

Transcript of KMYR series on The Public Affair: “Woman’s Revolution: The Change to Androgyny”

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This radio program is a five-part report on local Feminist attitudes by Georgelle Durcan.

Keywords and topics: feminism, Lesbian Feminism, Chicano Movement, Chicana, civil rights, Black women, Black community, women’s rights, Woman’s Movement, androgyny, sexuality

ZANE BLANEY: On “The Public Affair”:

WOMAN’S VOICE: I should be free to love who I want. And that means if I want to love women, I should not be discriminated for it in any way, shape, or form. And eventually, I want to see every kind of love, whether it’s the love of a dog or the love, for me, for another woman, or for a man, or whatever. All those kind of loves, those free forms of expression should be exactly that: free expression.

BLANEY: On “The Public Affair”, the “Woman Revolution: A Change to Androgyny” with Georgelle Durcan.

[music; singing]

BLANEY: “The Public Affair” this week is a five-part look at the Woman’s Revolution with Georgelle Durcan.

GEORGELLE DURCAN: The Woman’s Revolution is moving the human race toward androgyny. Webster’s [Webster’s Dictionary] defines androgyny as “having female and male characteristics in one.” Metaphysically, the androgyne is the complete human being. Androgyny suggests a spirit of reconciliation between the sexes. A full range of experience where women may be aggressive, men tender. A world in which roles of personal behavior can be freely chosen. The meaning of androgyny in the Woman’s Movement can be heard in the following dialogue with an Albuquerque feminist.

DURCAN: What is the point of this Woman’s Revolution? What is the whole thing about?

WOMAN’S VOICE: Okay, a year ago I would have said the point of this Woman’s Revolution is to annihilate man and for woman to have her rightful role on this Earth. But, okay, I’ve progressed. And I—I consciously use the word “progress” because I have progressed. I am more open to seeing not just women but seeing men and so what I want now is first of all: full equality. Not

like Edward Bellamy's world of *Looking Backward*, his twenty-first century utopia. Not his equality of, you know, there being the main-task workforce industrial army and then the woman having their workforce within that main army. No. I want complete and utter equality. Like, if I want to be an astronaut or if I want to be a grave digger or if I want to be a surgeon or, you know, that's one aspect of it. Secondly, full equality where – and this is going to take time because it's like we were saying earlier on, that, first of all, woman has to learn the technicalities, you know. The whole – woman has a lot to learn about just surviving, uh, with the jobs, with the whole mental attitude and mental approach of being a singularly independent individual, which women have never been. Uh, they've always had to be reliant upon somebody, in essence, the men. If not an individual man, then the male part of the society, which is normally – which has always been, as far as we know, the dominating part. And like, the freedom – I guess the easiest way to say this is the freedom that men enjoy, whether they be the poorest man in the lowest kind of slum or the King of England, you know, that whole [mumbled], women have to enjoy the freedom that all those men enjoy. And, to me, what is even more important in many respects – and this will not automatically come with full equality for women – and that is I should be free to love who I want. And that means if I want to love women, I should not be discriminated for it in any way, shape, or form. And eventually, I want to see every kind of love, whether it's the love of a dog or the love, for me, for another woman, or for a man, or whatever. All those kind of loves, those free forms of expression should be exactly that: free expression.

DURCAN: Let me ask you something else.

WOMAN: Sure.

DURCAN: What is it that men will learn from this Woman's Revolution? Will need to learn?

WOMAN: Okay, well first of all, society – and we have to start from, from the crib, in essence. Um, we have to start with the children. And, like, this friend of mine that's a teacher at a school and she is teaching boys and girls to be non-sexist to each other. Um, like she's giving – like she isn't just giving a certain kind of male-oriented book to a boy and a woman-oriented book to a girl. She's giving them both the same kind of book and she's giving them both the same kind of, um, projects to do. She's getting them to look at each other and say, "Well what do you want to do?" and – and Emily might say, "Well, you know, I wouldn't mind being, um, an Admiral." And Emily saying to, uh, John, "Well, what do you want to do?" and he saying, "Well, I wouldn't mind being a typist." And for neither of them to feel weird about saying that. And that's where we have to start, you know. Like, there are some men that are my age and, you know, our age in general, that are looking at women first of all, not as sex objects. Which that's the first thing we have to get rid of is the sex object. Once men stop looking at women as sex objects and look at women and relate to women as human beings.

[music]

DURCAN: Tomorrow, we hear about the politics of the Lesbian Feminist and her work in the Woman's Revolution and the change to androgyny.

[music; singing]

DURCAN: This is Georgelle Durcan on KMYR.

[06:32]

[Note: this interview section is poorly recorded with echoes and muffled voices]

BLANEY: "The Public Affair" this week is a five-part look at the Woman's Revolution with Georgelle Durcan.

