

Fourier and Feminism

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Preliminary remarks

... Did you already find seats? If you're here to stay, find your seats. Any of these people do... *[inaudible]*. A couple of announcements — just come in and sit down — a couple of announcements before we commence today. First of all, my comrade Bob Kimbrough of the English department would like to have a word with you...

[audio cuts out]

[Kimbrough: ... and I congratulate you very much for being here this semester.] [applause]

That's usually reserved for obituaries *[laughter]*... or for a First Communion *[laughter]*. But do not be disheartened, because now the debts are cleared. And you may be well assured, and we all are going to be well assured, that considerable damage will be done. But the problem will not be solved, and that leaves everything for us to do.

Lecture

We've been talking, then, about the recrudescence of the women's movement in France in the early 1830s, that whole initiative undertaken by a group of militant women against a sexist society — in fact, the most radical revolt in the nineteenth century against the very virulent anti-feminism which had taken root in France on the morrow of the French Revolution. Or, to put it more precisely, we have begun to examine why and how it was that Fourier and the early Saint-Simonians not only inspired that early feminist movement of the nineteenth century, but also gave it its peculiar radical shape and its very radical ideology.

Now, at the very heart of that massive, subversive project of Charles Fourier was that incomparable sensitivity to the repression and to the deformation and to the distortion in the daily practices of bourgeois society; how the practices and mores of bourgeois culture systematically thwarted the emotional needs and inherent emotional propensities of men and women; how the practices and the mores of those bourgeois societies simply, effectively, thwarted the development of human personalities. It's that that's at the very heart of Fourier's concern. He looked at those capitalist societies, and for him they meant the destruction of the harmony of humankind — sundering men and women from their natural environment, turning

men and women against each other, setting adults against children, nation against nation, race against race.

Look: you have only to dip into the thousands of pages which Fourier has left to us to fathom the depth and the breadth of his assault on everything that he considered to be life-diminishing and desiccating in those capitalist societies. Driven as he was by an indomitable belief in a world that was liberated from bloodshed and from violence and from oceans of tears, he demystified — more than any other person in the first half of the nineteenth century — the totality of a sexist and an authoritarian and elitist and, ultimately, a fraudulent kind of culture.

Consider Fourier for a moment on the question of colonialism, and rarely do we find in the first half of the nineteenth century anyone who was as sensitive as Fourier was to the kind of ethnocide which imperialist countries were already perpetrating against Third World societies. And so, in the struggle of England and France over that delightful and lovely Polynesian island of Tahiti, Fourier saw already the ravages of cultural imperialism that would one day really ravage large sections of the Third World. And so he wrote:

"From time immemorial, Tahiti was a happy nation whose inhabitants easily satisfied their economic wants, whose mores served the psychological needs of the people. But our so-called civilized countries of Europe have unleashed against the Tahitians a storm of moral vandalism. Once navigators and explorers reported that a tiny nation, living peacefully thousands of miles away, seemed prosperous and contented, a horde of Western merchants, missionaries, and generals were consumed with greed, envy, and lust.

"Our hypocritical Christian countries were suddenly aflame with crusading zeal. From France and England, missionaries have swarmed into Tahiti to teach the peoples the lessons of morality; behind them have flooded in the merchants determined to impose upon the Tahitians the laws of the free market. And those poor Tahitians, who neither knew nor needed marriage vows, now have been taught how sinful their harmonious and communal life was. At the point of bayonet, they have been forced to learn and to accept the sacred laws of marriage."

Now, we know that Fourier devoted years of his life to the elaborate construction of a model of an ideal harmonious community: what he called in his own invented terminology the "phalanstery." But, you see, we would grossly diminish the revolutionary importance of Fourier if we were to dismiss that phalanstery as simply a kind of idle exercise in modelbuilding. You must understand that the so-called utopian writing of Fourier — the phalanstery and all of its institutions and practices, all of its ways of living, all of its ways of working and loving — that all of that for Fourier was an immense mirror in which to refract the compulsive repression of

capitalist societies and the distorted social relationships that they produced. That the phalanstery for Fourier was an agenda: it was what an authentic revolutionary socialist culture really was. That Fourier realized, in the very marrow of his bones, how absolutely diminishing, how absolutely disenchanting, how absolutely squalid it would be if socialism were to arrive simply as the transfer of property titles from private hands into a bureaucratic state, without ever touching the dehumanized work or the perverse social relationships or the compulsive sexual repression of those capitalist societies of the nineteenth century.

