

MEN IN FEMINISM

On Tuesday, April 11, 1989, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in the Wilmington Room of the Sheraton Washington Hotel, a National Art Education Association (NAEA) Convention session titled "Men in Feminism" was held. This event was coordinated by Doug Blandy and Kristin G. Congdon, and the session included a panel whose members were: Georgia Collins, Clayton Funk, Heather Anderson reading a paper by Karen A. Hamblen, Jan Jagodzinski, Ken Marantz, and Amy Brook Snider. An introduction was given by Doug Blandy, and Kristin G. Congdon made concluding remarks. Approximately 60 people attended.

Following are the statements by the session coordinators and by each of the panel members in the order in which they were presented. Sara Snowden contributes a synopsis of the comments from the attending delegates. This synopsis is based on the notes that she took during the session at the request of the session coordinators.

Panel Coordinators:

Kristin G. Congdon, University of Central Florida
Doug Blandy, University of Oregon

Panel Members

Karen A. Hamblen, Louisiana State University
Amy Brook Snider, Pratt Institute
Ken Marantz, The Ohio State University
Georgia Collins, University of Kentucky
Jan Jagodzinski, University of Alberta, Edmonton
Clayton Funk, Teacher's College, Columbia University

Synopsis of Delegate Responses:

Sara Snowden, University of Oregon

INTRODUCTION(S) TO MEN IN FEMINISM

KRISTIN G. CONGDON & DOUG BLANDY

Kristin G. Congdon

In the Spring of 1988 I received a note from Doug Blandy asking if I wanted to co-ordinate a panel on "Men in Feminism" with him. The idea of men working with feminist ideas was not new to our discussions. When we worked together at Bowling Green State University, we often wondered (and indeed frequently laughed) at how gender related the reactions of our faculty and students probably were to our successes and failures.

Shortly after I agreed to coordinate this panel with Doug, I attended a conference in the Pennsylvanian mountains in "Women, Art and Society." This was my first major conference exclusively designed for women dealing with women's issues. It felt different; and it felt good. The first full day, at lunch, a woman I did not know took a seat by me and we readily struck up an active conversation based on the morning's events. We talked about men's place in feminism. Before too long, with anger and disgust, she said to me, "Did you know there is even a book out now called *Men in Feminism?*" Her inference was that this was women's territory; men did not belong. That afternoon I heard a panel talk about contemporary feminist writers, and the idea of writing with white ink — symbolizing mother's milk — rather than viewing the pen as phallic symbol which negates women's ability to create literature. Women are talking about writing through their bodies. During the discussion, an audience member, who taught Women's Studies courses, talked about how a man in her university was now teaching classes in her department. She said she was trying to accept his position there, but she could not tolerate him telling her to try writing through her body — thereby owning, acknowledging, and thrusting upon her the current feminist theory which she felt strongly belonged to her.

On my way home from this conference I had a long, conflicting dialogue with myself about my participation in the creation of this panel. I strongly believe, as do many other feminists, that feminism — both as scholarship and as activism — is the most exciting, hopeful, revolutionary and viable movement of our times. By creating this panel, by raising this issue, am I in danger of having men take away and distort what belongs to women? And is feminism really a woman's fight anyway?

I wrote Doug about my concerns. What follows is an excerpt from my letter, reflecting on the Pennsylvania conference: "I am coming to the conclusion that clear distinctions need to be made — and I am not yet sure how to make them or where the boundaries seem to lie — but I am ... convinced that men can not (develop or create) feminist art — or feminist theory. They can, perhaps, learn from it and practice feminist perspectives to the good of

their gender — and maybe that is what I was/am responding to as a result of the panel. I feel men should respond to feminism — responsibly. But the boundaries must be drawn in so far as exploitation is a real possibility — once again."

