

## The Masculinist Revolt

William Tenn

I

## The Coming of the Codpiece

Historians of the period between 1990 and 2015 disagree violently on the causes of the Masculinist

Revolt. Some see it as a sexual earthquake of nationwide proportions that was long overdue. Others

contend that an elderly bachelor founded the Movement only to save himself from bankruptcy and saw it

turn into a terrifying monster that swallowed him alive.

This P. Edward Pollyglow—fondly nicknamed “Old Pep” by his followers—was the last of a family

distinguished for generations in the men’s wear manufacturing line. Pollyglow’s factory produced only one

item, men’s all-purpose jumpers, and had always operated at full capacity—up to the moment the

Interchangeable Style came in. Then, abruptly, overnight it seemed, there was no longer a market for

purely male apparel.

He refused to admit that he and all of his machinery had become obsolete as the result of a simple

change in fashion. What if the Interchangeable Style ruled out all sexual differentiation? “Try to make us

swallow that!” he cackled at first. “Just try!”

But the red ink on his ledgers proved that his countrymen, however unhappily, were swallowing it.

Pollyglow began to spend long hours brooding at home instead of sitting nervously in his idle office.

Chiefly he brooded on the pushing-around men had taken from women all through the twentieth century.

Men had once been proud creatures; they had asserted themselves; they had enjoyed a high rank in

human society. What had happened?

Most of their troubles could be traced to a development that occurred shortly before World War I,

he decided. “Man-tailoring,” the first identifiable villain.

When used in connection with women’s clothes, “man-tailoring” implied that certain tweed skirts and

cloth coats featured unusually meticulous workmanship. Its vogue was followed by the imitative patterns:

slacks for trousers, blouses for shirts, essentially male garments which had been frilled here and

furbelowed there and given new, feminine names. The “his-and-hers” fashions came next; they were

universal by 1991.

Meanwhile, women kept gaining prestige and political power. The F.E.P.C. started policing

discriminatory employment practices in any way based upon sex. A Supreme Court decision (Mrs.

Staub's Employment Agency for Lady Athletes v. The New York State Boxing Commission)

enunciating the law in Justice Emmeline Craggly's historic words: "Sex is a private, internal matter and

ends at the individual's skin. From the skin outwards, in family chores, job opportunities, or even clothing,

the sexes must be considered legally interchangeable in all respects save one. That one is the traditional

duty of the male to support his family to the limit of his physical powers—the fixed cornerstone of all

civilized existence."

Two months later, the Interchangeable Style appeared at the Paris openings.

It appeared, of course, as a version of the all-purpose jumper, a kind of short-sleeved tunic worn

everywhere at that time. But the men's type and the women's type were now fused into a single

Interchangeable garment.

That fusion was wrecking Pollyglow's business. Without some degree of maleness in dress, the

workshop that had descended to him through a long line of manufacturing ancestors unquestionably had

to go on the auctioneer's block.

He became increasingly desperate, increasingly bitter.

One night, he sat down to study the costumes of bygone eras. Which were intrinsically and

flatteringly virile—so virile that no woman would dare force her way into them?

Men's styles in the late nineteenth century, for example. They were certainly masculine in that you

never saw a picture of women wearing them, but what was to prevent the modern female from doing so

if she chose? And they were far too heavy and clumsy for the gentle, made-to-order climates of today's

world.

Back went Pollyglow, century by century, shaking his head and straining his eyes over ancient, fuzzy

woodcuts. Not this, no, nor that. He was morosely examining pictures of knights in armor and trying to

imagine a mailed shirt with a zipper up the back, when he leaned away wearily and noticed a

fifteenth-century portrait lying among the pile of rejects at his feet.

This was the moment when Masculinism began.

Several of the other drawings had slid across the portrait, obscuring most of it. The tight-fitting hose

over which Pollyglow had bitten his dry old lips negatively—these were barely visible. But between them,

in emphatic, distinctive bulge, between them—

The codpiece!

This little bag which had once been worn on the front of the hose or breeches—how easily it could

be added to a man's jumper! It was unquestionably, definitively male: any woman could wear it, of

course, but on her clothing it would be merely a useless appendage, nay, worse than that, it would be an

empty mockery.

He worked all night, roughing out drawings for his designers. In bed at last, and exhausted, he was

still bubbling with so much enthusiasm that he forgot about sleep and hitched his aching shoulder blades

up against the headboard. Visions of codpieces, millions of them, all hanging from Pollyglow Men's

Jumpers, danced and swung and undulated in his head as he stared into the darkness.

But the wholesalers refused the new garment. The old Pollyglow Jumper—yes: there were still a few

conservative, fuddy-duddy men around who preferred familiarity and comfort to style. But who in the

world would want this unaesthetic nov-elty? Why it flew in the very face of the modern doctrine of

interchangeable sexes!

His salesman learned not to use that as an excuse for failure. "Separateness!" he would urge them as

they slumped back into the office. "Differentness! You've got to sell them on separateness and

differentness! It's our only hope—it's the hope of the world!"

Pollyglow almost forgot the moribund state of his business, suffocating for lack of sales. He wanted

to save the world. He shook with the force of his revelation: he had come bearing a codpiece and no one

would have it. They must—for their own good.

He borrowed heavily and embarked upon a modest advertising campaign. Ignoring the more

expensive, general-circulation media, he concentrated his budget in areas of entertainment aimed

exclusively at men. His ads appeared in high-rated television shows of the day, soap operas like “The

Senator’s Husband,” and in the more popular men’s magazines—Cowboy Confession Stories and

Scandals of World War I Flying Aces.

The ads were essentially the same, whether they were one-pagers in color or sixty-second

commercials. You saw a hefty, husky man with a go-to-hell expression on his face. He was smoking a

big, black cigar and wore a brown derby cocked carelessly on the side of his head. And he was dressed

in a Pollyglow Men’s Jumper from the front of which there was suspended a huge codpiece in green or

yellow or bright, bright red.

Originally, the text consisted of five emphatic lines:

**MEN ARE DIFFERENT FROM WOMEN!**

**Dress differently!**

**Dress masculine!**

Wear Pollyglow Men's Jumpers

With the Special Pollyglow Codpiece!

Early in the campaign, however, a market research specialist employed by Pollyglow's advertising

agency pointed out that the word "masculine" had acquired unfortunate connotations in the last few

decades. Tons of literature, sociological and psychological, on the subject of overcompensation, or

too-overt maleness, had resulted in "masculine" being equated with "homosexuality" in people's minds.

These days, the specialist said, if you told someone he was masculine, you left him with the

impression that you had called him a fairy. "How about saying, 'Dress masculinist?'" the specialist

suggested. "It kind of softens the blow."

Dubiously, Pollyglow experimented with the changed wording in a single ad. He found the new

expression unsavory and flat. So he added another line in an attempt to give "masculinist" just a little more

punch. The final ad read:

**MEN ARE DIFFERENT FROM WOMEN!**

**Dress differently!**

**Dress masculinist!**



Wear Pollyglow Men's Jumpers

With the Special Pollyglow Codpiece!

(And join the masculinist club!)

That ad pulled. It pulled beyond Pollyglow's wildest expectations.

Thousands upon thousands of queries rolled in from all over the country, from abroad, even from the

Soviet Union and Red China, Where can I get a Pollyglow Men's Jumper with the Special Pollyglow

Codpiece? How do I join the masculinist club? What are the rules and regulations of masculinism? How

much are the dues?

Wholesalers, besieged by customers yearning for a jumper with a codpiece in contrasting color,

turned to Pollyglow's astonished salesmen and shrieked out huge orders. Ten gross, fifty gross, a hundred

gross. And immediately—if at all possible!

