



By Douglas J. Meredith

Pre-Ramble

I have often been accused of being overly negative. This is simple not true. I hate it when people say this. In an effort to disprove these rumours, I have divided this column into distinct sections. The more observant readers will notice that not all of these sections are entirely negative.

Things I Hate (in no specific order)

1. Going to the grocery store on Monday and finding that there isn't any bread. Why is there never any bread on Mondays?
2. Going to the Cosmo and being told there isn't any room at the coat check. It should be a simple matter to match the number of coat hangers with the number of people the fire regulations permit to be in the club.
3. Being young, single (with a perfect driving record) and having to buy car insurance. \$1848.00 for one year????
4. Living in an arctic zone. Why couldn't I have been born in Florida? What is the point in having all of this snow? What do we need cold for? Why does God hate Canada?
5. Michael Jackson. Nuff said.
6. Mornings. I don't know why, but I've never been any good at getting up in the morning (sometimes not even in the early afternoons). It doesn't even seem to have anything to do with the amount of sleep I get. I hate people who can get up in the morning.
7. Canadian politics. What could possibly be more petty than Canadian politics. The major issue of the Conservatives' first term was tuna. WHO CARES? Another dumb Canadian trait: Canadians always whine that the government would do more for us, and that we should have more social programs, and then they want to know why we have such high taxes. It's because you asked for it, Stupid.
8. Going to the Hilltop for supper and not being able to get a seat.
9. Going to the Lunar Rouge for supper and not being able to get a seat. I find this especially annoying as it probably means that I have already been at the Hilltop and failed to get a seat.
10. Taxes. Need I say more?
11. When it is slippery out and I'm going up Smythe street. I'm doing fairly well making my way up the hill and I am just starting to feel proud of my superior driving ability, when the guy in front of me starts to spin his tires. Somehow not realizing that this will only make things worse, he presses down harder on the accelerator, thus managing to bring himself (and the six people behind him) to a full stop. Why are there so many people in New Brunswick who don't know how to drive in the snow?
12. When Americans take Canada for granted. Canada is the U.S.'s largest trading partner, yet we still hear statements like "(The American-Japanese trade relationship is the most important one in the world." Oh, well, I guess it's easy to take people for granted when they all speak French, live in log cabins (or igloos), and ride dog sleds. Yes, we do get ALF in Canada, and no, they don't have to translate it.
13. Cleaning my apartment. The only thing I hate more than cleaning it, is having it messy.
14. Leaders of trade unions. Petty little people grasping for whatever shred of power they can get. They don't seem to be too concerned about the members of their own unions. Get a life.
15. The local cable company (you know who you are). They always seem to be about three minutes late turning off their simulcasting. It's really annoying when you go to watch your favorite show (Coach, channel 7) and for the first three minutes you have to watch what is on channel 8. Okay, Roseanne is on both of these channels right before, but stop the simulcasting at 10:30!

Contrary to popular belief, I don't hate what's-her-name, the leader of the New Brunswick socialist party. She isn't significant enough for me to hate.

Miscellaneous Questions:

What do those "I'm a Friend of Bill W." bumper stickers mean?

Why do the Liberals and that other little party keep saying that we are inferior to the Americans? I say that Canadians are the equals of any other country, and we can compete fairly with any other country and hold our own. I'm tired of having people tell me that my country is inferior.

Miscellaneous Answers:

- X=7
- Siagon.
- E. All of the above.

Post-Ramble

If anyone decides to sue me for anything in this column, then the offensive remark was not mine. It was added by the editors without my permission.

OPINION...

