'duty' in this field as in all the others assigned to them.[137]

The phenomenon of female self-objectification, then, played an important role in ensuring that the liberatory potential of the sexual revolution was never realized because the automatic functioning of patriarchal power led women to police their own behavior.

Foucault explains that the panopticon is an economically efficient political technology that operates via the tactical distribution of bodies in space, increasing its efficiency via expanding points of contact instead of recruiting external sources of authority. Panoptical

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[136] Pat Mainardi, "The Politics of Housework," *Redstockings: First Literature List and Sampling of Its Materials,* redstockings.org (1969), 14.
[137] Mubayi, "Women's Lib and Commercialism in the US," 571.

observation "automatizes and de-individualizes power"[138] and renders its institution visible yet its active observation unverifiable; it erases the potential for centralized, tyrannical power and instead "strengthen(s) the social forces."[139] Thus, disciplinary mechanisms tend to be de-institutionalized and become "co-extensive with the entire social body."[140] The effect is the diffusion of power to the extent that it can no longer be located in physical space or persons, but rather in the internal workings and external relations of both individuals and institutions. Those internal workings and external relations comprise what Foucault termed the Carcereal.

As Foucault explains, "the frontiers between confinement, judicial punishment, and institutions of discipline…tended to disappear and to constitute a great carcereal continuum that diffused penitentiary techniques into the most innocent of disciplines."[141] In the context of a carcereal network, all institutions and the individuals located between them have internalized disciplinary thinking and militate against any abnormalities. It is this universal exercise of discipline, this constant institutional, peer, and self-monitoring of the abnormal, that creates a panoptical effect, for nowhere within a carcereal continuum can an individual deviate from the norm with the full confidence that there will be no punishment. To be human within the context of Foucault's panoptical carcereal continuum, then, is to understand yourself as a subject in the same terms that the panoptical carcereal continuum would define you as an object, as is required to avoid deviation and punishment. To be human in a carcereal society is not to understand yourself as elementally a subject, but rather to transform an external conceptualization of yourself as an object into an internal yet identical conceptualization of yourself as an individuated subject--in other words, to self-objectify.

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[138] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 202.
[139] Ibid., 208.
[140] Ibid., 213.
[141] Ibid., 295.

The arguments and examinations presented thus far corroborate the claim that radical feminists understood patriarchy to function as a carcereal continuum. The panoptically incarcerated individual defines himself in terms of how he is evaluated as an object and thus internalizes disciplinary thinking, militating against his "abnormalities." As I have demonstrated, radical feminists understood that, similar to the panoptically incarcerated individual, women defined themselves as they believed patriarchal society would evaluate them and militated against any of their own inclinations to deviate from their prescribed social roles. Radical feminists, like Foucault, understood that this self objectification and self-regulation both permitted and promoted the functioning of other nodes of the carcereal continuum: Willis believed that women's negative self-definition permitted their further subjugation through a capitalist system; Tax contended that women's conception of themselves as sexual objects perpetuated their oppression through heterosexual relationships; Mubayi argued that women's conformity to their passive social role only reinforced their subservient status in personal relationships with men; and so forth. In other words, radical feminists believed that female oppression could not be reduced to the product of a single oppressive force, but was rather diffused through the social body, functioning through external sources of oppression (institutions and social norms) and internal sources of discipline (self-objectification and self-regulation) that eliminated the need for a central, tangible source of patriarchal authority.

But what, then, is to say of those individuals and organizations that posited the existence of a single source of female oppression? Indeed, their peers offered substantive arguments against their claims, yet many other radical feminists held true to their beliefs that female subjugation was the product of capitalism, or of individual male's exertion of power, or a sexual class struggle. Despite their explicit statements concerning the source of male dominance, the

goals and tactics of these organizations and individuals reveal that, implicitly, they acknowledged that patriarchal dominance functioned systematically, as a carcereal continuum, in that it relied upon the self-objectification and self-regulation of women in accordance with existing social norms in order to operate.

The Role of Consciousness-Raising

Understanding patriarchal society as a carcereal continuum is essential to understanding the ways in which patriarchal ideals and institutions may be effectively subverted, and by extension illuminates the fallibility of reformism. The patriarchal carcereal continuum is a structure, an intangible ordering of ideas and institutions that diffuses the location and functioning of patriarchal power. Liberal feminists, utilizing "strategies intended to win legal equality for men and women in the public sphere" held non-violent demonstrations and marches in pursuit of legal reform, lawsuits, and political participation--strategies that "were aimed at enforcing structures to create opportunities and legal protections."[142] Though reformism produced opportunities that women were able to actively seek out, they did little to alter the basic structural pre-conditions out of which reformist feminists were able to summon legal or governmental change. In failing to launch an attack on a part of the carcereal structure, reformist feminism failed to generate meaningful change.

Radical feminists, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of turning inward, evaluating their own thoughts and behaviors instead of only directing their energies towards external sources of oppression. As I have explained, the self-objectification of women was an essential part of the carcereal network, for it compelled women to self-discipline, to hold

[142] Donna Langston, "Black Civil Rights, Feminism, and Power," *Race, Gender, & Class*, Vo. 5 No. 2 (1998), 160.

themselves as subjects to the standards that patriarchal society had established for them as objects. Because the carcereal continuum is a network, it relies for its efficacy upon the proper functioning of all of its parts. Thus radical feminists, by way of promoting the transition from self-objectification to active subjecthood, established the basis upon which women were able to refuse to participate in and even actively disturb the functioning of the patriarchal carcereal continuum. Indeed, Tax contended, because patriarchal ideals were so deeply ingrained in the social fabric of the 60's and 70's, "it is impossible to achieve revolutionary consciousness without some sort of confrontation with the self."[143]

Essential to radical feminist struggle, then, was revealing the very borrowedness of female roles and essentialist definitions and encouraging women to reject them. Ti-Grace Atkinson, who conceived of female oppression as a class struggle, remarks that "'political' classes are *artificial;* they define persons *with* certain capacities *by* that capacity, changing the contingent to the necessary, thereby appropriating the *capacity* of an individual as a *function* of society."[144] Atkinson further contended that because women are persecuted as women, they must "eradicate their own definition."[145] Densmore recounts that the "effort to dig out from under the normative dictates of men's fantasy of 'woman' was a major activity of most parts of the women's movement,"[146] and as I will explore further in Chapter 3, The Furies resorted to separatism as a political tactic in part to provide a space for women to actively define themselves as women. Dana Densmore conceded that the radical feminist movement at large sought to

[143] Tax, "Woman and Her Mind," 27.
[144] Atkinson, "Radical Feminism," 85.
[145] Ibid., 83.
[146] Densmore, "A Year of Living Dangerously," 86.

challenge men's "power to define what is proper for women"[147] and construct a similar environment that would foster active self-definition.

One of the primary ways that radical feminists fostered the crucial ideological shift from self-objectification to active self-definition was through "the process of sharing and analyzing our own experience in a group"[148] termed "consciousness-raising" by New York Radical Women in 1967. Cassell, author of *A Group Called Women,* defines feminism itself as the attempt "to seek autonomy and independence, and define the self by activity rather than relationships,"[149] and she described consciousness raising as "the subjective identity-altering experience in the women's movement."[150] Consciousness raising groups met regularly (in the case of the Redstockings, about 30 women for five or six hours)[151] to have discussions in "small women-only settings where women discussed the political dimension of their multifaceted experiences."[152] Koedt explains that consciousness raising groups eschewed "solving secondary problems arising *out* of that condition [of female oppression]"[153] and instead worked to transform the ideological conditions that enabled patriarchal oppression. This focus on ideology was necessary for creating a new female subjectivity.

Women's Liberation, deriving much of its theory and practice from the struggle for civil rights and black liberation,[154] was inspired by the prospect of helping women to liberate themselves from their own confining self-conceptions, imposed by and accepted from their oppressors. Like their counterparts in the black power movement, radical feminists sought self-

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[147] Densmore, "Independence from the Sexual Revolution," 111.
[148] Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," 121.
[149] Cassell, "A Group Called Women," 75.
[150] Ibid., 79.
[151] Davidson, "An Oppressed Majority Demands Its Rights."
[152] Nachescu, "Radical Feminism and the Nation," 29.
[153] Koedt, "Women in the Radical Movement," *Notes From the First Year* (June, 1968), 26.
[154] Davidson, "An Oppressed Majority Demands Its Rights."

determination through consciousness-raising by "creating a separate identity, creating a radical body of theory and language, and re-education within the oppressed group" that was designed to "free the group from 'oppressor' ideology"[155]--in other words, to allow women to transition from self-objectification, or understanding themselves as men understood them, to understanding themselves by way of their own definitions. Unlike liberal feminists, who vied for legal changes that would integrate women into the public sphere and to "educate men and women about mistaken cultural ideas,"[156] radical feminists constructed "an analysis framing the differences between men and women…[a] design to dismantle the existing system, and to create autonomy through self-education."[157] Hanisch and Sutherland emphasized that the goal of consciousness raising was "not for equality. Who wants to be like men! We are trying as women to define ourselves. We not only reject the definitions that men have given us, but reject becoming like men."[158]

Key to the re-definition of women as subjects was developing an understanding of patriarchal oppression. As the authors of the Redstockings Manifesto explained, the separation and isolation of women within their homes led women to perceive their problems as personal, not political. It became the task of the Redstockings' and other groups' consciousness raising sessions to "develop female class consciousness through sharing experience and publicly exposing the sexist foundation of all our institutions."[159] Women's liberation recognized the existence of "women's long-suppressed anger at being used; women's sense of vulnerability and defenselessness; women's suspicion and mistrust of other women, women's insecurity, lack of confidence in their judgments, and the 'secret fear,' as one girl put it, 'that maybe we are

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[155] Langston, "Black Civil Rights, Feminism, and Power," 161.
[156] Ibid., 158.
[157] Ibid., 159.
[158] Hanisch and Sutherland, "Women of the World Unite: We Have Nothing to Lose But Our Men!," 13.
[159] "Redstockings Manifesto."

inferior.'"[160] It was the goal of women's liberation to expose these insecurities and fears as the result of some manifestation of the patriarchal carcereal continuum in order to channel women's energies from criticizing themselves to subverting the patriarchy.

Radical feminists typically identified these manifestations as capitalism, institutions, and/or social relations, yet as is made evident in the preceding section, radical feminists also conceded that women's active acceptance of prescribed roles enabled patriarchal oppression to function as a carcereal continuum. Kaplow explained that women's realization of this complicity would occur as part of the consciousness raising process--presumably igniting the self-blame that consciousness raising sought to eradicate. Yet Kaplow contends that "This inturned anger demands action--change--and won't let go until its demands begin to be satisfied...This inturned anger is a constructive or rather reconstructive catalyst. For what you can do under its impetus is to restructure yourself, putting new images, patterns, and expectations in place of the old, no longer viable ones."[161] Only when women realized their complicity in their own oppression, their borrowing and performance of the female role, could they cease to participate in that oppression and instead construct themselves as women anew. Kaplow further argued that women would best go through the process of transitioning anger in groups, for "Through consciousness raising each woman can (at least ideally) find sufficient confirmation of her perceptions to be reassured of her own sanity...In the second phase of inturned anger [realization of complicity], women can support one another in their attempts at self-definition and change."[162] The result of this awakening to the realities of patriarchal oppression was the articulation of the "pro-woman line" which held that "women are really neat people. The bad things that are said about us as women are either myths (women are stupid), tactics women use to struggle individually (women are

[160] Davidson, "An Oppressed Majority Demands Its Rights."
[161] Kaplow, "Getting Angry," 40.
[162] Ibid., 41.

bitches), or are actually things we want to carry into the new society and want men to share too (women are sensitive, emotional)."[163]

Shulamith Firestone explains how the women's movement "exposed the white male power structure in all its hypocrisy. Its very existence and long duration were proof of massive large-scale inequality in a system that pretended to democracy."[164] Firestone frames feminism as a sort of unveiling of the mechanisms of patriarchal dominance, much of which occurred in the context of consciousness-raising groups. It is this conception of feminism as solely the exposure and condemnation of patriarchal mechanisms that has cloaked radical feminism's aspiration to ideological change in the notion of the "bitch session."