P. Edward Pollyglow was back in business. He produced and produced and produced, he sold

and sold and sold. He shrugged off all the queries about the masculinist club as an amusing sidelight on

the advertising business. It had only been mentioned as a fashion inducement—that there was some sort

of in-group which you joined upon donning a codpiece.

Two factors conspired to make him think more closely about it: the

competition and Shepherd L.

Mibs.

After one startled glance at Pollyglow's new clothing empire, every other manufacturer began

making jumpers equipped with codpieces. They admitted that Pollyglow had single-handedly reversed a

fundamental trend in the men's wear field, that the codpiece was back with a vengeance and back to

stay—but why did it have to be only the Pollyglow Codpiece? Why not the Ramsbottom Codpiece or

the Hercules Codpiece or the Bangaclang Codpiece?

And since many of them had larger production facilities and bigger advertising budgets, the answer

to their question made Pollyglow reflect sadly on the woeful re-wards of a Columbus. His one chance

was to emphasize the unique nature of the Pollyglow Codpiece.

It was at this crucial period that he met Shepherd Leonidas Mibs.

Mibs—"Old Shep" he was called by those who came to follow his philosophical leadership—was

the second of the great triumvirs of Masculinism. He was a peculiar, restless man who had wandered

about the country and from occupation to occupation, searching for a place in society. All-around

college athlete, sometime unsuccessful prizefighter and starving hobo, big-game hunter and coffee-shop

poet, occasional short-order cook, occasional gigolo—he had been everything but a photographer’s

model. And that he became when his fierce, crooked face—knocked permanently out of line by the

nightstick of a Pittsburgh policeman—attracted the attention of Pollyglow’s advertising agency.

His picture was used in one of the ads. It was not any more conspicuously successful than the

others; and he was dropped at the request of the photographer who had been annoyed by Mibs’s

insistence that a sword should be added to the costume of derby, codpiece, and cigar.

Mibs knew he was right. He became a pest, returning to the agency day after day and attempting to

persuade anyone at all that a sword should be worn in the Pollyglow ads, a long, long sword, the bigger

and heavier the better. “Sword man is here,” the receptionist would flash inside, and “My God, tell him

I’m not back from lunch yet,” the Art Director would whisper over the intercom.

Having nothing else to do, Mibs spent long hours on the heavily upholstered couch in the outer

office. He studied the ads in the Pollyglow campaign, examining each one over and over again. He

scribbled pages of comments in a little black notebook. He came to be accepted and ignored as so much

reception-room furniture.

But Pollyglow gave him full attention. Arriving one day to discuss a new campaign with his account

executive—a campaign to stress the very special qualities of the Pollyglow Codpiece, for which, under

no circumstances, should a substitute ever be accepted—he began a conversation with the strange, ugly,

earnest young man. “You can tell that account executive to go to hell,” Pollyglow told the receptionist as

they went off to a restaurant. “I’ve found what I’ve been looking for.”

The sword was a good idea, he felt, a damn good idea. Put it in the ad. But he was much more

interested in certain of the thoughts developed at such elaborate length in Mibs’s little black notebook.

If one phrase about a masculinist club had made the ad so effective, Mibs asked, why not exploit

that phrase? A great and crying need had evidently been touched. “It’s like this. When the old-time

saloon disappeared, men had no place to get away from women but the barber shop. Now, with the

goddamn Interchangeable Haircut, even that out’s been taken away. All a guy’s got left is the men’s room,

and they’re working on that, I’ll bet they’re working on that!”

Pollyglow sipped at his glass of hot milk and nodded. “You think a masculinist club would fill a gap

in their lives? An element of exclusiveness, say, like the English private club for gentlemen?”

“Hell, no! They want something exclusive, all right—something that will exclude women—but not

like a private club one damn bit. Everything these days is telling them that they’re nobody special, they’re

just people. There are men people and women people—and what’s the difference anyway? They want

something that does what the codpiece does, that tells them they’re not people, they’re men! Straight

down-the-line, two-fisted, let’s-stand-up-and-be-counted men! A place where they can get away from

the crap that’s being thrown at them all the time: the women-maybe-are-the-superior-sex crap, the

women-outlive-them-and-outtown-them crap, the a-real-man-has-no-need-to-act-masculine crap—all

that crap.”

His eloquence was so impressive and compelling that Pollyglow had let his hot milk grow cold. He

ordered a refill and another cup of coffee for Mibs. “A club,” he mused, “where the only requirement for

membership would be manhood.”

“You still don’t get it.” Mibs picked up the steaming coffee and drank it down in one tremendous

swallow. He leaned forward, his eyes glittering. “Not just a club—a movement. A movement righting for

men’s rights, carrying on propaganda against the way our divorce laws are set up, publishing books that

build up all the good things about being a man. A movement with newspapers and songs and slogans.

Slogans like ‘The Only Fatherland for a Man is Masculinity.’ And ‘Male Men of the World Unite—You

Have Nothing to Gain but Your Balls!’ See? A movement.”

“Yes, a movement!” Pollyglow babbled, seeing indeed. “A movement with an official uniform—the

Pollyglow Codpiece! And perhaps different codpieces for different—for different, well—”

“For different ranks in the movement,” Mibs finished. “That’s a hell of a good idea! Say green for

Initiate. Red for Full-Blooded Male. Blue for First-Class Man. And white, we’d keep white for the

highest rank of all—Superman. And, listen, here’s another idea.”

But Pollyglow listened no longer. He sat back in his chair, a pure and pious light suffusing his gray,

sunken face. “None genuine unless it’s official,” he whispered. “None official unless stamped Genuine

Pollyglow Codpiece, copyright and pat. pending.”

Masculinist annals were to describe this luncheon as the Longchamps Entente. Later that historic

day, Pollyglow’s lawyer drew up a contract making Shepherd L. Mibs Director of Public Relations for

the Pollyglow Enterprises.

A clip-out coupon was featured in all the new ads:

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MASCULINISM?

WANT TO JOIN THE MASCULINIST CLUB?

Just fill out this coupon and mail it to the address below. Absolutely no charge and no obligation—just lots of free literature and information on this exciting new movement!

FOR MEN ONLY!

The coupons poured in and business boomed. Mibs became head of a large staff. The little

two-page newsletter that early applicants received quickly became a twenty-page weekly, the

Masculinist News. In turn, it spawned a monthly full-color magazine, the Hairy Chest, and a wildly

popular television program, “The Bull Session.”

In every issue of the Masculinist News, Pollyglow’s slogan, “Men Are Different from Women,”

shared the top of the front page with Mibs’s “Men Are as Good as Women.” The upper left-hand corner

displayed a cut of Pollyglow, “Our Founding Father—Old Pep,” and under that ran the front-page

editorial, “Straight Talk from Old Shep.”

A cartoon might accompany the editorial. A truculent man wearing a rooster comb marched into

cowering masses of hippy, busty women. Caption: "The Cock of the Walk." Or, more didactically,

hundreds of tiny children around a man who was na-ked except for a huge codpiece. Across the

codpiece, in execrable but highly patriotic Latin, the words E Unus Pluribus—and a translation for

those who needed it, "Out of the one, many."

Frequently, a contemporary note was struck. A man executed for murdering his sweetheart would

be depicted, a bloody axe in his hands, between drawings of Nathan Hale being hanged and Lincoln

striking off the chains of slavery. There was a true tabloid's contempt for the rights or wrongs of a case. If

a man was involved, the motto ran, he was automatically on the side of the angels.

