

OtherWise

A Feminist Newspaper at U of T

Volume 2, Number 2, 22 October 1985

...And for the
touch, complex
with a cunning
than life
ring...



Jennifer McIntyre

JM/85.
Teskey, the
feminist, page 4.



Jennifer Gillmor

Maureen Fitzgerald is employed elsewhere for the time being. Contracts offering no job security are forcing teachers like her off campus and playing havoc with courses that affect Women's Studies degrees.

Why Maureen Fitzgerald Isn't at School This Year

by Carrie Brown

Maureen Fitzgerald is not teaching "Childhood, Family Life and Community" (INI 233) this year because the university would not offer her job security. She had been teaching INI 233 since 1977 when there were four sections of the class and four staff who worked collectively.

The university hires teaching staff in two ways: on tenure or tenure-track agreements, and on a contract basis. To have tenure means to have a permanent appointment as an instructor. Contracts are short-term positions which are either renewable, or limited/non-negotiable. This method enables the university to get more for less. For example, a tenured professor earns about \$60,000 annually. S/he probably teaches 2.5 courses. That means the university pays \$24,000 per course to tenured staff. A contract instructor, on the other hand, receives between \$6,000 and \$7,000 per course.

Fitzgerald had been hired on a three-year renewable contract until last fall. At that time, the Dean of Arts, Robin Armstrong, in an attempt to tighten his budget, said no to all three year contracts up for renewal. At the same time, Innis College was unsure it could come up with the money to sponsor the course in 1985-86. Without the money for the course, Fitzgerald couldn't get a contract, and without a contract, she could have no job security. It was not until the spring of 1985 that Innis found the money; however, it was uncertain whether there would be funds for the following 1986-87 academic year. Fitzgerald was offered a one-year contract with no guarantees about the future. In January of 1985, she accepted a position as Managing Editor at Women's Press.

"Childhood, Family Life and Community" is offered by the Urban Studies Program and is an optional course for Women's Studies. The course, which enrolled 30 to 60 students per year, was taught by Fitzgerald with a Marxist-feminist perspective and was interdisciplinary in nature. Each of these characteristics may have something to do

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Talking Sex: Against the Odds

by Carla-krystin Andrade

Six months ago, David Turner and I wrote an article about the Sex Education Centre (SEC). The Centre had just finished its first year independent of SAC funding since it opened in 1977. SEC provides such services as library facilities and peer counselling, on the phone or on a drop-in basis, which cover many aspects of sexuality including birth control, pregnancy, relationships, gay and lesbian issues, and sexually transmitted diseases. SEC decided on a course of autonomy from SAC because of the controversy involving SAC, SEC and St. Michael's College in which the latter threatened to pull out of SAC if they kept funding a centre which provided pregnancy counselling. The funding and support from the four colleges (Victoria, Innis, University, and New) which were part of the SEC Management Committee had made the break possible. That article was our declaration of independence, a statement by a dedicated group

of people which had survived an exhausting, yet rewarding year. We faced controversy and made the difficult transition from a hierarchy to a collectively run organization. That was six months ago.

In the tradition of a volunteer-run organization, SEC continues only with the influx of new volunteers. A few remaining SEC members usually work over the summer and begin recruiting in September. This year something went awry. Fortunately, two past members, Carol Thomas and Bruce Carpick, took the initiative of trying to begin the recruiting process. I was contacted and the Save the Sex-Ed Centre Campaign Committee began.

The goal of this transitory committee is to re-establish the Centre. The campaign is a media blitz, designed to increase campus awareness of SEC's continued existence and to begin the traditional recruiting process. In the

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From The Collective

Just as our family structures have been changing throughout history, our views of abortion have changed. Until just over a hundred years ago willfully terminating a pregnancy was legal and morally justifiable in western society up to the "quickening" - when the fetus starts to kick. At the time of the industrial revolution, when children were needed to work in factories, abortion became illegal, and against the law of the church.

We are again in a time of social upheaval. The nuclear family of dad at work and mom at home with the kids, is dying. Women have been simultaneously liberated from a preprogrammed life of "Kinder, Küche und Kirche" and left "unprotected". Men are no longer as socially obliged to care for their children; most divorced fathers provide no financial support at all.

Abortion, the choice not to have a child, is necessary because we live in a world where a pregnant woman is not always free to choose to have a child. Many married couples don't want another child, or simply cannot support another. "Unwed" motherhood brings poverty and social stigma. Giving up a child for adoption brings equal stigma and heartbreak. As birth control is not universally effective and since we are sexual beings, abortion has become an unfortunate necessity in an imperfect world where there is no other way for a woman to maintain control of her person. Without the possibility of abortion, women will remain slaves to reproduction.

In the past few years it has become increasingly difficult for a woman to choose to terminate a pregnancy as fewer and fewer legal abortion services are available. Hence an abortion clinic like that of Dr. Morgentaler, which operates without a "therapeutic abortion

committee" of doctors. Even that is not enough; women who live outside of Toronto and women who cannot afford Morgentaler's clinic must have access to abortion services. Abortion is only truly accessible to all women when it is free and can be obtained without the intervention of an abortion committee.

Abortion was legalized in Canada in 1969, the same year birth control became legal. Although this was a major change for a country which until then had only sold condoms for the prevention of disease, it was not an unconditional victory for women. Abortion remained in the criminal code, legal only in hospitals with therapeutic abortion committees. As feminists, we must constantly remember that any victory is temporary, dependent for the most part on the largesse of men.

