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Gender Disobedience: Antifeminism and Insurrectionist Non-dialogue

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2009

The insurrectionist milieu has situated itself as an iconoclastic force within anarchist thought. Its critique often seeks to analyze and subvert the subtle leftism of much allegedly radical thought. This is important. This is valuable.

However, I find it disturbing that, in the midst of this, there lies gross generalizations, ignorance toward the material being criticized, and outright refusal to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of many frames of critique. With this piece, I will focus on the critique of feminism in the works of Feral Faun/Wolfi Landstreicher, as I find it to be generalizing, misinformed, and thus far without consolidated response from anarchists or feminists.

One of the key texts produced by insurrectionary anarchists to counteract feminist critique is Feral Faun's "The Ideology of Victimization" found in the collection *Feral Revolution*. Within this, Feral Faun posits that feminism and victimization are inseparable and, because of this, feminism turns toward domination structures such

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Retrieved on August 15, 2009 from zinelibrary.info

From *Bloodlust: a feminist journal against civilization* #1, August

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as the state for support. There is much to be said for this argument; it undeniably does describe certain strains of feminist thought. Unfortunately, Faun transforms feminism into a monolithic ideology, stripping it of all subtleties and nuances.

The entirety of the piece is based on a piece of graffiti Faun saw saying “Men Rape” that he claims was “most likely” written by a feminist (*Feral Revolution*, 38). Does he once reference a piece of feminist literature to support his argument? No. Does he ever acknowledge that this analysis does not apply to all feminist critique? No. Instead, he makes empty claims with no reference to the field of theory he is critiquing.

Feminism “promotes fear, individual weakness (and subsequently depends on ideologically based support groups and paternalistic protection from authorities)” (37). What Faun fails to realize is that these exact issues have been addressed within feminist discourse. Take for example, Germaine Greer’s statement in *The Female Eunuch*: “The opponents of female suffrage lamented that women’s emancipation would mean the end of marriage, morality, and the state; their extremism was more clear-sighted than the woolly benevolence of liberals and humanists, who thought that giving women a measure of freedom would not upset anything. When we reap the harvest which the unwitting suffragettes sowed we shall see that the antifeminists were after all right” (*Eunuch*, 12). In addition, Valarie Solanas, in *SCUM Manifesto* advocates sabotage, informal revolt, direct action, avoidance of civil disobedience tactics, and the destruction of capitalism and the state. Radical feminists established further critiques of the state in their works as well (see: Emma Goldman, *No More Fun and Games* journal, etc). The fact is, there is a wide critique of hierarchical power structures within feminism and even a cursory exploration of feminist theory would indicate that. Greer’s statement is in direct contradiction to Faun’s attempt to dismiss feminism. She opposes the state, morality, and marriage, all subjects Faun/Landstreicher has tackled in his works. Are we to assume that Faun is not familiar with the work

of Greer, an avowed anarchist and important figure in the theory that Faun critiques; or Valarie Solanas, one of the most infamous feminist icons? Or is it simpler to ignore such writings, as they do not conform to the distortions of feminism Faun seeks to make?

Faun goes on to say that feminism “focuses the energy of individuals away from an examination of society in its totality and of their role in reproducing it” (*Feral*, 38). While it is absolutely true that liberal and reformist feminism lacks a critique of the totality, this does not make it true for feminism as a whole. Eco-feminism makes connections between all forms of oppression – patriarchy, racism, anthropocentrism, etc – and ties it all to a critique of civilization itself. Susan Griffin’s poetic discourse on civilization and patriarchy, *Woman and Nature*, is a force within the green anarchist critique Faun can be considered a part of. It makes all of the connections to the totality that Faun claims feminism cannot. But the work and its writer are explicitly feminist. Another example of feminists making connections between the various forms of oppression is the term “white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” that writer bell hooks uses in her works (see *Feminism is for Everybody*). While certainly this does not critique civilization itself, it disrupts Faun’s false idea that feminism does not make connections to any form of domination outside of patriarchy.

Furthermore, Faun claims that the ideology of victimization present in feminism creates a view where “the family, the cops, the law, therapy and support groups, education, ‘radical’ organizations ... are there to protect us” (*Feral*, 38). Enough examples have been given thus far to refute this entire statement. I find it impossible to believe that, in writing or researching this piece, Faun never came across any feminist works that contradicted his message. The very basis of the piece – that feminism is based in victim status – has been addressed by Third Wave feminists such as Naomi Wolf (see *Fire with Fire*). It seems safe to say that Faun has either done no research on feminism despite writing multiple times on it, or has

purposely ignored the wide array of feminist critiques in order to further his own ideology of antifeminism.

In his newer works under the name Wolfi Landstreicher, Faun has critiqued feminism for its inability to transcend binary gender. In “Against Binary Gender” from *Willful Disobedience*: selections from Vol 2, #10–12, Landstreicher/Faun makes the following incoherent statement: “To criticize the poverty of the practice of feminism and the emptiness of so many of its theoretical constructs which have left it incapable of truly confronting and moving beyond gender because one imagines a liberation from the constraints of gender that is not homogenization into a universal androgyny but rather the opening up of the full spectrum of singular expressions of one’s being in the sexual and passional spheres and every other sphere that gender has affected — this is pure arrogance particularly if one happens to be a man” (*Willful*, 5). Let us deconstruct the arguments made here.

Feminism allegedly is “incapable of moving beyond gender.” While many feminists of the First Wave and Second Wave supported the concept of gender essentialism, this has been confronted by modern feminist, queer, and gender theory. The very idea of eliminating binary gender is central to postmodern gender theory and much of Third Wave feminism. Judith Butler, in such books as *Gender Trouble* has addressed this, and transgender writers such as Leslie Feinberg have furthered the analysis of the sexual and gender binaries. The claim that feminism seeks “homogenization into a universal androgyny” can also be refuted with a simple glance at gender theory. This exact issue is addressed by Kate Bornstein in her book *Gender Outlaw*. She posits that the very concept of androgyny holds up the gender binary and that we must have, as Landstreicher suggests, an “opening up of the full spectrum of singular expressions of one’s being.” The most unusual part of the entire rant is the end in which he says “if one happens to be a man.” Landstreicher seems to decry feminism for clinging to the female identity, but feels fine using his identity as “male” to aid in his dismissal of

feminist concerns. So we must do away with binary gender, but it is acceptable to use it to write off feminists for alleged reverse sexism?

The entirety of Landstreicher/Faun’s work on gender is both confusing and infuriating. Not once does he reference a work to back up his claims and all of his characterizations of feminism can be refuted by even light engagement of feminist theory. It seems as though, in the desire to be a “wrecking ball” for ideology, critical thought takes a backseat to baseless claims and false representations. What is most disturbing is the way in which these works are supported within the insurrectionist milieu and how antifeminism seems to run rampant within that community, almost always regurgitating the same arguments presented by Faun/Landstreicher and similarly without any reference to real examples.

I do not wish to claim that feminism is inherently whole or encompassing in its critique. I feel that an anarchist critique of feminism may be valuable and illuminating. What I do not wish for is more of the same anti-intellectualism and non-thought that seems to be the lot of post-Leftist critiques of feminist theory. If we continue to accept accusation in place of research and false representation in place of actual engagement with what is being critiqued, we are destined to be as theoretically empty as any ideology we can possibly imagine.