Why should Fourier — and this is an essential question — why should Fourier, after all, have devoted so many years of his life to constructing a human psychology? Why should he have pioneered, three-quarters of a century before Sigmund Freud, across the terrain of human emotion and impulses? Why should he finally have offered up a list of "thirteen essential passions," as he called them, or drives of human beings, which societies had either to accommodate or repress? It was obviously because he had to insist that human beings were capable — if their emotions and passions were given vent and given release — were capable of living in and constructing a joyful and a harmonious society: that their failure to do that was because of those bourgeois societies that had repressed those and had consigned them, as a result, to a joyless and an alienated and an enslaved kind of life.

And we certainly don't have time at this point to elaborate on all of the manifold ways in which Fourier set down what the terms, what the irreducible terms of socialist culture really are. How, for example, work had to be revolutionized, so that men and women went to work not out of the compulsion of economic need, but they went out of joy, out of a sense of their own creative need; so that work no longer would be monotonous, no longer would be mind-destroying — twelve and fourteen hours a day at the same boring task, in the pestilential and dirty and airless environments of those early capitalist workshops and factories. So that work in an authentic socialist society — "in Harmony," as Fourier called it — would reflect what he called the "butterfly passion of human beings" (the need for variety), and would reflect the "composite passion," as he called it (the need for sociability). So that no man or woman in the phalanstery that Fourier constructed would work at any task in any given day for more than two hours; would change tasks four and five times; would move from the fields into the workshops as the spirit and the needs of those particular workers moved them; so that in each workplace, there would be a team of other workers, about whom hovered that spirit of intimacy and of sociability and of Harmony.

Nor can we spend time really to elucidate what Fourier said about the industrial cities of capitalist societies, what he called "anthills of deformed human beings." But note it well: that the phalanstery was to be a rural city, so that people were once more planted in the countryside, so that their relationship with their natural environment, which had been sundered by the society,

would once again be repaired; that these phalansteries were to be small communities of 1,800 people at the most, so that a certain intimacy and friendliness and sociability should prevail.

Nor can we do more than note in passing that Fourier was an early and very visceral critic of — frenetic productionism, the kind of productionism that capitalism produces — and along with it, of course, the corollary of consumerism: so that Fourier insisted that in the socialist society, in the phalanstery, there would be manufacturers to be sure, but products would be produced to last for a long time and not to become obsolescent for the sake of new profit; so that only those products would be produced and only those materials used which suited the needs of human being, and not simply the markets for profit of private entrepreneurs. All of that, important to note in passing.

But our primary concern is to look at Fourier at his most radical, at his most revolutionary: Fourier on the question of women, Fourier on the question of sexual repression, Fourier in a frenetic attack against all of the restraints of the society against the emotions. And what is striking about Fourier when he approaches the question of women is his attitude — his attitude really bespeaks of a spirit that is androgynous. There is nothing in all of the discourse of Fourier — and it is copious on the question of women — which in any way suggests that he believed in a separate feminine nature. Nor is there any trace in his writings and thinking about women of those stereotypes, which were so widespread in the nineteenth century, of woman as angel: the depository — virginal or monogamous — the depository of all moral purity; or the other common stereotype: woman as a prostitute, woman as temptress, driven by sexual passions, and hence to be controlled and confined and domesticated — stereotypes which we find, over and over again, recurring in the medical and the moralistic literature of the nineteenth century.