Women have always been punished for displaying, overtly, that we are sexual beings. To be sexual is to be a slut, a whore, or, God forbid, a lesbian. Pregnancy is something to hide. We were all so shocked when Princess Diana wore a bikini while pregnant - why shouldn't she? How many of us pretend we are not really having sex if we don't plan it, if we don't use birth control? How many men inquire about birth control before they have sex? How many of us are too embarrassed to talk about condoms IUDs and pills? How safe or effective are most forms of contraception? Sex is no longer taboo enough that couples wait for marriage, yet it is taboo enough that we don't like to be sensible about it.

In our society women are allowed the freedom to live alone, to earn a living, to have sex, but we should never, must never, be too far from men's control. The hospitals in Toronto which perform abortions are not picketed; there a

therapeutic abortion committee has "allowed" women to terminate unwanted pregnancies. The Morgentaler clinic is picketed constantly; there, women have gone to make their own choices.

The idea of women controlling their own bodies is profoundly radical. As feminists, we must work to achieve control of our lives and thus, most fundamentally, control of our reproductive capacities. But how can we have reproductive freedom in an imperfect world?

Less than 15% of Canadian families fit the "nuclear" mold, yet our society has not yet dealt with this fact. Increasingly women are bringing up their children alone, with no financial support from the fathers. Yet our politicians seem uninterested in the way that the wage gap between men and women - the sixty cent dollar - is forcing women and their children to live in poverty.

Abortion, it seems, is an unfortunate necessity but the alternative, forcing women to carry to term unwanted pregnancies, seems even worse. Many feminists are ambivalent about abortion. It's not nice or easy like equal pay. So many women are heartbroken when they abort naturally - as many as one in four pregnancies miscarry. It seems horrible that women are so often in positions where they must choose to end their pregnancies. Every time a woman is pregnant against her will we are reminded of how far we still have to go, how much sex education is still needed, what research just doesn't get done, and what responsibilities men don't take. But as feminists committed to the liberation of women we must continue to support a woman's right to choose to terminate a pregnancy. It's not a new problem and abortion is a very old solution, but for now, it's all we've got. OW

We Are OtherWise

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From Our Readers

Dear OtherWise,

First of all, please accept my meagre financial contribution: I know it's not much but I hope it helps.

Second, I'd like to present a few comments on Mike Zryd's "Alone and on the Inside: About Being a Feministic Male." While sympathizing with Mike's generic political position, I must take exception to many of his liberal claims in this particular article.

Being a "feministic male" like Zryd, I find the "barriers" he speaks of in the first paragraph illusory barriers. Zryd claims that men cannot fully sympathize with women (because, of course "they are not women"). Mike may be right but he should be aware (and I know he is -- why is he so silent?) of the arguments against his position: that is, his acceptance of "sexual dimorphism (as) a metaphysical dimension of the human species" (Kathryn Morgan). I am reminded here of certain theories drawn from psychoanalysis and post-structuralism, although there are other movements that are just as convincing. Morgan, for example, is an exponent of the theories put forth in Money and Tucker's revolutionary Sexual Signatures, a work which articulates just how culture-specific (and therefore malleable) gender roles (e.g. "male" and

"female") are.

I do not have much problem with Zryd's specific claims: that men earn (on average) 40% more than women, that men cannot know (fully) the pain involved in the abortion question and that women should be allowed (and encouraged) to run an autonomous Women's Centre. Nonetheless, liberation will not come from minor tampering but only from a radical restructuring of sexual arrangements. Yes, I know this sounds too "theoretical" but I think it is always necessary to think about liberation beyond the Morgentaler clinic or beyond the Women's Centre.

I get a lot of flack for my position. Unlike Mike, I do not think that men should "tread lightly in their approach to feminism." I do not see men as the "enemy" so "don't give (me) any guilt trips", Mike. You would have us bow down in humble ignorance to the women's movement and, yet, I think this will only exacerbate the radical demarcation between male and female which is, one could argue, the root of the problem. Mike, women can be wrong just as blacks, gays and the "proletariat" can be wrong. It will help neither men nor women to "tread lightly." Your confused ally,
 Jim Shedden

Sins of Indulgence: Shopping and the Construction of Desire

by Marianna Valverde

Shopping and Desire

"Feminism" and "fashion" appear to be contradictory terms designating mutually exclusive realms. Everyone knows that feminists don't shave their legs, never shop at Eaton's and get their scanty wardrobes either at the Sally Ann or from their male relatives. When forced to wear something ladylike (for instance when going to a job interview or when attending a funeral) we feminists panic and make frantic phone calls trying to borrow something suitably dressy, with predictably comic results: the silk shirt turns out to be two sizes too big, and doesn't go with the comfortable brown Oxfords that we just refuse to give up.

But I wonder, is it that we have transcended the realm of fashion, to live in a higher world where objectification is unknown—or is it that we are lacking in some of the basic skills that most other women learn in adolescence, the skill involved in creating oneself as feminine? Reflecting on the typical scene mentioned above (i.e. frantic borrowing) one could conclude that we feminists are not "beyond" fashion, but rather incapable of dealing with it. Perhaps our contempt for those who make it their business to learn how to be fashionably feminine is a rationalization of our disability.

Fortunately, there have recently been some feminist attempts to begin to understand fashion and lay bare its complex codes rather than pretending that we can leap over them. The first precondition of understanding how the fashion system works is to recognize that the observer, however feminist she may be, is capable of experiencing the specifically female pleasures of learning about fashion and consuming as much of it as her pocketbook allows. So, as my modest contribution to an explanation of fashion that is critical without falling into holier-than-thouism, let me offer a couple of random thoughts.

Overheard in a department store: First woman "I want it so bad... but I shouldn't, and Jim will be mad." Second woman: "Go ahead, get it, don't feel guilty, indulge yourself!" First woman "Yeah, I really love it..."

