

Bushing the system
Rocking " " not the Cradle

Mother Blind

The Child Syndrome
" Baby Bed "
Mother

In the 50s ~~and 60s~~ when my friends were having children,

I began feeling their subtle nudges indicating ~~that~~ I was out of step.

Subtlety/^{soon} gave way to "What are you~~d~~ waiting for?" and "You'll be sorry".

^SSome of their remarks took on an unmistakable misery-loves-company patina

I started asking them why they had children each time they sideled into

why I didn't. Their answers troubled me. They still do.

Many

~~Most were~~ seemed to feel it was a ~~vague~~ matter of duty. To whom? Cer-
tainly not to the world since ^{we even then well} ~~were already~~ aware of the problems of over-
population. Duty to Family? Keep the line going at all costs? Apparently.

^{as in one case,} Even if it meant/perpetuating an incurable genetic disease. For most,
the idea was: have 2 kids, put them in school and get on with your own life,
~~after~~ as soon as ^{was} the curtsy to tradition ~~performed~~. Or, in 1 case it was have 1 kid thru
which to vicariously live everything both parents ~~thot~~ they missed, clutch
every breath the child draws, then have the whole thing blow apart when
the child runs away at 16 never to be heard from again. Or have 5 kids
because mother never outgrew dolls, then when theyre not fun to dress or
dandle anymore, abandon them all including the husband who didn't want them
in the first place. Thos^e maternal grandparents certainly got their wish for
continued
lineage, for they had to raise them.

One couple assured me their baby was an extension of their great love & I
was convinced until they divorced, each bitterly accusing the other of neg-
lect, each ^{saying} ~~bitte~~ the child supplanted him/her in the marriage & that the
other was trying to turn the child against him/her.

Another pair kept talking about how they adored children & it was true.

Theirs were expected to constantly supply them with pleasure & pride. For the most part they did, but when they boy married he moved a continent away altho he didn't have to make that particular choice. The girl has never married, says she never will, & lives in another state.

Only 1 friend ever gave me what I thought was a good answer. "I think", she said, "that everyone has a calling & mine is motherhood. I had wonderful parents & I want to pass it on. I've practiced for it since I was old enough to know what I wanted. Sure, I'll make mistakes, but with God's help I believe I can turn out solid productive members of society & the Christian community." At the time I'd have bet my life she'd succeed. I'd have won, too. She did & her offspring did. She's in her grandmother mode now & the special ingredients still run thru the generations.

In India, South America & other ^{countries} ~~parts of the world~~, adults freely admit they want many children--to help with the work, ^{the} earning power, & to make sure there is enough care for them ^{selves} when they're ^{old} ~~old~~ ^{elderly + infirm}. Maybe it's a valid enough reason in the third world but it's the wrong answer. Yet a college mate once said she wanted "lots of kids to keep me ^{from being lonesome} ~~company~~ in my old age." I remember asking her how often she kept her own grandmother company. "Oh, that's different. I can't talk to her, she doesn't understand how things are today. Beised I don't have time", was the gist of her answer. This friend died in an auto accident recently. Only 1 daughter and 1 granddaughter showed up for the funeral, ^{out of a possible total of 7.}

By contrast, another firend and her husband spent a lot of time thinking up ideas to get their elder son to move out of their house & to keep the younger son's kids from arriving to be kept.

Ego, selfishness, peer pressure & herd mentality are not good reasons for having children. Self centeredness begets more of the same. Parenthood is not for everyone. Some people have no business with children even if they want them. It goes without saying that noone should bring unwanted shildren into the world or without definite plans ^{have them} & a seeking of knowledge to prepare themselves for what's involved.

