

Which Are More Attractive: Left-Wing Women or Right-Wing Women?

BEING A RELATIVELY conservative woman with the tiresome habit of harping on the Ten Commandments, my wife has prohibited me from doing the extensive reporting I need to fully buttress my argument that liberal women are fantastic lovers. Nevertheless, relying on massive secondary research and close observation, I can assure you that if you ever get the chance to roll around on a futon with a woman of leftist leanings, you should definitely grab the opportunity. When I say "you," I obviously mean "you women." Men will also enjoy superior sex with liberal women, though of course the woman will be less into it.

You see, liberals, who do not normally embrace hierarchies, do have a hierarchy when it comes to sex. For liberals, the highest form of sex consists of ten female literary theorists sitting naked in a circle in a forest telling each other how beautiful their private parts are. The second highest form is a woman pleasuring herself alone in front of a mirror, and then writing a journal entry to be shared with her reading group. And at the bottom is regular heterosexual sex between a man and a woman.

Yet even at this lowest level, liberal sex is of a high caliber. Liberal women have many advantages over their right-wing sisters (even aside from the obvious, that left-wing women don't have cigar breath). For example, liberal women have adopted the absurd notion that female sex drives are as strong as male sex drives, which means that in order to live up to their creed, they have to put out like crazy. If a

From the right,
David Brooks admits
he finds liberal babes
sexier...



man meets resistance from a liberal mate, all he has to do is quietly muse, "I guess Naomi Wolf was wrong then....," and he will be happily lovemaking within thirty seconds.

Erotic paraphernalia companies advertise profusely in left-wing magazines, while right-wing magazines tend to run ads from companies that have discovered a sure-proof way to remove rodents from your yard. And this does signify the crucial mood advantage liberal women have in the intimate sphere. Conservative women, especially in educated circles, are constantly aware that they are swimming against a tide of feminist orthodoxy. This gives conservative heroines, like Margaret Thatcher, an admirable toughness, but you get the impression that even amidst a glorious spring sunset they'd be out whacking moles near the vegetable garden.

But liberal women are comfortable with the *zeitgeist*, so they can flow with the current, carrying themselves with a delightful playfulness and ease. You can be more candid with liberal women, using words and expressing sentiments that would produce a slap across the knuckles from the Victorian viragos that one sometimes finds on the right. Moreover, liberal women don't see themselves as part of a diminishing remnant charged with upholding the high standards of Western civilization. Liberal women aren't always judging you on your manners, and an afternoon with them is full of Frisbee and fun, not Emily Post and Oswald Spengler. The young liberal women of today take equality for granted. That's

actually the way today's men, even today's conservative men, have been raised. So you can behave naturally around a liberal woman, instead of constantly asking yourself, "Now how would Beau Brummel have handled this situation?" Finally, liberal women never begin sentences with, "As I said on MSNBC last week..."

I don't mean to suggest that left-wing women will provide frequent and fantastic intimacy without any negative considerations. The decline of reticence being what it is, liberal women can be embarrassingly loud during lovemaking. Moreover, while the feminist sex magazines treat the female orgasm with the sort of reverence they once reserved for the Russian revolution, they consider the male orgasm as vaguely fascistic. It can be easy to start having sex with a liberal woman, but politically incorrect to finish.

But the male conservative's great advantage is that liberal women have mostly been sleeping with liberal men—that is to say, timid, ineffectual, feminist men with blotches of randomly spaced chest hair who are so ashamed that they are not women themselves that they turn foreplay into an especially non-aggressive form of transcendental meditation. When a liberal woman is intimate with a virile Republican he-male, she will be overwhelmed by his awesome masculine vigor, and his electric, Decade-of-Greed style lustfulness.

