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FB, catella 2, 30

26 June, 1975
Toronto

Dear Women:

This statement outlines my understanding of the struggles of fat women. The WFH perspective is used to break down the isolation of various groups of women and to understand the divisions imposed on us by capital. Fat women have been separated from thin women by capital..In order to break down this division, fat women must examine why capital reacts violently to our struggles and to see that in fact we are struggling. Clearly, there are reasons why fat women are trashed in this society. Womens struggles against our work are direct attacks against capitals control of our lives. Being fat is a struggle against womens role. To see being fat as anything short of a struggle against our work is to separate once again the "personal and political" aspectsof our lives. As if the two could ever be separated!

Please distribute this paper far and wide. (At least to your WFH collective. fat friends, local feminist and lesbian papers) Please send me comments and criticisms c/o Box 38, Stn. E., Toronto.

Lorna Boschman

A proposito del
LBSBISMO
febbraio 78

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Scienze Politiche e Sociali

(26)

FAT WOMENS LIBERATION FROM A WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK PERSPPCTIVE
by Lorna Boschman

We are trained to be thin-identified. When we see fat women on the streets we notice first that they are fat. Being fat is not viewed as a positive distinguishing characteristic. We think that fat women have some emotional or physical problems to be "that way". Because no one wants to be fat. We aren't allowed to enjoy being fat. Friends tell us that we'd look better if we were thinner. And this society as a whole reinforces that attitude. Fat women are made to feel guilty about being fat; this feeling is increased when we can't find clothes to fit, except those of the most conservative variety or overalls. And furniture is built for thin people; we are sometimes worried that we won't fit into a chair or that a rickety one might crumble under our weight.

Why must we be on a diet all of our lives, to achieve that ultimate goal, thinness? Fat women, much more than fat men, are taught to be thin-identified. Women are, and are constantly encouraged to be, on diets. We are always guilty about our fat, even if we have very little of it. Even a little fat is too much. We are taught to hate ourselves, our bodies and other fat women. On the streets, men and women look disapprovingly at fat women, and either pity or hate us.

Fatness is a refusal to do one part of the work expected of us. We must appear thin and feminine to fulfill our role as women. Dieting is work and fat women refuse to do this work. When women refuse part of their work, which means refusing part of their role, society responds by punishing us for our rebellion by saying we are not real women. We are fat women and made to feel external to other women and their (our) struggles. It makes us feel so guilty that we join groups like Weight Watchers or go to fat farms, where, in isolation from thin women, except those who are the instructors (tormenters and guilt producers), the guilt we feel for being fat is reinforced. We pay a high price for the torture.

Refusal of our work is not doing specific parts of womens role deemed necessary by this society. Refusing to be thin, refusing to be heterosexual, refusing to be mothers; all of these are ways in which we women are struggling against the work that this society forces upon us. But when we refuse to do parts of our work, we are punished by this society for it. This often takes the form of self hate. The taboos against women refusing parts of our role are so strong that we, the ones in struggle, are unable to help feeling at least slightly guilty. Just look at fat women and lesbians!

For fat women, eating is a source of security. It is one way of adjusting to a sick society. It is a source of power and powerlessness. Our power is that when we refuse one part of our work, we are able to refuse more of it and push our struggles further. We are no longer viewed as desirable by men, and this, therefore, makes it easier to refuse the work of heterosexuality, if we want to. Our powerlessness is that fatness is seen as a negative thing by us, and by society around us. Its just one more reason to hate ourselves.

Why do women stay thin until after they're married and then refuse to work at being thin and so, gain weight? For many women getting married means having that relationship forever until one of them dies. ~~_____~~
~~_____~~ Marriage is a form of security for women. While she does have to work for at least one more person after she gets married, and probably has to get a waged job outside the home to pay the bills, there is security in two salaries and the knowledge that some day she may only have to do the unwaged labour inside the home, and of course, the work of being a woman. She also has the company of this man who probly won't leave tomorrow. Society tells women to expect at least this much from life. The security of marriage ~~_____~~ gives women

the power to refuse parts of the work of being a woman. She can have headaches when he wants to fuck, she can make T.V. dinners if he makes a lot of money, and she can refuse to be on a diet all the time. Being and staying thin is hard work for many women.

Fat women also tend to be loud and/or jolly. It is assumed that if you have an "ugly" body, you need an exceptional personality to have friends, lovers, etc. This society probably also likes fat women to be jolly because if we got angry, we might get violent or sit on someone. Angry fat women are terrors to behold.

Being fat enables women to push struggles against our work even further. Have you ever noticed that fat women work less hard at wearing make-up or fancy clothes? Trying to look beautiful is hard work. Fat women are viewed by capital as less productive workers. Its easier to look tired if you are fat. You can get red in the face and sweat a lot, and pretend to be exhausted and less physically fit than the thlner workers. We can, and do, get out of work in the paid workplace this way. We can avoid various forms of prostitution at work, since fat women don't usually get hired to be executive secretaries or receptionists or body rub attendants. Men don't usually see fat women as sex objects, only as objects. So we can avoid contact with men by being fat. There are a lot of fat dykes out there: big, strong women.

To refuse our work on a larger scale, we need more money. Money is power-it means less work, less time spent shopping and cooking. We might losing money, and often we are, when we don't get the prostititional office job or it we don't get attached to a man. We need money for the work we do, and money so we can refuse to do it.

The only valid reasons for dieting are health reasons. It is true that fatness is hard on our hearts and lungs and may increase the chance of getting diabetes. But sun tans give us skin cancer, diet pills and losing weight rapidly are severe strains on the body, smoking causes ailments too numerous to list and drinking rots our livers. If clothing doesn't fit, we should organize to fight the companies that cater only to thin women. If someone tries to make us hate ourselves for being fat, we should be able to put ourselves in a position to love ourselves and our fat. Being fat is a struggle against the powerlessness of women and fatness is a point of struggle against womens role. Hating ourselves will not be stopped by changing our mental attitudes about fat. Only when fat women unite and fight capital and the dicipline of thinness as a group, not as individuals, will we be able to feel good about ourselves. Fat women, unite and fight!

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