But Fourier approached women as simply other human beings, and approached them as other contracts in society. He approached them however, as those people in society who were most oppressed, most subjugated, and most enslaved. And when he comes to define the question of women, Fourier is absolutely uncompromising. He finds their deep basement in nineteenth-century society to be a very central symbol of a repressive society. And so he said, "In debasing women, men have corrupted society, drained it of human decency and dignity. Wherever men have degraded women that have degraded themselves. As a general rule, we can say that the test of human progress in any society is the advance of women toward genuine liberation; that the test of decadence in any society is the denial of freedom for women." In a word, that the liberation of women is the central principle of all social progress.

And when he came to diagnose what the basis of the debasement was, Fourier was all-encompassing. There was nothing in the subjugation of women that really escaped his remarkable discourse. And of course, women were merchandise in that society; they were property to be bought and sold in the marriage market. And so as early as 1808, Fourier — in the

midst and at the height of that reactionary Napoleonic empire — had, after all, the courage to make a frontal assault upon that marriage institution: "Marriage is nothing but imprisonment for women, the principal vehicle of their servitude."

And what the most important and pressing task was, as a result, was to liberate women of the necessity of being married — not of marriage itself necessarily, but of the imperative or the necessity economically of being married. In other words, to relieve women of that kind of enslavement not only to the whims of men, but also to eternal unpaid domestic drudgery, which was foisted upon them because they have no other alternative. And so he writes, "The greatest misery of our contemporary world is that not a single government anywhere is the friend of women or interested in justice for women. The first measure of equity would be to ensure that the effective power to choose their own destiny, to free them from the humiliation of putting themselves up for sale, of being forced to suppress all of their emotional and sexual needs, until some unknown male comes along to bargain for their body and for their domestic work."

And the problem, as Fourier saw it, was that all of the practices and the mores of the society conditioned, and in a sense made inevitable, that fate for women — conditioned them for that particular enslavement. And how? Because the society provided no education for women, because it provided them with no proper employment, and consequently did not permit them to relieve themselves of that economic bondage. And so he says,

"How can women escape this servility when their entire training from birth until marriage is designed to stifle their power, to thwart their personality, to force them to yield to the first man, no matter how despicable he may be, who will agree to make them his wife? Forced into a tightly confined sex role, a woman can have no other destiny except to prepare the soup for her husband, wash his pants, and of course produce his heirs. Look at our society: even at the top echelon, you have a *Madame la présidente*, but she doesn't preside over anything; you have *Madame la générale*, but she commands no army. They are empty shadows, barely visible in the reflected glories of their husbands. But women have the same rights as men to live creatively and independently.

"But let's face it squarely: men don't want to lose their absolute power, and they don't want the competition of women. They fear it — consider how jealous they are of a female author when she arrives on the scene. After brutalizing their slaves, the colonial rulers of the Antilles rationalized their barbarism by charging that blacks were subhuman. But the opinion of male-dominated society about women is on the same level. The Church teaches women that they have no soul and are unworthy to enter paradise; the French tell women that they have no towel and can never leave the kitchen. It is the same sexist doctrine — a little bit cruder in the Orient, a little bit more alike in the West, but

also more hypocritical in the West in masking the unchained egoism of the all-conquering male sex." — 1831.

And so it is that Fourier, when he comes to construct that phalanstery, gives what he considers a revolutionary answer. Why is it not the role that a socialist movement must fight for in this regard? What will a socialist society presumably do in ending this oppression of women? And so in the phalanstery, as Fourier constructs it, there are no separate sex roles; it is a destruction of those sex roles. All of the domestic drudgery which has been shoved off on women disappears, because there are communal kitchens, and there are communal sewing shops, and there are communal laundries, and there are communal daycare centers. And Fourier goes even further: that the people who are in charge of them, who work in them, are both men and women. And he's very keen here. Because he insists, after all, that in men there are many desires and propensities to do these tasks that are considered to be only female. And consequently, in the phalanstery, in the authentic revolutionary society, male and female will have an opportunity to go with their impulses and where their propensities take them.