"Straight Talk from Old Shep" exhorted and called to action in a style reminiscent of a football

changing room between halves. "Men are a lost sex in America," it would intone, "because men are being

lost, lost and mislaid, in the country as a whole. Everything nowadays is designed to sap their confidence

and lessen their stature. Who wouldn't rather be strong than limp, hard than soft? Stand up for

yourselves, men of America, stand up high!"



There was a ready audience for this sort of thing, as the constantly rising circulation of the

Masculinist News attested. From shower to washstand to wall urinal, the word spread that the problems

of manhood were at last being recognized, that virility might become a positive term once more. Lodges

of the Masculinist Society were established in every state; most large cities soon boasted fifteen or more

chapters.

Rank and file enthusiasm shaped the organization from the beginning. A Cleveland chapter

originated the secret grip; Houston gave the movement its set of un-printable passwords. The Montana

Lodge's Declaration of Principles became the preamble to the national Masculinist constitution: "...all men

are created equal with women...that among these rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of the opposite

sex...from each according to his sperm, to each according to her ova..."

The subgroup known as the Shepherd L. Mibs League first appeared in Albany. Those who took

the Albany Pledge swore to marry only women who would announce during the ceremony, "I promise to

love, to honor and to obey"—with exactly that emphasis. There were many such Masculinist subgroups:

The Cigar and Cuspidor Club, the Ancient Order of Love 'Em and Leave 'Em, The

I-Owe-None-Of-It-to-the-Little-Woman Society.

Both leaders shared equally in the revenues from the movement, and both grew rich. Mibs alone

made a small fortune out of his book, *Man: The First Sex*, considered the bible of Masculinism. But

Pollyglow, Pollyglow's wealth was heaped up beyond the wildest dreams of his avarice—and his

avarice had been no small-time dreamer.

He was no longer in the men's wear line; he was now in the label-manufacturing business. He made

labels to be sewed on to the collars of men's jumpers and inside the crowns of brown derbies, cigar

bands for cigars, and little metal nameplates for swords. One item alone did he continue to manufacture

himself. He felt an enduring and warm affection for the little fabric container bearing the legend Genuine

Pollyglow Codpiece; it seemed to involve him in the activities of his fellow men everywhere, to give him

a share in their successes and their failures.

But everything else was franchised.

His imprimatur came to be needed, needed and paid for, on a vast variety of articles. No

manufacturer in his right business mind would dream of coming out with a new model of a sports car, a

new office swivel chair or, for that matter, a new type of truss, without having Official Equipment—

Masculinist Movement of America printed prominently on his product. The pull of fashion has always

been that of the stamped-in herd: many men who were not card-carrying Masculinists refused to buy

anything that did not bear the magic phrase in the familiar blue isosceles triangle. Despite its regional

connotations, all over the world, in Ceylon, in Ecuador, in Sydney, Australia, and Ibadan, Nigeria, men

demanded that label and paid premium prices for it.

The much-neglected, often-dreamed-of men's market had come of age. And P. Edward Pollyglow

was its world-wide tax collector.

He ran the business and built wealth. Mibs ran the organization and built power. It took three full

years for a clash to develop.

Mibs had spent his early manhood at a banquet of failure: he had learned to munch on suppressed

rage, to drink goblets of thwarted fury. The swords he now strapped back on to men's bodies were

always intended for more than decorative purposes.

Swords, he wrote in the Hairy Chest, were as alien to women as beards and mustaches. A full

beard, therefore, and a sweeping handlebar mustache, belonged to the guise of Masculinism. And if a

man were bearded like the pard and sworded like a bravo, should he still talk in the subdued tones of the

eunuch? Should he still walk in the hesitant fashion of a mere family-supporter? He should not! An armed

male should act like an armed male, he should walk cockily, he should bellow, he should brawl, he

should swagger.

He should also be ready to back up the swagger.

Boxing matches settled disputes at first. Then came fencing lessons and a pistol range in every

Masculinist lodge. And inevitably, almost imperceptibly, the full Code Duello was revived.

The first duels were in the style of German university fraternities. Deep in the basement of their

lodges, heavily masked and padded men whacked away at each other with sabers. A few scratches

about the forehead which were proudly worn to work the next day, a scoring system which penalized

defensive swordplay—these were discussed lightly at dinner parties, argued about in supermarkets.

Boys will be boys. Men will be men. Attendance at spectator sports began to drop sharply: didn't

that indicate something healthy was at work? Wasn't it better for men to experience real conflict

themselves than to identify with distant athletes who were only simulating battle?

Then the battles became a bit too real. When a point of true honor was involved, the masks and

padding were dropped and a forest clearing at dawn substituted for the whitewashed lodge basement.

An ear was chopped off, a face gashed, a chest run through. The winner would strut his victory through

the streets; the loser, dying or badly wounded, would insist morosely that he had fallen on the radio aerial

of his car.

Absolute secrecy was demanded by the Code Duello from all concerned—the combatants,

seconds, officials, and attending surgeons. So, despite much public outcry and hurriedly passed new

laws, very few duelists were ever prosecuted. Men of all walks of life began to accept armed combat as

the only intelligent way to settle an important controversy.

Interestingly enough, swords in an open field at dawn were used mostly in the East. West of the

Mississippi, the two duelists would appear at opposite ends of the main street at high noon, pistols

holstered to their thighs. Advance warning would have emptied the street and pointedly suggested other

locales for police officials. At a signal, the two men walked stiff-legged toward each other; at another

signal, they pulled out their pistols and blazed away. Living and/or dead were then bundled into a station

wagon which had been kept nearby with its motor running. At the local Masculinist Lodge, there would

be a rousing discussion of the battle's fine points as well as medical treatment

and preparations for burial.

Many variations developed. The Chicago Duel had a brief and bloody vogue in the larger cities.

Two cars, each driven by a close friend of the duelist sitting in the rear, would pass in opposite directions

on the highway or a busy metropolitan street. Once abreast, foe could pound at foe with a submachine

gun to absolute heart's content: but firing was expected to cease as soon as the vehicles had drawn apart.

Unfortunately—in the intense excitement of the moment—few antagonists remembered to do this; the

mortality rate was unpleasantly high among other motorists and open-mouthed bystanders, not to mention

the seconds and officials of the duel.

Possibly more frightening than the Chicago Duel were the clumps of men—bearded, sworded,

cigared and codpieced—who caroused drunkenly through the streets at night, singing bawdy songs and

shouting unintelligible slogans up at the darkened windows of the offices where they worked. And the

mobs which descended upon the League of Women Voters, tossing membership lists and indignant

members alike pell-mell into the street. Masculinism was showing an ugly edge.

Pollyglow became alarmed and demanded an end to the uproar. “Your followers are getting out of

hand,” he told Mibs. “Let’s get back to the theoretical principles of Masculinism. Let’s stick to things like

the codpiece and the beard and the cigar. We don't want to turn the country against us."

There was no trouble, Mibs insisted. A couple of the boys whooping it up—it was female

propaganda that magnified it into a major incident. What about the letters he'd been receiving from other

women, pleased by the return of chivalry and the strut-ting male, enjoying men who offered them seats in

public conveyances and protected them with their heart's blood?

When Pollyglow persisted, invoking the sacred name of sound business practice, Mibs let him have

it. He, Shepherd L. Mibs, was the spiritual leader of Masculinism, infallible and absolute. What he said

went. Whatever he said went. Any time he felt like it, he could select another label for official equipment.

