Empirical science left repercussions in its wake: the sudden advancement of technology upset the natural order. But the recent interest in ecology, the study of man’s relationship to his environment, may, by 1970, have come too late. Certainly it is too late for conservatism, the attempt to redress natural balances. What is called for is a revolutionary ecological program that would attempt to establish a humane artificial (man-made) balance in place of the natural one, thus also realizing the original goal of empirical science: human mastery of matter.

The best new currents in ecology and social planning agree with feminist aims. The way that these two social phenomena, feminism and revolutionary ecology, have emerged with such seeming coincidence illustrates a historical truth: new theories and new movements do not develop in a vacuum, they arise to spearhead the necessary social solutions to new problems resulting from contradictions in the environment. In this case, both movements have arisen in response to the same contradiction: animal life within a technology. In the case of feminism the problem is a moral one: the biological family unit has always oppressed women and children, but now, for the first time in history, technology has created real preconditions for overthrowing these oppressive “natural” con-
ditions, along with their cultural reinforcements. In the case of the new ecology, we find that independent of any moral stance, for pragmatic—survival—reasons alone, it has become necessary to free humanity from the tyranny of its biology. Humanity can no longer afford to remain in the transitional stage between simple animal existence and full control of nature. And we are much closer to a major evolutionary jump, indeed, to direction of our own evolution, than we are to a return to the animal kingdom from which we came.

Thus in terms of modern technology, a revolutionary ecological movement would have the same aim as the feminist movement: control of the new technology for humane purposes, the establishment of a beneficial “human” equilibrium between man and the new artificial environment he is creating, to replace the destroyed “natural” balance.

What are some of the concerns of ecology that are of direct interest to the feminist movement? I shall discuss briefly two issues of the new ecology that particularly pertain to the new feminism: reproduction and its control, including the seriousness of the population explosion and new methods of fertility control, and cybernation, the future takeover by machines of increasingly complex functions, altering man’s age-old relation to work and wages.

Previously I had taken copious notes, written whole drafts on the population explosion, quoting once again all sorts of frightening statistics about the rate of population growth. But on second thought, it seemed to me that I had heard it all before and so had everyone else. Perhaps for the purposes of this book, we would do better to discuss why these statistics are so consistently ignored. For, despite increasingly dire pronouncements from every expert in the field, few people are seriously worried. In fact, the public euphoria and laissez faire actually seem to grow in direct proportion to the need for immediate action to stave off future disaster.

The relation between the two situations is direct: in-
ability to confront or deal with the problem creates a sham confidence, the extent of which is borne out by a recent Gallup poll (August 3, 1968) in which, to the question, "What do you find to be the most pressing problem confronting the nation today?" less than 1 percent of the national sample of adults questioned mentioned population. And yet at the very least, to quote population experts Lincoln H. Day and Alice Taylor Day, in their book *Too Many Americans*, "To support an increase of another 180,000,000 (forty-four more years, at current rates) this country would have to undergo changes in the condition of life as radical as those that have occurred since Columbus." This is the most conservative estimate. The majority of demographers, biologists, and ecologists are considerably more pessimistic. Books come out all the time on the subject, each with a new slant to the terrors of the population explosion (If we had reproduced at this rate since the time of Christ, by now we would have . . . . If we continue at this rate, starvation will look like . . . by the year . . . . So and so many rats congested in a room produce XYZ behavior . . . .), books with such titles as *Famine, 1975, The Population Bomb*, and so on. Scientists themselves are in a panic: a well-known biologist at Rockefeller University is reputed to have stopped speaking to his own daughter after the birth of her third child; his students multiply at their peril.

Yet the public remains convinced that science can solve the problem. One reason the man on the street believes so ardently that "they" can handle it—in addition to the Witchdoctor Mystique that "they" always seem to find an answer for everything—is that information filters down so slowly from above. For example, the public began to hear about the "green revolution" only when scientists abandoned hope in it as anything but a desperate stopgap measure to delay worldwide famine for another generation; but rather than causing widespread alarm and immediate action, this information acted as a bromide.

The Miracle-of-Modern-Science is only one of a whole
stockpile of arguments that, no matter how often they are disproven, keep bobbing up again. There is the Food Surplus argument, the Vast-Stretches-of-Unpopulated-Land argument, the Economic argument (more people keep the economy going), the Military argument (population increases defense strength, cf. the Chinese Boogy-Woogy) and many more, varying in their sophistication with the social milieu of their propounders. It is useless to argue—and therefore I won’t do it here—for it is not at all a question of correct information, or logic. There is something else that unites all these arguments. What is it?

Underlying all these arguments is the peculiar chauvinism that develops in the family. In past chapters we have discussed some of the components of this psychology: The patriarchal mentality concerned only with its own interests, and with its progeny only insofar as they are heir and ego extension, in the private bid for immortality (why worry about the larger social good just so long as—that beautiful phrase—You And Yours are “happy” when the great catastrophe hits); Us-Against-Them chauvinism (blood is thicker); the division between the abstract and the concrete, the public and the private (what could be more abstract and public than a demographic statistic? what could be more private and concrete than one’s own reproduction?); the privatization of the sex experience; the power psychology; and so on.

Leftists and revolutionaries, unfortunately, are no exception to this universal malpsychology generated by the family. They too indulge in Us-Against-Themism, though this time in reverse. If “Us,” the upper-class and highbrow intelligentsia, argues that “We better not have a decrease in birth rates or the rabble and/or the weak-minded will take over,” “Them,” the “rabble” (lately known as the “lunatic fringe”), counters with paranoia about being birth-controlled out of existence—“Genocide of the Third World and Undesirables at Home.” This fear is well-founded. However, it is also responsible for a general failure of vision on the Left to see beneath the
evil uses of birth control to a genuine ecological problem which no number of fancy arguments and bogey statistics can erase. It is true that capitalist imperialist governments are only too glad to dispense birth control devices to the Third World or to Blacks and the poor in the U.S. (particularly welfare mothers, who are often made into guinea pigs for the latest experiments), while at home they think nothing of giving a man a ten-year jail sentence for dispensing Emko Foam to a young, white, unmarried coed; it is true that a redistribution of the world’s wealth and resources would greatly ease the problem—even if it *could* happen tomorrow. But the problem would still remain, for it exists independently of traditional politics and economics, and thus could not be solved by traditional politics and economics alone. These political and economic complications are only *aggravations* of a genuine problem of ecology. Once again radicals have failed to think radically enough: capitalism is not the *only* enemy, redistribution of wealth and resources is not the *only* solution, attempts to control population are not *only* Third World Suppression in disguise.