The two women friends evaluate the dangers and pleasures of consumption. The would-be consumer cruises the clothes, feeling her intense desire overcoming her scruples—scruples about spending too much money, and at a deeper level, about indulging herself. The other woman plays the role of legitimizing her friend's desire and counteracting her Puritan objections.

Their dialog tells us a great deal about how female desire is constructed as the desire to shop and to consume. If the conversation were directly about sexual desire, the second woman would change her tune; she would say, "Be careful, don't let him hurt you, don't make it too obvious that you really lust after him." But in the clothing store the only dangers are those of overspending. One cannot lose face or be traumatically rejected by one's Calvins. Thus, the interplay of desire and danger, indulgence and self-control, is transferred from the sexual arena to the department store, investing shopping with a sexual glow that is all too evident on the faces of eager, obsessed, Saturday female shoppers.

Class and Fashion Writing

Vogue never condescends to tell its reader how they can achieve the "look" presented in its hundreds of pages of advertisements. The "look" is an elusive thing, signified not by explicitly giving details about where buttons go this year but by some ineffable aura which is exuded as much by the photography as by the clothes themselves.

Vogue does not stoop to giving instructions; after all, the wealthy women who are *Vogue's* ideal if not real



Jennifer Gillmor

audience are not the sort to pore over a *McCall's* pattern and measure the buttonholes. No; rich women are supposed to hire others to fill in the menial details. What *Creeds* offers you is not just clothes but the certainty that you are acquiring the proper "style" for this season without having to put it all together from scratch.

By contrast, magazines that cater to the working girl or to the thrifty (read poor) housewife are chock full of detailed instructions for how to achieve this or that effect. Reading a lot of these magazines makes one feel positively exhausted. So many details! And all for one homemade dress or one warm knitted sweater for those chilly fall evenings.

But the upper-class magazines are a delight to look at. One never thinks of the tiresome aspects of women's work; one merely enjoys the overall aura of elegance. After all, expensive fur coats are not homemade, and it would show a lack of "class" if one were to show too much interest in their seams. Rich women pay furriers and retailers to worry about the seams.

Working-class women work to achieve femininity; upper-class women have to work to keep their bodies in shape, but everything from the skin out is achieved through other people's work.

There are a myriad of questions about fashion which feminists have yet to ask... And when we finally have an analysis of the dominant fashion culture, we may begin to grasp the semiotics of birkenstocks. *OW*

reasonable wages not in fashion yet

Seamstresses In Distress: Strike Continues at Outdoor Outfits

by Tori Smith

The more things change the more they stay the same. Corsets became girdles and girdles became passé, the mini skirt came, went, and came again, but the garment industry has stayed the same. Superficially it has improved but the foundation, cheap labour is a constant. Seven per cent of the Toronto labour force works in the garment industry, and although business is down due to American imports, the demand for workers is constant. For immigrant women it is the most readily available job besides domestic work. It is also one of the lowest paid.

Except for seamstresses who do piece work at home, most garment workers are unionized. This doesn't prevent abuses from occurring, and a strike by local 253 of United Garment Workers is highlighting some of the problems workers face. About thirty strikers, almost all of whom are women, walked off the job at Outdoor Outfits six weeks ago over wage issues. They have been without a con-

tract since May, and are asking for a 5% increase to be paid from that time. This would bring their earnings up to an average of five dollars an hour. The other contentious issue in the contract is the wording surrounding payment for piece work. Recently the owner of the shop cut prices paid per piece, so that some workers are now making substantially less than they earned in past years. The union wants to tighten the contract, increasing the penalties paid for such infractions.

The major obstacle to a quick settlement in the dispute is that the owner of Outdoor Outfits who owns a second shop under a separate contract. Workers at the second shop, Abbycrest, were laid off prior to the strike. When the strike began they were called in to handle work left unfinished in the Outdoor Outfits shop. The union feels this is a clear violation of labour regulations and is taking the matter to arbitration. If they win on this point and Abbycrest is prevented from what is essentially scab-

bing, the pressure to settle with Outdoor Outfits will increase.

Further pressure will soon be brought to bear on the company by some of their customers. Fifteen per cent of their business is with the United Steelworkers, for whom they make union jackets. If the strike continues they will take their business elsewhere. Outdoor Outfits also sews the uniforms of various police and fire departments, and the TTC, and the union is confident that if necessary, the government will pull its business as well.

The strike has already lasted longer than the women expected. Despite dropping temperatures, and strike pay of twenty-five dollars a week, they will remain united. Most of them have worked at least ten years for the company. They want to stay, but they know they deserve better. And for all the women and men who work in an industry that allows owners to abuse labour the way Outdoor Outfits does, it is important that they get a better deal. *OW*

An Article on Fashion in which the word *chic* is never mentioned

What the Well Dressed Feminist will be wearing in '86

by Terry Teskey

This is a clothes-positive piece of writing. And I'm a clothes-positive woman.

Jargon aside, this means I love clothes. My idea of a go-to-hell, devil-may-care, really enchanted afternoon is one spent sauntering in and out of second hand clothing stores, chatting up the staff and shoppers, in hot pursuit of the extravagant and eye-catching. Or just a little something to liven up a dull blouse or day.

Shopping relaxes me. And ladies, couldn't we all use a little soothing these days? So I spend time unsnarling my nerves and swelling the purses of others, checking out Toronto's purveyors of used fashions. Eventually I'll get around to displaying my prejudices on where-to-get-great-clothes-for-cheap. The immediate task is therapeutic: to alleviate residual feelings of (conceptual) conflict and (political) discomfort which often afflict the fashion-conscious feminist.