The old man swallowed hard a few times, little lumps riding up and down the tightly stretched

concave curve of his throat. He patted Mibs's powerful shoulders, croaked out a pacifying pair of

phrases, and toddled back to his office. From that day on, he was a wordless figurehead. He made

public appearances as Founding Father; otherwise, he lived quietly in his luxurious skyscraper, The

Codpiece Tower.

The ironies of history! A new figure entered the movement that same day, a

humble, nondescript

figure whom Mibs, in his triumph, would have dismissed contemptuously. As Trotsky dismissed Stalin.

## II

### DORSELBLAD

Masculinists had rioted in a California town and torn down the local jail. Various pickpockets,

housebreakers, and habitual drunks were liberated—as well as a man who had spent eighteen years in

the alimony section of the jail, Henry Dorselblad. More than anyone else, Dorselblad was to give

Masculinism its political flavor and peculiar idiom. Who that has heard it can ever forget the mighty skirl

often thousand male voices singing—

Oh, Hank Dorselblad is come

out of the West,

Through all the wide Border, his

codpiece is best...

Hellfire Henry, Hank the Tank, Give 'Em Hell Henry, Damn 'Em All  
Dorselblad—this was a culture



hero who caught the American imagination like no other since Billy the Kid. And, like Billy the Kid,

Henry Dorselblad was physically a very undistinguished man.

Extremely short, prematurely bald, weak of chin and pot of belly, young Dorselblad had been

uninteresting even as prey to most women. His middle-aged landlady, however, had bludgeoned him into

matrimony when he was only twenty-two, immediately purchasing twelve thousand dollars worth of

labor-saving household machinery on the installment plan. She naturally expected comfortable and

diligent support thereafter.

Dorselblad fulfilled her expectations during several exhausting years by holding two full-time jobs

and a part-time one on weekends. He was a skilled programmer for payroll computing machines: in his

day, such men had each replaced two complete staffs of bookkeepers—they were well worth their high

salaries and substantial job security. The invention of the self-programming payroll computer destroyed

this idyllic state.

At the age of twenty-five, Henry Dorselblad found himself technologically un-employed. He became

one of the shabby, starving programmers who wandered the streets of the financial district, their punching

tools in their right hands, looking for a day's work in some old-fashioned, as yet unconverted firm.

He tried desperately to become a serviceman for the new self-programming computers. But

twenty-five is an advanced age: personnel interviewers tended to classify him as “a senior citizen—junior

grade.” For a while, he eked out a bare living as a computer sweeper, clearing office floors of the tiny

circular and oblong residues dropped by the card-punching machines. But even here, science and

industry moved on. The punch-waste packer was invented, and he was flung into the streets again.

Her bank account shrinking at an alarming rate, Mrs. Dorselblad sued him for nonsupport. He went

to jail. She obtained a divorce with alimony payments set at a reasonable level—three-fourths of its

highest recorded earning power. Unable to make even a token payment as a demonstration of good faith,

he was kept in jail.

Once a year, a visiting panel of women judges asked him what efforts he had made in the past

twelve months to rehabilitate himself. When Dorselblad cunningly evaded the question with a speech on

the difficulties of looking for a job while in prison, he was given a severe tongue-lashing and remanded to

the warden for special punishment. He became bitter and sullen, a typical hardened alimony criminal.

Eighteen years passed. His wife married three more times, burying two husbands and jailing the third

for nonsupport. His responsibilities in no way affected by the vicious negligence of his successors, Henry

Dorselblad lived on behind bars. He learned to steep raisin-jack in a can under his cot and, more

important, to enjoy drinking it. He learned to roll cigarettes made of toilet paper and tobacco from butts

stomped out by the guards. And he learned to think.

He spent eighteen years brooding on his wrongs, real or imaginary, eighteen years studying the social

problems from which they sprang, eighteen years reading the recognized classics in the field of relations

between the sexes: Nietzsche, Hitler, the Marquis de Sade, Mohammed, James Thurber. It is to this

period of close reasoning and intense theorizing that we must look if we are to understand the

transformation of a shy and inarticulate nonentity into the most eloquent rabble rouser, the most astute

political leader of his age.

A new Henry Dorselblad was released upon the world by the Masculinist mob. He led them,

drunken rescuers and cheering prisoners alike, out of the smoking wreckage of the jail, beating time with

the warden's hat as he taught them the riotous verses of a song he had composed on the spot, "The

Double Standard Forever—Hur-rah, Boys, Hurrah!"

One by one, the movers and shakers of his time learned to reckon with him.  
Re-arrested in another

state and awaiting extradition, Dorselblad refused to grant the governor an  
interview because she was a

woman. A free-born male citizen, he maintained, could not accord legal or  
political dominance to a mere

female.

The governor smiled at the paunchy little man who shut his eyes and jumped  
up and down, chanting,

“Kitchens and skirts! Vapors and veils! harems and whore-houses!” But she did  
not smile a week later

when his followers tore down this prison too and carried him out on their  
shoulders, nor the next year

when she was defeated for re-election—both disasters to the accompaniment of  
the self-same chant.

Nor did Shepherd L. Mibs smile much after Henry Dorselblad’s guest  
appearance on “The Bull

Session.” Once it became apparent that he was political dynamite, that no state  
and no governor would

dare move against him, he had to be tapped for the Masculinist program. And  
almost every viewer in the

United States and Canada saw Shepherd Mibs, the moderator of the program and  
the National

President of Masculinism, forced into a secondary, stammering position,  
completely eclipsed by Hellfire

Henry.

Throughout the country, next day, people quoted Henry Dorselblad's indictment of modern society:

"Women needed the law's special protection when they were legally inferiors of men. Now they have

equality and special protection. They can't have both!"

Columnists and editorial writers discussed his pithy dictum: "Behind every successful woman there

stands an unsuccessful man!"

Everyone argued the biopsychological laws he had propounded: "A man who enjoys no power

during the day cannot be powerful at night. An impotent man in politics is an impotent man in bed. If

women want lusty husbands, they must first turn to them as heroic leaders."

Actually, Dorselblad was simply rephrasing passages from Mibs's editorials which he had read and

reread in his prison cell. But he rephrased them with the conviction of a Savonarola, the fire and

fanaticism of a true prophet. And, from the beginning, it was observed, he had almost the same impact on

women as on men.

Women flocked to hear him speak, to listen to his condemnations of their sex. They swooned as he

mocked their faults, they wept as he cursed their impudence, they screamed yeas as he demanded that

they give up their rights and return to their correct position as "Ladies—not

Lords—of Creation.”

Women flocked; men massed. Dorselblad’s personality tripled the membership of the Movement.

His word, his whims, were law.

He added an item to Masculinist costume, a long, curling eagle’s feather stuck in the brim of the

derby. All over the world, eagles were hunted down relentlessly and plucked bare for the new American

market. He added a belligerent third principle to those enunciated by Mibs and Pollyglow: “No legal

disabilities without correspond-ing legal advantages.” Men refused to be breadwinners or soldiers unless

they were recognized as the absolute monarchs of the home. Wife-beating cases and paternity suits

clogged the courts as the Masculinist Society pledged its resources to any man fighting the great fight for

what came to be called the Privilege of the Penis.

Dorselblad conquered everywhere. When he assumed a special office as the Leader of

Masculinism—far above all Founders and Presidents—Mibs argued and fought, but finally conceded.

When he designed a special codpiece for himself alone—the Polka-Dotted Codpiece of the Leading

Man—Mibs scowled for a while, then nodded weakly. When he put his finger on Masculinism’s most

important target—the repeal of the Nineteenth Amendment—Mibs immediately wrote editorials damning

that irresponsible piece of legislation and demanding the return of elections held  
in saloons and decisions

made in smoke-filled cubicles.