But often there is a more serious error: the *misuse* of scientific developments is very often confused with technology itself. (But do the black militants who advocate unchecked fertility for black women allow *themselves* to become burdened with heavy bellies and too many mouths to feed? One gathers that they find contraception of some help in maintaining their active preaching schedules.) As was demonstrated in the case of the development of atomic energy, radicals, rather than breastbeating about the immorality of scientific research, could be much more effective by concentrating their *full* energies on demands for control of scientific discoveries by and for the people. For, like atomic energy, fertility control, artificial reproduction, cybernation, in themselves, are liberating—*unless* they are improperly used.

What are the new scientific developments in the control of this dangerously prolific reproduction? Already we have more and better contraception than ever before in his-
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The old spanner-in-the-works intervention of conception (diaphragms, condoms, foams, and jellies) was only the beginning. Soon we shall have a complete understanding of the entire reproductive process in all its complexity, including the subtle dynamics of hormones and their full effects on the nervous system. Present oral contraception is at only a primitive (faulty) stage, only one of many types of fertility control now under experiment. Artificial insemination and artificial involution are already a reality. Choice of sex of the fetus, test-tube fertilization (when capacitation of sperm within the vagina is fully understood) are just around the corner. Several teams of scientists are working on the development of an artificial placenta. Even parthenogenesis—virgin birth—could be developed very soon.

Are people, even scientists themselves, culturally prepared for any of this? Decidedly not. A recent Harris poll, quoted in Life magazine, representing a broad sampling of Americans—including, for example, Iowa farmers—found a surprising number willing to consider the new methods. The hitch was that they would consider them only where they reinforced and furthered present values of family life and reproduction, e.g., to help a barren woman have her husband's child. Any question that could be interpreted as a furthering of "sexual revolution" alone was rejected flatly as unnatural. But note that it was not the "test tube" baby itself that was thought unnatural (25 percent agreed off the bat that they themselves would use this method, usually given the preconditions we have described), but the new value system, based on the elimination of male supremacy and the family.

It is clear by now that research in the area of reproduction is itself being impeded by cultural lag and sexual bias. The money allocated for specific kinds of research,

*I must ask the reader to forgive me here—this chapter was written before the "Pill Hearings," indeed, before the mushrooming of the ecology movement itself. Such is the speed of modern communications—a book is outdated before it even makes it into galleys.
the kinds of research done are only incidentally in the interests of women when at all. For example, work on the development of an artificial placenta still has to be excused on the grounds that it might save babies born prematurely. Thus, although it would be far easier technically to transfer a young embryo than an almost fully developed baby, all the money goes into the latter research. Or again, that women are excluded from science is directly responsible for the tabling of research on oral contraceptives for males. (Is it possible that women are thought to make better guinea pigs because they are considered by male scientists to be “inferior”? Or is it only because male scientists worship male fertility?) There are great numbers of such examples.

Fears of new methods of reproduction are so widespread that as of the time of this writing, 1969, the subject, outside of scientific circles, is still taboo. Even many women in the women’s liberation movement—perhaps especially in the women’s liberation movement—are afraid to express any interest in it for fear of confirming everyone’s suspicions that they are “unnatural,” spending a great deal of energy denying that they are anti-motherhood, pro-artificial reproduction, and so on. Let me then say it bluntly:

*Pregnancy is barbaric.* I do not believe, as many women are now saying, that the reason pregnancy is viewed as not beautiful is due strictly to cultural perversion. The child’s first response, “What’s wrong with that Fat Lady?”; the husband’s guilty waning of sexual desire; the woman’s tears in front of the mirror at eight months—are all gut reactions, not to be dismissed as cultural habits. Pregnancy is the temporary deformation of the body of the individual for the sake of the species.

Moreover, childbirth *hurts.* And it isn’t good for you. Three thousand years ago, women giving birth “naturally” had no need to pretend that pregnancy was a real trip, some mystical orgasm (that far-away look). The Bible said it: pain and travail. The glamor was unnecessary: women had no choice. They didn’t dare
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squawk. But at least they could scream as loudly as they wanted during their labor pains. And after it was over, even during it, they were admired in a limited way for their bravery; their valor was measured by how many children (sons) they could endure bringing into the world.

Today all this has been confused. The cult of natural childbirth itself tells us how far we’ve come from true oneness with nature. Natural childbirth is only one more part of the reactionary hippie-Rousseauean Return-to-Nature, and just as self-conscious. Perhaps a mystification of childbirth, true faith, makes it easier for the woman involved. Pseudo-yoga exercises, twenty pregnant women breathing deeply on the floor, may even help some women develop “proper” attitudes (as in “I didn’t scream once”). The squirming husband at the bedside, like the empathy pains of certain tribesmen (“Just look what I go through with you, dear”), may make a woman feel less alone during her ordeal. But the fact remains: childbirth is at best necessary and tolerable. It is not fun.

(Like shitting a pumpkin, a friend of mine told me when I inquired about the Great-Experience-You’re-Missing. What’s-wrong-with-shitting-shitting-can-be-fun says the School of the Great Experience. It hurts, she says. What’s-wrong-with-a-little-pain-as-long-as-it-doesn’t-kill-you? answers the School. It is boring, she says. Pain-can-be-interesting-as-an-experience says the School. Isn’t that a rather high price to pay for interesting experience? she says. But-look-you-get-a-reward, says the School: a-baby-all-your-own-to-fuck-up-as-you-please. Well, that’s something, she says. But how do I know it will be male like you?)

