

Here are a devil's dozen reasons for owning a fur coat. (One could start with, perhaps, a silver fox dyed purple with 'faux' and some pawprints done in orange on the back.)

1. Furs are biodegradable. Try composting your vinyl.

2. They are soft, warm and cuddly. Like Teddy bears.

3. They are worth saving up for.

4. Foxes are vermin who eat all sorts of native Aussie beasts. Killing them makes me warm.

5. Unlike a pet, they do not require petfood, and do not run around killing native Aussie fauna.

6. They are the nearest thing to bestiality without breaking the law.

7. They poke fun at rigidity in the Green movement, which is sometimes repressive. See point 11.

8. They are all but essential in Canberra, where the temperature often slides to minus five in winter. This European weather requires European clothing—unless we're all to wear kangaroo, which is harder to dye nice colours.

9. By buying an Australian made fur coat, you are supporting the textile, clothing and footwear industry. It's a more attractive way of doing this than voting for any candidate in Wills.

10. I like the way tails can make patterns. I like to stroke them.

11. I recently dropped in to speak to a leading Melbourne fur manufacturer and member of a fur lobby group in Melbourne. He was articulate, polite and thoughtful. I then walked up the street to look for recycled paper in the Friends of the Earth shop. When I walked out, I was followed by two 'Green' men who called me things such as 'meat for Carnivores'. I was

wearing horsehair shoes with a fake leopard skin print and a vinyl jacket with sheepskin, so I was asking for it, I guess, as the judge said to the prostitute. Or maybe they saw me in the furshop—which would really mark me as fair game. My difference from a 'proper' woman invited their contempt. Now in a sense we are all meat, but no ageing, fat, sexist hippie is getting near this cotelette.

12. They are doing such wonderful things with dye and fur these days. Fur no longer need look tatty and sad and moth-eaten and natural.

13. Most importantly, I look wonderful in fur.

It seems to me that too often repression of desire and searching for rules is a particular tendency of people who see themselves as leftwing. The desire to belong to a group has not left us since the death of older forms of organisation. Many people crave a particular way of dress, speech or behaviour as providing a sense of security once provided by being a card-carrying member of whatever. It's like a school uniform examination to see if one is wearing the right sort of underwear. My answer: Don't bother, bend over and flash.

As a woman who sees herself as a feminist, but who wears high heels and likes pornography and cake-decorating, I am used to being regarded with suspicion. Sometimes this is fun and throws one back on one's resources. Sometimes it is not—as in the case of harassment on the street, or blind stupidity that relegates any politics outside the current definition to a mythical land called 'reactionary'. But, then, I always preferred Shostakovich to Stalin.

The funniest 'lefties' of all are those who are misleadingly known by the ebullient-

sounding term 'trots', but who are absolutely incapable of tolerating, let alone enjoying, difference. Hence a woman at a recent party I attended asking me why I was so rightwing as to wear high heels and show my breasts. Darling, high heels do not Imelda Marcos make. If she's 'leftwing', then I'm the Pope. It's lucky for her I'm not as rigid as she, or she might have been found floating on Lake Burley Griffin with a stiletto heel through her hard heart.

Of course, it's a good thing that the old connection with stalinism was broken within the Australian 'Left' but perhaps until we learn to drop the word—which alienates so many interesting, caring people—we will continue to produce do-it-yourself stalinists among our ranks. On the other hand, the instance of the would-be rapist Greens suggests to me that personality is the issue, not the movement involved. Ugliness, it seems, is with us forever. Me, I'll just continue to wear unsuitable things and flaunt my difference. I'll be a credit card carrying anarchist degenerating into furs. If only I can get the money together... ■

Penelope Cottier.



**MOVEABLE  
FEAST**

## **FUR ENOUGH**