The poor dear hasn't an easy time of it. She faces pressure from two distinct quarters, both of which consider her a walking contradiction in terms. The first consists largely of people who shop at the Eaton Centre and find her style just flat-out WEIRD. (Read: ugly.) So - on these terms she's a feminist but by no means stylish, in any commendatory sense of the term. Then there are feminists who have trouble reconciling her appearance with feminism as they understand it. Now she's fashionable, hence no longer a feminist.

The first sort, although irritating, shouldn't induce insomnia; I don't know any feminist who takes to heart the opinions of the great overly-washed. Feminist critiques of dress, however, really do have to be dealt with before one can hit Queen Street with a clear conscience.

Two issues here masquerade as one: should we adorn ourselves at all? And should we adorn ourselves in a particular way? The second question commonly captures the limelight, perhaps because people assume the alternative to the first is running naked through the streets. Not so; "adornment" involves going beyond the dictates of practicality. The utilitarian approach to dress is also a style, but it doesn't count as adornment.

Exceeding a utilitarian standard entails exceeding a minimal outlay of time, energy, and expense. These can be reasons to avoid doing so. But they're decisive factors only if their object is thought to be unworthy of such attentions. Does attention to garb betray a pea-brain?

Susan Brownmiller certainly thinks so. In *Femininity* we read that "the nature of feminine dressing is superficial in essence....To care about feminine fashion, and do it well, is to be obsessively involved in inconsequential details on a serious basis".

I protest. Claims about "essence" are opaque to start with, but surely if clothing is essentially anything at all, it's communicative. And what is

communicated depends on the prevailing system of conventions. (Contrivances can be "essentially uncomfortable" or "intrinsic instruments of torture", but this is just a blow-hard's way of saying they damage our bodies.)

In less ornate terms, a contemporary woman who devotes herself to display does so in a context where such behaviour is defined as feminine, with all that that entails. According to Brownmiller, it entails accepting the "handicap of restraint and restriction, and (coming) to adore it", since the feminine aesthetic is one "built upon a recognition of powerlessness".

Exactly. And we can't just obliterate these conventions at will. Culture fixes the meaning of our appearance; we risk recreating ourselves as life-size Barbie dolls if we're not careful.

But can we be careful, short of abandoning all interest in decking out? I think so, if we remember that we can communicate one thing by primping at all, another by primping in a particular way. Precisely because style has twin foundations, we're not condemned to a rigid code of sartorial significance. We can play the two off against each other, set up tensions between expectations raised by the traditionally feminine practice of donning plumage, and the form of the plumage itself. Jarring these expectations chips away at our petrified interpretative codes, not to mention keeping at bay misconstruals of our persons.

Ways of cultivating collision are legion. My personal favourites all depend on some form of more-or-less blatant "inappropriateness". Combining articles from different conventional categories is good for generating cognitive dissonance - you can almost see people scrambling to unify the disparate elements of your ensemble. Try wellingtons under an elegant flowing skirt, or the fairly common combination of pearls and a faded jean-jacket. Delightful insouciance!

For the adventurous, there's also exaggeration to absurdity. This is the inverse of withholding respect by refusing to dress "up". Here we convey disrespect by exaggerated obedience to conventional standards of appropriateness. One woman I know attended a posh theatre opening done up in the sort of 1930's lady's suit never before seen on a woman this side of 70, in a preternaturally bright shade of green. And no underwear, although one had to look. She looked revolting.

She also, to her chagrin, met with a minimum of startled glances. Which illustrates the danger of this approach: one can be co-opted, or, in other words, mistaken for one of THEM. The tactic is a mock, a parody: it assumes some wit on the part of others, sometimes a perilous assumption.

No-one wants to wear a ballgown to Robarts anyway. Something less spectacular is wanted. And used clothing (although not it alone) is perfectly tailored to this

purpose. It counts as a declaration of independence - very unladylike behaviour that! - flung in the scabrous face of consumer culture, a culture that believes in obsolescence and the necessity of the new.

One can mix and match these tactics, or dream up one's own. In liberalspeak, they all involve a forceful assertion of one's individuality, a sensibility that says I-don't-buy-into-it. (Don't worry about what "it" is; your fellow citizens will fill in the blank according to what most threatens them. If you're a feminist you'll doubtless be edified.)

So the well-turned out feminist emerges unscathed, her feminist credentials intact. She may even have a method of nudging along social change, if she and her clothes are innovative enough. But where to get those clothes? Now's the fun - a guide to used Toronto.

a guide to used toronto....

For flash and dazzle, try Incognito, 600 Bloor West. The ambience is that of an elegant parlour, the conversation always engaging. (Introduce yourself to the owner: she's fun and woman-positive.) And Incognito's wares are to die over. Split 50-50 between recycled and the store's own designs, they run the gamut of prices and styles. The house line follows classic contours, as in cocktail length silk shifts with sash. Of particular interest is an impressive collection of jewelry, both vintage and original design, gently used skinny pants for under \$10, and wonderful bulky sweaters in natural fibres, all reasonably priced. As for exotica, try to imagine a royal blue tissue lame 50's style evening gown with strapless heart-shaped bust sporting an organza rosebud and tiers of organza falling away from those naked shoulders, cut low in back and culminating in a fishtail, with a tiered organza flounce at the hem. I don't think you can, and it's expensive anyway. Red sequin suspenders for \$10 are, however, probably within the budget.

Still in the environs but on the other side of Bathurst, there's Meran's, a well-rounded establishment where just about everything is interesting, in good shape, and cheap. I've had particularly good luck with their dress rack: often something really bent turns up. Plus Meran's boasts some of the most interesting staff and customers to be encountered. Watch for sales; frequently everything in the store is tagged at \$9 or less. All this goes as well for a second Meran's at Queen and Beverly.