Artificial reproduction is not inherently dehumanizing. At very least, development of an option should make possible an honest reexamination of the ancient value of motherhood. At the present time, for a woman to come out openly against motherhood on principle is physically dangerous. She can get away with it only if she adds that she is neurotic, abnormal, childhating and therefore “unfit.” (“Perhaps later . . . when I’m better prepared.”)
This is hardly a free atmosphere of inquiry. Until the taboo is lifted, until the decision not to have children or not to have them "naturally" is at least as legitimate as traditional childbearing, women are as good as forced into their female roles.

Another scientific development that we find difficult to absorb into our traditional value system is the dawn of cybernation, the takeover of work functions by increasingly complex machines—machines that may soon equal or surpass man in original thinking and problem-solving. While it may be argued, as with artificial reproduction, that such machines are barely past the speculative stage, remember that it was only five to ten years ago that experts in the field were predicting that five or six computers would satisfy permanently the needs of the whole country.

Cybernation, like birth control, can be a double-edged sword. Like artificial reproduction, to envision it in the hands of the present powers is to envision a nightmare. We need not elaborate. Everyone is familiar with Technocracy, 1984: the increased alienation of the masses, the intensified rule of the elite (perhaps cyberneticians), baby factories, increased government efficiency (Big Brother), and so on. In the hands of the present society there is no doubt that the machine could be used—is being used—to intensify the apparatus of repression and to increase established power.

But again, as with the population explosion, and birth control, the distinction between misuse of science and the value of science itself is not often kept clear. In this case, though perhaps the response may not be quite so hysterical and evasive, we still often have the same unimaginative concentration on the evils of the machine itself, rather than a recognition of its revolutionary significance. Books and research abound on how to avoid Technocracy, 1984 (e.g., Alan Weston’s Privacy and Freedom), but there is little thought about how to deal effectively with the qualitative changes in life style that cybernation will bring.

The two issues, population control and cybernation,
produce the same nervous superficial response because in both cases the underlying problem is one for which there is no precedent: qualitative change in humanity's basic relationships to both its production and its reproduction. We will need almost overnight, in order to deal with the profound effects of fertility control and cybernation, a new culture based on a radical redefinition of human relationships and leisure for the masses. To so radically redefine our relationship to production and reproduction requires the destruction at once of the class system as well as the family. We will be beyond arguments about who is "bringing home the bacon"—no one will be bringing it home, because no one will be "working." Job discrimination would no longer have any basis in a society where machines do the work better than human beings of any size or skill could. Machines thus could act as the perfect equalizer, obliterating the class system based on exploitation of labor.

What might the immediate impact of cybernation be on the position of women? Briefly, we can predict the following: 1) While at first automation will continue to provide new service jobs for women, e.g., keypunch operator, computer programmer, etc., these positions are not likely to last long (precisely why women, the transient labor force par excellence, are sought for them). Eventually, such simple specialized control of machines will give way to a more widespread common knowledge of their control and, at the same time, at top levels, increased specialized knowledge of their more complex functions by a new elite of engineers, cyberneticians. The kinds of jobs into which women have been welcomed, the lower rung of white-collar service jobs, will be cybernated out. At the same time, housework will become more fully automated, reducing women's legitimate work functions even further. 2) Erosion of the status of the "head of the household," particularly in the working class, may shake up family life and traditional sex roles even more profoundly. 3) Massive unrest of the young, the poor, the unemployed will increase: as jobs become more difficult
to obtain, and there is no cushioning of the cultural shock by education for leisure, revolutionary ferment is likely to become a staple. Thus, all in all, cybernation may aggravate the frustration that women already feel in their roles, pushing them into revolution.

A feminist revolution could be the decisive factor in establishing a new ecological balance: attention drawn to the population explosion, a shifting of emphasis from reproduction to contraception, and demands for the full development of artificial reproduction would provide an alternative to the oppressions of the biological family; cybernation, by changing man’s relationship to work and wages, by transforming activity from “work” to “play” (activity done for its own sake), would allow for a total redefinition of the economy, including the family unit in its economic capacity. The double curse that man should till the soil by the sweat of his brow and that woman should bear in pain and travail would be lifted through technology to make humane living for the first time a possibility. The feminist movement has the essential mission of creating cultural acceptance of the new ecological balance necessary for the survival of the human race in the twentieth century.
THE ULTIMATE REVOLUTION

I
STRUCTURAL IMPERATIVES

Before we talk about revolutionary alternatives, let's summarize—to determine the specifics that must be carefully excluded from any new structures. Then we can go on to "utopian speculation" directed by at least negative guidelines.

We have seen how women, biologically distinguished from men, are culturally distinguished from "human." Nature produced the fundamental inequality—half the human race must bear and rear the children of all of them—which was later consolidated, institutionalized, in the interests of men. Reproduction of the species cost women dearly, not only emotionally, psychologically, culturally but even in strictly material (physical) terms: before recent methods of contraception, continuous childbirth led to constant "female trouble," early aging, and death. Women were the slave class that maintained the species in order to free the other half for the business of the world—admittedly often its drudge aspects, but certainly all its creative aspects as well.

This natural division of labor was continued only at great cultural sacrifice: men and women developed only half of themselves, at the expense of the other half. The division of the psyche into male and female to better reinforce the reproductive division was tragic: the hypertrophy in men of rationalism, aggressive drive, the atrophy of their emotional sensitivity was a physical (war) as well as a cultural disaster. The emotionalism and
passivity of women increased their suffering (we cannot speak of them in a symmetrical way, since they were victimized as a class by the division). Sexually men and women were channeled into a highly ordered—time, place, procedure, even dialogue—heterosexuality restricted to the genitals, rather than diffused over the entire physical being.