The responsibility for men art educators I refer to is to actively respond, by asking, listening and hearing women speak about: 1) what pornography in all categories of visual art does to us; I do not ask for censorship, I ask for sensitive education; 2) to recognize that pluralistic approaches to educational programming can result in new ways to problem-solve, create and re-create the world; I do not ask nor want men to formulate all these theoretical approaches, rather, I ask that men seriously listen and take into consideration the language, world views, learning styles, and creative expressions of all people, certainly including women; and 3) to acknowledge that a man's membership in the NAEA Women's Caucus means more than paying dues; I ask that men actively acknowledge and permit the use of feminist theories for the betterment of humankind.

Of course, I recognize that I have less control over men's responses or their involvement in feminism that they have over my participation in patriarchy. My wishes cannot be a mandate; they are simply an opinion and a request. Perhaps that is the reason many feminist women don't feel it is their place to address issues regarding men in feminism. However, for me as an individual, I have found it more helpful and hopeful to dialogue with men on these issues rather than ignore them. I hope this presentation will be taken in that spirit.

I would like to thank Doug for initiating this panel which has made me think and re-think my position on this issue (April, 1989).

Doug Blandy

Kristin and I assume that the feminist movement is a socio-political reality that has been initiated by women to shape consciousness and thus transform societies and cultures that discriminate against women. We concur with Daly's (1987) position that the feminist movement is successfully exposing "the basic model and source of all forms of oppression" (p. 75). Like Daly, we also see the feminist movement successfully initiating a change in consciousness and motivating "moral outrage on behalf of women as women" (p. 75). It is this assumption that motivated our "Men in Feminism" proposal to the 1989 NAEA Convention Planning Committee. This proposal was also motivated by a recognition of problems within the field of art education involving the neglect of women and gender issues.

For example, Sacca (1989) testifies to discrimination against women in art education. She reports that prior to 1977, only one article was published in *Studies in Art Education* on gender differences. She reports that this neglect was attended to in 1977 with a special issue of *Studies in Art Education*, edited by Packard and Zimmerman, that included seven articles on the topic of gender differences. However, over the next decade, Sacca reports that only eight more articles in 32 issues appeared on gender differences. In her analysis of this research, Sacca concludes that there is

evidence that suggests male art educators working in higher education are the primary recipients of status and recognition.

Another example is the NAEA 1989 Convention program (The Board of Directors of the National Art Education Association invites you to attend the 1989 National Convention, April 8-12, Washington, D.C., 1989), of which this session is a part. The guest speakers invited to this Convention are a distinguished group. However, of twenty-four guest speakers listed, only five are women. Of the twenty guest speakers pictured, only four are women.¹ The speakers who are men represent a diverse group of artists, critics, publishers, administrators, editors, and educators. Only one of the women is not an art educator. It is impossible for me to believe that the Planning Committee could not find women from outside the field, as they were able to find men, who could share their wisdom with the Convention. In addition, the Convention's Special Events listing include myriad museum and gallery opportunities. These opportunities draw upon almost all of the major museums and galleries in Washington, D.C. However, the National Museum of Women's Art is not among them. In addition, the Convention's study tours ignore women and art as a specific topic.

Feminists within the art education profession are addressing problems such as these, but so must men. This panel is a beginning attempt to clarify and suggest what role men can or cannot, should or should not, have in the feminist movement within art education.

As members of the Art Education profession, we are involved in political work through the choices we make in our professional lives. We will bring to our professional life the authority and power that is inherent in our activities and the activities of our professional association. I concur with Lentricchia's (1985) position that scholars are most affecting when pursuing political work integral to what they are prepared for and in those arenas in which they work.

Consequently, this session can be seen as a political event. Kristin's and my purpose in coordinating this event is to provide a forum in our professional association for the participation of art educators in the continuing discussion that is occurring nationally and internationally on the relationship of men to feminist visions and agendas. I am personally indebted to Jardine and Smith (1987) and the example they have set for scholars through their work within the Modern Language Association on this issue. Hopefully, discussions such as this one will contribute to the policies and activities of this Association. Our discussions within art education must include, but not be limited to, the continuing rediscovery and inclusion of contributions by women artists and art educators in research and teaching; and the acknowledgment that gender issues will pervade our thinking on the cultural, biologic, historical, political, economic, and psychological foundations of art education. Feminism will also assist us in our consideration of groups that we might usually think of as being subordinated and victimized. Instead, we can see such individuals as active resisters as feminist historians instruct us in the ways women have resisted (Keniston, 1968).