Further along, at Queen and Bathurst, is the find of the season: Carico, recently opened and owned and operated by an affable woman with an irreverent wit and ridiculously low prices. Mint condition lined silk suits, for instance - and not cheap silk either - alas, they sold quickly. Winter coats in perennially popular styles are currently going for \$25. The array of purses makes

choice difficult, but at \$6-7 each maybe getting two or three isn't a mortal sin. In fact, most items at Carico seem priced from \$6-12. Exceptions are the extravagant evening gowns brought in by a transvestite who's getting married. (Sequins, feathers, and clingy turquoise satin - the man has taste.) But then, what price satin?

While in the vicinity, try Bragg's. The atmosphere is definitely glacial, so it's not pure ecstasy, but the stuff's often fascinating. Clothing's in the back, if you make it that far; it's easy to get side-tracked by the brass pins or 1920's magazine ads.

And for that finishing touch, complete any outfit with a cunning black larger-than-life spider ring, only 25 cents from Digs, 436 Queen. (A particularly appropriate trinket around Hallowe'en.) Digs leans towards the bizarre - it's worth keeping an eye on.

Pushing further west to Queen and Palmerston, you'll find a fabulous fashion outpost. Kitsch Lorraine - great name! - has three main virtues: first, Lorraine is a woman of enormous charm. Second, she carries everything. Some highlights: her assortment of hats is great fun, from pill boxes to silly sequin caps to fedoras. Boas come in absurd neon colours. A wicker picnic basket for \$20 would make an admirable briefcase. And a cat clock with pendulum tail and jeweled metronomic eyes...\$60, but it drips kitsch. Lorraine provides a junk trunk that often rewards perseverance, and her jewelry collection is superior to most. She's also good for the impossibly arcane; last spring I slaved over an 1890's black satin and lace ankle-length skirt complete with bustle. This time around I noticed a Victorian blouse on display. Finally, the third virtue: for the delectation of patrons, the store offers cappuccino and a dish of suckers.

Kitsch Lorraine, incidentally, is just across the street from Dufflet's....

Continuing the trek yet further west along Queen, there's a mysterious little store called Stor at, roughly, Bellwoods. (Originally its insignia was a reverse interrogation sign, until that was ripped off.) There's some great stuff here amidst the clutter, but time your visits carefully; the place seems to open and close on a whim. Best times are between 2 and 7 p.m.

I've spent many a happy hour digging through these stores. I don't claim to have furthered the feminist revolution, but I haven't harmed it either. I may have helped to undercut the restrictive conventions governing women's dress and other aspects of our lives; I've certainly had a good time. OW

Incognito

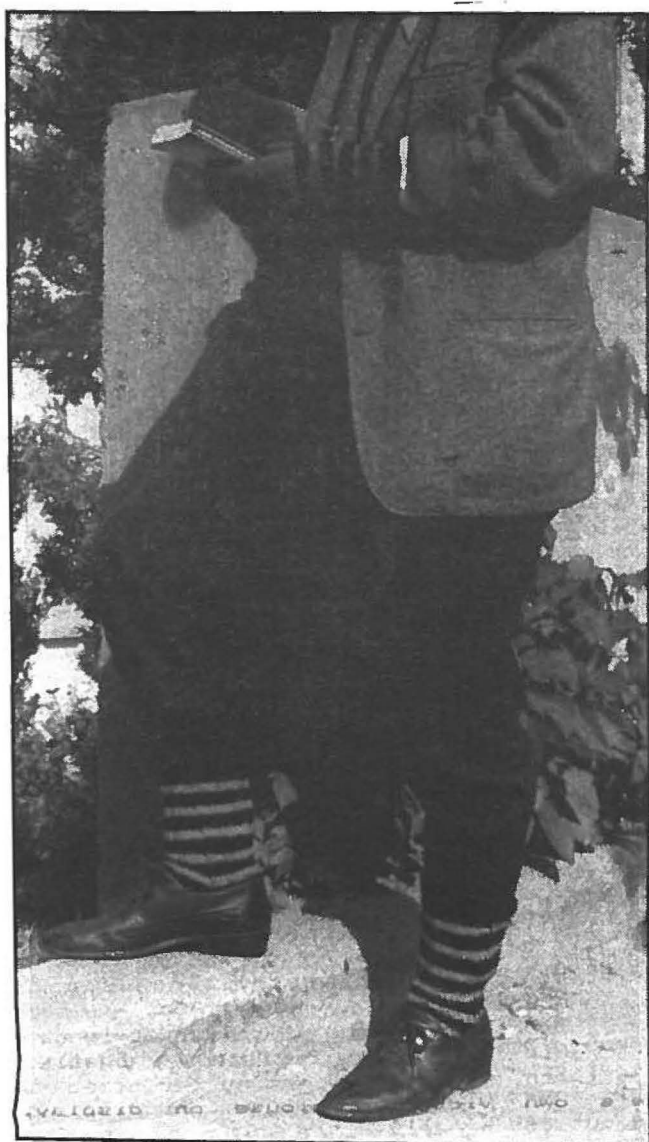
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F A S H I O N

OtherWise Style



do's & don'ts

Which author was it who quipped "Why must feminists dress like badly dressed men?" We certainly don't know. While some feminists don't dress like men at all, some of the feminists we know prefer to dress like well dressed men.

When riding your bicycle you might have to adapt your outfit to suit the fast lane. But after you dismount, don't forget to untuck those trousers from your handmade socks; discretely slip your cycling gloves into your pack and unroll those jacket sleeves. *Voila*, casual practical elegance!

Our model sports a paisley silk tie from a Queen Street boutique, Italian shoes of burgundy leather from a rummage sale, and there's nothing like the many pocketed splendor of her herringbone tweed jacket.

It's the Eighties! And in this day and age androgyny is fashion's provocative edge. But it's still easier for women to don masculine garb, than it is for a man to wear a skirt. Com'mon fellas, get on board!