The term "bitch session" implies that the consciousness-raising group was a place for women to relinquish emotional control and succumb to their grievances, to engage in some sort of distinctly unproductive group catharsis. Yet Kathie Sarachild's "Program for Feminist Consciousness Raising" demonstrates that feminist consciousness raising was a means for women to leverage their emotions not just to unveil patriarchal mechanisms, but also to find ways to deconstruct them. According to Sarachild, women are not "underneath," or controlled by their feelings, but merely more intimately in touch with them than men, because

> for most of history sex was, in fact, both our undoing and our only possible weapon of self-defense and self-assertion (aggression). We're saying that when we had hysterical fits, when we took things 'too' personally, that we weren't underneath our feelings, but responding with our feelings correctly to a given situation of injustice...by first feeling and then revealing our emotions we were acting in the best strategical manner.[165]

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[163] Hanisch, "The Personal Is Political," 1.
[164] Firestone, "The Women's Rights Movement in the U.S.," 2.
[165] Kathie Sarachild, "A Program for Feminist Consciousness Raising," 273.

In Sarachild's terms, the consciousness raising group provided a space for channeling this socialized receptivity to feeling into strategy and action, where "feelings will lead us to our theory, our theory to our action, our feelings about that action to new theory and then to new action."[166] Indeed, the authors of the Redstockings Manifesto also attacked the notion that consciousness-raising is therapy or a "bitch-session," contending that consciousness-raising was a means for women to "ensure that our program for liberation is based on the concrete realities of our lives."[167]

Hanisch, too, explains how those who referred to consciousness raising sessions as therapy fundamentally misunderstood the political nature of consciousness raising. As Hanisch argued, "Therapy assumes that someone is sick and there is a cure, e.g. a personal solution…Women are messed over, not messed up!"[168] Similarly, the authors of the Redstockings Manifesto contended that referring to consciousness-raising as therapy "implies the existence of individual solutions and falsely assumes that the male-female relationship is purely personal" instead of political.[169]

Consciousness-raising was not about "dealing with" feelings and experiences, but using them to identify the mechanisms of oppression to which women were subject and to subsequently formulate a plan of attack, to "change the objective conditions, not adjust to them"[170] by way not of personal solutions, but of collective action. In the context of consciousness-raising groups, the personal was political, for as Hanisch explained, they allowed her to cultivate "a whole new political understanding which all of [her] reading, all [her] political

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[166] Ibid., 274.
[167] "Redstocking Manifesto."
[168] Hanisch, "The Personal Is Political," 1.
[169] "Redstocking Manifesto."
[170] Hanisch, "The Personal Is Political," 1.

discussions, all [her] political action"[171] had not, that the visceral understanding of her own oppression had become more politically incendiary to her than her "esoteric and intellectual understandings."[172] Insofar as fostering the transition from self-objectification to active self-definition was, as radical feminists believed, a crucial element of the personal consciousness-raising process, we may understand that this transition was, by extension, politically incendiary, that it served as the basis and motivation for political action (a concept I will explore more deeply in Chapter 3).

There were, however, radical feminist contingents that rejected consciousness-raising. Roxanne Dunbar explains how Cell 16 became controversial within the community of radical women's organizations in the Boston area because they were contemptuous of "what we call their 'T-groups,' which we considered touchy-feely self-indulgence."[173] Cell 16 claimed that they "were more revolutionary and pushed for more radical women's liberation positions."[174] Yet, in spite of their outright rejection of consciousness raising, Cell 16 recognized the importance of fundamentally altering women's self-conceptions. Dunbar recounts that Cell 16 "strongly believed that only when each one of us felt autonomous and powerful could we multiply that power by joining together, but that our separate selves should never be submerged, not for any cause, ever."[175] Echols recounted that, "For Cell 16 the problem was women's diffidence and their dependence upon men, and the solution lay in women's unconditioning themselves by taking off the accumulated emotional and physical flab that kept them enthralled

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[171] Ibid., 1.
[172] Ibid., 1.
[173] Roxanne Dunbar, "Outlaw Woman: Chapters from a Feminist Memoir-in-Progress." In *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women's Liberation*, ed. Rachel Blau Duplessis and Ann Snitow (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 112.
[174] Ibid., 112.
[175] Ibid., 105.

to men."[176] Though The Feminists, who were more idealistic than materialistic in orientation, engaged more in theoretical abstracting than in personal discussions,[177] their vehement criticism of women who conformed to their socially prescribed roles as complicit with the system signifies that The Feminists understood that self-objectification enabled female oppression. Indeed, in their manifesto, "The Feminists: A Political Organization to Annihilate Sex Roles," The Feminists promoted the "self-development" of women as a means of counteracting sex roles.[178] Thus, even radical feminists that rejected the concept of the consciousness raising group understood the role that female subjecthood would play in their quest for liberation.

Sarachild lists "Zap actions," or "Movie benefits, attacks on cultural phenomena and events, stickers, buttons, posters, film"[179] among methods of what she terms Consciousness Raising Action, forms of public demonstration geared towards raising consciousness at a larger scale. Hanisch described these "Zap Actions" as efforts to utilize "our presence as a group and/or media to make women's oppression into a conscious social issue."[180] While marching in support of a legal reform does not qualify as radical action, many feminist demonstrations in the 1960's and 1970's did indeed prove sufficiently radical in promoting an alteration in the subjecthood of women.

The protest against the Miss America Pageant of 1968 was one such form of radical demonstration. As Carol Hanisch, a member of New York Radical Feminists and originator of the idea for the protest, explains, the idea was a direct outcome of the consciousness raising process, specifically

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[176] Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 158-160.
[177] Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," 131.
[178] "The Feminists: A Political Organization to Annihilate Sex Roles," 374-375.
[179] Kathie Sarachild, "A Program for Feminist Consciousness Raising," 275.
[180] Carol Hanisch, "A Critique of the Miss America Protest."

> of our group method of analyzing women's oppression by recalling our own experiences. We were watching Schmearguntz, a feminist movie, one night at our meeting. The movie had flashes of the Miss America contest in it...From our communal thinking came the concrete plans for the action. We all agreed that our main point in the demonstration would be that all women are hurt by beauty competition.[181]

The demonstration featured a "Freedom Trashcan" into which women threw (but did not burn) "'instruments of torture'--girdles, curlers, false eyelashes, cosmetics of all kinds, wigs, issues of both Cosmopolitan and Playboy, and, yes, bras,"[182] as well as the crowning of a sheep as Miss America. The protest was a demonstration of the group's rejection of "woman as spectacle, woman as object, woman as consumer, woman as artificial image. What they wanted was to be taken seriously, not to be judged by their appearance. Why, they asked, couldn't women look just ordinary and why couldn't a woman be a subject, instead of an object?"[183] Thus, the protest was both enabled by the New York Radical Feminists' evolved subjecthood and motivated by the desire to effect a similar change in subjecthood in the community of women, and the symbolic elements of the protest indicated that "it was not only about civil and economic rights but also about the most personal and intimate kinds of psychological and bodily bondage."[184] Hanisch admits that the posters reading the phrases 'Up Against the Wall, Miss America,' 'Miss America Sells It,' and 'Miss America Is a Big Falsie' were more divisive than illuminating and failed to convey that beauty pageant queens and beautiful women suffer from oppressive definitions of beauty as much as the average-looking woman. Nonetheless, their intention was to promote consciousness raising, and the crowning of a sheep as Miss America, according to

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[181] Ibid.
[182] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 160.
[183] Ibid., 159.
[184] Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 180.

Hanisch, "did say to some women that we are viewed as auction-block docile animals."[185] In fact, one contestant's grandmother actually joined the protest upon hearing about the sheep.

The Burial of Traditional Womanhood, held on January 15th, 1968 in response to the Jeannette Rankin Brigade occurring the same day, also sought to challenge the traditional subjecthood of women. The Jeannette Rankin Brigade in Washington, D.C. was comprised of various women's groups that had coalesced to protest the Vietnam War on Congress's opening day. Firestone rejected the protest as ineffectual, stating, "It is naive to believe that women who are not politically seen, heard, or represented in this country could change the course of a way by simply appealing to the better natures of congressman."[186] Yet Firestone also condemned the way that the protest ultimately served to strengthen the image of the traditional woman, explaining that the women "came as wives, mothers, and mourners; that is, tearful and passive reactors to the actions of men rather than organizing as women to change that definition of femininity to something other than a synonym for weakness, political impotence, and tears."[187]

In response, New York Radical Women held a burial of traditional womanhood in Arlington National Cemetery, staging a funeral procession of a female dummy "complete with feminine getup, blank face, blonde curls, and candle. Hanging from the bier were such disposable items as S & H Green Stamps, curlers, garters, and hairspray."[188] At the burial, Kathie Sarachild (then Kathie Amatniek) presented her Funeral Oration for the Burial of Traditional Womanhood. Sarachild explained that the traditional conception of the female subject had an oppressive function, for "As human beings, both men and women were sexual creatures and they shared their sexuality. But the other areas of humanity were closed off to traditional

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[185] Hanisch, "A Critique of the Miss America Protest."
[186] Shulamith Firestone, "The Jeannette Rankin Brigade: Woman Power?," *Notes from the First Year* (June 1968).
[187] Ibid., 18.
[188] Ibid., 18.

womanhood...the areas which, as has already been noted, were more characteristically human, less limited by biology."[189] Sarachild revealed that traditional womanhood rendered women politically ineffectual, exposing a truth that Brigade marchers had failed to understand: that women could not hope to ensure democracy and peace beyond their borders until they could find it for themselves, and they had "a problem as women alright, a problem which renders us powerless and ineffective over the issues of war and peace, as well as over our own lives--the problem of traditional womanhood."[190] In what is evidently a critique of the mindset of Brigade marchers, Sarachild pointed out how Traditional Womanhood even had a divisive effect upon women, as "The old hen, it turns out, was somewhat disturbed to hear *us*--other women, that is--asserting ourselves just this least little bit about critical problems in the world controlled by men."[191] Sarachild thus indicated that traditional womanhood tended to be more conducive to resentment within and amongst women as opposed to solidarity. In exposing the flaws of traditional womanhood, New York Radical Women sought to do what the Brigade had failed to: challenge the self-objectification of women and advocate the active re-definition of the category of woman.

The Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (WITCH) was another radical feminist group that sought to generate a change in subjecthood through consciousness-raising demonstrations. WITCH frequently leveraged guerilla theatre as a consciousness-raising tactic and "staged sporadic actions designed to make more women aware of their dual role as household slave and useless decorative object."[192] The organization was less concerned with recruiting members and gaining political clout than it was with encouraging women to re-think

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[189] Kathie, Amatniek, "Funeral Oration for the Burial of Traditional Womanhood," *Notes from the First Year* (June 1968), 20.
[190] Ibid., 21.
[191] Ibid., 21.
[192] Mubayi, "Women's Lib and Commercialism in the US," 571.

their subjectivity, writing in an issue of *Off Our Backs*, "If you are a woman and dare to look within yourself, you are a Witch...you can form your own Coven...and do your own actions."[193]

In 1970, five witches in black gowns performed a zap action in front of over 700 people at the 14th Annual Gridiron Dinner, held at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee. According to the issue of *Off Our Backs* reporting the event, "Contrary to what the OP-Press Club would have you believe, it's not primarily a press club, but a water place for the elders of the Milwaukee advertising and public relations fields"[194] and thus an appropriate site to awaken people to the exploitive nature of public relations. The witches performed a zap condemning the capitalistic degradation of women, shouting,

> To defend our sisters against your power we witches meet at this hexing hour...Media is power, through which you can control our life, our spirit, our mind and our soul...You tell us we're passive, submissive, sublime; to make us in your image, you control our minds…'Stay at home' shout the pages of newspapers and ads...with cooking and cleaning our role is complete; while Revlon and Clairol make profits off our meat.[195]

The witches finally proclaimed, "We Liberate Ourselves; Now liberate YOUR minds,"[196] testimony both to their capability of freeing themselves from the common conception of woman (effecting a change in their subjecthood) and their intention to encourage others to rethink those conceptions (to effect a change in the subjecthood of the audience, of which many members were women).

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[193] "Droppings…" Off Our Backs, Vo. 6 No. 8 (November 1976), 11.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid.

Rosen lists newspapers and literature[197] among the consciousness raising endeavors that radical feminists undertook, and indeed many radical feminists were authors or journalists. Most groups published their own periodicals and journals, among them the Redstockings' *Feminist Revolution,* New York Radical Women's *Notes from the Second Year,* and the New York Radical Feminists' and The Furies' regular newsletters. Other independent publications included *Off Our Backs,* a radical feminist periodical that was first published in 1970 that would suggest venues for women to raise others' consciousness and published the dates and locations of lectures, poetry readings, and workshops conducive to consciousness raising. Most radical feminists wrote articles to be published in newsletters and journals. Robin Morgan, however, compiled a full feminist anthology, *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement,* in 1970.