And so Fourier says, "Many men enjoy these tasks, but in our society, they are inhibited from expressing their instincts." Why shouldn't the man who feels a strong maternal instinct manifest it in communal daycare centers? But it goes even deeper than that, and this is fascinating: that from the first educational origins on, in the socialist society as Fourier conceived of it, there would be no differences in the education of the sexes — that girls and boys would go through the same procedure, that they would not dress separately in order to identify separate sex roles, that from the very beginning there would be that mixing so that their impulses would not be frustrated by what society told them was masculine and feminine. There is a total androgynous reasoning in this Fourier text:

"In the phalanstery, both sexes will receive the same education, participate in the same physical exercises, learn the same parts in practice, even in dress — they will not be distinguished by forcing all girls to wear skirts and all boys wear pants. For such an artificial distinction right may only frustrate the full and free expression of the personality. At that age up, boys and girls should be totally free to learn whatever they would like, rather than to suppress their instincts, because certain activities are said to be masculine and others are said to be feminine."

Well, you can't get very much more radical than that, both in an understanding of what is the root of a great deal of this sexism and what are the cures for it. If it rings with a completely contemporary tone, remember that it is written in the first third of the nineteenth century.

And that yet isn't the half of it. Because, really, when you push Fourier to his most radical limits — to the outer extremes of his assault on that bourgeois culture — it is, of course, his exhortation

for sexual liberation: his demand, after all, that the sexual passions be given its vent, and that consequently it be made into a health-giving and life-giving function, and not something really that leads to the kind of brutality that he so graphically describes in his own society. You see, if there is anything that is alien to Fourier, it is the double standard: that women, for example, should be deprived of their right of sexual expression, or that that right of sexual expression should be channeled within the limits of monogamous marriage into the reproductive function.

Now, it's hard to explain, but you have to try and understand what this whole thing about sexual liberation means to Fourier; it is very profound, and consequently, it needs more than just the graphic illustration that he gives it. He believes, after all, that the erotic impulse in society is very deep and very complex: that every man and woman is able to manifest that erotic impulse; is enabled, after all, to feel and to touch and to embrace others; that it is the very basis for the manifestation of sociability, the manifestation of intimacy and of love in society. But that that erotic impulse, after all, has a kernel, which is the sexual impulse itself — in other words, the desire for physical relations. And it is Fourier's idea that it is imperative that everyone in a good society have what he calls "the sexual minimum," the capacity to express himself or herself in that way. If that is repressed, or if that is channelized within the framework of monogamous marriage, if it cannot flow out freely in its most natural ways, then it becomes something really barbaric. Then it becomes something in which men brutalize women: in which they commit adultery from their monogamous marriages, in which they permit women no such outlet. Here Fourier speaks:

"In our civilized society, repression and inhibition have degraded the erotic life by reducing sex to brutish impulsions, devoid of sentiment, beauty, and real attachment. The moral codes imposed by our society have transformed love — the source of social unity — into an egocentric, selfish, aggressive activity, which has subjected women to every kind of problem and turned marriage into a nightmare of rape. Even the dissidents — the sexual insurgents who practice free love — find no meaningful gratification, for their illicit fleeting relationships are wholly egoistic and devoid of generosity. The bond of marriage satisfies no one. Husbands, the privileged class in our society's amorous regime, systematically practice adultery, but even that outlet is forbidden for women."

And so there is another regime of sexuality that Fourier proposes: it is the amorous regime of Harmony, or that authentic socialist society. And he prefaces it this way: "In Harmony, the authentic socialist society, love is neither mere diversion nor a momentary recreation, but it is the essential principle of communal life. All of Harmony's amorous practices are designed to guarantee a basic human right: that no one capable of love will ever be frustrated in his or her desire."

Don't think of Fourier as some kind of an *obsédé*, as someone who was really obsessed with physical sexuality; he himself, as far as I can tell — and I've looked at Fourier for years and years, and manuscripts and everything else — as far as I can tell, never had any sexual relations with anybody [*laughter*]. But it suffices to say that he had a magnificent and capacious imagination [*laughter*]. And when he thought about this, it wasn't as though he was saying that people, after all, must constantly manifest that physicality, but that they must manifest it at certain points. After that flows this eroticism; after that flows out this kind of intimacy with others. Otherwise, it becomes internalized, and it really, really begins to warp the human personality and to seek absolutely terrible outlets.