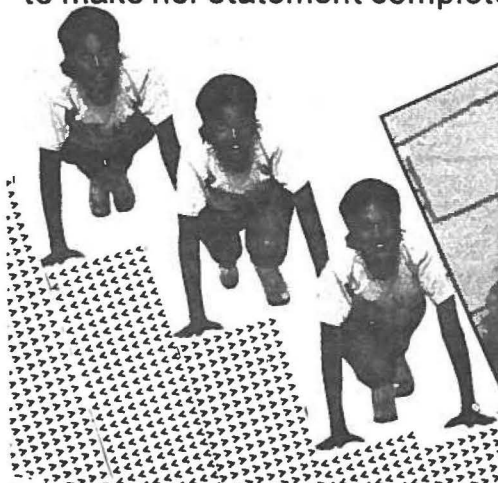
WRONG

RIGHT

"OtherWise, Make Me Over"

By Kate Lazier and Ingrid MacDonald
Photos by Kate Lazier

When Renate won an OtherWise fashion makeover as the doorprize at a recent women's studies lunch bag lecture, she decided it was time to give herself a whole new look. While her skeptical, confident look displays the kind of confidence a woman needs in the big city, our fashion experts wanted to evoke a more personable, brighter, shinier Renate. Our consultants thought that the layered look works just fine with her small lean body, and so does her hair, cut so that tossed curls fall loosley over well trimmed sides and back (perfect for a quick dry at the gym!). Her naturally good fashion sense needed only one little thing to make her statement complete.



CARICO

Second Hand and Vintage
Clothing



Don't forget us at Halloween.

671 Queen St. W.
just west of Bathurst.
366-5634

Jane Rule's novel made into film *Heating Up The Desert With Lesbian Sex*

by Mary Louise Adams

I came out in Peterborough, in a conflict-laden and painful relationship that left me in dire need of positive lesbian images. I sidled up and down library aisles looking for even a tiny glimmer of optimism. *Desert of the Heart*, a wonderful novel by Canadian author Jane Rule, was the first to reward my surreptitious diligence. So when I learned that "Desert Hearts", the film version of the book, was to make its way to this year's Festival of Festivals I was thrilled. I looked forward to it with nostalgia. Surely this would be the lesbian film my mother could understand, and it is.

"Desert Hearts" is a love story. It has beautiful women, schmaltz, sexual tension and a happy (for those of us with faith in such things) ending. Helen Shaver plays Evelyn, a prim, rational English professor from Columbia. She goes to Reno, Nevada for a quick divorce. She makes arrangements to spend the six weeks it takes to establish state residency on a ranch outside the city. It's there that she meets Kay, a 25 year old lesbian who works in a casino, the step-daughter of the woman who owns the ranch.

The romantic intrigue starts early in the film as Evelyn becomes curious about the beautiful sculptor who lives in the cottage out back. Evelyn's curiosity intensifies when, calling on Kay unexpectedly, she finds a woman in her bed. And so too begins Kay's interest in her.

We watch the two of them—the conservative and proper professor yearning for more in her life, and the self-protecting young artist afraid to even

admit her dreams—share intimacies, arguments and beers until Evelyn can no longer ignore Kay's feelings for her nor hers in return.

After what seems like ages of sexual tension our two heroines finally make it to bed. The love-making scene is erotic. It's long and slow with the camera so close you can actually see the saliva on the women's lips as they kiss. We hear only the sounds of their lips and their tongues and their breath. There's no need for background music to set the scene. The textures and colours of hair and skin and light are enough. And, all this is created with limited nudity. It's here, where we feel most the influence of a woman director.

It's a simple plot with a still simpler script that falls short of Jane Rule's original work. The dialogue is often awkward and the speedy progression of events tends towards the unbelievable. It is disturbing that Evelyn is portrayed as just being swept along by Kay, in an "Oh my goodness I don't know what's come over me" vein. She fails to take much responsibility for her own feelings or for the fact that Kay is acting in reaction to them. It's a subtle version of the you-young-lesbians always-seduce-straight girls myth. It wasn't in the book.

Thinking back on Rule's book, I remember the landscape; the impact it had on Evelyn and the fact that in many ways it was what enabled her to break out of old patterns and open herself to a new way of loving. Certainly the possibility of exploring this visually is great. Yet Deitch made little use of the landscape of her

title. We saw far more of casinos and bars than we did mountains or mesa.

But of course none of this would matter to my mother who hasn't read Jane Rule. What she would see is a woman-made image of women in love and of women's desire. And, she'd find it different than your average Hollywood movie. For one thing, almost all of the characters are women and they are presented with compassion. Even Kay's alcoholic step-mother who tries to break up the relationship is forgiven by the end. And the women know their own minds—something few male directors could ever admit. But most importantly, mother would see lesbians who are attractive, intelligent and who if they really wanted to (which they don't) could "get a man". They aren't degenerate, man-hating, child-molesting weirdos. They're the women with the courage to make a choice.

Desert Hearts will be released across Canada later this fall.

OW



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Movement To Movement

The second Pan-Canadian conference of "Women and Words/ des femmes et des mots" will be held in Toronto, Ontario in June 1986.

Currently, the Conference Committee is seeking women for membership on the general committee and for various task-oriented subcommittees. The Conference Committee is an on-site committee responsible for everything from programme planning, fundraising, and budgeting, to childcare, entertainment, and office operations. To ensure that all of these committees reflect diversity in perspective and skills, it is hoped that they will be composed of writers, both established and otherwise, community workers/activists, professors, journalists, playwrights, editors, songwriters, librarians and any other women who are interested in working with words.