I submit, then, that the first demand for any alternative system must be:

1) The freeing of women from the tyranny of their reproductive biology by every means available, and the diffusion of the childbearing and childrearing role to the society as a whole, men as well as women. There are many degrees of this. Already we have a (hard-won) acceptance of “family planning,” if not contraception for its own sake. Proposals are imminent for day-care centers, perhaps even twenty-four-hour child-care centers staffed by men as well as women. But this, in my opinion, is timid if not entirely worthless as a transition. We’re talking about radical change. And though indeed it cannot come all at once, radical goals must be kept in sight at all times. Day-care centers buy women off. They ease the immediate pressure without asking why that pressure is on women.

At the other extreme there are the more distant solutions based on the potentials of modern embryology, that is, artificial reproduction, possibilities still so frightening that they are seldom discussed seriously. We have seen that the fear is to some extent justified: in the hands of our current society and under the direction of current scientists (few of whom are female or even feminist), any attempted use of technology to “free” anybody is suspect. But we are speculating about post-revolutionary systems, and for the purposes of our discussion we shall assume flexibility and good intentions in those working out the change.

To thus free women from their biology would be to threaten the social unit that is organized around biological reproduction and the subjection of women to their biologi-
cal destiny, the family. Our second demand will come also as a basic contradiction to the family, this time the family as an economic unit:

2) The full self-determination, including economic independence, of both women and children. To achieve this goal would require fundamental changes in our social and economic structure. This is why we must talk about a feminist socialism: in the immediate future, under capitalism, there could be at best a token integration of women into the labor force. For women have been found exceedingly useful and cheap as a transient, often highly skilled labor supply,* not to mention the economic value of their traditional function, the reproduction and rearing of the next generation of children, a job for which they are now patronized (literally and thus figuratively) rather than paid. But whether or not officially recognized, these are essential economic functions. Women, in this present capacity, are the very foundation of the economic superstructure, vital to its existence.† The paean to self-sacrificing motherhood have a basis in reality: Mom is vital to the American way of life, considerably more than apple pie. She is an institution without which the system really would fall apart. In official capitalist terms, the bill

* Most bosses would fail badly had they to take over their secretaries’ job, or do without them. I know several secretaries who sign without a thought their bosses’ names to their own (often brilliant) solutions. The skills of college women especially would cost a fortune reckoned in material terms of male labor.
† Margaret Benston (“The Political Economy of Women’s Liberation,” *Monthly Review*, September 1969), in attempting to show that women’s oppression is indeed economic—though previous economic analysis has been incorrect—distinguishes between the male superstructure economy based on commodity production (capitalist ownership of the means of production, and wage labor), and the pre-industrial reduplicative economy of the family, production for immediate use. Because the latter is not part of the official contemporary economy, its function at the basis of that economy is often overlooked. Talk of drafting women into the superstructure commodity economy fails to deal with the tremendous amount of necessary production of the traditional kind now performed by women without pay: Who will do it?
for her economic services* might run as high as one-fifth of the gross national product. But payment is not the answer. To pay her, as is often discussed seriously in Sweden, is a reform that does not challenge the basic division of labor and thus could never eradicate the disastrous psychological and cultural consequences of that division of labor.

As for the economic independence of children, that is really a pipe dream, realized as yet nowhere in the world. And, in the case of children too, we are talking about more than a fair integration into the labor force; we are talking about the abolition of the labor force itself under a cybernetic socialism, the radical restructuring of the economy to make "work," i.e., wage labor, no longer necessary. In our post-revolutionary society adults as well as children would be provided for—irrespective of their social contributions—in the first equal distribution of wealth in history.

We have now attacked the family on a double front, challenging that around which it is organized: reproduction of the species by females and its outgrowth, the physical dependence of women and children. To eliminate these would be enough to destroy the family, which breeds the power psychology. However, we will break it down still further.

3) **The total integration of women and children into all aspects of the larger society.** All institutions that segregate the sexes, or bar children from adult society, e.g., the elementary school, must be destroyed. *Down with school!*

These three demands predicate a feminist revolution based on advanced technology. And if the male/female and the adult/child cultural distinctions are destroyed, we

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* The Chase Manhattan Bank estimates a woman's over-all domestic work week at 99.6 hours. Margaret Benston gives her minimal estimate for a *childless* married woman at 16 hours, close to half of a regular work week; a *mother* must spend at least six or seven days a week working close to 12 hours.
will no longer need the sexual repression that maintains these unequal classes, allowing for the first time a "natural" sexual freedom. Thus we arrive at:

4) The freedom of all women and children to do whatever they wish to do sexually. There will no longer be any reason not to. (Past reasons: Full sexuality threatened the continuous reproduction necessary for human survival, and thus, through religion and other cultural institutions, sexuality had to be restricted to reproductive purposes, all nonreproductive sex pleasure considered deviation or worse; The sexual freedom of women would call into question the fatherhood of the child, thus threatening patrimony; Child sexuality had to be repressed because it was a threat to the precarious internal balance of the family. These sexual repressions increased proportionately to the degree of cultural exaggeration of the biological family.) In our new society, humanity could finally revert to its natural polymorphous sexuality—all forms of sexuality would be allowed and indulged. The fully sexuate mind, realized in the past in only a few individuals (survivors), would become universal. Artificial cultural achievement would no longer be the only avenue to sexuate self-realization: one could now realize oneself fully, simply in the process of being and acting.

II

FEARS AND CONSIDERATIONS

These broad imperatives must form the basis of any more specific radical feminist program. But our revolutionary demands are likely to meet anything from mild balking ("utopian . . . unrealistic . . . farfetched . . . too far in the future . . . impossible . . . well, it may stink, but you haven't got anything better . . .") to hysteria ("inhuman . . . unnatural . . . sick . . . perverted . . . communistic . . . 1984 . . . what? creative motherhood
seen, also fulfilled some of the stipulations and not others, or only partially fulfilled all of them. And marriage has the added advantage of being a known quantity.

And yet marriage in its very definition will never be able to fulfill the needs of its participants, for it was organized around, and reinforces, a fundamentally oppressive biological condition that we only now have the skill to correct. As long as we have the institution we shall have the oppressive conditions at its base. We need to start talking about new alternatives that will satisfy the emotional and psychological needs that marriage, archaic as it is, still satisfies, but that will satisfy them better. But in any proposal we shall have to do at least one better than marriage on our feminist scale, or despite all warnings people will stay hooked—in the hope that just this once, just for them, marriage will come across.