Radical feminists sometimes disseminated their writings at meetings and conferences with the intention of raising consciousness. For example: on June 27-28, 1969, the women of the Redstockings, under the title "Women's Liberation," flooded a New Left women's conference in New York City with several pieces of their work. In one such piece, Kearon identifies the arguments women often present in explaining why they should not hate men and offers her own rebuttals, which seek to challenge the way that women conceive of themselves. One of Kearon's arguments: "Hate men? No! Definitely not! We must understand them; they depend upon us to show them how to love," to which Kearon replies "This argument is based upon the 'Natural Superiority of Women.' We are congenitally incapable of hatred...Brushing aside forever the utterly unprovable fiction of our second nature, and speaking purely from personal experience, it

[197] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 276.

would seem, on the whole, that people do not react to oppression with Love."[198] Kearon goes on to critique the ways that women are prejudiced against themselves, stating, "I know we ought to hate the sin and love the sinner. But too often we end up loving the sinner and hating his victim...If it is a choice between woman-hating and man-hating, let it be the latter."[199] The Redstockings utilized this New Left women's conference as a means of disseminating pieces like Kearon's, which sought to effect a transformation in women's consciousness.

Consciousness raising was not static in form, but it was by and large predicated upon the understanding that, in order to subvert the operation of the patriarchal carcereal continuum, women must first grapple with their own tendency to self-objectify. Private consciousness raising sessions, public demonstrations and speeches, guerilla theatre, and the dissemination of radical feminist writing were all intended to awaken women to their self-objectification and complicity in sustaining male power. Radical feminists believed that this awakening to the realities of oppression would inspire and serve as the ideological basis of a political program for subverting male dominance.

Conclusion

The radical feminist struggle of the 60's and 70's was by no means a monolith. Some radical feminists believed that the expression of patriarchal dominance occurred through individual men's oppression of individual women; others, through a class struggle between a dominant male class and a subjugated female class; and still others, through male-dominated institutions. Furthermore, radical feminists disagreed upon whether patriarchal dominance, be it

[198] Pamela Kearon, "Man-Hating," in *Redstockings: First Literature List and Sampling Materials*, Redstockings.org (1969), 12.
[199] Ibid., 13.

in the form of individual or institutional oppression, derived from the American capitalist economy or existed alongside it, functioning autonomously. Yet across the board, radical feminists either explicitly espoused (like Willis, Booth, Goldfield, and Munaker, etc.) or confirmed through their implementation of consciousness-raising programs designed to promote active self-definition (the Redstockings, the New York Radical Feminists, New York Radical Women) that patriarchal oppression functions as a network, a carcereal continuum reliant upon the self-objectification of women. Even radical women's organizations that rejected the formation of consciousness raising groups (Cell 16 and The Feminists) performed actions and utilized tactics that were designed to challenge women's borrowed conceptualizations of themselves.

Radical feminists therefore used consciousness-raising sessions and actions as a political tactic. Though they understood consciousness raising as a means of establishing the basis of their political ideologies and programs, they also believed that consciousness raising, in fostering women's transition from self-objectification to active subjecthood, possessed a particularly promising liberatory potential. As I explained in Chapter One, radical feminists rejected the historical project of reformism and instead sought to obstruct it, creating the space for the emergence of a new social order. I contend in the following chapter that radical feminists saw the transition from self-objectification to active self-definition as the crux upon which their ability to subvert the patriarchal carcereal continuum depended.

Chapter Three: Radical Feminism as Social Arrest

"Passivity is the *dragon that every woman has to murder in her quest for independence. Independence means autonomy means aggressive control of one's own destiny."*[200] -Jill Johnston

Valerie Solanas wrote in her Manifesto for the Society of Cutting Up Men (SCUM) that "No genuine social revolution can be accomplished by the male, as the male on top wants the status quo, and all the male on the bottom wants is to be the male on top. The male 'rebel' is a farce...Ultimately, what the male 'rebel' is rebelling against is being male."[201] Women liberationists, like Solanas, recognized that the existing sociopolitical order was maintained by men in the interests of men. Instead of operating within the confines of this inherently male sociopolitical system--that is, instead of seeking to win legal and economic concessions from those that maintained the system--radical feminists sought so to subvert the exertion of male dominance through the sociopolitical status quo.

Thus, the radical feminists of the 60's and 70's strove to effect the transition from self-objectification to active self-definition not merely for its own sake, but also as a means to the political end of subverting a male-dominated sociopolitical system. They recognized that, if women were able to understand that their roles as women were externally derived, mapped onto them instead of flowing from some intrinsic, elemental womanness, they would cease to conform to the patriarchally prescribed definition of woman. The transition to active subjecthood, the ability to define the self, enabled women to reject their social roles and thus disable the functioning of the patriarchal carcereal continuum via the disruption of the everyday operation of

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[200] Johnston, "Selections from *Lesbian Nation*," 340.
[201] Valerie Solanas, "SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) Manifesto, in *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 210.

power; I therefore contend that in many ways, radical feminism functioned, in Dosemeci's terms, as a *social arrest* of the patriarchal order.

In this chapter, I first utilize Third's analysis of the relationship between radical feminism as female terrorism and modernity in order to explain how radical feminism, in disrupting the order of everyday life, registers as apocalyptic. I then introduce the concept of social arrest and explain how, based on Third's explanation, radical feminism qualifies as a social arrest of modern time. The everyday is the site upon which modern time achieves hegemonic status, and patriarchal ideals and institutions, what I have termed the patriarchal carcereal continuum, sustain the hegemony of modern time by compelling self-regulation in the context of the everyday. I argue that women liberationists' disabling of the patriarchal carcereal continuum in the context of the everyday constituted a social arrest of modern time and, by extension, the patriarchal order. It is to the latter form of social arrest, disruption in the context of the everyday, that I then turn, examining the elements of radical feminism that function as tactical and/or ideological social arrests.

Disruption of the Everyday: An Assault on Modern Time

After the 1968 protest of the Miss America Pageant, Ros Baxandall commented on the David Susskind show that "Every day in a woman's life is a walking Miss America contest."[202] Similarly the Redstockings stated in their Manifesto that "Women's submission is not the result of brain-washing, stupidity or mental illness but of continual, daily pressure from men."[203] Meredith Tax in "Woman and Her Mind: The Story of Everyday Life," speaks of the "everyday

[202] Carol Hanisch, "Background and Introductory Thoughts," *carolhanisch.org*, (July, 2003).
[203] "Redstockings Manifesto."

realization of how we have been emotionally deformed by our socialization, and how convenient this deformation is for men, employers, advertisers, and anything else who wishes to use us."[204] Though radical feminists explicitly delineated differing understandings of the source of patriarchal oppression, they understood that oppression ultimately came to bear upon women through the processes of daily living.

We may utilize the conception of the patriarchy as a carcereal continuum and Amanda Third's conception of the "everyday" to understand how patriarchal forces and values achieve their hegemonic status in the context of everyday life. Third describes the everyday as a "spatial and temporal framework, a template that governs the ways individuals perform the rituals of everyday life, locking subjects into particular modes of operating and ensuring their compliance with the laws of social order."[205] It is not merely the ascription of a temporal location to roles and behaviors, but also a set of ideas that dictate and legitimize the performance of living, a formulaic template of understanding that defines and limits the actions that we take everyday. Patriarchal forms of domination, which, as women liberationists either explicitly espoused or confirmed through their programmatic goals, function through a carcereal continuum of patriarchal ideals and institutions, have been central to maintaining the system of gender representation so ingrained in the everyday. Radical feminists acknowledged that the dominant conception of womanness and women's social roles, and the resultant self-objectification of women, guided and limited the actions that women undertook in their everyday lives, that the understanding of gender implicit in the everyday promoted the oppression of women. As Third explains it, the "routinization of the quotidian" through the everyday "produces a fundamental power differential" between male and female, rendering the everyday "a technology of the

[204] Tax, "Woman and Her Mind," 25.
[205] Third, *Gender and the Political,* 80.

subordination of women to men."[206] Hence, radical feminists themselves argued that men, male values, and male institutions achieved hegemonic status in the context of mundane, everyday life.

Third explains that the everyday, a set of social prescriptions that maintain a gendered power differential, is a tool of modern time. Third understands "modern time" as the linear unfolding of history in a process of historical progression, of social and political advancement, towards a utopian society. Modern time is "characterized by an organizational drive, a ceaseless quest for social order"[207] that contemporary society equates with progress. Dosemeci parallels Third's analysis, noting that

> The modern (western) conception of time views history as a cumulative and universalizing project framed by the ideas of development and progress. In the two centuries since its first enunciation by the late-Enlightenment thinkers Condorcet and Kant, this progressive temporality has infiltrated nearly every regime of government, informing the cosmology of most bourgeois, communist, colonial, and postcolonial states.[208]

One of the ways that modernity's organizational drive comes to bear upon humanity is through the everyday. The everyday grounds the notion of linear time, of progress and order, in the mundane practices of living. In structuring the lives of humans in such a way that preserves the dominant order--what Third points out is a distinctively gendered order--the gendered ideas and practices that constitute the everyday allow time to become "a tool of modern hegemony,"[209] a force preserving the order and progress of modern time. Specifically, these gendered social

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[206] Ibid., 102.
[207] Ibid., 72.
[208] Dosemeci, "The Kinetics of Our Discontent," 28.
[209] Third, *Gender and the Political,* 80.

norms and doctrines that comprise the everyday command individual conformity to the patriarchal order, sustaining the hegemonic status of modern time by compelling self-regulation.

Insofar as the patriarchal carcereal continuum is essential to the everyday as a technology of control, we may understand this carcereal continuum and its constituent parts, such as self-objectification, as mechanisms that sustain the operation of modern time. Thus, radical feminism is not merely a breach of time that cannot be logically located along an historical continuum, an uncontextualized phenomenon that exposes the faults of liberal feminist reformism; it is also a fundamental threat to modern time insofar as it interrupts the operation of the carcereal continuum in the context of the everyday, compromising the social organization of modernity. In other words, the everyday is the primary site upon which radical feminists have been able to interrupt the operation of the patriarchal carcereal continuum and, by extension, pose the threat of the end of the linear progression of patriarchal forms of organization in apocalypse--in the destruction of patriarchal order.

How is it that radical feminists' disruption of the everyday registers as apocalyptic? Third contends that the deconstruction of modernity, the apocalyptic end of the modern project of progress, is the primary objective of female terrorists and that their operation within the terrain of modern time is what enables this process of deconstruction. Radical feminism as female terrorism exploits "the inevitable fissures that open in the time-space of the totalizing order of the everyday" and, insofar as the everyday is a hegemonic tool of modern time, radical feminism launches an attack on modernity itself. In Third's words,

> By disrupting the quotidian flow of time, terrorism radically deconstructs the order imposed by the everyday in modernity. In this context, terrorism conjures the apocalyptic end of modern linear time, and by extension, the apocalyptic end of modernity. Registering as a transgression

> that conjures the radical end of modern social order, terrorism articulates within the cultural imagination as the moment of end-time. As discursive equivalents, both terrorism and radical feminism, as subaltern modes of resistance, find their epistemological foundations in apocalyptic thought and this produces them, at the level of discourse, as geminate practices.[210]

It is the very notion that history is continually approaching its utopian end that causes the disruption of the everyday to register as apocalyptic--as a threat not from the past, but from the future. Because linear time is "a technology of order and control, a medium for the organizational force of modernity,"[211] radical feminism's disruption of that time via defying the social codes implicit in the everyday "fundamentally threatens modernity itself, forcing upon its audiences a different temporal logic that challenges the seamlessness of ordinary linear time and the order it implies,"[212] bringing the future to bear upon the present. Radical feminism therefore presents the idea that modernity, in failing to reach its utopian end, has failed to keep its liberatory promise.