At the first National Convention of Masculinism in Madison, Wisconsin, Old  
Shep shared a docile

anonymity with Old Pep, in a corner of the platform. He yelled and stamped with  
the rest when Hank the

Tank thundered: “This is a man’s civiliza-tion. Men built it, and—if they don’t  
get their rights back—men

can tear it down!” He chuckled with the others at the well-worn barbs that  
Dorselblad threw: “I didn’t

raise my boy to be a housewife” and “Give me the name of one woman, just one  
woman, who ever—”

He was in the forefront of the mob that marched three times around the hall  
behind Hellfire Henry,

roaring out the Song of Repeal:

Cram! Cram! Cram! the ballot boxes—

Jam! Jam! Jam! the voting booths...

It was a stirring spectacle: two thousand delegates from every state in the  
union, their derbies

bouncing rhythmically on their heads, their eagle feathers waving in majestic  
unison, swords jangling,

codpieces dangling, and great, greasy clouds of cigar smoke rolling upwards to  
announce the advent of

the male millennium. Bearded, mustachioed men cheered themselves hoarse and pounded each other's

backs; they stamped so enthusiastically on the floor that not until the voting began was it discovered that

the Iowa delegation had smashed themselves completely through and down into the basement below.

But nothing could destroy the good humor of that crowd. The more seriously in-jured were packed

off to hospitals, those with only broken legs or smashed collar bones were joshed uproariously and

hauled back to the convention floor for the balloting. A series of resolutions was read off, the delegates

bellowing their agreement and unanimity.

Resolved: that the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, granting

universal female suffrage, is unnatural biologically, politically, and morally, and the chief cause of our

national troubles...

Resolved: that all proper pressure be brought to bear on the legislators of this nation, both holding

and seeking office...

Resolved: that this convention go on record as demanding...

Resolved: that we hereby...



There were midterm congressional elections that year.

A Masculinist plan of battle was drawn up for every state. Coordinating committees were formed

to work closely with youth, minority, and religious groups. Each member was assigned a specific job:

volunteers from Madison Avenue spent their evenings grinding out propagandistic news releases;

Pennsylvanian coal miners and Nebraskan wheat farmers devoted their Saturdays to haranguing the

inmates of old-age homes.

Henry Dorselblad drove them all relentlessly, demanding more effort from everyone, making deals

with both Republicans and Democrats, reform elements and big city bosses, veterans' organizations, and

pacifist groups. "Let's win the first time out—before the opposition wakes up!" he screamed to his

followers.

Scrabbling like mad at their beloved fence, the politicians tried to avoid taking a definite position on

either side. Women were more numerous and more faithful voters than men, they pointed out: if it came

to a clear contest, women had to win. Masculinist pressure on the ballot box was considerable, but it

wasn't the only pressure.

Then the voice of Hank the Tank was heard in the land, asking women—in

the name of their own

happiness—to see to it that the long, long winter of feminism was definitely past. Many women in his

audiences fainted dead away from the sheer flattery of having Henry Dorselblad ask them for a favor. A

ladies' auxiliary to the Masculinist Movement was organized—The Companions of the Codpiece. It grew

rapidly. Female candidates for office were so ferociously heckled by members of their own sex that they

demanded special police protection before addressing a street-corner rally. “You should be ironing your

husband's shirts!” the lady masculinists shouted. “Go home! Your supper's burning!”

One week before election, Dorselblad unleashed the Direct Action squads. Groups of men, wearing

codpieces and derbies, descended upon public buildings all over the country and chained themselves to

lampposts outside. While officers of the law chopped away at their self-imposed bonds with hacksaws

and acetylene torches, the Masculinists loudly intoned a new liturgy: “Women! Give us your vote—and

we will give you back your men! We need your vote to win—you need to have us win! Women! Give us

your vote on Election Day!”

Where, their opponents inquired cruelly, was the vaunted pride and arrogance of Masculinism in

such an appeal? Were the Lords of Creation actually begging the weaker sex for

a boon? Oh, for shame!

But Dorselblad's followers ignored these jeers. Women must themselves return the vote they had

falsely acquired. Then they would be happy, their men would be happy, and the world would be right

again. If they didn't do this of their own free will, well, men were the stronger sex. There were

alternatives...

On this ominous note, the election was held.

Fully one-fourth of the new Congress was elected on a Masculinist platform. Another, larger group

of fellow travelers and occasional sympathizers still wondered which way the wind was really blowing.

But the Masculinists had also acquired control of three-quarters of the state legislatures. They thus

had the power to ratify a constitutional amendment that would destroy female suffrage in America—once

the repeal bill passed Congress and was submitted to the states.

The eyes of the nation swung to its capitol. Every leader of any significance in the movement hurried

there to augment the Masculinist lobby. Their opponents came in great numbers too, armed with

typewriter and mimeograph against the gynecocratic Ragnarok.

A strange hodge-podge of groups, these anti-Masculinists. Alumnae associations from women's

colleges fought for precedence at formal functions with Daughters of 1776;  
editors of liberal weeklies

snubbed conservatively inclined leaders of labor unions, who in turn jostled  
ascetic young men in clerical

collars. Heavy-set, glar-ing-eyed lady writers spat upon slim and stylish lady  
millionairesses who had

hurried back from Europe for the crisis. Respectable matrons from Richmond,  
Virginia, bridled at the

scientific jocosities of birth controllers from San Francisco. They ar-gued  
bitterly with each other,

followed entirely divergent plans of action and generally delighted their  
codpieced, derbied,

cigar-smoking adversaries. But their very variety and heterogeneity gave many a  
legislator pause: they

looked too much like a cross-section of the population.

The bill to submit repeal of the Nineteenth Amendment to the states wandered  
through an

interminable Congressional labyrinth of maneuver and rewording and committee  
action. Mobs and

counter-mobs demonstrated everywhere. Newspapers committed themselves  
firmly to one side or the

other, depending on their ownership and, occasionally, their readership. Almost  
alone in the country, The

New York Times kept its head, observing that the problem was very difficult and  
asking that the

decision—whatever it eventually was—be the right one—whatever that might  
be.

Passing the Senate by a tiny margin, the bill was sent to the House of Representatives. That day,

Masculinist and anti-Masculinist alike begged and battled for a gallery pass. Hellfire Henry and his

followers were admitted only after they had checked their swords. Their opponents were forcibly

deprived of a huge sign smuggled to the gallery in four sections. "Congressman!" the sign shouted. "Your

grandmother was a suffragette!"

Over the protests of many legislators seeking anonymity on this issue, a roll-call vote was decided

upon. Down the list of states it went, eliciting so many groans and cheers from the onlookers that the

Speaker finally had to lay aside his damaged gavel. Neck and neck the two sides went, the Masculinists

always holding a slim lead, but never one large enough. Finally the feverish talliers in the gallery saw that a

deadlock was inevitable. The bill lacked one vote of the two-thirds majority necessary.

It was then that Elvis P. Borax, a junior Representative from Florida who had asked to be passed

originally, got to his feet and stated that he had decided how to cast his vote.

The tension was fantastic as everyone waited for Congressman Borax to cast the deciding vote.

Women crammed handkerchiefs into their mouths; strong men whim-pered softly. Even the guards stood

away from their posts and stared at the man who was deciding the fate of the

country.

Three men rose in the balcony: Hellfire Henry, Old Shep, and white-haired Old Pep. Standing side

by side, they forebodingly held aloft right hands clenched around the hilts of invisible swords. The young

Congressman studied their immobile forms with a white face.