So it's pretty clear liberal women offer a superior brand of erotic partnership. But as a conservative myself, I feel I should remind everyone of the virtues of chastity and abstinence, which is what I shall be practicing for six months after my wife reads this essay. ♦

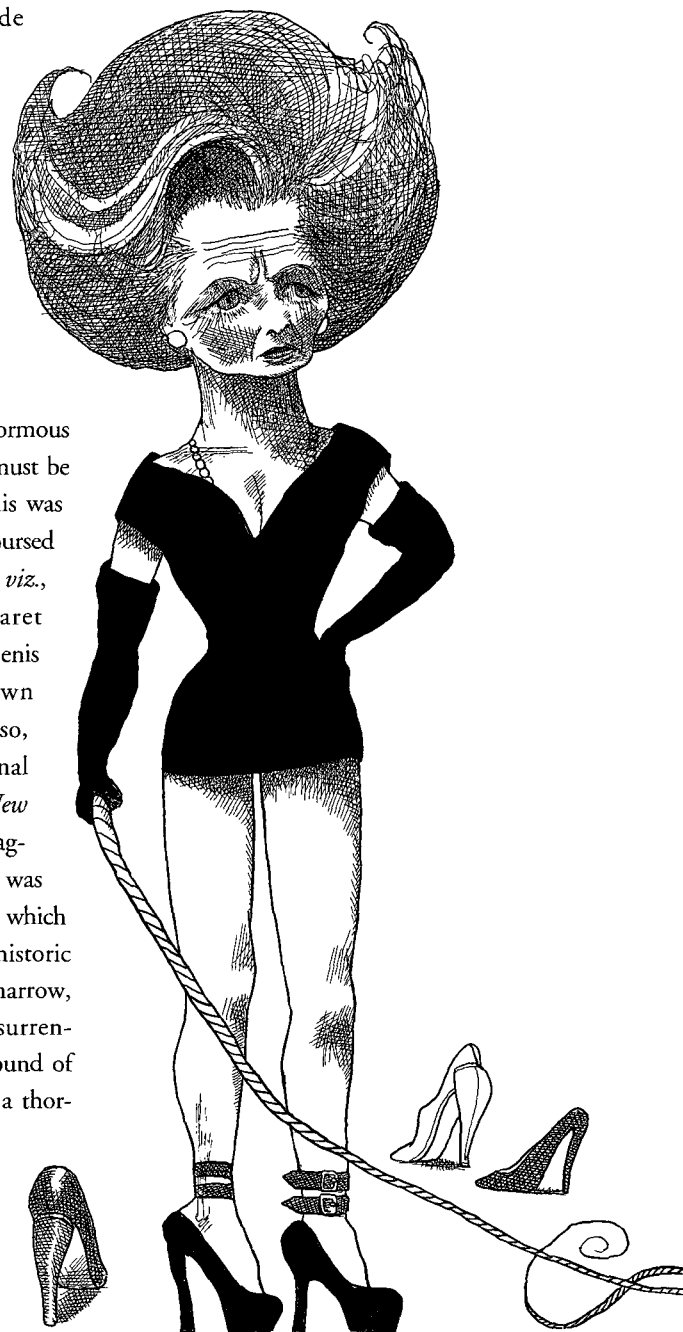
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...While from the left, *Christopher Hitchens* reveals his lust for Thatcher types

I HAVE NEVER been one of those on the left whose chief delight lies in displays of the "unpredictable." I like my knee to jerk, as I am fond of remarking, because it reassures me that my reflexes are in good order. (A failure to jerk, in other words, might represent a failure of nerve.) Every now and then, a bit of socialist fratricide breaks out and I like to be in the thick of it. But not for me the over-stuffed, chat-show chair where a week's reputation can be wrung from the "paradoxical" avowal that Charles Murray is onto something or that a "Star Wars" defense would deter Hamas or that "root causes" are a cop-out.

I did once, however, reap an enormous mailbag of the "Come off it; you must be kidding; get out of here" sort. This was when, in the *New Statesman*, I discoursed a bit on what was to me obvious, *viz.*, the sexual magnetism of Margaret Hilda Roberts, the second Mrs. Denis Thatcher and now a full-blown baroness. The year was 1977 or so, and she was still a very provisional Leader of the Opposition. At the *New Statesman*, which was then the flagship journal of the British left, it was easy to share in the prevalent view, which was that the Tories had made a historic mistake. By picking that "shrill, narrow, suburban housewife," they had surrendered the all-important middle ground of politics and set themselves up for a thorough trouncing as "extremists" and "ideologues." I had other reasons for thinking this opinion to be a mistaken one, but this article is not about my foresight. It's about my political libido.

