

Zeitschrift: Der Kreis : eine Monatsschrift = Le Cercle : revue mensuelle
Band: 29 (1961)
Heft: 12

Artikel: Mothers are bewildered over feminism in sons
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-570965>

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Mothers are bewildered over feminism in sons

by Dr. Walter Alvarez



Many mothers write to ask me what they should do with a son who is feminine in many of his interests, and perhaps is living largely for music or art. He will seldom go out with a girl, and then he may go with a mannish girl who is a bit mixed-up, much as he is.

What the mother wants to know is what she can or should do about the situation. Should she scold her son and perhaps ask the family doctor to scold him? I would say, «Most certainly not». The boy is probably very lonely and very unhappy about the situation, and there is little or nothing he can do to change it.

THE MOTHER WANTS to know if she should consult their minister, and I would say, «No.» The problem, as I see it, is purely a medical one. While he was in the womb, something went decidedly wrong in the development of the boy's brain and, to some extent, his body. I do not imply that these lads are not bright; in an Army study their intelligence and ability averages were found to be higher than normal.

Many a mother wants to know if she should scold and raise Cain when her son brings a close friend home with him; and again, I would say, «No.» That would be very unkind and very stupid, and would only drive the son away from his family.

The next question is, should the mother try to get her son to marry a nice girl? My answer would be to leave that up to him; only he can know whether he could stand living every day with a woman; and only he can know if he can show her enough affection to keep her reasonably happy. My feeling is that the girl ought to be told what she is getting into.

I have seen cases in which the young man did a dirty trick to an affectionate girl by marrying her, just to get a housekeeper and a «front» to deflect suspicion from himself. Naturally, she soon was desperately unhappy.

THE NEXT BIG QUESTION the mother asks is, «Should I insist that my son take extensive treatment from a psychiatrist?» I would say, «No»—unless perhaps a kindly psychiatrist could be found who would just talk to the lad and help him with his adjustments to an unhappy and lonely life.

So often the mother of the unusual son will say. «I guess he was BORN the way he is. I noticed that he was 'different' when he was little.

He liked to play with dolls, and he never cared to go out with the boys to play sand-lot football.»

YES; THE MOTHER is right, her son is «different», he was born that way, and the probability is that he always will be that way.

English Movies

«A Taste of Honey» is the real thing. Like Shelagh Delaney's original stage play, which she has adapted with Tony Richardson, it is marvelously expressive and invigoratingly direct. It is also moving, funny, packed with imagery and Lancashire fortitude, and emotionally without a false note. As on the stage, the crux of the screenplay is the railing tenderness between the schoolgirl heroine, pregnant by a Negro sailor, and the homosexual who moves in to look after her. The relationship is quite unsentimental: the girl preserves her right to mock the queer, and remains insistently curious. «You can stay if you tell me what you do. *Go on . . .*» »I don't go in for sensational confessions,» he says with dignity. She finds herself suddenly cared for, cooked for, chivvied and loved: she is in a panic about pregnancy, and he is what she needs.

Murray Melvin plays the queer; he is an actor with a beautifully crisp technical sense, and his repose and melancholy African-mask face seem to belong to the same private world as the Opice games on the soundtrack and the mandolin used in John Addison's exquisite score.

(From «*The Observer*»)

The British film, «Victim», is fortunate in the fact that homosexuality in the cinema has not had to face the self-conscious sniggers that for so long delayed its debut as a serious subject of theatre.

The screenplay makes a clear plea along Wolfenden lines for more tolerance and for second thoughts about a law described as «a blackmailer's charter.»

In its own right, «Victim» is a very efficient and crisply edited thriller which tells how a young man who hangs himself rather than challenge his blackmailers, almost brings about an exposé of his herofigure, a successful barrister with whom he once went for car rides.

Its besetting sin is a sentimentality which prevents the unhappy central figure going off the rails quite as wholeheartedly as serious literature on the subject would lead one to expect. (From another English newspaper)

DIRTY INDUSTRY

(also from England)

A letter from Washington has reached us, with the disturbing postmark of «Report Obscene Mail to your Postmaster.» Not having any obscene mail at hand to report, we rang up the American Embassy for further elucidation.

It turns out that obscene mail is an important American industry, which Senate hearings five years ago estimated at being worth from 100 to 300 million dollars: and there's a Federal law against sending dirty literature through the post: the post office will even refuse to send any mail to some people, on the grounds that they've been discovered to be sending O.M.

The G.P.O. think the whole thing is rather absurd.