

"The Woman As Artist In A Sexist Society"

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sitters.

After Ms. Whisnant's introduction, Bertha Harris began reading some of her thoughts about the woman in literature and the role of woman in general.

Ms. Harris stated that she felt crippled as a writer and yet she did not know how to begin, that the reading she was to do was from a lecture at Wesleyan and that it suffered from an incoherence of rage.

"The writer is confused by her own definitions," stated Ms. Harris, "since to be human is to be man". The portrait of the artist as a young woman is a confusing one, according to Ms. Harris, and Sylvia Plath illustrated that confusion, the poet's ignorance as to the source of her pain.

Ms. Harris pointed to Joyce as the ultimate transfiguration of the World, the Flesh and the Devil held up to her as a young student of literature and she went on to explain that suffering in literature seems to be like the work itself, a male prerogative. In literature, the woman may be the target of tragedy, but she is never the agent of her own destiny.

Sophocles gives Oedipus center-stage to act out his destruction and Jocasta simply recedes into the back ground. In literature, Ms. Harris said, Icharus can fly too high and fall to his death but it was his aspiration, his attempt that ended in failure. The woman, on the other hand, is noble if she gives in, female nobility is a submission, not a willing as it is for men.

The conditions of being a woman, then, are in contrast to those of being an artist. A woman may write poetry, but her poems "are still the records of a slave's sensations", said Ms. Harris.

Suicide, madness and worse are the results of the woman's life as an artist. It may even be worse for the writers who survive, according to Ms. Harris for they "become the house nigger, they learn to bow and scrape"; they become women who mumble the man formulae.

"We can only hope that all of humanity will be allowed to participate in that creation," Ms. Harris stated and added that because women have been

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denied self-love, they deny self-love to their literature and to their world.

Ms. Carolyn Kizer was next and she spoke first of her close friend, Denise Levertov who at one point, seemed to be able to attend the symposium but cancelled later. Ms. Kizer related her search for the muse, in which Denise Levertov was such an inspiration. When Ms. Kizer referred to the Muse, she stated she was referring to the goddess of poetry, a female image to conjure and she presented a poem entitled "Who is The Muse?", dedicated in part to Robert Lowell who stated once that it was impossible for women to be great artists.

Ms. Kizer later recited several other of her poems, one of which was "Persephone Pauses". Persephone was the mythological character who was forced to live half the year in Hades and the other half in light. Ms. Kizer uses the analogy of the housewife who spends half her day (when her husband is at work) ordering her life and making the household run and spends the other half being subservient to the wishes of her husband. Half-light, half-dark is the life of the housewife. It pertains to the schizoid personality of woman under these conditions, continued Ms. Kizer.

Another poem was concerned with era, who in a moment of "adness" considered herself the equal of a god and hangs upside down, tied to the firmament as punishment for her presumption. Most of the work read by Ms. Kizer is available in her volume, "Midnight Was My Cry".

Kate Millett was fourth on the program and she spoke of the in-

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the writers' symposium:

Some Male Thoughts

It is hard to sit before a sterile typewriter trying to put on paper some of the impressions, the conflicting thoughts that arose during the writers' symposium. Indeed, there's even the question of whether a male is in any position to make comment at all; it could be hostile territory. Yet, the questions asked, the statements made are so direct and so immediate, so important both to men and women that I have to comment; perhaps it is a way to calm some of the impressions and clarify some of my own confused opinions.

"Women are an emerging people, Charleen Whisnant said. And I couldn't disagree. Women are stepping into their own in business, politics and maybe even the arts, or at least they seem to be.

But mention emerging people, or mention "up against the wall" and males all over the world get wet, shaky hands. Feminism, Women's "Lib" is threatening to males, it smacks of something far away and dangerous. I remember watching the Dick Cavett Show sometime last year and seeing a parody of the times going on before me: two women, one in her "Superwoman" outfit and the other a screaming, tousled matron's nightmare, as

they screeched and re-screamed obscenities at a cool and somewhat aloof Hugh Hefner.

He sat there, representing in every motion and every cool, subtle statement, the plastic-supermasculine - manipulation which is Playboy and they were like something out of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari; neither of the two were real. They were both satires somehow and I sat wanting to laugh but afraid to.

Sexual Liberation is not only a Feminist slogan; it is a genuine call for the loosening of strict sexual behavior which so many times keeps us from being authentically ourselves. We are strapped and buckled by the proscriptions of myths; distant, vague terrors and suspicions.

It was interesting for me personally after the symposium to get the candid reactions of some of the spectators; interesting because inevitably people were not touched by Ms. Whisnant's statements that women have never been great artists to the degree of men because many of their emotions are still-born; nor were they bowled over by Bertha Harris' commentary on the woman in literature; nor did they mention Carolyn Kizer's wit, razor sharp and acid-burning in places. No, they all say right

off, "You mean, Kate Millett is a LESBIAN!"

It was funny because if they had done any reading at all, they would have found that Ms. Millett has made the statement many times before, but mostly its just funny because they managed to miss the deepest, the most profound and they fell into the most incidental, the most rival of all that was said.

One professor at the end of question and answer period voiced what may have been a male feeling in the audience when he mentioned that he hadn't heard much "about cooperation". He was threatened; his palms were sweaty.

Sexual Liberation for women means something deadly for so many men in that it means the end of a power system, the end of a form of security which was time-honored and sacrosanct, worshipped in temples and law courts, obeyed in the home and held in the street; the supremacy of the male and the subservient role of the woman.

Another man asked if there were any way for woman artists to write anything other than suffering and repression; Kate Millett answered that they tried. Again threatened, a man

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\$600.00 Missing from Loan Fund

Six hundred dollars from the SGA Loan Fund from last year is missing and is not expected to ever be recovered, according to SGA President Jim Cochran and Finance Commissioner Jan Green.

The fund which was allocated \$1,000. at the beginning of the second semester of last year was administered directly by Tom Barrett under the direction of Ed Rosenberg, then Finance Commissioner.

Cochran and Green who have been etehing to recover or at least track down the missing funds have complained of gross administrative negligency, and incompetence on the part of Barrett whose primary responsibility was the fund and on the part of Rosenberg who was responsible for reviewing Barrett's work.

"Some of the receipts for loans and loan agreements were made on napkins from the snack shop," Cochran added. The loan fund is open to any full-time students, and allows for a maximum loan of \$100.00 to any

deserving individual who submits a request to the loan office. Legitimate need is determined by a committee chosen either by the President of the SG or the Finance Commissioner. Procedures are not strictly set down.

"There were no records," stated Cochran. Barrett and Rosenberg left no records and receipts were scarce, and usually informal if present at all. One student has complained that he returned an institutional loan (one administered by the Business Office) to Barrett and that Barrett never turned the money over to the administration.

The Ridgerunner published an account last year about the Loan Fund's dealings and the allegations that friends of Barrett and Rosenberg, non-students, were receiving money from the Loan funds. That account went unheeded.

"We have almost no hope of recovering that money," said Cochran and hadded that, "Since there are no records, no receipts and no formal way of

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