You couldn't beat the British Conservative party as a man's club in those days (or indeed, alas, in these). And most of the senior leadership had not voted, on the first or the second round, for the lady who deposed Edward Heath. So she was stuck, for a goodish bit of time, with a load of red-faced paunches who thought she was



the spawn of hell. And loyalty being a premium virtue in that party, she had to affect to think of them as wise and experienced colleagues. Yet, at the party conference and in Shadow Cabinet meetings and in Parliament, she regularly reduced these chaps to mush. It was at the annual conference that, as I stood in the body of the hall, it hit me. The feline smile, the composed but definite body-language, the voice at once stern and cajoling...to say nothing of the Valkyrie helmet of blond locks. My god! She has them in her thrall! And she knows it! The minx knows it! It was for writing this that I got into the hot water of what nobody then called political correctness.

Mark the sequel. Not long afterwards, I was at a reception in the Rosebery Room of the House of Lords. She came. (I'll try and keep this brief.) A mutual Tory friend offered to introduce us. I agreed with some alacrity. The subject of the moment was Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. I held one view on this. She held another. The introduction was effected. Did I imagine it, or did she recognize the name of the scribe who had hymned her feminine allure? At once we were embroiled in an argument on the subject of racism and decolonization. I was (I only mention it) correct on my facts as well as my principles. She was lousy on both. But what a bonny fighter! She wouldn't give an inch. I found myself conceding her a trivial point, and bowing as I did so. She smiled.

"Bow lower," she said. Suddenly robbed of volition, I complied. "No—much lower." By now near to drowning in complicity and subjection, I obeyed. She withdrew from behind her back a rolled-up copy of the Parliamentary orders of the day, and gave me a sound smack before I could—how does one put this?—straighten up. I regained the perpendicular in some blushful confusion and difficulty, to see her swing away and look over her shoulder, the words "naughty boy" float-

ing over me in my near trance-like state, as the journo witnesses closed in to say, "What was that all about?" I told them they would never understand, and—what do you know—they never did.

Once in office, she calmly destroyed and (if you will pardon the expression) dismembered all her male rivals, from Sir Geoffrey Howe to Nigel Lawson to Sir Ian Gilmour to Jim Prior, as well as a succession of Labour challengers. According to the biography by her loyal press officer, Sir Bernard Ingham, the first signal that someone was finished was the fluted question: "Shall we withdraw our love?" She also, incidentally, took my advice, and reversed herself completely on Rhodesia. None of her triumphs astonished me.

The purpose of this somewhat sticky prologue is to introduce the more delicate question, Does the conservative woman possess a special attraction beyond her own wing, or faction? To stay with Thatcher for a moment—and I don't want you to think I'm obsessed with her, or anything like that—an instant answer was first confected by her opponents. She had charisma and potency, agreed, but it wasn't feminine. She was really a man. In the words of a gazillion tiresome jokes, she was the only one with balls. How people talked themselves into this I don't know, but talk themselves into it they did. You can look it up.

Paradoxically—I knew I'd get here sooner or later—this mirrored or borrowed from traditional reactionary propaganda against radical women. Louise Michel, Rosa Luxemburg, at least two of the Pankhursts, and many others were written off either as mannish and thwarted or secretly Sapphist. And sexually "free" or emancipated types like Alexandra Kollontai and Emma Goldman were denounced as sluts. (Thatcher has at least been spared the last two of these imputations.) Rudyard Kipling's "The Female of the Species," probably among his top

three poems in point of quotability, insinuated the same idea in the maddening form of a heavily sarcastic compliment, but struck close to the mark by suggesting that the latent superiority of women lay in their childbearing role.

IF THEY CAN'T get you one way, as females down the ages have had cause to reflect, they'll get you in another. The alternative model of the "progressive" woman was that of the simpering, prissy type: too squeamish for war or capitalism and inclined to be schoolmarm-like. (Some crossover, in the latter suggestion, with Sapphism. But only some.) To take a wearisome current example, see how the First Lady is variously described by her foes as a boss bitch and a bleeding-heart. I'm coming back to her. Add to this constant suspicion—actually affirmed by some feminists—that men are intellectual and rational while women are emotional and nurturing, and you have the outline of the problem. What is a tough-minded, free-market, heterosexual woman to do, except be tough-minded, free-market, and heterosexual? Is there a style? Ought there even to be a style? If I were a conservative, I'm sure I would say not.