Radical feminism registers as apocalyptic not simply because it compromises the gendered order of the everyday, threatening the hegemony of modern time, but because it is only within the terrain of modern time that radical feminists are even able to disrupt the everyday. In other words, radical feminism exposes the instability and terror of modern time by revealing that modern time is the source of its own demise. Third contends that the spatial and temporal organization of modern society through the everyday, in the context of the western liberal democratic state, is itself terroristic, and that the terror implicit in the everyday, a feature of modern time, is what allows radical feminists' disruption of the everyday to present as the very

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[210] Ibid., 72-73.
[211] Ibid., 76.
[212] Ibid., 77.

end of modern time. Third explains that, "in disrupting the linear and routinized time of modernity, terrorism announces modern order as the seed of its own destruction," exposing the faultiness of the organizational power of modernity by revealing the possibility that linear time will teleologically culminate in apocalypse instead of utopia. The disruption of modern time in the everyday thus "draws attention to the terror *within*," politicizing "the terror that circulates in and through the everyday" and thus representing the "apocalyptic moment when the terror that underpins the everyday threatens to engulf the modern project…[giving] expression to the terror of the loss of routine, the terror of the loss of order, the terror that is sublimated by modern forms of social organization."[213]

Radical Feminism as Social Arrest

The radical feminists of the 60's and 70's sought to foster the transition from self-objectification to active subjecthood that would allow women to fulfill new social roles and, by extension, refuse to continue to function as part of the patriarchal carcereal continuum. I maintain that their assumption of new roles and behaviors disrupted the peaceful order of everyday life and by extension threatened the progression of modern time, presenting the possibility that the maintenance of order through the patriarchal carcereal continuum could be subverted; subsequently, radical feminism "[desublimated] the terror of the loss of (gendered) order that underpins and drives the organizational drive of modernity"[214] by unveiling and then challenging the "invisible structure of gendered power relations implicit in the everyday."[215] Specifically, I argue that radical feminism, via the irruption of the everyday, functioned as a

[213] Ibid., 87.
[214] Third, *Gender and the Political*, 105.
[215] Ibid., 102.

social arrest of the patriarchal order--that is, as an attempt not to promote progress within an existing patriarchal system or structure, not to evolve or improve it, but to arrest the very functioning of that system or structure.

Dosemeci locates the rise to hegemonic preeminence of the kinetic analysis of social struggle, or the evaluation of social struggles as movements, in the 1960's. As Dosemeci explains,

> The present prevalence of the term movement as a political and analytical category has its roots in post-war progressive history, specifically in the first-world social struggles of the1960s and 70s. It was the relative success of the civil rights, anti-war, student, women and gay liberation struggles that established the hegemony of the term among activists and academics alike. In fact, 'The Movement' (the self-nominated term used by civil rights, new left, student, and feminist activists of the 60s and 70s) [bound] the category of movement to our understanding of social struggle.[216]

As I discussed earlier, Dosemeci explains that the ascription of the term "movement" to social struggles that seek not change or alteration, but rather the cessation or dissolution of a process or system, misconstrues the nature and objectives of those struggles. Terming a social struggle that is determined to achieve not the progression, but rather the cessation of a system in motion, a "social movement" mistakes it for a reformist struggle, one that seeks the advancement of the existing social order instead of, in Benjaminian terms, grabbing for the emergency brake on the locomotive of history.[217]

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[216] Dosemeci, "The Kinetics of Our Discontent," 4.
[217] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project.*

In order to understand the fundamental difference between social movement and social arrest in terms of their goals and tactics, we must first analyze how the dichotomy in the kinetic functioning of the modern state influences the nature of the social field within which contemporary social struggle occurs. Dosemeci identifies two kinetic characterizations of the modern liberal state: "the first, an inertial entity arresting and confining motion towards the management of order; the second an active entity that oversees a regime of incessant movement."[218] The first assumes the equation of movement with freedom in accordance with classical liberal theory; indeed, Kotef contends, "The Liberal subject is essentially a moving subject, and her first and most fundamental freedom is freedom of movement."[219] In parallel, Dosemeci states, "In its classical political formulations, liberalism stood as an oppositional ideology to all static or immovable structures within feudal regimes, including hereditary privilege, state religion, absolute monarchy, and the divine right of kings."[220] This coupling of unrestrained motion with liberty and progress, foundational to the birth of liberalism and, by extension, the modern liberal state, served as the ideological foundation for social movement as a political category.

This first characterization of the modern state implies the existence of a stagnant social field, one in which the state achieves stability through the conservation of social conditions. The function of the state in the context of such stagnancy is to ensure that humans themselves remain socially and spatially fixed, occupying their prescribed physical and social positions and consistently performing their respective functions. Disruption, in the context of stagnancy, manifests as a *commotion* that disturbs or prevents the maintenance of the social and physical conditions of the state. Thus, the state functions as "the quintessential arresting apparatus, one

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[218] Dosemeci, "The Kinetics of Our Discontent," 14.
[219] Hagar Kotef, *Movement and the Ordering of Freedom* (United States: Duke University Press, 2015), 58.
[220] Dosemeci, "The Kinetics of Our Discontent," 9.

that interrupts and confines movement in the management of order,"[221] and motion constitutes "a restless and inassimilable alterity busily working both within and against state power's most cherished idea: social order."[222]

However, Dosemeci explains that, in the context of the everyday maintenance of power, states must be more concerned with ensuring that goods, services, and bodies flow in a sustained order than with repressing motion. The emergence of market economics and the transatlantic slave trade, coupled with the enclosure of the commons and subsequent shift to wage labor, accompanied the development of what Dosemeci terms an "economy of movement," itself sustained by the state's institutionalized "regime of movement."[223] The regime of movement controls "the space and the population inhabiting it by controlling the temporality and continuity of the movement within it."[224] This conception of the state as a locomotive entity parallels the Foucauldian conception of the modern liberal state, which holds that the state's allowal of affairs to take their course, to "flow," is actually a mechanism of control: the liberal technology of freedom.[225]

In the context of this second function of the modern state, "the social field against which liberalism operated was filled with barriers that inhibited both the motion of society and the individuals that constituted it."[226] Maintaining the condition of the social field, then, meant sustaining compulsory motion. Indeed, Ranciere maintains that "the function of the [modern] state apparatus is to ensure the constant circulation of people, goods, and services" and that the function of the police is to ensure "that nothing appears which may itself arrest the functioning of

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[221] Ibid., 11.
[222] James I. Payne, "Does Freedom Prevent Terrorism?," *The American Conservative,* April 11, 2005.
[223] Dosemeci, "The Kinetics of Our Discontent," 12.
[224] Kotef, *Movement and the Ordering of Freedom*, 21.
[225] Ibid., 59.
[226] Dosemeci, "The Kinetics of Our Discontent," 10.

society, cause society to pause."[227] Thus, disruption in the context of the latter regime necessitates the interruption, or arrest, of that motion--hence the term *social arrest.* In the context of a perpetually moving social field, acts of disruption necessitate that an individual either actively function as an obstruction to the motion of goods, bodies, and social progress, or remove her consent to obligatory motion, ceasing to participate in the regime of movement.

The difference between social movement and social arrest lies in the ways in which the two forms of struggle situate themselves within differing social fields. Social movements assume the existence of a stagnant social field and a state apparatus that maintains control via limiting free movement. Social arrest, on the other hand, assumes a social field in constant motion, a state apparatus that maintains power by ensuring that the locomotive of the social field continues to function optimally. Hence, social movements seek to subvert the powers that be through just that--movement--whereas social arrests seek the same ends via the arrest of the economy of movement. In other words, social arrest does not seek to procure formal legal or institutional changes "nor [seeks] integration within the existing socio-political order," but rather "renounces this regime of movement by withdrawing its consent to forced motion while simultaneously creating a space for the formation of a new collective subject."[228]

The modern liberal state is characterized by a regime of movement and, by extension, a social field in motion. Because society conceives of modern time as the progress of the modern liberal state, and because, as Dosemeci claims, this progress relies upon the modern liberal state's regime of movement, we may understand that modern time itself is characterized by a social field in perpetual motion. Thus, disruption of modern time necessitates an arrest of its forward motion in history, which, I have argued, radical feminists were able to achieve by

[227] Ibid., 13.
[228] Dosemeci, "The Kinetics of Our Discontent," n.p.

disrupting the gendered order of the everyday, registering as a breach of modern time and threatening its apocalyptic demise. Put simply, radical feminists disruption of the everyday constituted a social arrest of modern, linear time.

Tactical vs. Ideological Arrest

Social arrest, as a form of social struggle, assumes both tactical and ideological forms that are neither mutually exclusive nor necessarily concurrent. Radical feminists sought to socially arrest modern time through the disruption of the everyday both by interrupting the regime of movement, a form of tactical social arrest, and assuming new social roles, an ideological form of social arrest. The former constituted a literal disruption of the movement of goods and bodies in physical space, the latter an arrest of the system of male dominance by refusing to self-regulate in accordance with the dictates of the everyday.

Tactically, social arrest assumes two forms: one akin to sabotage, or the active obstruction of motion, the other to a strike, or the resignation of compulsory motion. Radical feminists frequently used tactics that amounted to kinetic sabotage, such as sit-ins, guerilla theater, and occupations, to physically disrupt the regime of movement. Insodoing, radical feminists came to conceive of themselves as active political subjects in realizing their power to arrest the perpetual movement characteristic of modernity.

Not all tactical social arrests possess the same kinetic relationship with their objectives, however. In the event that the resignation of compulsory motion or active obstruction of motion is leveraged as a persuasive tactic to achieve the reform of an existing sociopolitical system, tactics of arrest ultimately function as means of promoting the progress of the existing system, not arresting it. Instead of disrupting the physical regime of movement of the everyday, several

radical feminists rejected self-objectification, refused to self-regulate, and rejected their social roles in order to subvert the patriarchal carcereal continuum. Insodoing, these women ultimately sought to arrest the dominant patriarchal order and, by extension, modern time itself, to mount an ideological social arrest instead of a tactical one.

In the following sections, I will discuss the various ways in which the radical feminists of the 60's and 70's either advocated or achieved the arrest of the regime of movement and the patriarchal carcereal continuum in the context of the everyday. I will examine occupations, demonstrations, and acts of destruction--disruptions of the regime of movement--that functioned as tactical social arrests, and challenges to the female role that functioned as ideological arrests. I will then discuss the unique case of radical lesbians, who pursued the social arrest of patriarchal order not by confronting it, but rather by removing themselves from its sphere of operation.

Occupation, Demonstration, and Destruction

Third contends that "Like the 'revolutionary terrorism' of the time, radical feminism's tactics of shock and disruption aimed to destabilize and eventually overthrow dominant order."[229] Though, as I will demonstrate, radical feminist's disruptive tactics were not inherently linked to the desire to abolish the existing patriarchal order, they nonetheless constituted a social arrest of the functioning of the everyday. Disrupting the orderly flow of bodies and sequence of events in the spaces that they occupied via guerilla theatre and "zap actions," i.e. "Movie benefits [and] attacks on cultural phenomena and events,"[230] radical feminists frequently utilized tactics of social arrest to achieve their ends.

[229] Third, *Gender and the Political*, 95.
[230] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 276.

Valerie Solanas was perhaps one of the most vehement advocates of a tactical social arrest of the patriarchal order. Solanas, infamous for shooting Andy Warhol, was a "cause celebre" for some younger feminists and "a disturbed woman in need of sisterly assistance" for others.[231] In her controversial "SCUM Manifesto," published in 1967, Solanas explicitly condemned the tactics taken up by liberal feminists, i.e. picketing, demonstrating, marching, and striking, detesting them as tame, ineffective, and docile. Further, Solanas did not condone acting on a "mob basis," claiming such actions were only for "decent, clean-living women, highly trained in submerging themselves in the species"[232] and argued instead for individual acts that would disturb the functioning of patriarchal dominance at the micro-social level; she advocated criminality over civil disobedience, claiming that the latter "acknowledge[s] the rightness of the overall system and [is] used only to modify it slightly, change specific laws" whereas SCUM was "against the entire system, the very idea of law and government."[233]

Specifically, Solanas believed that SCUM women could rapidly achieve the apocalyptic end of patriarchy and government by "fucking up the system, selectively destroying property, and murder."[234] Solanas stated that SCUM would become members of the "unwork" or "fuck-up" force and refuse to do their jobs properly. Solanas provided the examples of salesgirls refusing to charge customers, telephone operators refusing to collect call charges, and office and factory workers refusing to conform to their assigned roles--women seeking to arrest the operation of the social body in the context of the everyday. To the same ends, and to disturb the

[231] Ibid., 85.
[232] Solanas, "Society for Cutting Up Men (SCUM) Manifesto," 220.
[233] Solanas, "Society for Cutting Up Men (SCUM) Manifesto," 220.
[234] Solanas, "Society for Cutting Up Men (SCUM) Manifesto," 218.

binary structure underpinning the everyday, Solanas prescribed "couple-busting"--literally "[barging] into mixed (male-female) couples, wherever they are, and [busting] them up."[235]

Solanas ultimately advocates individual yet massively disruptive disturbances in the functioning of the everyday, condemning marching and picketing as ineffectual. The Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (WITCH) was also well known for its disruptive tactics, which were similarly predicated upon a politics of arrest. According to Third, "WITCH aimed to disrupt the routine of the everyday, and, in so doing, focus attention on the basic repression inhering in social order"[236]: in other words, WITCH engaged in guerilla theatre or 'theatre of the apocalypse' to disrupt the smooth operation of patriarchal society in the context of the everyday.[237] WITCH's interruption of the 14th Annual Gridiron Dinner at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, discussed in Chapter Two, is one such example of a disruption that constituted a social arrest. At the dinner, the witches "stationed themselves by bridge tables, moaning loudly slogans like 'What am I doing here?,' 'What a useless life this is,' 'What a bore,' etc."[238] Armed with pails and brooms, a WITCH coven "performed guerilla skits on Wall Street to shocked and amused crowds,"[239] employing tactics of social arrest to disrupt orderly movement in the city and blatantly refusing to self regulate in accordance with the dictates of the everyday, conceiving of themselves as guerilla fighters instead of docile objects.