IV
ALTERNATIVES

The classic trap for any revolutionary is always, "What's your alternative?" But even if you could provide the interrogator with a blueprint, this does not mean he would use it: in most cases he is not sincere in wanting to know. In fact this is a common offensive, a technique to deflect revolutionary anger and turn it against itself. Moreover, the oppressed have no job to convince all people. All they need know is that the present system is destroying them.

But though any specific direction must arise organically out of the revolutionary action itself, still I feel tempted here to make some "dangerously utopian" concrete proposals—both in sympathy for my own pre-radical days when the Not-Responsible-For-Blueprint Line perplexed me, and also because I am aware of the political dangers in the peculiar failure of imagination concerning alternatives to the family. There are, as we have seen, several good reasons for this failure. First, there are no precedents in history for feminist revolution—there have been women
revolutionaries, certainly, but they have been used by male revolutionaries, who seldom gave even lip service to equality for women, let alone to a radical feminist re-structuring of society. Moreover, we haven’t even a literary image of this future society; there is not even a utopian feminist literature in existence. Thirdly, the nature of the family unit is such that it penetrates the individual more deeply than any other social organization we have: it literally gets him “where he lives.” I have shown how the family shapes his psyche to its structure—until ultimately, he imagines it absolute, talk of anything else striking him as perverted. Finally, most alternatives suggest a loss of even the little emotional warmth provided by the family, throwing him into a panic. The model that I shall now draw up is subject to the limitations of any plan laid out on paper by a solitary individual. Keep in mind that these are not meant as final answers, that in fact the reader could probably draw up another plan that would satisfy as well or better the four structural imperatives laid out above. The following proposals, then, will be sketchy, meant to stimulate thinking in fresh areas rather than to dictate the action.

* * *

What is the alternative to 1984 if we could have our demands acted on in time?

The most important characteristic to be maintained in any revolution is flexibility. I will propose, then, a program of multiple options to exist simultaneously, interweaving with each other, some transitional, others far in the future. An individual may choose one “life style” for one decade, and prefer another at another period.

1) Single Professions. A single life organized around the demands of a chosen profession, satisfying the individual’s social and emotional needs through its own particular occupational structure, might be an appealing solution for many individuals, especially in the transitional period.
Single professions have practically vanished, despite the fact that the encouragement of reproduction is no longer a valid social concern. The old single roles, such as the celibate religious life, court roles—jester, musician, page, knight, and loyal squire—cowboys, sailors, firemen, cross-country truck drivers, detectives, pilots had a prestige all their own: there was no stigma attached to being professionally single. Unfortunately, these roles seldom were open to women. Most single female roles (such as spinster aunt, nun, or courtesan) were still defined by their sexual nature.

Many social scientists are now proposing as a solution to the population problem the encouragement of “deviant life styles” that by definition imply nonfertility. Richard Meier suggests that glamorous single professions previously assigned only to men should now be opened to women as well, for example, “astronaut.” He notes that where these occupations exist for women, e.g., stewardess, they are based on the sex appeal of a young woman, and thus can be only limited way stations on the way to a better job or marriage. And, he adds, “so many limitations are imposed [on women’s work outside the home] . . . that one suspects the existence of a culture-wide conspiracy which makes the occupational role sufficiently unpleasant that 90 percent or more would choose homemaking as a superior alternative.” With the extension of whatever single roles still exist in our culture to include women, the creation of more such roles, and a program of incentives to make these professions rewarding, we could, painlessly, reduce the number of people interested in parenthood at all.

2) “Living Together.” Practiced at first only in Bohemian or intellectual circles and now increasingly in the population at large—especially by metropolitan youth—“living together” is becoming a common social practice. “Living together” is the loose social form in which two or more partners, of whatever sex, enter a nonlegal sex/companionate arrangement the duration of which varies with the internal dynamics of the relationship. Their contract
is only with each other; society has no interest, since neither reproduction nor production—dependencies of one party on the other—is involved. This flexible non-form could be expanded to become the standard unit in which most people would live for most of their lives.

At first, in the transitional period, sexual relationships would probably be monogamous (single standard, female-style, this time around), even if the couple chose to live with others. We might even see the continuation of strictly nonsexual group living arrangements (“roommates”). However, after several generations of nonfamily living, our psychosexual structures may become altered so radically that the monogamous couple, or the “aim-inhibited” relationship, would become obsolescent. We can only guess what might replace it—perhaps true “group marriages,” transexual group marriages which also involved older children? We don’t know.

The two options we have suggested so far—single professions and “living together”—already exist, but only outside the mainstream of our society, or for brief periods in the life of the normal individual. We want to broaden these options to include many more people for longer periods of their lives, to transfer here instead all the cultural incentives now supporting marriage—making these alternatives, finally, as common and acceptable as marriage is today.

But what about children? Doesn’t everyone want children sometime in their lives? There is no denying that people now feel a genuine desire to have children. But we don’t know how much of this is the product of an authentic liking for children, and how much is a displacement of other needs. We have seen that parental satisfaction is obtainable only through crippling the child: The attempted extension of ego through one’s children—in the case of the man, the “immortalizing” of name, property, class, and ethnic identification, and in the case of the woman, motherhood as the justification of her existence, the resulting attempt to live through the child, child-as-project—in the end damages or destroys either the child or the
parent, or both when neither wins, as the case may be. Perhaps when we strip parenthood of these other functions, we will find a real instinct for parenthood even on the part of men, a simple physical desire to associate with the young. But then we have lost nothing, for a basic demand of our alternative system is some form of intimate interaction with children. If a parenthood instinct does in fact exist, it will be allowed to operate even more freely, having shed the practical burdens of parenthood that now make it such an anguished hell.