But here I must have done with the throat-clearing and foot-shuffling. The trifles that I composed in honor of Mrs. T. were as nothing, in terms of their outrage-the-comrades effect, to the roar of anger that greeted the avowals that Alexander Cockburn and I made about Jeane Kirkpatrick in the *Nation*. Never mind for now that I thought then, and think now, of Jeane as a death-squad groupie and a coiner of euphemisms for dictatorship. Never mind, either, that on the matter of the Falklands, she was Thatcher's most sedulous foe. To watch her on television or in person was to see someone who enjoyed dialectic for its own sake, who strove to define the argument rather than squelch about in a pacifying "middle

ground,” who had convictions rather than opinions but who also, and here I take the plunge, could be deliciously aware of her sex. She made Phyllis Schlafly look like a faggot. And she also showed the superiority of the pseudo-intellectual over the anti-intellectual. By this I mean, to phrase it simply, that you just can’t imagine Jeane Kirkpatrick commencing a sentence with the words, “As a woman, I feel...”

The cross-dressing appeal of conservative women for radical men is buried in there somewhere. Thanks to certain ephemeral “movement” ethics, a number of our guys had every chance to get a touch bored with people—of any sex and of none—who started with their identity and continued with their feelings. Don’t tell me who you are—I can see that. And don’t tell me how you feel—tell me how you *think*. We Marxists go by the content, not of your character, but of your cerebellum. And we don’t mind scar tissue if it’s been honorably incurred.

That’s why so many of us wish we’d met Jessica Mitford when she was young. Not, I hasten to add, that we weren’t her pliant tools when she was in her seventies. She would tell broad jokes in male company, she quaffed, she smoked, she had faced down cops and bullies, she was screamingly witty, and she had done all her reading and homework. Dressy she wasn’t. But drop-dead elegant. And cross her—no thank you. Her claws would be across your face and back in her lap before you could notice it. The healing would come with the next limerick. Withal, a perfect mother, an ideal sister, an adored wife, and (not her fault) an exemplary widow. There was no feminine part that she had not filled to perfection. If she and Ayn Rand had ever met, Nathaniel Branden would have needed Miss Rand’s dental records even sooner than he actually did.

I mention the late and beloved “Decca” because I realize that I’ve given a hostage to fortune. The thrill of cruelty

isn’t absolutely indispensable to one’s make-up or vulnerability, whatever you may have read about the education of the English male. When I first met Laura Ingraham, she was brought by Dinesh D’Souza as his luncheon guest—in the White House mess, as it happens, on the only occasion I dined or expect to dine there—and she rather offset his Thomist subtlety and discretion by thundering on about her adventures in El Salvador and inquiring boldly about one’s marital status. OK, I remember thinking, I get the point. You can be female and feminine and assertive, and, so to speak, right-wing. (Good grief, how many times does that of all points need hammering home?)

Hillary Clinton began life as a “Goldwater Girl,” distributing those cute little AuH₂O stickers around her bourgeois neighborhood in Illinois and generally being the perfect white-toothed, hair-banded little brat of the 1964 GOP rally. I can’t help feeling that she’d have been better off staying right there, and would probably have made a happier marriage and met a nicer class of people. Thanks partly to her, though, the whole idea of the political woman has become indissolubly linked to the preachy, the righteous, the health-conscious, and the wholesomely interfering. If conservative women want to elicit low, helpless growls from our side or any other, and this is only a suggestion for heaven’s sake, then they must cease to wave their babies about, cease to speak about gender gaps, cease to be “inclusive,” and instead flaunt what makes them different—their attachment to ideas. I still have the reading lists that Decca sent me. Which Tory minx, of her prey, will be able to say the same? ♦

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We Didn't Mean Paying Those Dues!

THE GREAT ADVOCATES of equal pay for working women lose a lot of their ideological zeal when it comes to paying working women out of their own pockets.

A source tells TWQ that for the past year, Ms., Working Woman, and Working Mother magazines have owed freelance writers (the bulk of them female, natch) some \$70,000 in fees. The writers have badgered the publications for payment, but as yet have received nothing.

The problem arose in June, 1996, when MacDonald Communications bought the magazines from Lang Communications. MacDonald then refused to pay any of Lang’s previous debt, which was in the millions and included the writers’ fees.