Members of WITCH also joined the New York Radical Feminists at the Miss America pageant in 1968, throwing 'instruments of female torture' into a 'freedom trashcan' and shouting women's liberation slogans during the pageant's procession, disrupting the traditional operation

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[235] Solanas, "Society for Cutting Up Men (SCUM) Manifesto," 218.

[236] Third, *Gender and the Political,* 95.
[237] Ibid., 95.
[238] Mubayi, "Women's Lib and Commercialism in the US," 571.
[239] Davidson, "An Oppressed Majority Demands Its Rights."

of the pageant. Indeed, radical feminist guerilla theatre was as symbolic as it was disruptive. In January of 1969, for example, members of New York Radical Women "chose to dramatize their rejection of electoral politics at the anti-inauguration events organized against President Richard Nixon" as a women's auxiliary to a coalition of New Left organizations. Nachescu recounts that "New York Radical Women symbolically planned to burn their voter registration cards, a rejection of representative democracy and of women's franchise, which had been able to do so little to change women's situation within American culture at large."[240] Rosen provides an additional example of symbolic, disruptive demonstration: the dumping of aprons in front of the White House.[241]

In a similarly disruptive vein, members of the radical women's group Bread and Roses invaded the Boston Globe in May of 1970, launching a symbolic attack upon what they deemed "a sexist newspaper which daily bombards women with 'blatant symbols of their oppression.'"[242] Their action was partially predicated upon a politics of disruption: blocked from using the up escalator, the members of Bread and Roses walked up the down escalator, disseminating leaflets and speaking with female employees, though they later resorted to picketing tactics characteristic of social movements. The Women's Liberation Front at Berkeley (BWL), too, leveraged tactics of social arrest, invading and interrupting the orderly motion of bodies and work in University spaces to draw attention to their desires. For example, in response to the University's lack of weight training and self-defense classes for women, members of BWL invaded the men's gym, shouting "Self-defense for women now," proceeding on to infiltrate the men's locker room. In 1969, BWL invaded the editorial offices of the San Francisco Chronicle,

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[240] Nachescu, "Radical Feminism and the Nation," 41.
[241] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 84.
[242] "Struggle," *Off Our Backs*, Vo. 1 No. 5 (May 16, 1970), 10.

answering phone calls with "The paper's closed down."[243] Yet the BWL, to the distaste of feminist thinkers like Solanas, did not necessarily embrace the ideological arrest of patriarchal institutions. Rather than demand the dissolution or radical restructuring of the University, the BWL "demanded 50 percent women employees in all departments, a revision of its women's pages, and an end to the acceptance of any advertising that exploited women."[244] Thus, though they utilized tactics of social arrest, their ideological orientation was ultimately reformist and thus conformed to the ideological inclinations of social movements.

Though by and large radical feminists pursued the arrest of the patriarchal order through disruption, in some instances radical feminists achieved the same ends by removing themselves from the social field in perpetual motion, thus arresting its operation and creating spaces for new political subjectivity. For example, a contingent of radical feminists including members of New York Radical Women and the Redstockings occupied the offices of the *Ladies Home Journal* in 1970, hanging a banner reading "Women's Liberation Journal" and demanding that the editor resign.[245] The radical feminist periodical *Off Our Backs* provides a report of an additional example:

> Women from New York's upper west side members of a women's liberation child care collective are squatting in space they liberated from the city on Sunday, April 19 [1970]. Since then, they have been running a day-care center for the community, specially for the people involved in Operation Move-In, an effort by community residents to reclaim the public housing that the city of New York has been denying them for years.[246]

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[243] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 206.
[244] Ibid., 206.
[245] Avita H. Block, "The Media and the Movement," Review of Bradley, Patricia, *Mass Media and the Shaping of American Feminism*, 1963-1975, H-1960's, H-Net Reviews (June, 2006).
[246] "Struggle," 10.

In seizing public holdings, radical feminists sought not only to remove themselves from the regime of movement in non-"liberated" spaces, but also to create a space for the cultivation of a new political subject, "soliciting literature from movement groups to distribute at the center for they want it to be more than a baby-sitting service." As I will discuss further below, radical lesbian separatists, too, understood that by removing themselves from heterosexual spaces they could arrest the exertion of male dominance and create a space for women to cultivate an active subjectivity.

Through occupation, demonstration, and disruption, radical feminists sought to disrupt the flow of the everyday and thus physically arrest patriarchal society's regime of motion. Many of these tactics, though not all, were specifically utilized to raise a consciousness in women that would allow them to reject their prescribed social roles and define new ones for themselves; the dumping of Aprons on the White House lawn, the burning of instruments of female torture at the Miss America pageant, and the torching of registration cards are apt examples. The active assumption of new roles that such actions sought to promote, and to which I will now turn, would constitute the rejection of self-objectification and the active self-definition capable of disabling the patriarchal carcereal continuum and, by extension, arresting the progress of modern time.

The Role of Roles

The examples explored above demonstrate that radical feminist social arrests featured the disruption of the everyday as a means of compromising the linear progression of patriarchal society. Yet social arrest did not necessarily have to assume the form of public spectacle,

destruction, or even occupation. Having raised their own consciousness, the radical feminists of the 60's and 70's were able to imagine themselves in new roles and began to alter their behaviors in a way that was destabilizing to the patriarchal status quo. Indeed, Willis wrote, "though the radical feminist surge helped liberals win support for economic and legal reforms (the ERA, which had been languishing for decades, passed Congress easily in 1970) its distinctive accomplishment was the destruction of the prevailing common sense about male-female relations."[247] Radical feminists sought, and in several ways succeeded, in doing what Shulamith Firestone advocated in her Abortion Rally Speech: to refuse to "submit to [man's] definition of what we should or should not be or do to become truly feminine [their] your eyes."[248]

Rosen writes that, in the 1960's, "Much of American society still accepted the idea that 'separate but equal'--while discredited as policy for the races--suited men's and women's separate social roles rather well."[249] Women, legally free to enter the workforce, were largely relegated to the domestic sphere out of economic and social necessity. Radical feminists Booth, Goldfield, and Munaker explain how the end of World War II and the relegation of female wartime workers back to the domestic sphere both prompted and was legitimized by a media campaign designed to glorify domesticity, writing that "frills were again in vogue, drudgery was made glamorous."[250] Social narrative dictated that improvement in home technologies had greatly improved the lot of domestic women and that these improvements, in combination with their access to jobs and legal protections, made American women the most liberated women in the world.[251] Booth, Goldfield, and Munaker, however, explain that the resultant spike in women's involvement in charities, the arts, clubs, enrichment courses, and shopping did not

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[247] Willis, foreword to *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975*, x.
[248] Firestone, "Abortion Rally Speech," 25.
[249] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, 64.
[250] Booth, Goldfield, and Munaker, "Toward a Radical Movement," 59.
[251] Mubayi, "Women's Lib and Commercialism in the US," 569.

satisfy, "was not serious, not involving; it merely whittle[d] away the long endless hours."[252] In a similar vein, Mubayi wrote that the "liberated" woman had not truly been freed by the improvement of technologies for the maintenance of the home, which had granted women excess time for activities that were not interesting or socially useful. Rather, Mubayi argued that "once given their freedom from household drudgery, their role as a mere decorative object--another possession of the male household--[was] brought to the fore."[253]

Furthermore, even those women who were working outside of the home were not working "on equal basis with men. With their taste of economic independence came also the taste of exploitation both as women and as workers."[254] To be sure, women's entrance to the workforce did prove threatening to the patriarchal status quo, as evidenced in Lynn Piartney's "Letter to the Editor of Ramparts Magazine" in which she quotes a *Ramparts* article as stating, "'the Brigade ladies are frighteningly businesslike.'" Piartney comments that "the term 'frighteningly' here reveals the threat posed by women breaking out of pre-established social roles, even through doing something as mild-mannered as appearing businesslike,"[255] and indeed, their rejection of their prescribed domestic role and appearance represent a departure from the typical self-objectified woman's conception of herself as homemaker. Yet working women tended to occupy subordinate positions as assistants or secretaries to male bosses, and thus, as was the case in the sexual revolution, merely replicated their performance of male caretaker in a space external to the home. Further, women workers had difficulty divorcing their newly cultivated conceptions of their working selves from their roles as mothers and homemakers. As Rosen commented, women's participation in the workforce did not give rise to

[252] Booth, Goldfield, and Munaker, "Toward a Radical Movement," 59.
[253] Mubayi, "Women's Lib and Commercialism in the US," 571.
[254] Booth, Goldfield, and Munaker, "Toward a Radical Movement," 59.
[255] Lynn Piartney, "A Letter to the Editor of Ramparts Magazine," *Notes from the First Year* (June, 1968), 22.

the conception of woman as capable, woman as worker, but of "Superwoman, who, with her hair swept back, briefcase in one hand, baby in the other, tried to have it all, by doing it all,"[256] who worked just as hard in the domestic sphere as she did in the workplace.

Instead of generating change through the institutions comprising the patriarchal carcereal continuum, radical feminists sought to attack them, to dissolve the structural preconditions for women's oppression both at home and at work. Acknowledging that the pursuit of workplace legislation was reformist, many radical women sought to undermine patriarchal power by instead challenging their domestic and social roles, which they believed were the products of self-objectification and thus served as the ideological basis for male dominance.

Often women made the proposition to their husbands that housework be shared, and the line of defenses that men would offer exposes the ways in which sharing the role of the housekeeper with men threatened to arrest patriarchal dominance, compelling them to resist the change. Mainardi translates these defenses into what she believes are their underlying meanings: "I don't mind sharing the housework, but I don't do it very well. We should each do the things we're best at" meant "Historically the lower classes (Blacks and you) have had hundreds of years of experience doing menial jobs. It would be a waste of manpower to train someone else to do them now"; "I hate it more than you. You don't mind it so much" meant "Housework is garbage work. It's the worse crap I've ever done. It's degrading and humiliating for someone of my intelligence to do it. But for someone of your intelligence…"; "Housework is too trivial to even talk about" meant "It's even more trivial to do. Housework is beneath my status. My purpose in life is to deal with matters of significance. Yours is to deal with matters of insignificance. You should do the housework"; and, most tellingly, "Man's accomplishments have always depended on getting help from other people, mostly women. What great man would have accomplished

[256] Rosen, *The World Split Open*, xv.

what he did if he had to do his own housework?" meant "Oppression is built into the system and I as the white American male receive the benefits of this system. I don't want to give them up." Mainardi made the point that the man's resistance served as the measure of female oppression; the more intense the resistance, the more intensely the husband perceived the shift in roles to threaten his dominance over his wife.[257] In other words, men's reluctance was testimony to the power of changing roles to arrest the circulation of male dominance in the everyday, and their implicit rationale, as Mainardi interprets, exemplifies the complex ways in which the historical and ideological basis of patriarchal dominance manifest in the mere allocation of housework.

In many ways, the campaign for abortion rights, though epistemologically reformist, did serve to interrupt the operation of patriarchal dominance by challenging ideas of the traditional female role. According to Willis, our male supremacist culture's worst nightmare was "women cut loose from their anatomical destiny; women putting their needs and desires before their age-old obligation to create and nurture new life; women having sex on their own terms and without fear; women becoming players on the worldstage instead of providing the backdrop--and the safety net--for men,"[258] and these were the ideas implicit in women's desire for the right to an abortion. Indeed, Willis contended, "On the deepest level, the right-to-life movement spoke to primal fears that if women stop subordinating themselves to their role as caretakers of men and children, civilization and morality as we know them will give way to destruction and chaos," suggesting that legalizing abortion and birth control would challenge the female sex role, leading to the apocalyptic end, the social arrest, of patriarchal dominance. Yet the women's movement, "deprived of a radical language could only respond, with ludicrous weakness, that it was for

[257] Mainardi, "The Politics of Housework,"15-16.
[258] Willis, foreword to *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*, viii.

