Feminist manifesto

Mabel Dodge Luhan papers

Call Number: YCAL MSS 196
Creator: Loy, Mina
Other Creator: Luhan, Mabel Dodge, 1879-1962
Language: English
Date: [1914?] November 15
Genre: Manuscripts
Type of Resource: text
Description: Holograph manuscript, corrected.
Physical Description: 7 p.
26 cm.
Box: Box 62
Folder: Folder 1658
Rights: More about permissions and copyright
Permission from the Yale University Committee on Literary Property is required to publish Mabel Dodge Luhan materials in any format. To learn more, contact the Curator, Yale Collection of American Literature.
Collection: Beinecke Library
Source Digital image/tiff
Format:

A record for this resource appears in Orbis, the Yale University catalog

Beinecke Library Permissions and Copyright notice

Click here to begin looking at the images!
This is a draft of a feminist Manifesto. The feminist movement as at present instituted is Inadequate.

Women, if you want to realise yourselves — you are on the eve of a momentous psychological upheaval — all your pet illusions must be unmasked — the lies of centuries have got to go — are you prepared for the Wrench? There is no half-measure — no scratching on the surface of the rubbish heap of tradition, will bring about Reform; the only method is Absolute Demolition.

Cease to place your confidence in economic legislation, vice-crusades, uniform education — you are glossing over Reality.

Professional & commercial careers are opening up to you — Is that all you want?
And if you honestly desire to find your level without prejudice be brave
2. deny at the outset that pathetic clap-trap that Women are Woman is the equal of man for
she is NOT!

The man who lives life in which his activities conform to a social code which is a protectorate of the feminine element is no longer masculine.
The women who adapt themselves to a theoretical valuation of their sex as a relative impersonality is not yet feminine.

Leave off looking to men to find out what you are not seek within yourselves to find out what you are.
As conditions are at present constituted you have the choice between Parasitism, and Prostitution, or Negation.
Men & women are enemies, with the exception of the exploited for the parasite, the parasite for the exploited - at present they are at the mercy of the advantage that each can take of the other's sexual dependence. The only point at which the interests of the sexes merge - is the sexual embrace.

The first illusion it is to your interest to demolish is the division of women into two classes, the mistress, & the mother. Every well-balanced, & developed woman knows that is not true; Nature has endowed the complete woman with a faculty for expressing herself through all her functions - there are no restrictions the woman who is so completely developed self-conscious evolved as to be un-self-conscious in sex will prove a restrictive influence on the temperamental expansion of the next generation; the woman who is a poor mistress will be an incompetent mother - an inferior mentality - & will enjoy an inadequate apprehension of Life.
To obtain results you must make sacrifices.

The first and greatest sacrifice you have to make is to your "virtue".

The fictitious value of a woman as identified with her physical purity is too easy a stand-by. Reverting her to the acquisition of intrinsic merits of character by which she could obtain a concrete value, therefore, the first self-enforced law for the female sex, as a protection against the man-made booby of virtue, which is the principal instrument of her subjection, would be the unconditional surgical destruction of virginity throughout the female population at puberty.

The value of man is assessed entirely according to his use and interest to the community. The value of woman, depends entirely on chance, her success or insuccess in manoeuvring a man into taking the life-long responsibility of her—

The professional advantages of marriage are too ridiculously ample—compared to all other trades—for under modern conditions
a woman can accept preposterously luxurious support from a man (without return of any sort - even offspring) — as a thanks for her virginity.

The woman who has not succeeded in striking that advantageous bargain — is prohibited from any but surreptitious reaction to life - stimulus — or entirely debarred maternity. Every woman has a right to maternity.

Every woman of superior intelligence should realize her race-responsibility, in producing children in adequate proportion to the unfit or degenerate members of her sex.

Each child of a superior woman should be the result of a definite period of psychic development in her life — not necessarily of a possibly insome extent worn out continuance of an alliance spontaneously adapted for vital creation in the beginning but not necessarily harmoniously balanced as the parties to it follow their individual lines of personal evolution. For the harmony of the race, each indi-
individual should be the expression of an easy
and ample interpenetration of the male and female
temperaments—free of stress
Woman must become more responsible for
the child than man—
Women must destroy in themselves, the
desire to be loved—
The feeling that it is a personal insult
when a man transfers his attentions from
her to another woman
The desire for comfortable protection instead
of an intelligent curiosity and courage in
meeting and resisting the pressure of life
Sex or so called love must be reduced
to its initial element—honour, grief
sentimentality, pride consequently feelings
must be detached from it.
Woman for her happiness must retain her
deceptive faculty of appearance, combined with
indomitable will, irreducible courage, & abun-
dant health to the outcome of sound nerves—
another great illusion that
Woman must use all her introspective
clear-sightedness & unbiased bravery
to destroy for the sake of her self respect
is the inferiority of sex
the realisation in defiance of superstition that there is nothing impure in sex — except in the mental attitude to it — will constitute a wider, more an incalculable & wider social regeneration than it is possible for our generation to imagine.

Nov. 15th. Nina Loy.

Florence.