DURCAN: "The world will not change overnight and liberation will not happen unless individual women agree to be outcasts, eccentrics, perverts, and whatever the powers-that-be choose to call them. The key to the strategy of liberation lies in exposing the situation and the simplest way to do it is to outrage the pundits and the experts by sheer impudence of speech and gesture. Women must refuse to be meek." Those are the words of Germaine Greer in "The Female Eunich". Here are the words of an Albuquerque Lesbian Feminist.

DURCAN: What about men?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Okay, I see, um. Okay, there's a lot of reasons why [mumbled]. Most of the time I don't, it's not worth the effort. Um, I guess I see that men's place is to be together with other men and change themselves. That, um, they shouldn't expect women to change them. For women and men to work together all the time to eliminate oppression, it probably won't work because men and women working together is the pattern of men being on top and women being on bottom in whatever they're working together on. And then that, I think, would be continued. So, they have to be separate.

DURCAN: What?

WOMAN'S VOICE: I see them as separate. Their role as separate.

DURCAN: At this point?

WOMAN'S VOICE: At this point and probably for a long time to come.

DURCAN: Are you saying that we should not be having a [mumbled]?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Um, yeah, essentially I am. Um, let me see. I'm saying like [mumbled; echoed]. There are a lot of nice men around, okay? [mumbled] I see that as a possibility. There are probably a lot of nice men around. I see that still women have to put their energies toward other women because men have been supported by women for a long time, emotionally. That's how come they put out the works of art [mumbled] quite often, I mean the woman behind the crown, right?

DURCAN: Are you saying that women should take women as lovers?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Uh, I think that still has to be – I mean, if you're a woman and you find a woman you love then you certainly should. I don't, um, I'm not in the movement for lesbian sexually for all women, at this point, because it probably wouldn't be a realistic sort of thing to a lot of women. I'm suggesting either – I'm suggesting Lesbian Feminism rather than lesbianism in a sexual sense.

DURCAN: What's the difference between Lesbian Feminism and lesbianism?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Lesbian Feminism is who and what we've been talking about, the political doctrine. It doesn't mean that you have to love other women physically. It means putting your energies into other women.

DURCAN: Eliminating the male – Eliminating any -- any energy toward the male work?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Yeah. I think – I think that – I don't think that's really possible, totally. It's something that's an ideal to work toward, I think. Um, I think there's no way that we can survive without dealing with men in society now. But as far as possible at this point, putting energy into women.

DURCAN: Do women who are Lesbian Feminists have men as lovers? Or [mumbled] that you know?

WOMAN'S VOICE: None that I know of. None that comes – I mean.

DURCAN: So Lesbian Feminism actually works out to being, um, sexual Feminism as well, doesn't it?

WOMAN'S VOICE: No. Well, there is another possibility, which is celibacy.

DURCAN: That's true.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I've been celibate for most of my life. It can be a very good place to go, especially at this point for a lot of women. It's really a viable alternative. I know several women who are beginning to consider it and, um, even [mumbled] that's something – especially if you've been used to putting all your energy into just other people, period. You know, forget men and women or whatever the reason. It's about putting your energy into yourself. Putting yourself as a sexual being. You know, and your sexuality comes from you. I mean, it doesn't have to be asexual.

DURCAN: But are there [mumbled] – Are women just beginning to take on these vows and practices of celibacy?

WOMAN'S VOICE: I think there are probably a fair number and I think it's on and off. There are probably a lot more than I know of who have come out, who have become lesbians.

[music]

DURCAN: Tomorrow we hear from a Chicana Feminist on the “Woman’s Revolution: The Change to Androgyny”.

[singing]

DURCAN: This is Georgelle Durcan on KMYR.

[12:03]

BLANEY: Georgelle Durcan continues her look at the “Woman’s Revolution: A Change to Androgyny”.

DURCAN: “While attending a Mexican-American Conference, I went to one of the workshops that were held to discuss the role of the Chicana, the Mexican-American woman. The woman of La Raza. The only thing the women had to report was it was the consensus that the Chicana woman does not want to be liberated. As a Chicana woman, I felt this as quite a blow. I could have cried.” That is from “Colonized Women” in *Sisterhood is Powerful*. This is from an Albuquerque Chicana Feminist.

WOMAN’S VOICE: As far as I know, of all the women that I’ve ever come in contact with that have this viewpoint that are Chicanas, we have all, at one time or another, been banished from a certain organization. Been banished from or been ridiculed for being certain Feminists –

DURCAN: Who ridiculed you?