“I vote nay,” he breathed at last. “I vote against the bill.”

Pandemonium. Swirling, yelling crowds everywhere. The House guards, even with their

reinforcements from the Senate, had a hard, bruising time clearing the galleries. A dozen people were

trampled, one of them an elderly chief of the Chippewa Indians who had come to Washington to settle a

claim against the government and had taken a seat in the gallery only because it was raining outside.

Congressman Borax described his reactions in a televised interview. “I felt as if I were looking down

into my open grave. I had to vote that way, though. Mother asked me to.”

“Weren’t you frightened?” the interviewer asked.

“I was very frightened,” he admitted. “But I was also very brave.” A calculated political risk had paid

off. From that day on, he led the counter-revolution.

### III

#### The Counter-Revolution

The anti-Masculinists had acquired both a battlecry and a commander-in-chief.

As the Masculinist tide rose, thirty-seven states liberalizing their divorce laws in the husband's favor,

dozens of disparate opposition groups rallied to the standard that had been raised by the young

Congressman from Florida. Here alone they could ignore charges of "creeping feminism." Here alone

they could face down epithets like "codpiece-pricker" and "skirt-waver," as well as the ultimate, most

painful thrust—"mother-lover."

Two years later, they were just strong enough to capture the Presidential nomination of one of the

major parties. For the first time in decades, a man—Elvis P. Borah—was nominated for the office of

chief executive.

After consulting the opinion polls and his party's leading strategists, not to mention his own instincts

and inclinations, he decided to run on a platform of pure, undiluted Mother.

He had never married, he explained, because Mother needed him. She was eighty-three and a

widow; what was more important than her happiness? Let the country at large live by the maxim which,

like the Bible, had never failed: Mother Knew Best.

Star-studded photographs of the frail old lady appeared all over the land. When Dorselblad made a

sneering reference to her, Borax replied with a song of his own composition that quickly soared to the

top of the Hit Parade. That record is a marvelous political document, alive through and through with our

most glorious traditions. In his earnest, delicately whining tenor, Borax sang:

Rule, Maternal! My mother rules my heart!

Mother never, never, never was a tart!

And there was the eloquence of the famous “Cross of Swords” speech which Borax delivered again

and again, at whistle stops, at church picnics, at county fairs, at state rallies.

“You shall not press down upon the loins of mankind this codpiece of elastic,” he would thunder.

“You shall not crucify womankind upon a cross of swords!

“And do you know why you shall not?” he would demand, his right hand throb-bing above his head

like a tambourine. The audience, open-mouthed, glistening-eyed, would sit perfectly still and wait

eagerly. “Do you know?”

“Because,” would come a soft, slow whisper at last over the public address system, “because it will

make Mother unhappy.”

It was indeed a bitter campaign, fought for keeps. The Dorselbladites were out to redefine the



franchise for all time—Borax called for a law to label Masculinism as a criminal conspiracy. Mom's

Home-Made Apple Pie clashed head-on with the Sword, the Codpiece, and the Cigar.

The other party, dominated by Masculinists, had selected a perfect counter-candidate. A former

Under-Secretary of the Army and currently America's chief delegate to the thirteen-year-old Peace and

Disarmament Conference in Paris: the unforgettable Mrs. Strunt.

Clarissima Strunt's three sturdy sons accompanied her on every speaking engagement, baseball

bats aslant on their shoulders. She also had a mysterious husband who was busy with "a man's work." In

photographs which were occasionally fed to the newspapers, he stood straight and still, a shotgun

cradled in his arm, while a good hound dog flushed game out of faraway bushes. His face was never

clearly recognizable, but there was something in the way he held his head that emphatically suggested an

attitude of no nonsense from anybody—especially women.

Hellfire Henry and Kitchen-Loving Clarissima worked beautifully together. After Dorselblad had

pranced up and down a platform with a belligerently waving codpiece, after he had exhorted, demanded

and anathematized, Clarissima Strunt would come forward. Replying to his gallant bow with a low curtsy,

she would smooth out the red-and-white-checked apron she always wore and talk gently of the

pleasures of being a woman in a truly male world.

When she placed a mother's hand on the button at the top of her youngest son's baseball cap and

fondly whispered, "Oh, no, I didn't raise my boy to be a sissy!"—when she threw her head back and

proudly asserted, "I get more pleasure out of one day's washing and scrubbing than out of ten years'

legislating and politicking!"—when she stretched plump arms out to the audience and begged, "Please

give me your vote! I want to be the last woman President!"—when she put it that way, which

red-blooded registered voter could find it in his heart to refuse?

Every day, more and more Masculinist codpieces could be counted on subways and sidewalks, as

well as the bustle-and-apron uniforms of the ladies auxiliary.

Despite many misgivings, the country's intellectual leaders had taken up Borax's mom-spangled

banner as the only alternative to what they regarded as sexual fas-cism. They were popularly known as

the Suffragette Eggheads. About this time, they began to observe sorrowfully that the election was

resolving an ancient American myth—and it looked like the myth made flesh would prevail.

For Borax campaigned as a Dutiful Son and waved his mother's photograph

up and down the

United States. But Clarissima Strunt was Motherhood Incarnate; and she was telling the voters to lay it

on the line for Masculinism.

What kind of President would Strunt have made? How would this soft-voiced and strong-minded

woman have dealt with Dorselblad once they were both in power? There were those who suggested that

she was simply an astute politician riding the right horse; there were others who based a romance

between the checked apron and the spotted codpiece upon Mrs. Strunt's undeniable physical

resemblance to the notorious Nettie-Ann Dorselblad. Today, these are all idle speculations.

All we know for certain is that the Masculinists were three-to-two favorites in every bookmaking

parlor and stockbroker's office. That a leading news magazine came out with a cover showing a huge

codpiece and entitled Man of the Year. That Henry Dorselblad began receiving semi-official visits from

U.N. officials and members of the diplomatic corps. That cigar, derby, and sword sales boomed, and P.

Edward Pollyglow bought a small European nation which, after evicting the inhabitants, he turned into an

eighteen-hole golf course.

Congressman Borax, facing certain defeat, began to get hysterical. Gone was

the crinkly smile, gone

the glow from that sweet, smooth-shaven face. He began to make reckless charges. He charged

corruption. He charged malfeasance, he charged trea-son, murder, blackmail, piracy, simony, forgery,

kidnapping, barratry, attempted rape, mental cruelty, indecent exposure, and subornation of perjury.

And one night, during a televised debate, he went too far.

Shepherd Leonidas Mibs had endured displacement as Leader of the Movement far too long for a

man of his temperament. He was the position at the rear of the platform, at the bottom of the front page,

as an alternative speaker to Hellfire Henry. He burned with rebellion.

He tried to form a new secessionist group, Masculinists Anonymous. Members would be vowed to

strict celibacy and have nothing to do with women beyond the indirect requirements of artificial

insemination. Under the absolute rule of Mibs as Grand Master, they would concentrate on the

nationwide secret sabotage of Mother's Day, the planting of time bombs in marriage license bureaus, and

sudden, night-time raids on sexually nonsegregated organizations such as the P.T.A.

This dream might have radically altered future Masculinist history. Unfortunately, one of Mibs's

trusted lieutenants sold out to Dorselblad in return for the cigar-stand concession at all national

conventions. Old Shep emerged white of lip from an interview with Hank the Tank. He passed the word,

and Masculinists Anonymous was dissolved.

But he continued to mutter, to wait. And during the next-to-last television debate—when

Congressman Borax rose in desperate rebuttal to Clarissima Strunt—Shepherd Mibs at last came into his

own.