'choice'"[259]; thus, women themselves may not have understood their own power in such apocalyptic terms.

Because many radical feminists believed that institutions perpetuated the social roles that enabled male dominance, they advocated the abolition of marriage and family as a means of abolishing the oppressive heterosexual female role. Atkinson referred to married women as "hostages,"[260] and Sheila Cronan, claiming marriage was a form of slavery, contended that "the institution of marriage 'protects' women in the same way that the institution of slavery was said to 'protect' blacks--that is, that the word 'protection' in this case is simply a euphemism for oppression...the Women's Movement must concentrate on attacking this institution. Freedom for women cannot be won without the abolition of marriage."[261] Lehmann and Sullinger grounded their advocacy for the abolition of marriage in the realization that this elementally oppressive nature of marriage sustained male dominance:

> Marriage has existed for the benefit of men and has been a legally sanctioned method of control over women...Male society has sold us the idea of marriage...Now we know it is the institution that has failed us and we must work to destroy it...The end of the institution of marriage is a necessary condition for the liberation of woman. Therefore, it is important for us to encourage women to leave their husbands and not to live individually with men.[262]

Some radical feminists rejected the institution of family entirely. Roxanne Dunbar contended that the demand for the destruction of the family unit would "throw the whole ideology of the

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[259] Ibid., viii.
[260] Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*, 178.
[261] Sheila Cronan, "Marriage," *in Radical Feminism, ed.* Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine, and Anita Rapone (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973), 214 and 219.
[262] Nancy Lehmann and Helen Sullinger, *Declaration of Feminism* (1971), n.p.

family into question" and thus encourage women to abandon their husbands and pursue economic autonomy.[263] Atkinson even condemned sexual intercourse as an anti-feminist institution.[264]

These radical feminists' vehement rejection of marriage and family is testimony to their objection to the heterosexual roles that these institutions maintained, roles that they believed perpetuated the oppression of women. The Feminists discouraged heterosexual relationships with men in seeking to achieve their ultimate prerogative, the annihilation of sex roles, and Cell 16, though they did not fundamentally reject heterosexuality, believed that women should not expend their energies on heterosexual relationships because it would redirect women's energies from the movement to the performance of heterosexual roles. Rensenbrink notes that many radical lesbian separatists embraced the possibility of parthenogenesis, or the asexual reproduction of humans using unfertilized eggs, as a means of creating all-female communities and eliminating the social and biological necessity of men. In other words, parthenogenesis offered lesbian separatists the possibility of annihilating gendered roles and arresting the operation of male dominance by withdrawing their participation in heterosexual reproduction.[265]

Radical lesbian feminists were particularly critical of heterosexual roles. Marilyn Frye stated that "A vital part of making generalized male dominance as close to inevitable as a human construction can be is the naturalization of female heterosexuality" and that "Without (hetero)sexual abuse, (hetero)sexual harassment and the (hetero)sexualization of every aspect of

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[263] Roxanne Dunbar, *Female Liberation as a Basis for Social Revolution* (New England Free Press, 1974), n.p.
[264] Ti-Grace Atkinson, *Amazon Odyssey* (New York: Links Books, 1974), 86.
[265] Greta Rensenbrink, "Parthenogenesis and Lesbian Separatism: Regenerating Women's Community Through Virgin Birth in the United States in the 1970's and 1980's," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vo. 19 No. 2 (May 2010), 289.

female bodies and behaviors, there would not be patriarchy."[266] Radical Lesbian separatist groups, such as the Radicalesbians, The Gutterdykes, and The Furies (discussed below) believed that removing themselves from the heterosexual domestic sphere entirely would arrest the exertion of patriarchal power, at least over their own bodies and minds. The ability of both lesbian feminists and lesbian separatists to so confidently cast off their heterosexual roles and disable the operation of patriarchal dominance in everyday life was largely predicated upon their rejection of self-objectification and their refusal to self regulate. Martha Shelley comments that the danger of the lesbian lay in her lack of concern with the opinion of man, her disinclination to self-regulate in accordance with his concerns.[267] This lack of care was the derivative of what Johnston termed "lesbian chauvinism," or "the aggressive assertion of sexual and sensual needs and interests"[268] instead of the subversion of needs and interests to those of men. Charlotte Bunch, member of the radical lesbian separatist group The Furies, most eloquently articulates the significance of lesbian self-definition in enabling the rejection of the traditional female role and, by extension, the subversion of patriarchal power:

> In our society, which defines all people and institutions for the benefit of the rich, white, male, the Lesbian is in revolt. In revolt because she defines herself in terms of women and rejects the male definitions of how she should feel, act, look, and live. To be a Lesbian is to love oneself, woman, in a culture that denigrates and despises women. The Lesbian rejects male sexual/political domination; she defies his world, his social organization, his ideology, and his definitions of her as inferior. Lesbianism puts women first while the society declares the male

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[266] Marilyn Frye, *Willful Virgins: Essays In Feminism, 1976-1992* (Freedom*:* Crossing Press, 1992), 130-132.
[267] Martha Shelley, "Lesbianism and the Women's Liberation Movement," in *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Barbara A. Crow, 201-222 (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 305.
[268] Johnston, "Selections from *Lesbian Nation*," 340.

> supreme. Lesbianism threatens male supremacy at its core. When political [consciousness is] organized, it is central to destroying our sexist, racist, capitalist, imperialist system.[269]

For Bunch and other lesbian feminists, then, lesbianism constituted the rejection of externally (and distinctively male) derived definitions of women and, through this rejection of roles, the subversion of the patriarchal system.

Lee Schwing, also a member of The Furies, argued that an additional source of female oppression was the "stereotyped body that women are expected to have. A woman is supposed to be feminine or, in other words, full-breasted, soft, tiny-waisted, large hipped, long haired, or a variation on that model depending upon the style of sex object desirable that year."[270] Schwing, like Cell 16, was an advocate of self-defense, believing that it was not simply a practical skill but a rejection of feminine passivity and vulnerability. Schwing recognized that "as long as...woman appears somewhat weak and helpless, in short, physically unfit, she is acceptable any year."[271] Schwing believed that the rejection of this body and the cultivation of strength and defensive power constituted the refusal to self-regulate, the rejection of the feminine role. As Schwing explains,

> ...to be strong and care about your physical being is to reject the male stereotype for women and the idea that women are supposed to look a certain way, and to begin to take yourself seriously. If you are political about your situation-meaning that you will take control of your life, make changes in yourself and in others, and ultimately, in the system that keeps you down.[272]

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[269] Charlotte Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt," *The Furies: Lesbian/Feminist Monthly*, Vo. 1 (January 1972), 8-9.
[270] Lee Schwing, "Women, Weak or Strong," *The Furies: Lesbian/Feminist Monthly*, Vo. 1 (January 1972), 3.
[271] Ibid., 3.
[272] Ibid., 3.

For Schwing, being a pretty body was a social expectation; being a capable body constituted the radical deconstruction of the patriarchal order. In The Furies' newsletter, Schwing published an article providing readers with instruction in self-defense, complete with pictures and explanations.

Joreen's *Bitch Manifesto* illustrated that the refusal to comply with the dictates of femininity could produce a new female subjectivity that would threaten to arrest patriarchal dominance. Joreen describes the Bitch as a woman who deviates from her socially prescribed role as woman, rejecting pure femininity for androgyny and occupying space, both physically and socially, in a powerful, disruptive, and even offensive manner. In so doing, "Bitches seek their identity strictly through themselves and what they do. They are subjects, not objects,"[273] actively defining themselves instead of passively accepting and performing the traditional feminine role. The existence of Bitches posed a threat to patriarchal dominance in the context of the everyday, for as Joreen explains,

> The mere existence of Bitches negates the idea that a woman's reality must come through her relationship to a man and defies the belief that women are perpetual children who must always be under the guidance of another. Therefore, if taken seriously, a Bitch is a threat to the social structures which enslave women and the social values which justify keeping them in their place. She is living testimony that woman's oppression does not have to be, and as such raises doubts about the validity of the whole social system.[274]

Joreen's definition of the Bitch is also testimony to the role that physical motion played in the production of a female subjectivity that would permit such an arrest. Bitches' refusal to

[273] Joreen, "The Bitch Manifesto," 51.
[274] Ibid., 52.

self-regulate was both social and physical, for "The most prominent characteristic of all Bitches is that they rudely violate conceptions of proper sex role behavior...Their attitudes towards themselves and other people, their goal orientations, their personal style, their appearance and way of handling their bodies, all jar people and make them feel uneasy."[275] Just as Bitches refused to confine their bodies, they "refused in mind and spirit, to conform to the idea that there were limits on what they could be and do. They placed no bounds on their aspirations or their conduct."[276] Thus, Bitches' physical motion was intimately connected to their conceptualization of their capabilities as subjects.

Finally, The Bitch Manifesto highlights the significance of consciousness-raising in allowing the Bitch, as a subject, to arrest the operation of the patriarchal carcereal continuum. Joreen explains that Bitches, though strong-minded and powerful, have been ostracized and/or put down their whole lives for their threatening behavior. Joreen contends that the "internalization of a derogatory self-concept" that results from years of social oppression and exile "always results in a good deal of bitterness and resentment. This anger is usually either turned in on the self--making one an unpleasant person--or on other women--reinforcing social cliches about them." According to Joreen, Bitches could harness their anger for subversive purposes instead of self-destructive ones by raising their consciousness, stating, "Only with political consciousness is [Bitches' anger] directed as the source--the social system."[277]

These radical feminists' contradiction of their prescribed social roles demonstrates the necessity of rejecting self-objectification for active self-definition in order to arrest patriarchal power. The rejection of domestic and heterosexual roles and the fight for abortion rights represented the rejection of woman's obligation to cater to her husband and family and the

[275] Ibid., 52.
[276] Ibid., 53.
[277] Ibid., 58.

cultivation of a sense of self no longer predicated on these roles. Likewise, the rejection of the passive, objectified female body via self defense or embracing one's inner Bitch amounted to the definition of the female self as an active subject. Because the oppression of women functioned through a patriarchal carcereal continuum--a network of social roles, the institutions that promulgated them, and the women who defined themselves in terms of and actively performed them--women's active self-definition, in enabling and legitimizing their rejection of their social roles, rendered the patriarchal carcereal continuum inoperable and thus disrupted the gendered order of the everyday. In so doing, radical feminists who rejected their social roles desublimated the terror of the loss of gendered order and threatened to arrest the progress of modern time itself.

Radical Lesbians

As I explained above, radical lesbians issued particularly ardent criticisms of the heterosexual female role, and their rejection of these roles in favor of active self-definition is exemplary as a social arrest of modern time via disruption of the patriarchal carcereal continuum in the everyday. The nature of radical lesbian feminism, in terms of the kinetic element of its tactics and goals, is complex. Ideologically, radical lesbian feminists advocated the complete arrest of male supremacy. However, instead of confronting men as transformed, active subjects in the context of heterosexual relationships, radical lesbians withdrew from them and, in the case of separatists, from male-dominated society entirely. How, then, could radical lesbians arrest the exertion of male dominance without confronting it? The conception of patriarchal dominance as a carcereal continuum illuminates the way that radical lesbian feminism amounted to a social arrest. Just as striking workers arrest the function of a factory by withdrawing their consent to

forced motion, radical lesbian feminists and separatists arrested the linear progression of male dominated society not simply by re-defining themselves, but also by removing themselves from the patriarchal carcereal network entirely.