Two or three of ~~those~~ ^{those who were most} vocal about my decision to remain childless later

Wins: 1985

JAN. SOUNDINGS Lake Shore Press:
FIRST Old Wines the Tales Come From \$70.00
SECOND Sonnet for Miss Nonesake \$5.00

" New Hampshire SPS:
FIRST Weatherscope \$50.00
FIRST HM Block Opal

~~March~~ Psoy Penna SECOND Anniversary Wine \$10.00

April Buffalo Spruce - Watercolor Weekends \$20.00
Mid-ad, PW; - Ballad For my Pinal Second \$10.00
Spore Quest, Second \$10.00
The Orbits Second \$150.00
the Potter from the Red Hills \$30.00

~~May~~ ~~MARILYN~~ June - Annonsas Writers Cong.

an Ocean Colored Memory - Second \$15.00

Tonny (as a short story) Third \$10.00

Perseverance - flying jumanee Joe Cope \$10.00
(short story) ~~Third~~

The Catalyst (novel) Third \$10.00

Rock Eagle article 1st HM

said they wished they'd done the same. Sadly, one said it in front of her teenagers. How tragic for people to ~~wait to~~ ^{wait to} decide ~~realize~~ they shouldn't have been parents ~~until~~ after they are. ^{the question a great deal} ~~My husband & I are thankful we gave the world much~~ ^{Consideration before it was too late. We've never been sorry}

Today there are numerous couples who realize that their careers, lifestyles, or other circumstances make them ill suited personalities ~~are not suited~~ ^{suggest} to parenthood. Even now certain friends may ~~say~~ ^{that} "a baby will change all that," ~~but~~ ^{but} most are mature enough to know better. My young neighbor said it well: "After the novelty wore off, a child would get the leftovers of our lives. That's not what any child needs."

Fortunately, they ~~don't~~ ^{nowadays} have to defend their position, ~~except~~ ^{sometimes} with ~~some~~ ^{of} their own parents. But parents have no right to urge their children into any life-long commitment ~~they~~ ^{their offspring} feel is unwise. That's another example of bad parenting. It's a decision for husband & wife, no one else. It needs ^{long} careful soul searching & discussion of how various problems will be handled, ~~long before they arise.~~

To those who are undecided, spending as much time as possible around kids ^{can} be invaluable. Sit for friends. Keep the church nursery. Visit day care centers. One young couple takes in wards of the state for short periods. Find out how well ~~you~~ ^{they} cope. ^{"Know thyself."} ~~They~~ ^{they} ~~are~~ ^{say} "Children aren't amusements to be sent to bed when you tire of them. Children are for life. If they're yours, you are totally responsible for that life. ~~Don't let it be an accident. Don't let it be a consequence of carelessness.~~ ^{It shouldn't} Whatever they decide, somehow I think it will be the right choice."

★ It's not true that marriage is nothing without children. Some of the ^{best + marriage} ~~closest ones~~ ^{are childless} ~~of all~~ ^{also} ~~is not~~ true that it takes children to make a family. A family ^{begins} ~~can be~~ two people who come for each other. All ^{real} families begin ~~thus~~ ^{is} thus, ~~if they end thus they are~~ ^{if they end thus they are} ~~ending~~ ^{if they end thus they are} Some remain thus - with or without additional members.

May 1, 1985

Dear Verna Lee,

I can't resist! Your conference looks so good in the brochure I called tonite & reserved my room at the Hilton & my Super-Saver flight to Little Rock. ~~Had~~ a friend ~~had~~ told me about that, it would have been out of the question at regular fare. I should arrive in time for the luncheon on Friday, May 31. What I don't know is — what is available to get me from the airport to the convention or how for it is. Plane gets in 10:15 a.m. United Airlines.

Most likely I'll visit a friend in Hot Springs ~~on Sunday~~ ^{on Sunday}. He may be able to come over as my guest ^{to} the Sat. nite dinner ^{if that's possible} in which case I'll go home with her ^{afterward}. But if I check out Sat. morning, I'm wondering if the Hilton provides a Courtesy room for luggage, etc. during that day & a place to dress for dinner. I hate to pay for a second nite's lodging if I'm not going to sleep there.