In that sense, in Harmony there will be full and free outlets: outlets for sexuality, outlets for sensuality, outlets for all of this eroticism. There is no perversion in Harmony — there is no perversity, there is no abnormality — with the exception of those few relationships in which one partner imposes pain or humiliation against the will of the other partner; everything else is permissible. And Fourier is consequently the great emancipator, and he is consequently the great lawgiver of sexual enfranchisement. And he calls out to everyone in every closet: all of the people, after all, who are so frightened that their particular propensity is unique in society, and that it is condemned. And so he tells us this particular story — not quite sure whether Fourier really means this, or whether it's really true or whether he's just trying to encourage other people. And he says, at any rate:

"In our civilized society, one's passions, if they are not the usual ones, are generally tamed. I was thirty-five years old when, through a chance accident, I could admit finally that I have a special passion for close friendship with lesbians. I estimate, by my mathematical calculations [*laughter*], that from the 33 million French, there are 26,450 others who share my passion [*laughter*]. Yet I have never met anyone else who has felt liberated enough to admit it, though I freely stated my preference in various groups" [*laughter*].

Well, Fourier's point is, quite obviously, that nothing is to be shameful and that nothing is to be inadmissible. On the question of homosexuality, he is open and frank: insistent that it is an incontestable right, that it is a preference no worse and no better than any other preference.

And in *The New World of Love* (*Le Nouveau monde amoureux*), toward the end of his life, Fourier really does erupt in a volcano of sexual images and fantasies. And the reason, I think, is perfectly clear, and that is that under that volcanic eruption, he is really trying to bury all of the inhibitions, all of the restraints, all of the repression that exists in society. And so he writes in that *Nouveau monde amoureux* about six teams, six teams or groups of six couples; he talks about *octogynes*, groups of eight couples, lovers and friends who begin to mix it up. Until finally, at the end of a very long passage — which really goes to the culmination of Harmony and

attraction and community in this particular demonstration — he talks about *les orchestres passionnels*: veritable "passionate orchestras" of all sorts of people, mixing it up together in this perfect harmony.

But, you see, you read that, and I tell you that there is nothing as barren and nothing as meaningless about all of that as the kind of very bogus sexual liberation of our own time and our own place, which is a very calculated ploy of co-optation of sexual permissiveness by governing authorities, more and more concerned, after all, about political somnolence and about popular obedience. And I should say, parenthetically, that if these crazies of the Moral Majority start messing around with that effective strategy and ploy, then they really will open up Pandora's box of revolt. And it will be interesting to see, finally, people coming in from that particular activity after it has been all banned and all put — chucked — to the side, and finally beginning to think about the society.

But that's not going to happen with Fourier: you're talking about this sexual liberation within the framework of socialism. For the nuclear family, obviously, Fourier had no use, and it would disappear in that socialist society. He called it fraudulent and bogus, and this is the way he described that patriarchal family:

"The members of the family want nothing more than to get out [*laughter, applause*]. The child squirms at the table, anxious to play with other kids in the neighborhood. The adolescent wants to go to the music hall against the orders of her penny-pinching father. The young woman wants to go dancing and not to Mass. The mother dreams of getting out in the neighborhood and meeting new people, which the father forbids. What a community! Talk at the dinner table is about the weather or about the sickness of relatives. And for this family ideal, the father subjects the wife and children to that systematic repression which passes for morality."

In 1838, a year after Fourier died, it was the great French novelist Stendhal who foresaw eternal fame for him, who believed that posterity would credit Fourier with having been one of the few, very authentic pioneers and prophets of human liberation in modern history. And Karl Marx, who never soft on utopians, nonetheless observed about Fourier that you had to read him if you want to know the depth and the breadth of what an authentic revolutionary socialist society might be.