The videotape recording of the historic debate was destroyed in the mad Election Day riots two

weeks later. It is therefore impossible at this late date to reconstruct precisely what Borax replied to Mrs.

Strunt's accusation that he was the tool of "the Wall Street women and Park Avenue parlor feminists."

All accounts agree that he began by shouting, "And your friends, Clarissima Strunt, your friends are

led by—"

But what did he say next?

Did he say, as Mibs claimed,"—an ex-bankrupt, an ex-convict, and an ex-homo-sexual"?

Did he say, as several newspapers reported,"—an ex-bankrupt, an ex-convict, and an

ex-heterosexual"?

Or did he say, as Borax himself insisted to his dying day, nothing more than

“—an ex-bankrupt, an  
ex-convict, and an ex-homo bestial”?

Whatever the precise wording, the first part of the charge indubitably referred to P. Edward

Pollyglow and the second to Henry Dorselblad. That left the third epithet—and Shepherd L. Mibs.

Newspapers from coast to coast carried the headline:

MIBS CLAIMS MORTAL INSULT  
CHALLENGES BORAX TO DUEL

For a while, that is, for three or four editions, there was a sort of stunned silence. America held its

breath. Then:

DORSELBLAD DISPLEASED  
URGES MIBS CALL IT OFF

And:

OLD PEP PLEADING WITH OLD SHEP—  
“DON’T DIRTY YOUR HANDS WITH HIM”

But:

MIBS IMMOVABLE  
DEMANDS A DEATH

As well as:

CLARISSIMA STRUNT SAYS:  
“THIS IS A MAN’S AFFAIR”

Meanwhile, from the other side, there was an uncertain, tentative approach to the problem:

BORAX BARS DUEL—  
PROMISE TO MOTHER

This did not sit well with the new, duel-going public. There was another approach:

CANDIDATE FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
CAN’T BREAK LAW, CLERGYMEN CRY

Since this too had little effect on the situation:

CONGRESSMAN OFFERS TO APOLOGIZE:

“DIDN’T SAY IT BUT WILL RETRACT”

Unfortunately:

SHEP CRIES “FOR SHAME!

BORAX MUST BATTLE ME—

OR BEAR COWARD’S BRAND”

The candidate and his advisors, realizing there was no way out:

MIBS-BORAX DUEL SET FOR MONDAY

HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP TO OFFICIATE

PRAY FOR ME, BORAX BEGS MOM:

YOUR DEAR BOY, ALIVE OR DEAD

NOBEL PRIZE WINNER GETS NOD



## AS BOUT'S ATTENDING SAWBONES

Borax and ten or twelve cigar-munching counselors locked themselves in a hotel room and

considered the matter from all possible angles. By this time, of course, he and his staff only smoked

cigars under conditions of the greatest privacy. In public, they ate mints.

They had been given the choice of weapons, and a hard choice it was. The Chicago Duel was

dismissed as being essentially undignified and tending to blur the Presidential image. Borax's assistant

campaign manager, a brilliant Jewish Negro from the Spanish-speaking section of Los Angeles,

suggested a format derived from the candidate's fame as a forward-passing quarterback in college. He

wanted foxholes dug some twenty-five yards apart and hand grenades lobbed back and forth until one or

the other of the disputants had been satisfactorily exploded.

But everyone in that hotel room was aware that he sat under the august gaze of History, and History

demanded the traditional alternatives—swords or pistols. They had to face the fact that Borax was skillful

with neither, while his opponent had won tournaments with both. Pistols were finally chosen as adding the

factors of great distance and uncertain atmospheric conditions to their side.

Pistols, then. And only one shot apiece for the maximum chance of survival. But the site?

Mibs had urged Weehawken Heights in New Jersey because of its historical associations.

Grandstands, he pointed out, could easily be erected along the Palisades and substantial prices charged

for admission. After advertising and promotion costs had been met, the purse could be used by both

major parties to defray their campaign expenses.

Such considerations weighed heavily with Borax's advisors. But the negative side of the historical

association weighed even more heavily: it was in Weehawken that the young Alexander Hamilton had

been cut down in the very flower of his political promise. Some secluded spot, possibly hallowed by a

victory of the raw and inexperienced army of George Washington, would put the omens definitely on

their side. The party treasurer, a New England real estate agent in private life, was assigned to the

problem.

That left the strategy.

All night long, they debated a variety of ruses, from bribing or intimidating the duel's presiding

officials to having Borax fire a moment before the signal—the ethics of the act, it was pointed out, would

be completely confused by subsequent charges and countercharges in the newspapers. They adjourned

without having agreed on anything more hopeful than that Borax should train intensively under the pistol

champion of the United States in the two days remaining and do his level best to achieve some degree of

proficiency.

By the morning of the duel, the young candidate had become quite morose. He had been out on the

pistol range continuously for almost forty-eight hours. He complained of a severe earache and

announced bitterly that he had only the slightest improvement in his aim to show for it. All the way to the

dueling grounds while his formally clad advisers wrangled and disputed, suggesting this method and that

approach, he sat in silence, his head bowed unhappily upon his chest.

He must have been in a state of complete panic. Only so can we account for his decision to use a

strategy which had not been first approved by his entire entourage—an unprecedented and most serious

political irregularity.

Borax was no scholar, but he was moderately well-read in American history. He had even written a

series of articles for a Florida newspaper under the generic title of When the Eagle Screamed, dealing

with such great moments in the nation's past as Robert E. Lee's refusal to lead the Union armies, and the

defeat of free silver and low tariffs by William McKinley. As the black

limousine sped to the far-distant

field of honor, he reviewed this compendium of wisdom and patriotic activity in search of an answer to

his problem. He found it at last in the life story of Andrew Jackson.

Years before his elevation to high national office, the seventh President of the United States had

been in a position similar to that in which Elvis P. Borax now found himself. Having been maneuvered into

just such a duel with just such an opponent, and recognizing his own extreme nervousness, Jackson

decided to let his enemy have the first shot. When, to everyone's surprise, the man missed and it was

Jackson's turn to fire, he took his own sweet time about it. He leveled his pistol at his pale, perspiring

antagonist, aiming carefully and exactly over the space of several dozen seconds. Then he fired and killed

the man.

That was the ticket, Borax decided. Like Jackson, he'd let Mibs shoot first. Like Jackson, he would

then slowly and inexorably—

Unfortunately for both history and Borax, the first shot was the only one fired. Mibs didn't miss,

although he complained later—perfectionist that he was—that defective sights on the antique dueling

pistol had caused him to come in a good five inches below target.

The bullet went through the right cheek of the Congressman's rigid, averted

face and came out the

left. It embedded itself in a sugar maple some fifteen feet away, from which it was later extracted and

presented to the Smithsonian Institution. The tree, which became known as the Dueling Sugar Maple,

was a major attraction for years and the center of a vast picnic grounds and motel complex. In the first

decade of the next century, however, it was uprooted to make way for a through highway that connected

Hoboken, New Jersey, with the new international airport at Bangor, Maine. Replanted with much

ceremony in Washington, D.C., it succumbed in a few short months to heat prostration.

Borax was hurried to the field hospital nearby, set up for just such an emergency. As the doctors

worked on him, his chief campaign manager, a politician far-famed for calmness and acumen under

stress, came out of the tent and ordered an armed guard posted before it.

Since the bulletins released in the next few days about Borax's condition were reassuring but cryptic,

people did not know what to think. Only one thing was definite: he would live.