But what, on the other hand, if we find that there is no parenthood instinct after all? Perhaps all this time society has persuaded the individual to have children only by imposing on parenthood ego concerns that had no proper outlet. This may have been unavoidable in the past—but perhaps it’s now time to start more directly satisfying those ego needs. As long as natural reproduction is still necessary, we can devise less destructive cultural inducements. But it is likely that, once the ego investments in parenthood are removed, artificial reproduction will be developed and widely accepted.

3) Households. I shall now outline a system that I believe will satisfy any remaining needs for children after ego concerns are no longer part of our motivations. Suppose a person or a couple at some point in their lives desire to live around children in a family-size unit. While we will no longer have reproduction as the life goal of the normal individual—we have seen how single and group nonreproductive life styles could be enlarged to become satisfactory for many people for their whole lifetimes and for others, for good portions of their lifetime—certain people may still prefer community-style group living permanently, and other people may want to experience it at some time in their lives, especially during early childhood.

Thus at any given time a proportion of the population will want to live in reproductive social structures. Correspondingly, the society in general will still need reproduction, though reduced, if only to create a new generation.
The proportion of the population will be automatically a select group with a predictably higher rate of stability, because they will have had a freedom of choice now generally unavailable. Today those who do not marry and have children by a certain age are penalized: they find themselves alone, excluded, and miserable, on the margins of a society in which everyone else is compartmentalized into lifetime generational families, chauvinism and exclusiveness their chief characteristic. (Only in Manhattan is single living even tolerable, and that can be debated.) Most people are still forced into marriage by family pressure, the "shotgun," economic considerations, and other reasons that have nothing to do with choice of life style. In our new reproductive unit, however, with the limited contract (see below), childrearing so diffused as to be practically eliminated, economic considerations non-existent, and all participating members having entered only on the basis of personal preference, "unstable" reproductive social structures will have disappeared.

This unit I shall call a household rather than an extended family. The distinction is important: The word family implies biological reproduction and some degree of division of labor by sex, and thus the traditional dependencies and resulting power relations, extended over generations; though the size of the family—in this case, the larger numbers of the "extended" family—may affect the strength of this hierarchy, it does not change its structural definition. "Household," however, connotes only a large grouping of people living together for an unspecified time, and with no specified set of interpersonal relations. How would a "household" operate?

Limited Contract. If the household replaced marriage perhaps we would at first legalize it in the same way—if this is necessary at all. A group of ten or so consenting adults of varying ages* could apply for a license as a group in much the same way as a young couple today

* An added advantage of the household is that it allows older people past their fertile years to share fully in parenthood when they so desire.
applies for a marriage license, perhaps even undergoing some form of ritual ceremony, and then might proceed in the same way to set up house: The household license would, however, apply only for a given period, perhaps seven to ten years, or whatever was decided on as the minimal time in which children needed a stable structure in which to grow up—but probably a much shorter period than we now imagine. If at the end of this period the group decided to stay together, it could always get a renewal. However, no single individual would be contracted to stay after this period, and perhaps some members of the unit might transfer out, or new members come in. Or, the unit could disband altogether.

There are many advantages to short-term households, stable compositional units lasting for only about a decade: the end of family chauvinism, built up over generations, of prejudices passed down from one generation to the next, the inclusion of people of all ages in the child-rearing process, the integration of many age groups into one social unit, the breadth of personality that comes from exposure to many rather than to (the idiosyncrasies of) a few, and so on.

Children. A regulated percentage of each household—say one-third—would be children. But whether, at first, genetic children created by couples within the household, or at some future time—after a few generations of household living had severed the special connection of adults with “their” children—children were produced artificially, or adopted, would not matter: (minimal) responsibility for the early physical dependence of children would be evenly diffused among all members of the household.

But though it would still be structurally sound, we must be aware that as long as we use natural childbirth methods, the “household” could never be a totally liberating social form. A mother who undergoes a nine-month pregnancy is likely to feel that the product of all that pain and discomfort “belongs” to her (“To think of what I went through to have you!”). But we want to destroy this possessiveness along with its cultural reinforcements so that
no one child will be a priori favored over another, so that children will be loved for their own sake.

But what if there is an instinct for pregnancy? I doubt it. Once we have sloughed off cultural superstructures, we may uncover a sex instinct, the normal consequences of which lead to pregnancy. And perhaps there is also an instinct to care for the young once they arrive. But an instinct for pregnancy itself would be superfluous—could nature anticipate man's mastery of reproduction? And what if, once the false motivations for pregnancy had been shed, women no longer wanted to "have" children at all? Might this not be a disaster, given that artificial reproduction is not yet perfected? But women have no special reproductive obligation to the species. If they are no longer willing, then artificial methods will have to be developed hurriedly, or, at the very least, satisfactory compensations—other than destructive ego investments—would have to be supplied to make it worth their while.

Adults and older children would take care of babies for as long as they needed it, but since there would be many adults and older children sharing the responsibility—as in the extended family—no one person would ever be involuntarily stuck with it.

Adult/child relationships would develop just as do the best relationships today: some adults might prefer certain children over others, just as some children might prefer certain adults over others—these might become lifelong attachments in which the individuals concerned mutually agreed to stay together, perhaps to form some kind of non-reproductive unit. Thus all relationships would be based on love alone, uncorrupted by objective dependencies and the resulting class inequalities. Enduring relationships between people of widely divergent ages would become common.

Legal Rights and Transfers. With the weakening and severance of the blood ties, the power hierarchy of the family would break down. The legal structure—as long as it is still necessary—would reflect this democracy at the roots of our society. Women would be identical under the
law with men. Children would no longer be "minors," under the patronage of "parents"—they would have full rights. Remaining physical inequalities could be legally compensated for: for example, if a child were beaten, perhaps he could report it to a special simplified "household" court where he would be granted instant legal redress.

Another special right of children would be the right of immediate transfer: if the child for any reason did not like the household into which he had been born so arbitrarily, he would be helped to transfer out. An adult on the other hand—one who had lived one span in a household (seven to ten years)—might have to present his case to the court, which would then decide, as do divorce courts today, whether he had adequate grounds for breaking his contract. A certain number of transfers within the seven-year period might be necessary for the smooth functioning of the household, and would not be injurious to its stability as a unit so long as a core remained. (In fact, new people now and then might be a refreshing change.) However, the unit, for its own best economy, might have to place a ceiling on the number of transfers in or out, to avoid depletion, excessive growth, and/or friction.