And yet, of course, the destiny of Fourier was shocking and incredulity in his own time, after that occasional derision, but mainly obscurity. Even socialists and communists really buried Fourier, refused to discuss him. Because, after all, that exhortation to a liberation of the flesh, that exhortation to release of emotions from their imprisonment, that frontal attack on marriage and

the family, on those vaunted bourgeois institutions — all of those were explosives that could not be detonated.

And consequently, even the *fourieristes*, his disciples of the 1840s, were at pains to dissociate themselves from the most radical parts of his own analysis. They were social engineers, and while they were busily at work constructing economic cooperatives — which were very pale versions of the kind of phalanstery that he had conceived of — while they were busily doing that, they were also truncating the texts of Fourier and burying many of the unpublished manuscripts. Even in 1841, when the *fourieristes* published what they called the complete works of Fourier — which was anything but the complete works — they had to add a preface in which they categorically stated, "Neither Fourier nor his devoted followers expect society to adopt those innovations which can only alter or disrupt our contemporary mores and habits."

Again, you see the subversion in that. And the message spread, and it filtered, of course, into the discourse of the early Saint-Simonians, and from them it filtered into the consciousness of those women who would become the revolutionary vanguard of the early 1830s. Now, in coming to terms with the Saint-Simonians, we obviously have to return — however briefly — to Saint-Simon.

And, you see, you can argue that between them, Saint-Simon and Fourier really represent the two essential strands of the socialist project in modern history. That Saint-Simon was the great ideologue of productionism: the quantitative dimension of socialism, the imperative of planning the economy. And the legacy of Saint-Simon, far the more enduring and the deeper one in the history of socialism — a legacy replete with bureaucratic distortions and over-centralization of state planning. The legacy of Fourier, a much more furtive one: surfacing from time to time in cultural revolt, but remaining to this very present time the agenda still to be enacted of socialism.

Now, we can best come to grips with the remarkable palette of Henri de Saint-Simon if we think about how he viewed those European societies at the turn of the nineteenth century: that his view of those societies was very much the same kind of view that we might have of Third World societies at any time after 1945. That is, societies in which the laboring poor live at subsistence levels; societies in which a parasitical and corrupt elite — landlords, bureaucrats, army officers — usurp an unequal portion of the national wealth; societies in which social activists — in other words, the authentic development of the society — depended upon national production and rational distribution of the social wealth. It's in that light that Saint-Simon looked at those European societies at the turn of the nineteenth century: that he saw the possibility of perfecting development.

You must understand that you're talking about someone who understood his own milieu and broke with it. Born in 1760, named Henri de Saint-Simon, was a member of one of the old

aristocratic families and one of the most prestigious. But it was a milieu that he came to hate and despise very early, because he found that ruling class to be parasitical, wasteful, and unproductive — he called it "the feudal class." And the feudal class he defined by its concern for warmaking and for hunting and its contempt for everything that was productive in the economy and in the society. And then came the French Revolution, and Saint-Simon rallied to that French Revolution, and he gave up his aristocratic title. And suddenly he realized that society was in a transition from that feudal stage to what he allied "the authentic industrial stage": in other words, that stage in which rational production would ensure the wellbeing of the citizenry. And consequently, he was enthusiastic about the prospect of progress.

For Saint-Simon, the golden age was not in the past, as it had always been for poets and philosophers, but the golden age was in the future. And so he was to write in 1814 in his book *On the Reorganization of European Society*, "What our fathers have never seen our children will one day see, and it is the duty of our generation to clear the way, to ensure the golden age happens." And consequently, Saint-Simon looked at a struggle going on in society, a struggle that was essentially a class struggle but that he defined as the conflict between *les oisifs* — the parasites, the old parasitical ruling class — and *les industriels* — the industrialists. But you must understand what Saint-Simon means by the term *industriels*. He doesn't mean industrialists in the narrow sense of the word; he means all of the true producers in society. He means the entrepreneur and the capitalist, but he means also the worker and the artisan; he means the doctor and the scientist; he means also the poet and the artist — all produce, all create in society.