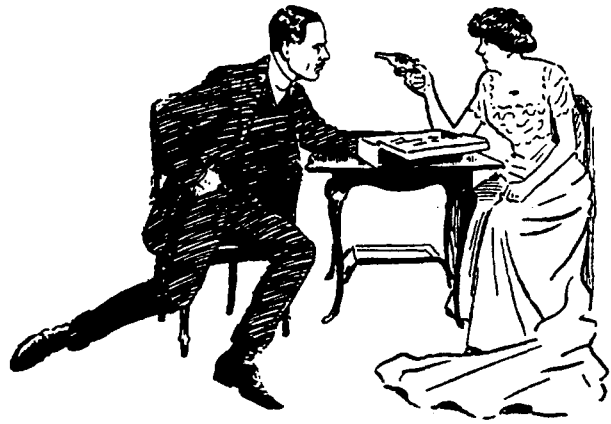
Finally, in September, the National Writers Union threatened to stage a protest outside the Work/Family Congress gala awards dinner in New York where MacDonald paradoxically planned to honor the hundred best companies for working mothers.

The company hastily agreed to a settlement of sorts—a better contract for freelance writers in the future—but not before its lawyers threatened to sue the union for defamation and “product disparagement.” The demonstration was called off.

So much for sisterhood. ♦

And Above All, Lighten Up

Americans approach dating like a job interview, complains
Jonathan Foreman



PEOPLE BACK IN my homeland of England often ask me if American women are as sexually aggressive as they have heard. British males who don't really know this country are convinced that American women are all fierce, perpetually complaining feminists who throw themselves at men with startling force and frequency. "Is it true they just come up to you in bars and ask you to sleep with them?" one fellow asked, his eyes goggling.

The truthful answer is, "Uh, not usually." American women are no more likely to be sexually hyperactive than their British counterparts; in fact, British women are a far better bet if you meet them at a bar. (Surveys have shown that the Brits are the most promiscuous nation in Western Europe—far more so than the French, for all their talk.) Despite this society's openness about sex, American women often have remarkably frustrating sex lives. This is not because American women are in any way prudish. On the contrary. It is mainly because the rules of "dating" wreak such havoc on relations between the sexes.

I have lived in this country for a decade, my father was American, I spent all my school vacations in California, and I still don't really understand what Americans mean by "dating." It is hard to believe, I know, but we simply

don't have "dating" in England. This is not as strange as it sounds. We still have sex lives; we still marry and have children. Indeed, we have successfully done all these things for centuries. This is also true for people in all the hundreds of other countries where no one "dates." In fact, so far as I know, "dating"—whatever it is—scarcely exists outside the United States.

For example, I once heard one of my American female colleagues say, "I'm dating three guys right now, nothing serious." I was stunned. She seemed like such a reticent creature. Could she really be sleeping with three men simultaneously? A friend explained she was not sleeping with them, she was merely "dating" them—in other words going out to dinner with them. I asked this friend—a lawyer—if that meant that any time a man has dinner with a woman they are on a date. Not at all, she explained. For a dinner to be a date, there has to be *romantic intent*. At this point I thought I understood dating. It was a kind of reconnaissance made in a restaurant before two people embarked on a relationship; no carnal activity was involved except eating.

But there are many times when the context is less clear. If I meet an unmarried woman and she tells me that she has been dating someone for three weeks, or three years, what does

she mean? Is she single or not? (As a European, I would be quite happy to treat all attractive women as potential lovers—I was brought up to look at a woman's eyes not her ring finger—but as I live here I would prefer to avoid misunderstandings.)

There are a host of ancillary questions, all of which depend on correct interpretation of this mysterious concept. How do I know if a lunch, dinner, or drink with a woman constitutes a "date"? Many American women feel they should not sleep with you, or in extreme cases, even kiss you, until the second or third "date." Yet some women don't count a dinner as a date if she has invited the man out, or if neither person has used the actual phrase, "It's a date." More quaintly, others require the man to pay for the woman if the occasion is to count as a "date." (Presumably such women see dating as a transaction that is partly financial: Each of the three dates is an installment paid in advance. The man's return takes the form of what lawyers call consortium: a combination of company, domestic work, and sexual favors.) One could go on. What I want to know is how many dates have to take place before you can say you are "dating" someone? When should "dating" someone imply exclusivity? And can you sleep with a woman without "dating" her?