**Chores.** As for housework: The larger family-sized group (twelve to fifteen people) would be more practical—the waste and repetition of the duplicate nuclear family unit would be avoided, e.g., as in shopping or cooking for a small family, without the loss of intimacy of the larger communal experiment. In the interim, any housework would have to be rotated equitably; but eventually cybernation could automate out almost all domestic chores.

**City Planning.** City planning, architecture, furnishings, all would be altered to reflect the new social structure. The trend toward mass-produced housing would probably continue, but the housing might be designed and even built (perhaps out of prefabricated components) by the people living there to suit their own needs and tastes.
Privacy could be built in: either through private rooms in every household, or with “retreats” within the larger city to be shared by people of other households, or both. The whole might form a complex the size of a small town or a large campus. Perhaps campus is the clearer image: We could have small units of self-determined housing—prefabricated component parts set up or dismantled easily and quickly to suit the needs of the limited contract—as well as central permanent buildings to fill the needs of the community as a whole, i.e., perhaps the equivalent of a “student union” for socializing, restaurants, a large computer bank, a modern communications center, a computerized library and film center, “learning centers” devoted to various specialized interests, and whatever else might be necessary in a cybernetic community.

The Economy. The end of the family structure would necessitate simultaneous changes in the larger economy. Not only would reproduction be qualitatively different, so would production: just as we have had to purify relations with children of all external considerations we would first have to have, to be entirely successful in our goals, socialism within a cybernated state, aiming first to redistribute drudgery equitably, and eventually to eliminate it altogether. With the further development and wise use of machines, people could be freed from toil, “work” divorced from wages and redefined: Now both adults and children could indulge in serious “play” as much as they wanted.

In the transition, as long as we still had a money economy, people might receive a guaranteed annual income from the state to take care of basic physical needs. These incomes, distributed equitably to men, women, and children, regardless of age, work, prestige, birth, would in themselves equalize in one blow the economic class system.

Activity. What would people do in this utopia? I think that will not be a problem. If we truly had abolished all unpleasant work, people would have the time and the energy to develop healthy interests of their own.
What is now found only among the elite, the pursuit of specialized interests for their own sake, would probably become the norm.

As for our educational institutions: The irrelevancy of the school system practically guarantees its breakdown in the near future. Perhaps we could replace it with noncompulsory "learning centers," which would combine both the minimally necessary functions of our lower educational institutions, the teaching of rudimentary skills, with those of the higher, the expansion of knowledge, including everyone of any age or level, children and adults.

Yes, but what about basic skills? How, for example, could a child with no formal sequential training enter an advanced curriculum like architecture? But traditional book learning, the memorizing of facts, which forms the most substantial portion of the curriculum of our elementary schools, will be radically altered under the impact of cybernation—a qualitative difference, to the apparatus of culture at least as significant a change as was the printing press, even as important as the alphabet. McLuhan pointed out the beginning of a reversal from literary to visual means of absorbing knowledge. We can expect the escalation of this and other effects in the development of modern media for the rapid transmittal of information. And the amount of rote knowledge necessary either for children or adults will itself be vastly reduced, for we shall have computer banks within easy reach. After all, why store facts in one's head when computer banks could supply quicker and broader information instantaneously? (Already today children wonder why they must learn multiplication tables rather than the operation of an adding machine.) Whatever mental storing of basic facts is still necessary can be quickly accomplished through new mechanical methods, teaching machines, records and tapes, and so on, which, when they become readily available, would allow the abolition of compulsory schooling for basic skills. Like foreign students in the pursuit of a specialized profession, the child can pick up any neces-
sary basic "language" on the side, through these supplementary machine methods. But it is more likely that the fundamental skills and knowledge necessary will be the same for adults as for children: skill in operating new machines. Programming skills may become universally required, but rather than through years of nine-to-five schooling, it would have to be learned (rapidly) only in conjunction with the requirements of a specific discipline.

As for "career indecision": Those people today whose initial "hobby" has survived intact from childhood to become their adult "profession" will most often tell you they developed it before the age of nine.* As long as specialized professions still existed, they could be changed as often as adults change majors or professions today. But if choice of profession had no superimposed motives, if they were based only on interest in the subject itself, switches in mid-course would probably be far fewer. Inability to develop strong interests is today mostly the result of the corruption of culture and its institutions.

Thus our conception of work and education would be much closer to the medieval first-hand apprenticeship to a discipline, people of all ages participating at all levels. As in academia today, the internal dynamics of the various disciplines would foster their own social organization, providing a means for meeting other people of like interests, and of sharing the intellectual and aesthetic pursuits now available only to a select few, the intelligentsia. The kind of social environment now found only in the best departments of the best colleges might become the life style of the masses, freed to develop their potential from the start: Whereas now only the lucky or persevering ones ever arrive at (usually only professing to) "doing their thing," then everyone would have the opportunity to develop to his full potential.

Or not develop if he so chose—but this seems unlikely, since every child at first exhibits curiosity about people,

*If children today were given a realistic idea of the professions available—not just fireman/nurse—they might arrive at a special interest even sooner.
things, the world in general and what makes it tick. It is only because unpleasant reality dampens his curiosity that the child learns to scale down his interests, thus becoming the average bland adult. But if we should remove these obstructions, then all people would develop as fully as only the greatest and wealthiest classes, and a few isolated "geniuses," have been able to. Each individual would contribute to the society as a whole, not for wages or other incentives of prestige and power, but because the work he chose to do interested him in itself, and perhaps only incidentally because it had a social value for others (as healthily selfish as is only Art today). Work that had only social value and no personal value would have been eliminated by the machine.

* * *

Thus, in the larger context of a cybernetic socialism, the establishment of the household as the alternative to the family for reproduction of children, combined with every imaginable life style for those who chose to live singly or in nonreproductive units, would resolve all the basic dilemmas that now arise from the family to obstruct human happiness. Let us go over our four minimal demands to see how our imaginary construction would fare.