The Committee is seeking the full participation of women of

varied ethnic and racial backgrounds in every phase of the conference, from decision making and programming to serving as panelists and attending the conference itself. A commitment has been made to ensure that all committees and workshops address and reflect the diversity of language, race, class, sexuality, and geography of the participants' lives, including both national and local concerns. The Conference Committee is also striving to increase the representation of older women, young women, physically disabled women and poor women.

Any women interested in becoming involved in any of the above committees or subcommittees, or who is interested in suggesting workshop and panel topics may contact the Conference Committee at (416) 532-9868 or (416) 925-1372 or write to: Ontario Women and Words Society, P.O. Box 12, Station E, Toronto, Ontario, M6H 2X0.

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—statement— The Coalition for Unbiased Language

We are students who are outraged at the countless examples of the use of sexist and racist language on campus, particularly the use of such language by lecturers and in printed materials handed out by respective faculties. We are fed up with men who "persistently define themselves as occupying the positive semantic position" and subsuming half the population under the so-called generic noun "MAN". We are fed up with white people persistently "using their own group as the standard against which others are assessed."

The Coalition for Unbiased Language aims to obtain an official policy statement from the University of Toronto calling for an end to racist and sexist language on campus. We are presently soliciting for statements of endorsement from various student and faculty organizations and unions. Following this, we will present our demands along with the obvious show of support throughout the campus to the University of Toronto ruling body.

The task the coalition has set out for itself is an enormous one. We therefore ask individuals who support the coalition's goals to please join us to eliminate these practices which are biased, discriminatory and demeaning. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 920-0817 (early mornings, late evenings).

Popular Columnist Up In Smoke?

by Ingrid MacDonald

TORONTO (OWPI) The recent disappearance of Ms. Enigma Person has got authorities scratching their noses in genuine puzzlement. She is alleged, by friends, to have vapourized in a supernatural puff of smoke while seated at a table where a séance was under way.

Ms. Person, a petite mouse-haired spinster is well known as a regular "self help" columnist in several national papers, including the well respected *OtherWise* Journal. She endeared herself to her readers by solving problems for which no absolute answer could be prescribed. Her advice on questions of the most intimate nature was sought by thousands, both women and men, from near and far.

Ms. Person was said to have been attempting contact with her companion of seventeen years, the irreplaceable Newcombe of Connecticut, a female calico cat, at the time of her mysterious departure.

The authorities, inspired by the popularity of Ms. Enigma's personality cult, are leaving no stone unturned in their dedicated search for clues concerning Ms. Enigma Person's whereabouts. *OW*

CLASSIFIEDS

THE U OF T SEX EDUCATION CENTRE is currently recruiting volunteers for counselling and administration. Apply at the centre behind the Admissions Office until Nov. 8

MEANINGFUL WORK in a friendly environment. CONNEXIONS, an information-sharing project publishing resources for social change groups, welcomes new members and volunteers to join us in writing, editing, computer work, indexing, office tasks, etc. Call Ulli at 960-3903.

REGISTER NOW for the PINK TURF women's indoor soccer league. Forms available at the women's bookstore. Registration is limited. First meeting Oct. 22 7:30 pm. at 519 church. For more inf. call 977-8927.

CLASSIFIED in *OtherWise* \$0.20 a word with a \$2.00 minimum charge. Send ad and method of payment to: *OtherWise*, P.O. Box 857, Station P, Toronto, M5S-2Z2.

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An institution in the lower
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by Ann Stratton

Summer 1969. A milky-haired woman bends over her petunias, busy wrinkled fingers tearing weeds. I, in braids and sun-dress, observe from the edge of the patio, hands behind back.

"Grandmother."

The woman looks up briefly, raises one white eyebrow. "Call me Nonnie," she says, not unfriendly. "Everyone else does."

Nonnie?? What is "Nonnie"? And who is Everyone Else? No.

"Grandmother", I repeat obstinately, clasping my hands tighter behind my back. The woman stiffens, turns to another section of the garden. She is not my grandmother, and I am not her granddaughter. I am adopted, and perhaps shouldn't have been, and all of this suddenly seems painfully obvious. I go and play in the sand by myself.

I say I "perhaps shouldn't have been" because, for whatever reasons, the adoption didn't work. For most of the parties involved, the experience had all the charm of a 16-year stint in a Turkish prison. However, adoption failure isn't that unusual--the rate, I understand, is about par with today's divorce/separation rate--and for the purposes of this article, I won't dwell on it. I've been asked to write about my grandmother, and my grandmother is unusual: Grandmother lives in a filing cabinet.

This means that while many women trace their family histories back through photo albums, family Bibles, marriage records and oral histories to a succession of mothers, grandmothers, aunts and cousins, my own search for my family history ends abruptly, after a short trek down the tiled hallway of the London and District Family and Children's Services, at a door marked "No Admittance". Inside is The Filing Cabinet, and tucked neatly into one of the files (File No. 1673, in fact) are the rest of the Strattons.

I happen to know they're living in File no. 1673 because--lucky me--I have a copy of my Adoption Order. (An adoption order is a sort of "bill-of-sale", transferring legal guardianship of the "Said Child" from its biological mother to its adoptive parents, and

REMembering

finalizing any name changes to the child.) On my A.O., baby Heather Ann Stratton dies a quiet crib-death on October 22, 1964 and rises again on October 23, 1964 as Someone Completely New, squalling for Pabulum. Anyway, I have this little item as well as a handy little 3-paragraph background history of myself. These were given to me by my adoptive father last year in a sudden gesture of either "Go with God, my child," or just plain "Go." I'm not sure which. In any case, this is all I have; the adoption laws in Ontario, which stand firmly on the "closed file" principle, prevent me, and other adoptees like myself, from knowing any more than what we can uncover through accident or hard work. In any case, I have my trusty photocopies. Some adoptees have nothing. Few of us know our mothers, not to mention our unsung grandmothers.