Beating the System

Adult Society sorts itself into various substructures
reflecting enormous numbers of people who ~~do things~~
move thru life on cue. Miss a cue or 2
and you're ^{hopelessly} out of sync with the crowd. Many
people do indeed hear a different ~~drummer~~ ^{beat} but
are afraid to break the rhythm of their platoon ^{all those other feet around them.}
To us ~~become aware of~~ ^{learned phrases} ~~like~~ ^{peer pressure & herd mentality}
for some ~~enough~~ ^{those things} enough to keep them in step. For those
whose drummer is more insistent, life is different.
We may or may not marry after or during our period
of higher education. But if we do, we don't necessarily
have children. That's the operative word is necessarily.

THIS DAY, THIS SHORE

There's no division of morning and sea:
A monotone of pewter palls the sky
Like painters' canvas, primed and left to dry
For Van Gogh's palette, Gauguin's potpourri.
The mind demands delineation be
Apparent; order seems to go awry
When borders vanish. Our insistent eye
Will furnish lines, avoid anomaly.
Yet often we erase the clear-cut guides
And substitute a blur like smeary chalk.
Our own horizon, out of focus now,
Awaits firm definition in the tides.
Between the high and low, we'll mark this walk
And draw a faithful chart on morning's brow.

There is nothing sacred re motherhood. Some women do imbue the process with haliness & dedication worthy of a saint, but ^{saints} ~~its~~ ^{station} ~~personal~~ ^{personal} individual attributes not belonging to the institution itself. All merits should be credited to the individuals who earn them, not ^{the} subjects in which they are acquired. So many myths surround Motherhood its almost impossible ~~for anyone~~ ^{commonly} to look at it dispassionately. ~~It is~~ ^{commonly} supposed that mothers are good wise kind & patient. The fact that a woman is his ^{coequal} of repro-

her self makes her none of the above if it isn't already part of her nature. Nor does her bio-ability have ^{mean} any bearing on whether ^{that} she should use it any more than her ability to ~~hit~~ ^{hit} high & mean she should be an opera singer. One of my neighbors has 8 kids. ~~stop there~~ There is a tendency for other mothers ~~who don't know her~~ to call & consult her on a wide range of matters on the presumption that all those kids have made her all knowing. If they knew her better they would discover that she is one of the worst mothers possible & they would do better to ^{consult} a lady further down the road who has no kids at all but does possess a wealth of know. & fund. of humans of all ages. Why do people suppose that ^{neglecting} ^{children} having a baby means ^{the} woman knows what she's doing when it comes to raising ^{them}? Pregnancy is a matter of odds, ^{chemical} ^{connections} not an expression of cleverness. "She must be a good woman. She's raised 3 kids."

~~So did Ma Bouter~~ What utter garbage.

Pregnancy is a chemical lottery, not an act of will. ~~That~~ may result from an act of will or hope, but no woman can

MOTHER FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Do you notice
how many times
I forget your
needs, your birthday?

My disregard
for your wishes
in some matters
must make you wince.

Unpaid visits,
calls undialed
are bound to make a dent

will conception anyone than she can will the sex of the Con-
ceived. Most pregnancies are surprises, even
if not ~~surprised~~ ^{unplanned}.

The question is why do women who don't deserve it
automatically share this blanket of worn mystique ~~something~~
because they are mothers? History is loaded with bad
examples of motherhood enough so that no one would ever
utter that nonsense about ^{"mother"} ~~the most beautiful word~~ ^{being the most beautiful word} in the language
~~motherly love~~
~~being a~~ woman's face & beauty.

honey If a woman is a bad mother, why should anyone
respect her just because she gave birth? Yet many women
expect that alone to win respect & admiration. Why?

At Dawn the moon on Dorado's slope

People from all over the world are acquainted with Georgia's Stone Mountain. Speculation about its origin has flourished for decades. But few people, even among natives, are aware of Georgia's even more fascinating stone mysteries.

Scholars are still puzzling over the two Eatonton effigy mounds in Putnam County. The larger one, called Rock Eagle, now lends its name to the beautiful 4-H Club Park where it nests. From the ground it looks like a pile of rubble. You must climb a to