Over a decade ago, Skouholt (1978) described the impact of feminism in men's lives. His research suggests at least two options that are available to art educators who are men as they encounter feminism. We can see our options diminish as the options of our women colleagues increase. We can

react with increased competitiveness, desiring to maintain superiority. The much more compelling option, the option with which I am working and the option that also motivates my participation in this session, is to acknowledge responsibility for discriminatory practices and environments, work with women and men for better options for women, and contribute to the critique of masculinity and the male socialization process that contributes to discriminatory practices and environments. Fortunately, we will be supported in this second option through research like Skouholt's (1978), scholarly responses like that of Jardine and Smith (1987), and professional organizations like the National Organization for Changing Men (NOCM) which sponsors conferences and symposia on the topic.

Footnote

1 It is also important to note that there are also few people of color and other minority group members among the Convention guest speakers.

References

- The Board of Directors of the National Art Education Association invites you to attend the 1989 National Convention April 8-12 Washington, D.C. (1989). *Art Education*, 42(1), 29-48.
- Daly, M. (1987). *Webster's first new intergalactic wickedary of the English language*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Jardine, A. & Smith, P., Editors. (1987). *Men in Feminism*. New York: Methuen.
- Keniston, K. (1988, May 8). Wife beating and the rule of thumb. *New York Times Book Review*, p. 12.
- Lentricchia, F. (1985). *Criticism and social change*. Chicago University Press.
- Sacca, E. J. (1989). Invisible women: Questioning recognition and status in art education. *Studies in Art Education*, 30(2), 122-127.
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A MODERNITY-POSTMODERNITY DIALECTIC ON MEN IN FEMINISM

KAREN A. HAMBLIN

In my discussion of men in feminism, I will focus on this topic in terms of art educators employed in higher education. My comments are based on the assumption that feminism and its attendant values, attitudes, and behaviors are seen as something that men, in some way, react to, adjust to, or, just plainly, take into consideration at this time in history. An ostensibly neutral stance is not possible - ignoring feminism is itself charged with value judgments. Questions, however, arise as to how an optimum state of sex equity and gender consciousness might occur and what relationships men would have toward feminism given the current character of academia and, specifically, of art education faculties. I will use the terms *adaptive*, *separatist*, and *androgynous* as descriptors of how women relate to male-dominated academia. Conversely, these same descriptors also provide perspectives on how men relate, or could relate, to feminism.

In an *adaptive* approach, women attempt to be more like men in their professional behaviors, attitudes, and values, and, by acquiring such characteristics, women accept recognition for achievements commensurate with those of their male colleagues. In the adaptive relationship, women try to buy into the patriarchal system of hierarchical power and decision-making - to a great extent this is what women in higher education have traditionally tried to do (Rush, 1987). The second relationship, *separatist*, exists when women develop their own community of feminist values, attitudes, and behaviors, and work toward getting the administrative hierarchy to consider feminist issues and values as legitimate in their own right. Needless to say, women who have ignored or directly confronted the system in this manner have met with less than optimum success. For example, women who have attempted to receive tenure on the basis of classroom teaching and community service can readily attest to the lack of recognition given to such so-called female activities. A separatist approach does not mean equal consideration. The third way in which women relate to male domination in higher education is through the integration of feminist values with the most desirable values of traditional patriarchies. The results are assumed to be the best of the two worlds of male and female and has been considered *androgynous* in nature (Collins, 1977).

Adaptive Approach of Men to Feminism

The adaptive approach, wherein feminism would constitute the operative system, appears to be preferable from a feminist viewpoint. If men were required to adapt to feminism, this would constitute a so-called