WOMAN’S VOICE: Okay, uh, generally, I suppose it would be the man, but of course also females who do not hold these viewpoints. Who feel that we are dividing the movement – the Chicano Movement. Instead of, uh, you know, trying to liberate ourselves so we can liberate the men so we can struggle together.

DURCAN: What are the difficulties that you say Feminist Chicanas have? Are you trying to work for the Woman’s Liberation, are you trying to make this thing come together? It sounds like it’s a difficult thing to work with.

WOMAN’S VOICE: Okay, it is difficult because being both a Chicano – you’re schizo in a society where you have to be bi-cultural and bi-lingual and, etc. Which is not a, you know, which is not a bad thing. But the problem is that if you have to deal with two different economic systems, which we do have. The Anglo living in a man’s dominated society, you have to deal with one economic system and living in the Chicano society, you have to live under another economic system. And I think this is one – this is one fact that sociologists have failed to see. That we have– we are schizo in almost everything that we do. Right now, the Chicana at the university-level, what she is trying to do now is not separate herself. Definitely not separate herself from

the Chicano Movement and totally relegate all her energy to the Feminist Movement, but rather, she is trying to do a hard job. She is trying to do twice as much as the white woman. She is trying to get herself together. She is trying to fight for social and economic equality within her group – within La Raza, and at the same time, trying to be there when there – when there is an insistence for Chicano unity. And this is extremely important.

DURCAN: How does this affect you personally? I mean – how – how is your attitudes about, you know, wanting to be your own being, affected your relationship with men? With, I guess, with Chicano men?

WOMAN'S VOICE: There are still men that are saying, "Yes, fine. Go ahead and join the Chicano Movement, but what we would like you to do is kind of do the clerical work and maybe, you know, go out and sell cookies so we can raise money for the movement." Something to that effect. Um, there are men at that level. There are also men at the level that are saying, "Okay, we will become economically independent together." And, um, that is happening more and more. Which is also happening in the wider movement. And then you are going to find those men who are really enlightened and they realize just as we realize, that we cannot be separated from each other. We have to work together, we don't have much choice. We are a minority as it is and if we should split up into a female and male organization or organizations, then we'd have less power. And, uh, it's good to find men that realize that. Okay, now the problem with the Chicana Feminist is that, uh, you do have to be together much sooner and faster, I think, than the males. Because it our responsibility to educate the man if he does not realize that. And re-education is extremely important because it's not a feminist movement, per se. It's not just going to liberate the woman it's also going to liberate the man, naturally.

[music]

DURCAN: Tomorrow we hear the politics of the Black woman on "The Woman's Revolution: The Change to Androgyny".

[music; singing]

DURCAN: This is Georgelle Durcan on KMYR.

[17:23]

BLANEY: Georgelle Durcan continues her discussion of the "Woman's Revolution: The Change to Androgyny".

DURCAN: "If the white group do not realize that they are, in fact, fighting capitalism and racism, we do not have common bonds. If they do not realize that the reasons for their condition lie in the system and not simply in men getting a vicarious pleasure out of concealing their bodies for exploited reasons, then we cannot unite with them around common grievances or even discuss these grievances in a serious manner because they are completely irrelevant to the Black

struggle.” That is from “Women in the Black Liberation” *Sisterhood is Powerful*. To expand upon that point, here are several of Albuquerque’s Black women.

FIRST WOMAN’S VOICE: We are often in two struggles. And, um, I don’t have too much of a problem struggling as a woman because I’m aware of myself as a woman. And the best thing I could do is make my man aware that I am a woman – his woman. And the movement we’re in together with our Black men, because we can’t sit up here and say we’re struggling for women’s rights. Because I don’t have rights as a Black woman first and these rights are more predominant in my heart than, you know, just having rights as a woman. Uh, the struggle I’m involved in is for my whole Black race and until I accomplish these things, I don’t have time – and this is my own personal opinion, I don’t have time to be struggling for women’s rights. ‘Cause once they obtain them, I’m going to get them anyway, but I just feel I need my Black rights first.

SECOND WOMAN’S VOICE: And it’s quite evident, okay, another reason why Black women probably don’t participate in the Feminist Movement as much as possible is because that movement has tried to fashionize, uh, the Black community as a whole. It’s also tried to bring about a wider split between the Black woman and the Black man, okay. What happens is that we have white women who will, in the Feminist Movement, get up and say, “Well, how about Algiers, where these women they got out and they fought and they founded a revolution beside their men and after the revolution the men said, get in back of us.” Well, you see the thing is, that uh, that’s one situation and true enough that did happen as far as those women were concerned. My point is that we are the United States and our part of the whole Black struggle is here so we have to deal with the men we have here in the United States. I do not see that situation re-occurring, okay? I do not see the situation where Black men will say, you know, after we have fought side-by-side through everything that, uh, “Hey, you have to take the backseat.” I don’t see that because our struggle is so unique that we’ve gone through the same things. I mean, you know, when we had to fight for rights, we have had to fight together. I mean, we had – I want the right to be able to go to this school regardless of whether I really want to go to this – I had a right, you know. I may not want to go there but I should have the right. When we fought for that, we didn’t say that was for men only, okay? That was a struggle for both men and women, okay? So, this is my point. In the United States, as far as I can see, the struggle has been so far that Black men and Black women have worked together simultaneously. It might have split up somewhere else, it might have been a different situation. But all I see in that situation is that is the European influence on those people and usually that’s when you [muffled].