By and large, the radical lesbian feminists of the 60's and 70's conceived of their sexuality not merely as a personal preference, but as a political tool for disabling patriarchal power. For radical lesbians, the sexual was deeply political, and many radical lesbian feminists criticized women liberationists for prioritizing programmatic goals over complete sexual freedom. Sidney Abbot, a lesbian activist and member of the Lavender Menace, and Barbara Love, also a feminist and a lesbian activist, believed that women liberationists had sacrificed the pursuit of sexual freedom in order to focus on abortion as a way for women to control their bodies.[278] Similarly, Jill Johnston claimed that feminists' neglect of the sexual component of male dominance proved a hindrance to the women's movement, stating,

> The political rhetoric of the feminist movement directed toward economic and representative equality I think obscures perhaps even to the feminists themselves the fundamental drive of feminism which is sexual liberation. I don't think the feminists, generally, envision their liberation in this form. I think their orientation basically is toward the material male superstructure within which they want parity. All the feminist issues--abortion, child care, prostitution, political representation, equal pay--are in relation to the man. In other words in relation to reproductive sexuality. Within which the woman remains trapped as a sexual nonentity.[279]

[278] Sidney Abbot and Barbara Love, "Is Women's Liberation a Lesbian Plot?," in *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Barbara A. Crow (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 312.
[279] Johnston, "Selections from *Lesbian Nation*," 339.

In fact, many members of radical lesbian groups were not lesbians upon entering the feminist struggle but rather became lesbian converts out of what they perceived was a political necessity.

Thus, radical lesbian feminists conceived of their lesbianism as a political rejection of the heterosexual love and sexuality that they believed sustained the existence of male supremacy. Martha Shelley, one of the initial members of the Gay Liberation Front and a radical lesbian feminist writer, wrote, "...most heterosexual relationships are based on a master-slave psychology which can hardly be said to characterize mature adulthood."[280] Similarly, Abbot and Love describe love as "a type of mass domination of women through personal domination in heterosexual love relationships."[281] According to Shelley, women in heterosexual relationships "are told to be weak, dependent, and loving. That kind of love is masochism. Love can only exist between equals, not between the oppressed and the oppressor."[282] Radical lesbians believed that the actual act of heterosexual sex, too, reinforced the oppression of women in heterosexual relationships. As Abbott and Love claimed,

> Feminists who have men in their lives and are free to demonstrate and fight for equality complain that the wonderful feelings of independence, self-possession, and self-determination they have around other women are shot down when they come home and are dominated by men in bed. No matter what the feminist does, the physical act throws both woman and man back into role playing: the male as conqueror asserts his masculinity and the female is expected to be a passive receiver. All of her politics are instantly shattered.[283]

[280] Shelley, "Lesbianism and the Women's Liberation Movement," 307.
[281] Abbott and Love, "Is Women's Liberation a Lesbian Plot?," 321.
[282] Shelley, "Lesbianism and the Women's Liberation Movement," 308.
[283] Abbott and Love, "Is Women's Liberation a Lesbian Plot?," 321.

Radical lesbians also rejected institutionalized heterosexuality, namely the nuclear family, monogamy, and marriage. Charlotte Bunch claimed that the lesbian "rejects the nuclear family as the basic unit of production and consumption in a capitalist society."[284] Jill Johnston, American feminist author of *Lesbian Nation*, advocated the rejection of monogamy in complete defiance of heterosexual institutions. Abbott and Love were highly critical of feminists who chose to remain in heterosexual relationships, arguing that "Feminists who continue to live off their husband's incomes and perform the traditional duties of wife and mother *at the expense of their own development* are hiding and only paying lip service to their cause, much as lesbians who flirt with men in the office. They are trying to escape discrimination by appearing to perpetuate the system."[285] In contrast, as Bunch explained, "Whether consciously or not, by her actions, the lesbian has recognized that giving support and love to men over women perpetuates the system that oppresses her. If women do not make a commitment to each other, which includes sexual love, we deny ourselves the love and value traditionally given to men."[286]

Radical lesbians sought to arrest the modern patriarchal order by resigning themselves to heterosexual relationships, which they believed were central to the maintenance of male supremacy. Without women to oppress through sex, love, and marriage, radical lesbians reasoned, men could not continue to comfortably occupy their dominant social position.

Within the all-woman social space that radical lesbians constructed, radical lesbians emphasized the importance of active self-definition, of replacing borrowed definitions of womanness with their own. Shelley explained that the inequality elemental to heterosexual love and sex was the result of women's psychological oppression, of their desire to achieve the approval of men; this psychological oppression, in turn, provided the basis for their

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[284] Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt," 335.
[285] Abbott and Love, "Is Women's Liberation a Lesbian Plot?," 313.
[286] Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt," 332.

corresponding political and economic oppression.[287] In abstaining from heterosexual love and sex, Shelley and other radical lesbians believed, women could remedy their obsession with male approval, cease to self-objectify, and actively define themselves, dissolving the basis for their political and economic oppression.

In Bunches' words, "Male society defines lesbianism as a sexual act, which reflects men's limited view of women: they think of us only in terms of sex,"[288] yet Johnston contends that "The lesbian/feminist is the woman who defines herself independently of the man."[289] The radical lesbians of the 60's and 70's sought to replace the external, sexual conception of lesbianism with their own, and they frequently emphasized the importance of self-definition. Abbot and Love believed that "The lesbian foreshadows a time when individuals will create themselves from the total range of human qualities and not limit themselves to those ascribed by culture's reading of their biology."[290] They believed that this era of self-definition could only be realized through the struggle to raise consciousness, stating,

> The massive consciousness-raising among lesbians marked the beginning of a joint struggle, with women--both heterosexual and homosexual--fighting together openly for a social revolution that seeks to dissolve traditional sex roles and to bring about a new world of self-possession, one which must admit the emotional life of the homosexual and allow all women to live their lives as they themselves define them.[291]

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[287] Shelley, "Lesbianism and the Women's Liberation Movement," 305.
[288] Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt," 332.
[289] Johnston, "Selections from *Lesbian Nation*," 340.
[290] Abbott and Love, "Is Women's Liberation a Lesbian Plot?," 321.
[291] Ibid., 320.

The act of radical lesbian self-definition, radical lesbians recognized, would compromise the perpetuation of male dominance. Shelley claimed that, before the Women's Liberation Movement, men did not "take women seriously enough to consider lesbianism a real threat"[292]; it was when lesbianism began to develop a political dimension in the context of Women's Liberation that lesbian self-definition came to constitute a political threat to male dominance. According to Shelley, men hated "women who aspire to 'independent personhood'"[293] as lesbians did because, in Abbott and Love's words, men

> are upset and confused by women who do not fit into categories they can handle: unmarried and seeking domination, married and dominated, frustrated career woman, or incomplete old maid or spinster. But a lesbian? 'Let's face the truth,' says one feminist, 'the greatest threat to men is solidarity among women and 'lesbianism' epitomizes that solidarity.[294]

Accordingly, men accused "women who have tried to adopt any of those human qualities and attitudes not considered natural to a female"[295] of being "imitation men...a laughing stock for both sexes."[296] Refusing to confront the threat of the lesbian as her own social creation, men located lesbians within the male sphere of the gender binary. Abbott and Love do well to explain why it is that the establishment of lesbian as its own category, as a self-defined identity and not a prescribed social position, proved so threatening to the patriarchal status quo:

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[292] Shelley, "Lesbianism and the Women's Liberation Movement," 306.
[293] Ibid., 305.
[294] Abbott and Love, "Is Women's Liberation a Lesbian Plot?," 310.
[295] Ibid., 314.
[296] Ibid., 316.

> More than male homosexuals, lesbians are seen as a threat to the entire system based on sexual relationships. A male homosexual retains his male life style....lesbians try to live a stable life, more often they try to build a home life without men. Clearly, this is not permissible within the male sexist system. It is acceptable for a man to do without women, as in men's clubs, sports, or the army, but it is never acceptable for a woman to be without a man. A woman is defined in relationship to men and family. A female without a man and a family is not considered a complete woman, but rather a failed woman. The single man is a bachelor; the single woman is an old maid--or a lesbian.[297]

In a similar vein, Frances argued, "It is daring, reckless to say 'We will not depend on men. We will be strong human beings and build our own culture and collectivity outside the culture which says it's human but which is in reality white, heterosexual, male."[298] Lesbian self-definition, the creation of an identity and a social space for women that is separate from and not reliant upon the patriarchal system of value, proved incredibly threatening to the status quo.

Abbot and Love define lesbians as "women who survive without men financially and emotionally, representing the ultimate in an independent lifestyle."[299] The independence of lesbians posed an additional threat to the male ego, which radical lesbians recognized was rooted in women's sexual and economic dependence upon men. The lesbian was, by necessity, fiercely independent, for in relinquishing heterosexual privilege for homosexual oppression, the lesbian moved "from a recognized and valued position with certain kinds of privileges into a new, lonely place, one that may involve open hostility."[300] Indeed, lesbians were frequently subject to hostility and prejudice even within radical feminist groups, fostering the emergence of

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[297] Ibid., 317.
[298] Frances, "The Soul Selects," 329.
[299] Abbott and Love, "Is Women's Liberation a Lesbian Plot?," 311.
[300] Ibid., 313.

exclusively lesbian feminist organizations such as Radicalesbians, The Furies, and the Gutterdykes. Berated and criminalized, lesbians had to "develop a sense of self-esteem that [could] withstand intense disapproval" while also having to "survive economically without the aid of men."[301] Accordingly, they were required to cultivate the male-identified traits necessary for establishing social and economic independence.[302] Abbot, Love, and Shelley concede that lesbians, thick-skinned and independent by necessity, rejected the sensitivity and dependence characteristic of the female role. Their independence, according to Charlotte Bunch, "undermines the personal power that men exercise over women. Lesbianism is a threat to the ideological, political, personal, and economic basis of male supremacy. The lesbian threatens the ideology of male supremacy by destroying the lie about female inferiority, weakness, passivity, and by denying women's 'innate' need for men. Lesbians literally do not need men, even for procreation."[303] By their very existence, lesbians constituted a political threat to the order of male supremacy.

Furthermore, radical lesbians cared far less than radical heterosexual feminists about the opinions of men, making it easier for them to reject self-regulation and self-objectification and thus disrupt the smooth gendered operation of the everyday. According to Abbot and Love, "In many ways the lesbian *has* freed herself from male domination...Because they have little interest in pleasing men, lesbians are not usually man-haters, as the stereotype so often has it. They do not see men as a threat to them personally, as feminists often do."[304] Having "decided to get up

[301] Shelley, "Lesbianism and the Women's Liberation Movement," 306.
[302] Abbott and Love, "Is Women's Liberation a Lesbian Plot?," 321.
[303] Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt," 334.
[304] Abbott and Love, "Is Women's Liberation a Lesbian Plot?," 311.

from the human garbage pile and walk away,"[305] lesbians lived unhindered and unthreatened by men.

In sum, radical lesbians disrupted the everyday operation of male dominance by rejecting the heterosexual relationships that sustained it, creating a new social space for lesbian self-definition, asserting their independence, and ceasing to care for the dictates and opinions of men, thus threatening the very definition of man and the stability of the gendered social order. Yet some radical lesbian feminists went further still, arguing that the only way to completely abolish male supremacy was to create a women's only society, and in the 1970's radical lesbian separatist groups began to emerge, primarily in New York, Washington, and Chicago.[306]

One such group was The Furies. In the early 1970's, The Furies, a group of 12 white women all under 30 years of age,[307] created a lesbian separatist collective in Washington, D.C., "where a small number of white lesbian feminists lived and worked together, separated both from heterosexual women and men."[308] The creation of the collective was ultimately a short-term strategy for achieving a larger goal--the creation of a Federation of Feminist States--based upon the vision that Charlotte Bunch articulated in a 1972 memo. Removing themselves from patriarchal society, The Furies created a space intended to allow women to "analyze their experiences as women, question their own principles and assumptions, and subsequently develop a base from which they could mobilize other women for social change."[309]

The Furies shared many beliefs with the larger population of both heterosexual and homosexual radical feminists. Criticizing liberal feminists' focus on the workplace and

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[305] Ibid., 320.
[306] Anne M. Valk, "Living a Feminist Lifestyle: The Intersection of Theory and Action in a Lesbian Feminist Collective," Feminist Studies, Vo. 28 No. 2 (Summer 2002), 308.
[307] Ibid., 308.
[308] Ibid., 303.
[309] Ibid., 303.

reproduction, The Furies leveraged the argument that the personal was political "to debunk the Freudian and functionalist myth of the neurotic American housewife by arguing that the private, domestic realm was inherently an arena for political struggle,"[310] and they allowed personal experiences to form the foundations of their political goals. They were critical "of relationships, daily living, household politics, and emotions,"[311] understanding the degradation of individual women in their personal lives as a political problem just as most radical, non-separatist feminists had.