Many rumors circulated. They were subjected to careful analysis by outstanding Washington,

Hollywood, and Broadway columnists. Had Mibs really used a dum-dum bullet? Had it been tipped with

a rare South American poison? Had the candidate's mother actually traveled all the way to New York

from her gracious home in Florida's Okeechobee Swamp and hurled herself upon Old Shep in the

editorial offices of the Hairy Chest, fingernails scratching and gouging, dental plates biting and tearing?

Had there been a secret midnight ceremony in which ten regional leaders of Masculinism had formed a

hollow square around Shepherd L. Mibs and watched Henry Dorselblad break Mibs's sword and cigar

across his knee, stamp Mibs's derby flat, and solemnly tear Mibs's codpiece from his loins?

Everyone knew that the young Congressman's body had been so painstakingly measured and

photographed before the duel that prosthesis for the three or four molars destroyed by the bullet was a

relatively simple matter. But was prosthesis possible for a tongue? And could plastic surgery ever restore

those round, sunny cheeks or that heartwarming adolescent grin?

According to a now-firm tradition, the last television debate of the campaign had to be held the night

before Election Day. Mrs. Strunt gallantly offered to call it off. The Borax headquarters rejected her

offer; tradition must not be set aside; the show must go on.

That night, every single television set in the United States was in operation, including even the old

black-and-white collectors' items. Children were called from their beds, nurses

from their hospital

rounds, military sentries from their outlying posts.

Clarissima Strunt spoke first. She summarized the issues of the campaign in a friendly, ingratiating

manner and put the case for Masculinism before the electorate in her best homespun style.

Then the cameras swung to Congressman Borax. He did not say a word, staring at the audience

sadly out of eloquent, misty eyes. He pointed at the half-inch circular hole in his right cheek. Slowly, he

turned the other cheek.

There was a similar hole there. He shook his head and picked up a large photograph of his mother

in a rich silver frame. One tremendous tear rolled down and splashed upon the picture.

That was all.

One did not have to be a professional pollster or politician to predict the result. Mrs. Strunt

conceded by noon of Election Day. In every state, Masculinism and its protagonists were swept from

office overwhelmingly defeated. Streets were littered with discarded derbies and abandoned bustles. It

was suicide to be seen smoking a cigar.

Like Aaron Burr before him, Shepherd L. Mibs fled to England. He published his memoirs, married

an earl's daughter, and had five children by her. His oldest son, a biologist,

became moderately famous as

the discoverer of a cure for athlete's foot in frogs—a disease that once threatened to wipe out the entire

French frozen-frogs-legs industry.

Pollyglow carefully stayed out of the public eye until the day of his death. He was buried, as his will

requested, in a giant codpiece. His funeral was the occasion for long, illustrated newspaper articles

reviewing the rise and fall of the movement he had founded.

And Henry Dorselblad disappeared before a veritable avalanche of infuriated women which

screamed down upon Masculinist headquarters. His body was not found in the debris, thus giving rise to

many legends. Some said that he was impaled on the points of countless umbrellas wielded by outraged

American motherhood. Some said that he escaped in the disguise of a scrubwoman and would return one

day to lead resurgent hordes of derby and cigar. To this date, however, he has not.

Elvis P. Borax, as everyone knows, served two terms as the most silent President since Calvin

Coolidge and retired to go into the wholesale flower business in Miami.

It was almost as if Masculinism had never been. If we discount the beery groups of men who, at the

end of a party, nostalgically sing the old songs and call out the old heroic



rallying cries to each other, we

have today very few mementos of the great convulsion.

One of them is the codpiece.

The codpiece has survived as a part of modern male costume. In motion, it has a rhythmic wave that

reminds many women of a sternly shaken forefinger, warning them that men, at the last, can only be

pushed so far and no farther. For men, the codpiece is still a flag, now a flag of truce perhaps, but it

flutters in a war that goes on and on.

Afterword

This is what I wrote about “The Masculinist Revolt” when it was published in my collection, *The*

*Wooden Star* (1968):

I have lost one agent and several friends over this story. A woman I had up to then respected told me, “This

castration-nightmare is for a psychiatrist, not an editor”; and a male friend of many years put the story down with tears in his eyes,

saying, “You’ve written the manifesto. The statement of principles for all the guys in the world.” My intention was neither

castration-nightmare nor ringing manifesto; it was satiric, very gently but encompassingly satiric. I may have failed.

1961, the year in which the story was written, was well before the hippies created a blur between the sexes on matters of clothing and hair styles. The first few editors who saw the piece felt that 1990 was a bit too early for such major changes as I described. My own feeling now is that I was subliminally aware of rapidly shifting attitudes toward sexual differentiation in our society, but that what I noticed as an anticipatory tremor was actually the first rock-slide of the total cataclysm.

I would like to add now (2001) these observations: Apparently I picked the wrong sex, but I was

right about the nuttiness either of the two could develop as it wriggled in the throes of gender-political

militancy. I further thought that I clearly portrayed in my male leads, Old Pep, Old Shep, and Hellfire

Henry, three different kinds of utter failures as men, but I have been assured—by the equivalents of

Germaine Greers and Catherine Mac-Kinnons in my own circle—that these characters are to most

women the most typically typical of men. So what do I know.

I was between agents at the time I wrote this—because my then agent, among the top ones in New

York at the time, told me she'd rather not represent me if I insisted on writing such vicious trash. So I

sent it on my own to A.C. Spector (he was, I had discovered, called Old Spec by his subordinates!),

the editorial director of Playboy to whom I had been introduced by the minstrel-

cartoonist Shel

Silverstein. Spector sky was kind enough to tell me at the time of the introduction that he had so much

enjoyed my story “Down Among the Dead Men,” that he had memorized whole passages of it. He kept

“The Masculinist Revolt” on his desk for a year and a half, calling me up from time to time to tell me that

he was thinking of asking me to have it expanded so that he could devote an entire issue to it, a la The

New Yorker and John Hersey’s Hiroshima.

I almost went mad during this time; I priced Mercedes-Benzes up and down the island of

Manhattan.

Finally, some assistant editor or other (or, possibly Hugh Hefner himself) happened to read the story

and went in to Spector sky with the comment that the piece was a ringing satire on the Playboy empire.

The story was bounced back at me by the next post.

All right, maybe it’s not the stuff of immortality, but I still think it’s pretty good and pretty funny. And,

for readers who are generous and will tell me they liked it, I have this to say:

Blame it on E.B. White. His short piece, “The Supremacy of Uruguay,” is ultimately responsible for

most of my stories of this type. It showed me that you didn’t need individual characters prancing about if

you saw a story as a kind of pseudo-history—something told at a remove by a reasonably objective

historian. It occurred to me, immediately upon reading “The Supremacy of Uruguay,” that the

pseudo-history belonged above all in the literature of science fiction. And then, later, of course, I

encountered Olaf Stapledon’s novels and was privileged to see how a really great science-fiction writer

managed the form.

These have been a bunch of miscellaneous remarks. But just one more. Henry W. Sams, the great

English Department head at Penn State, gave me a job, a teaching job, the only job I’ve ever liked better

than writing. He actually hired me as a professor, after he read two stories of mine, “My Mother Was a

Witch” and “The Masculinist Revolt,” despite the fact that I didn’t have the necessary doctorate.

(Of course, I also didn’t have—and Henry knew it at the time he put me in front of a university

classroom—either a Master’s degree or a Bachelor’s. I did have, as my brother Morton, a real

professor, is quick to point out, a high-school graduation certificate and an honorable discharge from the

Army.)

Henry Sams, bless him, was the only member of the Establishment I have known who was in

permanent revolt against the Establishment.

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