Like *Oliver Twist*, not to bash a symbol to death, I want more. This can be a rather controversial stance to take, I've found. Each time I've raised the issue of my tentative search for my biological mother and grandmother et al., someone has questioned my motives or out and out accused me of administering a nasty kick in the chops to the people who, after all, raised me. Well, I'm not at all disregarding the fact that my adoptive parents raised me and provided me with a fairly comfy middle-class home (as opposed to, perhaps, a life of Dickensian transience). Nor am I proposing, in the event that I ever do track down my mother (or whoever) to throw myself on her knees and wail "Mama, Mama!!" It may actually sound somewhat stupid and simplistic, but I want to meet someone who looks like me. (Ever been to someone else's family picnic??) I'd like to meet someone who is like me in aptitude and--God forbid--temperament. (I want to know who the hell's responsible for this curly hair...) I'm interested in what country these Strattons were from, what they did during their lifetimes--I want my history.

But here we are again, back at "No Admittance" and the Yale lock. So, from my handy little photocopies, I shall now construct for you "My Sketch of Grandmother Stratton". Here she is:

Grandmother Stratton had four children, 2 girls and 2 boys, in that order. The second girl was my mother. Grandmother's husband, Mr. Stratton, or Grandfather S., held "a responsible position" in their home town of London, Ontario. Perhaps, then, Grandmother lived in relative material comfort; they probably owned a house. Both Grandmother and Grandfather Stratton were "of Anglo-Saxon descent"--though from which of the British Isles they hailed I know not. (Please, O Powers That Be, don't let it be Scotland... bagpipes give me dropsy...) Between Grandmother and Grandfather there was blonde hair, brown eyes and fair skin, for their second daughter (my mother) lucked into these in the genetic shuffle. The entire family is said to have been is robust physical health. The End.

Like me, you probably find this somewhat dry. Grandmother Stratton reads like the back of a cake mix beside the other grandmothers featured in this column. There has to be more: What did she do? What did she look like? Where did she grow up? Did she knit, keep canaries or play the piano? Did she drive a race car or a Dodge Dart? Did she have blue hair? False teeth? Was she political, apolitical or oblivious? Would she have been a nice grandma, or a real schmuck? It doesn't matter (much) to me, even if they are all schmucks, right down to the family dog, they're my schmucks. Almost.

This is where things stand with Grandmother Stratton and myself for the time being. While she and her family are snugly, anonymously residing in a lovely beige file-folder, I'm busily hunting for the back road to Grandma's house, armed with my photocopies, a stack of old London phone books, an application to the Ontario Adoption Registry and about 10 pounds of train tickets. If all goes well, I just might get to meet her. On the other hand, I may become a grandmother myself before I have anything else to write about. Either way, I'll let you know. OW

Fitzgerald, continued from page 1

with the financial insecurity of the course. A sibling course, "Law in the Community" (INI 336), was threatened with the same fate as INI 233, but was saved through the efforts of Innis Principal J. Browne and the head of Urban Studies, Professor S. Roweis. Fitzgerald believes that the feminist content contributed to Browne's allegations that Women's Studies should support her course instead of Innis, and, subsequently, to his lack of interest in fighting to save the course. "I don't know how anybody in an administrative position can succumb to cutting a course when it involves 50 to 60 students. It seems to me to be something to fight for."

If Fitzgerald's experience is at all representative of staff working conditions, what does the security of the Women's Studies Programme look like? Of the forty-five courses listed in the 1985-86 programmes booklet, ten are offered by the department at New College. The other thirty-five courses are taught elsewhere and therefore depend on various departments and colleges throughout the university to see that the courses are offered and well staffed. Of the same forty-five courses, twenty-two are taught by tenured professors, three of whom teach more than

one of the twenty-two. Twenty-three courses in the programme are being taught by untenured contract staff. During cutbacks, courses taught by contract staff would be the first to go, while courses given by tenured professors are less likely to be cut and are therefore more secure.

Said Fitzgerald: "Students find it difficult to find courses. That says something." This year, only one and one half 400-level courses are offered by the programme. With the majority of the courses being offered outside the department, the Women's Studies programme has very little control over what courses are being cut, or not offered; over the security of teaching staff, i.e. tenured or contract; and over ensuring that tenured staff is of high quality, with a feminist background.

How can this fragility be overcome? Fitzgerald sees the need for smaller and unconventional courses/departments to work together. "You shouldn't have to choose between what goes. That's really important to me. I just think we should fight cuts of good, well-attended courses." And to accomplish that: "Administrators should be fighting at all levels: department administrators with principals, principals with deans, deans with Simcoe Hall, and Simcoe Hall with the province."

If the university continues to deny funds for quality staff in popular courses, others like Fitzgerald will continue to trickle through this institution's aging fingers for more lucrative positions where their skills will be acknowledged. As Fitzgerald said of her teaching experience, "I'll miss it. But I also like publishing." OW

Sex Ed Centre, continued from page 1

meantime, the committee is doing the administrative tasks necessary to get the Centre going again--a Herculean task for three people. One or two people have joined our group but we need more. We need at least thirty volunteers with energy and enthusiasm; we'll take care of the training. Applications will be available from the Centre which is located on Devonshire Place behind the Admissions Office, until November 8, 1985. This year, volunteers will have a choice of doing counselling and/or working in administration, publicity, education or discussion groups.

Our goal is realistic--the Sex-Ed Centre will be open for business in January '86. The heat in the building has been turned on and we're ready to go. Look out for posters, listen to CIUT, pick up an application form. Contact us whether you want to help with the campaign or be a SEC member! OW