THIRD WOMAN’S VOICE: [muffled] Also, uh, white women are saying, “We want to get out and define ourselves. We want to get out – we want to have some life other than our home and our husband.” And Black women have always had to get out. They’ve always had to define themselves. They’ve never had the choice of whether to stay home and be a mother or go out

and work. It's always been necessity that they –they're a mother or a wife, uh, then they had to go out and be a mother to somebody else's children.

[people talking at the same time; muffled]

It wasn't a matter of choice. It's still isn't a matter of choice. It still is necessary for them to have jobs. It's still necessary for them to define themselves because if Black women let someone else define them then we would be ugly, because we don't have long straight hair, we don't have blue eyes, green eyes, you know. Uh, we would be, uh, masculine. Promiscuous. All this stuff has been defined on us, you know? So, therefore, we can't even relate to what you're trying for.

[music]

DURCAN: Tomorrow, a Feminist speaks about her role as wife and mother on the "Woman's Revolution: The Change to Androgyny".

[Yoko Ono singing her song "Sisters, O Sisters"]

DURCAN: This is Georgelle Durcan on KMYR.

[22:40]

BLANEY: Georgelle Durcan concludes her series on the "Woman's Revolution: The Change to Androgyny".

DURCAN: And perhaps the sexes are more related than we think and the great renewal of the world will perhaps consist in this: that man and maid, freed from all false feeling and aversion, will seek each other, not as opposites, but as brother and sister. As neighbors, and will come together as human beings.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I didn't really become involved in the Woman's Movement until after I had a child and, um, I guess that what I realized was that a role I had been socialized for my whole life wasn't what it was cracked up to be. [laughs]

DURCAN: How?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Oh, I was really happy with the child and very happy sort of doing the physical things, but I became very isolated for the first time in my life. I had total responsibility for the child. Responsibility – a kind of responsibility that I'd never had before. Um –

DURCAN: Didn't you have a husband at that time?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Yes, but he was not involved at all in the care of the child. He was a Ph.D. student at the time and was writing his dissertation and, you know. I did the whole thing.

DURCAN: What did the relationship go through? You know, from your awakening?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Oh, lots of problems. Um, I had been pretty much totally devoted to him and to his career and to his growth and change and then I became devoted to my child's growth and change. And I really began to see myself as an observer of life rather than a participant in it because these other people were doing wonderful, fantastic things and my kid, in particular, was really very dynamic, exciting experience. And I was an observer. I was a facilitator, it wasn't happening to me.

Um, it seemed like there wasn't room in that relationship for more than one important person. That, uh, the person I was married with had been socialized his whole life to think that he, in fact, was more important. And, um, he was a scientist, so that a whole culture fed into that. Um, him thinking he was the most important. I'm right now, doing some research on, uh, sex role socialization and how we as young children learn about our sex roles and what values we put on them. And boys as young as three and four and five – boys and girls – see the male role as more powerful. They're very aware of the economic implications of the father in the family. Um, they're very aware of what's the most powerful. They're very aware of who is the most important person in the house at a very young age so that the situation I arrived at with an adult male was the product of long, long, long years of socialization just like I was the produce of long years of socialization. I wanted to change. I had a strong motivation, a strong thrust to change. Um, he did not have that thrust to change. Because he was in the position of things were fine for him. And so that, um, it – I think it's really hard for people who have been socialized like that to – not only to give up, but to see things from another person's perspective because everyone has fed their perspective.

DURCAN: Do you – Do you see men and women as working together? Do -- do you feel that they are a good complimentary team?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Um hmm. Um, yes, I would say that in idealistic kind of a way, yes, that's what I would hope for. And I don't think it's just individual women working with individual men. I think it's each woman working with the male in her and each male working with the female in him. That that kind of – it's a search for androgyny. It's a search for the missing parts to make ourselves whole. And then, um, I think if we work on that in our own selves that we will not meet each other in terms of conflict because we will see in ourselves that which is in the other.

[music; singing]

DURCAN: This has been the "Woman's Revolution: The Change to Androgyny". I'm Georgelle Durcan on KMYR.

[27:17]

[end]