The Furies advocated separatism "on grounds that...ultimately to feel right about ourselves we must get out of situations which distort us and sap our strength."[312] Thus, The Furies sought political agency not by seeking to reform or reconceptualize their roles as domestic housewives, as other radical feminists had, but instead by removing themselves from the private spheres within which their personal lives as they existed had developed. Radical lesbian separatists perceived liberation "as a possibility only through instant revolutionary withdrawal of women from the man or the system (Man and the system being synonymous) whose privilege remains impregnable while the woman persists in accommodating herself to it."[313]

The Furies emphasized the importance of consciousness raising in promoting active self-definition. Frances stated that one of the primary objectives of separatist organizing was to "offer women a change for personhood, a place to get free of male definitions and identifications and decide what kind of revolutionary person she wants to be."[314] Though The Furies, much like the members of Cell 16, explicitly claimed that feminist groups that focused on personal experiences were ultimately ineffectual for the purpose of establishing a political movement, they

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[310] Valk, "Living a Feminist Lifestyle," n.p.
[311] Ibid., 305.
[312] Frances, "The Soul Selects," 331.
[313] Johnston, "Selections from *Lesbian Nation*," 340.
[314] Frances, "The Soul Selects," 331.

nonetheless allowed the collectivity to evolve into "a kind of laboratory where each member would interact in ways intended to overcome patterns of behavior that reflected both their class status and internalized hatred of women."[315] Though the group did not validate consciousness-raising as a political tool, it nonetheless sought to foster the confrontation with the self that Kaplow claimed was the essence of consciousness raising. Outside of the collective, The Furies worked towards the same end by organizing seminars and workshops designed to educate, inform, and inspire.[316]

Ultimately, The Furies believed that effectively dissolving patriarchal ideas and institutions would require not actively combatting male dominance in their personal lives, but rather removing themselves from the contexts in which male dominance became possible (i.e. marriage, relationships, the household, etc.). Indeed,

> ...the Furies argued that heterosexuality constituted the basis of patriarchy. Lesbian feminism, conversely, contained the potential for revolutionary change in general and for the destruction of a male supremacist society in particular. By rejecting relationships with men, repudiating male privilege, abandoning patriarchal institutions, and developing female-centered organizations and world views, lesbian feminists would constitute a vanguard in the revolution against capitalism and male supremacy.[317]

Yet The Furies sought not only the deconstruction of institutionalized male sexual power, but also the replacement of the male worldview itself. Though they believed that the expression of male dominance occurred in the context of heterosexual relationships, they recognized that

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[315] Valk, "Living a Feminist Lifestyle," 321.
[316] Ibid., 315.
[317] Ibid., 310.

that expression was rendered possible by "cultural imperatives that socialized women to shape their lives around relationships with men"[318] and by American culture's positive valuation of masculine qualities (competition, aggression, etc.). The Furies believed that their creation of an autonomous female sphere would permit the cultivation of new cultural norms and conceptions of morality predicated upon female values. For example, the Furies "shared money, clothing, bedrooms, automobiles, and responsibility for child care" in order to accommodate the varied economic statuses of their members, abandoning the masculine imperative of "every man for himself." They also often refused to sign their publications by name in denunciation of individual property rights. For The Furies, separatism enabled the creation of this sphere and lesbianism the cultivation of a new worldview; a woman who failed to develop a sexual preference for women thus demonstrated her acceptance "of the male world view and the traditional social roles it fostered."[319]

Radical lesbians were living testimony that the social arrest of patriarchal power could assume non-confrontational forms. Radical lesbians shared with the broader population of radical feminists the belief that active-self definition through challenging and redefining women's prescribed social roles would render the patriarchal carcereal continuum inoperable; they recognized that if they refused to conceive of themselves as male appendages, the exertion of patriarchal power through male institutions and men themselves would no longer effectively compel them to self regulate, would relinquish them from the social obligation to function as instruments of their own subjugation. Yet radical lesbians also recognized that removing themselves from the heterosexual world in which they were forced to confront these institutions would render the exertion of male dominance inoperable. These lesbian separatists emphasized

[318] Ibid., 311.
[319] Ibid., 312.

that complete physical withdrawal from the heterosexual world would permit the creation of an environment more conducive to active self-redefinition, further undermining patriarchal power. Thus, though radical lesbians did not necessarily directly confront the many nodes of power constituting the patriarchal carcereal continuum, they were, like the broader population of radical feminists, invested in utilizing tactics that would compromise the gendered order of the everyday, threatening to arrest the progress of modern time.

Conclusion

Radical feminists were not uniform in terms of their tactics and goals. In fact, their ideas and actions differ so markedly in some instances that historians have criticized our tendency to think and write about them as a cohesive group. Yet one element of the radical feminist struggle that appears to remain constant across its many organizations and thinkers is a politics of social arrest, specifically the social arrest of modern linear time.

In some instances, radical feminists' actions were predicated upon a politics of tactical social arrest. Many women liberationists advocated or utilized occupations, spectacle, and destruction as means arresting the regime of movement in order to draw attention to their causes. Other radical feminists operated based on a politics of ideological social arrest, either rejecting their prescribed social roles or removing themselves from the heterosexual sphere in the renunciation of self-objectification and the adoption of an actively defined self. The latter form of struggle disabled the operation of the patriarchal carcereal continuum and by extension compromised the totalizing, gendered order of the everyday, presenting the possibility that the patriarchal status quo could be undermined, the progress of the patriarchal modern social order compromised. Thus, when radical feminists adopted new roles and challenged traditional ideas

of femininity, they registered as terroristic, functioned as a threat of the apocalyptic end of the modern social order, and sought to socially arrest modern time.

Conclusion

"The things that mess us up are so built into the structure of society that only the most radical of social changes--one far more radical in its attack on the basic institutions of this society that traps us, and far more drastic in the changes it effects on human consciousness, than previous revolutions--has a chance of doing the job, of freeing us and freeing those who will be born out of our lives." -Meredith Tax[320]

In Chapter One, I explained how the prevailing conception of revolution as a lightning strike moment of governmental or legal reform effects the burial of radical feminism in time that, according to Amanda Third, causes radical feminism to register as a historically unprecedented threat to the existing social order. Historians' and radical feminists' attempts to locate radical feminism along an historical continuum of progress are merely efforts to disguise radical feminism's apocalyptic potential, to blunt the threat that it poses. Radical feminists did not participate in a historical project of gradual reformism, but rather recognized the failures of this historical project to produce a meaningful transformation of women's everyday lives.

It was my objective, in Chapter One, to illustrate both the significance of radical feminists' pursuit of substantive yet intangible changes in women's everyday lives and to illuminate the nature of radical feminists' relationship to the prevailing patriarchal order. Though the process of ideological change is vulnerable to the enclosure and burial of history in the event of legal or governmental (what radical feminists deemed reformist) change, its achievements ultimately survive the period of revolution, whereas reformism merely disguises the preservation of patriarchal conditions over time. Thus, radical feminists eschewed reformism as a political

[320] Tax, "Woman and Her Mind," 27.

tactic and instead focused on effecting a radical change in the consciousness of women. Radical feminists thus, instead of participating in the historical project of gradual reformism, sought to interrupt that project, to obliterate and provide an alternative to the sociopolitical order within which liberal feminists had fought for progress.

Radical feminists believed that ideological change created the possibility of subverting that sociopolitical order, and it is to the relationship between ideological change and patriarchal dominance that I turn in Chapter Two. I argue in Chapter Two that radical feminists either explicitly espoused or implicitly confirmed that male dominance functions as a patriarchal carcereal continuum of institutions, ideas, and female self-objectification. Because the patriarchal carcereal continuum was predicated upon female self-objectification, radical feminists recognized that ideological change, specifically the reversal of women's tendency to self-objectify, would amount to the subversion of the patriarchal order. Radical feminists utilized consciousness raising discussions and demonstrations in order to foster the transition from self-objectification to active self-definition.

In Chapter 3, I demonstrate that the ideological change that radical feminists created allowed them to reject prescribed social roles and adopt new ones, disrupting the gendered order of the everyday and thus functioning, in kinetic terms, as a social arrest of modern time. I explain that radical feminists utilized both forms of tactical social arrest and forms of ideological social arrest to disrupt the patriarchal carcereal continuum in the everyday, by extension threatening to socially arrest the perpetuation of the patriarchal social order itself. In so doing, I build upon the argument that I made in Chapter One concerning radical feminists' condemnation of the project of gradual reformism. Radical feminists' disruption of the everyday constitutes not simply the vilification of the process of gradual reform characteristic of modern time, but the active attempt

to arrest it. Radical feminists believed that, in obstructing the advancement of this social order, they would clear space for creating an entirely new social order, and indeed, radical feminists' were deeply invested in building spaces conducive to the creation of a new, female collective subjectivity.

The struggle for Women's Liberation, I believe, aptly demonstrates the essentialness of promoting a change in subjectivity and rejecting patriarchal social prescriptions in the struggle against women's oppression. The radical feminists of the 60's and 70's believed and demonstrated that legal or governmental change would ultimately fail to combat the oppressive force of patriarchal dominance if women continued to think of themselves and behave as passive, obedient, docile, domestic, sexual objects. In order to bolster my point, I would like to examine a counterexample of radical feminism: cultural feminism.

Ellen Willis explains that, by the mid-1970's, the oppressive might of American liberalism had forced radical feminism to devolve into either reformism or cultural feminism, the marginalized aspirations of second-wave feminists recast into "a cult of the individual 'liberated woman.'"[321] According to Willis, cultural feminists saw

> the primary goals of feminism as freeing women from the imposition of so-called 'male-values,' and creating an alternative culture based on 'female-values.' While radical feminism was conceived as a political movement to end male supremacy in all areas of social and economic life, and rejected as sexist the whole idea of opposing male and female natures and values, cultural feminism is essentially a moral, countercultural movement aimed at redeeming its participants.

[321] Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," 119.

> Though cultural feminism came out of the radical feminism movement, the premises of the two tendencies are antithetical.[322]

Many radical feminists rejected the ideas of cultural feminists, claiming that their advocacy of a valuational transformation would not suffice in effecting a radical improvement in the lives of women. Carol Hanisch, when asked about the contemporary branding of corsets and high heels as feminist expressions of sexuality, problematizes this form of feminism as valuational change:

> I think this is an example of how the Women's Liberation movement has become depoliticized...Women using the power of their sexuality goes way back to Jezebel and before, and it's not a real challenge to male supremacy because it doesn't demand that men change how they think about us or treat us, and it seems to me it supports the status quo. Men are all too happy to see us competing with each other over who's the sexiest. It helps keep women in their place. And in my view, women's place is not in front of the mirror...to take the trappings of our oppression and try to redefine them as liberating I think is really reactionary...I don't think we need feelings of empowerment, what we need is real power.[323]

In light of understanding the importance of challenging self-objectification in order to arrest the operation of male dominance, their criticism is understandable. The cultural feminists' approach was not ideational. In other words, cultural feminists did not seek to challenge the traditional idea of femininity, but rather sought to recast it in a positive light. Insodoing, cultural feminists merely glamorized self-objectification, reinforcing the roles and oppressions that self-

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[322] Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," 117.
[323] Hanisch, "A Critique of the Miss America Protest."

objectification necessarily enables and ultimately obstructing real challenges to the patriarchal status quo.

The recognition that valuational change amounts to complicity with the patriarchal status quo whereas ideological change provides the potential for its subversion is essential to combatting female oppression as it exists today. The alarming prevalence of eating disorders amongst women is grave testimony to the oppressive effects of self-objectification, to the fact that women conceptualize and evaluate themselves as subjects in the same way that men observe them as objects--as mere bodies--to the very detriment of those bodies. Media campaigns condemning our cultural obsession with the "thigh gap" and praising "curvy," "real" women, are merely a culturally feminist attempt to revalue different types of female bodies in a way that reinforces self-objectification. Revaluing "healthy-looking" or "thick" female bodies amounts to what Hanisch would call an attempt "to take the trappings of our oppression and try to redefine them as liberating"[324] instead of obliterating, or arresting, them. Similarly, women's reclamation of the word "slut" and condemnation of "slut-shaming" revalues promiscuous sexual behavior but does not problematize women's tendency to evaluate each other and themselves in terms of their sexual activity. These valuational changes, though intended to enable women to evaluate themselves in a way more conducive to strong self-esteem, only encourage women to continue to define and evaluate themselves in male terms--as objects. In order to truly liberate women from the oppressive standards of beauty and sexuality, we must reignite the radical feminist struggle and encourage women not to sustain the prevailing definition of woman by evaluating themselves on its terms, but to destroy it, to arrest the progress of a society founded upon those standards.

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[324] Ibid.

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