1) The freeing of women from the tyranny of their biology by any means available, and the diffusion of the childbearing and childrearing role to the society as a whole, to men and other children as well as women. This has been corrected. Childbearing could be taken over by technology, and if this proved too much against our past tradition and psychic structure (which it certainly would at first) then adequate incentives and compensations would have to be developed—other than the ego rewards of possessing the child—to reward women for their special social contribution of pregnancy and childbirth. Most of childrearing, as we have seen, has to do with the maintaining of power relations, forced internalization of family values, and many other ego concerns that war
with the happiness of the individual child. This repressive socialization process would now be unnecessary in a society in which the interests of the individual coincided with those of the larger society. Any child-rearing responsibility left would be diffused to include men and other children equally with women. In addition, new methods of instant communication would lessen the child’s reliance on even this egalitarian primary unit.

2) The economic independence and self-determination of all. Under socialism, even if still a money economy, work would be divorced from wages, the ownership of the means of production in the hands of all the people, and wealth distributed on the basis of need, independent of the social value of the individual’s contribution to society. We would aim to eliminate the dependence of women and children on the labor of men, as well as all other types of labor exploitation. Each person could choose his life style at will, changing it to suit his tastes without seriously inconveniencing anyone else; no one would be bound into any social structure against his will, for each person would be totally self-governing as soon as he was physically able.

3) The total integration of women and children into the larger society. This has been fulfilled: The concept of childhood has been abolished, children having full legal, sexual, and economic rights, their educational/work activities no different from those of adults. During the few years of their infancy we have replaced the psychologically destructive genetic “parenthood” of one or two arbitrary adults with a diffusion of the responsibility for physical welfare over a larger number of people. The child would still form intimate love relationships, but instead of developing close ties with a decreed “mother” and “father,” the child might now form those ties with people of his own choosing, of whatever age or sex. Thus all adult-child relationships will have been mutually chosen—equal, intimate relationships free of material dependencies. Correspondingly, though children would be fewer, they would not be monopolized, but would mingle
freely throughout the society to the benefit of all, thus satisfying that legitimate desire to be around the young which is often called the reproductive "instinct."

4) Sexual freedom, love, etc. So far we have not said much of love and sexual freedom because there is no reason for it to present a problem: there would be nothing obstructing it. With full liberty human relationships eventually would be redefined for the better. If a child does not know his own mother, or at least does not attach a special value to her over others, it is unlikely that he would choose her as his first love object, only to have to develop inhibitions on this love. It is possible that the child might form his first close physical relationships with people his own size out of sheer physical convenience, just as men and women, all else being equal, might prefer each other over those of the same sex for sheer physical fit. But if not, if he should choose to relate sexually to adults, even if he should happen to pick his own genetic mother, there would be no a priori reasons for her to reject his sexual advances, because the incest taboo would have lost its function. The "household," a transient social form, would not be subject to the dangers of inbreeding.

Thus, without the incest taboo, adults might return within a few generations to a more natural polymorphous sexuality, the concentration on genital sex and orgasmic pleasure giving way to total physical/emotional relationships that included that. Relations with children would include as much genital sex as the child was capable of—probably considerably more than we now believe—but because genital sex would no longer be the central focus of the relationship, lack of orgasm would not present a serious problem. Adult/child and homosexual sex taboos would disappear, as well as nonsexual friendship (Freud's "aim-inhibited" love). All close relationships would include the physical, our concept of exclusive physical partnerships (monogamy) disappearing from our psychic structure, as well as the construct of a Partner Ideal. But how long it would take for these changes to occur, and in what forms they would appear, remains conjec-
The specifics need not concern us here. We need only set up the preconditions for a free sexuality: whatever forms it took would be assuredly an improvement on what we have now, "natural" in the truest sense.

In the transitional phase, adult genital sex and the exclusiveness of couples within the household might have to be maintained in order for the unit to be able to function smoothly, with a minimum of internal tension caused by sexual frictions. It is unrealistic to impose theories of what ought to be on a psyche already fundamentally organized around specific emotional needs. And this is why individual attempts to eliminate sexual possessiveness are now always inauthentic. We would do much better to concentrate on overthrowing the social structures that have produced this psychical organization, allowing for the eventual—if not in our lifetime—fundamental restructuring (or should I say destructuring?) of our psychosexual identity.

Above, I have drawn up only a very rough plan in order to make the general direction of a feminist revolution more vivid: Production and reproduction of the species would both be, simultaneously, reorganized in a nonrepressive way. The birth of children to a unit which disbanded or recomposed as soon as children were physically able to be independent, one that was meant to serve immediate needs rather than to pass on power and privilege (the basis of patriarchy is the inheritance of property gained through labor) would eliminate the power psychology, sexual repression, and cultural sublimation. Family chauvinism, class privilege based on birth, would be eliminated. The blood tie of the mother to the child would eventually be severed—if male jealousy of "creative" childbirth actually exists, we will soon have the means to create life independently of sex—so that pregnancy, now freely acknowledged as clumsy, inefficient, and painful, would be indulged in, if at all, only as a tongue-in-cheek archaism, just as already women today wear virginal white to their weddings. A cybernetic socialism would abolish economic classes, and all forms of
labor exploitation, by granting all people a livelihood based only on material needs. Eventually drudge work (jobs) would be eliminated in favor of (complex) play, activity done for its own sake, by both adults and children. Love and sexuality would be reintegrated, flowing unimpeded.

The revolt against the biological family could bring on the first successful revolution, or what was thought of by the ancients as the Messianic Age. Humanity's double curse when it ate the Apple of Knowledge (the growing knowledge of the laws of the environment creating repressive civilization), that man would toil by the sweat of his brow in order to live, and woman would bear children in pain and travail, can now be undone through man's very efforts in toil. We now have the knowledge to create a paradise on earth anew. The alternative is our own suicide through that knowledge, the creation of a hell on earth, followed by oblivion.