But, you see, that term *industriel*, it confused people, and until 1820 it was a confusing concept. So we should note that they were French bankers like Jacques Laffitte who financed the reviews and the journals of Saint-Simon; who thought he was their great friend, because he wanted the entrepreneurs really to develop society. But, you see, what they misunderstood was what the goal of all of this production was for Saint-Simon. All of this rational production was not for profit, but it was, after all, to control what he called the natural state of affairs or the natural society: to control nature, to be able to bring all of the forces of society under control for the wellbeing of the citizenry.

Ultimately, after the impression of 1815 to '19, Saint-Simon got more precise, and consequently he said that his whole system was dedicated to the emancipation of the most numerous and the poorest class — namely, the proletariat. From that point on, there could be no ambiguity about Saint-Simon. And the fulcrum for all of this productionism, for all of this new industrial society, the fulcrum was to be the state: not the state as that instrument of the old ruling class, but a simple planning authority. Saint-Simon is the real progenitor of the entire idea of the state planning board, of the planning operation, of the *plan pour l'État*.

And consequently, it is this planning authority which rings with a kind of terrible, terrible connotation in our ears — about all of the distortions of those socialist and capitalist planning societies, about all that over-bureaucratization. But for Saint-Simon, it wasn't seen in those terms: it was seen as the clustering together of all of the technicians and all of the engineers and all of the experts in society to make the greatest possible stockpile of social wealth that could be distributed in the society. And dealing with Saint-Simon — now, before he died, after all, he did worry about the relationship between all of those experts and the people, and the fact that workers had the right to revolt against all of those bureaucrats if they were to get out of hand.

How to do it? Well, Saint-Simon died in 1825. And at the end, after all, he left a message, and it was a message that he inscribed in a book called *The New Christianity*. And he was, after all, an atheist, and it had nothing to do with Christianity, but it had to do with the imperative of a new ideology in society: that there would be no transition to his new industrial order — that there would be no usefulness of this productionism for the wellbeing of society — unless there were a new ideology that were spread in the society; that the goal, after all, was to end the misery of the most numerous and the poorest class. And so he left it to a group of disciples, a small knot of disciples, to carry the word, to expose his message, to create a new ideology that would finally grab large numbers of people and create some kind of revolutionary party. And that is the instrument, that Saint-Simonian group.

And how will that Saint-Simonian group translate these broad lines in Saint-Simon of creating a new productive, abundant society? They move in one direction or another until one of them, [Prosper] Enfantin, discovers women as the center of the problem: that, after all, there will be no new society, no productive society, until there is a revolution in the status of women. And what that revolution is begins to become clear to Enfantin when he reads Fourier, and it has to do not only with jobs and not only with education, but it has to do with a total liberation. And that makes it very radical and very dangerous.

It is phenomenal — you can do anything in society except attack marriage, the family, and the myth of sexual continence. You can run for the presidency of the United States [*laughter*] and spout all of the most inconceivable immoralities about wasting resources in military equipment, about subordinating the environment to private interests, about shafting the poor by withdrawing even the fairest variable for their survival, and you may not even lose [*laughter, applause*]. But go out on a Sunday show, after all, and say that marriage and the family are repressive and they should be transcended, and you won't get to the first primary. And consequently, it is there that the radicalism comes.

And here is the problem — and the problem that I want to delineate when I get properly into the women's movement Monday — and that is that these women in the 1830s acted it all out. They really tried to go the whole liberation route, and they were absolutely courageous and absolutely

calumniated. And by the time the women's movement then revised in 1848, that second generation will drop all of that essential sexual radicalism, turn their backs on it as something that is too explosive to handle. The notion of being too far in front of the masses — the French Communist Party, who was, as always, misaligned for anything.

And so you get, really, a problem. What those women in the 1830s did, we'll start to see next time. But what the 1848 women would not do becomes the point, really, of our discourse.
[*applause*]