

# Buy, Sell; Don't Smell!

Pam Gwim

1970

from *The Great Speckled Bird*

Radical women across the country are demanding an end to the male supremacist attitudes and policies of the underground press. It is essential that these demands be recognized and met as a political priority; not only for the women who are struggling against male supremacy in this country but for the Movement as a whole.

At present, the income from the exploitation of women (sex ads, boutique ads, cosmetic ads) is financing the production of an organ of the radical community and its feeding the people who are working fulltime to create change in this country.

There are two categories of ads that exploit women: (1) ads selling sex as a commodity, and (2) ads that use sex to sell a product. The first category includes ads for prick extenders, clit ticklers, porn pictures, etc. We've all heard these ads described as sexually liberating—that the more cocks, cunts, tits and asses you see, the more you accept them as natural and thus the more liberated you are.

What has to be understood by the men (and some women) who take this position is that as long as this society is based on male supremacy and male chauvinism, sexuality is defined in terms of that supremacy and chauvinism. As long as sexuality is couched in those terms, the sexual liberation of either men or women is impossible.

Sexual liberation does not come with the opportunity to look at a porn book and beat off. Sexual liberation is not achieved with gadgets and machines that temporarily eliminate the boredom of -conventional sexuality. Fuck books or orgy movies will not teach us to relate to one another in a new, equal, giving, non-possessive manner.

The sexual diseases produced by our repressive society will not be cured by simply perpetrating the same standards and values in a more graphic or sensual way. Sexual liberation will come only when the dominant-passive, superior-inferior, oppressor-oppressed relationships between man and woman are broken down.

The second category of advertising is, perhaps, more dangerous than the first. Here the guise of sexuality and the myth of the woman are used to sell a product.

The woman's body is made into an object and capitalized upon. The woman is told she must be 'in,' 'cool,' 'sensual' to 'catch that man.' The ad which uses a woman to sell an unrelated product says to the consumer "look how cool we are... aren't tits the greatest thing in the world... buy our toothpaste and you may get some."

For the most part the radical community has reexamined these values and rejected them. But the very fact that such ads appear in the radical media perpetuates these standards and creates the contradiction in the minds of the unradicalized reader.

No radical rag would print a racist ad. Or a Peace Corps or U.S. Army recruiting ad. Our political priorities would not allow us to print such ads. If we see the fight against male supremacy as a political priority, then we cannot accept ads which perpetuate male supremacist attitudes. Ads which are exploitative of women should be immediately phased out of underground publications.

The elimination of male supremacist ads should be viewed as another step in the direction of dealing in a total way with the problem of advertising. It is a challenge to the entire radical community to see that the underground press remains viable without the hypocrisy of its present exploitative policies.

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