

Suffragettes suffering the myth that a right
to treatment as male or less means freedom
even if only in a most commercial sense
a buying into equality

equality of the sort death bestows on us all —
indistinguishability —
for *equal* read *same* for consciousness understand
a species effect or property

Man and Woman taking the place of women and men
in the eyes of blind justice
abstract entities entitled by statute
in the name of liberty

as if civilization by definition entails
homogenizing the human race
genius bred to reproductions of reproductions
forged in the melting down of creation

Rome's temples pulverized for lime mortar
chunks of Athens in the British Museum
Homer and Dante so much paper for wrapping fish
when not applied to lower functions

as if having legal equal rights on the books
could guarantee equivalent power
under rules of law by and for the forces
that are and that will be

as if having adjudicated rights and duties —
respect and dignity certified —
could ever provide love care sympathy
the spirit behind the letter of the law

as if turning private responsibilities
over to the public sphere
giving the bureaucrats access to our most intimate lives
could make for free individuals

One-size-fits-all equality is in fact
as the *Gotha Critique* says
liberal inequality — equality

confused with identity —

legal and political in a mass society
perverted from a working principle
that gives everyone equal status by reinstating
excluded middle classes

within the action-authority-order equation
into a mangle that renders
individuals normal, unique human beings
bourgeois liberal ciphers

Not to say that armed revolution is the answer —
property rights turned upside down
the means of production assumed by inexperienced hands
the men with know-how out the window —

nor some transfiguration into a public image
of some private sublimity
attained by a breaking out of some particular
cultural inheritance

— some style vocabulary tradition — when all it takes
is a tweak here and there in the money supply
so those whose labor produces things of use have cash
to buy those goods they produce

a simple redistribution of the beautiful —
not indiscriminately
among such as are not to be trusted with the secret
but those who know the difference