On Hope for the End of Two "Isms"

by David K Heckerl

An interesting paradox for feminism and environmentalism is that both implicitly imagine social conditions in which neither "ism" would be necessary or important. Seeking the subversion of male dominated, patriarchal culture, feminists find themselves in the uneasy position of promoting the end of feminism itself. Feminism is, it seems to me, parasitic on a dialectic of mutual entailment with patriarchy -- feminism exists because patriarchy exists -- and if patriarchy is somehow abolished, feminism will perish as unworthy of interest. By the same token, environmentalism seeks a non-instrumental relationship between humans and non-humans that will render environmental discourse dated and trivial. Environmental thought is a product or symptom of environmental crisis, and if this crisis is resolved environmentalism will, like feminism, run its course.

A better way of making my point is to say that when feminism ceases to exist there is a good chance that it will have finally passed from marginal belief to concrete embodiment in the social weave of institutions and personal relationships. Feminism wants ultimately to be taken for granted, to be part and parcel of the social, political, and cultural air we can't help but breathe, but once this condition is achieved feminism becomes insignificant. Likewise, environmentalism will cease to exist when it achieves submersion as assumed procedure in our institutional and personal dealings with the non-human world. If and when feminism and environmentalism constitute the very fiber of our presuppositions about how to conduct ourselves toward women and nature, then what had started as anticipatory belief will know true success precisely in becoming superfluous. In other words, feminism and environmentalism will have succeeded in reforming societal practice when it no longer seems interesting to talk about feminism and environmentalism at all. Of course, other beliefs will form in the wake of those beliefs that have passed from anticipatory hope to concrete realization, and the cycle of particular beliefs and their hopes for embodiment in public life will continue.

The disconcerting implication for feminists and environmentalists who openly acknowledge their desire for social conditions that will abolish their most cherished beliefs is that this necessarily requires accepting one's future triviality. Those feminists and environmentalists who wish to see their beliefs attain "matter of course" status in the ordinary functioning of public institutions and private relationships face the prospect that their most cherished beliefs will, at the moment of concretization, cease to exist in the sense of becoming trivial and obsolete. Accepting the notion that the beliefs which constitute our innermost selves require, to be fully justified, a kind of extinction -- embodiment in the taken for granted life of society -- seems threateningly morbid. It is undeniably difficult, psychologically speaking, to realize that the cherished beliefs you hope will find widespread embodiment in social practices demand, as the condition for success, the demise and trivialization of those very beliefs.

So what is the point of all this? Does it matter? Can I be serious about advocating that feminists and environmentalists take seriously the planned obsolescence entailed in furthering the social conditions in which feminism and environmentalism will cease being compelling, interesting issues? If what I said about the dialectical relationship between feminism and patriarchy and environmentalism and ecological crisis holds true -- that feminism, for example, needs patriarchy as its condition of possibility -- then accepting the hope of ceasing to be a feminist or environmentalist is, I think, justified.

In light of my hope for the future end of these two "isms", it seems to me that feminists who want to eternalize feminism and environmentalists who want to eternalize environmentalism tacitly desire the perpetuation of patriarchy and ecological crisis. You can't have feminism without patriarchy or environmentalism without environmental crisis, so to eternalize either "ism" is to simultaneously eternalize their dialectical opposites. Assuming that this state of affairs is unacceptable to both feminism and environmentalism, it follows that feminists and environmentalists need to embrace the contingency of their beliefs as subject, hopefully, to the end that would fully justify them: pervasive embodiment in public institutions and private relationships as obligatory attitudes toward women and nature. Obligatory, because feminism and environmentalism would ideally become "automatic" in being constitutive of our deepest beliefs about women and nature.

As argued above, for me to say that "I want to dedicate my life to defending and furthering feminism and environmentalism" is to unwittingly say that "I resign myself to the lifelong hegemony of patriarchy and the inevitability of environmental collapse." That feminism and environmentalism are crucial issues attests, among other things, the dogged persistence of patriarchy and the grim possibility of "ecotastrophe." To long for the life, then, of feminism and environmentalism is to hope for their re-emergence as trivial issues of no consequence. At that moment, the moment of their dissolution, the life of feminism and environmentalism will have truly arrived.